



# Connecticut Guardian

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## Time Magazine selects American Soldier as Person of the Year

K.L. VANTRAN  
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

Three 1st Armored Division soldiers — Sgt. Ronald Buxton, Spec. Billie Grimes and Sgt. Marquette Whiteside — grace the cover of Time magazine. They represent “The American Soldier” - all men and women in uniform - who have been chosen as Time’s 2003 Person of the Year.

“For uncommon skills and service, for the choices each one of them has made and the ones still ahead, for the challenge of defending not only our freedoms but those barely stirring half a world away, the American soldier is Time’s Person of the Year,” editor-at-large Nancy Gibbs wrote in the opening essay of the magazine.

The American Soldier, representing all men and women who wear the uniform, has been named Time magazine’s Person of the Year. Three 1st Armored Division soldiers — Sgt. Ronald Buxton, Spec. Billie Grimes and Sgt. Marquette Whiteside — are featured on the magazine’s Dec. 29 - Jan. 5 cover.

“By naming the American soldier as Person of the Year, we’re using that term in its broadest sense, to stand for all of those in a U.S. uniform who go in harm’s way, including the Navy’s sailors, the airmen and women of the Air Force and the Marines,” managing editor Jim Kelly wrote in a letter to readers.

The magazine cover is a “fitting tribute to these young men and women who have volunteered to serve their country and are



*The American Soldier, representing all men and women who wear the uniform, has been named Time magazine’s Person of the Year. Three 1st Armored Division soldiers are featured on the magazine’s Dec. 29 - Jan. 5 cover. (Photo by James Nachtwey / VII for Time, used by permission.)*

over there doing a superb job,” Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers said on CNN’s “Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer” Dec. 21.

The war in Iraq dominated the magazine’s covers during the last year, said Mark Thompson, Washington correspondent for

Time. In the October- November timeframe, he said, nominees included President Bush and Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld.

“It’s a grand choice,” said Thompson, who has been in Afghanistan and flown over northern Iraq with U.S. troops.

The photo taken by James Nachtwey Dec 10, was shot a few hours before a grenade landed in the humvee he and Time reporter Michael Weisskopf were traveling in. Weisskopf lost his right hand when he attempted to throw the grenade from the vehicle. Nachtwey and two soldiers also were wounded in the attack. All are recovering from their injuries.

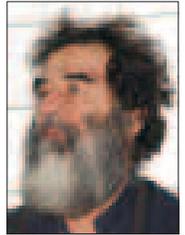
Time’s tradition of naming a “Person of the Year” began in 1927 when the “Man of the Year” honor, as it was then called, went to Charles Lindbergh for his solo flight over the Atlantic. Since then the title has gone to individuals as well as the “Endangered Earth” (1989) and “The Computer” (1982).

This isn’t the first time the magazine has chosen U.S. military members for its annual honor. “The American Fighting-Man” was Time’s Man of the Year in 1950 as the Korean War was being fought. “The American fighting-man could not win this struggle without millions of allies ... and it was the unfinished (almost unstarted) business of his government to find and mobilize those allies. ... But the allies would never be found unless the American fighting-man first took his post and did his duty,” Time wrote in its Jan. 1, 1951, edition.

## Hussein ‘Caught Like a Rat,’ 4th Infantry Div. commander says

KATHLEEN T. RHEM  
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

Saddam Hussein was “caught like a rat” and offered no resistance when U.S. soldiers captured him near Tikrit Dec. 13, the U.S. general in charge of the operation said.



Saddam was found hiding at the bottom of a hole hidden on a farm near his hometown. Roughly 600 U.S. soldiers were involved in the operation, but no shots were fired. Two other men were captured in the compound, Maj. Gen Raymond T. Odierno, commander of the Army’s 4th Infantry Division, said during a press briefing in Iraq.

Odierno surmised the pressure on Saddam had become so tight that he couldn’t risk traveling with a large entourage, and therefore had no bodyguards with him. “It was him and just a couple other people with him, so he really didn’t have much of a security force,” the general said. “And he was in the bottom of a hole, so there was no way he could fight back, so he was just caught like a rat.”

The 4th Infantry Division has been in Iraq since April, and Odierno said he believes Saddam largely had been in the Tikrit area since then. So there was “some satisfaction” in capturing the Iraqi dictator. However, he stressed, “There’s still a lot of work that we have to do, and we’re still focused on our tasks of defeating any regime elements who might be remaining who want to conduct attacks against coalition forces and more importantly try to stop most Iraqis from moving forward.”

The most important thing for the Iraqi people now, he said, is for them to continue to move forward in their efforts to control their own country. “We continue to help the Iraqis take charge of their country, and we continue to help build the infrastructure so that they can take charge of their country,” Odierno said.

## FW party hit despite bad weather

MAJ. GEORGE WORRALL  
103 FW PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Despite the early Christmas snowstorm Dec. 14, the holiday cheer at the annual 103rd Fighter Wing Children’s Christmas Party went on unbroken in the base dining hall.

“We had 88 kids registered and 80 showed so the snow did not turn many away,” said Debra Welton, who took over the lead role for her husband Chief Master Sgt. Raymond Welton who is away on extended overseas duty. “We had a lot of help and I am very impressed how it went, but it was a lot of work.”

The Noncommissioned Officers Academy

Graduate Association Chapter 28, of which Chief Welton is the president, has organized the event for many years. The chapter’s Vice President, Senior Master Sgt. Kevin Salsbury, state classifier, Human Resources Office, took the role as master of ceremonies.

“It was great and my fifth year doing it,” said Master Sgt. Timothy Barkyoub, crew chief, 103rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron who played a special role at the party. “I think it is cool to see the kids’ eyes when they see Santa Claus.”

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*Devin Worrall, 8 months, looks cautiously at the first Christmas present of his life, while Santa Claus himself holds him at the 103rd Fighter Wing Children’s Christmas. (Photo by Maj. George Worrall, 103 FW Public Affairs)*

# Up Front with the Adjutant General

## The New Year Ahead



*Maj. Gen.  
William A. Cugno  
Adjutant General*

First I would like to wish each and every one of you a Happy and Healthy New Year. As we ring in the New Year let me reassure you that our mission is not yet complete.

In September 2001 President Bush stated that our Nation faced a crossroads of radicalism and technology and that our enemies had openly declared that they were seeking weapons of mass destruction, and evidence indicated that they are doing so with determination. He stated the United States would not allow these efforts to succeed.

"History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action," he said.

At the time it was a year after the tragedies of September 11<sup>th</sup> and Operation Iraqi Freedom was still in the planning phases. Today we remain engaged and fully committed to the same cause.

The capture of Saddam Hussein has only strengthened the commitment and dedication to the Global War on Terrorism.

Today, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate each and every one of you as members of America's Armed Forces for the honor of being named this year's "Person of the Year" by Time magazine.

It is an honor you have earned not only this day, or this year, but throughout your volunteer service. It is an honor to serve as

your adjutant general. I am extremely proud of the sacrifices you make to the organization each day.

Common tasks and basic soldier skills are still the core to survival on the battlefield and remains the number one responsibility of today's leadership.

Leaders at all levels of command need to remain focused on maintaining an appropriate level of readiness.

I can't over emphasize the importance of leadership to prioritize training at the soldier level. To date, our commitment to squad level basic skills training has been the key to success.

On the issue of never leaving anyone behind, our Connecticut National Guard Foundation is doing an incredible job to support the needs of our military family.

As you know the National Guard and Organized Militia consists of Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen who serve our Nation and states with unparalleled professionalism.

The National Guard deploys on numerous contingency operations all over the world in support of the national defense requirements.

