Connecticut Guardian

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102nd gets call: Heading to Iraq

Pfc. Jordan E. Werme
65th PCH

Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry Battalion will soon be shipping out in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Thirty-six soldiers from four platoons have been mobilized and will be attached to the 39th Cavalry Division upon arriving at their destination. However, the group has not yet been given the exact destination of its deployment, said Staff Sgt. Wallace C. Rand, squad leader for the 102nd.

The soldiers will first travel to Fort Hood, Texas, to receive pre-mobilization training before embarking on the scheduled 12-month deployment, said Rand.

"It's something I have to do," said Spec. Joseph H. Aparo, Jr., grenadier with the 102nd. "I'm just doing what I've trained to do."

Aparo will be leaving on the heels of three previous activations in his three years of National Guard service. Aparo was previously activated as part of a support platoon at West Point for eight months, served in a Force Protection Unit for six months, and was also mobilized during the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City in 2002.

"I'm very, very proud of him," said his mother, Denise Aparo. "It's in him to do it. He gets it from his father."

A soldier of the 102nd gets a hug from a family member. (Photo by Spec. Claude Hibbert, 65th PCH)

Spec. Aparo's father is Command Sgt. Major Joseph H. Aparo, Sr., 143rd Forward Support Battalion.

"I've had most of these soldiers with me at one time or another," said Aparo, Sr. "Through the years I've seen them grow and develop into professional NCOs. I know my son is in good hands and will be a great asset to them."

Each of the 36 soldiers is leaving friends, family and loved ones behind, but each one knows his duty, said Rand, who must temporarily leave his wife and three children, Sonnie Rae, 10, Wallace Jr., 5, and Jeremy, 2, behind.

The send-off ceremony for Company C was held Jan. 6, in the lobby of the state Legislative office building.

Among the guests and speakers were Major Gen. William A. Cugno, and Medal of Honor recipient Col. (Ret.) Robert B. Nett, both of whom praised the effort of the deploying soldiers to get ready and remain ready for whatever obstacles lay before them.

Cugno also emphasized his long-standing pledge to the families of deployed soldiers to provide any and all assistance within the power of the CTARNG while the soldiers are away.

Deployments bring a mixture of sadness and pride to the families that must let their soldiers go. And for each family it boils down to one old cliché said Mrs. Aparo.

"If not my son, then who's?"

Preston takes oath as SMA

Joe Burlas
Army News Service

Introduced by Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker as the right man for the job, Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Preston was sworn in as the 13th sergeant major of the Army during a Pentagon ceremony Jan. 15.

Preston replaces Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack Tilley who was recognized for his 35 years of service during a retirement ceremony earlier in the day.

As sergeant major of the Army, Preston will act as the Army chief of staff's personal adviser on all enlisted-related matters, particularly in areas affecting Soldier training and quality of life.He will also sit on a variety of councils and boards that make decisions impacting enlisted Soldiers and their families and testify before Congress on Soldier issues.

"(Preston) is the finest noncommissioned officer in the (NCO) Corps," Schoomaker said. "We have a real Soldier here. I am confident he will serve our Soldiers well as we transform and reorganize our Army."

"With 20 to25 percent of our forces currently in Iraq being Guard or Reserve, their issues are important," Preston said.

Among Preston's stated priorities in his new job are: ensuring Soldiers are properly trained and equipped to win against the nation's enemies; instilling the warrior ethos in all Soldiers as "every Soldier is a rifleman first;" facilitating change as the Army embraces new formations, technologies and tactics; and caring for Army families.

"Our enemy on freedom's frontier is adapting to our tactics everyday and so must we adapt and change out tactics to defeat this threat," Preston said. "Change and evolution are not new to us. Our veterans here today have seen many improvements and changes in our structure and tactics over their service.

"With the foundation of basic Soldier skills to build upon, we will continue to chart an azimuth to adapt to this ever-changing battlefield."

Preston has served in the Army for 28 years, mostly in armor units throughout his career. Prior to his selection as sergeant major of the Army, he was the command sergeant major for Combined Joint Task Force 7 in Baghdad, Iraq.

Connecticut Airman delivers in desert

Maj. George Worrall
103rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs and
Master Sgt. Don Perrien
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Jennifer K. Gray, settles into the driver's seat of a tractor-trailer truck before a run in August 2003 near Tallil Air Base, Iraq. (Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. Jennifer K. Gray)

Convoys began building Tallil Air Base Iraq when coalition forces took control of the former Iraqi Air Force base early in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Most convoys carry the equivalent of six to ten C-130 Hercules loads, but some also carried a Connecticut sergeant, Staff Sgt. Jennifer K. Gray, licensing section supervisor, 103rd Logistics Squadron.

"It is an experience I will remember for the rest of my life," said Gray who spent July through November driving through the desert. "It was pretty interesting. I drove things I had never even seen before to get the trucks unloaded."

Trucks. Lots of trucks. Trucks with aircraft parts, refrigerators, wall lockers, office desks, computer equipment, construction vehicles — some even hauling other trucks, along with hundreds of other odds and ends. All these items are loaded and strapped onto 18-wheelers and flatbed trailers, winding their way across dusty desert roads.

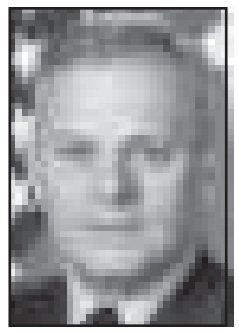
The truck convoys, called the Red Tail Express, emptied Al Jaber Air Base, Kuwait (twice the 103rd Fighter Wing's home in Operation Southern Watch), to bring the salvaged pieces of one air base in to build a new one.

"Without the Red Tail Express, Tallil would not be what it is today," said Capt. Anthony Min, 486th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron commander.

See CONNECTICUT AIRMAN Page 17

Up Front with the Adjutant General

Black History Month: Diversity remains a priority for the organization



Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno Adjutant General

During these extraordinary times, America looks forward to new challenges and opportunities with an invigorated sense of unity and common purpose. We are a vibrant state and nation, thanks to creativity, fortitude and resilience of people of every background. During Black History Month, we celebrate the many achievements and contributions made by African Americans to our economic, cultural and political development.

To perform in today's extremely demanding environment, the National Guard has relied on dedicated soldiers and airmen from throughout the country. Guardsmen and women reflect our communities in America. The military today must reflect our society. We are a force of people. Our Soldiers, Airmen and women are citizens first and military members second. This is a fundamental part of our founding fathers' vision.

We in the National Guard know the importance of having a diverse force. Martin Luther King once said, "There is nothing more dangerous than to build a society, with a large segment of people in that society, who feel that they have no stake in it."

The Connecticut National Guard realizes that a key aspect of a society's togetherness, and "espirit de corps," is inclusiveness. The National Guard is an organization that is rooted at the community level, and we're leading the way in inclusiveness and diversity. We realize what should be obvious: that skill and talents are found among every race and ethnicity.

The Connecticut Guard is comprised of talented Soldiers and Airmen from every walk of life. The portrait of the Guard is the portrait of America. . . as it is with our country's citizens, the diversity is astounding.

It is precisely this diversity that makes us better, tougher, stronger. We know that it is important for our leadership to understand the strength of our diverse force. Workforce diversity is an organizational behavior that acknowledges and values differences and similarities among people and how differences can improve the organization. It also means understanding the organizational environments with a greater appreciation for gender, culture and ethnic lifestyles.

It's a team of all components, not just the majority or the plurality, the entire diverse military team that make us the strong force that we are.

Diversity truly makes our Guard strong and makes America the great country that it is. America is still the land of opportunity and all any American asks for is an opportunity, an equal chance to excel. It is imperative that we as leaders give ALL of our Soldiers and Airmen and women a fair shot at success. We owe it to them!

There is always room for improvement. As the adjutant general, I continue to push for a well-balanced, diverse organization and ask the leadership to continue to work with me toward this goal.

This year the Connecticut National Guard is proud to dedicate our 2004 celebration to the "Harlem Renaissance." More than a literary movement, the Harlem Renaissance exalted the unique culture of African-Americans and redefined African-American expression. The Harlem Renaissance transformed African-American identity and history, but also transformed American culture in general.

We are pleased to have Dr. Gayle Pemberton, Professor of English and African-American Studies, Wesleyan University, as the keynote speaker. Please mark Friday, Feb. 6 on the calendar and join the Connecticut National Guard for this spectacular celebration.

Perspectives

How do the newly enhanced, unlimited commissary benefits affect you?

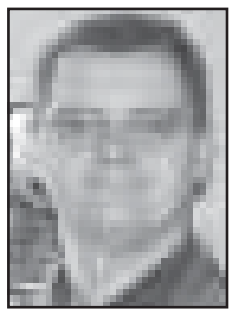
Master Sgt. Sheryl Laporte
103rd Services Flight

The change means one less additional duty for me – not having to account and issue the commissary cards. I have not personally used the commissary in years, but it was a big savings when we used to go.

Master Sgt. Mary A. Reed
103rd Communications Flight

It does not matter to me because I do not go there. By the time I would go to save money, it would cost me more in gas.

Maj. George H. Worrall
103rd Fighter Wing



My wife and I stop in at the Groton commissary when we are in the area, so it will be nice to not need a card anymore. Groton is only a few minutes from our families and the jar baby-food only costs a third of what we pay at the grocery store, plus the meat and frozen food prices are very low, so we stock up.

Staff Sgt. Alicia M. Black
103rd Medical Group

Not really an impact because I live so far from any commissary. It is easier to just go to the grocery store.

Tech. Sgt. Reui P. Araujo
103rd Medical Group

It does not because of the distance from here. I am not going to drive an hour-and-a-half for groceries, gas is expensive.

Senior Airman William C. Deme
103rd Fighter Wing

Not really a whole lot because the distance to a commissary is not convenient.

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First Company Governors Horse Guard

Second Company Governors Horse Guard

First Company Governors Foot Guard

Second Company Governors Foot Guard

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'We're there' says Cugno of Joint headquarters

SGT. 1ST CLASS DEBBI NEWTON
STATE SENIOR PA NCO

The Background

In May 2004, Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, told NGB and the adjutants general around the country that the National Guard was going to begin downsizing from the top and that by October 1, 2003, he expected all Joint Headquarters to be in place.

"The National Guard must transform for future threats and current realities," Blum told reporters at the time.

The Connecticut National Guard had already taken many of the steps Blum ordered teh rest of the country and NGB to take.

"The important thing is that the model Gen. Blum is working towards is in-line with what we already have, a single Connecticut National Guard headquarters," said Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno, the adjutant general, shortly after Blum's announcement.

Where we are

Since May, Connecticut's Joint Force Headquarters has grown into other areas of the Guard and, according to Cugno, is showing benefits.

"We're there," said Cugno. "We were already there in October. We have met the objectives we submitted to NGB."

Prior to implementing the joint plan, all states were required to submit their plans to NGB for approval. The plans had to be approved before being implemented.

How we got there

"We concentrated on what best served both the Army and Air," said Cugno.

The Joint Headquarters, or J-5, was the first joint orginization stood up in Connecticut, and that took place several months before the October 2003 deadline imposed by Blum.

Since then, the Recruiting Force has been combined, "with both organizations benefitting," said Cugno.

He also said the legal, chaplain and public affairs sections have been combined at the headquarters level and "the one-section is growing into it."

What's next?

Cugno has instructed the chief of staff and the assistant adjutant general to bring the Inspector General's offices into the joint arena next.

"I've also asked them to schedule the next J-shop summitt to be held within the next 90 days," said Cugno. "At that summitt, I want the answers to three questions: What's gone right? What's gone wrong? And what do we need to do to affect the steps necessary for future change?"

How do we get there?

Cugno said the next step in the transformation to joint headquarters is to tweak what's already in place, look at what other shops are eligible for the joint concept and what positions could be opened up to either Army or Air personnel.

"Frankly, I think we are very much ahead of other states," said Cugno, obviously pleased with the progress Connecticut has made so far.

STARC, or the State Area Command, no longer exists. In it's place is the JFHQ, or Joint Force Headquarters.

"Emergency operations have been greatly expanded" due to the joint concept of operations, said Cugno.

"We have solid working relationships with the other services in Connecticut," said Cugno, who would like to strengthen the ties with the Navy even more.

"We have a great relationship with the

Coast Guard," he said. "We've been able to work very well with them on things such as port security. The Air Guard has a tremendous amount of talent with a lot to offer. We need now to look at working more closely with the Army Reserve and the Marine Corps Reserve to expand our Joint Staff even more."

Sitting down with a Medal of Honor recipient

MAJ. JOHN WHITFORD
STATE PAO

On Jan. 6, Medal of Honor recipient Col. (ret.) Robert Nett was the guest speaker at the send-off ceremony of his former unit, Company C, 102d Infantry.

He came to Connecticut from his Georgia home to see his old unit off.

Charlie Company has since left for Ft. Hood, Texas for further training with the 39th Enhanced Separate Brigade (eSB) and will deploy to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Having the opportunity to sit down with Col. Nett is an honor one doesn't forget. You are quickly surrounded his aura and drawn to the stories of he and his buddies of Charlie Company, 102d Infantry during World War II.

"First off, I am a Medal of Honor recipient, not a winner," said Nett. "I didn't go out to win this medal."

Nett tells this to make it very clear that the medal he proudly wears around his neck was not won.

"I consider this a great honor to be here to see my old unit off. On Feb. 24, 1941, we were called to active duty, and what was going through my mind as well as probably their minds, was the unknown that is before them. We had training and thought we were prepared but still felt that there was more training necessary before we engaged the enemy," said Nett.

Nett said the platoon leader, the NCOIC and the condition of the rest of platoon looked amazing. They looked sharp and ready as any platoon would ever be.

"I am delighted at the quality of Connecticut National Guard troopers who have been called to active duty and I am delighted with what the state is doing in regards to Family Support and it appears to me that an integral part of the Army today is the Reserve and the National Guard."

Nett said that after 33 years, a strong support for the family is necessary for the military to be successful.

"If the family is taken care of and the individual knows when he or she goes into harms' way that his or her family is taken care of if they needed some help it is a great feeling of relaxation," said Nett.

Col. (Ret.) Robert Nett (center) visited the construction site of the leadership hall being named in his honor when he was in Connecticut. With him are (from left) John Carlin, President of Carlin Construction; Lt. Col. Gerald Lukowski, FMO; Scott Bianchi, site forman; and Gary McDonald, Engineer from the Maguire Group. (Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Gerald Lukowski)

He went on to say that when he went off to the Korean and Vietnam wars, his wife, who was an Army nurse during World War II, was both mother and father and at times it was real trying.

Nett is very proud of his old unit and grateful to what the state of Connecticut is doing in both protecting our vital installations and also being ready when called upon - especially his old platoon - for whatever the Department of the Army expects them to do.

The question of where he was when Pearl Harbor was bombed had to be asked.

"I was at Camp Blanding, Florida, with 102nd Infantry. Me and a friend in C Company went to Catholic mass. When mass ended we went to a drug store that had a Speak Easy in the basement to get a cup of coffee. We sat down to have our cup of coffee and a danish and there was a radio interruption of a special announcement that the Japanese Empire bombed Pearl Harbor. That was when I knew that our mile-long bayonet course may be the real thing," recalled Nett.

Nett has never said no to coming home to visit his old unit. Nett is planning to come back this summer for the ribbon-cutting of the Robert B. Nett Leadership Hall that is currently under construction and is scheduled to be completed by this summer.

Col. Nett, it was truly an honor.

A sheep amongst a pack of wolves

1st Lt. Jeremy Kerfoot
709th Military Police Battalion
(Serving with the 143rd Military Police Company)

In the heat of the Baghdad sun with helicopters flying overhead and tanks rolling through, there I was with my platoon of military police.

We were involved in Operation Bulldog Raptor, a mission that was the first of its kind because it involved a raid on a mosque with suspected terrorist ties in the noonday sun.

Our mission was twofold, to secure a section of the inner perimeter cordon and to help conduct the actual raid itself. The mission was not unlike any other mission that is taken out by military police units on a daily basis, but this mission was different.

It involved the coordination of active duty combat units and a National Guard military police platoon; a National Guard military police platoon under the leadership of an active duty lieutenant.

The mission went off without any incidents and the military police conducted themselves like any professional military fighting force. That mission started to make me reconsider my thoughts on the nation's "weekend warrior" units and their combat fighting ability.

First, let me take a moment to step back and provide background on the situation leading up to the mission and my subsequent dealings with the National Guard military police platoon.

After enjoying a good amount of time as a platoon leader for an active duty platoon in Germany, I was called by the 709th Military Police Battalion to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. After learning of my deployment, I naturally began to ask what I would be doing. I felt that I had no chance of becoming a platoon leader and began to wonder what staff position I would be under.

Then my commander told me there was a slight chance I would still be a platoon leader downrange. There was a catch though; it was a platoon leader position for a Connecticut Army National Guard. I will admit that the stereotypes immediately entered my head about the reserve and National Guard components.

"Are they really up to standard?" and "How well are they trained?" I asked myself at times. I accepted the possibility to be a platoon leader again, but still had no concrete answer. I got many words of advice on what to watch out for and what to be mindful of when working with the National Guard. I wasn't the only one that has accepted the stereotypes of the non-active military units.

My journey to Iraq and assignment in theater changed my view of the National Guard.

I arrived in country and soon found myself face-to-face with the commander of the mighty "Wolfpack" 143rd Military Police Company, a National Guard unit based out of Connecticut. I was met by my new commander and quickly inducted into the National Guard family.

After meeting the operations cell, I was taken to meet my platoon sergeant. After the initial formalities and introductions, we went and met up with my new platoon. The platoon is an interesting mix of young and old Soldiers and NCOs. It was going to be an interesting leadership experience. The stereotypes began to disappear soon after my tour as a platoon leader began.

My first mission as the platoon leader was to provide support to the maneuver battalion in the western sector of Baghdad as a direct support entity.

Within the first 48 hours as platoon leader, I was already in the thick of planning a portion of a major operation known as Bulldog Raptor; along with my platoon sergeant catching me up on everything as quickly as possible. My time to play catch up was very short.

To make a long story short, I was impressed. As mentioned before, the mission was successful and was accomplished in a very professional way. I realized an important fact about my National Guard platoon – they were trained to do a job and they accomplished the mission effectively. They were not unlike any active duty platoon. If you had to compare the two, they would be exactly the same in mission accomplishment.

This National Guard platoon is a true asset for the missions the military police are currently conducting here in Baghdad. Many of my Soldiers and NCOs are police officers in the civilian world. They offer so much experience in the realm of police operations that they could set any unit up for success.

Our current mission of running police stations and training Iraqi Police in the Baghdad area is ideal for military police. What better trainers and managers of such a task than fellow law enforcement officials from "back home." They are a great resource to add insight and ingenuity to the programs that the Department of Defense is trying to install within Iraq.

It is a factor you just don't get with many active duty units – a unit full of different experiences that come together to help out the team. Most active duty units have soldiers and NCOs that know one thing – the army way. That is not a strike against them and they are good at what they do – fighting and winning the nation's wars, but what an asset the National Guard brings to the table in the way of democratic law enforcement.

