



Illinois

Guardian

Volume 7, Number 4

Newspaper of the Illinois National Guard

Summer 2011

Second lady visits Chicago-area Illinois Guardsmen and families



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

Dr. Jill Biden comforts tear-filled Angela Hornbeck, daughter of Illinois Army National Guard Soldier Sgt. 1st Class William Hornbeck, June 16 at the Chicago School of Psychology.

Story by Spc. Chasity Johnson
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

CHICAGO -- Dr. Jill Biden, second lady of the United States, met with Illinois National Guard troops, their families and the Illinois Guard's community partners June 15 and 16 in Chicago.

The visit was Biden's first stop on the Joining Forces tour, a national initiative to support and honor America's servicemembers and their families.

"Michelle Obama and I are joining forces," said Biden. "We created an initiative to get all Americans on board to commit to an act of kindness for a military family. We want everyone to realize the sacrifices that the military and their families are making for all Americans."

Biden kicked off her visit at a USO-sponsored pizza party at D'Agostino's Pizza and Pub, June 15 in Wrigleyville. There, Biden sat down and spoke with each individual Soldier in attendance and their family. Biden took time to listen to the issues family members of Guardsmen face when their loved ones are deployed. In return she shared her experiences as the mother of a deployed servicemember.

"I'm traveling and Michelle is traveling and our goal is to reach out to as many military families and Americans as we can to say 'hey one percent of Americans are serving and 99 percent of us have to step up and show our thanks,'" said Biden.

After the pizza party Biden, the Soldiers and their families loaded up into a trolley and headed to Wrigley Field to watch the Chicago Cubs play.

"It was a great event that brought a lot of families together," said Staff Sgt. Pablo Salinas of Chicago, a field artillery specialist with Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery Regiment in Chicago. "It was really nice meeting Mrs. Biden. She seemed really down to earth. My family really enjoyed it, especially my daughter."

The following day Biden attended a meeting at the Chicago School of Psychology to learn how they support the emotional and psychological

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North Riverside unit helps British vacate Iraq

Story by Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

UMM QASR, Iraq - Another chapter in the responsible drawdown of Iraq has ended.

On May 16, the 1244th Transportation Company from North Riverside, along with the 230th Sustainment Brigade's Personnel Security Detail, headquartered out of Chattanooga, Tenn., took a trip to Umm Qasr, Iraq, to transport the last remaining British Soldiers and their equipment out of Iraq.

British officials asked the U.S. Army to augment their efforts with this daunting task because they did not have the full complement of assets to complete this mission on their own. Upon receipt of the mission, the Tennessee Army National Guard brigade made direct contact with the British liaison officer to plan, coordinate and implement the necessary assets to accomplish the request.

When asked 'why the 230th,' Lt. Col. Martin J. Basham, executive officer of the brigade, replied, "(The 230th Sustainment Brigade) are the guys that move all the stuff out of the country."

One of the 230th's missions is to help facilitate the drawdown and complete withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq by the end of 2011.

"We are the haul assets," continued Basham. "Not only do we haul stuff out of Iraq, we also sustain the units currently there. We also handle all the equipment and people as it goes in or out of Iraq."

"This mission is very historic. Not only are we helping

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Obama meets Illinois Guard Soldiers during visit to Poland

Story by 1st. Lt. Dutch Grove
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

WARSAW, Poland -- President Barack Obama met with 12 Illinois Army Guardsmen May 27 in Warsaw, Poland.

The Illinois National Guard Soldiers are part of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package from Springfield and returned from Poland during Memorial Day weekend.

The Illinois National Guard troops and Polish Soldiers trained together to respond to a chemical attack May 19 to 27 as part of the crisis management exercise EPIFAKTOR 2011 in Warsaw, Poland. Capt. Douglas Coop of Jacksonville, the State Partnership Program Director, said the Illinois National Guard received the request to support the president's visit May 24 and the 12 troops were ready to assist.

The troops were present as Obama laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Poland in honor of Memorial Day and the servicemembers killed in the line of duty. The monument stands tribute to the unknown Soldiers who gave their lives during conflicts in Poland's history.

Coop said the president talked to the Soldiers discussing the Illinois National Guard, their mission and the partnership between Illinois and Poland.

"The president took time to shake each of our hands and visit briefly, acknowledging that we're all from his home state," said Coop.

Since 1993 Illinois Army National Guard and Polish forces have trained together as part of the State Partnership Program. Illinois and Poland have conducted exercises, both in Illinois and Poland, for 18 years. Polish forces and Illinois National Guard troops have deployed together to both Iraq and Afghanistan during every Polish rotation into theater.



Submitted photo

President Barack Obama shakes hands with Staff Sgt. Sarah Roman of Evanston, with the 135th Chemical Company in Machesney Park, May 27 in Warsaw, Poland.

COMMAND FOCUS

More than just free pizza with Dr. Biden



Maj. Gen. William Enyart

FREE PIZZA! Now that's the way to start a column and get attention. I could have started it: Free Cubs tickets, but then I lose the Cardinals and White Sox fans, not to mention

the non-baseball fans.

How about : Read about the Illinois National Guard on the White House web site! Is that a better way to start a column? Okay, put the Guardian down, go to your trusty computer and visit this link: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/06/20/joining-forces-illinois-national-guard>

You say your Internet is down and the link doesn't work?

Let's try it this way: June 15 was an exciting day for 40 Illinois National Guard Soldiers and family members.

It wasn't just free pizza (courtesy of the USO at D'Agostino's near Wrigley

Field), or the free tickets to the Cubs-Brewers game. The real thrill of the day was eating free pizza and sitting at the game with Dr. Jill Biden, Second Lady of the United States.

A week before the 15th, I received a call from Dr. Biden's staff, which told me she was coming to Chicago to deliver a speech to a group of business executives. She also wanted to meet with families of deployed Illinois National Guard members to learn more about our family and servicemember support programs. By the way, I couldn't tell anyone about it due to security considerations.

Luckily, we have a tremendous family support program staff headed by Mr. Eric Murray, a retired Lt. Col. with virtually no notice they, with the assistance of the USO of Illinois CEO Alison Ruble, put together a family pizza party, a ball game at Wrigley Field, and found 40 of our Illinois National Guard family members who were ready, willing and able to show up. None of the families knew Dr. Biden would be our guest of honor.

Wednesday afternoon came, rain and pouring; freeways jammed; two-hour delays at O'Hare. We all know the saying, "If it ain't raining, we ain't training." We've got the party room at the restaurant, we've got our family programs staff, we've got the USO, we've got the Secret Service, we've got pitchers of soda, we've got breadsticks. What we don't have are family members, or Dr. Biden. Five o'clock, family members start to trickle in, talking about traffic jams on the freeways. Dr. Biden's staffers are texting back and forth. She's landed and on her way. It all came together.

Dr. Biden came to meet families. She came to listen. She came to learn and to carry our concerns, our stories, back to the leaders of our country. She came not only as the spouse of the man a heartbeat away from the President of the United States, but also as a National Guard mom. Her son, Beau Biden, deployed to Iraq as a National Guardsman. She understands, on a very personal level, our concerns, our worries, our joys and our pride as part of the National Guard

family.

The next day, after the ball game, she met with some of our community partners, our chaplains, our community college leaders, Soldiers who had deployed and their family members. That morning she wrapped her arms around a weeping 15-year-old girl who couldn't talk about the loneliness of having her father deployed to Afghanistan. She couldn't talk about the fear she felt when word came an Improvised Explosive Device had taken the lives of her father's teammates.

This young woman came to Illinois because of the national attention our family programs and our Soldier support programs have drawn. She came to Illinois because our Educational Outreach program is known as a "Best Practices" program. She came to Illinois because she is one of us, a member of our National Guard family.

Dr. Biden, thanks for coming and hurry back. We'll keep the coffee on.

PS: the Cubs lost.

PPS: Thanks also to the USO, Alison Ruble, and the Cubs organization.

Guardsmen uphold tradition, help protect communities



Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti

Halfway through 2011 and we've already had a lot of excitement for our troops. Nearly 500 of our Soldiers and Airmen were activated for the February snowstorm and approximately 500 servicemembers were put on State Active Duty for the May floods in southern Illinois.

This is who we are. This is where we came from. We are citizen-Soldiers who helped our communities in a time of need.

While most of us have deployed overseas during the last decade, we are looked at as protectors of our local communities. Just like the militia riding in on horses 200 years ago, to provide support to our local communities in distress. Without hesitation we set aside family issues, work/school concerns and personal problems to assist our neighbors when the call comes.

In case you were too busy saying "It's just my job" or "It's what I volunteered to do,"

your communities thank you and appreciate your sacrifice. You enlisted for a reason and missions like these have shown we have a purpose.

We all face challenging issues during our military career, but I encourage you to think about the reason you enlisted and the purpose you have served while in uniform. As your ETS draws closer, think about your importance in your local community. You are part of something bigger than yourself and part of a historical team dedicated to helping others.

Your continued selfless service helps your family, your neighbors, your community, your state and your nation. As you look forward in your life, look back at your military career and realize you ARE making a difference. It takes dedicated servicemembers like you to ensure our kids and grandkids, as well as our neighbors and friends feel safe and secure.

I want to personally thank each and every one of you and your families for what you do for the Illinois National Guard and this great country. You have protected this state and nation, and I know you will continue to build the path for our next generation. Thank you!

Airmen prove readiness



Brig. Gen. James Schroeder

Congratulations to the 126th Air refueling Wing upon their recent inspection. The HQ AMC/IG Team conducted an Ability to Survive and Operate (ATSO) evaluation, completing the 126th and 906th Air Refueling Squadron's (ARS) 11-04A ORI in June. The 126th earned "mission ready" for positioning the force, employing the force, and sustaining the force as a result of participation in Operation Odyssey Dawn. To complete this inspection, ASTO was evaluated IAW AFI 90-201 by the administration of an ATSO RODEO event when 150 Airmen demonstrated ATSO skills at four of seven randomly chosen stations. The 126th's performance was strong and their preparation was very evident. Overall, the Wing was graded satisfactory using the standard five-tier criteria.

They demonstrated the full potential of the active-associate vision during the Nuclear Operational Inspection. Overall, the performance of the Total Force team was excellent. Their preparation and positive attitudes were abundantly evident. The 126th generated six aircraft and crews accomplishing the objectives supporting their nuclear mission. The Wing senior staff and supervision provided superb leadership during this difficult, time-compressed scenario, and successfully responded to three fast-response scenarios. Wing plans personnel developed, briefed, and executed an effective Alert Aircraft Repositioning Plan. Twelve nuclear-certified aircrews earned an "outstanding" with 100 percent on emergency action command and control procedures tests, and 99.7

See **READINESS** page 5

Army Guard holds retirement briefing for Soldiers and federal technicians

I am happy to announce that we will finally have an M-Day, Pre-Retirement Briefing in the State of Illinois.

For as long as I can remember, we have always had pre-retirement briefings for our active guard reservists (AGR) and Federal Technician Soldiers but until now, we have never had one for our traditional Soldiers.

The target audience will be all M-Day Soldiers with 18 or more years of service, retired Soldiers, and retired Soldiers waiting to apply for retirement compensation (grey-area Soldiers). Spouses are encouraged to attend, but at their own expense.

