



Connecticut Guardian

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Putting a face on breast cancer

**SGT. 1ST CLASS DEBBI NEWTON
STATE SENIOR PA NCO**

“You have breast cancer.”

Four little words that are every woman’s nightmare.

This is the story of two women who heard those words. Both of them fought their battles with courage and grace. One who won many of her battles, but ultimately lost the war; and one who has won all of her battles, and as time goes on, has her chances of winning the war improve.

Deborah Therrien first found out she had breast cancer in December of 1997. The wife of Chief Warrant Officer 5 Paul Therrien, Debbie lost her battle a little over a year ago.

Sgt. 1st Class Sharon Stroman was diagnosed with breast cancer on Sept. 11, 2001.

“Debbie asked me to check a lump for her one night,” said Therrien. “She said something didn’t feel right to her.”

She had a needle biopsy done and learned she had a malignant breast cancer tumor. In mid-January 1998, Debbie had a surgical biopsy done and her four centimeter tumor was staged at Stage III cancer.

“The cancer had invaded the surrounding tissue,” said Therrien. “In February of 1998, she scheduled herself for a modified radical mastectomy of the breast.” In this procedure, only breast tissue is removed, not muscle, making it easier later for reconstructive surgery.

Debbie then spent six weeks going through chemotherapy and radiation treatment.

“For a few months after that, her follow-ups said she was in remission,” said Therrien.

Then, in May of 1998, Debbie and Paul were standing at the sink doing dishes, when Debbie said something didn’t feel right in her neck. She went to see Dr. Lyn Davis at St. Francis Hospital for a check up. It turned out the cancer was back and this time was in her lymph nodes.

“When we saw his face...he sort of frowned,” said Paul. And they knew the news wasn’t going to be good. Davis offered to arrange a consultation at the UConn Medical Center.

“That’s where we met Dr. Peter Tutschka and that whole bunch of angels there,” said Therrien. And that’s where the Therriens learned that Debbie would have a bone marrow transplant with stem cell rescue, which she had in the summer of 1999.

Debbie spent 43 days in the intensive care unit and then was in remission for seven or eight months.

“Then it came back in her spine,” said Therrien. “She had massive doses of radiation and chemo which knocked the cancer out. She had a six-month reprieve. I asked the doctor once if the cancer was going to kill her, and he told me ‘No, but the treatment probably will.’

“The cancer came back again, this time in her lower back,” said Therrien. Because of

the size and location of the cancer, it caused skeletal compression, creating a great deal of discomfort for Debbie. She again received multiple, high-dose chemo and radiation treatments, and in March of 2000 was chosen to be part of a groundbreaking treatment known as heat shock protein therapy.

“Ultimately, it wasn’t done,” said Therrien. “Her immune system was too weak to withstand the treatment. But the massive amounts of chemo and radiation she did receive was enough to sustain her and get her through the pain until about a week before she died.”

Debbie and Paul had been married for 19 years, one month and eight days when she died, a figure that rolls from Paul’s mouth as easily as baseball statistics do from most men.

“Debbie was a very easy person to be in love with and have as a life partner,” said Therrien. “She was full of life. She fought the cancer. She was not going to let it control her. The single biggest thing I will remember about Debbie is that she redefined courage in her life, not just with the cancer. She was strong and courageous. She was extremely outgoing in her capacity to love. When she would meet someone, her arms were wide open to them. She worked with the church and with Little League while she was sick. She was always there for kids and the grandkids.”

See **BREAST CANCER** Page 28

Brig. Gen. Epps retires from Air National Guard

**TECH. SGT. CLAIRE M.S. POTIER
HEADQUARTERS, CTANG**

On September 14, approximately 200 men and women of the Connecticut National Guard, colleagues, family members and friends of Brig. Gen. Mary Ann Epps gathered at the Radisson Hotel in Cromwell to celebrate her retirement. The evening allowed friends, current and past members of the Connecticut National Guard, New York Air Guard, and representatives from the National Guard Bureau to exchange greetings and share memorable moments.

Lt. Col. Charles McKellar, master of ceremonies for the affair, began the evening by welcoming everyone.

“Tonight, we gather to honor a woman, whose career spans 26 years of service to the United States Air Force, the Connecticut Air National Guard and the State of Connecticut,” McKellar said. He continued by reminding the audience that when Epps entered the service, our country was overcoming the aftermath of a great conflict known as the Vietnam War. This event had challenged our nation in ways it had never witnessed before.

“While we have made progress, both militarily and in the civil rights of our citizens, we now find our country is again being challenged by war,” said McKellar.

“The recent anniversary of September 11th reinforced our commitment to fight terrorism. This fight will be long and enduring. This call to duty requires the dedication and leadership exercised so eloquently by Gen. Epps throughout her military career. She truly exemplifies the Air Force’s core values of “Integrity first, Service before self, and Excellence in all that we do.

“Today, the men and women of the Connecticut Air National Guard and the Air Force are far better for having served with Gen. Epps. There is no greater example of this than during the recent national

See **EPSS** Page 21

New London remembers 9/11 with flags



More than 3,000 American flags, representing those who lost their lives on 9/11, wave in the breeze at the New London armory. (Photo by Maj Chuck Strong, 85th Troop Command)

**SGT. 1ST CLASS DEBBI NEWTON
STATE SENIOR PANCO**

Three thousand, seven American flags were lined up in military precision on the lawn of the New London armory. One for every life lost on 9/11.

The staff of the New London armory wanted to remember the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Towers and the plane that went down in Shanksville, Penn. killing all on board, including the terrorists who had hijacked it.

Master Sgt. Dennis Kaiser, a chief logistics NCO for the 85th Troop Command was the driving force behind the memorial. Other members of Troop Command and the 192nd Engineer Battalion expanded on Kaiser’s idea.

In addition to the American flags on the lawn, the flags of the all 50 states hung from the roofline of the armory, a Humvee

See **NEW LONDON** Page 3

Up Front with the Adjutant General

Looking ahead –

MAJ. GEN. WILLIAM A. CUGNO
ADJUTANT GENERAL



October marks the beginning of our military's training year and our federal government's fiscal year. Looking ahead we must be vigilant and focused, with regard to executing the essential training required that ensures Connecticut soldiers and airman continue to be ready to support the global war on terrorism.

Our nation is at war, and all indications are that the United States will soon intensify and vastly expand current military operations and deployments. All of you must clearly understand the realities and implications we now face, and must do your part individually and collectively to ensure our nations readiness.

Leaders at all levels must foresee the training requirements of our soldiers and airmen to best prepare them for future missions. This requires we maintain an acute awareness of our current unit and individual readiness posture. This is essential to effectively target limited resources and to ensure we provide our nation with a trained and ready force.

In addition, we must ensure that training is realistic and that risk assessments are conducted to enhance our soldiers' level of preparedness and safety. The appropriate administrative requirements for soldiers, airmen and their families need to be up to date as well.

Basic soldier skills are the foundation to survival on the battlefield. I want non-

commissioned officers to prioritize their training time. Make sure your soldiers are properly trained in the handling of weapons, intimately aware of the impact and requirements for operations in cold and warm climates, physical fitness, and understand the requirements for preparing their family and employer for possible mobilization.

Training on Common Tasks is essential. Particular focus and emphasis must be placed on preparing our soldiers, airmen and equipment for Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) warfare. Sustaining a satisfactory level of proficiency in this area is particularly important. Remember—train as you fight! I want to see much more NBC training scheduled and soldiers operating in protective equipment for longer periods of time.

Commanders need to communicate effectively. Ensure timely, accurate and pertinent information flows seamlessly up and down the chain of command. Talk to your soldiers! Keep your organization informed of current events. Don't hesitate to ask questions or take initiative.

I want commanders to exercise and train their staffs. Staff coordination, at all levels of command, must be flawless. The success of mission objectives will be dependent upon staffs' ability to conduct mission analysis and provide feasible courses of actions for the commander to make informed decisions.

Commanders should be prepared to brief me, or other key leaders, on the readiness posture of their unit and intelligently address issues impacting the ability for the unit to perform its wartime mission. I expect leaders to be knowledgeable of the same for

the elements or individuals for which they are accountable.

Looking ahead, current national and world events provide obvious indicators of what lies ahead for the National Guard. American history is full of examples when certain generations have had to step forward and sacrifice all, for the preservation of our great nation. For us in uniform, it is times like now that define our existence and demands all we can give. The Guard has been a corner stone in the foundation of our national strength, and has played a central role in building America's communities and protecting our American values for nearly four centuries. Our service to the nation is well documented and we have always answered the call to nation and state.

Fiscal year 02 in the Connecticut National Guard provides stark examples of service to country and state. I anticipate that the new fiscal year upon us will demand an even greater commitment for Guardsman and their families both in Connecticut and across America. We will once again be called to step forward and answer the call. Keep your families informed; keep your head in the game, and BE READY!

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Perspectives

Do you plan to vote in the November elections? Why or why not?



Staff Sgt. Carl Bourne
Firearms Instructor
G3
"Yes. We can't complain unless we participate."



Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Colangelo
State Security Manager
Force Protection
"Yes. It is a right that is given to us by our



Master Sgt. Frank Gonzalez
Avionics Integrated Electronics Systems Specialist
103rd Maintenance Squadron
"Yes, of course, because it's my



Lt. Col. Barry Martin
Safety Officer
103rd Fighter Wing
"Am I going to vote? Yes. Why? It's my duty. I don't show the flag for 21 years and not vote. It's my privilege. My honor. My duty."



Sgt. Victor McEntire
Marksmanship Instructor
G3
"Yes. I stay current with issues, and this is how we get our 'say' into what happens in our country



Staff Sgt. Gregory Tomsen
Marksmanship Team
G3
"Yes. I vote in every election, because it is my responsibility, as an American citizen. We have freedoms

constitution and we need to exercise that right."

right to vote. The voting is very important. If you don't vote you don't have a right to complain."

and in our government."

and we need to exercise them."

New London pays tribute to victims of 9/11

From Page 1

represented the previous and past willingness of the citizen soldiers to "Roll" in support of the War on Terrorism and Homeland Defense and a soldier in Battle Dress Uniform stood guard over the field of flags from sunup to sundown on Sept. 11, 2002.

After the flags were posted in the ground at 5 a.m. by volunteers from the New London armory, a group of soldiers road marched by foot with rucksacks weighing 80 pounds, the minimum weight for a deployed soldier's rucksack. They marched from the armory, over the Gold Star Bridge in New London and back again in recognition of the soldiers, airmen, sailors,



Soldiers from the New London armory start out on their road march in honor of those who are currently serving in Homeland Defense and the War on Terrorism. (Photo by Maj. Chuck Strong, 85th Troop Command)

marines and Coast Guardsmen currently engaged and on patrol in Afghanistan and other locations around the world.

"We arrived back at the armory at precisely 8:48 a.m., the moment the first hijacked airliner struck the North Tower," said Lt. Col. Ron Welch of the 85th Troop Command. "We paused for a moment of silence in memory of those who lost their lives during the tragedy one year ago today.

"What hit home about the catastrophic events on 11 Sept. is the fact that the McCourt family resides just a few miles south of the armory," said Welch. "Mr. David McCourt suffered significant loss as his wife, Ruth, and four-year-old daughter, Juliana, were killed, as was the godmother of his daughter, when the aircraft slammed into the tower. Also, a family from Norwich, which is just north of the armory, lost a daughter, Madeline Amy Todd Sweeney, an airline attendant on Flight 11."

According to Maj. Chuck Strong of the 85th Troop Command, people were stopping by the New London armory all day to look, spend a quiet moment, thank the Guardsmen and remember.

"We had a group of school children come by and spend some time on the lawn," said Strong. "Families came by and had lunch out there. Firefighters from New London's Engine No. 1 came up to take pictures and thank us for the display."

One woman who lived on Long Island a year ago and watched the devastation unravel in New York from her front beach and has since moved to New London, stopped by and cried. She was so moved by what she experienced at the New London armory, she wrote a letter to the soldiers there. (See below.)



Local school children stopped by the New London armory to remember and discuss the events of 9/11. (Photo by Maj. Chuck Strong, 85th Troop Command)

"We will do this again next year," said Kaiser. "The support from the community and the National Guard community was unbelievable."



Master Sgt. Dennis Kaiser (C), the driving force behind the flag memorial, with members of New London Fire Department's Engine Company 1 and a fellow Guardsman. (Photo by Maj. Chuck Strong, 85th Troop Command)

A Letter of Thanks to Connecticut Guardsmen

September 11, 2002

Dear Members of the Connecticut National Guard,

This morning I woke up, telling myself that it was not September 11th. That would be tomorrow. I would have one more day to not think and remember what I watched that day.

I stood on my beach on Long Island, and saw only one tower. Only one. There was an amount of smoke, but only a single tower stood where I knew my friends and relatives should have been. I kept trying to see the second one, the North Tower. With everything in my being I willed it to be there. But instead, the South Tower began to fall. With an amazing force, I watched as thousands of people, trapped inside, died. There was nothing I could do. In respect, I chose not to stare, but to turn my head and pray silently, and with tremendous disbelief. As I looked up once again, I saw an amount of smoke that was huge beyond my ability to calculate, fill the entire atmosphere for miles up north and south. These were the people that worked there, I thought.

The next evening, there was a rainbow

that filled the sky, filling the same atmosphere in the same way as the smoke from the falling of the towers. It was huge, beyond my ability to calculate. I knew from my high school science days, that the refraction of light creating the colors was created by the particles in the atmosphere. To my mind, the particles were the people from the towers.

The days following the attack were difficult for us on Long Island, as we could not get off due to the closing of the roads and bridges. There was a quiet that I could not really remember before. There were no planes going in or out of LaGuardia or Kennedy. Every few minutes there was silence and then there was more silence, instead of the roars and screams of jet liners making their constant every few minutes' descent. My neighbors and I waited in that silence in small frightened huddled groups by front doors and across fences to hear from our families and friends. Cell phones and broadcast TV were not functioning that well without the antennae that once stood on top of the South Tower. Every time I thought of that, I thought of the time I saw George Willig's name written in magic marker on the top of the WTC. In that eerie silence we cried, worried, tried to comfort each

other, and began to realize what was really happening. And we all waited to hear what was going to be next. Most were expecting a nuclear attack to follow. Most of us still do. I do not have to tell you what we heard. There were over three thousand dead, and we did not know who did this to us. And there was more than that. There was the walking wounded. We are countless in numbers. We are America.

I write this in the Library of Three Rivers Community College. I am here for many reasons. One reason I moved away from Long Island is because I needed to get away from all the sad. I didn't get too far. My new neighbor downstairs lost her husband in 9/11. We are all of America.

But I was telling myself that I had one more day to not remember. And then I drove by the memorial that stood in front of the National Guard building. (*The New London Armory*) All of the other flags I would not let myself see. It was not today. I had one more day to not remember. But I saw those flags. It looked to me that there was a flag planted in the ground for everyone who died that day, all in neat orderly cared about and thought about and remembered rows. There were flags representing our servicemen and women. There were flags all over the place.

Flying proudly, strongly and in numbers that reminded me of the dust and the tears and the pain and the loss. There were more flags, set out with more determination and strength than I had ever seen in one spot. And there was the one flag that was attached to the armored vehicle in front of the building that had the missing towers on it. All the missing people. All the people we loved and lost. And the towers themselves. We so loved them, too. We really did. Anytime we came home, they were there. We had to pass by. Anytime we were at the beach, they watched over us. Anytime we looked up, just about, they were there. Standing tall. Watching over us. Now, standing tall, watching over all the flags, and all of the people, and all of the loss, was a single National Guardsman, at attention. He seemed to me to be saluting. He was taller than the towers, I thought. He really was. And for the first time since 9/11/01, I felt safe. I cried and called out "Thank you!" He said

"You're welcome."

And I cried because I was safe.

Thank you.

Maureen Gismerick

Being in New York one year after 9/11

SGT. 1ST CLASS DEBBI NEWTON
STATE SENIOR PANCO

It was a strange day. It wasn't anything you could easily put your finger on, but it was strange.