Often, these deployments create difficult financial situations for Guard members and their families. During their time of need, they may be eligible for assistance from the Connecticut National Guard Foundation, Inc.

The Connecticut National Guard Foundation is an organization established to take care of our own. It is a nonprofit corporation organized for the purpose of providing temporary financial assistance for Connecticut National Guard and Organized Militia members, and families who are in need. The fund was established to provide benefits such as clothing, food, medical and surgical aid, and general care and relief. The New Year marks the beginning of our annual fund raising campaign.

Corporate and individual contributions are welcome. Volunteers are needed. For more information please call (860) 241-1550.

Each of you and your family have paid a personal price.

To all of you currently deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism and to your loved ones this holiday season, know that my heart and prayers are with each of you and with your families who have also sacrificed.

Keep your head in the game, remain focused, and remain vigilant. I promise you continued leadership that does the same.

God bless you and God bless America.

## Perspectives

What is the one goal, personal or professional, that you hope to achieve this year?



**Sgt. WILLIAM DALY**  
712<sup>th</sup> MAINTENANCE

*My goal is to make E-6 by attending BNOG. Eventually I want to work for STARC. Start a family and buy a home.*

**SPEC. JACK PEREZ**  
712<sup>th</sup> MAINTENANCE

*My goal is to complete PODC and graduate to E-5. I want to pursue my Associates degree at Manchester Community College.*



**CAPT. ANNE-MARIE GARCIA, COMMANDER, 141<sup>st</sup> MEDICAL Co. (PHOTO UNAVAILABLE)**

*Keep training my soldiers to prepare them for possible deployment. My goal is to complete CAS3 for the Major promotion Board.*



**SPEC. TESSIFYA DICKENSON**  
712<sup>th</sup> MAINTENANCE

*I want to build a new home and complete PODC.*

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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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# Wing pulls together for Children's Place Christmas Party

MASTER SGT. SHERYL LAPORTE, 103<sup>rd</sup> SERVICES FLIGHT AND MAJ. GEORGE WORRALL, 103 FW PUBLIC AFFAIRS

*Editors note: The Connecticut Children's Place requested that the children's faces and identifying information be omitted, which is why this article is not accompanied by pictures of the many smiling children.*

Continuing a 31 year tradition, the 103<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing hosted the annual Christmas Party for Connecticut Children's Place Dec. 11 at the base in East Granby. Twenty-nine of the home's children came to the evening event prepared by Connecticut Air National Guard volunteers, which included dinner, music, a chance to sit in an A-10, talk with unit members and of course receive bags of gifts.

"To the members of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing - we did it - thank you," said Master Sgt. Sheryl Laporte, services technician, 103<sup>rd</sup> Services Flight, who organized the last 11 Children's Place parties and helped for the 10 years prior. "All of you are awesome. The annual Connecticut Children's Place party was another huge success."

Santa's Workshop opened on Dec. 9 for wrapping but by the morning of Dec. 11 it appeared preparations were behind schedule.

"I did not think everything would be ready for the party," said Laporte. "Still so much wrapping needed to be done by noon and then all the bags needed to be filled. Col. Scace came into the dining hall and asked me 'how is everything going' so I told him I could use more help."

Within 15 minutes civilian and military members from across the base came to help finish the wrapping. By noon the bags were ready to begin filling. All the sponsored gifts went in the bags first and all the rest of the general and extra gifts were used as filler to keep the bags equal in size and value.

The children and staff arrived at 6 p.m. Twenty-nine of the fifty-two children from Connecticut Children's Place were present for the party.

"A few are sick, others are on placement visits and some have not earned enough priviledge points (earned and taken away for good or bad behavior)," said Joyce H. Welch, superintendent, Connecticut Children's Place.

All but four of the children were visiting the base for the first time. In addition to the staff and children the Adjutant General, Maj.Gen. William Cugno, Commissioner for the Connecticut Department of Children and Families Darlene Dunbar, 103<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing Commander Col. Daniel Scace and Deputy Commissioner DCF James Carr spent the evening with the children.

"I would just like to thank the Guard for doing this for the kids and express our appreciation to the Guard for all they are doing," said Darlene Dunbar, Commissioner for the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. "This is the only facility in the state like this that is as an entry and

diagnostic center where we help figure out with kids and families what they need."

The evening opened with welcomes, introductions and a brief sing along before the Master of Ceremonies, Maj. Roy Walton, 103<sup>rd</sup> Maintenance Group, started the party dressed as the Cat In The Hat telling jokes and passing out small gifts as he sent each table to the dinner line.

The kitchen chefs, led by Tech. Sgt. Russell G. Webster, prepared the feast with 20 turkeys donated by unit members, homemade bread stuffing, mashed potatoes, vegetables, ziti with sauce, salad and lots of fresh fruit. Eight more donated turkeys were later delivered to the home for the Christmas Day meal.

"All these people that pitch in do a great job so everything comes together," said Tech. Sgt. Russell G. Webster, production controller, 103<sup>rd</sup> Maintenance Operations Flight, who has led the effort in the kitchen for the past eight years. "This year went the smoothest ever. This is an event I never want to miss as long as I am here."

After dinner, the Cat In The Hat readied the children for a stroll to the Main Hangar to see the A-10s. Pilot Maj. Joseph H. Schulz, assistant A-flight commander, 118<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron led the group to the hangar and answered questions about the planes while the children took turns getting their photos taken in the cockpit.

"Every year the chiefs (Chief Master Sgts. Patrick L. Wheeler and Francis E. Macsata) volunteer to do this," said Laporte. "They provide the cameras, the film, photo jackets and their time."

Although it would be easy to assume the gifts are the night's highlight, the children mention other parts of the night when asked.

"I think today was really interesting because people actually took the time to prove they have an interest in the new generation of children ...I just want to say thank you," said Jennifer.

"I really enjoyed it because I am trying to get into the service once I get of age and catch up with school," said Ryan.

"It is amazing what you guys do here and how you keep track of every little thing," said Josh.

"It was really great I like the airplanes, the missiles and other stuff ... it was very fun," said Amanda.

While the children spent time in the hangar the busy elves back in the dining hall brought out the home-baked desserts and prepared all the bags of gifts for each child's visit with Santa Claus.

While 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Tom Cordier, 103<sup>rd</sup> Medical Group, wife Jen and daughter Adeline played music on their DJ gear, the Cat In The Hat called each child from the youngest to oldest to come up and see Santa (Senior Master Sgt. Michael Fennessy, 103<sup>rd</sup> Communications Flight) for their bag of toys which are bought for each individual child by 103<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing members.

It is also tradition after all the gifts have been given to the children that a check is presented to the Connecticut Children's Place from the members of the Wing. This year a total of \$1,800: \$500 from the Chiefs Council, \$500.00 from the Junior Enlisted Council, \$800 from the technicians meeting and section/individual donations. After the things not donated were purchased, Scace presented a check for more than \$1,400 to the home.

"Thank you for all you have given us and shown us today," said Josh who spoke for all the children at the end of the night. "We really appreciate this thank you so much."

Then the children gave a round of applause for the National Guard.