The stereotypes of the National Guard still exist and some are even true. Will they, as a whole, be as fully trained in war fighting as the active duty units are? The answer is no, they don't have the same pool of money and training time available. They do, however, embrace the time they do have and train to the fullest. I am confident they train as much as they can after seeing them in action over the past few months.

They work hard and play hard, just like any other unit. Yes, they do have a more casual air about them in regards to professionalism; but what I have seen happen is when the switch needed to be turned on, the unit fell right in line with normal army operating parameters. They know who is in charge and they get the job done.

I have also realized that the National Guard units have less to work with, but they turn out "diamonds" in the end. Both the support personnel and military police are working with aging equipment and sometimes have inadequate means to fight battles to the fullest. They conduct the missions and come up with successful results in the end. This shows how innovative the soldiers of today are, whether they are active, reserve, or national guard.

Today's fighting force has the ability to think and act on a more individual basis than ever before.

I have noticed a strong bond with the platoon. It is something you don't necessarily get to experience with the active duty because we are constantly on the move and the leadership changes frequently for the Soldier. The National Guard has the time to build relationships over years, not just over months like the active duty. One of my initial concerns was the possibility of not being accepted in the platoon family, knowing how close all of them already were. Would I be the outcast that couldn't motivate the platoon and effectively lead? This was not the case, however, and I have fallen right into the mix. It is a different beast to lead a National Guard Platoon of MPs, but the learning experience and challenges are worth it.

All too often the reserve and National Guard units are cast as second rate when compared to active duty units. I cannot speak for the entire reserve component, but it is unacceptable for 3/143rd MP Company to be viewed as such. They, along with the rest of the company, have been accomplishing all of their wartime missions. My first-hand interactions with them have changed my thoughts about the National Guard.

They no longer, in my mind, take a back seat to the rest of the army. I would stack up my platoon against any other military police unit in the army. I am confident in their abilities to accomplish the mission.

I consider it an honor and privilege to lead soldiers into combat. I appreciate my commanders for allowing me to lead once more, and I thank 3/143rd MP Company for allowing a sheep to step in and lead a pack of wolves.

URGENT warning about government charge card scam

(Editor's Note: This information was provided by the United States Property and Fiscal Office of the Connecticut National Guard. It was provided to them by GSA SmartPay. Please read it carefully and address any questions or concerns to the USP&FO, Hartford Armory.)

The below message is real. Individuals are currently trying to obtain government cardholder information fraudulently. Please make sure all of your cardholders are aware of the deceptive practices listed below. Once again…the bottom line is never give anyone else your card or personal information. It may look legitimate, but the bank would not need to ask those questions.

During the past week, there have been several reports of external fraudulent activity targeted toward or affecting the government's charge card program. Please notify all agency/organization program coordinators (A/OPCs), charge card managers, cardholders, and other employees touching the card program of the following:

1. Do not give out account information in response to a fraudulent e-mail indicating it is from Visa officials, stating that cardholders have to "reactivate" their accounts due to a "technical security update." The e-mail directs the user to click a link that appears to be the Visa Web site, but is actually a fake mirror image. Entering personal information into that site could result in identity theft. Note that no one from Visa banks will ever call or e-mail a cardholder and ask for an account number or other personal information. Thus far, this action has been targeted at government travel cardholders. Cardholders should report any attempts to the A/OPC and to the banks (800 number on the back of the credit card) as soon as they occur.

2. Information warns of a potential scam whereas unknown callers falsely identify themselves as bank employees working with the government charge card program. The scam operators claim to be checking suspicious card activity and may ask for account numbers, social security numbers, and other personal information. Be aware that bank employees would not take these actions. The A/OPCs should be the only persons requesting this type of information. Cardholders should report any attempts to the A/OPC and to the banks (800 number on the back of the credit card) as soon as they occur.

Bush to ask for $401.7 billion for defense in 2005

JIM GARAMONE
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23, 2004 - In a break from past practice, the Defense Department announced that President Bush will request a $401.7 billion defense budget for fiscal 2005.

Normally, this is one of the more closely guarded figures in the Pentagon. It usually is released with great fanfare after the president's budget request is delivered to Congress the first week in February.

Officials said the number represents about a 7 percent increase from fiscal 2004.

The request does not include funds for the ongoing war on terror. DoD will make supplemental budget requests for those funds, officials said. DoD Comptroller Dov Zakheim said during a recent Defense Writers' Group briefing that he does not expect to make a supplemental request in fiscal 2004.

The fiscal 2005 request will fund continuing transformation efforts and the operations and maintenance of today's force. The budget also will focus on pay and benefits for service members and "quality-of-life measures needed to recruit and retain the highest quality volunteers for service in the active and reserve forces," a DoD official said.

"The president three years ago directed that we consider how best to transform this department to ensure our nation has the capabilities and people needed for the national security circumstances of the 21st century," Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said in a written release. "We have made significant progress."

An official familiar with the budget request's details said the request invests in new intelligence capabilities, counterproliferation strategies and new capabilities to capitalize on influencing situations before war begins and after one ends.

DoD officials said the budget capitalizes on the new National Security Personnel System Congress passed last year. The system will allow DoD to more effectively manage its civilian work force.

The specific numbers making up the $401.7 billion were announced Feb. 2.

Under Secretary of Defense, Comptroller, Dov Zakheim refers to a chart as he presents the Department of Defense Fiscal 2005 budget during a Pentagon briefing on Feb. 2, 2004. (DoD photo by Helene C. Stikkel)

Rumsfeld outlines DOD priorities

DONNA MILES
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — The war on terrorism will remain the Defense Department's top priority in the new year, as officials continue to focus on improving and modernizing its programs, systems and forces to make them more responsive to 21st century requirements.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said the department already has made "remarkable progress" and will continue its work to "strengthen, improve and transform our forces, modernize and restructure programs and commands … and streamline DOD processes and procedures."

Secretary Rumsfeld laid out an ambitious list of initiatives, many already under way, that he said will help free the department of its Cold War-era trappings that no longer support current demands.

Among these initiatives is the effort to rebalance the active and reserve components throughout the services. Secretary Rumsfeld said the war on terror, with its heavy use of National Guard and Reserve troops, underscores the importance of the effort.

"Our experience thus far in the global war on terror, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, has shown that we have somewhat of a Cold War mix of active and reserve forces remaining," Secretary Rumsfeld said. "And we really do need to adjust it to reflect the circumstances of the day."

Proposals being drafted by the services "will set a new balance between active and reserve that will fit the 21st century," Secretary Rumsfeld said.

Also high on the agenda for 2004 is implementation of the new National Security Personnel System that took effect with passage of the 2004 National Defense Authorization Act, Secretary Rumsfeld said. The new law gives DOD the authority to create a new framework of rules, regulations and processes that govern the way civilians are hired, paid, promoted and disciplined within the department. The new system will replace outdated and rigid civil service rules that many said hindered DOD's ability to carry out its national security mission.

"Executed properly, the new system … can play a key role in relieving stress on the force," Secretary Rumsfeld said.

On a broader scope, Secretary Rumsfeld said the military will continue its efforts to adjust global posture during 2004.

This initiative involves re-examining the U.S. military "footprint" in the world — much of it the result of historic, Cold War threats that no longer exist — and to revise them to meet current demands.

Besides those people permanently stationed at its bases worldwide, the U.S. military has thousands of servicemembers on deployments worldwide, said Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This includes roughly 125,000 in Iraq; 13,000 in Afghanistan; more than 2,000 at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; and more than 1,000 participating in Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa.

Meanwhile, nearly 3,500 servicemembers are conducting stabilization operations in the Balkans, and about 1,500 are performing counterdrug operations and other training in Central and South America, General Myers said.

Secretary Rumsfeld continued to list efforts and initiatives the department will pursue in 2004.

"Going forward, we will continue to aggressively pursue the global war on terrorism, strengthening joint warfighting capabilities, transforming the joint force, strengthening our intelligence capabilities (and) strengthening our ability to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction," he said.

Secretary Rumsfeld said DOD also will focus on improving force planning through quality of life, infrastructure and other modifications, refining and improving the department's role in homeland security, and streamlining its budget, contingency and other departmental processes.

"We have a full agenda," Secretary Rumsfeld said. "It is what President Bush has asked of us. It is what the American people expect of us. And it is work that we intend to proceed with over the coming months of 2004."

AF releases new fitness instruction

STAFF SGT. C. TODD LOPEZ
AIR FORCE PRINT NEWS

One of the most noticeable changes to the Air Force's new fitness program is that it will be defined by an operational rather than a medical instruction.

The change shows that senior leaders consider fitness an important part of operational readiness, said Maj. Lisa Schmidt, the Air Force chief of health promotions operations.

"As we support the aerospace expeditionary force and the environments we now deploy to, fitness becomes a readiness issue," Schmidt said. "If a person is fit, they are going to be able to tolerate austere environments, the fatigue and the temperature changes."

The full text of the Air Force's new fitness instruction is now available to the force, she said.

The planned release comes less than five months after the service's highest ranking officer told airmen there would be changes in the way the Air Force looked at physical fitness.

"The amount of energy we devote to our fitness programs is not consistent with the growing demand of our warrior culture," wrote Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper in his July Sight Picture. "It's time to change that."

Besides making physical fitness a readiness requirement, the new instruction also puts an emphasis on commander involvement in unit fitness programs.

"If you look at the July Sight Picture, General Jumper says fitness is a commander's responsibility," Schmidt said. "This instruction puts more responsibility on the commander, not the medical community."

Among other things, the instruction requires unit and squadron commanders to implement and maintain a unit physical-training program and to offer the program at least three times a week.

The instruction also details methodology for conducting fitness evaluations. Schmidt said the instructions for conducting the push-up and crunch portions of the evaluation should be no surprise to airmen. They are the same instructions that have been used at the end of the cycle-ergometry test for the last two years.

"The only change is that the push-ups and crunches will be evaluated for one minute, instead of two minutes," Schmidt said.

The new fitness instruction took effect Jan. 1.

'TF Soldier' focuses on warrior readiness

JOE BURLAS
ARMY NEWS SERVICE

(Editor's note: This article is the first of a monthly series that will examine the 16 focus areas outlined by Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker.)

While inculcating the Warrior ethos into all Soldiers of both the active and reserve components is one of their top priorities, so is ensuring that all deploying members of the Army team are properly trained and equipped, according to members of a Fort Benning task force.

TF Soldier, a subordinate organization of Fort Benning's Infantry Center, has been charged by the chief of staff of the Army to analyze Soldier training, equipment and readiness needs for fighting the global war on terrorism and coordinate with other Army organizations to implement programs and policies to meet those needs.

"The Soldier" is one of the focus areas the Army will be directing its resources toward in a systematic and deliberate way in coming years," said Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker during October's Association of the U.S. Army annual meeting.

The Warrior ethos statement contained within the new Soldier's Creed — "I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit. I will never leave a fallen comrade." — is a key aspect of The Soldier focus area, said Brig. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley, chief of Infantry and Fort Benning's commanding general.

"This is about shifting the mindset of Soldiers from identifying what they do as a Soldier — 'I'm a cook, I'm an infantryman, I'm a postal clerk' — toward 'I am a Warrior' when people ask what they do for a living," Freakley said.

The Soldier's Creed helps Soldiers understand that despite very diverse backgrounds, all Soldiers are warriors and members of a team, Freakley said. The creed is also about changing the Army culture, by encouraging it to examine its beliefs from a warrior's perspective and checking that the Army produces and retains Soldiers of value to the nation, he said.

While Freakley said he had a hand in helping to develop the warrior ethos and Soldier's Creed, he credited the work of dozens of others, including a warrior ethos task force created by former Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric K. Shinseki that recommended valuable background information in developing the Soldier's Creed.

"The Soldier's Creed training is being implemented throughout the Army, including pre-commissioning instruction, basic training and officer basic courses," said Lt. Col. Peri Anest, TF Soldier operations officer. Schoomaker includes instruction on the Soldier's Creed when he talks to each pre-command course for officers preparing to take battalion, brigade or higher commands, Anest said.

TF Soldier is helping to ensure that needed clothing and equipment for deploying Soldiers and Department of the Army civilians are issued in a timely manner. Those items include things like moisture wicking undergarments that help prevent chafing in a desert environment, wrap-around sunglasses and hydration systems.

"In the past, Soldiers would have to go off post and buy things like this off the shelf from a commercial vender," Anest said. "Under the Rapid Fielding Initiative, we are working with PEO (Program Executive Officer) Soldier to identify clothing and equipment not normally in the Army system and get it into the system. Ideally, these items will become part of a Soldier's basic issue that he carries with him from post to post during his career – similar to what the Special Forces Soldiers do today with much of their gear — but that will be an issue for the Army Clothing Board to decide."

While much of the new equipment is getting to deploying active, Reserve and National Guard units prior to their departure from home station, some of it may be issued weeks or even months after those units arrive in theater.

"I have to warn you about raising false expectations," said Brad Tesch, a TF Soldier operations specialist. "We have a variety of venders with different production lines producing at varying speeds. That means we are playing catch up with some of the items."

"Until enough of the RFI equipment is produced to field it to all Soldiers in the Army, TF Soldier and PEO Soldier are working with (Headquarters, Department of the Army) G-3 to prioritize which units get the equipment first and when," Anest said.

"Other TF Soldier efforts include identifying 40 individual and 10 collective warrior tasks in which all Soldiers will remain proficient. Those tasks include react to a grenade attack, evacuate a wounded or injured Soldier, avoid an ambush and conduct a convoy operation. (Training and Doctrine Command) is currently working to ensure the tasks are included in enlisted and officer initial entry training courses," Anest said.

For more information on TF Soldier, visit www.infantry.army.mil/taskforcesoldier.

(Editor's note: While this article focused on The Soldier, other focus areas include: The Bench; Combat Training Centers/Battle Command Training Program; Leader Development and Education; Army Aviation; Current to Future Force; The Network; Modularity; Active Component/ Reserve Component Balance; Force Stabilization; Actionable Intelligence; Installations as Flagships; Authorities, Responsibilities, and Accountability; Resource Processes; and Strategic Communications. To view a synopsis of each area, visit The Way Ahead on AKO)

Warrior ethos, not just for combat Soldiers

JOE BURLAS
ARMY NEWS SERVICE

While the warrior ethos may be central to the new Soldier's Creed, it is not new to the Army.

Field Manual 22-100, Army Leadership, published in August 1999, defines the warrior ethos as the desire to accomplish the mission despite all adversity.

The manual also states, "The warrior ethos applies to all Soldiers and (Department of the Army) civilians, not just with those who close with and destroy the enemy."

The warrior ethos is also discussed in FM 7-0, Training the Force, published in Oct. 2002: "Warrior ethos compels Soldiers to fight through all conditions to victory no matter how much effort is required. It is the Soldier's selfless commitment to the nation, mission, unit and fellow Soldiers. Warrior ethos is grounded in refusal to accept failure."

And according to Brig. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley, chief of Infantry and Fort Benning commanding general, the warrior ethos is about manning the force with adaptive Soldiers who do not rely on a single set of job skills to get the job done.

"What we are talking about is adaptive Soldiers who are situationally aware of what is going on around them and have a mindset that is ready to quickly adapt to changing situations and environments to accomplish the mission," Freakley said.

"It is like a football team where the quarterback reads the defense on the line after the huddle and doesn't like what he sees. With a good team, the quarterback can call an audible for a different play at the last minute based upon the defensive situation."

Warrior ethos extract from the Soldier's Creed:

I will always place the mission first.

I will never accept defeat.

I will never quit.

I will never leave a fallen comrade.

Lady Liberty makes surprise visit to deployed Airmen

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

A very special lady lifted the spirits of deployed members of the 103rd Fighter Wing while in Southwest Asia in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom last spring, and she never said a word.

A green, 2-foot-6-inch Statue of Liberty LEGO kit traveled overseas to the delight of weary airmen in need of a downtime distraction.

"It's not hard to see a smile over the phone," said Senior Master Sgt. Al Parent, avionics element chief, 103rd Maintenance Squadron, who remained stateside, but kept in contact with his troops through email and telephone.

He did the necessary legwork to get the statue kit for his airmen after they specifically requested it.

"I bought them a star-destroyer, the largest LEGO model, because I wanted to give them something for a surprise when they arrived," said Sergeant Parent. "They were so happy, so I bought them that statue (Liberty Statue) too, with my wife's employee discount."

Parent received an email from one of his deployed troops after that member received the box of LEGO bricks.

"It can be 30 degrees and you sleep in a tent, on plywood, with 12 other guys, you can be eating two hot meals and an MRE on a hot day—it can't be all that bad (with LEGOs)," the deployer wrote.

Staff Sgt. John Malin, avionics attack control systems journeyman, 103rd Maintenance Squadron, and his coworkers worked to make the box of little plastic pieces into the finished product.

"We had a good time on breaks putting it together," said Malin. "We were going out of our mind with boredom sometimes. It gave the guys something to do."

The statue, dismantled for her return trip to Connecticut, was rebuilt with an extra piece — a unit coin. After her final construction, her assemblers glued her together, and then signed her instruction book.

For now she resides in Parent's office, until he finds her a permanent home, which he plans to be the LEGO Company office in Enfield.

From left to right Staff Sgt. John Malin, avionics attack control systems journeyman, Senior Airman Joe Mazzie, aircraft structural repair journeyman, Tech. Sgt. Dan Taylor, aircraft structural repair craftsman, and Senior Airman Jim Quadagnoli, aircraft structural repair journeyman, all 103rd Maintenance Squadron, stand with the LEGO Statue of Liberty that was sent as part of Morale, Welfare and Recreation package to members of the 103rd Fighter Wing while deployed overseas as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom last spring. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Carolyn A. Aselton, 103rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

Patriot Defense tests abilities of state agencies to work together

CAPT. LOU MARTINEZ
PAO, JOINT FORCES COMMAND

"We are setting up shelters in New Haven, New London and Greenwich, and we are asking the National Guard to transport cots and blankets," said John Hartgering, a volunteer with the American Red Cross.

"We are monitoring hospital beds, and have concerns about water purification, we are also reaching out to the National Guard to transport medical professionals," said Leonard Guercia with the State Public Health Department.

"We have called in troopers for 12 hour shifts," said Master Sgt. Dan Lewis, Connecticut State Police. All this played out in a training scenario for Patriot Defense 2004.

The exercise, Patriot Defense 2004, was designed nine months ago by Lt. Col. Scott Dilley of the J-5 to prepare the state military force to support civil authorities during a statewide emergency.

"I think it is designed to identify areas of improvement and maybe adjust ensuing plans to be able to react quicker," said Dilley, J-5 CTARNG.

The multi-agency exercise conducted during the week of Jan. 5 tested the Connecticut National Guard and State's capability to respond to a multi-faceted emergency.

The exercise involved the response to both a major winter storm similar to the blizzard of 1979, as well as potential local homeland security event, such as a terrorist attack. A scenario that mirrors the terror alert level the country and state was on at the time of the exercise: Terror Alert Orange.