Everyone and everything at the Hartford Armory was quiet. It was like everyone was waiting for the other shoe to drop, for the phone to ring telling us there was another attack on the one year anniversary of that fateful September day in 2001. But the other shoe didn't drop. The phone didn't ring. It was just quiet.

And that was a good thing.

I had tickets for the New York, Baltimore game at Yankee Stadium that night, and that was one game I did not want to miss. I was hoping there wouldn't be any problems, any emergencies that would keep me from that game, on that night, in New York. I know it sounds weird, but being in New York was one very small way I could tell the terrorists they hadn't gotten to me, and an equally small way to show my support to New York.

So, with no emergencies to stop me, I left work on 9/11/02, met my friends, and we were off to New York. And that's when things started getting stranger.

A strong windstorm kicked up while we were on the road. Between Stratford and the New York border, tree branches littered the Merritt Parkway. We were forced to stop three times because huge trees had been uprooted and were blocking the highway. But we made it to New York without incident, and the wind died down. It was almost like Mother Nature was paying her respects to a city that had already been through the unthinkable.

We parked the car in our usual spot at Yankee Stadium and headed down the street to one of the local sports bars. Even in there, it was quiet. There wasn't the usual pre-game jocularly that regulars to Yankees games have become accustomed to. There was one guy selling American flags to people to wave during the game, but we decided to wait until we got outside to buy ours from the Disabled American Vets. They were sold out by the time we went back.

Figuring security was going to be even tighter than usual since 9/11/01; we headed to the stadium a bit earlier than usual. And the lines were very long to get in. We went through the security point, having to take



An American flag recovered from Ground Zero is brought onto the field at Yankee Stadium by New York firefighters, EMTs, police officers and National Guardsmen. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Senior PA NCO)



Police officers, firefighters, EMTs and Port Authority Officers unfurl an American flag on the field at Yankee Stadium on 9/11/2002. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Senior PA NCO)

off our baseball caps so security personnel could look in them, opening my small waist bag, and taking the lens off the camera so they could check and make sure I wasn't bringing in any contraband.

Once inside, it was still quiet. I figured the place would be packed, sold out. But it wasn't. I guess people didn't like the weather, were worn out from the events of the day, they were scared, or they just wanted to stay home with their families that night. And you can't blame them. I remember being very worried about how my mom was going to take the news that I would be at Yankee Stadium that night. She had been very worried when I went to Philadelphia last December for the Army/Navy game thinking that it wasn't a safe place to be. But she looked at me when I told her about my New York plans and just said, "That's probably the safest place you could be." Moms will surprise you every time.

We got to our seats and it was still quiet, and empty by Yankee Stadium standards. I was looking forward to the memorial ceremony that was getting ready to take place. All I knew for certain was there would be a tree planting ceremony in Memorial Park. The bronze plaque next to the tree had pictures of the World Trade Towers, the Pentagon and emergency services vehicles engraved on it, and reads: "We Remember. On September 11, 2001, despicable acts of terrorism were perpetrated on our country. In tribute to the eternal spirit of the innocent victims of these crimes and to the selfless courage shown by both public servants and private citizens, we dedicate this plaque. These valiant souls, with unfettered resolve, exemplify the true character of this great nation. Their unity and resilience during this time of distress defined American heroism for future generations. Dedicated by the New York Yankees September 11, 2002."

As quiet as Yankee Stadium and New York had been since we arrived, it was about to get even more so. Several New York firefighters, police officers, Port Authority

Police and National Guardsmen began walking onto the field carrying an American flag that had been recovered at Ground Zero. It was difficult to take pictures right then. I had to keep reminding myself, "Right now you're a journalist. Do your job. Cry later." But it wasn't easy. The eyes got misty anyway.

When I got back to my seat after taking photos of the opening ceremony, I discovered the reason I was there. It was to meet the family sitting in front of me.

The Fusco's are from West Chester County in New York and had been on the water in their boat on Sept. 9, 2001 taking pictures of the New York skyline, including the World Trade Towers. They went back to the same spot one year later to take the photos again, this time with the towers missing.

They were a terrific family, and I've emailed Tony (the dad) a couple of times since then. He and his wife have four kids, all of whom were at the game, as well as another family. As soon as they found out we were in the National Guard, it was like we had known them forever. We talked about a lot of things, including what the National Guard does. They didn't really know, like most people who aren't connected to the military. They were even surprised to find out how great a role the Guard had played at Ground Zero, and that National Guard units from Connecticut and New Jersey were staged to go into Ground Zero on a moments notice to help in any way they were needed.

Tony told me his wife was very nervous about being at Yankee Stadium that night. Apparently, a lot of people were as there were only about 32,000 people in attendance. I guess her need to be with her family that night outweighed any trepidation about coming in to the city.

We also ran into a young soldier from Company A, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry, CTARNG at the game. I regret to say I can't remember his name - we called him Alpha Company all night. He was there with some

friends from the Berlin Volunteer Fire Department, one of whom is also in the Guard.

There were firefighters, EMTs and police officers from many different towns, cities and states there that night, showing their support and respect to their fellow emergency service workers from New York.

Towards the end of the game, the Fusco children pulled out a large American flag to wave during the singing of 'God Bless America.' When they were done with the flag, they started folding it like a blanket. But we asked them to bring it to us, and standing on the stairs of Yankee Stadium, we taught them how to fold the flag properly. Tony asked us to wait while he got his video camera out so he could tape how it was done for future reference.

And then the strangest thing of all happened. And I didn't really even know it until we were halfway home.

The game had gone into extra innings. Eleven innings in fact. The Yankees won, scoring five runs to Baltimore's four. The two teams had scored a total of nine runs in eleven innings.

Nine - eleven.

A strange ending to a strange day.

But a day I'm glad I experienced the way I did. I was able to see the resilience of New Yorkers, and the American people.

And in my own small way, so small in fact that many didn't even know, I was able to show my support to New York, and to tell the terrorists they hadn't gotten to me. That we as a nation are strong, and together we can survive anything.

It was a strange day. But one I'm glad I had. One I'm glad I shared with people who mean a lot to me. One I'm glad I shared with the new friends I met that night.

And one I will never forget.



Color Guards from West Point, Groton Sub Base and the United States Air Force participated in a 9/11 Memorial Tribute at Yankee Stadium. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Senior PA NCO)

A New Yorker remembers... 'A Million Stories'

ANTHONY S. FUSCO
A.S. FUSCO & ASSOCIATES, NEW YORK

The five year old boy, visiting his father's jobsite, looked up high towards the clouds. Two new skyscrapers were just being built. His eyes opened wide with amazement, and as the Red, White and Blue Flag at the top waved at him, he waved back.

He turned to his father with an innocent excitement and announced, "That's gonna be a million stories!" His father gave a chuckle and tugged him away saying, "...only a hundred or so."

"But daddy, I bet you can reach Heaven from way up there! Can we go up and take a picture of God?" "When it's finished, son," he said with a smile on his face. "Right now, God's busy protecting the men I work with."

A few short years later the family ventured in, to the great city of tall shiny towers. They climbed to the 'Top' and they peered through 25-cent binoculars. They viewed Lady Liberty, Queen of the Harbour and all around the Island of Manhattan. When suddenly the boy cried out "Mommy, look at that dove floating by!"

His mother said, "Honey, that's just a piece of paper from one of the offices below. But it does look like it's floating up to heaven, doesn't it." And just then the clouds broke with a ray of sunshine on the boy's face as if to say he knew something the others just couldn't understand.

Some years further on, the young boy, now in his teens and his eyes full of love, took his girlfriend to the 'Top'. He said "Some day, I'm going to marry you." She smiled sweetly at him. She thought he was kidding. Just then, he turned to grab a piece of paper from the floor. He fashioned it into an airplane, threw it out over the city and said, "As God is my witness I WILL marry you!" They watched the plane float up and it disappeared into the clouds.

The Millennium approached, the young man was now in his thirties. The strike of midnight only moments away, when HIS four-year-old boy asked, "Mommy, where is daddy?" She replied, "He just went downstairs to his office to get something for you." And when his father returned, the little boy joined in the shouting..."3-2-1" and everyone cheered a Happy New Year. He turned to his mother with a great big hug and said, "I love you Mommy, Happy New Year."

His dad took both the boy and his mom by the hand, led them out from The Windows restaurant up to the 'Top' and said to them both while staring into the heavens, "I love you both, and our baby to be, more than anything on Earth. No matter where, and no matter when, as God

is my witness, I'll love you and watch over you forever."

He bent down to his son, told him how HIS father helped build these twins that reach up to Heaven and whispered in his ear, "Make a wish to God." He gave his son a piece of stationary from his company a few floors below. The boy turned around and as he put the piece of paper to flight he said, "I wish someday I can be a construction worker, just like GrandPa, and build a skyscraper like he did!" Then he said, "Daddy, can I take a picture of you and Mommy with God!"

His mother smiled sweetly. But by now, like her husband, she understood... that way up, in the night, a million stories from earth, and near to the heavens God is listening and watching over her family.

Twenty-one months later the boy was at school. His baby brother, at home, was watching television, papers blowing everywhere. He said, "Mommy, look, birds, big building!" She turned to her toddler, with tears in her eyes and she caught herself. She paused for a moment and choking back the tears with all she could muster... said, "Yes honey, those are doves going to see God way up there in Heaven."

She held tightly, the picture from up in that star-filled New Year's night. Then she remembered what he said at the top. "...I'll love you and watch over you forever." She closed her eyes, and began to cry for her love, the man they may no longer see.

Now the steel and the stone and the glass are all gone. More blue sky fills the space where they stood. But the Men and the Women who narrowly escaped, the Bold and the Brave helping to rescue them, the Husbands and the Wives and all of the Children whose lives in some way great or small have been effected, all have stories to tell. Those stories are the threads that intertwine us... like the fabric of our flag.

There are a million stories, way up in the sky, all waiting to be told. Telling those stories keep the flags in our hearts fluttering and the flames of our hopes flickering.

God Bless America.

(Editor's Note: I was fortunate enough to have meet Tony Fusco and his wonderful family on Sept. 11, 2002, one year after the horrific events that inspired this story. It is printed here with the permission of it's author and was Copyrighted in 2001.)

Same skyline one year later



The photo of the World Trade Towers was taken from a boat on Sept. 9, 2001. One year later, on Sept. 9, 2002, the skyline has changed. (Copyrighted photos by Anthony Fusco, A.S. Fusco & Associates, New York, used by permission)

Connecticut Military Dept. remembers 9/11 with solemn ceremony

SGT. 1ST CLASS DEBBI NEWTON
STATE SENIOR PA NCO

They came to remember. They came to pray. They came to be with others they had shared that horrific day one year ago with. They came to pay tribute to all who lost their lives.

With nearly 200 members of the Connecticut National Guard and state military department silently watching television as the names of the victims of 9/11 were being read at Ground Zero in New York, John Wiltse, Director of Emergency Management, thanked everyone for coming.

At 8:46 a.m., the time the first tower was struck, he asked everyone to share in the National Moment of Silence. Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno expressed his appreciation for everyone who had come together during the past year to work hard for the protection of the state.

"Today's a somber day," Cugno said. "But you all came together, the military department, public health, state police and all the other agencies that worked round the clock for months, and you made the governor, Connecticut, and most importantly, the country, very proud. Thank you all for you did and all you continue to do in this very trying of times."



Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno, Adjutant General, and John Wiltse, Director of Emergency Management. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, Sr. PA NCO)



Members of the Connecticut Military Department watch the television as the names of the victims of 9/11 are read at Ground Zero. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Senior PA NCO)

QRF stands up for heightened threat level, one week after completing training

STAFF SGT. STEVE MARKOWSKI
65TH PCH

While many Connecticut residents bid farewell to summer by planning cookouts, and family activities, a group of Connecticut Army National Guardsmen spent Labor Day weekend training, and standing by in case of emergency.

Within days of completing their initial training, they were called to standby status again, after intelligence information caused the nation's threat level to be raised.

On Labor Day weekend, 30 members of Company C, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry completed Quick Reaction Force training at Camp Rowland. Over that long weekend, they stood ready in case any real-world missions were needed that weekend. Labor Day weekend turned out to be quiet, but a week later, many of these same infantrymen were called up for a force protection mission.

Just prior to the anniversary of the September 11th attacks, a monitored increase in electronic "chatter" by terrorists and other information collected by US intelligence networks prompted officials to raise the nation's threat level from yellow to orange. On the Office of Homeland Security Advisory System, the elevation of colors indicated an elevation from "Significant Risk of Terrorist Attacks" to "High Risk of Terrorist Attack." There was no specific threat, but the Homeland Security Council felt the elevation was necessary, and President Bush agreed.

At approximately 1:30 p.m. on September 10, 2002, Attorney General John Ashcroft and Governor Tom Ridge, President Bush's Advisor for Homeland Security, were explaining to reporters why the increase was made. At that same time, the Connecticut Guard's chain-of-command was in action, ensuring that the QRF would be on duty later



A QRF soldier checks his rifle, prior to deploying on a security mission from Camp Rowland. Several teams of soldiers deployed around the state, checking security at armories and other facilities. The scenario used for the training indicated that terrorist cells were trying to break into armories to steal uniforms and ID cards. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Steve Markowski, 65TH PCH)

that day at Camp Rowland.

"We were told to have the QRF ready by 1900 Hours. They were ready by 1830 Hours," said Lt. Col. Ron Welch, who said he was impressed at how quickly the Guardsmen were ready for duty. "The average soldier in the QRF is a college student, or a professional with a career outside of the military. But, they all responded ahead of time."

Nine full-time Guardsmen and 16 part-time Guardsmen were called for duty on September 10th. They stayed on alert through September 11th, until the immediate threat level was lessened.

"We had two squads, a commander and a first sergeant," said Welch, who served as the operations officer for the QRF. "But, once word got out that members of the unit were being called up, we had an overwhelming number of phone calls from other unit members, volunteering. They wanted us to know that they were ready to go, if needed."

Welch said he was impressed by the speed of the response and the extremely high level of morale.

"This was an actual alert. It was not a test," Welch said. He added that because the soldiers had completed the QRF training on the first weekend of September, in a MUTA-7, the process of calling them up on September 10th was expedited.

"Some of the equipment was already pre-positioned, and our alert rosters were extremely up-to-date," Welch said.

He also indicated that because the QRF training was recent, the briefing process went smoothly, and the Guardsmen went through some brief refresher training in Rules of Engagement for Homeland Defense operations.

"Upon arrival, they were given a threat briefing in terms of what could happen on September 11th, based on intelligence from various sources. We had all the potential threat data for the US and abroad. I went over everything, just to get them focused," Welch said. According to the intelligence data, more airline uniforms had been stolen, and some government vehicles had their license plates stolen, Welch said.

The troops were busy over those two days. Just as they had done during their initial QRF training, they checked security at armories and other facilities around the state. There were no problems, Welch said. The Guardsmen also made themselves visible on September 11th, helping reassure the public that Connecticut was safe.



The view over southeastern Connecticut from a Blackhawk helicopter. In addition to practicing air-mobile loading and off loading, the flights allowed the soldiers to get an aerial view of facilities that might be targets of terrorist attacks. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Steve Markowski, 65TH PCH)

"They conducted presence patrols, to let the public know that they were on duty and ready to protect them," Welch said. "They were totally mission-focused. The collective attitude was 'We know why we're here, and we know what we need to do.' Their heads were totally in the game... 100 percent in the game."

The 26 members of the QRF called up on September 10th, were among 30 who trained in "Operation Labor Day." The

MUTA-7 got them ready to respond. They had already gone through Homeland Defense Specific Individual Replacement Training. Among the important areas they covered that weekend was "Commander's Guidance on Rules of the Use of Force", Welch said.

They had also been briefed by an FBI anti-terrorist specialist, and they received training from the Connecticut Office of Emergency Management concerning the Incident Command System, which is the national standard in responding to emergencies. Other topics they had already covered included responding to a chemical attack, reacting to sniper fire, establishing roadblocks, air-mobile operations and searching buildings.

Also on their training weekend, they practiced their marksmanship skills by firing M-16 rifles and M-9 pistols at the

Groton Naval Base firing range. And they practiced on the simulators in the Engagement Skills Training facility at Camp Rowland.