From left: Senior Master Sgt. Timothy R. Shaw, 103<sup>rd</sup> Security Forces Squadron, Tech. Sgt. Richard Sherman, 103<sup>rd</sup> Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, and Airman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Lincoln Parker, 103<sup>rd</sup> Maintenance Squadron fill serving trays with turkey before the dinner begins. (Photo by Maj. George Worrall, 103 FW Public Affairs)



Cat In The Hat (Maj. Roy Walton, executive officer, 103<sup>rd</sup> Maintenance Group) calls each child's name as elf (Retired Tech. Sgt. Joanne Rhodes) and Santa (Senior Master Sgt. Michael Fennessy, 103<sup>rd</sup> Communications Flight) wait for each child to come for their gifts. (Photo by Maj. George Worrall, 103 FW Public Affairs)



Sgt. 1st Class Marc Pucinski of the 143rd Military Police Company sorts through the many care packages sent to the unit in Baghdad by families and citizens of the unit's home state of Connecticut. The unit received at least one box for every soldier, and says that each box was valued at \$50 each. Yankee Gas Company paid for the postage to have the boxes shipped. (Photo courtesy of the 143rd MP Co.)

## MPs express gratitude for touches of home

Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS MARC PUCINSKI  
143<sup>rd</sup> MILITARY POLICE COMPANY

Just as some Soldiers thought that the general public was no longer interested in what is going on in Baghdad, and the war has worn on them back home, the 143rd MP CO is reminded differently. Between Nov. 20 and 23, 130 boxes addressed to the senior NCO's in the unit, arrived at "Warrior Palace," home of the 709<sup>th</sup> MP BN (Warriors), where the 143d MP CO is attached.

The day for the administration run had started routinely enough, until it was time to pick up the mail. The Soldiers from the battalion took one look at the amount of boxes and knew, just by the vast numbers, a HMMWV 1 1/4 ton truck would not handle the job. They returned to Warrior Palace and secured a 5 ton truck for the job.

The boxes were marked Any Soldier, Male Soldier and Female Soldiers. The contents of the boxes, listed on the customs forms on the outside of the boxes, list Soldier comfort items such as toothpaste, soap, snacks, and socks, to name a few items. Other boxes contained nothing but granola bars or hot chocolate.

The boxes were packed by the Waterbury Family Support Group (FSP). The Yankee Gas Company, headquartered in Meriden, Conn. provided the funds for the postage. Each box is valued at approximately \$50 each.

That's a lot of money donated specifically for the Soldiers of the 143d MP CO.

"I heard that the FSG was sending us some packages before the holidays, but I never expected this. There is at least one box for every soldier," said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Marc Pucinski, who is also the full time Readiness NCO of the 143<sup>rd</sup> MP CO.

Pucinski receives periodic updates on the FSG activities, and passes the information

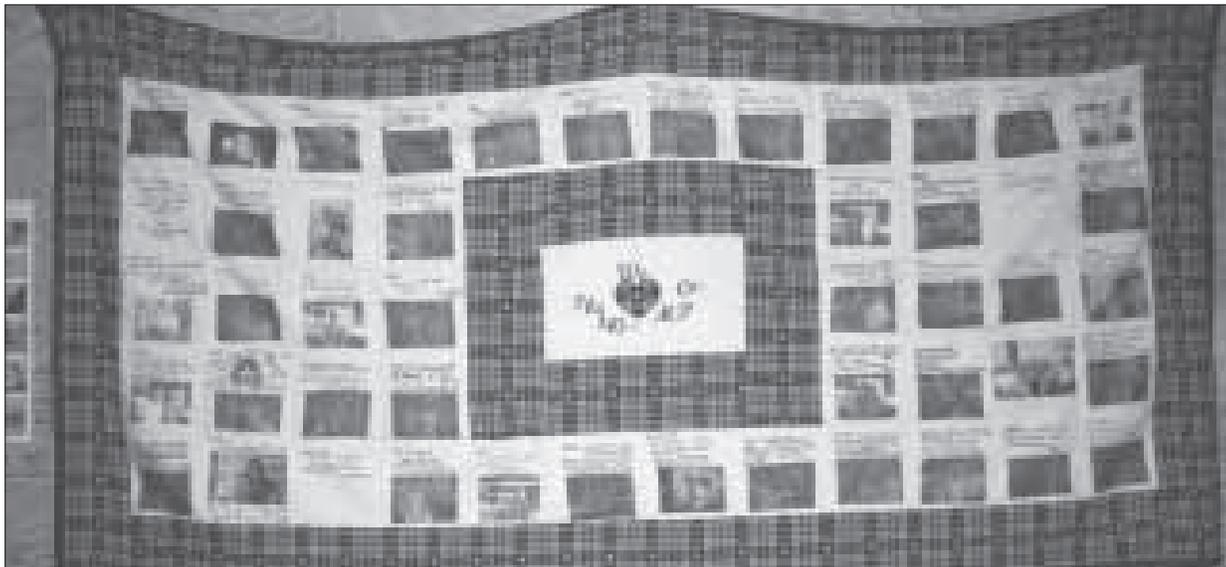
on to the company's leadership so they can pass it down to the Soldiers. Every night at the battalion meeting, the company commander, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. John M. Grube, has to give a good news story to the battalion commander, Lt. Col. John Garrity, in addition to the units' daily activities.

The active army side is impressed with the amount of stories generated from what the family support group does for the deployed Soldiers' families. One of the most memorable was the amount of amazement the unit received from the battalion leadership, when they saw a quilt the FSP had made for the unit. The quilt is made of photos of Soldiers' families and loved ones, one photo per patch. The quilt is hanging in the company operations center for all to see.

The recent packages were all addressed to Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Christopher Emmerson (4<sup>th</sup> PLT SGT), Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Robert Mongiat (2<sup>nd</sup> PLT SGT), Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Roddy Porter (1<sup>st</sup> PLT SGT), Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Lawler (3<sup>rd</sup> PLT SGT) and Pucinski (Operations Battle NCO). It will be their job to sort out the boxes and distribute them equally to the Soldiers.

"I am very thankful for the socks, snacks and hot chocolate now that the weather here is getting cold" says Staff Sgt. John Thompson, a Connecticut State Trooper in the Danielson Barracks. With the weather getting colder (yes it DOES get cold in the desert, with temperatures dropping 35 degrees in two hours), the items could not have come at a better time.

The officers, NCO's and Soldiers of the 143<sup>rd</sup> MPCO, wish to extend a very sincere thank you to every single person who contributed items, who contributed time to put the packages together, and special thank you to Yankee Gas for affording the postage. It feels good to be remembered.



Members of the 143rd Military Police Company's Family Support Group spent many hours working on this quilt for their deployed loved ones. The quilt is adorned with drawings by, and photos of, loved ones back at home. The quilt now hangs in the MP's Operations Center in Baghdad for all the Soldiers to see. (Photo courtesy of the 143rd MP Co.)

## Qui Transtulit Sustinet: Paying tribute to our comrades

Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class John W. Lane  
247<sup>th</sup> ENGINEERS

**Mosul, Iraq**— Among the Soldiers of the Connecticut Army National Guard deployed overseas there is no doubt that our families and friends are concerned for our safety and welfare.

Thanks to the global communications revolution, the internet, satellite phones, and the increasing presence of phone centers on our bases, we are better connected with our loved ones than soldiers in any previous conflict. We read your letters. We know you worry. We share the tastes and smells of your kitchens. We know you care.

What you may not realize is the concern Soldiers of Guard units have for each other. We hold our collective breath every time we hear bad news from an area where we know Connecticut Guard units are operating.

The sons and daughters of our state are scattered across the theatre— from Kuwait in the south to Mosul in the north, with a heavy concentration in and around Baghdad.

Keeping in touch with each other within theatre is actually more difficult than staying in touch with our families and friends stateside. The military phone system is tricky, commercial phones are worse, and because internet access is limited we tend to use the time we have communicating with our families.

Although we may lose contact with each other for weeks or months at a time, we are constantly thinking of our comrades wherever they are. The Soldiers of the 247<sup>th</sup> Engineer Detachment know the 1109<sup>th</sup> AVCRAD is doing their part to keep the helicopters we all depend on flying.