The state took advantage of an opportunity to get various municipalities and emergency officials at the local level the ability to exercise the new *Initial National Response Plan* issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and to demonstrate the State Government's response capabilities and overall commitment to emergency preparedness.

"This gives us a chance to bring in people who are new to particular agencies and gives them the opportunity to see how the Emergency Operation Center is run and experience what an activation would be like. We have a lot of new people asking a lot of questions," said Warren Hall, Exercise Training Officer for Patriot Defense.

The event driven scenario required interaction and interagency coordination among multiple organizations and all levels of government.

The major learning objectives of the exercise included: exercising the National Guard's coordination and support role to the state during a major emergency; exercising, validating and updating state emergency response plans and procedures; and exercising new relationships and protocols as outlined in the *Initial National Response Plan*.

"This exercise allows us to build our relationship with the Guard," said Hall. "It is very beneficial to learn what the Guard's needs are."

More than 150 people from 23 federal and state agencies participated, such as Connecticut Department of Public Health, the Connecticut State Police, the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, the Transportation Security Agency Team, the City of Waterbury, the towns of Groton and Harwinton, the American Red Cross, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Coast Guard, American Medical Response, the Connecticut departments of Transportation, Mental Health and Addiction Services and Information Technologies.

"This is a great opportunity for us to work together, exchange notes and practice domestic preparedness. I look forward to participating with all levels of government in future exercises," said Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno, adjutant general, Connecticut National Guard.

"Overall, the exercised actually worked out better than expected," said Dilley.

One soldier remembers a traumatic night's events

(Editor's note: This article was submitted on a CD-Rom by the 143rd Military Police Company and was sent from Iraq. The writer's identity was not disclosed.)

26 October 03 was a typical day at the boo. That's what everybody calls Abu ghraib for short.

It was the first full day of the Muslim observance of Ramadan. Things at the police station seemed to be running as usual with the hustle and bustle of people coming in and making complaints. It was about 2000 hours when the typical MP patrols came in to get their debrief of the day shift's activities.

Sgt. Thorne's crew, Viking 2 of the 527 MP Company was the team that had been assigned the patrol the boo. He knew his s*** and the area cause he'd been there since the beginning.

Later on that evening came rolling in our C.O. 1st Lt. Grube and his security team. His team was comprised of mostly people from 3rd Plt., because his normal team was in Qatar on R&R.

Most of the platoons in our company haven't been to the boo, so there is the usual s*** talking about whose area is the toughest. I think most of them think we make stories up and make them bigger than they are.

Coming in with the C.O. was Sgt. 1st Class Dan Lawler, Staff Sgt. Andrea Clouiter, Spec. Colon and Spec. Melissa Roberts. Roberts used to roll with our platoon so she knows what it's like here, but the others had no clue.

When you first enter the compound there's a small dirt parking area on the right which is for the humvees. That night it was a bit more crowded than usual because of everybody that was there at once. There was also a platoon of infantry from the 2-70 that provides security for the station with their Bradley fighting vehicles. Parking was going to be tight.

When our commander entered the station he came to the desk where I was working to find out if there was anything to report. I told him that there was nothing really, and it was quiet so far. Looking in the window from the outside was Master Sgt. Mark Youngquist, who works in operations and doesn't get out much so when he does, it's a break from the paperwork. It's always nice to see him because he brightens everybody's day.

After the C.O.'s debrief, he and some of his security detail headed to the roof of the police station to get a better view of the boo at night. Up there they were met by, Staff Sgt. Rosati and Pfc. Hackett who were working in the roof top bunker.

It's about 2230 hrs and I'm working the desk with Sgt. Cavin when Ahmed, one of our interpreters asks if he can go home a bit early. He told me that he had to get up at 0400hrs the next day because he had to eat and do prayers for Ramadan. So I call up to the roof and ask Rosati if it's ok, he said it was fine. So Ahmed begins to gather his stuff and says his goodnights and goodbyes and walks out of the station.

I'm now sitting at the desk with Cavin and a couple of the I.P.'s (Iraqi police) talking and joking around when a large explosion shakes the station. Immediately everybody starts to run to find out what it was. (Explosions were common at our station.)

Suddenly the roof opens up with gunfire, and a second explosion rocks the station. I figure the station is being mortared, but why is the roof shooting, is it an RPG attack? As I come out of the station, all I can hear is people screaming and yelling, the infantry is now pouring out of their building and to their vehicles. Amongst all of the noise and the mortars still falling I can only hear one thing, Thorne's voice repeatedly yelling, medic, medic……..medic!

As the infantry is running, I'm yelling to them if they have a medic, somebody replies no, and that's when I knew it had hit the fan.

Soldiers were being carried into the break room by Sgt. 1st Class Porter and other Soldiers, bloodied and screaming. Since there were no medics and I was the only combat lifesaver, I had to run to my vehicle to get my CLS bag.

I don't know how I did it but, it was just instinct.

As I was running, the mortars were still falling in, I didn't know where but the explosions were near by. As I got to my vehicle I tried to open my door but it wouldn't open because we had disengaged the handles on the door so nobody could open them while we were in them. So then I had to run around the vehicle to the other side and climb in to get my bag. That really sucked because with mortars, you don't know where they're gonna land.

After retrieving my bag and running back to the break room which was now turned into a makeshift triage room, I could now see the damage that had been done.

Spec. Monroe, Pvt. Busby, and Pfc. Bosveld were all on the blood-covered floor. Everybody worked franticly to treat the wounds. Monroe visibly seemed to be the worst, his left leg below the knee was just hanging there shattered and the right wasn't any better. We needed to tie off his legs to stop the bleeding. Things were so hectic. I tore through my bag and just dumped everything onto the floor, so as people yelled for things I could toss it to them.

Sgt Thorne and I began to work on Monroe. Thorne needed bandages and cravats to start the tourniquets to stop the bleeding. While he did that I began the I.V., this time there could be no second chances to get it started. All of the training they teach you that you think you'll never need was all coming together.

While I began the I.V., Thorne kept working on Monroe, also he was yelling Bosveld's first name, Rachel. Thorne kept saying "Hang in there Boz." Boz was pale and seemed to be in shock, Clouiter, Lawler and Roberts kept a watchful eye on Boz. In the meantime, Busby was working with someone else tending to Monroe's shattered leg.

Everything was so hectic with people yelling and running trying to regain some sense of order. Where were the damn medi-tracks? Suddenly things got a lot worse.

In the midst of treating shattered legs and lives, Lawler's voice echoed above everyone else's, as he shouted "She's not breathing!" Immediately he, Clouiter and Roberts began C.P.R. That's what everybody was working so hard to avoid. Monroe started to become restless at the sound of the focused attention on Bosveld.

Who wouldn't want to help their team member? But Thorne and I needed him to be as still and calm as possible under the circumstances. We didn't want him to raise his blood pressure for fear of anymore blood loss, which would make things worse than they already were. I grabbed Roberts who was next to me and told her that she had to keep Monroe calm. I don't think I'll ever forget that scene.

She was sitting beside him, calm as she could be, her blood-stained hands holding and comforting Monroe's head. She told him everything that was going on, the truth and not just what he needed to hear. Monroe responded well to Roberts, she stayed with him for the remainder of the time.

The only people who were communicating were the people in the room, the others were standing in the doorway with a sense of shock on their faces, but they were ready to help out if need be at a moments notice.

While we still were tending to our comrades, the sound of the 113 could be heard racing through the market towards us. It seemed like an eternity. As the 2-70th medics came in; the back hatch to the medi-track flew open and out came the medics. These guys had seen and experienced this before, since this had happened to a few of their own at the same place.

Immediately they brought in the stretchers. Their first priority was Boz. The medics began to work on her. We loaded Monroe onto the litter first. The pain must have been unbearable as we put him in and helped lift what was left of his leg. Next came Busby, his leg was just as bad as Monroe's. As we carried him to the track for transport, we had to pass by the medics working on Boz.

Once Busby was loaded up I returned to see if there was anything I could do help the medics, we had to get Boz to the C.S.H.(combat support hospital) We attempted to get Boz in the track, but the litter which she was on kept hitting the wooden poles that we used to tie off Monroe and Busby's legs.

Myself, Escobales and Colon loaded her into the back of the I.P. van. We had a makeshift ambulance which would have to do. At that point I told Porter that we would follow the track to the C.S.H. and that's where we'd be.

The track then rolled out, we were right behind it driving through the market at night. The thought crossed my mind, what if there was an I.E.D. like usual at this time of night. There'd be even a bigger mess on our hands. At that point I didn't even care. I drove while Esco and Colon still preformed C.P.R. I kept encouraging them and telling them that we were only a few minutes away from the C.S.H. It's only a two minute drive to the main gate, but with time ticking away every second seems like 10 minutes.

As we raced to our final destination and finally arrived, the medical personal came rushing out to take over. We yelled that we had a female and she wasn't breathing! Instantly they took her into the hospital and began working on her.

Monroe and Busby didn't get out of the track, but were driven over to an awaiting chopper behind the building which would take them to a trauma hospital.

Esco, Colon, and myself watched as the doctors worked to revive Rachel. Time passed. The only thing we could do now was wait. We then noticed that the doctors had stopped working, and a nurse came out and looked at the clock on the wall, wrote down the time, and asked us a few questions. The only person in the room now was the Chaplin.

At that same moment the CSM and LTC of the 709th MP BN asked what had happened. The only words Esco and I could tell them was that Boz didn't make it and she was dead.

They were in somewhat disbelief, and had to be told again. Esco, Colon, and I walked outside and found ourselves a quiet place to sit. We were all in disbelief that she was now gone. If that mortar had landed on the other side of that humvee, we would have been working on our soldiers instead of the 527th. Soon after her body was brought out and taken by ambulance to the morgue at the hospital.

We later found out that a small piece of shrapnel had entered Rachel's back where the armor plate didn't cover. This in turn caused internal damage which we were unaware of. Monroe lost his left leg below the knee but doctors managed to save his right one. Busby had major surgery to save his legs.

A memorial service was held a few days later for Boz, and people spoke highly of her. I've never attended a military memorial service, but it was well presented. It didn't really hit me hard until the final roll call.

Members of her squad were called answering up; Pittman- "here," Thorne- "here," Bagby- "here," Bosveld……Pfc. Bosveld ……Pfc. Rachel K. Bosveld."

She would have turned 20 the following week.

TO THE WORLD YOU MAY BE JUST ONE PERSON, BUT TO ONE PERSON YOU MAY BE THE WORLD……RKB.

Award citations don't come close to what the Soldiers do

(Editor's Note: This article was sent to the Guardian on a CD-Rom by the 143rd Military Police. It did not identify the writer.)

I have had the honor and the impossible task of writing some of the awards for the Company. The honor comes from putting words on paper about what the troops have done over the past year.

We have submitted several people for individual awards. This requires the review of statements from witnesses, incident reports, and other official documents.

It is humbling to read of the dedication, commitment, sacrifice and courage that the members of our company have displayed on almost a daily basis.

The impossible task is not leaving anyone out and also putting into words what really happened. Words can not always express the actions of Soldiers in harms way. These individual awards are limited to writing a single page sheet of paper describing the incident in detail for which the Soldier is getting the award for.

In most cases, with a lot of editing, we have been able to get the entire incident onto one sheet of paper. This is not the case with some other awards. There is a series of awards that put an even greater restriction on what can be put down on paper to describe what the Soldier did to deserve an award.

We have awards that require us to put down what a Soldier did in Operation Iraqi Freedom in one paragraph. This paragraph is limited to four single-spaced lines of about 60 words. Our problem is, how does one break down a year's worth of service in a combat zone performing all kinds of assignments and cover them all in sufficient detail in 60 words?

The easy answer is that we can not do it. The awards are going to be presented but they will never tell the full story of what happened. There will be no mention of the 130 degree heat. There will be no mention of the I.E.D. attacks. There will be no mention of the 12 hour days that ended up being 16 hours long and lasted for weeks. There will be no mention of swatting flies out of the food. There will be no mention of trying to sleep in the oppressive heat even at night. There is no mention of hours on end of force protection.

They used to call it guard duty but "guard duty" is not very sexy, where in one small fraction of a minute a Soldier was vigilant and stopped a vehicle bomb attack that would have killed six MPs. That one moment was played out for thousands hours by our troops manning security posts. That one act was repeated over and over by all our troops day after day. There isn't any separate award for all these acts that reflect our Soldiers' endurance, professionalism and dedication to duty.

What I am trying to say is that each Soldier earned their award 10 times over what is written on paper. What is written on paper is true and justifies the issuing of the award but does not even come close to relating all the details of a year on active duty in a combat zone for each individual Soldier.

Please know that the members of the 143rd Military Police Company have far exceeded expectations and the awards are just a symbol of their excellence.

Knowing what needs to be done and doing it

(Editor's Note: This article was on a CD –Rom sent to the Guardian by the 143rd Military Police Company. It did not identify the writer.)

Being a part of communications is similar to being in an ER. Your job doesn't take all day, but when you are requested, you are already late.

It's fast paced, and your chance of success depends on your decision to either go by the book, or follow any trend that works. Communications is mostly about problem solving. You are given a scenario, tools and time. Conditions are never in your favor, and in the end, everyone should be able to speak and relay vital information.

It's dawn in Baghdad, and weekly we change our COMSEC to secure operation security.

Every morning, the dampness of the night is still present. It leaves a mist around the radios, and mixes with the dust to make your sinuses that much more irritable. The process of modifying our radios becomes numbing after an hour, and the flat lining COMSEC alarm leaves a ringing in your ears. Nevertheless, the feeling after troubleshooting a problem in time for your squad to roll out is worth it.

It was an especially hot day when we rolled out headed for Warrior compound. There were various aspects of our section that needed to be taken care of and packed: SINCGARS, DNVT phone, field phones, Ethernet and antennas. It was definitely not a job for one person.

That is one of the reasons I am thankful we have a good number of people. It was just Eric and me. I didn't think we would sleep at night! We would all become night owls like Staff Sgt. Bispham.

The work of a 31U is not hard, but time consuming. Everything has to be just right, construction and execution. Time is never on our side. When we roll, we are the last one out, and the first one in. Both times we are acting fast. There is no time for half-a***d execution, or unaccountability.

We packed our truck, staged our convoy, and headed out. It was the first time in a long time that we drove somewhere that took longer than 10 seconds! Driving through the city, one never ceases to marvel at what a beauty the city used to have. There is a striking contrast between the lavish detail of many of the buildings and the poor and wasted tenants who reside in them. The traffic, crowds and the potential for violence are always something to be aware of when rolling through.

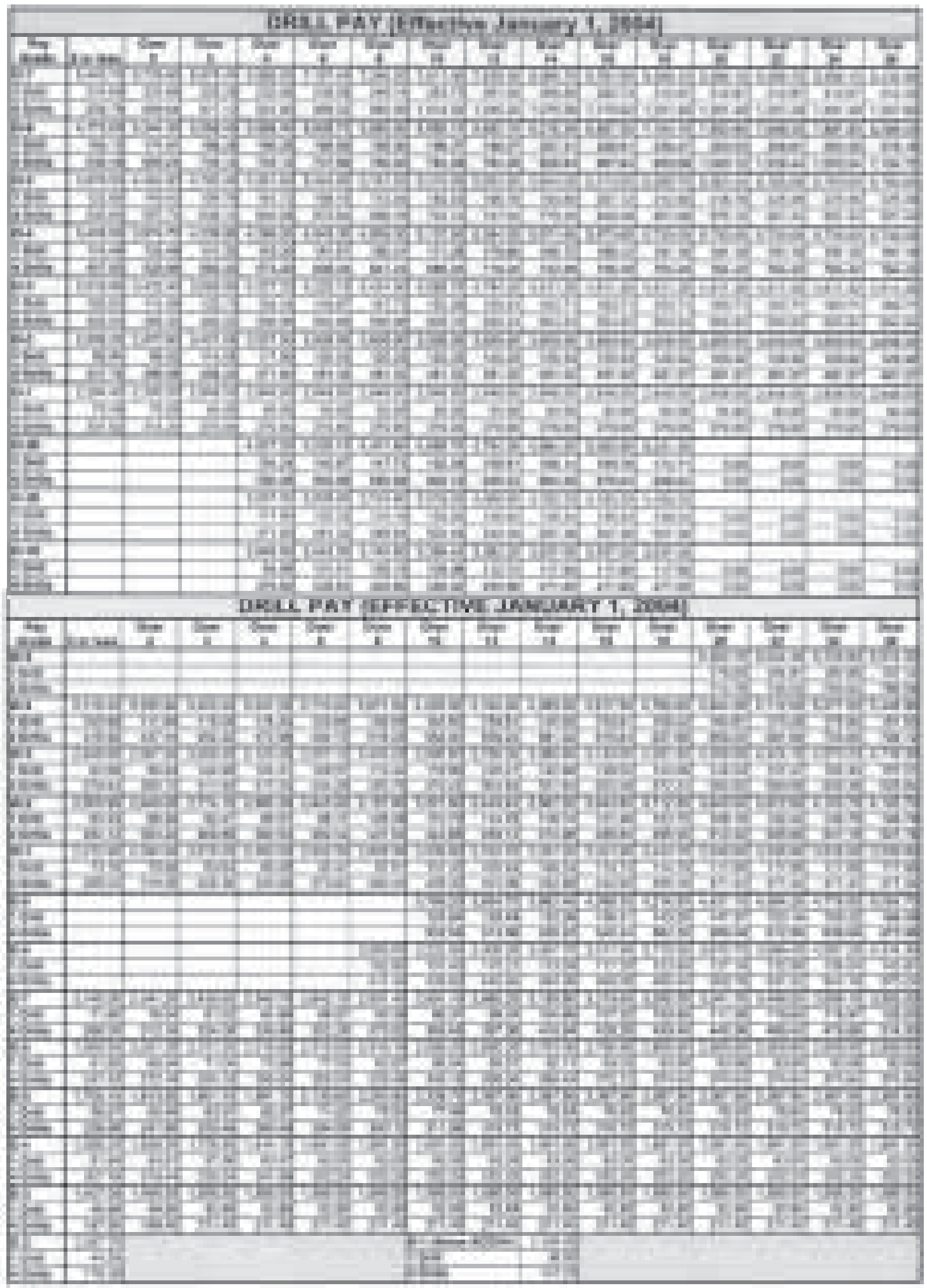
Our job when we reach our AO is always getting a line to our net. From there, we coordinate what issues need to be addressed, and where we set up an efficient point for communications. Again, time is precious. No one wants to set up antennae and tracing wire at night. It's always inconvenient, and dangerous. We try to keep those elements out of our work environment.

The first couple of nights at a new place are always restless, but much gets accomplished, and we know at the end of the day what was done, and what needs to be done tomorrow.

See the March *Connecticut Guardian* for more MP stories and photos

Drill Pay charts for 2004 released

Pay charts for AGR, and all special pay charts are available on the DFAS website. The charts below detail drill and AT pay for traditional Guardsmen. The top figure in each column is the 15-day AT pay amount; the second figure is the amount for one day of pay; and the third figure is the weekend drill pay. These figures do not include allowances such as housing, subsistance or mileage that could be given with ADSW or AT pay.