The members of Co. C, 1st Bn., 102nd Inf. represented the second iteration of QRF training conducted by the Connecticut Guard. Over the Independence Day holiday weekend, members of the 192nd Field Artillery went through the same training, becoming the first QRF in Connecticut.

(Editor's Note: Many of the Guardsmen who were called to duty for September 10th and 11th helped set up flags at the New London Armory to mark the anniversary of the September 11th attacks. This included 3,007 small US flags in front of the building, representing the people lost in the attacks. A Guardsman in a Humvee, with an automatic weapon, stood guard outside the building on Bayonet Street.)



Spec. Stanley Wawronkiewicz, of Company C, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry, holds onto his rucksack while riding in a Blackhawk helicopter over southeastern Connecticut, during Quick Reaction Force training. In addition to practicing air-mobile loading and off loading, the flights allowed the soldiers to get an aerial view of facilities that might be targets of terrorist attacks. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Steve Markowski, 65TH PCH)

Civil Support team offers help in 'unique' way

STAFF SGT. STEVE MARKOWSKI
65TH PCH

This year's annual training period for the 14th Civil Support Team (Weapons of Mass Destruction) was busy, but much less eventful than its 2001 AT period. That suited the members of the unit just fine.

The team had been on AT status during the second week of September 2001, training to learn the new skills team members would need in the event of a terrorist attack in Connecticut. On September 11, 2001, unit members received the news that terrorists attacked several sites, including the nearby World Trade Center. With the scope of the destruction and the proximity of Ground Zero, the State of Connecticut responded in whatever ways were possible. This included the CST, which sent a team to New York's capital city.

"Within seven hours we were in the New York State Emergency Operations Center in Albany, to help coordinate Connecticut support to New York," said Maj. Paul Ciesinski, acting commander of the CST. "We

stayed there for five days."

The unit, which was still quite new at the time, then began assisting fellow Guard members in Connecticut's Homeland Defense effort.

"We helped train elements of the 102nd Infantry and the 242nd Engineers. The team provided training and skills that allowed them to support maintaining security at our airports and nuclear facilities," Ciesinski said. Approximately 120 Guard members were trained in that effort.

In the year that has passed since the 9-11 attacks, the CST's mission has been brought to the forefront. Unit members want civilian authorities to understand that they are here to help.

"The mission is to assist civilian incident commanders in response to WMD attacks," said Ciesinski, acting commander of the 22-person unit. "The civilian authorities remain in charge, and we're there to assist, because we might have expertise in nuclear, biological and chemical weapons that the average first responder might not have."

Ciesinski has spent many years as a first responder in his civilian career as a Hartford police sergeant. Other unit members also have experience in first response, such as fighting fires and handling hazardous materials. The CST allows these professionals to integrate skills they've learned in their respective careers, establishing a solid base of experience and skill that defies the unit's age.

"We need to be certified and to be credible to a local first responder," Ciesinski said, adding that the HazMat training at the State Fire Academy brings the unit closer to that goal. "Every time we complete a class, we take a leap forward toward being able to support the civilian incident commander."

Given the nature of their complex role in assisting civilian authorities, and the hazardous situations they will face in a response, CST members must complete an extensive list of courses. Among the courses the unit has completed in the past year are: Emergency Response to Terrorism, OSHA

Hazardous Waste Operations, and Emergency Response.

Many of the classes are given by the Connecticut Office of Emergency Management and the Connecticut Fire Academy. But, the CST members also train at the national level, including at the US Army Chemical School and with the Soldier, Biological, Chemical Command at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

At the Connecticut Fire Academy, during an AT week in September, they completed a course on how to enter a HazMat Site and mitigate the effects of it.

"We can go in and identify the agent, and take samples, and then prevent it from spreading," Ciesinski said.

With the threat of chemical and biological attacks, the CST members need as much training as possible working in Level A protective suits – the safest suits available for responding to hazardous materials. The Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) allows the wearer to operate safely inside the suit, but the CST sets a 20-minute limit on operating inside the suit. During their AT period, unit members practiced operating at this high protective posture.

"You feel like you're Gumby when you're walking in that suit. You're very limited in movement. You might have to climb up a flight of stairs, or go up a ladder. It can be very dangerous," Ciesinski said.

In a hazardous materials incident, the CST might be called in to collect samples that will be analyzed to determine what is causing people to get sick or to die. In such cases, a Level A suit will be essential.

"If people are hacking, coughing and dying, and you don't know the cause, you need to take every precaution and be as prepared as possible," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Straite, NBC Reconnaissance NCO. "We would need to take every precaution, and be as protected as possible. In a chemical environment, if the chemical has eliminated the oxygen, the MOPP suit is ineffective. An MP40 mask filters oxygen, but does not have its own oxygen source,

so it's not effective in this situation."

The Guard members also trained in Level B suits, which are less bulky, and are mainly used to resist to hazardous liquids. Level B suits also contain an SCBA.

Of the 22 people in the CST, eight are assigned to enter a "hot zone." Other unit members receive the training, but they're counted on to provide support in the forms of communication, logistics, medical and command.

"If you equate it to a battlefield, you don't want the support staff to be in the battle. Without the command and control, the units involved in the battle would not be effective," Ciesinski said. If a team enters a hot zone, a rescue team will always stand by, in case anything happens. Also, the medical team is there to provide support to members of the CST if they need it, but may be able to assist civilian medical responders who may not have as much expertise in recognizing symptoms of WMD attacks.

There are two types of CSTs – full time ("Heavy") and part time ("Light"). Connecticut currently has a part-time team, but there are bills in Congress to give every state in the country a full-time team. If that happens, Connecticut will have another asset in preparing for and responding to different types of emergencies.

"The teams are designed primarily for WMD, but we have a secondary 'all-hazards' mission to support civilian incident commanders. This includes HazMat incidents not caused by a WMD event, a transportation accident, such as if the high-speed Acela train were to crash, and major natural disasters, such as hurricanes or ice storms. This would include anything that is beyond the capabilities of local first responders. If they ask for support, we can provide it," Ciesinski said.

"We're soldiers and airmen first, but we help in a unique way," he said.

The 14th Civil Support Team is currently looking for soldiers and airmen who are interested in preparing for and responding to WMD incidents.



Sgt. 1st Class Michael Straite practices collecting chemical samples while wearing a Level A protective suit. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Steve Markowski, 65th PCH)



Putting on a Level A protective suit is a team process. Maj. Paul Ciesinski (L), acting commander of the 14th Civil Support Team (WMD), gets help from Staff Sgt. Antonio Almodovar (R). In the background, Sgt. 1st Class Michael Straite puts on a suit with help from Master Sgt. Ken Rubano. Ciesinski is a Hartford police sergeant in his civilian career. Almodovar, a member of the CST's NBC reconnaissance team, is a New Haven firefighter. Straite, the NBC reconnaissance NCO, is a full-time member of the CST. Rubano, senior operations NCO, is assistant director of environmental health for the City of New Haven. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Steve Markowski, 65th PCH)

103rd Student Flight asks members 'Bring a friend to drill'

STAFF SGT. CAROLYN A. ASELTON
103rd FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Family and friends of the unit's newest recruits visited the base during the July training assembly to learn firsthand a little more about their loved one's enlistment.

The more curious of the visitors took advantage of the opportunity to do that from an A-10 cockpit.

"I want to fly it," Terri Patella said. "It was so tempting to press the buttons." Patella's son, Lincoln, who will work on base in aircraft electronics, begins basic training Sept. 3.

Lt. Col. Pamela Titus, student flight OIC, 103rd Fighter Wing, greeted the visitors standing with their airmen as they sought shade under a static display's wing by the front gate. She explained to the group of parents, sisters, brothers and friends the 103rd Fighter Wing's mission to provide close air support, combat search and rescue and drug demand reduction support.

From there the group crossed the street to the hangar to see up close and sit in the unit's A-10 Warthogs.

Once inside the hangar the visitors were careful to walk as instructed inside the yellow lines painted on the cement.

As two maintenance workers rolled stairs toward the jet, a third fielded the group's questions.

"What's the glass made of?"
"Can it be refueled in the air?"

The questions continued from the cockpit as the visitors climbed the stairs, sat in the pilot's seat, and exited down stairs on the other side of the aircraft.

Titus said having every student sit in the cockpit before they leave for basic training is just one more way for her to instill a sense of pride in that student about their unit. She said emphasizing to the students the wing's mission and providing A-10 exposure helps to ensure the student's success during their training as well as encourages them to take on leadership roles versus "just surviving." "It shows what they're doing to their family. It gives them a little bit of pride," she said of having the students' friends and family visit the base.

According to Titus, the amount of recruits in the student flight varies every drill due to new enlistments and students leaving for basic training.

During a well-timed tour of the engine shop the group had an opportunity to look



The friends and family of the unit's newest recruits wait in line for a turn to sit in the cockpit of an A-10 during the July training assembly. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Carolyn A. Aseltion, 103rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

through the Vice President's limousine, which some found as interesting as the jet engines. The group concluded the afternoon with refreshments at the picnic tables under a tree by the communications building.

There Parker said he joined the unit for the work experience and because of his long term interest in aircraft and flying.

"I think it's great. He needs it," Tiffany Parker said of her brother's enlistment.

Plastic modelers society helps Air National Guard unit capture history

STAFF SGT. STEPHEN MCKAY
103rd FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In June, model makers from the Connecticut branch of the International Modelers Society, located in Stratford, were recognized for their contributions to the expansion of the Flying Yankees Museum corridor, which is located in the operations building at Bradley Air National Guard base. The society's members built scale models and donated them to the unit for addition to the newly expanded display.

"We are very excited to have participated in this exciting project," stated Gil Hernandez, President of the International Plastic Modelers Club, Stratford Conn. Chapter.

Command staff commemorative coins were given to all of the model makers by Col. Daniel Scace, commander, 103rd Fighter Wing, as a token of appreciation for the important contributions

made to preserving the history of the Connecticut Air National Guard, the third oldest Air National Guard unit in the nation.

"The 118th Fighter Squadron was established in 1917 and has a long and distinguished history of military service. Models are the most practical and interesting way to visually represent aircraft, showing scale in relationship to other aircraft," said Lt. Brian Boeding, pilot 118th Fighter Squadron. "The aircraft models show extremely fine detail and truly add an element of reality to the museum experience."

Today, the Connecticut Air National Guard continues to add to its proud and distinguished history as the 118th Fighter Squadron flies A-10 Thunderbolts in close air support in various hot spots around the world.



Models on display in the operations building at Bradley Air National Guard base. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Stephen McKay, 103rd FW PA)



Scale model of an F-100. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Stephen McKay, 103rd FW PA)



INFORMATION

Security Begins With You!

The United States is a country open to all people. But it is also a country that is constantly under attack. We must protect ourselves. We must protect our information. We must protect our security. We must protect our future. We must protect our way of life. We must protect our freedom. We must protect our democracy. We must protect our values. We must protect our identity. We must protect our privacy. We must protect our lives. We must protect our families. We must protect our communities. We must protect our country. We must protect our world.

Connecticut A-10's Practice Desert Rescue

PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS LUKE JOHNSON
NAVAL STRIKE AND AIR WARFARE CENTER PA

As an aircraft hit by enemy missile fire is lost over the Northern Nevada desert the perilous search for the downed pilot begins.

A Navy F-18 Hornet has just spotted the downed pilot and is providing cover because opposing forces are in the area and are closing in fast. Suddenly, a Connecticut Air National Guard A-10 "Warthog" screams in low across the desert floor and takes out the enemy regiment, just as a rescue helicopter swoops in to pick up the pilot.

The scene played over and over in June during Desert Rescue 10 at Fallon Naval Air Station in Nevada. This whole scenario was designed to ensure that all branches of the military are on the same page when it comes to combat search and rescue (CSAR) so that any pilot no matter what branch of service can be confident they will be rescued.

Desert Rescue brings hundreds of service members from all branches of the military to the Northern Nevada desert to use the latest CSAR tactics and equipment. This exercise not only brought in CSAR units (including the Connecticut's 118th Fighter Squadron) but it also incorporated Special Operations, and opposing forces from the Nevada National Guard and marine units. The exercise even included a small boat unit for a CSAR exercise on an area lake.

"The fact that it was dedicated CSAR at night and in the desert, like where we often deploy, made it invaluable training for us," said Capt. Ron Latorre, pilot, 118th Fighter Squadron.

Conceived from the lessons learned after Operation Desert Storm in 1991, Desert Rescue is the largest CSAR exercise in the U.S. This event was the

10th year that Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center in Fallon Nevada has hosted the event. The objective of Desert Rescue is also to provide participants the opportunity to share ideas, and hone in their CSAR skills and tactics.

Desert Rescue provides an opportunity for units that do not work together to learn each other's capabilities and train together said Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert Campi, a CSAR instructor at NSAWC.

"It brings all of the forces together to practice with each other, and basically it breaks down a lot of barriers that the different services have," said Campi.

Classroom instruction is plentiful during Desert Rescue. The first week is spent briefing and learning what each unit's capabilities are. Experts from many different combat areas give briefings to aircrews.

"The classroom would give us a big overview and then right after the theoretical was over we got to go right out and practice it," said Col. Russ Thomas, director of operations, Headquarters Connecticut Air National Guard.

During the flying portion of Desert Rescue, different branches of the military can really get a feel of the other services capabilities.

"An Air Force unit can get on web page or pull up a publication and learn how the Navy does their tactics ... but until you actually fly with them you can't see it for yourself," said Campi.

Opposing forces also play a crucial role in Desert Rescue by providing a realistic threat out on the Fallon range. The opposing forces give the aircraft a threat presentation and make it more difficult to rescue the downed pilot.

"One of the hardest things is to rescue a pilot. There is a lot going on; you have an air war going on above and also you have a ground war going on. And you also have a survivor; you don't know where he is, and you have find out what kind of condition he is in and rescue him," said Campi.

For the A-10 pilots, whose aircraft's long

loiter time and deadly 30mm Gatling-gun are unmatched in a combat fighter platform, the skills they refine at Desert Rescue could be tested any time they fly in combat.

"As a general rule, any time we go out to a real world [downed aircrew] situation, the A-10's role is as the rescue commander," said Latorre. "In the simplest terms we bring the entire rescue package over to find the guy, get the guy, sanitize the threats so the helicopters can get to the guy, and then protect the rescue force on the way out."

One of the biggest challenges for rescuing a downed aviator is communicating with them. Each branch of the military has its own slightly different way of communication.

"Everyone has slightly different communication gear, and you have to work out the bugs so that we can talk to each other," said Campi.

Connecticut's Col. Thomas had an

opportunity to test the communications as he took a turn being rescued as part of the training.

"It was great to actually work with the radios and equipment you will have in a real situation," said Thomas who had to make due with a dead radio battery before he was extracted. "It was good for me to see the rescue from the ground point of view and then go back up and train in the air."

Campi stressed that the most important aspect of Desert Rescue is to ensure that all branches of the military are on the same page when it comes to rescuing a downed pilot in a hostile environment.

"We use real world scenarios, and this is the most realistic training that aircrews are going to see," said Campi.

(Editor's note Capt. George Worrall, 103rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs, contributed to this story.)



The downed aircrew member (laying on ground) awaits the approaching special forces troops who will take him to safety during Desert Rescue 10. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Luke Johnson, Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center Public Affairs)



A Desert Rescue exercise participant tries to make radio contact with the search aircraft while avoiding detection by other exercise participants. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Luke Johnson, Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center Public Affairs)

Preparing for PLDC by walking in the woods

**SPEC. ELVIS R. BRAGA
65th PCH**

On a hot afternoon in Stones Ranch at East Lyme, Conn., members of the 143rd Forward Support Battalion were in the thick brush practicing land navigation and map reading.

One of the most difficult tasks in the Primary Leadership and Development Course (PLDC) at Fort Dix, NJ is land navigation. Soldiers in this unit were practicing to make PLDC a little easier and to familiarize themselves with land navigation.

Before any soldier went out into the woods they were given instructions on how to read a map and how to navigate through the land with just a map and a compass. The briefings covered everything from map security, plotting grid coordinates, pace count and even a panic azimuth in case a soldier happened to get lost looking for their point.