We know the 248<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company has been tasked with an array of missions beyond anything they ever thought they would experience.

We know they've taken fire. We know their performance has been outstanding.

But when we gather in our free moments and the conversation turns to Connecticut's Soldiers in Iraq our greatest concern is for the men and women of the 143<sup>rd</sup> Military Police Company.

Nobody has it easy here. It is a dangerous place wherever you are. Once again our military fights an enemy without uniforms, an elusive enemy that blends in with the crowd.

But most of us aren't out looking for trouble. We do our jobs. When we cross the wire we take precautions and take our chances.

Not so the Soldiers of 143<sup>rd</sup> MP Company. Day and night these Soldiers are on point. They go looking for trouble and they find it.



*A Tribute to the 143<sup>rd</sup> Military Police Company. Soldiers from the 247<sup>th</sup> Engineer Detachment take time out from a drilling project in Bendowa, Iraq to pay their respects to the men and women of the 143<sup>rd</sup> MPs. From left: Sgt. Ronald Smith, Danielson; Spec. Joshua Murray, Manchester; Spec. Michael Robinson, New London and Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class John W. Lane, Lebanon.*

They've patrolled the worst parts of Baghdad, taken more fire than any of us care to think about, and spilled their blood in defense of our nation and its foreign policy.

These Soldiers live at the sharp end of the spear. They've done the state proud.

The military heritage of the State of Connecticut predates our independence as

a nation. Throughout our history the men and women of our state have answered our nation's call to arms and done so with pride and determination. The Connecticut Army National Guard units deployed in Iraq have continued that tradition. Our hats are off to all.

Qui Transtulit Sustinet.

## The road from Kani Baska leads to remembering why we're here

Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class John W. Lane  
247<sup>th</sup> ENGINEERS

Mosul, Iraq—Maybe it's the repetitive boredom of the landscape—endless denuded plains and small rolling hills. Maybe it's the utilitarian architecture, the dull anonymity of the clothing or the predictable poverty. It could be a defense mechanism, some sort of adrenaline management the brain uses to husband ones energy for those few seconds or minutes when it might be desperately needed. Perhaps the opposite is true—maybe we spend so much of our time in a state of hyperawareness that everyday stimuli become imperceptible. Whatever the reason, Iraq makes you numb.

It's not something you're really aware of, the numbness. It's more noticeable by its absence. The days blend together; life in a war zone can become just another job. Occasionally it passes: you have a really bad day or a particularly good one and you remember why you came. One day a few days before Thanksgiving, we did.

It was a typical day, a typical mission for the 247<sup>th</sup> Engineer Detachment. We left the plains around Mosul and headed north; passing along the way the crumbling remnants of war—abandoned fighting positions and tank defilades, hand painted concrete forts camouflaged in swimming pool green and shoe polish brown. About fifteen minutes outside of Mosul we could see the mountains; twenty minutes later we entered the outskirts of Dohuk, the Kurdish regional capital.

Crossing the Dohuk military checkpoint is like coming home. We stop scanning rooftops and roadside trash and release our mental seatbelts. We share Mosul with the enemy. We share Dohuk with our friends.

We were there to help a Civil Affairs unit conduct water resource and infrastructure assessments for some remote villages in the semi-autonomous Kurdish region above the Green Line. Most Kurds in Iraq live within the mountainous southern confines of traditional Kurdistan, a region that extends from Syria in the west to Iran in the east, capped in the north by the zigzag border with Turkey.

We linked up with the CA team and headed into the mountains. We noticed green; we noticed trees. Around Mosul there aren't any trees save solitary plantings in courtyards and an orchard or two. The agricultural economy of northern Iraq is based on wheat, sheep, and goats; neither the plow nor the ruminant are particularly tree-friendly. In Kurdistan, scrub pines and seedlings cling to cliffs and hill faces; some of the taller hills are covered with real trees, some more than 20 feet tall—old ones, too difficult to reach during the humanitarian disaster that followed Saddam's revenge after the first Gulf war. Fuel-starved and freezing, Kurdish refugees cut down anything that would burn. Massive tree plantings and a strict logging ban have

since reversed some of the damage, but it will take generations, if ever, before the forests resemble what they were.

About 20 km northeast of Dohuk we left the paved road and followed a rough switchback trail. We kept to the trail for another 10 or 15 km until we slipped across the lip of a steep valley, divided at the bottom by a glistening little watercourse, more rock than stream. Clinging to the sides of this valley one could see several small villages. Most were in ruins, shells of buildings and empty windows surrounded by piles of rubble.

We crested a small rise, the radio squawked unintelligibly; suddenly the road cut to the right and sliced into the center of a village. We stood on our brakes amidst scattering chickens and a flurry of dogs and small children. We had reached our destination: the village of Kani Baska.

Kani Baska is a small village. Of no great consequence really, except to the people that live there; the people that call it home. But for some reason Kani Baska and the other valley villages were chosen in 1988 by Saddam Hussein. Chosen and sentenced to death.

One can debate the military advantage of chemical weapons. One clear advantage of chemical weapons is the threat of their use. Speed is essential on the modern battlefield. Men wearing chemical protective gear can't move as fast; the sound of chemical alarms can slow the battle to a crawl. The threat has

military value. Actually deploying them is another matter. The history of World War I is replete with examples where engagements using chemical weapons turned with the wind, as poison gas launched against the enemy returned to seek its master. The winds of war are capricious.

But in the hands of Saddam Hussein chemical weapons certainly had value. Chemical weapons meant terror, and in his regime, terror was power.

The gas was delivered to the valley by artillery. The gun tubes were kilometers away, far across the ridgeline. The attack lasted a quarter hour, a half hour at most. When the air cleared 90 percent of those in the valley were dead or dying. They died choking, clawing at their eyes.

As we stood that day in the village on the flank of the ridge, talking with the village elders, it became clear that the attack on Kani Baska wasn't a military engagement.

The Peshmerga fighters had the high ground. Denser than air, the gas moved downhill. No. The attack on the valley was directed against those too slow, too weak or with too much responsibility to flee. It was an attack against the sick and the elderly, against mothers and their children. The attack on the valley wasn't a battle. It was murder. The murder of Kani Baska the other small villages was a deliberate show of force designed to terrorize; to pacify

# Nomads of Connecticut, Pennsylvania

**CAPT. JOHN KUBITZ**  
POL PLATOON LEADER  
COMPANY G, 104TH AVN REGIMENT

Company G, 104th AVN Regiment is comprised of 225 Army National Guard soldiers from Pennsylvania and Connecticut. Approximately 130 of the Soldiers call Ft. Indiantown Gap, Annville, Penn. their "home station," while the remainder are home stationed in Windsor Locks, Conn.

The unit is a heavy lift helicopter company that flies and maintains 14 CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

Presently, The Nomads, are in Kandahar, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The unit was first called to active duty in February 2003 and moved to Ft. Dix, NJ for a two-month mobilization period.

Following their validation at Ft. Dix, they were deployed to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in April 2003. As the war raged on just to the north of Camp Udari, Kuwait, the Nomads awaited the arrival of their equipment while enduring the rigors of a Kuwaiti summer in Spartan-like conditions.

While in Kuwait, the Nomads utilized aircraft of the 101st Airborne Division to train and acclimate to desert flying conditions. As major combat operations in Iraq quickly drew to a close, the Nomads were redirected by CENTCOM to move rapidly to Afghanistan for Operation

Enduring Freedom. The unit was then deployed to Al Udeid AFB in the country of Qatar. Once in Qatar, they received their equipment from the port and readied it for air transport to Afghanistan.