Our plan is to have one briefing every quarter in different locations throughout the state.

M-Day Soldiers will be allowed to attend in a drill or split status with their commander's approval.

Information presented will include



CSM John Starbody

counseling on benefits available at retirement and the steps involved, from requesting to completing the retirement process. Also discussed will be TRICARE medical and dental options, Survivor Benefits Plan, ID cards, Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS), retired pay, Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (SGLI), Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI),

education, Veterans Affairs services and benefits.

Our first M-Day Pre-Retirement Briefing will be held on Oct. 8 at the Illinois Military Academy in Springfield, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank two major players in this endeavor, Master Sgt. Cox and Sgt. 1st Class Brogdon, both of whom have spent a lot of time and energy putting this program together. noncommissioned make it happen!

Illinois Air National Guard addresses enlisted issues

Do you ever wonder how the Air National Guard (ANG) addresses enlisted issues? It's simple and effective through the ANG's Enlisted Field Advisory Council (EFAC). EFAC's purpose is to

propose solutions, changes and other policy actions that impact enlisted Airmen. Senior enlisted leaders tackle a wide-ranging agenda with issues of concern that have percolated up through chains-of-command. EFAC may be described as the problem-solving element that is committed to improving the the health, morale and welfare of enlisted Airmen. As State Command Chief Master Sergeant, I serve as an "at large" member of the EFAC. Below are



CCMsgt. Aaron Gatterdam

some of the open issues discussed at EFAC:

Group Chief Program. EFAC is committed to the development of the Group Superintendent-Chief program once the new manning document issues have been worked out. There is currently no job description, no training or "how to" program.

BAH for Single Prior Service Members Without Dependents. Single prior service personnel without dependents lose BAH when in training status. This is seen as unfair to those individuals as they still may have housing in their local areas to maintain.

Airmen Outside Commuting Distances. Returning Airmen on seasoning days for almost a year

See **ISSUES** page 5

MEDREACH 11 builds lasting relationships

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

LILONGWE, Malawi -- Army Col. Marcus De Oliveira, the U.S. Army Africa chief of staff, closed the MEDREACH 11 medical humanitarian assistance exercise May 12, praising the participating U.S. and Malawi Defense Force troops who, "accomplished every exercise objective and achieved far more than we asked of them."

The exercise, which kicked off May 1, was the first MEDREACH for U.S. Army Africa and the first surgical readiness exercise the United States has conducted in Africa. Illinois National Guardsmen from the 404th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade out of Chicago, attended MEDREACH 11 as part of their annual training.

De Oliveira ticked off a list of accomplishments: classroom exchanges on combat lifesaving, tropic medicine and other medical techniques, outreach missions that provided medical and dental care to more than 3,000 Malawian civilians, and use of new sutureless techniques that restored sight to almost 400 people suffering from advanced cataracts.

During the closing ceremony at the Malawi Defense Force's Kamuzu Barracks, De Oliveira said the exercise couldn't be done everywhere. It succeeded in Malawi, he said, "because here we found a professional force that stood side by side with us in planning, and, most important, in working to help the citizens of Malawi."

But beyond these training, health and surgical benefits, De Oliveira said MEDREACH provided "one small, positive piece of a much larger program."

"The real benefit of this exercise is the mutual respect and understanding gained by two professional militaries that worked side by side and built lasting relationships," he said. "Those relationships will far outlast the short-term benefits of this exercise. ... This exercise is really a small facet of a wider, strong lasting partnership between our two countries."

Lisa Vickers, charge d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Malawi, called MEDREACH



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

Army Sgt. Maj. Shane Lammers, sergeant major of the Illinois National Guard's 404th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, stands in formation during closing ceremonies for Medreach 11 in Lilongwe, Malawi, May 12.

"two nations."

"Such cooperation is critical as we both work for a more peaceful, stable and prosperous world," she added.

Lessons learned during MEDREACH 11 will help ensure that both the Malawi Defense Force and U.S. military are better prepared "for any mission that may come their way," Vickers said.

This preparedness is critical, she said, "whether that mission be peacekeeping on the continent of Africa, providing

humanitarian assistance to a neighboring country in their time of need, responding to a natural disaster here at home in Malawi, or yes, maybe even combat."

The U.S. government has long been a proud partner with the Malawian military in preparing for all of these missions, Vickers said. "And it is my hope," she added, "that the training gained in MEDREACH 2011 will be useful in any situation in which the [Malawi Defense Force] might find itself engaged."

Brig. Gen. Paul Phiri, the Malawi Defense Force's director of training, said the benefits of MEDREACH 11 will assist his troops as they conduct peacekeeping operations and respond to disasters and crises in the region.

"This joint exercise has increased the understanding of the two armed forces' capacity and capability in such operations," he said. "I believe there is a lot more we can do together. ... The impact of these exercises is far-reaching."

183rd Civil Engineers build hope in Navajo Nation

Story by Maj. Brad Leighton
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

SAINT MICHAELS, Ariz. -- The Airmen of the 183rd Civil Engineer Squadron, 183rd Fighter Wing in Springfield work nine to 12 hours each day in the desert plains. But despite hard work and fiery temperatures that would wilt most, at the 183rd's work site you hear playful bantering and laughter amid the banging hammers and saw buzz.

"When I was in Afghanistan, we were helping people -- and that was good," said Senior Airman Leonard Avery of Williamsville. "To be helping people here in the United States - it just means so much more."

Approximately 35 members of the

squadron helped construct a 3,200-square-foot adult programs building for the St. Michaels Association for Special Education in the heart of Navajo Nation from June 18 to 30. The 183rd was the sixth of eight annual training rotations to work on the building this year. It is scheduled to open in August.

The facility is part of a five-year Department of Defense-sponsored, Air National Guard-conducted Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) project now in the second year. IRT projects train troops in their military skills while helping communities. With the Navajo project, the non-profit association pays for supplies and materials. The Department of Defense, through the Air Guard, provides the labor, tools, equipment, management, building plans and oversight -- worth \$10.1 million.



U.S. Army photo by Maj. Brad Leighton, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Members of the 183rd Civil Engineer Squadron, 183rd Fighter Wing in Springfield, spread concrete in the Arizona sun while constructing a sidewalk to the Navajo Nation's Adult Program Administration and Daily Life Skills building near St. Michaels, Ariz., June 28.



Submitted photo

Pfc. Stephanie Pyles of Cerro Gordo with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 634th Brigade Support Battalion in Sullivan, carries an El Salvadorian child as Chaplain (Capt.) Vincent Lambert, of Chicago and with the Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery in Chicago looks on in El Salvador.

Illinois National Guard ministry team travels to El Salvador

Story by Chaplain (Capt.) Vince Lambert
2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery

EL SALVADOR -- Chaplain (Capt.) Vincent Lambert, of Chicago and with the Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery in Chicago, and Pfc. Stephanie Pyles of Cerro Gordo with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 634th Brigade Support Battalion in Sullivan, travelled to El Salvador May 7 to 21 for rotation six of Operation Beyond the Horizon (BTH).

BTH was a mission that included various branches of the U.S. military, such as the

U.S. Navy Seabees, U.S. Marines and the Army National Guard from Illinois, North Carolina, Texas and California. The engineering mission built four new school buildings and a soccer field. Additionally, free medical treatment was provided to the local population.

Lambert and Pyles provided religious and spiritual care to the military personnel on ground.

In addition to the ministry provided to the military personnel, the Illinois ministry team distributed school supplies to local school children and Bibles to local churches in the area.

Specialized Army unit trains, deploys with Polish military counterparts

Story by 1st Lt. Ryan Bivins
Bilateral Embedded Support Team A8

MARSEILLES -- Bilateral Embedded Staff Team A8 (BEST A8) continued the Illinois Army National Guard's partnership with Poland by inviting five Polish officers to train with the team during annual training (AT) May 9 to conduct pre-mobilization training. The Soldiers will deploy to Afghanistan with the Polish 15th Mechanized Brigade in June.

Not only did the Polish officers conduct every facet of training with the team, but they also qualified on U.S. weapons systems and flew in a Black Hawk helicopter. In return, Polish Soldiers and showed Illinois Soldiers how to play soccer during physical training.

Polish Major Slawomir Wozniak expressed his gratitude to the team for the opportunity to train with BEST A8 and stated that he looks forward to working together in Poland and Afghanistan. 1st Lt. Anthony Keel of Grayslake also said

he is looking forward to working with his Polish counterparts.

"I really enjoyed working with our Polish counterparts in Marseilles because they were easy to get along with and were great team members for the Army Warrior Tasks." Keel said. "I'm looking forward to working with them again this summer in Poland."

During the team's AT, the Soldiers completed several warrior tasks, which included shooting, moving, communicating, adapting and surviving. This training included basic and advanced rifle marksmanship, individual and team movement techniques, land navigation, improvised explosive device training, entry control points and vehicle searches, Humvee roll over training, combat life saver training and several other training tasks.

"The training in Marseilles was challenging and enjoyable," said Sgt. Josh Carlile of Bourbonnais. "As an infantry Soldier it was nice to do the basic soldiering skills that are necessary for us to be successful while deployed to Afghanistan."

The team has worked together for approximately six months, but AT was the first time the Soldiers accomplished tasks as a team.

"Our AT was successful because it showed our strengths as individual warriors and leads to our cohesion as a combat ready unit," said Col. Thomas Purple, Jr., of Rochester and the team's commander. "We took on challenges and learned that we need to stick together to be fully successful."

A deployment ceremony was held for these Soldiers June 21 at the Illinois Military Academy at Camp Lincoln in Springfield.

They are scheduled to continue training at Camp Atterbury, Ind., and train in Poland for two months before deploying to the eastern part of Afghanistan.



Submitted photo

An Illinois National Guard Soldier conducts training in preparation for an upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

Enyart reappointed as adjutant general

Story by Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD -- Gov. Pat Quinn announced the reappointment of Maj. Gen. William L. Enyart as the 37th Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard April 26. Enyart was previously appointed in 2007 and in 2009.

As the Adjutant General, Enyart will continue to advise the governor on military matters and to oversee the Illinois Department of Military Affairs. Enyart is also the senior officer commanding both the Illinois Army and Air National Guard. He also works closely with the leadership of the National Guard Bureau and the Departments of the Army and Air Force in Washington, D.C.

"Over the past four years, Maj. Gen. Enyart has led the Illinois National Guard through many significant challenges, including its largest overseas deployment since World War II, two state activations and direction of several important programs such as the State Partnership Program with Poland and the Lincoln's Challenge Academy Program," said Governor Quinn. "I am pleased that Maj. Gen. Enyart will continue to lead the Guard during these ongoing operations."



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

Maj. Gen. William Enyart, Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard of Belleville, is sworn in as the Adjutant General by Judge Ron Spears of Taylorville.

Guardsmen return from deployments

■ Nearly 440 Army Guardsmen return from yearlong deployment to Egypt



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Chasity Johnson, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 123rd Field Artillery Regiment, arrive to a homecoming ceremony in their honor, May 14 in Milan.

Story by Spc. Chasity Johnson
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

MILAN -- The Illinois Army National Guard held ceremonies May 14 in Milan, Galesburg and Macomb, to welcome home approximately 440 Soldiers who spent a year serving in Sinai, Egypt.