DRILL PAY (Effective January 1, 2004)

DRILL PAY (EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2004)

Soldiers, officers can now view records online

Soldiers can now review their personnel information on the Web in a one-page Enlisted Records Brief.

Official photographs were added last month to the online Officer Records Briefs, which first became available on the Web in June. The ERBs went online in December. MyERB and MyORB are now both on the U.S. Army Human Resources Command homepage at https://www.hrc.army.mil. Just click on the "Active" link at bottom right. Then the MyORB and MyERB links can be found in the left chimney.

The Web-based solution enables active-duty Soldiers to prepare for promotions by reviewing their records summary via the Internet, HRC officials said. Army Reserve Soldiers and officers can review some of their personnel information via the My2Xcitizen portal. Both the HRC and Reserve portals require Army Knowledge Online accounts and passwords.

"We believe that Soldiers' access to their personnel information is the best it's ever been with the ERB going online," said Col. Reuben Jones, commander of the Enlisted Records and Evaluation Center.

"If Soldiers need to make changes they should still contact their S-1," Jones said. "Once changes are made in eMILPO, Soldiers should see corrections to their ERB within 24 to 48 hours."

The ERB virtually replaces two forms — the old three-page ERB and the four-page DA form 2-1 for enlisted personnel, officials said. They added that the new ERB is now available for viewing 24/7 on the EREC homepage.

Similar to the ORB, the ERB contains personnel information used to manage professional development, assignments, and promotions such as assignment history, civilian and military education, awards and decorations, special skills, and individual qualifications. Both documents are updated from the data stored in eMILPO.

Currently, only the ORB includes a photo. The ERB will incorporate enlisted official photographs from the Department of the Army Photo Management Information System, known as DAPMIS, in a couple of months, officials said.

The ORB site has had about 25,000 "hits" since Dec. 18 when the photos were added.

"It is important that everyone ensures … personnel information is accurate and updated," said Brig. Gen. Rhett Hernandez, director of Officer Personnel, HRC. "MyORB with the photo is another step toward that end state."

(Editor's note: Shannon Brown, chief of the HRC Information Management Branch and Sgt. Maj. Deborah Seimer, the EREC sergeant major in Indianapolis, Ind., contributed to this story.)

Tri-care undergoes temporary overhaul

PFC. JORDAN E. WERME
65TH PCH

In the past, Tri-Care benefits have been available only to soldiers on current active duty assignments.

But for all of 2004, Tri-Care benefits will be available to a broader range of individuals.

"You have to understand how the old system worked before you can understand the new one," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Bill Cusack, health services officer for the Connecticut Army National Guard.

Tri-Care has only been available to active duty members with orders of 30 days or more, including AGR, ADSW and active Army or mobilized reservists he said.

But now, thanks in part to President George W. Bush signing the Senate's Appropriations Act and Authorization Bill, the United States Congress has authorized funding to temporarily expand the Tri-Care health plan. The expansion will run until Dec. 31, and has affected the plan in three ways he said.

First, soldiers not on active duty are now eligible for Tri-Care upon being alerted of pending mobilization or within 60 days of the mobilization, whichever is shorter, said Cusack.

"Eligibility begins on the 90th day prior to 31st day of the mobilization order," he said.

The pre-mobilization benefits have been added because the costs for mobilizing each individual soldier have been very high he said.

This new plan will enable each soldier to have all medical and dental screenings done prior to deployment at no cost to the individual, allowing soldiers to be better prepared for deployment.

Second, Tri-Care benefits remain effective for up to 180 days after the enrolled soldier is separated from the mobilization, said Cusack.

This amendment has been made to allow Tri-Care coverage to continue in the event that a soldier returning to work is not able to immediately re-enroll in his employer's provided health care plan. The previous plan allowed for either 60 or 120 days of continuing coverage, depending on time of service.

The third change allows anybody in military reserve components to file for Tri-Care if he meets any of the following criteria:

- Is entitled to at least one day of unemployment.
- Is employed but employer offers no sponsored health plan.
- Is not otherwise eligible for Transitional Tri-Care benefits.
- Spouse has no insurance.

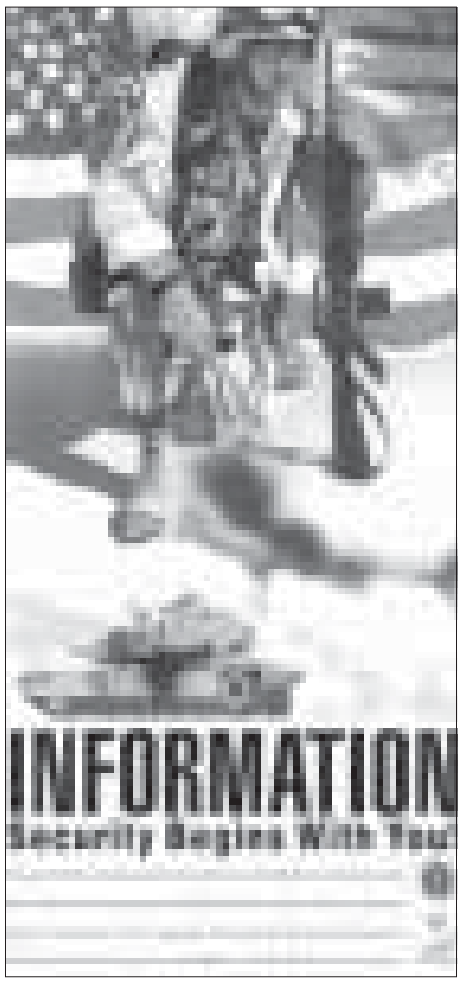
This program will also include family coverage, but will include deductibles, co-pay costs and cost-sharing of prescriptions, said Cusack.

No information is available yet as to the costs, co-pay amounts or deductibles for this program.

"We are awaiting written operating guidance," he said.

The expanded Tri-Care benefits will run until Dec. 31, at which point Congress will either; extend, make permanent or cancel the amendments. No information regarding the status of enrolled soldiers at the end of the trial period was available at the time of this writing.

Further information about the military Tri-Care program is available on line at www.tricare.osd.mil, and phone numbers can be found at www.tricare.osd.mil/main/tollfree.cmf.



OCS gets an insider's view of OIF from someone who's been there

OFFICER CANDIDATES ANDREW HAFFNER
AND DAVID LORD

On Tuesday, Dec. 2, Capt. Joseph DeRing of the 1/502nd Infantry, 101st Airborne (Airmobile) presented A Co. (OCS), 169th Leadership Regiment, a briefing on the Screaming Eagles' activities throughout OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM.

DeRing, currently stationed with the 101st in Mozul, Iraq, shared an evening of his two-week leave with the candidates of Class 49 in order to emphasize the Army's need for "flexible, adaptable junior leaders".

After deploying to Kuwait, the 101st prepared to breach the bearm separating them from Iraq. The 101st Division received a mission of protecting the western flank of the 3rd Infantry Division as they move up the Euphrates River toward Baghdad.

The mission quickly changed as they advanced north where they were directed towards An Nagjab and then Baghdad. During this attack, the 101st made the longest aerial assault in history. They faced numerous encounters with the Iraqi Republican Guard, Fedayeen militia, and other elements until they finally reached the northern city of Mozul.

From the end of major Combat Operations till the present, DeRing, an infantry officer, and the 101st have worked to stabilize Mozul and the surrounding region.

The Division's engineers have since managed to repair and fix many areas of Iraq's infrastructure. Schools have reopened and are teaching children of both sexes without government propaganda.

If it were up to him, DeRing said "the MVP (for OIF) goes to the Engineers."

"In what other profession can a 20-year-old E-5 take the initiative to rebuild an 85-year-old hydro-electric dam, which irrigates 700km of land and provides 2500 Megawatts of power to the valley? In what other job can a 20-year-old have the responsibility and the ability to change so many lives?"

DeRing's presentation also described many of the "lessons learned" and how the troops' morale and conditions are improving with the Iraqis'. He lauded the accomplishments of the Soldiers he served with.

"The Soldiers in the coalition are doing a great job." In fact, "they couldn't be doing a better job."

When Dering was asked, "What is your impression of the National Guard troops you've served with?" he replied, "There is no difference at all between the National Guard and the active duty army. I deal every day with National Guard Soldiers and many of them are the most professional Soldiers around."

After his comprehensive presentation, DeRing presented a video of the 101st's actions during OIF and then answered the class's questions. The pictures and message of the video, which was dedicated to the memory of the fallen 101st soldiers, riveted the candidates in the audience. It was inspiring and encouraging. It showed many of the challenges facing Soldiers and leaders.

DeRing stayed after his presentation to answer the candidates' questions. His answers were straightforward and delivered with personal examples and insight. DeRing vividly described several challenges that leaders faced. He described many of the concerns and possible changes in tactics and strategy that were projected for the coming year. DeRing described the need for changes in training and his belief that General Schoonmaker and the high command were already changing much of it at the TRADOC level.

DeRing's presentation is indicative of the caliber of training that is provided at Officer Candidate School.

"OCS just isn't push-ups and mountain climbers," said Officer Candidate Jeffery Morande, Student President of Class 49. "We're given contemporary perspectives of pertinent events that affect the way we lead. There's no doubt in my mind that all of us (in OCS) will be deployed in the war on terrorism sometime in the next year or so. This is something that we will keep in the forefront of our collective minds not only during our stay at OCS but also at our units and in our training."

DeRing returned to Mozul on Dec 16. The Screaming Eagles are preparing to rotate back to Ft. Campbell sometime in February. OCS Class 49 bids him Godspeed and wholeheartedly thanks him for spending a few of his precious hours he had at home to speak about leadership, initiative and courage.

HONOR LEADS THE WAY, SIR!

Record of Connecticut Men in the War of Rebellion

Editor's Note: This is the fourth monthly installment of the history of Connecticut's service in the Civil war, as published in the RECORD OF SERVICE OF CONNECTICUT MEN IN THE WAR OF REBELLION, 1861 TO 1865, from the History of the Second Connecticut Volunteers written by Gen. James B. Coit, Private IN Co. B. (Transcribed by Staff Sergeant Brett W. Wilson, Administrative Assistant to the USPFO for Connecticut)

During the grand uprising of loyal men which was the immediate result of the Union disaster at Bull Run, and while the infantry regiments from the Sixth to the Eleventh were forming, Major William H. Mallory of Bridgeport, who had served from the outbreak of the war, in a New York regiment known as Duryea's Zouaves, obtained from Governor Buckingham authority to recruit in Connecticut a squadron of cavalry.

At this early period the cavalry branch of the Union army was lamentably weak, and a plan was matured for raising a regiment of twelve companies for the regular service, by recruiting six squadrons from as many different States, it being agreed upon between the State authorities and the general government that each State should have the same credit for enlistments, and control of appointments in the companies it furnished as in the regiments of volunteers which it furnished complete. Under this arrangement the First Squadron of Connecticut Cavalry was recruited in August, 1861, Major Mallory being assisted in the work by Capt. Thos. B. Thornett and Lieut. Lucien H. Southard of Hartford, and Lieut. Marcus Coon of Waterbury. Before the end of August the squadron was mustered into the United States service.

Connecticut had thus fulfilled to the letter its part of the agreement, but from the date of the acceptance of the squadron by the general government that agreement was entirely ignored by the war department, and thereafter not an officer could be appointed in these companies by the Governor of Connecticut. The squadron was almost immediately consolidated with the Second New York, otherwise known as the "Harris Light Cavalry," and Connecticut was farther defrauded by the official assignment of the entire number of officers and men to the quota of New York. One result of this was that no muster-rolls or reports from these companies were forwarded to the Adjutant-General of Connecticut during all their term of service, consequently no records are now in possession of the State from which an adequate account of their service can be obtained.

While the regiment was en route for Washington, on September 8th, near Cockeysville, Maryland, Quartermaster-Sergeant Edwin L. Lyon and Private William A. German, both of Captain Thornett's company, met death as bravely as ever soldiers could in the field. The engineer in charge of the train, who was an ardent rebel, made a desperate attempt to bring about a disaster by running the train at such a fearful rate of speed as to throw the rear cars from the track. To foil this purpose the soldiers named attempted to check the speed by manning the brakes of the rear car, but being unable to keep their footing upon the platform were thrown from the car and instantly killed. Sergeant Lyon was a nephew of Gen. Nathaniel Lyon, who fell at Wilson's Creek, Missouri, a month later, the first Union general killed in the war.

The regiment encamped on Arlington Heights, where it remained in camp of instruction until thoroughly fitted for the arduous duty it afterwards performed. It was among the very first of the volunteer cavalry regiments to prove that Union cavalry could match and overmatch the rough riders of the Confederacy. With this regiment Davies and Kilpatrick both won their first distinction as cavalry commanders; and the rapid promotions of its Connecticut men, as also the many casualties accorded them in the rosters of the two Connecticut companies, render it matter of peculiar regret that a fair and circumstantial history of their active service cannot be given. On almost every field where the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac was engaged throughout the war, the Connecticut squadron left its record of bravery, unmarred by any sign of faltering, however hotly pressed. Among the earliest in the field, it was in at the death of the rebellion. Most of its members re-enlisted as veterans, and the organization was finally mustered out of service June 23, 1865.

Canadian First Squadron C. V. Cavalry

	A	B	Total
Killed	1	7	8
MIA, probably killed	1	–	1
Fatally Wounded	1	2	3
Wounded	–	4	4
Captured	7	20	27
Died in prison	6	6	12
Died of disease	8	8	16
Accidental deaths	–	4	4
Discharged disabled	11	14	25
Unaccounted for at muster-out	1	1	2
Total	36	66	102

Partial List of Engagements

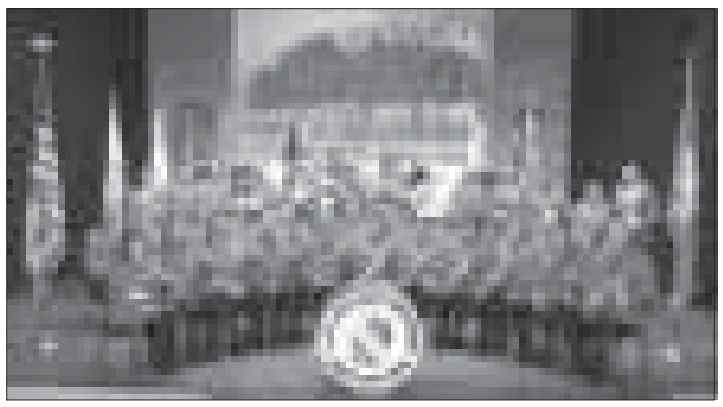
Falmouth, Va., April 17, 1862
Rappahannock Station, Va., August 23, 1862
Gainesville, Va., August 29, 1862
Martinsburg, Va., Sept. —, 1862
South Mountain, Md., Sept. 14, 1862
Catlett's Station, Va., Oct. 24, 1862
Fredericksburg, Va., Dec. 11, 1862
Chancellorsville, Va., May 3, 1863
Aldie, Va., June 17, 1863
New Baltimore, Va., July 1, 1863
Gettysburg, Pa., July 3, 1863
Rapidan Station, Va., Sept. 14, 1863
Liberty Mills, Va., Sept. 22, 1863
White's Ford, Va., Sept. 22, 1863
Brandy Station, Va., Oct. 12, 1863
Rapidan Station, Va., March 1, 1864
Dahlgren's Raid to Richmond, Mar. 1, 1864
Todd's Tavern, Va., May 5, 1864
Ream's Station, Va., June 30, 1864

Connecticut Military Department News

First Company Governor's Foot Guard Band celebrates centennial anniversary

The First Company Governor's Foot Guard Band is celebrating its Centennial Celebration this year.

When the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut passed the resolution in 1771 which formed the First Company Governor's Foot Guard, no mention was specifically made of a band of musicians, although a petition by commandant Captain Samuel Wyllys in the Company's first year of operation sought reimbursement for monies spent on fifes and drums. Thus, it is clear that music has always been part of the Foot Guard. It was not until 1904 however, that the First Company formed its own permanent band with its members a part of the rank and file of the Foot Guard.



Today, band members are enlisted personnel of the Company, full members of the First Company and of the State Organized Militia, who train and drill side by side with the Foot Guard's infantry unit. The ensemble referred to in State Statutes, as the "Band" is a concert band composed of roughly 40 musicians. The instrumentation of this ensemble is similar to that found in other military and wind bands and includes clarinets, flutes, saxophones, trumpets, bassoons, French horns, trombones, baritones and tubas as well as a full concert percussion section. This is occasionally supplemented by a vocalist and an electric bass. Led by Capt. Laura O'Connell, the first female officer in the 233-year history of the First Company, today's band performs many concerts, parades, ceremonies, and special events throughout the Northeast

The marching ensemble, referred to in State Statutes as "Field Music", is composed of roughly 35 musicians. Its instrumentation differs slightly from the concert band primarily because certain instruments found in the concert band, such as the bassoon, the electric bass and the French horn, are not well suited to being played while marching. The instrumentation of the marching ensemble is similar to military and corps style marching bands and includes clarinets, flutes, piccolos, saxophones, trumpets, marching mellophones, baritones, trombones, and sousaphones. The marching percussion unit includes cymbals, side drums, a tenor drum and bass drums, with the occasional addition of glockenspiel. Master Sergeant Max Covell is the Drum Major and is

See BAND CELEBRATES Page 25

ESGR sponsors Rose Bowl Parade float

First Sgt. (Ret. USAR) Ronald E. Lee
CT-ESGR Public Affairs Chairman

Like a fine musical orchestration, this year's ESGR Rose Bowl Parade Float, *"America's Employers…Orchestrating Freedom,"* salutes the relationship between members of the National Guard and Reserve, their families and their employers.

The float served as a reminder of America's first patriots and our nation's gratitude to the civilian military volunteers who have contributed their valuable serves since the start of our great country and the strong commitment of thousands of employers across America. The float paid homage to the National Guard and Reserve forces that so gallantly serve our nation.

It helped to bring worldwide attention to the sacrifices also being made by their families, employers and communities to ensure the availability and readiness of our Reserve forces to safeguard the security of our homeland and stand up to the threat of world terrorism.

The ESGR float, 30 feet high, 18 feet wide, and 55 feet long, depicted Uncle Sam gliding down the parade route proudly displaying the colors of our Nation – the majestic American flag – surrounded by symbols of America - the Liberty Bell, eagles, bugle and drums, fireworks, rockets and stars.

The float was a floral, musical and patriotic tribute to the 1.3 million active members of the National Guard and Reserve and a salute to their employers for the continued support and cooperation assuring Americans and the world a safer place.

ESGR sought to gain and reinforce the support of America's employers for a strong National Guard and Reserve system by honoring them with their second Rose Parade entry.