By June, 2003, Company G, 104th AVN had taken over the heavy lift helicopter mission in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Working first for the 82nd Airborne Division under Task Force Devil and then working for the 10th Mountain Division under Aviation Task Force Knighthawk and Task Force Falcon. The Nomads have also worked extensively with the 3rd Special Forces Group.

Since deploying to Afghanistan, the Nomads have been responsible for the bulk of all troop movements for air assaults throughout the country.

They have participated in Operation Haven Denial, Unified Resolve, Warrior Sweep, Devil Fury, Mountain Yankee, Mountain Viper and most recently, Operation Mountain Resolve. These missions required nothing less than perfection from all members of the unit in order to accomplish the mission in a safe and efficient manner. The landing zones chosen by the infantry, special forces and field artillery units have been challenging and required the utmost concentration by the pilots and crewmembers to safely make the landings. The terrain in Afghanistan is harsh, ranging from high mountains with jagged rocks to the relentless sand that can make landing a Chinook next to impossible. But the Nomads have been able to accomplish

the mission without exception.

The commander of Company G, Maj. David E. Wood, says, "This is without a doubt the roughest terrain in the world for helicopter operations. It is an unforgiving environment with no room for complacency."

Other platoons in the company have also been very busy. Master Sgt. Rich Francke is the Task Force Knighthawk motor sergeant. He is charged with maintaining over 50 vehicles and PLL for the motor pool. He has found this to be an enlightening experience on a full time basis. Fortunately for Francke, the supervision required to successfully manage the motor pool related to his full time job as a corporate manager.

Capt. John Kubitz and Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class John Rea lead the POL section. The members of the POL platoon are responsible for all helicopter refueling at Kandahar Airfield. To date, they have successfully refueled more than 3,000 rotary wing aircraft and pumped more than 1,000,000 gallons of fuel. This is no small feat by any stretch of the imagination. This has only been in six months of operation. This is probably close to a 20-year career of pumping fuel in the National Guard on an M-day basis.

Capt. Todd Smith and Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Brian Tripp lead the Headquarters platoon, along with Flight Operations Officer Capt. Dana Smith and Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Mike Gotta. Because G Company is the largest

company within the TF Knighthawk we are tasked with a number of duties that would not normally fall upon a company-sized element. The HQ platoon is the prime mover of the TF Flight Operations section, the motor pool and supply.

To further complicate matters, TF Knighthawk is comprised of six primary companies.

The companies are as follows:

Company G, 104th AVN (PA and CTARNG) led by Maj. David E. Wood and First Sgt. Dell Christine

Company C, 1/130th ATK BN (NCARNG), led by Capt. Benny Collins and First Sgt. John Hunter

717th Med Company (AZARNG), led by Maj. Jim Bibb and Staff Sgt. Kenny Keelin

Company B, 193 AVIM (HIARNG), led by Maj. Margaret Rains, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Daniel Chang and First Sgt. Jim Ballie.

Company B, 2/10 Asslt BN (FT Drum, NY), led by Capt. Josh Higgins and First Sgt. Frank Wallace

2/10 Asslt BN (FT Drum, NY), led by Lt. Col. Orlando Lopez and Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Jallah

Of these six companies, four of them are Army National Guard. This has added a few pitfalls in the way that the Active Army does business compared to that of the National Guard.

Pay, leave and supply issues are all handled a little differently from Guard to AD. But the issues have been insurmountable. This has been in large part due to the diligent work that has been done by the company headquarters platoon.

The flight platoons, led by 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Keith Graham, Capt. Bob Detrick, Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Dave Damron and Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Ed Blantz have not only accomplished all combat missions successfully, but have also continued training their Soldiers. Pilots have progressed in Readiness Levels as well as being progressed to Pilots-in-Command. Mechanics have been trained as CH-47 crew chiefs and crew chiefs have progressed to Flight Engineers.

And all the while, training classes, Standardization meetings and Safety meetings have continued on and are still considered part of doing business.

Standardization Instructor Pilots Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jeff Reep and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Cooper Hastings and Safety Officers Chief Warrant Officer 4 Gene St. Clair and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ken Duenzl have ensured that all Army Aviation regulations are complied with and the unit continues to train despite the combat environment. With an OPTEMPO that regularly exceeds 600 flying hours per month, maintaining the standards in safety and mission execution is paramount.

The aircraft maintenance platoon, led by Capt. David Sale, Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class James Duggan and Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Terry Jones have had an enlightening experience with this deployment. With responsibility of



Chinook pilots from Company G, 104th Aviation Regiment must be prepared to land their aircraft on any type of terrain as this mountaintop in Afghanistan shows. (Photo courtesy of Co. G, 104th AVN)

# keep Soldiers flying high over desert

maintaining 14 CH-47s in a dirty, dusty environment, day in and day out, has taken its toll on both man and machine. The unforgiving dust has taken its toll on the machines and has given the platoon more work than they could have imagined. Everyday it is a new maintenance task for their soldiers. But despite the forces working against them, they have managed to successfully complete two aircraft phases per month and maintaining a Combat Readiness Rate of over 90 percent. This is a phenomenal feat considering the environment these airplanes have been flown for missions.

Overall, Company G, 104th AVN has performed its combat mission in an exemplary manner. The Nomads, as well as the other ARNG units at Kandahar Airfield, have formed a cohesive bond with their active duty brethren and together have created an Army Aviation Task Force to be reckoned with.

With any luck, the Nomads will soon return home. At the time of this writing of

this article, the Nomads were mobilized for 10 months and deployed in two combat theaters. They have flown more than 3,000 flight hours, refueled more than 3,000 helicopters, transported more than 12,000 passengers and moved more than 400,000 pounds of cargo. The Soldiers and aircraft of G Company, 104th Aviation Regiment have endured and brought to Army Aviation a new level in mission support. They continue to be "Above the Best" in demonstrating the dedication of America's citizen soldiers in our fight against the enemies of freedom.

God Bless America and God Bless the Nomads!

*A chinook flown by members of Company G, 104th Aviation Regiment comes in for a mountaintop landing in preparation for picking up soldiers on the ground. (Photo courtesy Co. G/104th AVN)*



*Ground troops in the Global War on Terror prepare to board a Chinook piloted by members of Company G, 104th Aviation Regiment. The NOMADS are serving in Afghanistan after having served in Kuwait. The unit has been deployed since February 2003. (Photo courtesy of Co. G, 104th AVN)*

# Consumer credit counseling: Is it right for you?

Sgt. 1st Class DEBBI NEWTON  
STATE SENIOR PANCO

*Editor's Note: Two Connecticut Guardsmen agreed to tell their stories for this article. Because of the sensitivity of the issue and to protect the Guardsmen's privacy, as well as that of their families, The Guardian will not use their real names or ranks.*

The holidays are over and the bills are starting to roll in. You wonder how you let your spending get so far out of hand when you promised yourself last year that this would never happen again. You wonder how you're ever going to recover.

Or...you're at home with your family. The kids are doing their homework, you and your spouse are watching the news. Suddenly, your idyllic surroundings are shattered when the phone rings and your heart skips a beat.

You wait for the caller ID or the answering machine to let you know who's calling. Which bill collector is it this time? How nasty are they going to be? Will the kids hear and wonder what's going on? And you thank your lucky stars that you did not have company at the time the call came.

These two scenarios are all too familiar in many households across the country. Credit cards, personal loans, buy-now-pay-later offers all make it easy for people to get in over their financial heads.

Many people who find themselves deeply in debt turn to bankruptcy as an option. Many others turn to consumer credit counseling to find a way out of the fear and humiliation.

"The reason we went to it (Consumer Credit Counseling) was that every month we had bills coming in that we were not able to pay," said Jack. "We were two to four months behind. We'd pay one and not others. It was a vicious cycle."