The sky was overcast, rain was drizzling and the temperature was approximately 50 degrees, but that didn't discourage family, friends and supporters of the servicemembers from attending the outdoor event in Milan.

"I'm so excited to see my son that I can hardly stand it," said Debbie England of Milan, mother of 1st Lt. Drew England of Milan, with Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 123rd Field Artillery in Milan.

"We are so proud of him and what he does," said England, as she stood smiling in the rain surrounded by members of her family who were holding colorful signs in honor of their Soldier's arrival home. "We're excited to welcome him back."

The Soldiers mobilized in May 2010 as a part of the Multinational

Force and Observers (MFO), the international peacekeeping force oversees the terms of the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.

"My Soldiers were observing, reporting and verifying the compliance of the treaty," said Lt. Col. Maurice Rochelle of Flossmoor, 2nd Battalion, 123rd Field Artillery commander.

A sergeant in the 123rd said he enjoyed the opportunity to serve overseas with Soldiers he enlisted during his time as a recruiter, but he wasn't prepared for the emotional toll the separation from his family would have on him.

"It was really hard being away from my family," said Master Sgt. Brian Habel of Milan, with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 123rd Field Artillery in Milan. "I never knew how hard it was on other people who have deployed until I did it myself. Being greeted by my family at this ceremony is all I could have asked for."

Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti of Springfield, the Assistant Adjutant General-Army, Illinois National Guard, was in attendance at the ceremony in Milan to greet Soldiers and their families.

"Every time I participate in a welcome home ceremony it makes me proud to see all of the families come together," said Celletti. "It didn't matter that it was a rainy, cloudy day. The families were overjoyed as they greeted their families."

■ Springfield unit returns from Afghanistan

Story by Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD -- Approximately 20 Illinois Army Guardsmen who served in Afghanistan as part of an embedded training team returned home April 22.

Bilateral Embedded Staff Team (BEST) A6 mobilized in July 2010 and deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The team joined the Polish Land Forces, working as a joint unit throughout the mobilization. The Soldiers were selected for the mission based on their unique training and skills.

While assisting the Afghan government to gain legitimacy and conduct security operations throughout the province, BEST A6 provided key support and mentorship to each staff section of the Polish brigade, enabling the battle groups to conduct more than 3,000 combat patrols and 145 named operations.

VISIT

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wellbeing of servicemembers and their families. In attendance for the meeting were Maj. Gen. William Enyart of Belleville, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard, his wife retired Judge Annette Eckert, community college faculty members, high school teachers, clergymen, Illinois National Guard family service program leaders and Illinois Army Guard Soldiers and their children.

"As I have said in the past, the Illinois National Guard is a three-legged stool," said Enyart. "One leg is the Soldier, the other leg is the employer and the third leg is the family. If you don't have all three of those legs that stool is going to topple over."

Each person at the meeting had the chance to explain to Biden the challenges they encounter when dealing with military families. Servicemembers and their children also had the opportunity to share their stories of adjustment issues they experienced after of deployment.

The attendees explained the effectiveness of the programs that are in place for the troops, the plans to expound on these programs and how to create new ones.

"If the family is not taken care of, the Soldier is thinking about things other than his job," explained Enyart. "He is worried about things other than getting the mission done."

At the close of her visit, Biden said she was thoroughly impressed with the Soldiers in the Illinois National Guard.

"The Illinois National Guard is really showing some leadership in their programs and I think America should really be proud of what they are doing," said Biden.

Airman supports shuttle flight

Story by Tech. Sgt. Johnathon Orrell
National Guard Bureau Public Affairs

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, Fla. -- Air National Guard members from Illinois, New York and Virginia were on hand for the final launch of NASA's space shuttle Endeavour May 16, to provide front-line medical and emergency rescue support in the event of an incident, said Air Force Col. Joe Maslar of Chicago.

Maslar, who is the chief of aerospace medicine for the Illinois Air National Guard's 183rd Fighter Wing, volunteered with Air Force Col. Frank Yang, the Virginia National Guard state air surgeon, as part of the emergency response team.

"Every time there is a launch two pararescue jumpers and one flight doctor pre-position themselves between Cape Kennedy and the shuttle landing runway," he said. "If there is some accident or the shuttle has to come back, we then respond on a helicopter and provide initial on-scene triage support."

The New York Air National Guard provided Guard members from the Eastern Air Defense Sector to enforce the Federal Aviation Administration's temporary no-fly zone that was established around the Kennedy Space Center.

"The space shuttle launch is one of the special missions that EADS takes great pride in conducting," said Air Force Col. John P. Bartholf, EADS commander. "Enforcing the no-fly restriction ensures a safe, successful launch and supports [North American Aerospace Defense Command's] rapid response capability."

EADS is a joint force of New York Air National Guard members and a Canadian forces detachment.

They support NORAD's integrated warning and attack assessment missions and the U.S. Northern Command's homeland defense mission and are responsible for air sovereignty and counter-air operations over the eastern United States.

Before the mission, Yang and Maslar,

who has been on the medical team for six launches, landings and exercises, had to go through an initial two-week course to familiarize them with performing emergency treatment on astronauts.

"We go to Patrick Air Force Base in Florida where we learn space physiology, medical considerations for people who have been in space for a long time, the hazardous material complications that come with the shuttle and we learn how to take someone out of a space suit during an emergency situation," Maslar said.

They also trained on the other specialized equipment and medication they would need to use in the event of an emergency.

Even though he would be dealing with astronauts, Maslar, who is an emergency room doctor in Chicago, and a flight doctor in the Air National Guard, feels that both of his jobs tie in perfectly with a mission of this type.

"As a flight doc I deal with high altitude flight, space medicine and beyond ... so that extrapolates into the normal aviation experience," he said. "As my civilian job, since I working in an ER and a trauma center, those are the kinds of things you would expect to see if any traumatic incident happened."

Maslar feels the Guard is a good fit for this mission since the people who volunteer are doctors in the civilian sector and they can rely on their full-time skills to perform at a high level.

As a member of this historic launch Maslar is trying to enjoy his experiences and feels honored to have been a part of this.

"It's a great opportunity with so much history," he said. "Space travel is the pinnacle of human achievement with the most complicated machine created by man, and even though we are just a small response package in the bigger schemes of things ... it's a privilege to be part of the mission."

The space shuttle Endeavour's 25th launch since 1992, which is officially known as Space Transportation System-134, is scheduled to return home from the International Space Station June 1. After it returns it will be an exhibit for the California Science Center in Los Angeles.



Submitted photo

Bathed in xenon lights, space shuttle Endeavour moves along the crawlerway from the vehicle assembly building to Launch Pad 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, Fla., March 11.

Soldier's new invention may save Army millions

Story by Sgt. Jillian Wiens
33rd Military Police Battalion

BLOOMINGTON -- Chief Warrant Officer (2) Christopher Drozs of Clinton, the maintenance shop chief for the 33rd Military Police Battalion in Bloomington, noticed a malfunction with the side mirrors on the Humvee Series 1-1/4 ton while preparing to deploy for Iraq in 2006.

"I wanted to fix the problem before deploying, but there just wasn't enough time," said Drozs.

The side mirrors on the armored Humvee make it difficult to view the back of the vehicle as well as its surroundings, said Drozs. Maneuvering the vehicle becomes a difficult task, as well as a dangerous one. Also, the current side mirrors vibrate during vehicle operations, making seeing objects behind the vehicle difficult even when in the view of the mirrors.

Drozs said he had an idea to mount a mirror to sit on the front of the HMV that makes it possible to see almost completely around the vehicle. He took a concave mirror and attached it to brackets from the M35A-2-2 1/2 ton truck. This mirror subdues the vibrations and allows the driver to view most of the surroundings.

Drozs's idea was submitted to the Army Supply and Maintenance Assessment Review Team (SMART) in May of 2011. Of the seven-step process to review ideas, his proposal is on step five. If accepted, the mirror could be placed on all Humvees in the Army.

The review team members told Drozs that they are excited about his idea and are



Submitted photo

Chief Warrant Officer (2) Christopher Drozs of Clinton, the maintenance shop chief for the 33rd Military Police Battalion in Bloomington, stands beside a Humvee that he attached a concave mirror with brackets from the M35A-2-2 1/2 ton truck for better visibility. Drozs submitted his idea to the Army Supply and Maintenance Assessment Review Team and is on step five of seven.

planning on sending a team to Bloomington soon to review his design. If adopted, the team estimates Drozs could save the Army more than \$1 million in design work and perhaps much more by using an item that

may still be stock.

The SMART program can pay rewards for good ideas, but Drozs said he is more concerned about preventing motor-vehicle accidents than receiving monetary awards.

Readiness

■ From page 2

percent average on the aircrew general knowledge test. Also, command post controllers earned an "outstanding" 99.6 percent on the emergency action test. Security Forces also earned an "outstanding" rating. Finally, 126th and 906th Airmen earned nine IG team awards and six individual awards.

The 126th and 906th received a single, combined ORI grade, which demonstrated operational functionality and strong total force Integration. The combined team is ready and capable to perform its nuclear and global mobility mission.

My hat is off to the 126th. Job well done! In October is the 182 Airlift Wing ORI. They put in a tremendous effort in Volk field in preparation for the inspection and I am confident they will remain true to their high standards. The 183rd Fighter Wing recently had the ribbon cutting for their new CIRF mission. It's an upgrade for the 183rd and the remodeled hanger (P-1) looks great, too. Also, the 183rd Air Operations Group (AOG) has made great strides filling officer positions for critical AFSCs, which we all need to work toward 100 percent manning. Thanks for all you do for our organization day in and day out.

ISSUES

■ From page 2

and live outside the commuting distance can't get any form of relief which leads to undue stress.

Prior Service Sister Service PME Requirements. This course is intended for new enlistees into the ISAF from sister services who have already completed initial entry (basic training) with their sister service. This course orients prior sister service members to Air Force practices, policies, and procedures and provides limited initial medical, financial, clothing, and records processing support.

Enlisted PME Distance Learning Refresh. 90 percent of enlisted Air Guardsmen receive professional military education via distance learning; 10 percent are afforded resident opportunities.

-Course 00001 provides Airman Leadership School via paper-based career development course (CDC) style format last updated 2001

-Course 00009 provides Noncommissioned Officer Academy via paper-based CDC-style format last updated 2003

-Course 00014 provides Senior NCOA via Web-based voice-over-slide format last updated 2007.

-ALS and NCOA are used only by Air Reserve Component (ARC) Airmen while SNCOA is used by the total Air Force.

-Paper courses were developed using Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) personnel and man-days - IMA authorizations were deleted under PBD-720.

Replacing the Current Initial Issue Cold Weather Boot with a Composite Toed Cold Weather Boot. Look at removing the "MukLuk" boot and replace with the Belleville 675ST Cold Weather safety toed boot as an issued item. Units would no longer have to look for outside contracts for purchasing large quantities of Belleville boots that could be issued in basic training.

Mandatory EPRs for all Enlisted Airmen. EPRs can help when competing with jobs by providing a history of service and selective retention.

EPP for First Sergeants. If First Sergeants, other than the ANG Functional Manager, are allowed to EPP tenures could be affected.

CCAF Requirement for Promotion to E8 and E9. EFAC determined that a CCAF degree should be required for promotion to E8 and E9.