In the highest American tradition, the patriotic men and women of the National Guard and Reserve continue to serve voluntarily in an honorable and vital profession. They are trained to respond to their community and their country in time of need and deserve the support of every segment of our society and continue to assure freedoms for Americans and all future generations.

The Connecticut Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (CT-ESGR) continues to work to unite employers and business leaders, the military chain of command, and National Guard and Reserve service members to ensure that our nation will have sufficient, well-trained Reserve forces to achieve its national defense strategy whenever needed.

The men and women of the National Guard and Reserve now make up over half of our nation's uniformed military forces. They could not accomplish their mission without the support and understanding of their employers and families, who make sacrifices on the home front to support their service.

Since our Nation's founding, the concept of the "Citizen Soldier and Citizen Sailor" has helped our nation remain both prosperous and free. The partnership of today's business leaders is more important than ever and that patriotism and support will remain vital as America continues to fight the global war on terrorism - to ensure that our children grown up in a strong, free, secure nation. For additional information about CT-ESGR please visit the national website at www.esgr.com.

Second Foot holds annual meeting at site of original meeting in 1774

The Second Company Governor's Foot Guard gatheres at Richter's Tavern in New Haven. This was the original Beers Tavern where members of the original Second Company met to organize and found the New Haven militia company in 1774. There were sixty-five original members in all. One photo is showing the names of all sixty-five including our first commandant - Benedict Arnold. It has become a tradition for us to meet annually at this particular location and read the names of our founding fathers. The additional news we have to share is the Second Company Governor's Foot Guard Swing Band will be performing at the VFW - 591 on Prince Street in Wallingford on February 7, 2004. Members of our company will be on hand to prepare a meal and aid in the nightly festivities.

First Company Governor's Foot Guard Band Centennial Concert

The First Company Governor's Foot Guard Band continues its yearlong centennial celebration with a jubilee concert in the true military concert band tradition.

Musical Director and Bandmaster Capt. Laura O'Connell's program includes rousing marches, symphonic selections, and Patriotic medleys that will highlight the versatility of the band members.

Highlighting the performance will be a composition by composer Robert Sheldon, commissioned by the Foot Guard to honor the bands 100th anniversary.

The concert is being held at Belding Theater on Sunday May 2, 2004. For more information about the concert, visit www.governorsfootguard.com

Training for a moments' notice

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPEC. JESSE JAMES STANLEY
65TH PCH

No matter where they are or what they are doing, a single phone call can spark a whirlwind of reaction to any threat within our borders. In response to the 9/11 attack and the growing concern for threats of terrorism, Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno tasked the 85th Troop Command with developing a Quick Reactionary Force (QRF) in Connecticut.

Developed as a form of supplemental support for civilian authorities and added measure of security at key locations in Connecticut, the members of the QRF can be summoned at a moments notice and have been in the past. In the past, with less than four hours notice, the QRF was notified, mobilized and deployed.

"The National Guard mission has significantly increased and one of the primary missions is now homeland security and defense," said Lt. Col. Ron Welch, 85th Troop Command supervisor. "We must be able to rapidly deploy Soldiers to a variety of different missions at different locations across the state of Connecticut by ground or air transportation in support of local, state and federal authorities."

One of the major missions of the QRF is to provide security and defend key locations in Connecticut, some of which are the two nuclear power plants, Connecticut Yankee and Millstone, as well as bridges such as the Quinnipiac River Bridge and the Gold Star Bridge.

"If you were to take a loop to every location we secure it would be more than 170 miles," said Welch.

After this, its ninth training iteration, the QRF will have trained more than 400 Soldiers and Airmen and is considered a national model. In this iteration there are several Airmen from the Air Guard training along side Army Soldiers. Training in joint environments is becoming more common throughout the military.

"The Army has a lot more acronyms than we do," joked Air Force Master Sgt. William Marangnano, 14th CST.

Some previous operations that the QRF has been involved in are security for three national airports, seven municipal airports, two nuclear power plants, bridges and roving security. Their last deployment lasted 45 days.

Though typically not first responders to a situation, the Soldiers of the QRF are trained to handle a great variety of tasks. As a result they are a force multiplier for civil authorities.

In order to allow them to perform their mission better the QRF Soldiers and Airmen receive a great deal of training. On order, they deploy to Camp Rowland to serve as the Command and Control (C2) Headquarters for QRF training. They will receive Homeland-Specific Individual Replacement Training (H-SIRT) and perform Homeland-Stability and Support Operations (SASO) "Lanes" to enhance the CTNG Force Protection Posture.

"The H-SIRT builds on lessons learned in Iraq," said Col. Daniel J. McHale, Commander of the 85th Troop Command. "It allows our forces to be flexible, adaptive and proactive."

The members of the QRF spend a great deal of time learning skills such as how to search vehicles, perform security, search and question people, hand-to-hand combat and engagement skills.

The Engagement Skills Trainer allows soldiers to put their new skills to the test. Similar to how civilian police forces train, the members of the QRF watch a video of an encounter and need to respond appropriately. Each member of the squad going through the encounter has a weapon that is hooked into the system that records shots taken and hits. It even has the ability to fire back at the Soldiers.

"I think the hardest part of this is showing the proper restraint," said Cadet Keith Heidtman, Company B, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry. "It also allows us to refresh forgotten things and learn new skills."

"The Engagement Skills Trainer puts our Soldiers at an advantage," said McHale. "We trained some of our MPs on it before they left to join their unit overseas."

All of this training allows the QRF to react to a great deal of situations and have the skills necessary to perform. They can respond equally as well to a terrorist attack by providing security, patrols, aid in evacuation or quarantine to natural disasters or any other emergency operation that is too much for civilian authorities to handle.

Three Connecticut Army National Guard Blackhawks come in over th

"The QRF has an excellent relationship with a great deal of civilian authorities," said Welch.

It is key to the mission to have an excellent working relationship with a great deal of other people and departments. Local police departments in New Haven, New London, Groton, East Lyme and Waterford as well as State Police, DEP, DPS, FBI, U.S. Coast Guard and the security at the sub base and nuclear power plants work very closely with the QRF to provide a network of security.

Not only does the QRF respond to events but also they respond to elevations of our national security and information gained through intelligence.

"We are proactive to the point of preemptive," said McHale.

Finally, they are trained in different modes of insertion to an area of operations. With help from Capt. Mark Strout, commander of the Air Assault Helicopter Co., and his highly trained pilots and crew chiefs, the QRF learned to properly enter and exit aircraft for insertion and removal from areas of operations.

Three Blackhawks flew to Camp Rowland for the training exercise. Sgt. 1st Class Ron Giroux conducted

Soldiers run from Blackhawks to take up defensive positions during an aerial assault training exercise at Camp Rowland.

QRF Soldiers practiced exiting and entering Blackhawks during train

Guard Blackhawks come in over the tree tops for a landing at Camp Rowland during a QRF training exercise.

a brief class on aircraft safety and how to enter and exit the aircraft properly. The QRF Soldiers then toured the Blackhawks to get a feel for how they operate and can be used for their missions. It is through cooperation of many units that the QRF can respond to a situation anywhere in the state quickly.

Skilled pilots such as Chief Warrant Officer 4 Mark Stuart, who has been flying for 38 years, and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Renato Astolfi, are able to move entire platoons across the state in minutes.

Not only does the AASF aid in training missions and becomes an integral part of the QRF and its ability to respond to situations, but it also provides support to the Coast Guard and is an important asset to the military operations in Connecticut.

For their service and sacrifice, the Soldiers of the QRF are rewarded. Not only do they have the pride of service and knowledge that they are defenders of their home, but when they are called they are serving on State Active Duty. This means that all Soldiers are paid at the lowest as an E-6, if they are higher they are paid at their normal rate. As well, Soldiers have been awarded the State Emergency Service Ribbon in previous operations.

The Soldiers and Airmen involved have high morale and enthusiasm for what they are doing, even at the possibility of being called at a moment's notice.

"It is an exciting job and one that I am happy to do no matter when I am called," said Tech. Sgt. Henry Smalls, 103rd ACS.

The current state of the world does not allow us to sit back and relax with our guard down

Luckily we have the men and women of our Air and Army National Guard watching over our state during this time. They bring a sense of safety and security to our homes and pride as a national model to other states.

They go about their lives each day knowing that a telephone sits perched ready to ring and possibly take them away at a moment's notice. However they go knowing that we are that much safer for them being there.

A Blackhawk crew chief keeps a watchful eye on his bird and the Soldiers boarding during training at Camp Rowland.

nd entering Blackhawks during training at Camp Rowland.

Soldiers prepare for take-off in a Blackhawk, while a second Blackhawk sits beyond and waits for its passengers to board.

Social Security FAQ on a weekend drill

COL. GARY G. OTTENBREIT
J6 DIRECTORATE AND
ROBERT RODRIGUEZ
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE – SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

(Editor's Note: Many Soldiers have approached Col. Ottenbreit on weekend drills asking questions about Social Security. He will be answering many of those questions in this column.)

If you're one of the approximately 135 million people who automatically receive a *Social Security Statement* every year about three months before their birthday, do yourself a favor.

Read your *Statement* carefully and let Social Security Administration know as soon as possible if it contains any errors in your personal or earnings information.

Your *Statement* shows the amount of earnings your employer(s), or you, if you're self-employed, have reported to Social Security.

It also provides you with estimates of the benefits you and your family may be eligible to receive now and in the future.

The agency can't provide your actual benefit amount until you apply for benefits but the intent of the estimate is to help in planning for your financial future.

Therefore, if it contains incorrect or missing earnings, it's important to correct those errors right away because the amount of your future benefits will be based on Social Security's posted record.

It's usually easier to correct errors now than years later when you're ready to apply for benefits.

And make sure your date of birth and your Social Security number are listed correctly.

Incorrect personal information can delay the processing of your claim when you file for benefits.

No matter how careful you, your employer or Social Security are in reporting and recording important information, mistakes can happen.

Frequently, the agency finds that people have changed their name through marriage, divorce or other action and failed to notify Social Security.

Changing your name with your employer or notifying the Internal Revenue Service doesn't change your Social Security record.

You'll need to complete an application for a Social Security card (Form SS-5) and show us one or more original documents that identify you by your old name and by your new name.

You can get a copy of the Form SS-5 from the Internet at *www.socialsecurity.gov*, calling 1-800-772-1213 or by visiting any Social Security office.

If you don't file the application at a Social Security office, you'll need to mail the documents to us and we'll return them.

When you finish reading your *Social Security Statement*, we hope you'll use it as a tool in planning your financial future.

Social Security was never intended to be your sole source of income when you retire. It is often referred to as one leg of a three legged stool.

A pension from your work and personal savings and investments would represent the remaining two legs.

The goal is to match your earning power in retirement in order to keep the life style you are accustomed to.

Officers Club of Connecticut

February Events

Monday, Feb. 9
House Committee Meeting
5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 10
Ladies O'Club Meeting
12 noon
Quiet Birdmen Dinner
6 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 13
Sweetheart Dinner Dance
6:30 p.m.

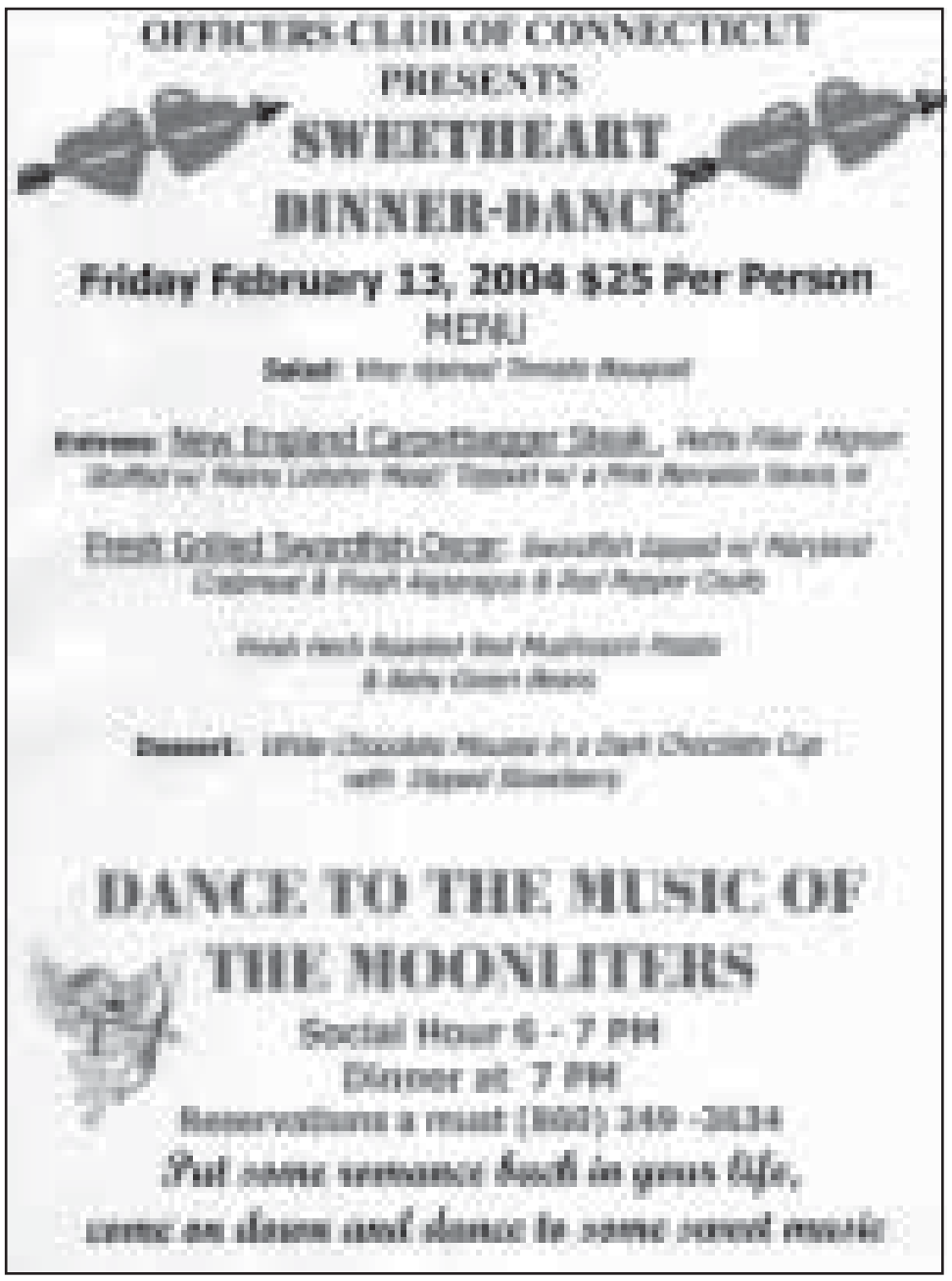
Monday, Feb. 16
President's Day
Club Closed

Thursday, Feb. 19
MOOA Lunch
12 noon
Board of Governor's Meeting
5:30 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 22
Sweetheart Brunch

Friday, Feb. 27
Karaoke Night
Brenda & Chuck Scott's Karaoke
Buffet: 6:30 p.m., $15

Bar and Lounge open daily at lunch and from 4 p.m. to....
Club open for lunch daily from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
To book a party or event, call (860) 249-3624



Connecticut Airman delivers in desert

From Page 1

"Every time the Red Tail Express came through the front gates, it was like Christmas for us."

Besides Tallil, the Red Tail Express provided materials and equipment to Baghdad International Airport and Kirkuk AB in northern Iraq. In total, 59 convoy trips ventured from Al Jaber, traveling almost 30,000 miles through hostile areas of Iraq, delivering more than 14 million pounds of cargo.

"By the last day of the (2-7 day-long) convoy everyone stinks because there are no showers," said Gray. "The highest temperature we saw was 152 degrees, but it was in the 140s most of the time."

The idea to move such a large amount of equipment through desert roads began at Al Jaber when it became clear more goods had to move into Iraq than airlift could move. Mission-essential equipment, including ammunition, fuel and water, was needed farther north — and quickly.

"There were some rough moments, especially during the first few runs, but everyone who went out on a Red Tail mission came home (safely)," said Staff Sgt. Robert Mejia, convoy liaison for U.S. Central Command Air Force.

"There were sometimes when I was definitely scared," said Gray, who would rather not detail that aspect of her time in the desert.

"The Red Tail Express convoys were a complete total-force effort; active duty, Guard and Reserve members," said Capt. Min. "We brought the materials needed to establish a bare base and did so safely and efficiently."

Chief Master Sgt. Frank Washburn, of the 332nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron came up with the name Red Tail Express to commemorate the Tuskegee Airmen, who painted the tails of their aircraft red to distinguish them from other fighter wings. The 332nd Expeditionary Air Wing, comprising units at Tallil, Baghdad and Kirkuk, is the legacy of the World War II aviators who never lost a single plane they escorted. The modern-day airmen had the same goal with the Red Tail Express, getting each truck and each airman home safely.

Before the last flatbed of the Red Tail Express was unloaded in October, Gray was selected to work directly for CENTAF.

"I was selected from Red Tail to escort the tractor trailers going in and out of Baghdad," said Gray.

"I was the only girl on the six-person team for CENTAF, although there were girls in the Red Tail team. So it was interesting to go to the bathroom over there (no bushes to hide behind)."

She said they started with HUMVEEs but later switched to driving suburbans because they needed to go faster than the HUMVEEs are permitted to drive.

"We would pick things up at the docks in Kuwait city and escort the third country nationals to and from port and delivery in Iraq," said Gray. "We would just get them up there safely. I was also in charge of getting the weapons, radios and the MREs for the crew so at least I always knew I would get fed, a weapon and radio."

Gray was among the last scheduled Air Force drivers when she departed for home.

"We (her and five others) finished up the Air Force convoys," said Gray, who unloaded the last few trucks before getting on the plane home in November. "Once we finished, the Army took over the convoy duty. I love my job and seeing new places and being in new climates."

Gray has a suggestion for those on their way to Iraq.