Jack said he and his wife had gone through all the traditional methods of trying to get out of debt. They tried talking to their creditors to lower their payments. They tried redoing their budget. Everytime they thought they might be getting somewhere, something else would come up.

"There was no end to the falling behind," he said. "The phone calls kept coming. It was Hell. We were afraid to answer the phone. Who's calling? What do they want? Will we be able to give it to them? And the embarrassment of having to admit to these people that you couldn't pay your bills..."

Jack finally turned to Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Connecticut after his wife heard their ad on the radio. He said it was the only agency he knew about at the time.

They sent him an eight or nine page form to fill out, detailing all the family's debt, income, who they owed, how much, how far behind they were and much more.

"We had to be completely honest, not only with them, but with ourselves," said Jack.

He admitted it was not easy, but also that it scared him to see how far in debt his family actually was.

"We were \$16,000 in debt, did not own our home, and had a total household income of \$37,000 a year," he said. The debt did not include utilities, something that does not generally fall into consumer credit counseling categories. His debt was due to eight or nine credit cards that had been maxed out, consumer loans for cars, and on-credit purchases such as encyclopedias. Jack said there were no medical expenses at that time.

That was five years ago. Jack says if he had kept to the plan, and had managed their money better, he would be out of debt by now. But he didn't do either.

Once a consumer completes the paperwork with a consumer credit counseling agency, the agency then contacts the consumer's creditors and works out lowered monthly payments. The total of each of these monthly payments is sent directly to the agency, who then disburses the payments to the creditors. Some agencies charge a nominal handling fee, others charge far more.

In Jack's case, he was paying the agency \$239 per month, of which \$20 went to the agency, the rest to his creditors.

"We should have been done by now," said Jack. "The pay-off plan assumes you will increase your monthly payments as you make more money or manage what money you do have better. We actually lowered our monthly payments to \$198. The agency expected us to manage our money and we didn't. We racked up even more debt."

Jack now owes \$14,000 to creditors, some of it still the original debt, the rest is newly incurred in the past couple of years.

"In order for the program to work, you have to follow it," said Jack. "You need to carefully watch your cash flow, eliminate extras, as you pay off one creditor, add that amount to what you're paying a different creditor."

Cathy's story is different. She had grown up in a house where she had gotten used to living without much.

"My family was not poor, but we did live paycheck to paycheck," she said. And she does remember at times hearing creditors call.

"I didn't want that for my children."

She carefully lived within her means, paying each bill every month. What she didn't know, until the calls started coming, was that her husband had some of his own credit cards and had the bills going to his office. He had racked up nearly \$30,000 in debt.

"I was terrified," said Cathy. "Were we going to lose our home? What about our cars? Were we going to be able to send our kids to college? It almost ruined our marriage."

Her husband decided to go on the Internet to find a credit counseling agency and chose the first one that had a human answer the phone. He didn't do the appropriate research or ask the right questions before jumping in to an agreement. It turned out to be the wrong choice.

"He was paying them nearly \$300 a month, and the bills were only decreasing by about \$125 to \$150 a month," said Cathy.

They stopped paying the agency, who never attempted to contact them to find out why, and called all their creditors to set-up payment plans. Both Cathy and her husband took second jobs and used every penny they earned to pay down their debt. They cut up all their credit cards, including the ones they were current on, keeping only one for emergencies, and that's locked in a strongbox that only Cathy has the key to.

In four years, their debt has decreased to less than \$3,000.

"I would not hesitate to use a reputable credit counseling agency if I had to," said Cathy. "I would just make sure I did my homework first. I'd check the Internet, check the Better Business Bureau, Consumer Protection agencies first to find out if the agency is reliable."

(A recent check on the Internet by *The Guardian* yielded 909,000 entries in .13 seconds using a well-known search engine.)

The Federal Trade Commission has several publications available on their Website ([www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov)) covering all aspects of consumer credit. Some titles include Credit Repair: Self-Help May Be Best; Credit and Your Consumer Rights; Knee Deep in Debt; Fair Debt Collection; and Fiscal Fitness: Choosing a Credit Counselor. All are available in free download formats.



## Tips to keep in mind when choosing help

### Check for Consumer Complaints:

Check with your state attorney general and the Better Business Bureau for any complaints filed against the company you are considering. This is a growth industry - companies in the business report counseling twice the number of new clients in 2000 than they did in 1990. Accordingly, the Business Bureau reports it has become inundated with complaints. Agencies authorized to use the Consumer Credit Counseling Service name are often a "safe" place to start. Just remember they are all independently run companies and quality will vary.

### Avoid High Fees:

Fees can vary. A CBS reporter called a couple of credit-counseling agencies to see how representatives explain their services to the average consumer. Even knowing what questions to ask, he struggled to get straight answers. Be sure to get these answers, however, before you sign up. Avoid programs that charge 100 percent of the first month's payment as a start-up fee.

### Read All Fine Print:

Agencies basically promise you nothing but will require you to waive your rights to sue for damages. Know this and read carefully before signing.

### Review Your Credit Report:

It's essential to review your current credit report and know how a credit-counseling agency will affect your report - will it hurt or help? Especially if you plan to apply for a mortgage any time in the near future, speak with your lender first.

## Credit Rules

1. Credit cards are just like a loan - You have to pay what you owe.
2. Keep track of how much you spend. Remember that incidental and impulse purchases add up fast.
3. Save your receipts. Compare them with your monthly bill. Promptly report any problems to the company that issued the card.
4. Never lend your card to anyone.
5. Owning more than you can repay can damage your credit rating. That can make it hard to finance a car, rent an apartment, get insurance - even get a job.
6. Pay your bill on time, and in full when possible. If you don't, you'll have to pay finance charges on the unpaid balance - and it takes forever to get caught up if you pay just the minimum.

From the Federal Trade Commission, 1-877-FTC-HELP, [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov)



SGT. 1ST CLASS RAYMOND HAMILTON  
U.S. ARMY SAFETY CENTER

Soldiers deployed in Southwest Asia probably have grown accustomed to seeing something a little unusual in the desert, something that might not remind them a little of home—a utility vehicle (ATV) made by John Deere called the M-Gator.

The six-wheeled M-Gator is the military version of the commercial Gator family of utility vehicles, generally used for landscaping and other heavy projects. However, unlike the commercial Gators, the M-Gator was designed exclusively for and is available only to military organizations, with the Army being a primary customer. M-Gators can be found scattered throughout Army units and have been used extensively in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom for several basic missions, including transporting supplies. The M-Gator has supported airborne operations and drop zone recovery with the 82nd Airborne Division and at Fort Bragg, N.C., and served on the front lines supporting the XVIII Airborne Corps' artillery. And, apparently, this piece of equipment is here to stay: the House Armed Services Committee recently appropriated \$2.5 million to buy more M-Gators for the military.

Besides its rugged durability, the M-Gator has many useful functions. Just ask any soldier who has had to move bulky equipment over a long distance without a HMMWV or the sergeant tasked with the command sergeant major's or first sergeant's police detail. The M-Gator is certified for airdrop and is transportable in most fixed- and rotary-wing utility aircraft. It also can be carried as an external sling load on some helicopters. The M-Gator's 3-cylinder,

liquid-cooled 18-horsepower diesel engine can use either diesel or JP-8 fuel and has a continuously variable transmission that eliminates shifting. The M-Gator seats two, has a payload capacity of 1,400 pounds—including a 200-pound driver and a 200-pound passenger—and comes equipped with a multi-position, heavy-duty cargo box with fold-down sides and tailgate and a power lift. The vehicle can reach speeds up to 18 mph and its low-pressure tires help soldiers get where they need to go.