Instructors were PLDC graduates and well prepared for their briefings. After the briefings, soldiers were given a practical exercise where groups of three or four

soldiers had to find points on a map. During the practical exercise, specialists would be team leaders to prepare for PLDC.

The course was very similar to what is done at PLDC except that the points were a little farther away and the terrain was a lot thicker.

Sgt. Geanabelle Bermudez, material storage handler, was instructing the soldiers and mentioned the importance of reading a map.

"Land navigation separates soldiers from leaders. That is why it is important at PLDC that all soldiers who make it through the class are well trained in that area," said Bermudez.

"Anything challenging prepares you for a real life situation," said Sgt. Megan E. Hayes, a recent Distinguished Honor Graduate from PLDC, who also received awards for highest physical training score and outstanding leadership. She attributed NCO's in her unit and the academy at Fort Dix to winning those awards.

"A soldier has to get hands on training in land navigation before they are well skilled. Land navigation is still one of the toughest parts of PLDC and what makes it more difficult is that it can't just be read in a book," said Hayes.



Soldiers of 143rd Forward Support Battalion familiarize themselves with the intricacies of map reading while conducting Land Navigation training at Stone's Ranch. Land Navigation is a vital part of any soldier's basic military knowledge. (Photo by Sgt. Greg Harrison, 65th PCH)



Soldiers of the 143 FSB attempt to orient themselves using a compass and terrain association during the field portion of Land Navigation Training held recently at Stone's Ranch. Land navigation is a vital part of soldiering and a skill that requires a great deal of work to become proficient. The FSB has been conducting map readin and land navigation classes and exercises to better prepare its soldiers for PLDC where land navigation is a major factor in receiving a pass or fail during the leadership course.(Photo by Sgt. Greg Harrison, 65th PCH)



Sgt. Richard A. Zanetti and Spec. Paul N. Bennett of the 143rd Forward Support Battalion explain how to effectively use a compass during Land Nav training at Stone's Ranch. (Photo by Sgt. Greg Harrison, 65th PCH)



Sgt. Geanabelle Bermudez of the 143rd Forward Support Battalion conducts an AAR with soldiers of her unit following the field portion of Land Navigation training recently held at Stone's Ranch. (Photo by Sgt. Greg Harrison, 65th PCH)



Soldiers of the 143rd Forward Support Battalion familiarize themselves with the intricacies of map reading while conducting Land Navigation training at Stone's Ranch. (Photo by Sgt. Greg Harrison, 65th PCH)



Staff Sgt. Chet Goralski coaches Spec. Carlos Velasquez during the 169th Aviation Battalion weapons qualification at Blue Trail Range in Wallingford. (Photo by Spec. Marian Rosado, 65th PCH)

Different origins, not so different reasons

SPC. JOSEPH WALLER
65th PCH

People join the Army National Guard for many reasons, ranging from wanting to serve their country to making a little extra money or financing an education. Many serve because of a combination of these, and there are many other reasons for which we all choose serve.

You may have, or even be serving with someone who wasn't born in the United States and has citizenship with another country. There are many such soldiers in the Connecticut National Guard, as in the rest of the United States' military.

Sgt. 1st Class Tony Gentles, a logistics sergeant originally immigrated to the United States from Jamaica in 1971. He decided to join the service in 1982 as an infantryman.

"I started out for education and I supported what the United States stood for, I found it was something that I liked, something that I wanted to do," he said.

With 21 years in service, Gentles has no regrets. "You are always going to run into people who aren't looking out for you," he said. "Overall it has been a good experience. I believe that you get as far in life as you can by your own effort. If you are doing the right things, you should be good to go."

Both Spec. Alexandra Lurci, an aircraft refueler, and Spec. Edyta Shim, a helicopter mechanic came to the United States for different reasons.

Lurci, 22-years-old, arrived in the United States in 1992 from Poland. She moved to be with her family and took up graphic design in college and works as a secretary. After three-and-a-half years in the National Guard she says, "I think it's great, I like my unit. They are down to earth, like a family."

Shim, 21, who moved from Poland in 1993 because her family won a visa lottery and wanted to see what the United States was like, agreed.

"I think it's exciting and fun. G Company treats each other with respect, and really take care of each other," she said. Shim joined the National Guard in 1998 and is now going to school for a degree in psychology.

Spec. Carlos Velasquez, a Chinook mechanic; at 27-years-old, Velasquez is originally from Lima, Peru. He came to the U.S. in 1988 and joined the active Army in 1996 and then the National Guard in 1999.

"At the time (he joined) there were no jobs. I saw one of the commercials, you know, 'be all that you can be.' I talked to my wife and we went to see the recruiter. I love it. It changed my life, my way of thinking, and it stopped me from wasting my time. Over the years the Army has been good to me, there are a lot of things that I am proud of because of the National Guard."

All these soldiers had their own reasons for joining, and many of those are the similar to the reasons other soldiers have all chosen to serve. Despite being from different parts of the world, soldiers are all serving for the same reasons.



Spec. Alexandra Lurci coaches Spec. Edyta Shim during weapons qualifications. Both soldiers are originally from Poland and have chosen to serve in the U.S. military. (Photo by Spec. Marian Rosado, 65th PCH)

Citizenship now easier for foreign-born soldiers

SPEC. JULIE M. NICOLOV, TESIA WILLIAMS AND
STAFF SGT. MARCIA TRIGGS

President George W. Bush ordered the naturalization of non-citizen soldiers be expedited for those who have served honorably in the military since Sept. 11.

Active-duty soldiers can now apply for citizenship without meeting the normal residency or time-in-service requirements.

Normally, a non-citizen in the U.S. military had to be a permanent resident in the country for at least three years before he or she could apply for citizenship. However, the president signed an executive order July 3 waiving that three-year waiting period.

"Generally, it makes it easier for non-citizens serving on active duty in the military to become citizens," said 1st Lt. Jason A. Denney, a legal assistance attorney with the XVIII Airborne Corps.

Former presidents have enacted similar executive orders during times of conflict as far back as the Korean War.

"It's normal during times of war," Denney said.

Since Sept. 11, about 30,000 non-citizens have served in the U.S. military. Nearly 6,000 soldiers are non-citizens working in positions that don't require a security clearance, said Lesley Lord, Army liaison to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The executive order also applies to Army Reserve and National Guard soldiers on active duty, Lord said.

Spc. Alonso Zoquier, a light-wheel mechanic and driver for the 1st Corps Support Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., is currently applying for his citizenship.

He was born in the Dominican Republic and lived there until he was 12 years old.

"I came to the United States in 1990 and finished school in Puerto Rico," Zoquier said.

Zoquier finished high school and 18 months of college in Puerto Rico before he joined the Army in January 2000. He said he enlisted as a way to support the country that adopted him.

Zoquier said he thinks the executive order is a positive step for the military.

"I think it's great. If you have somebody defending your country, he should have all the rights as a citizen."

Non-citizen soldiers who want to apply for citizenship can visit their local Personnel Support Battalion to get detailed information," Lord said.

"Personnel centers will be able to assess the situation and provide the contact that isn't possible over the phone," said Lord.

It is now more important than ever that personnel clerks ensure that the word "honorable" is placed in the character of service block on the Application for Naturalization, according to officials at the INS. Omission of the word will cause a delay in the processing of a soldier's application for citizenship, officials added.

A soldier's guide to citizenship application is available on the Internet at [HTTPS://WWW.PERSCOMONLINE.ARMY.MIL/TAGD](https://www.perscomonline.army.mil/TAGD) under "citizenship" in the alphabetical directory, Lord said.

Soldiers can also make an appointment with their legal assistance office for help with forms and procedures required by Immigration and Naturalization Services.

"Basically we review their forms, make sure everything is complete, and give them Department of Defense authorization to have fingerprints made," Denney said.

Before visiting the legal assistance office, soldiers are asked to visit www.ins.gov and print out and complete forms N-400 (Application for Naturalization), G-325B (Biographical Information) and N-426 (Request for Certification of Military or Naval Service). They should bring the completed forms, two immigration photos and a copy of their green card to their legal services appointment.

"Once everything is complete, we will mail the packet to the right INS office," Denney said. "We also do a cover letter so the packet will be from us as attorneys on the soldier's behalf."

After a non-citizen's paperwork reaches INS, it usually takes about eight months for the person to receive citizenship. That time frame is the same even for military personnel.

Because of the expected surge in the number of applications for citizenship from military personnel, soldiers can expect to wait longer for their applications to be processed, Lord said.

"The executive order does not move soldiers' citizenship applications to the front of the line," Denney said.

It also does not waive the requirement that applicants be of good moral character; know English and have a knowledge of civics. Nor does it waive the application fee, which runs up to \$310.

(Editor's note: Spec. Julie M. Nicolov is a member of the 22nd MPAD, Tesia Williams is with PERSCOM Public Affairs and Staff Sgt. Marcia Triggs is senior military correspondent with the Army News Service.)

Connecticut National Guard receives bonding approval for Nett Hall

MAJ. JOHN WHITFORD
SENIOR STATE PAO

The Connecticut National Guard has received bonding authorization of \$900,000 for the new Robert B. Nett Leadership Hall building to be constructed at Camp Rowland in Niantic, Conn.

These funds are to finance the state's share of the costs associated with construction of the new hall. The new classroom facility was designed using federal funds. The state funds are required to maintain the committed federal construction funds.

The new facility will have a meeting room, a small kitchen and storage rooms for equipment. This building should be completed by summer 2003.

The building is named after Connecticut's own Medal of Honor recipient, Col. (Ret.)



Artist's rendering of Col. Robert B. Nett Leadership Hall to be built at Camp Rowland (Connecticut Guardian file photo)

Robert B. Nett.

Nett Hall is just one of many new buildings that will be constructed at Camp Rowland. Camp Rowland is on a 10-year master plan. If you have not been to Camp Rowland lately, take the time to visit and see the current modernization and construction that has taken place.

"The facility will be able to seat a battalion

size element of up to 350 soldiers in one seating," said Maj. Gerald Lukowski, the Facility Management Officer of the Connecticut Army National Guard. "It is the only facility that we will have in our inventory that will be able to accomplish a task of this nature."

A groundbreaking ceremony will take place in November.

Danao receives Valley Forge Cross

2ND LT. CELINE T. MARINI
STATE ASSISTANT PUBLIC INFORMATION'S OFFICER

Maj. Joseph Danao, a member of Headquarters 143rd Area Support Group, was recently recognized by the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS), during the NGAUS Annual Conference, which was held in Long Beach, California September 6 to 9, 2002. Danao was one of a few National Guard members from across the country who was awarded the Valley Forge Cross.

The Valley Forge Cross was named for an episode in the nation's early history, synonymous with the Militia and exemplifying great courage. The Valley Forge Cross became part of the NGAUS Individual Awards Program in 1973.

It is presented to members of the National Guard who have distinguished themselves by performing acts that otherwise might not be recognized due to the National Guard's peacetime status.

Danao's nomination for this award resulted from his actions on Monday, November 26, 2001 at the scene of a serious motor vehicle accident.

Danao preformed an assessment of the accident and immediately rendered care to the most seriously injured person, a young man who was trapped in the vehicle.

Danao entered the badly damaged vehicle, began to assess the patient, and provided cervical spine immobilization. At this time, a paramedic arrived on the scene with equipment and Danao administered oxygen.

He stayed in the car with the unconscious patient and provided both medical and emotional support by continuing to communicate with the eighteen-year-old victim.

The fire department performed the extrication by removing the passenger door, the roof and a portion of the steering wheel.

After the extrication was complete, Lifestar Helicopter took the unconscious patient to Hartford Hospital.

Danao is married to Sgt. Maj. Laura Danao and they live in Salem, Conn. with their two children.

Connecticut remembers 9/11 at the Big E



Remembrance Day at the Big E drew thousands to the fairgrounds in Springfield, Mass., including the Connecticut Army National Guard soldiers standing with the American flags. Remembrance Day was a way to honor and remember all those who lost their lives on 9/11/01, their families and friends, and all the US servicemen and women who are fighting the war on terrorism around the world. (65th PCH photo)



Members of the 1st Company Governor's Horse Guard travel the parade route at the Big E on Connecticut Day. The largest country fair in New England, the Big E hosts a day during each fair to honor the New England states. The Big E is also known as the Eastern States Exposition. (65th PCH photo)

Visit the
**Connecticut
Guardian**

on-line at

www.ct.ngb.army.mil

Connecticut Military Department News

Charles T. Stanton Jr. - Soldier and Athlete

Pfc. HOWARD L. MILLER
TROOP HISTORIAN

First Company Governor's Horse Guard (Eighth in a series of profiles of the Adjutants General of Connecticut)

Charles Thompson Stanton Jr. was born in Stonington, Conn. on Nov. 30, 1839.

He entered Yale College in 1857, having been tutored by Dr. David Hart. At Yale, he belonged to the Neireid Boat Club, was commodore of the Yale Navy, and rowed on the crew of 1859, the first Yale crew to beat Harvard. All six oarsmen subsequently served with distinction as officers in the Union Army. During this period Stanton was known among his crew as "Iron Arm."

Stanton graduated from Yale in 1861 and personally began recruiting a company for service in the war. On Sept. 5, 1862 the Twenty-first Connecticut Volunteer Infantry Regiment was mustered into Federal Service. Capt. Charles T. Stanton was in command of Company E.

The regiment participated in the battle of Fredericksburg that December and subsequently saw action at the siege of Suffolk and other actions in Virginia.

On May 16, 1864 the 21st was engaged at the battle of Drewry's Bluff, an action that left 107 of its officers and men killed, wounded or missing.



Maj. Charles T. Stanton, Jr. from The Story of the Twenty-First Regiment, Connecticut Volunteer Infantry During the Civil War Press of the Stewart Printing Co., Middletown, Conn. 1900

In that engagement, Stanton received a minie ball through his right elbow, fracturing the joint and producing a severe wound. He refused aid for a time after he was wounded and finally, when taken from the field held his sword in his teeth, allowing no one to carry it for him.

Stanton was promoted to major on July 25th, but was discharged in September due to his severe wound. He returned to Connecticut and spent time in New York receiving treatment for the recovery of the use of his arm.

On May 2, 1866 he was named adjutant general on the staff of Gov. Joseph R. Hawley. The Connecticut National Guard then had a strength of 4,141. Although he only held this post for one year, upon Stanton's resignation, Gov. Hawley said "You have discharged the duties of a most important office to my extreme satisfaction."

Stanton returned to Stonington where he remained until 1869. From that date until April, 1885 he was engaged in sugar planting in Louisiana, where he was joint owner of a plantation, eight miles south of New Orleans.

When Stanton returned to Connecticut, he was appointed Customs Collector for the port of Stonington and, except for four years of democratic administration, held that office until it was abolished in 1913.

Stanton had always taken a strong interest in military, civic and church affairs. He was a member and former commander of the J.F. Trumbull G.A.R. Post of Stonington. He never married and had three sisters. Although he had suffered from heart trouble for many years, his death at home in Stonington, Nov. 26, 1915 was unexpected.

First Company Governor's Foot Guard announces 2002 Soldier of the Year

Major Commandant John O'Connell announced that the 2002 Soldier of the Year for distinguished service to the First Company Governor's Foot Guard was awarded to Staff Sgt. Michael Condon from Portland.

The commendation sites Condon as a dedicated, committed member of the First Company Governor's Foot Guard who gives freely of his time to its members and operation of the Company. All tasks are undertaken and are accomplished with energy, enthusiasm and a goal of excellence.

A percussionist with the Foot Guard band, Condon has undertaken the responsibility of providing the drum cadence for the Color Guard in the performance of ceremonial functions. As President of the Enlisted Members Association and Chair of the Publicity Committee Condon has utilized his position to introduce innovative programs to enhance unit cohesion and highlight the achievements of the Command.

Condon serves with distinction and is a credit to himself, the First Company Governor's Foot Guard, the State Militia and the State of Connecticut.

The award was presented on Aug. 2 at Camp Rowland at the end of summer encampment for the State of Connecticut Militia units.