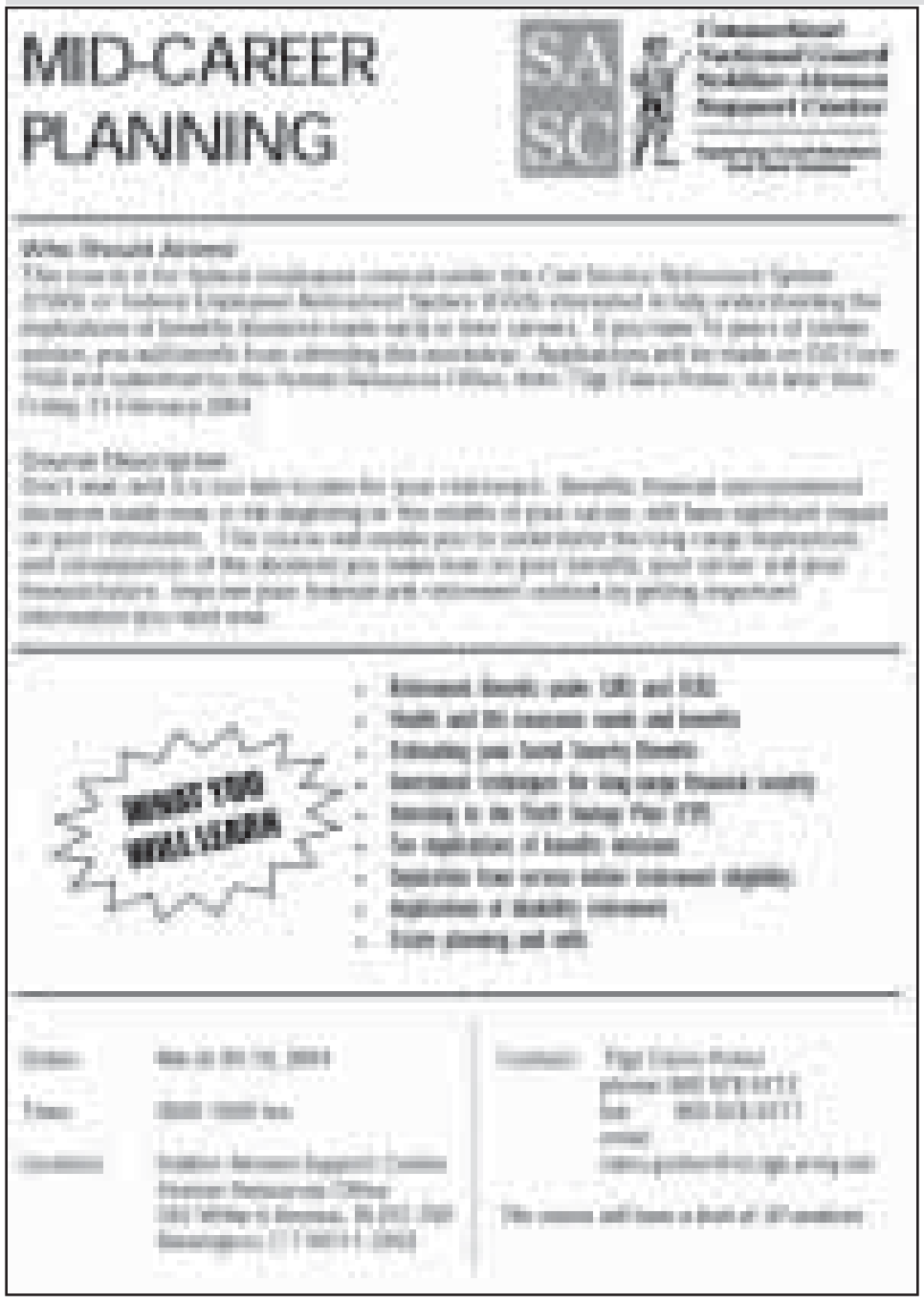
"It is worth it to always keep a smile on your face in that situation," she said. "You're far away from home, and so many people are so sad, you just have to do your job to make sure you get home safely. I also made sure I was smiling in every picture I sent home since my parents were freaking out enough."

Maj. Todd Chennelle (left) assists Staff Sgt. Jennifer K. Gray with her bags upon arrival home in Connecticut. (Photo by Maj. George Worrall, 103 Fighter Wing PA)

Senior Airman Christopher Davis (left) and Staff Sgt. Jennifer K. Gray, both vehicle operators, deployed to the 486th CENTAF pose in front of one of the last pictures of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad with captured AK-47s, before turning the weapons over to Iraqi police in October. (Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. Jennifer K. Gray)

The trucks making the last "Red Tail Express" delivery gather in the cargo-delivery area of Tallil Air Base, Iraq. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Karolina Gmyrek)

Military Matters



Attention Soldiers, Airmen and Families

The Connecticut Guardian wants your photos!

If you have photos you wish to share with the rest of our Guard family, we would like to publish them in the Guardian.

We are looking for photos of soldiers and airmen who are deployed either relaxing or working. We are looking for photos of familiy members at home or at play. We are looking for photos of families packing care packages to send to their loved ones.

We will print them in the Guardian as space allows so they can be seen and shared by Connecticut Soldiers, Airmen and families around the world.

Please e-mail your photos to ctguardian@ct.ngb.army.mil

Education Essentials: *Online degrees*

Evaluating an online degree program

Have you decided to go back to school and finish your degree online? Do you know how to choose a school or degree program that will meet your needs? Getting answers to the following 5 important questions will ensure you will be getting the education you need, the way you need it.

The Big 5 questions to ask about Online Degree Programs:

1) How is the course delivered?

There are many ways that an instructor can lecture: online using text, with accompanying slides, with or without student interaction, video, teleconferencing, audiotapes, CD-ROM, etc. Course content is more easily understood if it's presented in a dynamic engaging manner that involves an interaction between the students, the instructor, and the material. When you choose a program you should make sure that your online school utilizes many different methods to convey information.

2) How do I interact with the instructor and other students?

Some standard options for online student interaction include chat rooms, instant messaging, teleconferencing, and video conferencing. Finding a program that facilitates, and even requires, student interaction is an important aspect of choosing an online program. How the online community functions should be very important to both the instructor and the institution.

3) How will I be evaluated?

Will you actually be required to work in order to earn your degree. If students aren't evaluated appropriately and degrees are handed out with little or no verification that the students have actually learned anything, the program is not likely worthwhile and even less likely to be accepted by employers. A school that offers shortcuts may actually be a Diploma Mill and should be avoided.

4) What kind of library and research materials are available?

Ensure that the school you are interested in has a good system for providing reference materials and texts—they should be accessible from anywhere. The school's online references should be up-to-date and available at any time.

5) Is the school Regionally or Nationally accredited?

Ask about the school's credentials and the degrees the instructors hold. Many unaccredited online schools will eagerly grant you a degree, however these degrees from unaccredited schools are worthless. A Diploma Mill or unaccredited school should be avoided.

How online education works

Online courses follow the same format as traditional college courses, with a professor, textbooks, homework, exams, etc. However online courses have a much higher degree of flexibility and usually use a combination of message boards, e-mail, chat rooms, CD-ROMs and textbooks. In a typical online course the professor will post weekly reading assignments, study questions and schedule a group online chat time. The student must post answers to the study questions and respond to at least one other student's postings by the end of that week. Online courses typically have weekly deadlines - however, your daily/weekly study schedule is completely up to you. At the end of the course or module you will have a final exam (lower level) or written essay requirement (upper level) summarizing the context of the class.

Your key to success:

Just like in traditional college classroom courses, your success comes from a willingness to commit to your coursework. On average, online students spend a couple of hours a day studying. It is also essential for you to have a strong desire to learn and remain focused on the goal of earning the college degree - it is your degree that will expand your career opportunities. So you're asking: "Are online college courses for real"?

Yes. Many military members share your concern about the validity of online college programs. Online programs are offered by many "big name" fully accredited and esteemed schools like Penn State, Phoenix University, the University of Washington, and Capella University, to name a few. However you should remember: "Don't buy into an image, buy into a degree." Many "small name" colleges offer online courses that may best fit your needs and budget. There are a number of questions you should ask when choosing the right school and program for you:

Does Military Tuition Assistance or the MGIB cover the costs of the courses?

Does the school grant academic credit for Military schools and experience (as recommended by the American Council on Education (ACE)?

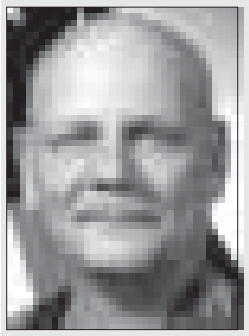
Does the media (CD-Rom, e-mail, internet, etc) fit your needs and abilities?

Does the school have the degree program that fits your education goals?

So if you think "online" may be the best fit for you, we encourage you to begin looking for the school that meets your needs. Schools usually have free information packets they will mail you with answers to the questions above, more on tuition costs, and an application.

For further information, contact: 1st Lt. Paul Draper or Sgt. 1st Class Linda Patnoad: 860-524-4816/4820

Enlisted Update



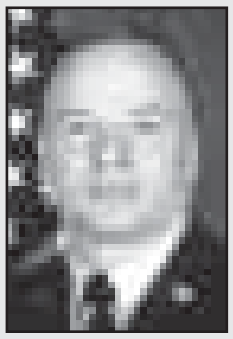
COMMAND SGT. MAJ. RAYMOND P. ZASTAURY

Over the next few months our deployed units will be returning home from theater. It is up to us as an organization to give our Soldiers a Heroes' Welcome Home that they all truly deserve. All of our Soldiers and Airmen performed in and continue to perform in an outstanding manner while deployed for OIF, OEF and ONE. The families of our deployed Soldiers and Airmen must also be recognized for all the hardships they incurred during their loved ones' deployment. Mrs. Kim Hoffman and her Family Readiness Program Staff are also to be congratulated for the outstanding service they provided to our Soldiers and Airmen and their families over the past year and a half. Great Job!

I would also like to recognize all the Soldiers and Airmen that were vital in the Mobilization, Deployment and the Demobilization Processes. Even though they did not deploy, they were instrumental in helping to make these processes a very smooth operation. I sincerely thank the J-1, J-3, J-4, Troop Command and the 143rd ASG for a job well done in preparing our Soldiers for deployment and ensuring a smooth and timely redeployment process. I salute you one and all!

At this time I would like to give up some of my column space for the recently retired Sergeant Major of the Army's farewell thoughts. I was very fortunate to have the pleasure on several occasions to meet the 12th SMA Jack L. Tilley. One of my proudest possessions is the The Noncommisioned Officer Guide (FM 7-22.7) which SGM Tilley autographed for me at a training seminar I attended at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy in December 2002. SMA Jack L. Tilley is an outstanding NCO who lead by example and expected all Soldiers to perform with the highest manner of pride and professionalism. SMA Tilley championed the concept of a one component Army. He always spoke of "The Army" when talking about the accomplishments the Regular Army, Army Reserve and the National Guard made on the Global War on Terrorism. As the SMA, he had a tremendous rapport with all the Soldiers. He truly cared about every Soldier and their families. I will personally miss SMA (Ret) Jack L. Tilley and wish him and his family a long and healthy retirement.

The time has come for me to say so long



SGT. MAJ. OF THE ARMY (RET.) JACK TILLEY

Are you ready? That seems to be a constant question people keep asking me as I prepare for my retirement this month. I'm not sure if you can ever be 100 percent ready, but the time has come for me to say so long.

For more than 35 years I have worn my uniform proudly. I love being a Solider. There have been long deployments, hard separations, tough living conditions, painful losses and horrible events along the way. I have watched friends and fellow Soldiers die defending the nation they love. It got harder and harder to lose part of my family.

However, despite those hard realities of our profession, it has been the most satisfying experience I could have ever asked for. I was blessed with an incredible wife, two terrific and outstanding sons, a wonderful daughter-in-law and two precious granddaughters.

It has been such an honor to serve as your Sergeant Major of the Army for the past three and a half years. I hope I have made a little difference in the lives of the people I've been lucky to have met. Any successes I've had as the 12th SMA are a direct result of you – the Soldier.

The 700,000-plus miles I've traveled have brought me up close and personal with you in every corner of the globe. I've tried to bring your issues back to the Pentagon and fight to make things better for all of us. Without your input, I could not have had any success.

One thing I've learned over my life is that no one succeeds alone. The SMA is no exception. I have worked with two tremendous officers, Gen. Eric Shinseki and Gen. Peter Schoomaker. Thanks to these two men, the Soldier's voice is heard loud and clear in every decision.

Without a doubt, our CSM Corps is the strongest it's ever been. These leaders represent you well. They accomplish so much for so many. They have been friends, critics and innovators. Thank you for helping me so much.

I cannot begin to express my pride in the Soldiers – Active, Guard and Reserve – I leave behind to protect our Nation. Without a doubt, you are the most professional, highly trained and dedicated force we have ever fielded. The nest Greatest Generation is here. Never doubt that you are the best.

I have been there with you in the mountains of Afghanistan not long after Operation Anaconda, in the streets of Baghdad during the war and in the rubble of the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001. I have drawn on your strength and applaud your accomplishments. It has been a busy three years. You have made history on countless occasions. Your legacy will be felt by generations of Americans who will be able to enjoy freedom and feel safe walking our streets.

Without my wife Gloria I know my successes would have ended long ago. I ask you to continue to take care of each other and your families. They endure so much for us.

Guard Voices

Family grateful for daughter's leader

To the Editor:

As this deployment of the 143rd MP Company and other state units wanes on, we're sure you've heard from many family members with their concerns and, no doubt, complaints about a variety of issues. We hope you can forgive us all, as our anxiety for our loved ones and their colleagues is sometimes overwhelming. Nonetheless, we thought you wouldn't mind hearing some complimentary thoughts for a change.

As you know, our daughter, Sgt. Jessica Walsh, was injured on 27 December in Baghdad by a roadside bomb which detonated under her Bravo team's Humvee. We thank God everyday that her injuries are relatively minor, as are those of her gunner Bart Winchowski, and we pray for the speedy recovery of her driver, Steve Wabrek, who was more severely injured and has returned to the States. These young men and the other MPs she is working with are not just her comrades, they are her "family," and we are so very proud of every one of them.

We want to especially call your attention to Jessica's squad leader, Staff Sgt. Martin Sullivan (2nd Platoon, 2nd Squad). From the moment that Staff Sgt. Sullivan was appointed to that position, Jessica and several other members of the 143rd with whom we regularly communicate have had nothing but the highest praise and regard for him. We now understand why.

In the wake of the IED incident of 27 December, Staff Sgt. Sullivan was in immediate contact with us and the families of the other injured MPs by phone and email. His genuine concern for them and their well-being is only rivaled by his efforts to calm the fears of those of us here at home. He continues to keep himself informed of Wabrek's progress and has even sent an envoy from his OWN FAMILY to check on Wabrek at Walter Reed and to deliver a get-well gift, along with the good wishes and regards of the 2nd Platoon. (As an aside, Staff Sgt. Sullivan has, additionally, continued to show sincere concern for the emotional well-being of Spec. Armando Torres who sadly and unexpectedly lost his father right before Christmas, and he has continued to keep in contact with Torres to comfort him in his grief.)

Staff Sgt. Sullivan's professionalism, coupled with his genuine respect for his subordinates and their families, proves him to be an usually outstanding leader. In a world in which a "superior" (either military or civilian) might be more likely to concern himself with self-aggrandizing issues and how to use his subordinates to bring kudos to HIMSELF, Staff Sgt. Sullivan is a man who quietly and consistently works WITH his subordinates, rather than just supervising them, to be sure the squad's missions are completed by the most efficient and safe means possible, and he consistently praises them for their efforts when merited.

The safety, well-being, and morale of his charges are his top priority...while, at the same time, he sacrifices his own time to make sure that we here at home are reassured that our loved ones are in good hands.

We know that until Jessica can be back here at home with us and her husband (and can resume to her interrupted teaching career), she will continue to function in a very dangerous situation. But we take solace in the knowledge that she is under the very skilled and professional oversight of Staff Sgt. Sullivan. For that we will forever be thankful.

SINCERELY,
DEAN AND ROXANNE ESPOSTI

A message to CTNG's deployed troops

To: The men and women of the Connecticut National Guard …in Iraq and wheresoever dispersed…

We send you greetings.

This message is dated Jan. 25, symbolically, since Jan. 25, 1945 marked the ending date of the Battle of the Bulge…we hope that your 'ending date' will be soon and that you will return to your home and your family…safe and sound.

The World War II era was different in every respect from the conflicts of today. We congratulate you as you face new challenges every day.

We pray, along with you, that you are successful in the completion of your tasks. We stand by you, and we will be here…to welcome you when you come home.

Our very best wishes.

FOR THE CONNECTICUT/NUTMEG CHAPTER OF THE VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE WWII,
RICHARD E. EGAN
PRESIDENT

Send Letters to the Editor to Editor, Connecticut Guardian, National Guard Armory, 360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105-3795 or by email to: ctguardian@ct.ngb.army.mil All letters must be signed and include a phone number for verification.

Homefront

In defense of Connecticut's children:

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America Leadership Forum XIV

CAPT. ANNE-MARIE GARCIA
DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION ADMINISTRATOR

The Connecticut National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Program was invited to take its Drug Prevention Display on the road to our nation's capitol.

More then 2,000 prevention specialists, educators and leaders in the drug education and treatment fields were present at this year's Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America's Leadership Forum XIV or otherwise known as CADCA. This year's leadership forum theme was "Community Coalitions: Local Actions = A World of Results."

The organization was officially launched in October 1992 under the leadership of Alvah Chapman, the Director and retired Chairman and CEO of Knight Ridder, Inc. who became CADCA's first chairman. With their guidance, the organization has evolved to become the principal national substance abuse prevention organization working with community-based coalitions and representing their interests at the national level.

In 1992 the President's Drug Advisory Council (PDAC), under the leadership of Jim Burke, the former Chairman and CEO of Johnson & Johnson and the current Chairman of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, encouraged the formation of CADCA to respond to the dramatic growth in the number of substance abuse coalitions and their need to share ideas, problems, and solutions. The current chairman and CEO of CADCA is **Arthur T. Dean** Major General, U.S. Army, Retired. CADCA's National Leadership Forum is the largest gathering of substance abuse prevention and treatment professionals in the country and equips professionals and students in all fields of drug prevention and treatment with the tools they need to effect a positive change in their community.

Maj. Gen. Paul J. Sullivan, sixth vice-chief, National Guard Bureau, visits the Connecticut Drug Demand Reduction display with Staff Sgt. Jeltema and Sgt. Reilly. (Photo by Capt. Anne-Marie Garcia)

At Forum XIV attendees were able to interact with leaders in the government, corporate and community sectors of America's drug reduction field.

No other program in the drug prevention and treatment field has the resources to bring government, corporate and community groups together in to one interactive convention.

CADCA's mission is to build and strengthen the capacity of community coalitions to create safe, healthy and drug-free communities. The organization supports its members with technical assistance and training, public policy, media strategies and marketing programs, conferences and special events. With more than 5,000 community coalition members from across the country, CADCA is working with these coalitions to realize its vision of: An Organization of Excellence Building Drug-Free Communities.

Community coalitions-more than any other entity-are poised to connect multiple sectors of the community, including businesses, parents, media, law enforcement, schools, faith organizations, health providers, social service agencies and the government.

By acting in concert through the coalition, all of the partners gain a more complete understanding of the community's problems. Together, the partners organize and develop plans and programs to coordinate their anti-drug efforts. The result is a comprehensive, community-wide approach to substance abuse and its related problems.

Since 1992, the Connecticut National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Program has been involved with CADCA and was proud to be invited this year to show off their display and to continue distributing educational materials and leadership programs to coalition and drug prevention leaders throughout the nation. Since 1992 we have reached over 575,000 youth and adults with anti-drug messages.

The Drug Demand Reduction Program is part of the National Guard's multi-front effort to halt the spread of drug use. The Connecticut National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Program mission is to educate and disseminate drug awareness information through the development of initiatives, activities, councils, youth programs, parent training and coalitions in order to support community efforts to educate youth and prevent substance abuse.