As you can see, EFAC's work is designed to translate to measurable improvement in an Airman's job. If you have enlisted issues to be addressed by EFAC, contact your Squadron First Sergeant or Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant. We continually seek input from the "54."

Guardsmen fight floods, save cities

450 Soldiers, Airmen answer the call to duty

Approximately 450 Illinois National Guard Soldiers and Airmen were ordered to state active duty beginning on April 26. In nine days, the Soldiers and Airmen helped evacuate residents from flooded neighborhoods, patched numerous levee boils, transported historic public records and artifacts out of public buildings threatened by the flood waters, assisted local law enforcement and the Illinois Department of Transportation to control traffic and close roads in flooded areas, filled sandbags and built sandbag barriers to protect critical infrastructure.

The Soldiers and Airmen deployed used more than 100 vehicles and six helicopters to transport people and sandbags.

These are their stories...

Water supply in trouble Guard, volunteers react

Story by Sgt. Charlie Helmholt
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MURPHYSBORO -- Illinois National Guard members, along with local volunteers and the Jackson County Sheriff's Department came together April 30 to ensure that the city of Murphysboro would not be left without a very important resource; drinking water.

The water and sewer treatment facility of the Department of Public Works in Murphysboro is responsible for developing and maintaining water and sewer service to nearly 9,000 city residents.

The facility was cut off from the rest of the town after flood waters rose to dangerous levels.

The plant itself is located on a small hill, but the rising flood water making its way up the hill to mix with treated water was not even the immediate threat. Rather, a power generator and transformer that sit at the bottom of the hill were in danger of becoming covered by the rising waters.

The station provides services for the whole city; if the generator is lost it cannot provide the power to the pumps needed to pump water to the city, said Jim Stewart an operator foreman at the facility.

A team consisting of 14 Illinois Army



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

Sandbags are flown in by a CH-47 Chinook helicopter assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment in Peoria, and crew in Murphysboro April 30.

National Guardsmen, from the 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment (HHC, 2/130 Inf. Regt.) based in Marion, joined with plant workers, and local volunteers to construct a wall of sandbags around the power equipment to hold the water at bay.

The Illinois guardsmen and volunteers were taken by a Sheriff Department's boat to the treatment plant.

Sandbags had to be flown in, and were done so by a CH-47 Chinook helicopter assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment in Peoria, and crew who transported four pallet loads from Marion High School to the site.

The Soldiers were more than ready to come out here and help these communities, said Sgt. Brad Duclos with Headquarters

and Headquarters Company (HHC), 2/130 Inf. Regt. and a resident of Herrin, Illinois.

Duclos, as is the case with many of the activated guardsmen, is from a nearby town also seeing flooding.

"I think a lot of the guys here can really take ownership of this project, every day when we go out I see three or four people I know, and we get to convey the message that we're here to help," said Sgt. Randy Frank with HHC, 2/130 Inf. Regt. from Carterville.

"The river came up so quick on us, there was no way we could get anything in," said Stewart. "Without the volunteers and the Guard we could have never done it that's as plain as I can put it."

Soldiers, Metropolis residents work together, save the day

Story by Spc. Christopher Garibay
33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team

METROPOLIS -- Metropolis, 'The home of Superman,' a city threatened by flood waters from the Ohio River saw more than one hero working to save the day.

Residents worked in conjunction with Illinois National Guardsmen assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment in Marion to protect their town as waters rose.

A series of storms caused flooding across several southern Illinois counties, prompting Gov. Pat Quinn to activate more than 450 Illinois National Guard Soldiers and Airmen.

The 2nd Bn., 130th Inf. Regt. conducted evacuation notifications in Cairo May 1, and are now in charge of sandbagging operations in Metropolis. The Soldiers have long hours in difficult conditions.

Spc. Forrest Feicho of Granite City, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), 2nd Bn., 130th Inf. Regt. in Marion said the unit had to endure cold and rainy weather, but still managed to fill thousands of sand bags to hand out to residents so they can protect their homes from flood waters.

As the rain and cold conditions continue, so does the effort of the Soldiers, Airmen and residents, said Staff Sgt. Tyler R. Johnson of Vienna, with

HHC, 2nd Bn. 130th Inf. Regt.

"Our Soldiers have put out about 22,000 sandbags yesterday and expect to put out another 16,000 today," said Johnson. "Even though we expect to put out close to 40,000 sandbags, we couldn't have done it without the support of the community."

"I'm pleased with my Soldiers and the output," said Johnson. "Morale is very good, and being able to see the civilian population turn out and come to help has been great."

Johnson further explained that he was impressed with the level of support from the residents of Metropolis. They had the greatest show of support and the unit is happy to see volunteers come to help, he said.

"If we can't come out here to help people save their town, their home and businesses, then who's going to help my town when I'm gone?," he said.

Feicho stressed the importance of the Illinois National Guard's dual duty, serving both the needs of the state and the needs of the country.

The 2nd Bn., 130th Inf. Regt. deployed to Afghanistan from 2008 to 2009 as part of the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

"As the National Guard, we have a dual mission: to help here at home, and out of country," said Feicho. "It's long hours, but we work as a team and come together as a family to get the job done."

Air Force keeps up lines of communication

Story by Sgt. Charlie Helmholt
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MARION -- As the Illinois Emergency Management Agency to lead in operations during the flood several agencies throughout the state were called up. Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn activated more than 450 Illinois National Guardsmen to help relief efforts. Illinois Army and Air National Guard units were on the ground helping and support the efforts of IEMA.

The Contingency Response Communication System from the 126th Fighter Wing, Communications Flight based in Scott Air Force Base, brought as a contingency to augment communication equipment for the 2011 southern Illinois flood response.

The CRCS was called to the Unified Area Command in Marion, Illinois to assist the Illinois Emergency Management Agency with flood relief to southern Illinois.



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert Fafoglia, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Staff Sgt. Chris R. Kruse (left) and Tech. Sgt. Justin M. Wholford from 126th Air Refueling Wing, Communications Flight in Scott Air Force Base, secure an adjustable antenna and camera extension arm to the side of a humvee.



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

Soldiers with the 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment in Marion work with residents in Metropolis to help protect homes and businesses.

Family program representative places service before self

Story submitted by Yellow Ribbon Program

SPRINGFIELD -- During the flooding that occurred in southern Illinois in May, Amanda Staszak worked tirelessly, often staying past her shift at the armory and taking her work home so she could continue monitoring and reacting to the latest updates from Camp Lincoln.

During this period, all other state family program personnel resources had been previously allocated to the state family conference in Chicago. This left Amanda to work almost single-handedly, keeping in constant contact with those in the worst areas to ensure they were safe. She was a great source of encouragement to Soldiers, families and family readiness group leaders.

Soldiers train with ultimate munitions

Story by Sgt. Adam Fischman
Joint Forces Headquarters Public Affairs

MARSEILLES -- Twenty-six Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers engaged one another with the latest Man-Marker training systems during an instructor course designed to educate and familiarize Soldiers to safely and successfully train their own individual units April 28 at Marseilles Training Center (MTC).

What was expected to be only 14 Soldiers turned out to be 26 from various units and job skills. The course allowed Soldiers from all over the state to experience the most realistic training with the lowest injury risk. The knowledge will be brought back to those Soldier's units.

"My goal here is to make training better for Soldiers," said Staff Sgt. Andrew Prentice of Streator, the MTC training aids, devices, simulators and simulations (TADSS) coordinator. "With this new state-of-the-art equipment available, there is no doubt we are accomplishing exactly

that."

The course included classroom training on the technology and benefits of the Ultimate Training Munitions (UTM).

Soldiers were introduced to was a conversion system for all of their actual weapons. The kit converts the service M-16 and M-4, M-42 9mm pistol and M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon into a non-lethal training device.

It is much more sophisticated and realistic than paintball. The conversion kit completely replaces the bolt, removing each weapon's ability to fire live rounds.

The close combat mission capability kits (CCMCK) also keeps the weapons cleaner than using traditional blanks because they do not produce carbon buildup. They are also to be operated

clean and dry without lubricants.

Parking lot-sized areas of 75 meters in almost any location become safe training environments with the UTM rounds. There are no longer the same 3100-meter restrictions and live-round regulations that

govern where training can be held.

"It is difficult to name just one or two benefits of training with UTM rounds," said UTM Master Trainer Eric Seto. "If you look at all the (military occupation skills) throughout this group, there is a variety of backgrounds that range from administration to Infantry Ranger and everything else between. Once this equipment is in their hands, they all get excited about it because it's so simple, easy to use, realistic to train with."

Following the classroom session Soldiers were introduced to the Military Operation in Urban Terrain (MOUT) site, where the arriving convoy of Soldiers was unexpectedly hit by a simulated Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attack.

"It definitely surprised them," said Prentice, "The more realistic, concussive feelings of something going off even makes you want to put your head down at certain times. Soldiers in training don't expect to see the visual as well as the explosive sound experience attributed to a simulated explosion."

With the Pacific Coast Systems and 155/2 joint artillery shells, the sound, pressure, and visuals of an IED explosion can be simulated accurately. After the explosion, Prentice held a hands-on course allowing Soldiers to set up these simulated IED's on their own so they could learn and, in turn, train their own units how to set up these lanes.

They could be detonated a number of ways whether it be by pressure plate - using a vehicles weight on the ground to set it off - or simply by a remote switch.

In addition to the simulated IED course, Soldiers were also given the hands-on training on of the UTM course, where they engaged one another in a "shoot and be shot" session with the man-marker rounds followed by firing of additional weapons and movement-to-contact drills.

The man-marker round fires a small cosmetic wax projectile that is color coated in red, blue, or yellow to mark its target.

However, in addition to the colored mark the round leaves, it also includes a sting of light pain with each contact to the body.

"It actually hurts," said Staff Sgt. Brandon Patchett of Oak Park, the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of training with Troop C, 2nd Squadron, 106th Cavalry Regiment from Aurora. "The pain aspect of this technology allows the training to be much more realistic because Soldiers are taking cover when they need to rather than engaging the enemy without care of becoming engaged themselves."

The shoot-and-be-shot scenario allowed Soldiers to actually understand that there is no mistaking when a Soldier gets shot.

"When a Soldier gets shot, they know it," said executive officer of range operations 1st Lt. William Hamby of Marseilles. "Questionability of whether you are hit or not is eliminated because there is definitely a pain response that changes the behavior of Soldiers during training."

Man-on-man encounters brought the day to a new level of realism. Natural survival instincts were brought to life as each Soldier avoided getting hit by man-marker rounds. Soldiers were seeking cover, changing magazines and using verbal and non-verbal communication to engage their opponents in the MOUT site.

At the end of the day after the adrenaline simmered, the Illinois National Guardsmen were excited about bringing their newly acquired training back to their units. With the knowledge of the new equipment and assets available to all Illinois National Guard units training opportunities were endless.

"All the soldiers that were here from all the varying units worked extremely well together to get this done," said Hamby. "They gave the utmost respect to the instructors were attentive, asked questions, and did exactly what they needed to do to get the most they could out of the training, and that was neat to see."