Marching in Memory

The 1st Company, Governor's Foot Guard steps off during ceremonies held in Southington to mark the first anniversary of Sept. 11, 2001. This was only one of many ceremonies held throughout Connecticut to remember those who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks. (Photo courtesy 1st Company, Governor's Foot Guard)

Lincoln Center Convergence



Members of the 1st and 2nd Companies, Governor's Foot Guard Bands march into Lincoln Center in New York as part of the Lincoln Center Convergence. The two bands participated in the event with 12 choirs and seven marching bands. (Photo courtesy of the 1st Company, Governor's Foot Guard)

How the military is ch

(Reprinted with permission from Health Bridge, a quarterly publication of Waterbury Hospital)

When you have your next screening mammogram at Waterbury Hospital or The Be Well Center at the Brass Center Mall, technology first used by the U.S. military will help doctors interpret your test results.

It's not about patriotism; it's about peace of mind.

Computer-aided detection, or CAD technology, first digitizes your analogue films and then uses pattern recognition software to analyze the digital images. The CAD reader then prints out a report – a kind of extra sensitive road map – for your doctor to use alongside your films to make the best interpretation possible.

Key in visualizing calcifications

The CAD reader, known as the CADX Medical System "Second Look," helps your doctor to identify abnormalities such as tricky, hard-to-visualize calcification.



Breast Cancer risk factors

Having one or more of these risk factors does not necessarily mean you will develop breast cancer. They are indicators that you may be at greater risk than other women. Some of the factors are in your control, others are not. Do what you can to decrease your risk.

- **Being female** – Males do get breast cancer, although the percentages of women diagnosed with breast cancer are much higher.

- **Age** – Breast cancer is rare in women under 20 years of age and increase with age. Women have a much more significant incidence of breast cancer after the age of 50.

- **Ethnicity and Race** – White non-Hispanic women have the highest incidence rate for breast cancer, and Korean women have the lowest. African American females have the highest mortality rate, while Chinese women have the lowest.

- **Age at onset of menstruation** – The younger a woman is when she starts menstruating, the higher her risk of breast cancer.

- **Age at first full-term pregnancy** – The older a woman is when she has her first child, the greater her risk.

- **Lactation** – Breast cancer rates are lower in populations in which breast-feeding is common and long lasting. Breast cells capable of lactating are cells that have fully

matured, which contributes to a lower risk of breast cancer.

- **Age at Menopause** – The later you enter menopause, the greater your risk.

- **Personal history** – Having had breast lesions, exposure to radiation (especially to the chest), having had breast cancer before and having a family history of breast cancer all increase a woman's risk for breast cancer.

- **Lifestyle** – Some studies have shown a correlation between use of oral contraceptives (birth control pill) and having hormone replacement therapy and increased risk for breast cancer. Weight gain after the age of 18 is associated with increased risk of post-menopausal breast cancer. Physical inactivity also raises one's risk for breast cancer, as does alcohol consumption. Most doctors recommend no more than seven alcoholic beverages per week for women.

If you do not have any of the above risk factors, do not get a false sense of security. While these risk factors are meant as a guideline to help people live healthier and less risky lifestyles, nearly three-quarters of the women diagnosed with breast cancer had none of these risk factors, and 80 percent did not have a family history of breast cancer, the most common risk factor.

Breast Self-Exams im

The American Cancer Society recommends that all women over the age of 20 examine their breasts once a month. Regular exams will help you know how your breasts normally feel so that you are more likely to know when an abnormality exists. Most lumps are found by women during their monthly exams. If you find something different, contact your doctor right away. Early detection is the best way to survive breast cancer.

When to do a breast self-exam

The best time to do a self-exam is two to three days after your period.

How to do a breast self-exam

1. The best way to do a self-exam is to lie down and flatten your right breast by placing a pillow under your right shoulder. Place your right arm under your head. You can also do a self-exam while in the shower, using the same position as if lying down.

2. Use the pads of your middle three fingers on your left hand (where your fingerprints are, not the tips). Feel for lumps using a circular, rubbing motion in small, dime-sized circles without lifting the fingers. Powder, oil or lotion can be applied to the breast to make it easier for the fingers to glide over the surface and feel changes.

3. Press firmly enough to feel different breast tissues, using three different pressures. First, light pressure to just move the skin without jostling the tissue beneath, then medium pressure pressing midway into the tissue, and finally deep pressure to probe more deeply down to the ribs or to the point just short of discomfort.

4. Completely feel all of the breast and chest area up under your



changing mammography

Every woman who has a screening mammogram at the mall or the Hospital has her film run through the CAD reader, noted radiologist Anita Bourque, MD, Chief of Mammography at Waterbury Hospital. Women who require more detailed studies, also known as diagnostic mammography, may also benefit from this technology.

Wartime meets peacetime

Computer-aided detection was created by a U.S. military pilot to determine the locations of enemy arsenals on aerial maps. He later adapted the technology for medical use when his mother was diagnosed with breast cancer, Dr. Bourque explained. "It's great to know the technology has a place in saving lives," she added.

Dr. Bourque noted that the CAD reader does not replace the expertise of the radiologist reading your films. "It's complementary technology. It will never replace the skill of the radiologist."

(Editor's Note: Check with your doctor and hospital to see if this technology is available in your area.)

Breast Cancer warning signs

While early breast cancer does not normally cause any pain that would trigger the desire for testing, there are other signs to look for and some can be subtle. If any changes are noticed, contact your doctor right away for an appointment.

Things to watch for:

- A lump or other change felt or seen during monthly breast self exam
- A discharge from the nipple
- A change in the color or feel of the breast skin, areola or nipple
- A change in the size or shape of the breast
- A lump or thickening in or near the breast or underarm area.

If you detect any of these warning signs, do not delay in getting a medical opinion. Delays could only make things worse.

Male Breast Cancer

While uncommon, men do get breast cancer. Men tend to be older than women when they get breast cancer, and the disease is usually in a more advanced stage when it is diagnosed.

All types of breast cancer that women get can be seen in men, although some are very rare.

A painless lump is typically the first symptom of breast cancer that a man will have, and it is usually the man himself who finds it. The lump generally is found beneath the areola, where the breast tissue is concentrated. A lump is not generally the only symptom.

Men are more likely than women to have nipple discharge, sometimes bloody, and signs of local spread including nipple retraction, fixation to the skin of the underlying tissues and skin ulceration.

Because many men are unaware they can get breast cancer, it is often into later stages when a diagnosis is made. But because of the smallness of a man's breast in comparison to a woman's, monthly self-exams can make it easier to detect for a man. But it also means that breast cancer in a man is more easily able to invade other nearby structures such as the chest wall.

Even if your doctor does not recommend it, men should conduct breast self-exams on a regular basis and see their doctors if they find any abnormalities.



important fact of life

armpit and up to the collarbone and all the way over your shoulder to cover breast tissue that extends toward the shoulder.

5. Use the same pattern to feel every part of the breast tissue. Choose the method that works best for you:

• Lines: Start in the underarm area and move your fingers downward little by little until they are below the breast. Then move your fingers slightly toward the middle, and slowly move back up. Go up and down until you cover the whole area.

• Circles: Beginning at the outer edge of your breast, move your fingers slowly around the breast in a circle. Move around the breast in smaller and smaller circles, gradually working toward the nipple. Don't forget to check the underarm and upper chest areas, too.

• Wedges: Starting at the outer edge of the breast, move your fingers toward the nipple and back to the edge. Check your whole breast, covering one small wedge-shaped section at a time. Be sure to check the underarm area and upper chest.

6. After you have completely examined your right breast, examine your left breast using the same method and your right hand with a pillow under your left shoulder.

7. You may want to examine your breasts or do an extra exam while showering. It's easy to slide soapy hands over your skin and to feel anything unusual.

8. You should also check your breasts in a mirror looking for any change in size or contour, dimpling of the skin or spontaneous nipple discharge.



Guard finds new trail to weapons qualification

SPEC. JEFFREY AUSTIN
65TH PCH

Some gun enthusiasts may consider shooting a family sport, but for members of Connecticut Army National Guard (CTARNG) the skills needed for the firing of an M-16A2 rifle to "qualify" may mean the difference between life or death on the battlefield if duty calls.

On Saturday, Sept. 7, soldiers from the Detachment 1, Company G, 169th Aviation Battalion participated in qualifying at The Blue Trail Range.

Previously, The East Haven Rifle Range is the place where the Connecticut Army National Guard would send its members to qualify.

However, the temporary closing of the East Haven Rifle Range for upgrade and modernization has caused the CTARNG to select The Blue Trail Range.

According to the Blue Trail Range pamphlet, 50 firing points at 200 yards are the scene of center fire matches and is design for the training and qualifying range for the military.

The range is nestled along the canopy roads and grassy fields of Wallingford,

Connecticut.

During this time of greater patriotism, many civilians find ways of serving their country. The owner of the Wallingford establishment "Blue Trail Range" is proud to host CTARNG members participating in qualifying training.

Serving the local community for more than 30 years and the CTARNG since the mid- 1980's, David Lyman is a third generation owner of The Blue Trail Range.

The range was first owned by Lyman's grandfather, Elihu Lyman and began as a test range for testing gun sights that Elihu Lyman developed and sold.

Lyman said he is glad to have the CTARNG at his range and his customers like to see the CTARNG training.

According to Lyman, civilians changed their attitude about safety after the terrorist attacks in New York City, Washington D.C. and in Pennsylvania.

He also said his customers have the feeling of safety when CTARNG members are around.

Soldiers fired the M16A2 rifle on the 25-meter range during the morning and afternoon.



Sgt. Nelson Rodriguez checks his shots during weapons qualification at Blue Trail Range in Wallingford. Nelson is a member of the 169th Aviation Regiment. (Photo by Spec. Marian Rosado, 65th PCH)

Lyman also said that other soldiers have fired weapons on the range during their private time.

Lyman took a moment to reflect on his pride and patriotism since he sees a bright future and a closer working relationship with the CTARNG.

According to Lyman, he believes he will probably see more members of the CTARNG at this range because as time goes by, the government will step-up the requirements for weapons training. Therefore, the future of the guard will be to use this range more.

Moreover, Lyman mentioned the service his two brothers gave to this country. His older brother Wally served in Vietnam, and Charles served time in the Air Force.

However, Lyman pointed out his enthusiasm for the sport and safety of weapons firing that has allowed him to develop leagues and classes that all members of the guard can attend. Men's Pistol Class, High Power Rifle and Twilight Leagues are a few.

While standing alone by the side of a fence and observing his fellow soldiers adjusting their paper targets on the 25-meter range, Sgt Ryan M. Stanley, fuel specialist, expressed his thoughts on the day's events.

"Today is a beautiful day. This is his first time we used this range and it was very convenient to set up for our purposes. The scenery is very nice and the location is excellent for the pistol range," according to Stanley.

Pfc. Ann Cullison of the 169th Aviation Regiment checks her targets during weapons qualification at Blue Trails Range in Wallingford. Looking through the scope, Cullison is able to tell where her shots hit and is then able to make adjustments on the weapon. The aviation unit was using the site as an alternate training facility while the East Haven Rifle Range is temporarily closed for upgrading and modernization. (Photo by Spec. Marian Rosado, 65th PCH)



Guard combat veterans may be eligible for VA medical benefits

The Veteran's Health Administration has issued a directive which establishes the policy and procedures for offering hospital care, medical services and nursing home care to recent combat veterans for a two-year period beginning on the date of the veteran's discharge for any illness, notwithstanding that there is insufficient medical evidence to conclude that their illness is attributable to their military service.

National Guard and Reserve personnel who were activated and served in a theater of combat or in combat against a hostile force may be eligible. Many activated reserve and National Guard personnel lose routine access to military health care and assistance as soon as they leave active duty, and may require VA services immediately. National Guard and Reserve personnel are eligible for VA health care if they were ordered to active duty by a federal declaration, served the full period for which they were called or ordered to active duty, and released or discharged from active duty under other than dishonorable conditions.

For more information, and to determine if you are eligible, contact the VHA and refer to VHA Directive 2002-049.

VA starts "List Server" for news releases, latest information

WASHINGTON – Anyone interested in obtaining the latest information from the Department of Veterans Affairs – from news releases and fact sheets to other products from VA's Office of Public Affairs – can sign up for automatic distribution through e-mail.

Called a "list server," the device will provide veterans, reporters, veterans' service organizations and interested Americans with VA's written products within seconds of their formal release in Washington.

Anyone wishing to receive materials distributed by VA's new list server can subscribe by going to the following Internet address: http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/opalist_listserv.cfm and providing a name and an e-mail address.

To discontinue service, subscribers go to the same Internet address and click the appropriate "button."

Camp Rowland PX takes cares of soldiers

MAJ. JOHN R. WHITFORD
SENIOR STATE PHOT

The Camp Rowland PX is focused on taking care of the soldiers' needs. Sandy Blackstone has been running the Camp Rowland PX for the past year and a half and takes pride in providing for the soldiers.

"I love what I do. I took this job to help soldiers and their families," said Blackstone. "My military background is one reason why I took this job."

Sandy's typical week begins on Monday, a day when the PX is closed. She conducts inventory, may have to travel to Westover, Mass. in her own vehicle and pick up merchandise for the store and plans for the week. Wednesdays are delivery days and she is there unloading those delivery trucks. She arrives to work daily long before the PX opens and stays long after the PX closes to get all the bills in order as well as answer all e-mails.

As you visit the Camp Rowland PX, you will notice more merchandise for the soldier, retiree or family member to purchase. Another thing that you will notice is that the store is constantly being re-organized to help everyone find the items they are looking for. In addition, you will see Comment Boxes in the store for the soldier, airmen, family members or retiree to make suggestions. Those comments are sent to the General Manager and the GM responds to those comments and needs.

One thing that Sandy wants to get out to the units is that if any unit buys in bulk the unit will receive a discount.

"Any purchase a unit makes in the store helps the unit's MWR fund, a portion of the AAFES sales goes to MWR."

Another thing for everyone to look for is advertising. During the week of Family Day, August 13-17, 2002, Sandy put out an advertising flyer letting people know of



The staff at the Camp Rowland PX very often decorate the store based on the activities taking place in teh Connecticut Guard. This sign, made of American flags, welcomes soldiers and airmen from around the country to Joint Task Force Husky. (Connecticut Guardian file photo)

certain sales going on at the PX. That week alone the PX did more than \$40,000 in sales and on Family Day alone the PX did more than \$17,000 in sales.

"We'll do more flyers," said Blackstone. "I'm looking to do a holiday season sale running from Thanksgiving to Christmas."

All this is being done with only three employees, Sandy as the only full-time person and two part-time. Sandy is looking to hire one additional part-time person.

Sandy is no stranger to the Connecticut National Guard. Her father Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Bruce Blackstone, her brother Maj. (Ret.) Carl Blackstone, her sister Sgt. (Ret.) Jean Olsen, and her sister, Cindy Hyatt who retired from the Wisconsin National Guard as a sergeant., were all in the Connecticut National Guard at one time.

"As we move forward with the construction

at Camp Rowland, in the master plan is a new Post Exchange building. The building will be quite larger and able to carry more merchandise, more uniforms, more clothing, electronics and food to go.

"I'd like to thank my family, Col. Gary Thorstenson and Lt. Col. Wayne Kowal for backing me and telling me that I could do it and I've done it," said Blackstone. "The Guard is my second family, I've renewed old friendships and made new friendships."

The hours of operation at the Camp Rowland PX are Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sundays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., closed on Mondays.

The Camp Rowland PX is dedicated to taking care of the soldiers, airmen, retirees and families. Sandy's motto is, "If I don't have it I'll get it."

VA Benefits Guide now available online

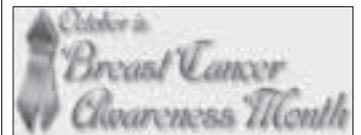
The Department of Veterans Affairs has made its comprehensive benefits guide available for free on the Internet. The website for this guide is www.va.gov. For those who do not have access to the Internet, this book can be purchased through the Government Printing Office for \$6.95.

"Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents" is a 100-page handbook describing benefits provided by the VA and an overview of programs and services for veterans provided by other federal agencies. This handbook also includes a listing of toll-free numbers, World Wide Web information resources and VA facilities.