If you would like to be connected with one of the many organizations that the Connecticut National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Program is associated with please call Capt. Anne-Marie Garcia at 860-493-2724.

Chaplain's Corner

Our Brother's Keeper

CHAPLAIN (MAJ.) JOSEPH D. NGUYEN

We have many troops oversea, trying to do their job. Unfortunately, they face danger everyday. They are their brother's keeper, watching each other's back to prevent any harm that may come to them. As I think and pray for them daily, I thought of a cute story which I ran across recently, so this month I would like to share it with you.

The story goes like this: A mouse looked through a crack in the wall to see the farmer and his wife opening a package. What food might it contain? He was devastated to discover that it was a mousetrap. Retreating to the farmyard, the mouse proclaimed the warning: "There is a mouse trap in the house, there is a mouse trap in the house." The chicken clucked and scratched, raised her head and said, "Mr. Mouse, I can tell this is a grave concern to you, but it is of no consequence to me. I cannot be bothered by it."

The mouse turned to the pig and told him, "There is a mouse trap in the house." The pig sympathized but said, "I am so very sorry Mr. Mouse, but there is nothing I can do about it but pray. Be assured that you are in my prayers."

The mouse turned to the cow. She said, "Wow, Mr. Mouse. I'm sorry for you. But it's no skin off my nose."

So the mouse returned to the house, head down and dejected, to face the farmer's mousetrap alone. That very night a sound was heard throughout the house, like the sound of a mousetrap catching its prey. The farmer's wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness, she did not see that it was a venomous snake whose tail the trap had caught. The snake bit the farmer's wife.

The farmer rushed her to the hospital. She returned home with a fever. Now, everyone knows you treat a fever with fresh chicken soup, so the farmer took his hatchet to the farmyard for the soup's main ingredient.

But his wife's sickness continued, so friends and neighbors came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them, the farmer butchered the pig. The farmer's wife did not get well. She died, and so many people came for her funeral the farmer had the cow slaughtered to provide meal for all of them.

So the next time you hear that someone is facing a problem and think that it doesn't concern you, remember that when the least of us is threatened, we are all at risk. In the book of Genesis, Cain said about Able his brother to our God: *"Am I my brother's keeper?"*

We are all involved in this journey called life. We must all keep an eye out one for another and be willing to make that extra effort to encourage one another.

And so, we ask that you, our loving God, bestow your blessings on those who serve our country overseas and protect them from any harm.

HANDYPERSON HOTLINE

CALL (860)209-0770 TODAY TO VOLUNTEER YOUR SKILLS

Warthog art class brings high school students to Air Guard

MAJ. GEORGE WORRALL
103RD FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

High school students from Lewis Mills High School in Burlington Connecticut visited the main hangar Oct. 22 for more than just a tour.

The 102 students were trying their hand at aviation art. They took turns looking at an A-10 static, sketching the A-10 and a display of equipment.

The trip came about after junior Lauren Pelleier, who takes private art lessons from Ray White, an artist in the Air Force Art Program, introduced her Lewis Mills School teacher to White.

"So I see pictures of Ray (White) with these planes and I say 'what is this about,'" said Mary Thompson, art teacher, Lewis Mills High. "He told me one of his goals is to get kids to draw military planes. So we started talking and today we have 100 students from different levels and classes here drawing planes."

Their drawings are part of an annual Veteran's Day themed celebration at the school.

"It seemed like an effective way to get the students into something real and generate some emotion for their work versus drawing a uniform or flags in class," said Thompson. "They will each make a composition by adding some emotion of something they connected with, and choose a background and color scheme."

The school plans to bring the finished artwork to the base at the end of the school year.

Leah Hanson, a Lewis Mills High School junior, sketches an A-10 Oct. 22 at Bradley ANG Base. (Photo by Maj. George Worrall, 103rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

Mary Thompson (right) art teacher, Lewis Mills High, talks with student Alex Pazzolo (left) about his sketch of an A-10. (Photo by Maj. George Worrall, 103rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

From left: Merissa Jetz, sophomore, Brian Ferro, sophomore, and Rachel Boss, junior, all of Lewis Mills High School, draw a still life of flight equipment and an A-10 30mm round.. (Photo by Maj. George Worrall, 103rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

Lewis Mills High School art students sketch an A-10 in the main hangar at Bradley ANG Base Oct. 22. (Photo by Maj. George Worrall, 103rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

Guarding Your Rights

Legal Affairs: *Special tax considerations*

CAPT. TIMOTHY TOMCHO
JAG OFFICE

Congress, to lessen the burden upon servicemembers deployed to either a combat zone (CZ) or a qualified hazardous duty area (QHDA), created special tax considerations. For tax purposes and this article, "CZ" and "QHDA," are used synonymously. The most popular "tax breaks" associated with CZ duty are the filing extension and income tax exclusion. Connecticut National Guard servicemembers who deployed to South West Asia in support of the Global War on Terrorism may qualify for CZ tax benefits.

The filing extension afforded to qualified servicemembers (those who are serving or who have served in a CZ during a tax year) is a minimum filing extension (past the April 15th deadline) of 180 days after the later of (1) the last day the taxpayer was in the CZ, or (2) the last day of any continuous qualified hospitalization for injury from service in the CZ. Qualified hospitalization must result from a line-of-duty injury sustained while serving in the CZ.

The deadline extends beyond the minimum 180 days by the number of days that were left for the member to file with the IRS when he or she entered the CZ. If the member entered before the filing deadline began, the deadline is extended by that entire time. For example, if a servicemember was in the CZ from September 15, 2002 - April 15, 2003, then an additional 105 days (January 1, 2003 - April 15, 2003) accrues. Thus, the filing deadline for the 2003 tax year would be extended 10 1/2 months (180 days + 105 days) after the 2003 tax-year deadline (April 15, 2004) to March 1, 2005.

Spouses of qualified servicemembers who file joint returns are entitled to the same deadline extension with two exceptions. The extension does not apply to a spouse for any tax year beginning more than two years after the date that combat activities end. The extension also does not apply to a spouse for any period the qualifying individual is hospitalized in the United States for injuries incurred in a CZ. Generally, both spouses must sign joint returns. However, when a spouse is deployed, a power of attorney may be used to file a joint return.

Qualifying servicemembers may also exclude certain pay from their income. They did not have to receive the pay while in the CZ, but it must have been earned for service there or for a period during which they were hospitalized as a result of their service there. Enlisted, warrant or commissioned warrant officers in a CZ (during any part of a month) can exclude all of their basic pay for that month from income.

Commissioned officers may exclude up to the highest rate of enlisted pay (plus imminent danger/hostile fire pay you received) for each month during any part of which they served in a combat zone. Other entitlements are also excludable, including dislocation allowance, if the move begins or ends in a month they served in a CZ; reenlistment bonus, if the voluntary extension or reenlistment occurs in a month they served in a CZ; pay for accrued leave earned in any month they served in a CZ; and pay for awards for suggestions, inventions, or scientific achievements for submissions made in a month while in the CZ.

The IRS publication, "the 2003 Armed Forces Tax Guide" answers most questions relevant to military taxpayers, which may be obtained at www.irs.gov. The IRS also has a special "e-service" (combatzone@irs.gov), to receive and respond to inquiries military taxpayers. Servicemembers and their spouses may also receive personal assistance in preparing tax returns at the Naval Sub Base Tax Assistance Office. Call (860) 694-3741, EXT 9, to set an appointment.

CT-ESGR presents awards

RONALD E. LEE, 1ST SGT. (RET.), USAR
CT-ESGR PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHAIRMAN

Connecticut Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (CT-ESGR) State Chairman Lewis Vasquez stood in front of a capacity crowd at the Dec.17 breakfast meeting that was attended by nearly one thousand employers and business people of the Middlesex County (Connecticut) Chamber of Commerce.

Vasquez gave what he referred to as "a thirty-second commercial for ESGR," explaining what ESGR is and does and the importance of employer support for their employees who serve in the Guard or Reserve.

Vasquez commented that "ESGR is four of the most important letters that those employers can know!"

The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce is one of the largest and most active Chambers in the State of Connecticut with more than 2400 members who employ more than 50,000 employees, many of which also serve in the military.

Vasquez made presentations of Statement of Support plaques to Michele Macauda, CEO of SBC/SNET and to the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce, both of whom have showed outstanding support for the Guard and Reserve as well as assistance to and support of the CT-ESGR.

Gov. John G. Rowland accepts the Freedom award from CT ESGR Chairman Lew Vasquez during breakfast ceremonies held in December. (Photo courtesy of CT ESGR)

These presentations were followed by the presentation of the "Connecticut Freedom Award", a beautiful Waterford crystal figurine of an eagle with spread wings on a granite base, to Governor John G. Rowland.

Rowland, guest speaker for the Chamber event, was Connecticut's 2003 nominee for the National Freedom Award.

He is a strong supporter of the Guard and Reserve and he took the opportunity to recognize families and members of the Connecticut National Guard who were in attendance after having recently returned from Iraq.

The governor noted that seven service members from Connecticut have given their lives as the supreme sacrifice in Iraq and that many others, including some of those present, had been wounded in combat.

He acknowledged Connecticut physicians who had served in Iraq. Rowland noted the irony of having Connecticut soldiers wounded in Iraq, rescued by other soldiers from Connecticut, and treated for their wounds by Connecticut surgeons in Iraq before being returned to the US.

Annual Conference to include dinner dance this year

The NGACT will be holding it's 10th Annual Conference at Foxwoods Resort and Casino on Saturday, March 20.

Back by popular demand this year is the Saturday evening dinner dance.

The conference will begin with a continental breakfast at 7 a.m. followed by the annual meeting at 8 a.m. Business will include voting on changes to the Constitution, reports on the EANGUS and NGAUS annual conferences, membership, an awards program (new this year) and election of officers.

Positions up fr election this year are: President-Elect (enlisted), Secretary, Treasurer, Army and Air Officer-At-Large, and Army and Air Enlisted-At-Large. If the changes to the Constitution are approved, there will also be elections for Army and Air Junior Enlisted members. Anyone interested in any of these positions can contact President Joseph Amatruda at 860-247-5000.

This year's keynote speaker will be Jim Vicevich, host of WTIC-AM 1080's "All New Today with Jim Vicevich."

Vicevich is a staunch supporter of the National Guard and has taken on the cause of the 143rd Military Police Company in particular. He dedicates a major portion of his daily show to maintaining contact with members of the 143rd through telephone calls and email.

The dinner dance will be held later that evening with coctkail hour beginning at 7 p.m. and dinner being served at 8 p.m. The menu includes Romaine salad with walnuts and raspberry vinaigrette, a combination plate of petite filet mignon and breast of chicken, and double chocolate mouse.

Registration for the conference is $20 per person, and the dinner dance is $45 per person with cash bar. Flyers and registration forms will be distributed soon. Special room rates will also be available on a limited basis and that information will be included on the flyers.

Also new to our conference this year is the NGACT Auxiliary. A year ago, the idea to start an auxiliary was brought up at the conference, and one year it is a reality. Representatives from the EANGUS National Auxiliary and the Area 1 Auxiliary will be on hand to help launch the newest addition to our already growing association.

Finally, the current Board members would like to thank outgoing President Joe Amatruda for his dedication over the last two years.

Inside OCS

Learning from the best and the worst to be the best

OC Austin M. Talley
OCS Class 49

Before undertaking Officer Candidate School (OCS), my perception of officers varied with my different active duty experiences as an NCO.

As a trainee at BUD/s (Basic Underwater Demolition / Seal) in sunny San Diego, Calif., I had the privilege of training along side many officers from all the different branches of service.

It was there I witnessed leadership in a combat environment at its finest.

Later on in my five years of service, I witnessed an example of poor leadership with the lack of integrity and honor to the duty of military service.

Since observing many officers and their different leadership styles and traits, there are many I plan to emulate and several from whom I plan to learn and lead differently.

After a four-year tour of active duty, I decided to go into an Army ROTC program because I had not heard about OCS.

Upon completion of my first semester I was unsatisfied with the level of expectation and the pace of responsibly brought on me as a cadet.

It was then I sought other avenues for a commissioning source with the guidance of one of my ROTC instructors. My instructor, Lt. Supernovwich, directed me to the Army National Guard OCS program.

He said I would probably find a home as he had a few years earlier. As a prior service soldier, I expected more and a faster rate of instruction from OCS.

From Region Seven OCS in Texas to Region One OCS here in Connecticut, my interaction with the TAC and instructor staff has been very informative and challenging.

With a greater ratio of staff to candidates in Connecticut, the TAC staff clearly dictates and presents my role as a future officer. The many skills a future leader is expected to know are being taught now at OCS.

have learned that excellence is the only standard and that officers must lead from the front.

As an officer, I know that my first and ultimate responsibility is the welfare of the men and women under my supervision. I have both the mental and physical strength to accomplish any mission and ensure the men and women I work with have every opportunity to excel.

The frequent moves inherent to growing up with a father as a Federal Agent, as well as my recent active military duty experience, have allowed me to cultivate people skills and leadership techniques that an effective team leader and officer must possess.

My desire to share in the pride of the military community has led me to attain the physical prowess necessary to operate successfully in the field. As a candidate I train to make a difference in this world whether it's at war or peace.

I know that I will be a credit to the military officer corps.

My career objectives are to gain operational experience as a platoon leader. Eventually I will seek staff experience to help serve me in my ultimate goal, command of a Special Forces Unit.

Officer Candidate School Information Briefs

28 February 2004
20 March 2004
24 April 2004

Building 32 Community Room
Camp Rowland
Niantic

1000 hours in BDU on duty,
Civilian all others
Friends, spouses and parents
are all welcome

POC: 2nd Lt. Shaun O'Dea
860-691-4216

Why Diversity?

Assumptions: What's Their Impact in our Organization?

Submitted by Sgt. 1st Class Scott J. Farrell
State Diversity Initiatives Coordinator (SDIC)

It is impossible to be a human being and not make assumptions or have expectations about what people are capable of and how they behave. Sometimes those assumptions create positive expectations and help people grow and achieve beyond what they ever thought was possible. Sometimes those same assumptions and expectations pigeonhole others into situations of little or no opportunity. What these two different outcomes have in common is the role of assumptions and the subtlety with which we form them.

Assumptions, expectations and stereotypes are linked in the following ways: 1) We create pictures about individuals frequently based on perceptions about a whole group. (e.g., Asians have quantitative skills, therefore they will excel in engineering and math. The Humanities are not their strength.) 2) These pictures are created based on some common experience. (E.g., there are many Asians who do have superb quantitative skills.) 3) These pictures are unconsciously formed and resistant to change. If we don't know they are part of our thought process, they can be damaging. (E.g., an Asian who wants to be in the advertising department and create ad campaigns may be seen as more effective in setting up the new information system.)

Our stereotypes and assumptions are like second hand smoke. If you are in the environment, you pick them up without even noticing. The media, in all its forms…print, video, TV, movies…contributes mightily to pictures we have of all of us: union members and those in executive suites; blue collar workers and white collar; Hispanics and Blacks; women and men; the more affluent and those on welfare.

Making assumptions is part of human nature. It helps us manage massive amounts of information in our complex society. Because assumptions order and simplify our world and because it is impossible not to make them, the challenge lies not in eliminating them, but rather in not having them unconsciously control our choices. The danger is that the stereotypes and assumptions we form may be incorrect, limiting and ultimately damaging to the commitment, productivity, and optimism of employees throughout our organization. As you look at the following behaviors, think about your colleagues and coworkers. What assumptions might you be making about any of them? And put the shoe on the proverbial other foot. What assumptions might they form about you? How might those limit you?

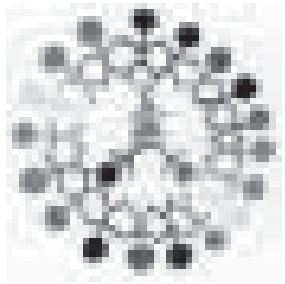
Your assumptions might be

Speaks too softly; speaks too loudly / stands too close; stands too far away / Asks more questions about time for family than about work / Is uncomfortable acknowledging individual strengths and accomplishment / Won't initiate questions / smiles and laughs nervously / spends too much time making small talk rather than getting into the heart of the interview / won't make eye contact / has a soft handshake / discounts me because of gender

Once you recognize your assumptions, ask yourself a couple of questions. 1) Are any of these behaviors cultural? Many undoubtedly are, and while knowing that fact doesn't always make a particular behavior easier to deal with, it can at least be a source of understanding and minimize an incorrect assumption. For example, lack of eye contact may mean to you that you can't trust a person while an Asian Pacific islander might have been taught to show respect by averting his/her eyes. 2) Recognize that all of us are both perpetrators and victims of assumptions and stereotypes. Even "positive" pictures of groups that create high expectations and appear to provide opportunity are often very limiting and force people to compromise their dreams. All human beings have talents, goals, hopes, and dreams. We are products of our own unique talents and traits, as well as the culture/environment in which we are reared. Attempting to remember, acknowledge, and honor that uniqueness benefits us all.

(This article is courtesy of the U.S. Postal Service – Diversity Newsletter)

If you have an interest in being part of the Diversity Initiatives team please contact me at (860) 878-6718 or E-Mail at scott.Farrell@ct.ngb.army.mil



Thought of the Month

You cannot make yourself feel something you do not feel, but you can make yourself do right in spite of your feelings.

Pearl S. Buck

Health & Fitness

Your Health Matters: *Carbon monoxide poisoning*

AIR POLLUTION AND RESPIRATORY HEALTH BRANCH
NATIONAL CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION
SOURCE: USA CHPPM

What's the Problem?

Carbon monoxide, or CO, is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death.

Carbon monoxide is found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by cars and trucks, small gasoline engines, stoves, lanterns, burning charcoal and wood, and gas ranges and heating systems.

Carbon monoxide from these sources can build up in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces. People and animals in these spaces can be poisoned by breathing it.

The most common symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.

High levels of carbon monoxide ingestion can cause loss of consciousness and death.

Unless suspected, carbon monoxide poisoning can be difficult to diagnose because the symptoms mimic other illnesses.

People who are sleeping or intoxicated can die from carbon monoxide poisoning before ever experiencing symptoms.

Who's at Risk?

All people and animals are at risk for carbon monoxide poisoning. Certain groups — unborn babies, infants, and people with chronic heart disease, anemia, or respiratory problems — are more susceptible to its effects.

Each year, more than 500 Americans die from unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning, and more than 2,000 commit suicide by intentionally poisoning themselves.

Can It Be Prevented?

Yes, you can prevent carbon monoxide poisoning by taking simple precautions to make sure that:

· all fuel-burning appliances are properly installed, maintained, and operated;

· furnaces, water heaters, and gas dryers are inspected annually by a qualified service technician;

· fireplace chimneys and flues are checked and cleaned every year;

· unvented fuel-burning space heaters are used only while someone is awake to monitor them and doors or windows in the room are open to provide fresh air;

· automobile exhaust systems are routinely inspected for defects; and

· automobile tailpipes are routinely inspected for blockage by snow during the winter months.