Photo by U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Adam Fischman, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

Illinois Guardsman Staff Sgt. Matthew Madiar of Bensenville, Troop C, 2nd Squadron, 106th Cavalry Regiment targets the enemy's location during movement to contact drills while testing new man-marker training rounds April 28 at Marseilles Training Center.

Guardsman recognized nationally for care, compassion

Story by 2nd Lt. April Hawes
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. -- In May, Capt. Elizabeth Roxworthy travelled to Washington, D.C., with her family to receive the nationally-recognized General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award. Her detailed nomination packet showed she earned the award for her care and compassion for her Soldiers, which continued even after the award presentation.

Before they left the nation's capitol, she and her fiancé, Maj. Wyatt Bickett, both of Lake in the Hills, went to Arlington National Cemetery to visit the grave of fallen Illinois National Guardsman Staff

Sgt. Kevin Grieco of Bartlett. Roxworthy never met Grieco nor was she in his chain of command. She does, however, wear the same uniform and said it was fitting to find his headstone and pay respect to him.

Along with Grieco, who was killed in action Oct. 27, 2008 while in Afghanistan with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery in Sycamore, there was another fallen Illinois National Guardsman on Roxworthy's mind: Sgt. Simone Robinson of University Park, who died March 1, 2009 after injuries sustained in Afghanistan with Company G, 634th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) in Crestwood.

"Throughout this entire process, the one person I think of daily is Sgt. Simone

Robinson. Her sacrifice, and the sacrifice of all of our fallen comrades, is what really drives me to be a better person and leader for my Soldiers," said Roxworthy, who is assigned to Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 634th BSB in Sullivan. "It's hard to put into words, but her sacrifice changed my life more than anyone will ever know and this award is a tribute to Simone."

After a tour in Iraq from 2006 to 2007, Roxworthy was assigned as the rear commander of Company G, 634th and served in Crestwood while Robinson and the majority of the company deployed to Afghanistan with the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT). After Robinson was injured, Roxworthy supported her and her family until she ultimately passed away at Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas.

"What sets Capt. Roxworthy apart is that she truly cares about her Soldiers and her unit," said Col. Paul Hastings of Saint Charles and 33rd IBCT commander. "Her compassionate and involved approach to Soldier care is the foundation of who she is."

Hastings, who also won the General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award in 1996, said this was evident again in November 2010 when she spent Thanksgiving Day at Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital in Chicago. She was at the bedside of Sgt. Emiliano Perez, also with Company G. Perez was hospitalized due to a non-combat related condition and passed away the next day.

Roxworthy found out she won the award March 1, which recognizes company grade commissioned and warrant officers who demonstrate duty, honor and country; the same values MacArthur stood for. Roxworthy is the first female from Illinois to earn this award.

She was first nominated for the award by the then 634th BSB commander Lt. Col. Eric Little, of Springfield and director of property and fiscal operations for the Illinois National Guard. He said Roxworthy's dedication to Soldiers, their families and her community is above her rank as a junior officer.

"The national award shows that what we nominated her for was true," Little said. "Her dedication and desire to ensure her Soldiers at the company level were taken care of was instrumental to the company's success."

Once winners are announced, they travel to Washington, D.C., for the presentation of the award by the Chief of the Staff of the Army. Roxworthy had the opportunity to be presented the award twice, by two different Chiefs of Staff.

Roxworthy was first presented the award at the Illinois Army National Guard's Senior Leadership Conference April 30 in Chicago by, now retired, Gen. George Casey. She then was officially presented the award during a ceremony at the Pentagon by Gen. Martin Dempsey, Chief of Staff of the Army. During the presentation she also met Lt. Gen. Raymond Carpenter, acting director of the Army National Guard.

Along with Bickett, who is assigned to Headquarters, Headquarters Company of the 33rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion in Machesney Park, Roxworthy's parents and niece attended the ceremony and met Dempsey. Hastings and Lt. Col. Charles Kitson, of Springfield and current 634th BSB commander, also attended.

"It was such a wonderful experience; one that I will never forget. It was really neat to be able to bring my family there with me," Roxworthy said. "Everyone really paid tribute to recognizing us for the award; everyone from the battalion leadership all the way to the Army Chief of Staff."



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

Gen. George Casey, then Chief of Staff of the Army, presents Capt. Elizabeth Roxworthy of Lake in the Hills and with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 634th Brigade Support Battalion in Sullivan, with the General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award April 30 in Chicago.

Father and son fly high with the Illinois Army Guard

Story by Mike Chrisman
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

PLAINFIELD -- Military flying is in the blood of the Kephart family. Illinois Army National Guard Capt. Peter Kephart of Plainfield is a fourth generation military aviator. His father retired from the Army in 1998 as a chief warrant officer (4). His grandfather retired from the Air Force as a lieutenant colonel. His great-grandfather also retired from the military. Kephart also has an uncle who is a retired colonel from the Air Force and another uncle who retired as a chief warrant officer (3) from the

Army. All of the Kephart servicemembers spent their careers as aviators.

Peter, the commander of Company B, 106th Aviation in Chicago, said the family ties to the military made the decision for him to join the Illinois Army National Guard easy.

"Being raised by a chief warrant officer (4), it was a foregone conclusion," Peter said. "I respected his passion and mastery of the aviation craft and actively pursued the military in order to emulate his success and tradition."

Peter's father, Marcus Kephart of Thayer, Kan., who also served with the Illinois

Army National Guard's Company B, 106th Aviation in Chicago, was a UH-1 Huey pilot in Vietnam. He recently concluded a 40-year career as an aviator retiring from the Army in 1998 and retiring from United Airlines as a Boeing 767 captain in 2008. Marcus said it was his dad who gave him advice that made him so successful.

"I clawed my way up from the bottom, taking my dad's advice," Marcus said. "He told me to take the jobs nobody else wants and eventually you will have the job everybody else wants. I was happy to retire as a captain flying Boeing 767s."

Marcus said he made up his mind that he would join the military before he was in kindergarten. He said it was family tradition and a heritage of aviators who influenced his interest in the military.

"I wanted to serve my country like my father did," Marcus said. "My father flew B-17s in World War II and his father flew balloons in World War I. My great uncle also fought in the Civil War."

While an aviation career was in the air, Marcus and Peter both said no one pushed them to join the military or fly an aircraft. Their biggest motivator to be successful was themselves.

"There is only self-induced pressure," Marcus said. "Every flight you try to make your best. After 40 years and 27,000 plus hours, I'm still looking for the perfect flight."

Peter admits he is very competitive and works hard to be the best.

"Self preservation is one hell of a motivating factor," Peter said. "Army aviators are generally type-A personalities. Inherent to that, they possess the self motivation and discipline required to be successful aviators."

Peter and Marcus have both deployed overseas during their military careers. During his 15-year career, Peter has



Photo submitted by Capt. Peter Kephart

Retired Chief Warrant Officer (4) Marcus Kephart of Thayer, Kan., served in Vietnam in 1971. Kephart was a member of the Illinois Army National Guard's Company B, 106th Aviation in Chicago.

deployed once, serving in Kosovo in 2008. During a career that spanned four decades, Marcus deployed to Southeast Asia in 1971 and served various duties in Germany, Honduras and Panama. He was also activated to support the relief effort during the 1993 floods.

The most influential person in many peoples' lives is their parents. Peter and Marcus both admit their fathers helped mold them into the person they are today.

"The best career advice I received from my father, is the same advice he received from his father: Live to retirement," Peter recalled. "As your career as an aviator progresses, that phrase commands greater meaning. Living to retirement means that you have successfully accomplished all of your missions. It means that you did your job right."



Photo submitted by Capt. Peter Kephart

Capt. Peter Kephart of Plainfield (right), commander Company B, 106th Aviation in Chicago and his father Marcus Kephart of Thayer, Kan., a retired UH-1 Huey pilot in Vietnam stand next to a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter.

Illinois Guardsman, Urbana native Ceremony honors fallen Civil War hero of Fort Blakely

Story by Spc. Zachary Zimerman
Illinois National Guard History section

SPRINGFIELD -- It was June 1862. After only being in business a few years as a merchant in Urbana, 26-year-old Samuel T. Busey would soon answer another calling from his state.

Illinois Gov. Richard Yates asked Busey to establish a company of men for active service in the Civil War. Commissioned as a second lieutenant, Busey quickly gathered men for service and was soon elected captain.

Aug. 6, 1862 Busey and his men became Company B of the Illinois 76th Infantry and he received promotion to lieutenant colonel. On Jan. 7, 1863, upon the resignation of Col. A. W. Mack, Busey filled the vacancy to lead the 76th as the unit's commanding officer.

In the fall and early winter of 1862, after Gen. Grant's retreat from Memphis during the inland movement to Vicksburg, the 76th acquired orders to perform rear guard duty to Snyder Bluff. Angered by the command, officers of the division formed a petition for Grant to be relieved and sent to the frontlines. Busey refused to sign the petition.

Characteristic of Busey's loyalty and sincerity he said, "No officer of my regiment would so far forget his duty, which was to obey orders without question and take whatever orders assigned to him without question."

To the joy of the men, the regiment was transferred to join the extreme left of the campaign before Vicksburg. It was said that the 76th approached so close to rebel lines that a man could throw a hat over the nearest enemy.

Busey frequently declined promotion to the rank of brigadier general.

After being told someone else would take the vacancy he replied, "Well, Col. G. will have to take it then, for I shall stay with my men."

He later declined to take command of the post at Natchez.

Busey continued to command his men in the 76th throughout the Civil War. On April 9, 1865, he led his regiment during the assault on Fort Blakely. Busey bravely charged ahead of the regiment alone and engaged the enemy, unsupported, in hand-to-hand combat against a rebel gun squad. Busey's right eye

was rendered useless after a shell round exploded and he also suffered an injury from a shot to the hip. He still successfully managed to kill a confederate gunner and injure two others.

The lone attack led to the personal surrender of the rebel officer and his staff, and saved the lives of 50 or more of his men. Afterwards, Grant and Maj. Gen. George Andrews recommended him for rank of brevet brigadier general and he was referred by his men as "The Hero of Fort Blakely."

Busey mustered out at Chicago Aug. 6, 1865 and he returned to his home in Urbana. In 1867, Dr. W. R. Earhart, Busey, and his brother started Busey Bank in Urbana. Busey served as mayor of Urbana for five terms until elected into the 52nd congress as a Democrat in a district that had been Republican for years.

Busey and his niece drowned while vacationing at Mantrap Lake, Minn., on Aug. 12, 1909.

According to Busey First National Bank Samuel is characterized in Champaign County history as "Soldier, banker, patriot, and public-spirited citizen".