Most veterans are eligible for healthcare and burial benefits. Many are also eligible for home loan guarantees, educational assistance, vocational rehabilitation, life insurance and compensation for service-connected disabilities.

This guide explains how to access many of the benefits on-line. For instance, it provides a Web address and instructions for enrolling via the Internet into the VA healthcare system. The book describes in detail the priority for care and services available. Seperate sections describe specialized services available to Gulf War veterans and those exposed to Agent Orange or radiation.

The Montgomery GI Bill and other education benefits are explained in depth. Burial benefits and employment services are also covered, as are rate charts for the various forms of compensation the VA provides.



COMMISSARY & EXCHANGE DIRECTORY

Here is a current directory of area commissaries and exchanges along with their phone numbers. Always call ahead to verify hours as they may change without notice. A valid i.d. card is necessary to use these facilities. Contact your unit administrator if you or your dependants need a card. If you have trouble, contact the State Family Program Office at 1-800-858-2677.

AIR NATIONAL GUARD
East Granby
TUESDAY – FRIDAY:
10:00 – 5:00
SATURDAY: 10:00 – 4:00
SUNDAY & MONDAY: Closed
UTAs: Open Saturday &
Sunday: 10:00 – 5:00
Phone: (860) 653-6994

COAST GUARD ACADEMY
New London
MONDAY – FRIDAY:
9:00 – 5:00
SATURDAY: 9:00 – 3:00
SUNDAY: Closed
Phone: (860) 444-8488

CAMP ROWLAND POST EXCHANGE
MONDAY: Closed
TUESDAY – SATURDAY:
10:00 – 5:00
SUNDAY: 10:00 – 4:00
Phone: (860) 739-9672

COAST GUARD STATION
120 Woodward Avenue
New Haven, CT
MONDAY – FRIDAY:
9:00 – 4:30
SATURDAY: 9:00 – 2:00
SUNDAY: Closed
Phone: (203) 468-2712

WEST POINT, NEW YORK
Exchange Hours:
SATURDAY – WEDNESDAY:
10:00 – 6:00
THURSDAY & FRIDAY:
10:00 – 7:00
Phone: (914) 446-5406
Commissary Hours:
MONDAY: Closed
TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY:
10:00 – 6:00
THURSDAY: 10:00 – 7:00
FRIDAY: 10:00 – 6:00
SATURDAY: 9:00 – 5:00
SUNDAY: 11:00 – 5:00
Phone: (914) 446-5406

SUB BASE, NEW LONDON
Exchange Hours:
MON., TUES., WED.,
FRI.: 9:00 – 6:00
THURSDAY: 9:00 – 7:00
SATURDAY & SUNDAY:
9:00 – 5:00
HOLIDAYS: 9:00 – 4:00
Phone: (860) 694-3811
Commissary Hours:
MONDAY: Closed
TUE., WED. & FRI.: 9:00 – 6:00
THURSDAY: 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.
SATURDAY: 8:00 – 5:00
SUNDAY: 10:00 – 5:00
Phone: (860) 694-2244

WESTOVER AIR FORCE BASE
Chicopee, Mass.
MONDAY – FRIDAY: 10:00 – 5:00
SATURDAY: 10:00- 5:00
SUNDAY: 11:00 – 5:00
Phone: (413) 593-5583

ARMY RESERVE CENTER
700 South Quaker Lane
West Hartford, CT
MONDAY – FRIDAY:
10:00 – 1:00
MONDAY – FRIDAY:
10:00 – 4:00
SATURDAY & SUNDAY: Closed
Phone: (860) 236-3393

Military Matters



LT. COL. JEFFREY SABOTKA
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

Use or Lose Annual Leave

Leave and earning statements (LES) indicate use or lose annual leave.

Employees, supervisors, and time keepers be advised on the policy for restoration (carryover) of use or lose annual leave.

Before forfeited annual leave may be considered for restoration, annual leave must have been scheduled in writing before 30 November 2002. Employees and Supervisors should project the appropriate time off into your work schedules before the end of the leave year, 11 Jan 2003 to

prevent the loss of Annual Leave. Employees requesting to restore forfeited annual leave in excess of 240 hours into next calendar year (2003) must be able to verify the leave was requested prior to 30 Nov 02 then subsequently denied. To request restoration, the employee must provide the HRO with all denied SF 71 leave requests and supervisor documentation (Memo) showing the overwhelming need of the agency to deny the originally scheduled leave due to mission requirements.

If you have questions contact the Human Resources Office, Capt. Jim Guerrero, (860) 878-6738 or email to: james.guerrera@ct.ngb.army.mil

Closing the Back Door: *Successful recruiting in trying times*

SENIOR MASTER SGT. BRIAN J. BAGLEY
RECRUITING AND RETENTION SUPERINTENDENT,
HEADQUARTERS CONNECTICUT AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Recruiting has just completed a difficult year thanks to National Guard members stepping up to the plate. Even with the trying times after 9-11, we have ended the year with a net gain. The significance of this is how all of the unit members and the recruiting staff have worked extra hard to make mission.

The Connecticut Air National Guard ended the year with more than 130 accessions. As a result of fewer active military members separating and returning to Connecticut, we have had to focus more and more on the non-prior service market. We have succeeded at this in a large fashion with more than six of every ten enlistments from non-prior service recruits. This is not only the case in Connecticut, but nationwide.

This means that most of our new members have never served in the military and require basic training as well as technical training. The higher ratio creates another challenge in the form of training. Since over the past few years we have been straining the technical training system, the increase in requirements will be stress the system even further.

Reduced availability of school dates and the increased requirements places the unit and recruiting in a difficult situation. The time delay from joining, starting training and returning to the unit has increased, and in some cases training is not available. The result is that new members have to make difficult choices in regards to their future career fields.

With these additional difficulties facing

recruiting, units share the challenges. We are now, and for the foreseeable future, faced with increased training requirements for our duty sections. Each of our training managers have stepped up to the plate and are facing the challenges with great enthusiasm.

We are now looking into the future to determine next year's goals based on current vacancies and potential losses. We could experience a large number of losses in career fields whose training availability is already slim. We are faced with increasing our focus on Security Police, Firefighting and a host of other career fields.

Once again, we need all of your assistance. As I have already said, you have done a great job in assisting recruiting to meet this year's mission requirements. Unfortunately, this task is one from which we have little reprieve.

We in recruiting know and understand the significant contributions you all have made, not only to recruiting, but to the missions of each of our sections. We thank you and ask you to continue to talk about the Guard with any and all interested parties. Every little bit helps.

In recruiting we sometimes have to contact ten to fifteen potential enlistees to get just one recruit. This is why the more you mention the benefits of membership, the greater chances we have of exceeding our goals and mission for the future. Please talk up the Guard and get the names of interested parties to the recruiters.

In addition to assisting the unit in meeting its staffing requirements, you also qualify for tokens of appreciation for assisting recruiting. Once again, thanks for all of your support and we in recruiting hope to hear from all of you during the coming year.

Education Essentials: Free Degree

1ST LT. PAUL L. DRAPER
EDUCATION SERVICES OFFICER

The Federal Children's Scholarship Fund (FCSF) has announced a NEW PROGRAM that allows EVERY member of the military to obtain a college degree in Business Administration from a fully accredited university, free of charge, thanks to a new program from Grantham University, a leading distance education institution of higher learning.

Grantham University has also granted FCSF some FULL scholarships for the children of the Military Community.

Grantham University, which celebrated its 51st anniversary this year, is offering an unlimited number of scholarships to all of the nation's soldiers, sailors, airmen and members of the other uniformed services.

The scholarship includes not only tuition, but also all books and software and is calculated to make Grantham completely FREE of cost to military personnel.

Members of the military are eligible to take college courses at a reduced rate through a partial tuition assistance program of the Department of Defense. Normally, individual service members have the burden of paying 25 percent of the tuition plus the cost of textbooks and software. The newly

announced scholarship program from Grantham University covers those expenses the military student normally would have to pay, so the cost of attending Grantham University is zero, or free to the service member.

This is legitimate.

Grantham is a nationally accredited institution that offers mostly distance learning coursework. They cover expenses not covered by tuition assistance and the Montgomery GI Bill, so a soldier can get a free education in Business Administration. They also cover expenses for books. The scholarship fund also apparently has money for family members of soldiers enrolled in Grantham.

The free education is certainly attractive. Soldiers and their family members need to be aware that, because Grantham is not regionally accredited, courses successfully completed may not transfer to other institutions in the vent the student relocates or changes colleges.

For further information on Grantham, check out their website at www.grantham.edu

For further information on education benefits for Guardsmen, contact 1st Lt. Paul Draper, Education Services Officer at (860) 524-4816.

Veterans Day Parade

Saturday
November 9, 2002
Hartford

Bring the family

Homefront



CAPT. ANNE-MARIE GARCIA
DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION ADMINISTRATOR

The Fiscal Year 2002 Connecticut National Guard (CTNG) Drug Demand Reduction Program (DDRP) was dynamic, dedicated, original, outreaching and a force multiplier in Connecticut's strategy to keep our children from ever taking drugs and participating in risky or violent behaviors. The CTNG DDRP conducted three residential Drug Education for Youth Programs (DEFY).

The DEFY 2002 Program was conducted at more than 65 National Sites throughout the United States in 2002 in cooperation with the United States Department of Justice's (DOJ) Executive Office of Weed & Seed and the United States Attorney's Office (USAO). This research based program is primarily funded by the United States Department of Justice. The instructors include educators, police officers, lawyers, Federal law enforcement agents, the United States Attorney John A. Danaher III, Delcie Thibault, the Law Enforcement Coordinator for the United States Attorney's Office and National guardsmen throughout the State of Connecticut.

In defense of Connecticut's children:

The program emphasizes: Drug prevention skills, conflict resolution, goal setting, life opportunities, gang prevention, physical fitness, nutrition and team work.

DEFY is designed and evaluated by the United States Navy Drug Demand Reduction Task Force and consists of two phases, Phase I is a five-day residential summer leadership course for youth 9-12 year old youth. Phase II is a nine-month mentorship program for the Phase I graduates and designed to reinforce the lessons covered during Phase I.

In Connecticut three residential leadership

All communities in the state benefit from the program as the youth of these communities are motivated and molded into good citizens. Many of the youth who have graduated from the program have experienced improved grades in school and have been inspired to achieve excellence, which in turn improves the community. Additionally, obvious benefits are less violence, drug use and truancy.

The benefit to National Guardsman that participate in Drug Demand Reduction Activities is intangible. The satisfaction of helping the young people in the state and watching them grow into good citizens and responsible adults cannot be measured by ordinary standards. It is safe to say, however, that the state receives many benefits from the adults that these children grow up to be. We also have seen a refreshing recommitment by individual Guardsmen to their unit, community and pride in their military job during and after their encounter with the DDRP and in particular with the youth.



DEFY students challenge a Team Building Event called the Web, created by the Connecticut National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Team. (Photo courtesy of DDR)

If your Community Organization, Educational Institution or National guard unit would like to become involved in any of the Drug Prevention Programs that the Connecticut National Guard has to offer please contact Capt. Anne-Marie Garcia or Master Sgt. Melisa Lata at 860-493-2724.

camps were conducted in the summer of 2002 at Camp Rowland in Niantic, Connecticut. Weed & Seed sites from Bridgeport, Stamford, Hartford, Norwalk and New Haven participated. In total, 175 youth and adults/mentors attended.



Being all you can be

CHAP. (COL.) DAVID FEYRER
STATE CHAPLAIN

At a recent conference of Army National Guard Chaplains, we were challenged by an eminent presenter to become responsible agents of positive change.

As we all know, we are faced in life today with constant change and life in the Connecticut National Guard is no exception. Our training is more intense, our planning is more comprehensive and our units are regularly alerted for potential missions.

These changes bring challenges to each and every one of us in the guard. In the words of the old Army slogan we are to "be all that we can be", fulfill our potential.

Something that we seldom recognize is that all of us can be leaders and facilitator of change. All of us have ideas and ideals that can be helpful to accomplishing our missions. We need everyone on the team to contribute their part for us to be a cohesive unit.

For us to deal effectively with change it is helpful for all of us to be sensitive to our own spiritual lives. As we are strong spiritually, we can be more effective in so many other areas of our lives. The chaplain corps are the "encouragers" in the spiritual area. Use your chaplain, use your local pastor or other spiritual advisor but most importantly, grow spiritually and you will be a more effective person, and you will come closer to being all you can be.

TGIF – The Guard Is Family: A fond farewell to friend of Guard families

KIM HOFFMAN
FAMILY PROGRAM MANAGER

On September 30th, the military career of Sgt. Maj. Barbara Montigny, the first female sergeant major in the Connecticut Army National Guard, came to a close. With more than 26 years of devoted service to the National Guard, Barbara has happily entered retirement.

I met Barbara nearly eight years ago when I became the State Family Program Coordinator. At the time, although she was still a military member, she was participating as a volunteer for the Family Program. Her background as an instructor at the former State Military Academy, coupled with her belief in the need for a Family Program, proved to be the start of a great relationship for all of us.

Throughout these eight years, Barbara has been a strong advocate for families and their readiness. Her most recent contributions to their success were marked

during the deployment of the 143d Forward Support Battalion and Co B 1st Bn., 102d Infantry to Bosnia in support of Stabilization Force 10. Barbara was hired on a temporary tour in the Family Program Office and was responsible for the coordination and operation of three Family Assistance Centers.

Her entire career has been marked by notable contributions and sacrifices for others. She epitomizes the saying "service before self." Barbara could always be counted on – no matter what the situation.

I will miss her professionalism, devotion, loyalty and most importantly her friendship. My life, both personally and professionally, has been enriched and I will be forever grateful for what she has so unselfishly given.

The families of the Connecticut National Guard were served well by her efforts and the Family Program has been left a better place because of her.

Happy Retirement Barbara – enjoy every minute of it!

It's not too early and it's never too late....

It's not too early to start planning your unit or base's family gathering for the holidays in December. Get your committee's together during the October drill and make sure that all service members' families are invited to participate in the planning and on the day of the celebration. A note from the Commander or First Sergeant in the monthly newsletter telling of the event is a great way to both extend an invitation and keep them informed.

It's never too late either to get your Family Readiness Group started. Use the opportunity that a social gathering provides to spark interest in the formation of a family readiness group. A family readiness group is so helpful and important during mobilization and deployment as it provides information networks and support systems that are

essential to a successful separation.

If your unit or base needs assistance in putting together a readiness group, contact your State Family Program Office at 1-800-858-2677 or 860-878-6723.

Visit the

Connecticut Guardian

on-line at

www.ct.ngb.army.mil

Epps honored at retirement dinner

From Page 1

emergencies when the Connecticut Air National Guard, under her command, mobilized and integrated seamlessly with our active duty forces. It is history that measures a person's value to their society and creates their legacy. In both of these areas, the Air Guard was in good hands because the General decided early in her career that she wanted more than just a career in the Air National Guard. She wanted a career that made a difference in improving mission readiness and the lives of the men and women she led and served with.

Epps joined the Connecticut Air Guard in June 1976 and served in various positions as a registered nurse, commander, and Assistant Adjutant General for Air and Commander of the Connecticut Air Guard.

There have been many firsts for Epps where she showed that through leadership, hard work and treating all with respect, you can achieve and make a significant difference. She was the first

African-American, and first female to achieve the rank of colonel in the history of the Connecticut Air National Guard.

After completing an active tour at the DOD Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, she was promoted to brigadier general upon her return to Connecticut.

The formal activities began with Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno, Adjutant General, presenting Epps with the Legion of Merit in recognition of her positive impact upon the Air Force and Air National Guard. During Cugno's comments he provided a number of examples of Epps's service ranging from diversity initiatives to her recent assignment of developing and implementing the Connecticut Military Department's Joint Staff. He said he would put forth his efforts to have Epps continue to use her talents to serve the National Guard.

During her comments, Epps thanked many in attendance for being mentors and supporters. Their concern and care were keys to her military success. She thanked Cugno for the opportunity to serve as brigadier general and giving her the command of the Connecticut Air Guard, an organization that is dear to her and one that she will always consider family.