With all of its good points, the M-Gator still can be dangerous if not used correctly. M-Gators have been purchased through the General Services Administration (GSA) catalog and the Army has yet to publish guidance on restrictions regarding occupants, speed, load, and towing limits. The U.S. Army Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM) recently released Safety of Use Message (SOM) 03-006. This SOM warns of the danger of serious injury or severe vehicle damage if drivers ignore the warnings in the commercial off-the-shelf John Deere technical manual(s). In accordance with the SOM, M-Gator users should adhere to the following limitations:

- The M-Gator shouldn't be used to

evacuate litters or carry casualties. In the event of a rollover, soldiers in litters are likely to be crushed.

- At no time should more than two riders (the driver and one passenger) be on the M-Gator. The cargo load limit of 1,000 pounds must be followed, and the driver and passenger must wear helmets and eye protection while the vehicle is in motion.
- All loads over 50 pounds must be strapped securely to the rear cargo tie-downs or to the cargo shelf in the front of the vehicle.
- The M-Gator is not towable—doing so will damage the chain drive, transaxle, and tires. In addition, the M-Gator had not been evaluated for its towing ability, so operators should not attempt to tow trailers behind the M-Gator.
- To ensure the vehicle is safe to operate after an airdrop, drivers should inspect the M-Gator for damaged or loose components and for fluid leaks prior to operating.
- Ammunition must be placed on a pallet and strapped securely in the rear cargo area.
- The M-Gator meets neither DoD nor Army Regulation 385-55 safety standards

for use on public roads. M-Gators should not be operated on public roadways—except when crossing over them—and then only at designated crossing points or with road guards.

Some Army organizations have conducted their own risk assessments and set risk reduction measures in place for the M-Gator. An example of this is the XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg Memo 25-50, Master Policy No. 73, *Fort Bragg Safety Policy on Utilization of the Utility Vehicle M-Gator*. This policy states that passengers may not ride in or on the vehicle's cargo areas, and that drivers must be licensed and have their qualifications to drive the M-Gator annotated on an OF 348. There are many other good directives listed in Policy No. 73.

The next time your first sergeant asks you if you have seen the unit's M-Gator, you will now know which piece of equipment he or she is talking about.

*Reprinted from Countermeasure with permission, U.S. Army Safety Center.*

## Veterans receive COLA increase

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is including a 2.1 percent increase in the disability benefit payments that millions of veterans and dependents will receive at the end of December.

President Bush authorized an increase matching the increase in Social Security rates by signing into law the Veterans Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2003.

"These benefits are a reflection of countless sacrifices ranging from peacetime injuries to wartime service," Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi said. "Cost-of-living increases for veterans and their survivors ensure strong programs that keep pace with their needs."

The new rates apply to benefits earned in December. VA benefit payments routinely are made at the beginning of the month following the one in which they are earned, but with

the New Year's Day holiday, checks or direct deposits will generally be received on Dec. 31.

Those receiving the increase include 2.5 million veterans awarded compensation for disabilities sustained or made worse during their military service, as well as 347,000 wartime veterans who are totally disabled from civilian-life causes and who receive a pension under an income-based program.

The increase also will go to 337,000 spouses, children and parents of veterans who died in service or from a service-connected condition, and another 231,000 who are served by an income-based program for survivors of wartime veterans.

Most veterans and survivors will receive their increased VA compensation or pension through direct deposit, which VA encourages because of its speed and security.

## VA to survey Gulf War vets' health

Veterans of the first Gulf War recently received a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) asking them to take part in a survey about their health.

"We are committed to finding answers for veterans who still suffer from a variety of symptoms and illnesses resulting from their service in the first Gulf War," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi.

"With soldiers returning every day from operations there, pursuing these answers remains a top priority."

The survey, called the Longitudinal Health Study of Gulf War Era Veterans, is a follow-up to one conducted in 1995-1996 on the health of 30,000 veterans of the 1990-1991 Gulf War.

A letter signed by Principi was sent to

veterans explaining the study's purpose and procedures for enrolling and encouraging their participation, whether or not they took part in the original survey or served in the Gulf War theater.

Participation is voluntary. Veterans fill out a detailed survey with questions about general health, functional status, chronic medical conditions, unexplained multi-symptom illnesses, doctor and hospital visits and treatments.

All information is confidential.

Dr. Han K. Kang, director of VA's environmental epidemiology service, who conducted the earlier study, will lead the research effort.

## Answering the call: Servicemembers put themselves in 'line

Pfc. JORDAN E. WERME  
65<sup>th</sup> PCH

Members of the United States Armed Forces are universally drawn together by a common goal: to serve our country and help those in need.

But for some Connecticut Army and Air National Guardsmen that calling extends beyond the green and blue uniforms of their country and into the burning homes and businesses within their own communities.

All across the state, citizens rely on brave men and women to volunteer their time with local fire departments as emergency service providers. Some National Guard members have answered this call in addition to the calls of state and country.

Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Malcolm V. Meyer, noncommissioned officer in charge of Radar Maintenance, 103<sup>rd</sup> Air Control Squadron, has been volunteering with his local fire unit for 27 years.

"I joined when I was 16," said Meyer. "I joined through the high school junior department and became full time when I turned 18." Meyer, who is a radar technician for the FAA at Bradley International Airport,

Windsor Locks, has no trouble working his volunteering into his otherwise busy schedule.

"It's been a part of my life for so long," he said. "It's just always been there. It's second nature."

Maj. Joseph D. Danao, II, CTARNG, volunteers his time with two fire departments. He serves as the Deputy Chief of Gardner Lake Fire Department, Salem, and as a Firefighter Emergency Medical Technician for Oakdale Volunteer Fire Department, Montville.

Danao started volunteer-ing when he was 19, taking the two-month certification course over a five-year period.

"The courses run counter to National Guard," said Danao. "The certification is done on weekends."

Air Force Senior Airman Brian T. Ellis, heavy equipment maintenance technician, 103<sup>rd</sup> Vehicle Maintenance Group, is a 13-year veteran volunteer and association president of Enfield's district 1 firehouse.

"Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno is very supportive of community involvement," said Ellis. "He is very receptive of volunteer work. It's very important that we work together to

support the community."

With all of the time spent working, volunteering and serving in the Armed Forces, support from loved ones and employers is very important.

"My family has been very supportive of all three aspects of my life," said Meyer. "My wife has never complained about me having to go out on a call, and is very understanding of my military duties."

"I have a very, very supportive family that understands how important it is to help other people when they're in need," said Danao.

"The most difficult part is not being away from home, it's the emotional side," said Danao. "After a day of helping injured



Senior Airman Brian T. Ellis is a 13-year veteran volunteer firefighter. He is also a member of the Connecticut Air National Guard. (Photo courtesy of Senior Airman Brian T. Ellis)

people, the last thing I want to see is my family doing something to hurt themselves."

For every volunteer there is a different reason for the commitment.

"You get to work together as a team," said Ellis. "Working together with all the guys gives you a real sense of camaraderie."

"It's like that old saying, 'If not me, who?'" said Meyer. "I get to show the new guys what needs to be done. Everyone is very



Volunteer firefighters and Connecticut Army National Guardsmen Maj. Joseph Danao and Sgt. 1st Class Craig Lytle scale a ladder during a fire department training exercise. As with Soldiers, firefighters must undergo continuous training to remain certified at their respective levels. (Photo courtesy Sgt. 1st Class Craig Lytle)

## of fire' by volunteering to help communities

shy at first, but then they begin to enjoy it.”  
 “I volunteer because I can,” said Danao. “Because I’m a Soldier ... and that’s very important. I’m able to be at a person’s side when they need help, and I’ll do anything to help anyone. I’m there doing that kind of thing because I can.”