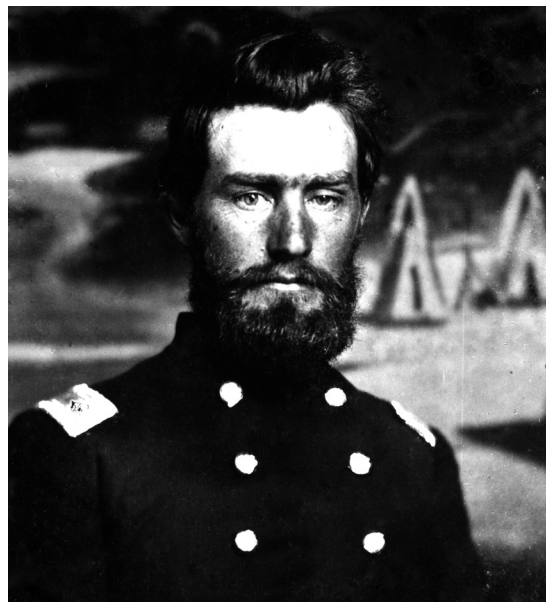


Photo submitted by Champaign County Historical Archives, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana

Samuel T. Busey of Urbana

Ceremony honors fallen

Story by Sgt. Charlie Helmholt
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

SPRINGFIELD -- Military leaders from the Illinois National Guard joined Gold Star Families in a ceremony to honor fallen Illinois Soldiers and Airmen at the Illinois State Military Museum in Springfield on May 14.

The Illinois National Guard has lost 33 Army National Guardsmen and one Air Guardsman since 9-11. Family members and friends from 12 fallen heroes were in attendance.

The men and women who gave their lives will not be forgotten, said Maj. Gen. William Enyart, the 37th Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard.

A display case with pictures, keepsakes and descriptions of Illinois' fallen heroes sits outside of Enyart's office and serves as a constant reminder of their sacrifice.

The ceremony reached an emotional high point when a letter written by Illinois Army National Guard Sgt. Scott Stream of Mattoon was read aloud. The letter read, in part...

We who joined with vague notions of protecting our country see how desperate the peril, how hungry the enemy and how frail the security we have is. So the more I love you all the more I feel I must keep fighting for you. The more I love and long for home, the more right I feel here on the front line standing between you and the seething madness that wants to suck the life and love out of our land.

Does that mean I cannot go home? I hope not, because I want

this just to be the postponement of the joy of life, not the sacrifice of mine. If it costs me my life to protect our land and people then that is a small thing, I just hope that fate lets me return to the promise land and remind people just how great our land is.

War is a young man's game, and I am getting an old man's head. It is a strange thing. I just hope that I am not changed so that I cannot take joy in the land inside the wire when I make it home. I want to be with you all again and let my gun sit in the rack and float on my back in a tube down a lazy river...

Stream died Feb. 24, 2009, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. He is survived by his wife Rasa and a daughter Laura who was only five years old at the time of Stream's death. Both in attendance at the ceremony.

Also in attendance was Regina Byther, of University Park whose daughter, Sgt. Simone Robinson, also a fallen hero, was honored at the ceremony.

Byther explained that although it is still very hard dealing with her daughters' death, ceremonies like this help keep her daughter's story and memory alive.

"I'm really proud of my daughter," said Byther. "I'm very proud of all the Soldiers."

This ceremony was the 2nd annual Fallen Heroes Event held at Camp Lincoln.

"They fought for our freedom," said Capt. Minda Ernst, the director of family programs here. "We want to recognize their ultimate sacrifice."

Soldiers, Airmen join Polish army for EPIFAKTOR 2011

Story by Spc. Lisa Laughlin
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

WARSAW, Poland -- A team of 49 Soldiers and Airmen with the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) went to Camp Radiowa, Poland to participate in Epifaktor 2011, a series of crisis management exercises May 21 to 25.

Servicemembers from the U.S. and Poland, as well as civilian authorities partnered to simulate different types of epidemiological attacks, to see how the separate forces would work together in the event of a real attack.

Capt. Christian E. Pedersen of Sherman, the officer in charge of the CERFP, said with Poland being one of the hosting countries for the 2012 Eurocup it is vitally important they be trained to deal with any type of threat that could occur.

"In today's complex threat environment there is always a threat," said Pedersen. "The United States is never at a green status. There is always some threat there, whether that threat is manmade or naturally occurring."

The Epidemiological Response Center (ERC) with the Polish Armed Forces responds to anything chemical,

biological, radiological, nuclear and high yield explosive and specialize in an entire spectrum of response, said Petersen.

"The other part of it is deterrence, by having a coordinated, equipped, trained, competent force and having the international partners there as well, we are providing the Polish citizenry and all of the visitors from throughout Europe that will be coming to watch this multi-national sporting event, we are providing a show of force, and that we are prepared for anything that may occur."

Maj. Gen. William L. Enyart of Bellville, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard, visited the CERFP while they were in Warsaw to observe the training exercises in action.

He said the mission of the CERFP is helping to ensure the growth of Poland and the continuation of peace in Central Europe.

"Peace in Central Europe depends on a strong and secure Poland," said Enyart. "What the CERFP is doing here today, and what they have done this week, and what we will continue to do in the future is help Poland grow as a democratic institution, help Poland grow defense capabilities, so that we will have peace in Poland, and we will have peace in Central Europe, and because of that we will have



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Lisa Laughlin, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

A Polish Soldier and a team of Illinois National Guard Soldiers carry a simulated casualty during the Epifaktor 2011 a series of crisis management exercises held May 21 to 25 in Warsaw, Poland.

peace in Western Europe and through this continent."

Polish Col. Artur Zdrojewski of Warsaw, the commander of the ERC, said through an interpreter that immense progress has been made on the part of his Soldiers since the beginning of the partnership with the Illinois National Guard.

"With time the level of responsibility increases, first we were observing the

U.S., then we started to participate, now we're planning the exercise, so the level increases, the level of expertise and challenges increses," said Zdrojewski.

The partnership between the Illinois National Guard and the Polish Armed Forces has been ongoing since 1993.

He said, "The partnership that we have is not only on paper, is not only by words, but it is also deep in our hearts."

Lawrenceville engineers field excavating equipment

Story by 1st. Lt. Jarod Thomas
631st Engineer Support Company

LAWRENCEVILLE -- As the National Guard has transformed from a strategic reserve to an operational force, the Illinois National Guard has fielded the same equipment as the active component.

The 631st Engineer Support Company in Lawrenceville was the latest unit to benefit from this change.

The Army is transitioning away from the small emplacement excavator (SEE) and replacing it with the highly mobile excavation equipment (HMEE). As a result, the engineers in Lawrenceville received eight new HMEEs in early May.

The SEE was a piece of engineer equipment capable of accomplishing light earthwork on a highly mobile platform.

Due to some restrictions, and the more advanced equipment now available, the SEE has completed its life cycle in the Army inventory.

"The HMEE is a larger, faster, more rugged vehicle which has given the

engineers a better capability for today's fight," said Capt. Matthew Brady of Evergreen Park, commander of the 631st Engineers. "Despite its many upgrades, its larger size has its disadvantages as well."

To fill this capability gap, the Army has also issued the engineers the skids steer loader (SSL).

The SSL is a piece of equipment capable of handling smaller odd jobs the HMEE is too big for.

Recently, at the 631st annual training (AT) that took place at the Marseilles Training Center, the 631st had an opportunity to prove what both of these pieces of equipment could do.

"The HMEE and SSL were valuable in almost every circumstance," said Sgt. Bryce Buchanan of Edwardsport, Ind., an engineer noncommissioned officer in charge and senior equipment operator with the 631st. "Though we did find drawbacks to the size of the HMEE, the much smaller SSL was able to come in handy during those circumstances and accomplish the mission."



Photo by U.S. Army 1st. Lt. Jarod Thomas, 631st Engineer Support Company

Spc. Jacob Winter of Mapleton shovels gravel as the skids steer loader assists engineers, eliminating hours of work time for engineers with the 631st Engineer Support Company in Lawrenceville during annual training in June at the Marseilles Training Center.

VACATE

■ From page 1

the British leave Iraq, but where they are coming out of Iraq is only a few miles from where they initially entered Iraq back in 2003," said Capt. Shawn D. Nokes of Springfield, company commander of the Illinois Army National Guard's 1244th Transportation Company.

For the 1244th, this is just another mission, not unlike any other they have undertaken. They go somewhere, pick up a load, then transport it and drop it off.

"This one is a little more intricate," said Staff Sgt. Shelly R. Johns of Chicago, a convoy commander for the 1244th, "(and) a little more detailed. Our job is to pick up something and take it where it needs to go. This one was a little more detailed, working with other countries

and their operating procedures.

The hardest part was just coordinating between different countries and contractors," said Johns.

"It was a privilege and an honor for the 1244th to not only be a part of the United Kingdom extraction mission, but to meet and get to know some of our coalition's British counterparts. We are humbled to be part of this historic piece and have the opportunity to work with our British comrades," said Nokes.

"Staff Sergeant Johns and her crew executed in an exemplary fashion navigating through rough terrain and tight congested areas to pick up and deliver the loads," Nokes said. "Job well done."

The 1244th was mobilized in September 2010 for a one year deployment in support of Operation New Dawn.

RTI courses for FY 2012

25U10 MOSQ Phases 1, 2

Jan. 7 to 26, 2012 (Phase 1)
July 7 to 26, 2012 (Phase 1)
Jan 26 to Feb 14, 2012 (Phase 2)
July 26 to Aug. 14 (Phase 2)
POC: SFC Edward Ruhrup,
217-761-1226

June 16 to 30, 2012 (Phase 2)
POC: SFC Edward Ruhrup,
217-761-1226

217-761-1229

Basic Combatives Course

Feb. 5 to 10, 2012
April 8 to 13, 2012
June 10 to 15, 2012
POCs: SGT Thomas Luca,
217-761-1245, and SFC Edward
Ruhrup, 217-761-1226

13B10-M777 MOSQ

July 9 to 24, 2012
POC: SFC Edward Ruhrup,
217-761-1226

OCS

Traditional Course: 16 months
Accelerate Course: 8 weeks
Offered twice year
POCs: SFC Dale Matteson,
217-761-1242
MAJ Benjamin Shakman,
217-761-1224

Tactical Combatives Course

July 15 to 25, 2012
Aug. 12 to 22, 2012
POCs: SGT Thomas Luca,
217-761-1245,
and SFC Edward Ruhrup,
217-761-1226

13B30-M777 ALC Phases 1, 2

March 30 to April 6, 2012 (Phase 1)
April 6 to 18 (Phase 2)
POC: SFC Edward Ruhrup,
217-761-1226

68W Sustainment Training Continuing Education (CPR)

Oct. 22, 2011
Feb. 25, 2012
April 28, 2012
Aug. 25, 2012
Refresher Training (24 hours)
Jan. 20 to 22, 2012
Feb. 25 to 26, 2012
March 17 to 18, 2012

ABIC (formerly known as the Total Army Instructor Trainer Course/TAITC)

Nov. 12, 2011 to Feb. 26, 2012 (IDT)
July 19 to 29, 2012
POC: SFC Edward Ruhrup,
217-761-1226

88M10 MOSQ Phase 1

March 4 to 17, 2012
April 15 to 28, 2012
July 8 to 21, 2012
Aug. 5 to 18, 2012
POC: SFC James Griffin,
217-761-1220

Six-day Annual Training (CEs, CPR and Refresher)

Dec. 6 to 11, 2011
Jan. 3 to 8, 2012
POC: SGT Daniel Brown,
217-761-1245

SGITC Course

June 10 to 15, 2012
Sept. 9 to 14, 2012
POC: SFC Edward Ruhrup,
217-761-1226

88M10 MOSQ Phase 2

March 17-31, 2012
April 28 to May 12, 2012
July 21 to Aug. 4, 2012
Aug. 18 to Sept 1, 2012
POC: SFC James Griffin,
217-761-1220

Combat Lifesaver Course

Feb. 7 to 10, 2012
March 15 to 18, 2012
June 14 to 17, 2012
Aug. 16 to 19, 2012
POC: SSG Gerald Davenport,

BN/CO Level pre-command course

April 23 to 26, 2012
POC: MAJ Benjamin Shakman,
217-761-1224

31B10 MOSQ

June 1 to 16, 2012 (Phase 1)

Biathlon team competes nationally

Story by Staff Sgt. Stephanie McCurry
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD -- Four Illinois National Guard Soldiers traveled to Camp Ethan Allen Training site in Jericho, Vt. to participate in the All Guard biathlon competition from March 5 to 13. Approximately 100 competitors from 25 states competed in the biathlon.