Brig. Gen. Mary Ann Epps spoke about her career, her legacy and the many people who influenced her along the way at her retirement party Sept. 14. (Photo by Capt. James J. Guerrero, HQCTANG)

Retiring Brig. Gen. Epps received plaques and tokens from both in and out of Connecticut as an outpouring of thanks for her 25-plus year's of service. (Photo by Capt. James J. Guerrero, HQCTANG)

Fuel Your Future

Air National Guard
 Contact a Recruiter by email at
recruiter@ctbrad.ang.af.mil

**238TH SUPPLY & SERVICE BN
 REUNION
 HQ 1ST BN 192D ARTILLERY (HERC)**

SAVE THIS DATE: FRIDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2002

It has been four years since our last reunion, and we are due. Come and enjoy the camaraderie of friends who served together in one of the finest units of the Connecticut Army National Guard. The 238th is now history, but the memories linger on. This will be a very informal gathering for reminiscing of old times and re-creating old friendships. So won't you fill out your reservation, mail your check and join us for a memorable evening.

Where? The Gallery of Food & Entertainment
 141 New London Turnpike, Glastonbury (STRIP MAP ENCLOSED)

When? Friday, 15 November 2002

What Time? 1800 Hours (6:00 p.m.) Social Hour 1930 Hours (7:30 p.m.) Buffet Dinner

What's for Class? Social Hour - Hot DOnarves (chicken & veggie chips, scallop & Bacon, meatballs, mini pizza, wings and more)

Buffet Dinner - Chicken Teriyaki, chicken and macaroni lasagna, baked potato, carved roast prime rib of beef and ham, vegetables de jour, tossed salad, rolls, dessert, coffee or tea

Liquor - Open bar 1800 - 2000 hours (6:00 - 10:00 p.m.)

How Much? \$30.00 per person

Make checks payable to "James Wagner".
 Please respond no later than 31 Oct 2002.
 Mail To: James Wagner
 716 Maple Street
 Rocky Hill, CT 06067

CHECK OFF AND RETURN WITH YOUR PAYMENT

NAME _____ PHONE No. _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Number Attending: _____ Amount Enclosed (\$30.00 Per Person) \$ _____

WARNING ORDER

**Connecticut Military Department
 Officer Dining-In**

All Connecticut active and retired Guard and Militia officers invited.

**Office of the
 Secretary of Defense**

**Thursday November 7, 2002
 Aqua Turf, Southington
 Hosted by the 143rd Area Support Group**

**A Guest Speaker from the Office of the
 Secretary of Defense.**

**Don't miss this opportunity to share in a time-honored
 tradition and an evening with a ranking member of the
 Defense Department. Mark your calendar now and watch
 for more information to follow.**

Guarding Your Rights

Legal Affairs: Political Activities of Federal Employees

Capt. Timothy Tomcho
JAG Office

Every soldier should be aware of the restrictions placed upon his or her political activities by the Hatch Act.

Congress passed the Hatch Act in 1939, which included provisions forbidding federal employees from engaging in certain political activities. The purpose of the Hatch Act was to separate the federal civil service and Armed Forces from politics.

After all, federal employees should not be able to use their positions and the federal resources available to them to engage in political activities. Additionally, federal employees, while on-duty, should focus on their jobs, not on politics.

Congress relaxed many of the Hatch Act prohibitions in 1993. Restrictions on the political activities of federal employees still exist. Federal employees **may not** (1) run for office in partisan elections; (2) use official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering or otherwise affecting the outcome of an election; (3) knowingly solicit or discourage political activity on the part of any person who is doing business with that employee's agency; (4) pressure

employees concerning voting, political functions, activities or contributions; (5) engage in political activities while on duty, on government premises, in a government vehicle or while in a government uniform; (6) solicit contributions from anybody else for the purpose of influencing any election for federal office; (7) solicit contributions for personnel services rendered to a political committee without charge for any purpose.

Federal employees are not barred from all political activities. Federal employees, while off-duty, **may** (1) register to vote and vote; (2) express personal opinion (as a private citizen, not as a representative of the Armed Forces) on political candidates and issues; (3) promote and encourage others to exercise their voting franchise, other rights, and express personal opinions; (4) join political clubs and attend political meetings when not in uniform; (5) sign petitions for specific legislation or to place a candidate on the election ballot; (6) write letters for publication expressing personal views on public issues or political candidates, so long as such action is not part of an organized letter-writing campaign or concerted solicitation of votes for or against a political

party or partisan political cause or candidate; (7) make monetary contributions to a political party, organization or committee, subject to other law limiting such contributions.

Army Regulation 608-20, "Voting by Personnel of the Armed Forces," details the duty of a commander to facilitate absentee voting by members of their command, while deployed.

Specifically, commanders at company level will appoint an officer, who is or will be trained, as a voting officer or counselor. The officer appointed should be readily available to deployed members and equipped to give personal aide to voting in federal, state and local elections. The officer shall ensure that an ample quantity of Standard Form 76, "Post Card Registration and Absentee Ballot Request," is available for soldiers upon request. Additionally, commanders must provide qualified (under concerned State law) officers to attest to oaths on the SF 76.

Voting is a right denied to many. All United States citizens should proudly exert themselves to ensure that they exercise all their rights, especially their right to vote, even while deployed. Exercise your rights.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve: 'Mission One' - Your source of information

Lt. COL. (RET.) HARRY RITSON
ESGR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Mission One program provides every Guard and Reserve member with important information about their rights and responsibilities under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, as well as information about services and programs offered by the Connecticut Committee, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

If you have any questions concerning your employment situation, your Mission One Representative should be your first contact. Your Representative should be able to provide information to you and/or your employer, and, if you prefer, also be able to mediate most conflicts by either communicating with you employer or working through your military chain of command. In more difficult situations, your Representative can seek assistance through our local or the



national ESGR Committee Ombudsman. That combination of resources has proven effective by solving more than 98 percent of conflicts here in Connecticut to the satisfaction of both parties.

Usually, most situations are solved through education covering the rights and responsibilities of both the citizen-soldier and the employer. It is important to remember that when you contact ESGR you remain in complete control, and we will take no action without your concurrence.

Another area of support is ESGR's Award Program, "My Boss Is A Patriot". Your Mission One Representative is fully informed on this program, and can supply you with the nomination forms. This is a wonderful way to demonstrate to your employer that you appreciate their support for your military service. It not only provides a series of attractive awards, but it also makes your employer eligible for other programs such as "BossLifts" and "Brunch With The Boss" and other recognition programs.

Your Mission One Representative and his/her contact information is available on the ESGR Poster on your unit's bulletin board.

NGACT: Volunteers needed for several committees

The National Guard Association is looking for a few good people to help out on several of our committees.

We currently have need of people to serve on the NGAUS, EANGUS, Finance and Audit, Legislative, Membership, Public Affairs and Information, Constitution and By-Laws, Fund Raising, ESGR, Family Support, Retiree, Automation and Conference committees.

We are also looking for unit representatives in each of the Army and Air Guard units.

We are not asking for a great deal of time, only what you feel you can give.

There are a myriad of ways you can help your organization: letter writing, monitoring the legislative process, making phone calls, helping at our functions and working in our office.

Please consider helping the NGACT. We have a good core group of people, and the time is now to expand.

There is exciting legislation pending at both the state and national levels that could greatly impact on your benefits in pay, retirement, health care and equipment arenas.

If you are interested in helping out, or want to learn more about what we do, fill out the form to the right and send it to: NGACT, 260 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105.



The National Guard Association of Connecticut
- VOLUNTEER APPLICATION -
PLEASE PRINT

Last Name	First Name	Middle Initial	Rank
Mailing Address		City	State Zip Code
E-Mail Address		Home Phone	Work Phone
Special skills, hobbies, or past experience that would be helpful to the Association			
CIRCLE THE COMMITTEE YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING:			
NGAUS	EANGUS	Finance & Audit	Legislative
Membership	Public Affairs & Information	Constitution & By-Laws	Fund Raising
ESGR	Family Support	Retiree	Automation
Conference	Other		

Health & Fitness

Your Health Matters: *Dental health concerns, Part II*

CAPT. RICHARD SAXTON
DEPUTY STATE SURGEON

Dental problems can make you non-deployable.

Dental problems are considered to be a significant health care issue in the U.S. today.

The National Survey of the Oral Health of Employed Adults and Older Americans (1986) found that fewer Americans were experiencing tooth loss due to caries but with more teeth at risk, a majority of adults also showed signs of periodontal disease.

Periodontal attachment loss of 2mm in at least one oral site occurred in 77 percent of working adults surveyed, and 24 percent had severe periodontal destruction of at least 4mm or more.

It is estimated that 21 million primary teeth restoration and 32 million permanent teeth

restoration in American children within the ages of 5 and 17 are required. So the question you are probably asking yourself right now is "so how does this affect me?" The military dental fitness classification is as follows:

Class 1—Soldier requires no dental treatment

Class 2—Unlikely to have a dental emergency within 12 months

Class 3—Likely to have a dental emergency within 12 months

Class 4—Will have a dental emergency within 12 months

Dental disease and injury is the number one non-battle injury (DNBI) experienced by US Army soldiers. During Viet Nam 144 out of every 1,000 soldiers experienced some type of dental emergency during their tour of duty.

In Operation Desert Storm a significant loss of actual duty days was the direct result of

dental emergencies.

According to Connecticut Army National Guard Health Service Specialist Warrant Officer 1 William Cusack, the CTARNG had 35-40 soldiers that were non-deployable, because they were dental class 3 or lower, (SFOR-10; 6 Nicaragua; and 47 Utah) and only class 1 or class 2 soldiers are deployable assets. You are a non-deployable asset until you do what is needed to bring yourself up to at least a class 2.

The good news is that in most cases this problem can be avoided all together with proper personal oral hygiene, and good nutrition. Floss and brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste. Go to the dentist or hygienist for routine cleaning regularly. Eat or drink calcium rich foods such as milk or



calcium supplements, and stay away from tobacco products (especially chewing tobacco).

So if you ever want to deploy with the CTARNG where you can actually put your long, hard training to use, you are going to have to take care of your teeth. If you don't have dental insurance you can purchase it thru the Guard. Contact your RNCO for more details.

Fit for Life: *Dietary Supplement FAQs*

2nd LT. CELINE MARINI
ASSISTANT STATE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

The following information is provided in response to deaths that have occurred while ARNG soldiers were taking the APFT this year. While not conclusive, it is suspected that dietary supplements were a contributing factor.

Q. What is a dietary supplement?

A. Herbal products, vitamins, minerals, enzymes, amino acids, "performance enhancing" products or "functional foods" like AriZona Rx Memory Mind Elixer or Kava Kava Corn Chips consumed to supplement the nutrients received during normal meals and snacks are considered dietary supplements.

Q. How large is the dietary supplement market?

A. An estimated 123.5 million Americans spend about \$31 billion annually on "natural" dietary supplements and "functional foods." A recent survey showed that 63% of consumers took a vitamin, mineral or herbal supplement in the past three months.

Q. Does the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulate the market?

A. No. IAW the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 (DSHEA), supplements are not considered drugs. They are not required to go through a rigorous approval process to make sure they are safe and effective. In other words, you're on your own when it comes to these products.

Q. What is the market's target audience?

A. By law, supplement makers can say their products treat "natural" conditions: symptoms experienced by healthy people, such as acne, hot flashes, premenstrual

syndrome and memory loss in aging. Many are marketed as weight loss and muscle building aids, but some are also being marketed to prevent cancer, lift mood, and improve sleep, joints, concentration, immune function and sex.

Q. Are there risks associated with taking dietary supplements?

A. Yes. The FDA has over 2,900 adverse-event reports about ephedra, ginkgo, St.-John's-wort, ginseng and thousands of other supplements. These reports include 104 deaths. For every adverse event in its files, the FDA estimates 100 more go unreported.

Q. What dietary supplement is the most controversial?

A. Ephedra (also known as ma huang) products are the most controversial. More than 1,200 complaints about the hundreds of ephedra products on the market fill FDA files.

Marketed as Diet Fuel, EnerGel, Herbalife, Herbal Phen-Fen, Ripped Force and Ultimate Energizer the product claims to increase energy, stamina, metabolic rate, fat loss and sex drive. However, FDA reports tie ephedra to cases of stroke, heart attack, seizures and 70 deaths. Caffeine and heat may amplify ephedra's effects.

Q. Which other products are controversial?

A. While ephedra supplements are raising the greatest worry in the medical community right now, other remedies also concern scientists. Among them:

Andro (androstenedione) is marketed as a "performance enhancing" product.

Marketed as 3-Andro Extreme, Andro-Gen, Andro-Stak, Animal Stak and Nor-Stak, the product claims to increase testosterone production; strength and muscle development. It has been found to upset hormonal balance and actually raise estrogen levels in men while lowering levels of HDL (or good) cholesterol.

Creatine is another "performance enhancing" product marketed as Animal Max, ATP Advantage, Crea-Tek, Mass Action and Teen Advantage Creatine Serum. The product claims to increase muscle capacity, strength and lean body mass. Reports tie its use to high blood pressure, muscle strain and abnormal liver and kidney function. Creatine raises the risk of dehydration and one study implicated it in the deaths of several collegiate wrestlers.

St.-John's-wort is marketed as a "mood enhancer" to combat depression. Scientists are only beginning to understand how this popular mood-elevator works in the body. Preliminary evidence suggests that the herb may interact with other drugs, rendering them ineffective. Researchers have reported that St.-John's-wort appears to affect a particular enzyme used by the body to process drugs. The enzyme, which is turned on like a faucet by St.-John's-wort, flows into the liver, eliminating many prescription drugs twice as fast as normal — greatly reducing their curative effects and potentially leading to life threatening situations.

Kava (also known as kava kava or piper methysticum) is marketed as a "sleep aid" containing the sedative kavapyrone. Recent reports from health authorities have linked kava use to at least 25 cases of liver toxicity, including hepatitis, cirrhosis and liver failure.

Ginkgo and ginseng are marketed as "memory enhancers." While there is some evidence that a ginkgo-ginseng combination may lead to modest memory and cognitive improvement, they also appear to interfere with the management and treatment of disease. Ginkgo can affect insulin secretion and ginseng can reduce blood sugar among diabetics. Both interact with the heart medication Digoxin.

Q. What should I do?

A. Each person reacts differently to the chemicals in medications and herbal products. Experts advise:

• Before you buy, do your homework. Read labels carefully and follow directions. Discuss concerns with your doctor and/or pharmacist.

• Give your body a chance to tell you how it reacts to a new drug or herbal product. Take it for a day and pay attention to its effects. Discuss these effects with your physician and/or pharmacist; Don't think that because a product is labeled "natural" it's harmless; Drink plenty of water, especially if you're taking medications.

Read all about it:

• **National Institutes of Health** [<http://odp.od.nih.gov/ods>]

• **National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine** [<http://nccam.nih.gov/health/alerts>]

• **FDA Center for Food Safety & Applied Nutrition** [www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/dswam.html]



Sports

20th Annual Cannonball Run held in Stratford

SPEC. ELVIS R. BRAGA
65th PCH

On September 8, 2002 the Connecticut National Guard Armory and the 242nd Engineer Battalion in Norwalk sponsored the annual Cannonball Run.

This run consists of a four-mile run with a grueling third mile and a downhill fourth mile. Proceeds went to benefit the American Cancer Society. The race was advertised through flyers at local libraries, on the internet and the local paper.

More than 100 participants entered the race. Every age group from 15 to 79 was represented at this race.

Seth P. Spector from Southport, Conn. finished before all the runners in 21:56. He is currently coaching cross country and track at Wilton High School. A former physical therapist and mom of four, Dede E. Beck from New Canaan, Conn. won top honors in her group.

The oldest runner at the race was 79-year-old Jon B. McManus, who won his age group (69-79) with a startling 36:15 time.

There was an after race pasta lunch to help the runners revitalize their energy. After the food was served a raffle was held.

To end the day, an awards ceremony was held and prizes were given to the runners who finished best in their categories.