Remember:

1. never use a gas range or oven to heat a home;

2. never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent, or camper;

3. never run a generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the doors or windows are open, unless the equipment is professionally installed and vented;

4. never run a motor vehicle, generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine outside of an open window or door where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area;

5. never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or semi-enclosed space, such as a closed garage.

Knowledge is the key to preventing carbon monoxide poisoning.

In most cases of unintentional poisonings, victims did not realize that carbon monoxide was being produced or building up in the air they were breathing.

Carbon monoxide can be easily and cheaply detected in the home; several relatively inexpensive carbon monoxide alarms are available.

Consider placing a carbon monoxide alarm on each level of your home and in your bedrooms.

Military and Dependent ID card appointments

are available by calling Ms. Muse in Newington at 860-878-6725 Monday through Friday 0800 to 1530 hours

Fit for Life: *Running shoe care and knee wear help performance, health*

MAJ. JAMES FINN
MASTER FITNESS TRAINER

How do your knees feel? Your military career and recreation for the rest of your life can be cut short if you ruin your knees wearing the wrong running shoes.

There are at least 10 factors you should take into account when choosing a pair of running shoes (cost is the least significant):

1. **Pronation / Supination** – Fancy terms for: 'do you run like a pigeon ("toes in"), a duck ("toes out"), or an ostrich (parallel)?' Companies make shoes to adjust your running style and prevent excess "stress" on your ankles and knees.

Run a couple hundred yards on a beach or on a flat grassy surface. Go back and look. If your footprints are not parallel, go talk to a physician. If your doctor is not "sports minded" ask for referral to a sports physician.

2. **Purpose -** Running, Long Steady Distance, Sprinting, Track, Cross-Country, APFT. . . Running shoes are available and designed for various activities.

Wearing "heavy" shoes during training and then switching to "racing shoes" for your APFT can make a minute difference per mile. Care should be taken to practice with the "light shoes" prior to your APFT or race. Which leads to the next concern.

3. **Terrain** - Train at least several times with your APFT shoes on the same surface as the 2-mile run.

The shoes you wear training on blacktop, concrete, or the local high school track will react differently on the Fort Devens or Fort Dix gravel tracks. If you are headed for a "school tour" ask what surface is the Run track. Don't end up sent home early due to a "bad" run.

4. **Mileage** – Most running shoe makers currently use Vibram for running shoe bottoms (and some combat boots). Vibram lasts longer than most other sole materials. Vibram provides good traction on a variety of surfaces. However, when worn smooth, Vibram can be treacherous even though the shoes still having many miles of wear left in them.

If you live in an area where you have to run on the roadside, watch out for the lines. D.O.T. paint, dew/drizzle, and Vibram do not mix. I found out the hard way. Running Shoe Companies provide articles every year explaining the variety and purpose of the shoes they market. Shoes are rated for short distance, middle distance, long distance, and many other categories.

f your soles wear out and the shoes are still good, replace with Vibram.

5. **"Lath"** - Under your feet are layers of material sewn, glued, or molded to withstand "the pounding". When shopping, pull out the shoe insert and take a look. If the insert is glued and won't come out; odds are the manufacturer is hiding something. Some companies use cardboard, high impact plastic, or other "cheap materials".

These do nothing for the cushioning or stabilizing ability of the shoes. I prefer sewn materials since glues tend to crack, dissolve (sweat and rain), or "pill" (roll up into little balls that cause blisters). Some glues, when combined with sweat, grow fungus very well.

6. **Arch and Support** – Shoes are also designed for runners with high, low, average arches and even flat feet. If you are not sure of your needs contact a Podiatrist. Painful feet can be prevented or treated.

7. **Longevity** – Running Shoes are also rated by how long they last. I have had cheap shoes last 1000 miles and others I would only wear for painting after 100. Watch the cushioning and don't wear the same shoes for two workouts in a row. Rotating shoes allows them to dry out and the sole to spring back to original thickness. Don't wear running shoes for other activities. Weigh training will stretch shoes the wrong way.

8. **Stiffness verses Your Weigh**t – In the "olden days" running shoes had flat bottoms. Currently many shoes have "bridges" that flex on impact. The heavier the runner the more the bridge works to transition the weight from heel to the ball of the foot before push-off. Gel inserts help prevent "plantar fasciaitis", a painful foot problem

9. **Weather** – Leather is durable but too much surface leather is bad for wet or hot weather. Plastics and cotton "wick" away moisture keeping feet cool but can also give you frost bite, trench foot or just aching feet in chilly weather. Change shoes and socks with seasons. Cotton absorbs, Wool warms, Cool-Max wicks.

10. **Fancy Stuff** –Velcro, pads, pumps, grids, bridges, "air", gels . . . are all accessories. Runners with special needs or preferences pay extra for these manufacturer modifications. If your shoes have these features, be careful. If the gel leaks, the air bladder breaks, or the bridge cracks, don't wear the shoes for running. The knees you save may be your own.

State Attorney General celebrates Marine Corps' birthday with 103rd

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

As most unit members bagged their chem gear after an exercise on base and headed for the gates, some stayed and joined former Marine and current State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal in celebrating the U.S. marine Corps' 228th birthday.

The Second Annual Marine Corps Birthday Celebration was an event full of tradition, pride, history and camaraderie that included an address by the attorney general. It was attended by 35 people, most of whom were Flying Yankees who had spent some time in the Marines.

"Almost all the important lessons of life I learned, or relearned, in the Marine Corps - the importance of conviction, courage, commitment, honor, and maybe most importantly, the importance of loyalty - personal loyalty, and leadership by example," said Blumenthal, who served as a sergeant in the Marine Corps Reserve.

Lt. Col. Frederick J. Miclon, commander, 103rd Maintenance Group, who helped organize the event, said his intention in hosting it was "to not only celebrate the rich history of the Corps and allow former Marines who are now Flying Yankees to share in the pride of being a Marine, but also to take pride in membership in an organization that, like the Marine Corps, has a rich history and is an elite, unique organization in its own right."

While selling drawing tickets that would offset the cost of the celebration, Tech. Sgt. George J. Ward, information manager, 103rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, talked about what being in the Marines meant to him.

"You know the old saying, 'Once a Marine, always a Marine,'" Ward said. He served six years in the Corps, which included two tours in Vietnam. "Comradeship with fellow Marines will always be there."

In keeping with tradition, a birthday cake was cut with a ceremonial saber by the oldest and youngest Marines present, together with Blumenthal.

The oldest Marine honors went to retired Maj. Owen McDonnell who served in the National Guard after 20 years in the Marine Corps.

Staff Sgt. Charles Foley, crew chief, 103rd Aircarft Maintenance Squadron, took the youngest marine honors.

He said he took from his four years in the Marines leadership skills, core values, brotherhood and a sense of pride.

For him, the celebration was "a time to honor all those who've went before and those still serving," he said. "It's a remembrance to all those who served."

During the ceremony, there were points of solemnity when McDonnell played Amazing Grace and the Marine Corps Hymn on the bagpipes.

There were also moments of lightheartedness, too, namely when Blumenthal talked about his time on Parris Island.

"I can tell yoy that I graduated from Harvard College and Yale Law School and getting out of Harvard was great. Getting out of Yale was perfect," he said.

"But getting out of boot camp on Parris Island was the best graduation of all."

According to Miclon, tradition has it that whenever two or more Marines are together, anywhere in the world, they celebrate the Marine birthday, Nov. 10.

State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal addresses guests at the Second Annual Marine Corps Birthday Celebration at Bradley Air National Guard Base. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Eileen S. Lanati, 103rd Communications Flight, 103rd FW)

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal speaks with several of the guests gathered at the Second Annual Marine Corps Birthday Celebration at Bradley Air National Guard Base. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Carolyn A. Aselton, 103rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

Staff Sgt. Charles Foley, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal and retired Maj. Owen McDonnell cut the cake with a ceremonial sabre at the Second Annual Marine Corps Birthday Celebration at Bradley Air National Guard Base. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Carolyn A. Aselton, 103rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

Band celebrates 100 years

From Page 13

responsible for leading the band when it marches.

Since 1904, the band has marched parades and performed concerts at many prestigious events, adding the color, ceremony, and precision associated with rich military tradition. In 1907, the newly formed band performed a concert at a special ceremony held at Gettysburg, and in 1908, Foot Guard Bandmaster Francis Sutherland performed as guest cornet soloist with John Philip Sousa's band when they performed at the Foot Guard's Armory on High Street in Hartford. Through the years, the band has represented the State of Connecticut in several Presidential inaugurations, at the New England Governors' Conference and in escort duties for foreign dignitaries and European royalty.

Recent memorable band performances include the launching and commissioning of the submarine USS Hartford; the 350th Anniversary celebration of York, Pennsylvania; annual appearances at Hartford's Riverfest; the "Convergence" parade at Lincoln Center in New York, the 225th birthday of Connecticut's Old State House and July 4th parades in Philadelphia and Washington DC. Of course, every four years the Band participates in the Governor's Inauguration Day ceremonies as the First Company Governor's Foot Guard upholds its chartered duties and commitment to the Governor and the State of Connecticut.

Retirees' Voice

Keeping an eye on pharmacy co-pay

SGT. 1ST CLASS (RET.) JOHN BEDNARZ

They are at it again. This time it's the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), at the direction of the White House, looking for ways to cut costs. Will it be at our expense?

While the initiative has been postponed, it would raise prescription co-pays more than 300 percent. And they would begin to charge co-payments at Military Treatment Facilities, such as the submarine base. The Department of Defense postponed it, but they will be looking at it again for Fiscal 2006.

The plan was to increase the Pharmacy co-pays to match the co-pays now required by Veterans Affairs (VA). Generic drugs would increase from $3.00 to $10.00, and name brands from $9.00 to $20.00. The non-network/non-formulary drugs would increase to $30.00 or 20 percent of the cost of the drug.

While OMB sys that this will align the co-payment with what the VA charges, the VA doesn't charge a co-payment for service-connected conditions and all others are $7.00. So unless they plan to increase the VA's co-payments, that assertion is wrong.

Their plan also called for a cost-share charge for prescriptions at Military Treatment Facilities (e.g. the Sub Base). Besides breaking the lifetime medical care promise, this proposal is from the OMB whose staff knows only cost, and not about benefits earned by careers in Military Service. Who will collect these payments at the Military Pharmacies? Will they hire an employee to collect the payments and account for the funds, or divert the hospital/clinic staff to take care of these payments?

The members of the Armed Forces have the military retirees and veterans communities to look to for examples of what will be in store for them, their families and survivors in the future.

The quick response from the Services and the various Military/Veterans Associations halted the immediate implementation of this plan. But the Department of Defense, in a December 22, 2003 letter, did say that it would 'form a working group to thoroughly evaluate the pharmaceutical co-payment proposal for consideration during the FY 2006 – 2011 Program/Budget Review'.

Bad ideas don't go away, but they can be blocked if we remain vigilant as the process evolves.

New Army Web site assists disabled retirees apply for special compensation

(Editor's note: This article was submitted by U.S. Army Human Resources Command Public Affairs Office)

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (Army News Service, Jan. 23, 2004) — A new Web site designed to assist disabled military retirees in applying for Combat-Related Special Compensation went online the week of Jan. 12.

The U.S. Army CSRC Web site, located at www.crsc.army.mil , provides information a disabled military retiree needs to apply for this special compensation, said officials from the Human Resources Command. The site provides program guidelines used to determine eligibility for combat-related disability benefits and application procedures for the program.

"The site includes an application form, which can be downloaded, and it gives detailed instructions of the application process, said Brig. Gen. Gina S. Farrisee, the Army Adjutant General. "It also contains supporting documentation required to substantiate a claim and helpful tips on how to enable the timeliest application processing."

The Web site also provides:

· Guidance on how and where to file an appeal for retirees who previously submitted applications that have been determined ineligible or have been declined.

· A detailed listing of specific information and documentation that is frequently overlooked by applicants in their initial applications, as well as procedural and timing considerations.

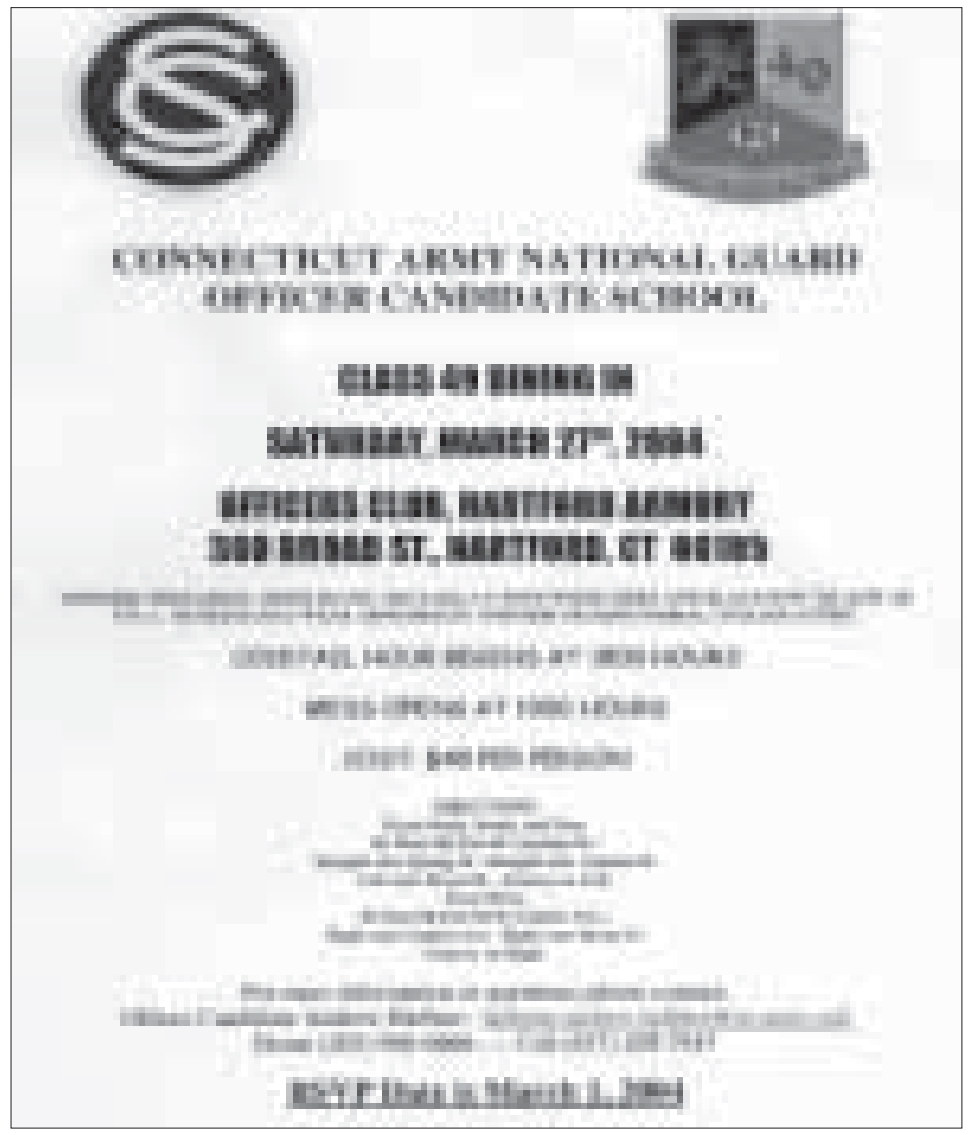
· Phone and e-mail points of contact in the event customers have difficulty navigating the site or need specific information about the CRSC program.

As a provision of the 2003 National Defense Authorization Act, CRSC allows eligible disabled military retirees to collect payments for both their military service and their service-related disability.

According to the legislation, a veteran with "combat-related" disabilities is any 20-year military retiree with at least a 60 percent combined disability rating, with injuries as a "direct result of armed conflict" or as a result of "hazardous" military service, while serving in "conditions simulating war" or were incurred "through an instrumentality of war."

Automatic qualifiers include any military retiree with at least 20 years of service who is rated as at least 10 percent disabled by injuries related to the award of a Purple Heart, officials said. Payments are retroactive to June 1 for those whose disability occurred before that date. Those who apply and are approved will begin receiving payments about 60 days after approval. Payments are deposited concurrently with standard military pay.

As of Jan.1, CRSC eligibility will be expanded to include disabled military retirees with 10 to 100 percent VA disability rating and Reservists and National Guard retirees eligible at age 60 who are receiving retired pay.



LEADS

Locating Enlistments by Awarding Dedicated Service

This is a statewide incentive program to reward all CTARNG members who produce a lead which becomes enlisted into the guard

Program will run from

1 Oct 2003 to 30 Sep 2004

Incentive Award Items

- **1 Lead-Enlistment** = Logo apparel award items
- **2 Leads-Enlistment** = Caseback and Polo shirt
- **3 Leads-Enlistment** = Impact AAM + Gerber Multi Tool or Sure Fire Flashlight or Jungle Boots etc...
- **4 Leads - Enlistment** = Garmin GPS or Motorola Two-Way Radio Set
- **5 Leads - Enlistment** = Impact ARCOM + Assault Pack
- **6 Leads - Enlistment** = Trip to Chief's 54 Awards Ceremony in Washington D.C.

For your convenience...

*Use the order form below to order name tapes for your Gortex jackets. They **ARE NOT** the same size tapes as the ones your wear on your BDUs or field jacket. You can also use the form to order all other name tapes and plastic name tags.*

ARMY AND AIR FORCE EXCHANGE SERVICE

EMBROIDERED NAMETAPES AND PLASTIC TAGS

JUNIOR TAPE			
NAMETAPES			
PLASTIC TAGS			
BRANCH OF SERVICE TAPES			

Coming Events

February

Feb. 6
Black History Month Celebration
Feb. 11
NGACT Executive Board Meeting
Feb. 16
Presidents' Day

March

March 10
NGACT Executive Board Meeting
March 17
St. Patrick's Day
March 20
NGACT Annual Conference and Dance
March 26
Women's History Celebration
March 27
EANGUS Area 1 Caucus
March 27
OCS Class 49 Dining In

April

April 9
Good Friday
April 11
Easter
April 14
NGACT Executive Board Meeting
April 26
NCOES Graduations

May

May 9
Mother's Day
May 14
Armed Forces Day Luncheon
May 15
Armed Forces Day
May 31
Memorial Day

In future issues

The Dangers of Club Drugs

118th Heads Out

Black History Month Celebration

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

Postcards Home

Soldiers of the 118th Medical Company receive first aid training at Fort Drum, N.Y. (Photo courtesy 118th Medical Company)

Members of the 118th Medical Company prepare their equipment for shipment overseas. The 118th has been at Fort Drum, N.Y. since December receiving its final validations and training before heading to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Soldiers are among the first to be called to duty for the second rotation in Iraq. (Photo courtesy 118th)

The AVCRAD Family Support Group spent many hours putting together this quilt that they sent to their deployed loved ones who hung it in a main area next to a mural painted by one of their own members. (Photo courtesy of the 1109th AVCRAD)

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