Sgt. 1st Class Trent Sinnett, of Homewood, with Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 33rd Military Police Battalion, Staff Sgt. Joseph Bray of Lisle, with Company E, 634th Brigade Support Brigade, Spc. Benjamin Latham of Woodstock, with the 1244th Transportation Company

and Pvt. Peter Tanis of Oneida, with the 444th Chemical Company made up the ILNG biathlon team. Illinois finished 9th in the relay race and 8th in the patrol race out of 25 states.

"We are considered a non-snow state and the members of our team were very enthusiastic and stuck together throughout the competition," said Sinnett. "We are looking to add a few good Soldiers to our core group and I think if we do that we will be very competitive next year."

The winter biathlon combines the athleticism of cross-country skiing with the precision of marksmanship. Competitors ski a series of loops with their rifle strapped to their back. In between

laps they fire a series of five, 4.5 inch targets from either a standing or prone position. For each missed shot, the skier completes a 150-meter penalty loop as they leave the shooting range for their next lap for the shorter races, the longer races add one minute for each missed shot to your total time.

The first two competitions are individual competitions consisting of a 10 kilometer ski with two shots and a 20 kilometer ski with four shots. There are two team competitions, patrol and relay. The patrol competition, your team of four ski together with three members carrying rifles and the captain of the team ahead in order to get them set up for their shots. The relay competition requires each team member to complete one circuit which consists of skiing a 7.5 kilometer loop and firing eight rounds from the prone position at the 50-meter target, with a 150 meter penalty lap for each missed shot. After the eight shots the competitor race around another 7.5 kilometer loop to engage five more targets from the standing position. They then complete one final loop before tagging the next member on their team.

Sinnett started the Illinois National Guard biathlon team in 2008. Most of the training the team does is on their own, Sinnett gives them exercises and different things to do to help advance their skills.

"I need athletes with balance and endurance," said Sinnett on what he looks for in a team member. "They need to have a desire to want to do it."

Tryouts for the ILNG biathlon team are scheduled to be held Aug. 28 at the Marseilles Training Center in Marseilles. Soldiers should be in a military status for tryout day. For more information please contact Sgt. 1st Class Trent Sinnett at 765-437-3007 or bigdogrunner@yahoo.com.



Photo submitted by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Trent Sinnett
Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 33rd Military Police Battalion

Pvt. Peter Tanis of Oneida, with the 444th Chemical Company, a member of the Illinois National Guard biathlon team, competed at the All Guard biathlon competition from March 5 to 13 at the Camp Ethan Allen Training site in Jericho, Vt.

Officer Candidate School Class 55-10 graduate Phase I at 100%



Submitted photo

Class 55-10 and cadre members pose during a field exercise at Marseilles Training Center. After passing Phase I of Officer Candidate School at Camp Riley, MN, and enduring 10 months of training in Springfield at the Illinois Military Academy, the candidates were pushed to Marseilles Training Center from May 22 to 26 to complete a practical exercise known as Field Leadership Exercise.

Award winning Soldiers give medals to kids with illnesses



Submitted photo

Illinois National Guard's Capt. Kira Crocker of Springfield (left) and Chief Warrant Officer (2) Rachelle McKay of Taylorville (right) stand with Scott Dahl from the nonprofit organization Medals4Mettle (M4M) at the St. John's Children's Hospital May 6. Crocker and McKay teamed up with M4M to give children and adults with debilitating illnesses their medals from running marathons, half marathons and triathlons.

New Army Guard data center increases efficiency, security

Story by Lt. Col Alex Lawson
Network Operations Manager

SPRINGFIELD -- In the coming months, the Illinois Army National Guard is going to see dramatic improvements in the reliability, security and speed in which information is processed thanks to the renovation of the United States Property and Fiscal Office (USPFO) and Department of Information Management (DOIM) Data Center.

For the Illinois Army Guard's full-time support staff, it's going to mean less network shutdowns and fewer glitches. For traditional Soldiers, it will mean their pay, orders, personnel updates and all the other functions that go through the Illinois National Guard's servers will be processed quicker and more efficiently.

For those full-time unit administrators punching away at computers throughout the state, there may still be some glitches in July as the last phase of the renovation is completed. For DOIM Soldiers – the wizards behind the curtain for all network operations – June brought the uncorking of Champaign bottles as this watershed \$1 million-plus project came to completion.

The Data Center contains the Illinois Army National Guard's core information technology infrastructure. That infrastructure has changed and expanded dramatically over the years, but the rooms in which they are housed hadn't changed since 1976.

In other words; the air conditioning, humidity control and power modifications that this technology depends on to operate effectively hadn't been upgraded since the Bicentennial. Back then, there were five systems to maintain. Now there are more than 100 servers, two phone systems (Nortel and Cisco), numerous routers, switches, firewalls, Web servers and intrusion detection and prevention systems. The 35-year-old room just couldn't handle all this modern technology.

The USPFO, DOIM and Facilities worked together resolve this issue. During phase one, all equipment was moved to the DOIM Data Center so renovation could begin in the old USPFO Data Center. In phase two, all the racks and servers were moved into the renovated room. The last phase – now nearing completion – is renovating the old DOIM Data Center. This final phase which happened during 4th of July weekend required moving all the core network equipment and phone systems into the renovated room.

This major renovation includes all new primary and redundant air conditioning and humidification systems, industrial-size uninterrupted power supply that is connected to the building's new generator system, elevated floors, sound dampening walls, a new ceiling, additional lighting and a fire suppression system.

These rooms have been designed to support additional systems and sustain the Illinois Army National Guard and our Soldiers for many years into the future.

Those of us who have been in DOIM for the last 20 years – Master Sgt. David Purdy, Susan Ferguson, Harold Boatz and I – can look back and reminisce about the not-so-good old days. In 1989, the USPFO Data Center had a single mainframe, punch-card machines and four tape-to-reel machines. The DOIM Data Center had the Automatic Digital Network, which operated on 8-inch floppy disk drives. A punch-paper tape was used to key the system.

In 1990, Illinois was the first state in the Army National Guard to join the Department of Defense (DoD) Data Network. A Unix server in Illinois used 19.2 baud-rate modems to connect 14 states into the DoD Network and Internet.

Illinois' first e-mail system used "dumb-terminals" (monitor and keyboard). Wyse computers with a 10-megabyte hard drive and 5¼-inch floppy drive or Zenith 248s with a 20-megabyte hard drive and a 3 ½- or 5 ¼-inch floppy drives. These were DOS-based systems. For you younger troops, picture a black screen where you type in commands like "run 'program'" or "copy 'file.'" A mouse was unheard of during these days.

The new Data Center is a giant step forward into the future, leaving the unhappy days of "dumb-terminals" and DOS, well back in the history of defunct technology. It is good to move on, unless of course you still like 8-track tapes and typewriters.

Illinois

Guardian

1301 North MacArthur Boulevard
Springfield, Illinois 62702-2399

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

The Illinois Guardian is the official newspaper of the Illinois National Guard authorized by The Adjutant General and published by the State Public Affairs Office, in accordance with AR 360-1 and AFI 35-101. It is funded and published quarterly by contracted offset process. Circulation is approximately 14,000.

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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State PAO Maj. Brad Leighton
Editor Spc. Chasity Johnson

SUPPORT STAFF

1st Lt. William Grove
2nd Lt. April Hawes
Staff Sgt. Cassidy Snyder
Staff Sgt. Stephanie McCurry
Sgt. Michael Camacho
Spc. Zachary Zimerman
Mike Chrisman
Adriana Schroeder

139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

NEWS BRIEFS

■ Heard-Thomas passes away

SPRINGFIELD – Retired Col. Lucretia G. Heard-Thompson of Chatham, passed June 4 after a long illness.

Heard-Thompson, 55, served in the Illinois Army National Guard for 32 years and was a member of the full-time staff for roughly 22 years.

She enlisted into the Women's Auxiliary Corps in 1976. After the auxiliary corps was disbanded in 1978 Heard-Thompson commissioned as a medical officer in 1979.

In her more than 30 years of service Heard-Thompson left several mile stones in her legacy to include setting the foundation for state family programs and being the first African-American female to be awarded the rank of colonel in the Illinois Army National Guard.

■ Remembering Pamela Vollmer

BEECHER CITY -- Pamela Kaye Vollmer, 57, of rural Beecher City passed away June 6.

Vollmer who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) used service dogs to help normalize her life.

After speaking to others about how the dogs helped her, she encouraged several Illinois National Guardsmen who suffered from PTSD to use service dogs as well.

"Pam is a community member that really appreciates what our Soldiers do and wanted to help," said 2nd Lt. Justin Anweiler, former Yellow Ribbon Program Coordinator for the Illinois National Guard. "She knew Soldiers struggled with PTSD and wanted to reach out to assist them. That is why she volunteered to tell her story, so others can get the help they need."

■ Damon Arnold gets Legion of Merit

CHICAGO -- Retired Col. Damon Arnold of Chicago, the director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, received the Legion of Merit from Maj. Gen. William L. Enyart of Belleville, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard, during a ceremony at the ILARNG's Retiree Dinner, April 29, at the Chicago Hilton.

The Legion of Merit is the U.S. military's sixth highest award, and is awarded to any member of the Armed Forces of the United States or a friendly foreign nation who has distinguished himself or herself by exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements.

Arnold served as a medical officer, retiring as the Illinois Army National Guard surgeon general. He deployed overseas more than 15 times on missions to South America, Africa, Europe and Iraq.

■ Col. Tony Libri retires after 30 years

SPRINGFIELD -- Col. Anthony P. Libri, Jr. of New Berlin, with Joint Forces Headquarters in Springfield and the Sangamon County Circuit Clerk, retired from the Illinois Army National Guard June 30, after 30 years of service.

Libri served in the United States Marine Corps from 1972 to 1974 until an injury caused him to separate. After physical rehabilitation, he attended the Illinois State Fair where a local radio announcer talked to him about serving in the National Guard. In 1981 Libri became an officer for the Illinois Army National Guard.

He served as an officer for 30 years, including tours overseas to Afghanistan, Bosnia, Croatia, Germany, Hungary and Panama, among other countries.

Libri said he plans to continue to work as the Sangamon County Circuit Clerk, continue to volunteer and spend time with his family.

"The Illinois National Guard is all I've known for the last 30 years," he said. "While I will retire from the military, I'll continue to help and support Illinois Guardsmen even without the uniform."