And they're off! Participants in the 20th Annual Cannonball Run including eventual winner, Seth Spector (#441), go full bore into the thick of the race. The event held at the Norwalk Armory, home of the 242nd Engineer Battalion, raises money for the American Cancer Society. (Photo by Sgt. Greg Harrison, 65th PCH)



At 79 years of age, Jon McManus was the oldest runner to finish the 20th Annual Cannonball Run. (Photo by Sgt. Greg Harrison, 65th PCH)

5th Annual NGACT Golf Tournament raises \$6,000 for children' hospital and scholarship fund



A golfer keeps an eye on his shot as it flies from the tee towards the green during the 5th Annual NGACT Golf Tournament. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Senior PA NCO)

Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton
State Senior PA NCO

The 5th Annual National Guard Association of Connecticut Golf Tournament raised \$6,000 for the Connecticut Children's Hospital and the NGACT



And the winners are...Sgt. Maj. Raymond Zasaury, Spec. Nick O'Dell, 1st Sgt. Chris Hawkins and (missing from the photo) Sgt. Maj. John O'Dell. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Senior PA NCO)



The team most in need of finding a new sport...Ryan Krusko, Maj. Tim Krusko, Master Sgt. Melissa Lata and (missing from the photo) Master Chief Mike Romeo. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Senior PA NCO)

Scholarship Fund this year.

More than 100 golfers from the Guard and the civilian community participated as well as more than a dozen volunteers who were checking golfers in and serving breakfast hors d'oeuvres later in the day. Volunteers also served as spotters on various holes for events such as closest to the pin, hole-in one and so forth.

This year's event was a very close match with the top three teams having the same scores. In the end, the winners were decided based on handicaps.

Finishing first were Buddy Zastaury, John O'Dell, Nick O'Dell and Chris Hawkins.

In second place were Richard Maziarz, Dave Sherman, Dave Cunningham and Dan McHale.

Third place finishers were Bryan Wheelock, Rory Wheelock, Chris Beloff and Pat Flaherty.

Finishing in last place and being chosen as the foursome most in need of finding a new sport were Tim Krusko, Ryan Krusko, Melissa Lata and Mike Romeo.

To volunteer for next year's tournament, either as a committee member or day of event volunteer, contact Warrant Officer 2 John Godburn or Maj. Ralph Hedenberg.



Members of one foursome watch as one golfer tees off during the 5th Annual NGACT Golf Tournament at Keney Golf Course in Hartford. The tournament raised \$6,000 for charity. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Senior PA NCO)

Retirees' Voice: Historical background on the Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council

On 11 February 1971, GEN Bruce C. Clarke, USA Retired, and BG Hallett D. Edson, USA Retired met with LTG Walter T. Kerwin, Jr., Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER), to express a desire that the Army take more interest in the affairs of its retired personnel and suggested that Army Retiree Councils be established.

On 29 September 1971, LTG Kerwin proposed that Retiree Councils be added to the Retirement Services Program. On 10 November 1971, VCSALTG Bruce Palmer, Jr., acting for CSA GEN William W. Westmoreland, approved the establishment of retiree councils. The first CSA Officer and Enlisted Councils were chaired by LTG Harry H. Critz, USA Retired, and SGM Joe Bussey, USA Retired, met on 5-9 June 1972 at Fort McNair. Each Council consisted of eight regular members and two alternates.

In 1977, CSA GEN Bernard W. Rogers approved increasing each Council to 11 members with the addition of a reserve retiree.

From 1972 until 1985, the CSA Councils met twice a year. In 1985, CSA GEN John A. Wickham, approved one meeting per year with a mid-year meeting with the Council Chairmen to review retiree issues.

In 1985, the Council membership was increased to 24 with the addition of two USAREUR representatives. In 1987, USARPAC was authorized two representatives, but without an increase in the total number of members.

In 1989, the Councils met for the first time in the Pentagon. This move was to eliminate

the expense of renting outside conference rooms and to facilitate the access by Army Staff speakers.

In 1990, CSA GEN Carl E. Vuono, approved combining the Officer and Enlisted Councils into one Council with Co-chairmen and reduced the membership to 18. USAREUR and USARPAC were authorized one representative each.

The CSA Council normally meets in March or April with the mid-year meeting between the Co-chairmen and the CSA in October.

The Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER) requests Installation Retiree Councils nominate retired members of their council to serve as members of the CSA Retiree Council. Nominations are forwarded through Installation and MACOM Commanders to DCSPER. After screening nominees, in coordination with the Council Co-chairmen, DCSPER forwards nominees to the CSA for selection and approval.

Prior to the annual meeting, Installation Retiree Councils submit issues and concerns for the CSA Council to review and discuss.

At the close of each meeting, the Council renders two reports, one to the CSA that highlights major issues of concern and the other addressing additional issues discussed, but not brought to the direct attention of the CSA. The Council chairmen meet with the CSA, discuss the reports and provide him written copies. The action issues in each report are tasked to the appropriate Army staff agency for resolution. A status of Council actions is furnished to Installation Retiree Councils and highlighted to the retired community through ARMY ECHOES.

Do you know these guys?



The 43rd Infantry Division was ordered into active military service on Feb. 24, 1941. Members remained at the home armory for two weeks then departed for Camp Blanding, Fla. The soldiers in the picture are Al Alamenda, Stan Kramarczyk, Chet Waskiel, Mike Onofrio, John Nappi and Fran Santillo. (Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Vic Cappella.)

If you have a picture of historical nature to share with our readers, email if possible to debbi.newton@ct.ngb.army.mil or mail to Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, Public Affairs Office, National Guard Armory, 360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105-3795. All photos will be returned.

Federal Help Wanted

Transportation Security Screeners

SV-0019-D
Salary Range: \$23,600 to \$35,400 plus locality pay
Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks
Preference given to veterans
For information and application, go to www.tsa.dot.gov

Supervisory Transportation Security Screeners

SV-0019-G
Salary Range: \$36,400 to \$56,400 plus locality pay
Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks
Preference given to veterans
For information and application, go to www.tsa.dot.gov

Lead Transportation Security Screeners

SV-0019-F
Salary Range: \$31,100 to \$46,700 with locality pay
Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks
Preference given to veterans
For information and application go to www.tsa.dot.gov

PHARMACY TECHNICIAN

USAJOBS Control No. IC4618 FO
Salary Range: \$23,417 - \$26,200 Annual
Series and Grade: GS-0661-04/05
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Veterans Health Administration, West Haven

CLINICAL NURSE

USAJOBS Control No. BY4769 FC
Salary Range: \$
Series and Grade: GS-0610-09/09
Department of Justice, Bureau of Prisons/
Federal Prison System, Various locations in the Northeast US
Announcement No. 01-NER-CN09 (Must be on application) For information, contact Marcy Sandum, HRS at (215) 521-7364

CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR

USAJOBS Control No. XA0561 FO
Salary Range: \$33,254 - \$52,305 Annual
Series and Grade: GS-1102-09/11
Department of Defense, Defense Contract Management Agency, East Hartford, Conn., Windsor Locks, Conn., Stratford, Conn.
Announcement No. DCMDE-01-1102SR (Must be on application) For information, contact DLA DEU TEAM at (614) 692-0200

PROCUREMENT TECHNICIAN (OFFICE AUTOMATION)

USAJOBS Control No. XA0583
Salary Range: \$21,947 - \$31,798 Annual
Series and Grade: GS-1106-05/06
Department of Defense, Defense Contract Management Agency, Stratford, Conn., Indianapolis, Ind., Fort Wayne, Ind.
Announcement No. DCMDE-01-118492-006 (Must be on application) For information, contact DLA DEU TEAM at (614) 692-0200



Connecticut National Guard Fulltime Employment Opportunities

The following are Connecticut Army and Air Guard Technician openings. For a copy of the Technician vacancy Announcement, see your technician/military supervisor or call Master Sgt. Kevin Salsbury at (860) 878-6739

Note: Outdated Closing dates indicate that applications are currently under consideration. Individuals interested in applying for the position are encouraged to do so and may receive an interview, if qualified, and no one else has been previously selected. Several additional job postings are available on the Connecticut National Guard Website.

Army National Guard Technician Vacancies

Position Title	Unit	Pay Grade	Closing Date
Heavy Mobile Equipment Repairer	OMS 8	WG-09	Oct. 4, 2002
Auditor	USPFO	GS-11	Oct. 7, 2002
Administrative Assistant	USPFO	GS-07	Oct. 7, 2002
Maintenance Specialist	SMMO	GS-09	Oct. 4, 2002

Air National Guard Technician Vacancies

Position Title	Unit	Pay Grade	Closing date
Sheet Metal Mechanic	103rd FW, LOG	WG-10/08/05	Aug. 19, 2002
Personnel Assistant	HRO	GS-07/06/05	Aug. 20, 2002

Listed below are current openings in the Connecticut National Guard AGR program. For a copy of the Military Tour Vacancy Announcement, see your supervisor or call Sgt. 1st Class Jacqueline Thomas at (860) 878-6729.

Note: Several additional job postings are available on the Connecticut National Guard Website.

Army National Guard AGR Vacancies

Position Title	Unit	Rank	Area of Consideration
Personnel Svcs. Branch Chief	HHD STARC PSC	WO4 or below	On Board AGR Only

Air National Guard AGR Vacancies

Position Title	Unit	Rank	Area of Consideration
There are no current vacancies listed			

The complete listing of both Technician and AGR vacancies and job descriptions can also be accessed by going to the Connecticut National Guard website at www.ct.ngb.army.mil

Coming Events

October

October 8

Technician Picnic
State/Federal Employees Awards Ceremony
Camp Rowland

October 10

Senior NCO Dining-In
Aqua Turf, Southington
CSM A. Frank Lever, Speaker

October 14

Columbus Day

October 18

Hispanic Heritage Celebration

October 19

1048th Truck Company Assumption of
Command
Camp Rowland

November

November 5

Election Day

November 7

Officer Dining-In

November 9

Veteran's Day Parade

November 11

Veteran's Day

In the Next CG

Maj. Gen. Blum discusses role of National
Guard in NorthCom

Fire Dept. returns from activation

Newington demolition project

The real cost of drunk driving

Deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month
previous to publication.

WANT TO JOIN OUR TEAM?

CALL

1-800-716-3530

Connecticut's Army National Guard

Putting a face on breast cancer

From Page 1

While Debbie lost her battle with cancer, Paul and the rest of the family survived. It hasn't always been easy, Therrien said, but they survived.

Survival is what's keeping Stroman going now.

In December of 2000, Stroman felt a lump in her breast. She went to her doctor who ordered a mammogram and told her she had fibrocystic breasts, not to worry about it.

"I watched this grow," said Stroman. "And all my doctor said was not to worry."

"Then I tried the Rappel Masters Course and couldn't complete it. I had so much pain in my upper chest when I tried rappelling, I really figured that something was wrong, but I still trusted my doctor. Apparently my doctor hadn't looked at my mammogram. I never got a call that anything was wrong. If the doctor didn't call me back, everything had to be fine."

On Sept. 9, 2001, Stroman ran in the National Guard's Cannonball Run, a four-mile race with proceeds going to the American Cancer Society. She completed

the race, but said her chest was hurting very badly by the end of the race.

Then on Sept. 11, 2001, she had the needle biopsy, and while she didn't find out until later, she was diagnosed that day with breast cancer.

After having the biopsy, Stroman learned of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon, and for a short time, her thoughts were on her father only.

"My dad worked in Tower 1 of the World Trade Towers," said Stroman with pride in her voice. "He is the commanding officer of the Port Authority Police... a two-star. I kept paging him and calling him on his cell phone all day, and I couldn't get him."

Then, while watching the 10 p.m. news on Channel 5 out of New York, Stroman saw her dad standing behind Mayor Rudy Guiliani and the New York City Chief of

Police at a news conference.

"'Oh my God, he's alive!' was all I could say, and then I started crying," said Stroman. Stroman, who works in the Personnel Service Center at the Hartford armory, credits military doctors for her ultimate diagnosis.

"I went in for a warrant officer physical in October of 2001 and the doctor there just kept checking my breast," said Stroman. "He found the lump, which by this time was the size of a plum, and he checked both breasts to be sure. He told me the lump was too solid and that it wasn't a good thing. He said I needed a needle biopsy, which I had already had. You really have to keep on your doctors. If you don't think something is right, keep after it, don't wait for them to call you back."

"The surgeon told me I had 'bad cells.' For a black woman, I thought that meant sickle cell anemia. Then I looked at the surgeon and it sunk in. I asked, 'Are you telling me I have cancer?' The answer was yes," said Stroman. Her husband, Michael, was with her, and as she started to fall from her chair, he caught her. And he's been with her every step of the way.

"The surgeon told me I would need a radical mastectomy," said Stroman. "I felt violated. I was already devastated. I didn't know what to do. I didn't like the surgeon. So I called Yale New Haven Hospital and got the best nurse on the phone. I didn't even know what questions to ask her, but she referred me to a breast surgeon in Greenwich, Dr. Ward. She (Dr. Ward) was wonderful. A week

later, on Nov. 9, I had my surgery.

After the surgery, Stroman said she just enjoyed the holidays. Then she went to Yale New Haven for her chemotherapy. At 38-years-old, she was given a 90 percent chance that the cancer would reoccur.

In January of 2002, Stroman began treatment of four cycles of cytoxin. After the first cycle, she lost her hair. She began to feel really weak. By the fourth cycle she was

beginning to get better.

"It was very difficult," said Stroman. "My family had to do everything for me. My mother-in-law especially was great. She had to feed me, clean me, dress me, everything."

After the chemotherapy was complete, she was given a 70 percent chance of reoccurrence. In April of 2002 Stroman began radiation treatments, Monday through Friday for 10 to 15 minutes for three months. By the end of June, she was back at work and in September started taking three college classes. While going through the radiation, she took a real estate course.

"My husband has been great," said Stroman. They will be married for 18 years on New Year's Eve. "He still says I'm beautiful. He and my son both shaved their heads when I lost my hair. My husband actually shaved my head for me, too. I asked him to. It was too hard waking up all the time and finding hair on my pillow, or running hand through my hair and having it all come out in my hand. The support was great."

Stroman said before the cancer, she was a pessimist, now she's an optimist. She's changed in other ways, too.

"I can't get mad at people. I smile and tell them to have a nice day. I smile more. I feel so good about life; I try to give that to other people. It's wonderful to have a second shot at life."

Stroman is adamant that people get a second opinion and stay on their doctors for answers.

"The second opinion truly saved my life," she says.

Therrien wants people to become educated and firmly believes in early detection.

"As a male, as a partner of a woman fighting breast cancer... the information out there was geared towards women. The support groups are geared towards women," he said. "I scrambled to become educated. There's not a lot out there from the husband's perspective. In the military, you become task-oriented. That helped me in my search for information. Once you educate yourself clinically, you need to shift your focus and become a moral support system. I gave Debbie as much emotional support as I could give her."

Therrien believes in early detection. He said that based on the size of Debbie's tumor, it had to have been growing for at least eight years. He says the mammography technology is much better



Sgt. 1st Class Sharon Stroman at home. (Photo courtesy Sgt. 1st Class Sharon Stroman)

now than it was.

"There are a lot of remarkable and exciting technologies on the horizon that are going to help a lot of people. I am a firm believer in self-examination and mammography. If caught early, even through Stage II, breast cancer can pretty much be eradicated."

Most people think of breast cancer survivors as being women. But Therrien is a survivor. And he feels stronger now.

"I had all my basic beliefs and morals tested," he said. "Coming through it, you can't help but be stronger. I've been in the military a long time. We are trained to defeat our foe. This was one foe I couldn't defeat. This was one time I had a total lack of control over the outcome. I had to come to the realization that I do not have control of everything in my life. I've served in a lot of different assignments in my military career, and the courage I've seen in the military all pales in comparison to what I saw with Debbie. She chose to live her life as happily as she could."

Therrien has advice for men that may be facing having a loved one with cancer.

"Do not walk away from it," says Therrien. "She's going to need you more than ever and more than anyone else. The doctors gave Debbie two years and she lived four years through sheer willpower. If I had bailed out, there's no telling. Trust the doctors. Say your prayers first every night, but trust the medical doctors."

"Love her. Hugs, kisses, the I love yous go a long way."



Debbie Therrien shares a quiet moment with grandson, Adam. (Photo courtesy Chief Warrant Officer 5 Paul Therrien)

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