Special Forces assessment

Company A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) are always looking for the right Soldiers to join their unit. Everyone who meets the minimum requirements is welcome and encouraged to attend the a readiness assessment. They expect candidates to show the initiative required to prepare themselves. Candidates should show up to the event ready for Special Forces Assessment and Selection, based off the training plan in the information packet provided by Company A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne). Those interested in attending the readiness assessment on Sept. 10 and 11 are asked to call (708)824-5817/5823 or e-mail NGILSpecialForces@ng.army.mil.

Riding with veterans to honor veterans

Story by Sgt. Michael Camacho
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD -- With decades of influence, motorcycle riders have defined their own lifestyle. With the various groups and clubs there are those who display a more patriotic tie to the men and women of the U.S. military.

During the current operations overseas over the last 10 years, more veteran support motorcycle groups have taken the road, escorting servicemembers or the fallen heroes who lost their lives serving their country.

In these groups several members are either combat veterans themselves, supporters who have dedicated time for troops and servicemembers who take time to honor their brother and sisters in arms. These groups share a common bond of motorcycle riding and service to their country. This blends two cultures together creating a military veteran sub-culture in the biker community.

The groups bring together people with a shared background and common interests, said Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Murphy of Galesburg, with the Illinois National Guard Recruiting and retention Command. Murphy has rode motorcycles for the past seven years and participated in veteran support events following his 2005 deployment, he is a member of the Warrior Brotherhood Veteran Motorcycle Association.

"All the guys that ride Jeeps wave to each other. It's the same thing with guys who ride motorcycles they all wave at each other, but all the guys who ride Toyotas ... don't wave at each other," said Murphy.

With the experiences of being overseas and having served, there is a lot story sharing, talking and conversations that provides a good outlet, said Murphy. The common factor of service to country sets the motivation for supporting veterans and community events to aid them.

"It's just to let others know other veterans support other veterans," said Murphy

The groups put forth effort to honor those who have given up so much for their country and its people, said 1st Sgt. Nancy Tieber-Wiles of Chillicothe, with the 708th Ground Ambulance Medical Company a member of Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association-Illinois (CVMA) and the Motor Maids, a women's only motorcycle association. The groups are filled with people who serve, have served and support those who serve.

Their sacrifices are not limited only when they wear their uniform, said Tieber-Wiles. Recently a member of CVMA and a combat veteran lost his life in vehicle accident, but as an organ donor he will go on to save 12 other lives.

"Not only did he give his life for his country, but he's giving his life for others," said Tieber-Wiles.

Maj. Jeffery Beierman of Loami, with the 129th Regional Training Institute has been riding motorcycles

The stats don't lie...

Motorcycle deaths are the second leading killer of Soldiers in privately owned vehicle accidents National Guard wide.

In Illinois there were seven reported accidents with one fatality in the 2010 fiscal year involving Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers. In the 2011 fiscal year there have been four reported accidents with no fatalities.

In order to drive motorcycles on post or in uniform Soldiers must go through the basic rider course and wear proper protective gear.

- Department of Transportation approved helmet
- Eye protection
- Long pants and long sleeved shirt/ jacket or Army Combat Uniform
- Full fingered gloves over the ankle boots/ shoes
- High visibility garments or reflective vest

for more than 20 years, buying his first bike before he enlisted in the National Guard. Beierman joined the CVMA in 2007 following his deployment to Iraq with the 33rd Military Police Battalion.

He has taken to the road riding with CVMA and other groups to honor servicemembers over the years. CVMA supports the Fisher House Foundation which gives aid to military families in need of housing assistance.

The CVMA participates regularly in veteran honoring events nation and statewide. One of their nationwide involves riding out to the Middle Eastern Conflict Memorial Wall in Marseilles.

"There's people from six, seven states away that come here to ride a weekend with our guys," said Beierman. "It's quite encouraging and hearing to see these people from all over the country who have shared this experience."

Beierman and Tieber-Wiles have attended the ride in the past. Beierman said the ride was a way for him to honor friends and fellow servicemembers whose names now adorn the wall.

Another part of the ride to the memorial wall is visiting the Illinois Veterans Home in La Salles.

"We shake some hands and spend some quality time with them These are all old Soldier, Sailors and Airmen," said Beierman. "It's nice to sit down with them and brighten up their day. We hear about their experiences and places they've been."

With a several veteran motorcycle association there are events going throughout the year.

The Springfield Area Peace Keepers will be holding a ride July 17, there will be a brief opening ceremony and the ride is scheduled to depart at noon. The ride will donate money to The Illinois Military Family Relief Fund which provides financial assistance for combat veteran and their family.

A glimpse through the eyes of a Soldier

Story by Adriana Schroeder
Illinois National Guard historian

SPRINGFIELD -- This summer, patrons to the First Division Museum in Wheaton, Ill. get a look through a photographer's lens at the "Operation Enduring Freedom: The 1st Division in Afghanistan," exhibit. Through

photos, visitors discover what the Soldiers of the 178th Infantry Battalion of the Illinois Army National Guard saw on their 2008-2009 deployment to Afghanistan. The Guard Soldiers served under the 1st Division, the famed Big Red One.

The unit formed Task Force

Bayonet with the mission to develop the capability of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and extend the influence of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. In addition, members of the 178th provided security for the U.S. Provincial Reconstruction teams (PRTs) operating throughout Afghanistan. The exhibit features 28 photographs by Guardsman and Chicago native Spc. Jason Dorsey.

"Photography is my passion. It is an expression of my thoughts, my fears and what compels me. As a machine gunner in Afghanistan, I felt it was my duty to make history and capture it at the same time," said Dorsey

The exhibit also includes artifacts and uniforms worn by Soldiers of the 1st Division and the 178th Infantry Battalion.

Visitors are invited to touch an armored door designed for a humvee. The door is hinged so its strength and weight can be appreciated.

"I think visitors will get a good sense of what our troops are experiencing and how they go about their dangerous jobs on a daily basis," said Teri Bianchi, First Division Museum exhibits manager.

The free exhibit is located in the museum gallery. It opened on June 8 and will run through Labor Day. Hours of operation are Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The museum is located at 1s151 Winfield Rd., Wheaton, Ill.



Submitted photo

Photos on display at the First Division Museum at Cantigny by Spc. Jason Dorsey of Chicago, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.

New recruits take on Foxtrot Warrior Challenge

Story by Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

CHICAGO -- It was a beautiful sunny afternoon, and the Illinois Army National Guard was taking over the Chicago Lakefront.

At least that is what it appeared to be, June 12 when Company F Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP) held its first ever Warrior Challenge, at Lincoln Park, Chicago. The challenge brought together two companies, allowing their warriors to battle through a series of team events. The day consisted of several events, from obstacle courses to volleyball. The two companies allowed Soldiers to form their own team, which was represented by a team name and t-shirt.

These warriors were able to experience the new Army Combat Readiness Test, even before it is introduced to basic training sites. This "drill weekend," was the brainchild of Sgt. 1st Class Samer Elguindy, who wanted a weekend where Soldiers could experience a "shock and awe of events."

"I like to think outside the box and I always believe in staying one step ahead of the power curve," stated Elguindy. "Some Soldiers always express their concern about how we never push them hard enough or we never do anything that involves teamwork; I think we satisfied those areas of concern today."

The focus behind the day was practicing teamwork, unit cohesion, camaraderie, leadership, building confidence, and



Submitted photo

Illinois Army National Guard recruiters and members of Company F Recruit Sustainment Program pose for a group picture during Warrior Challenge June 12 at Lincoln Park in Chicago.

simply having fun. The event was also an opportunity to expose the warrior's strengths and weaknesses.

"I didn't think I would be so winded from the obstacle course, since I just returned home from basic training and AIT, but I was," stated Spc. Justin

Shepherd.

Spectators watched from the sidewalk as warriors climbed a rock wall, pulled a rescue stretcher or maneuvered over and under hurdles with a rubber ducky in hand.

"Who would think that training could be so much fun?" said Spc. Rachel Burke.

"I know I will be sore tomorrow, but I also know I will be better prepared for basic training. Isn't that what RSP is all about?"

"All in all it looks like it was a very successful day, and I hope the challenge turns into an annual event," said Elguindy.

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 Fall 2011 issue of the *Illinois Guardian* is the last Wednesday of September.

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.

State conference focuses on resiliency for Guard, family

Sgt. Luke Austin
State Family Programs Office

CHICAGO -- Members of the Illinois National Guard (ILNG) gathered in Chicago April 29 to May 1 for their yearly state conference and brought family members to participate in the State Family Conference held in conjunction.

This year the family conference focused on building and maintaining resilience as family members of Soldiers and Airmen in the ILNG. Children attended the annual State Youth Symposium held at the same location, while adult family members were engaged with workshops, special performances and guest speakers, and the Resiliency Dinner held April 30.

"Family members serve right alongside their Soldier or Airman," said Eric Murray, chief of the ILNG Service Member Support Services Branch (SMSSB). "They face many of the same challenges and shoulder the burden of deployments and long training periods year after year."

Giving servicemembers and their family members the tools and support to be resilient when facing the challenges of military life is of the utmost importance to members of the SMSSB, said Murray.

"Mrs. Casey made it clear that families serve too," said Cpt. Mindi Ernst, director of the ILNG State Family Programs Office, which falls under the SMSSB.

Sheila Casey, wife of the Gen. George W. Casey, 36th Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, attended as a guest speaker with her husband at the dinner Saturday night. Casey was asked to speak because of her unique role as a military spouse.

"Military families are resilient, having proven in the almost ten years of deployments, homecomings, missed birthdays and anniversaries," said Casey. "We stand shoulder to shoulder through the good times and bad and we should be proud that we represent the less than 1% of Americans fighting for the safety of our nation."

Casey said she realized the importance of resiliency training having had her son, a member of the Army Reserves, mobilized for a deployment with a National Guard unit.

"It was terrifying that I was no longer in the position to do the most important job of a parent: that to protect my child," she said. "We have learned that in order to support the servicemembers overseas and maintain this pace of deployment, we need a greater emphasis on the resiliency in our military families."

Casey said that the Army has made great changes over the course of 41 years of service, but there were still issues that Soldiers and families still endured such as continued mobilizations, divorce and separation. As a special highlight during the dinner, the State Family Programs Office presented two awards to family members of the



Submitted photo

Ret. Judge Annette Eckert, wife of Maj. Gen. William Enyart and Sheila Casey, wife of Gen. George Casey, present Mark and Cherie Edgcombe the Family of the Year Award.

ILNG. Shirley Rehbein, an ILNG spouse and president of the 766th Engineer Battalion Family Readiness Group (FRG) received the Elizabeth Armstrong Award for her outstanding support to the unit during 2010.

The Edgcombe family, Mark and Cherie Edgcombe, were presented the Family of the Year Award for their deep involvement in unit activities and FRG meetings.

"It's important to recognize these family members for their dedication," said Ernst. "It was especially exciting for them to receive their awards from Mrs. Casey."

The guest speakers and activities of the youth symposium were all part of the resiliency theme, Dilworth said.

"The work of building and maintaining resiliency among the ILNG Soldiers, Airmen and their families did end at the conference.

"It is a continual effort," said Murray. "The National Guard serves part time, but the effect on families- especially from deployments- is daily. We need to reach out to the families and service members of the Illinois National Guard, spread throughout the state, and work to build a strong Guard-Family Team."

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