Meyer sees the connection between service of country and service of community.

“The military teaches a lot of leadership,” said Meyer. “It shows how valuable training is. You learn not to be afraid to take the ball and run. When something has to be done it doesn’t matter whose job it is, just do it. When an emergency call comes and you’re available to respond, you are expected to respond.”

The commitment of time and service is not unique to the Armed Forces, as civilian men and women all over the state and country

also volunteer their time and service to help their communities, but for members of the Army and Air National Guard, that commitment goes to new lengths when signing on to a volunteer firehouse.

“I and all volunteers deal with extreme situations on a continuous basis,” said Danao. “All volunteers are special people.”

“I really enjoy both (Air Guard and volunteering),” said Meyer. “It’s not even a job, it’s just something I’ve always done. It feels good being able to help people.”



Chief Master Sgt. Malcolm V. Meyer, a member of the Connecticut Air National Guard's 103rd Air Control Squadron, has been a volunteer firefighter for 27 years. (Photo courtesy Chief master Sgt. Malcolm V. Meyer)



Besides both being in the Connecticut Army National Guard, Sgt. 1st Class Craig Lytle (standing) and Maj. Joseph Danao are members of the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Department in Salem, Conn. (Photo courtesy Sgt. 1st Class Craig Lytle)

## National Guard family saves life

PFC. JORDAN E. WERME  
 65<sup>th</sup> PCH

“Your ambulance is on fire and the driver is unconscious. Give us a call when you get this message.”

This is what the Gardner Lake Fire Department’s Deputy Fire Chief heard on his voicemail just a few minutes past 7:00 p.m. on Oct. 28.

The fire chief was CTARNG Maj. Joseph D. Danao. The message he heard was from his 14-year-old son, Joey.

CTARNG Sgt. Major Laura Danao was traveling home with her children, Joey and Ashley, 9, when she spotted an ambulance from her husband’s department crashed into a rock off of Route 82 in Salem, Conn. Ashley waited in the car while her big brother and her mother went to help.

“There were sparks starting to fly and I could smell something burning,” said Sgt. Major Danao.

She saw that the driver was unconscious but not bleeding and then checked for a pulse while she dialed 911 from her cell phone.

Meanwhile, Joey went around to the other side of the vehicle and made sure the rear of the ambulance was clear of other passengers. He then got into the cab and used the radio to contact the dispatch center, said Danao.

When a state trooper arrived, she and Sgt. Major Danao were able to get the 6’ 3”, 300-pound driver out of the vehicle and away from any further danger, said Danao.

“My daughter had her sleeping bag in the car, and she gave it up so we would have something to rest (the driver’s) head on,” said Danao.

“It was pretty tough for me to take that call from 60 miles away,” said Maj. Danao of the voicemail his son left him. Danao was in a lecture working toward a Master’s degree in forensic fire science when the message came.

“I’m very proud that they were able to keep calm heads,” he said. “It’s awesome that they were able to be there and help out when nobody else could.”

“A lot of Laura’s training comes through and puts her in the frame of mind where she can help out, but certainly with Joey being able to jump into that cab, that surprises everybody,” said Maj. Danao.

“If not for Laura’s 911 call and my son getting on the radio there is no question that his life may not have been saved,” he said. “The ambulance is a total loss for the community, but it could have been much worse.

“As a father it’s awesome that they were able to save another father,” said Danao. “As a deputy fire chief it’s awesome that they could save a captain.”

# Record of Connecticut Men in the War of Rebellion

*Editor's Note: This is the third 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)*

THE volunteer companies which made up the Third three months regiment from Connecticut began their organization almost simultaneously with those which made up the First and Second. The original call of President Lincoln, however, only demanded one regiment from Connecticut, but the eagerness of Connecticut men to enlist induced Governor Buckingham to personally intercede with the President for the acceptance of at least three regiments, and this request being granted, the Third Regiment was very soon filled to the maximum. It went into camp at the Fair Grounds on Albany Avenue, in Hartford, on May 9th, and on May

14th was mustered into the United States service, with John

Buckingham as Colonel of the Third Regiment, and, being promptly mustered as such, assumed command. Colonel Chatfield had the advantage of long experience as a militia officer, was an excellent drill-master and disciplinarian, and knew not how to tolerate insubordination in any form. Lieut.-Colonel Brady considered that the commissioning of Colonel Chatfield over himself in the Third Regiment was a violation by the Governor of

Potomac," and was destined as such to march at the head of the column in the soon-coming and clamorously-demanded "On to Richmond." The energy and military ability of Colonel Chatfield brought the Third to a remarkable degree of efficiency, as was soon demonstrated in the field. The Third moved with its brigade at the head of the column under McDowell when it advanced *via* Centreville to Bull Run, and, in the trying

forward their regiments up the base of the slope about one hundred yards, when I ordered them to lie down, at a point offering a small protection, and load. I then ordered them to advance again, which they did, in the face of a movable battery of eight pieces and a large body of infantry, toward the top of the hill. As we moved forward, we came under the fire of other large bodies of the enemy, posted behind breastworks, and

o n reaching the top of the hill the firing became so hot that an exposure to it of five minutes would have annihilated my whole line."

Farther on in his report, Colonel Keyes says:

"The gallantry with which the Second Regiment of Maine, and the Third Regiment of Connecticut Volunteers, charged

up the hill upon the enemy's artillery and infantry was never, in my judgment, surpassed."

In obedience to orders, the Third, with the rest of the brigade, was soon after this action in retreat upon Centreville, but in good order. It bivouacked that night on the very ground it left on the morning of the battle, but about 10 P. M., after the demoralized portion of McDowell's army was far on its way toward Washington, orders were given to continue the march to Falls Church. From that point, and during the two following days, the Third, with the other Connecticut regiments, was busily engaged, without the semblance of panic, in saving camp and garrison equipage and stores abandoned by the other troops.

The Third was mustered out of service at Hartford, August 12, 1861.

## HISTORY OF THE THIRD CONNECTICUT VOLUNTEERS (Three Months)

### Casualties Third Connecticut Volunteers

	Field and Staff	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	Total
<b>Killed</b>		1			1	1				1		4
<b>MIA</b>							1					1
<b>Wounded</b>			3			1	1		3	1	1	10
<b>Captured</b>	1	1			1	1	5	1	1	2	4	17
<b>Discharged/ Disability</b>		3	1	1	2		2	1	2	2		14
<b>Total</b>	1	5	4	1	4	3	9	2	6	6	5	46

Arnold of New Haven, Colonel, Allen G. Brady of Torrington, Lieut.-Colonel, and Alexander Warner of Woodstock, Major.

The regiment left Hartford by rail for New Haven, May 23d, receiving its colors from the hands of Governor Buckingham, in front of the State House, in Hartford, when in line for departure, and sailed from New Haven for Washington on the steamer "Cahawba," *via* Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac. Arriving at Washington, it immediately went into camp at Glenwood, near the First and Second regiments, and was at once brigaded with them under Brigadier-General Dan. Tyler, who had been promoted from the Colonelcy of the First Regiment to the command of the brigade.

Colonel John Arnold soon resigned, and Lieut.-Colonel Chatfield of the First Regiment was commissioned by Governor

the current regulations and usages of the State militia, and refused to recognize Colonel Chatfield as his superior. For this insubordination, Lieut.-Colonel Brady was deprived of his sword during the remainder of the three months' term of service, but was honorably mustered out at its close. Lieut.-Colonel Brady's impetuous indiscretion in this instance was most amply atoned for by his subsequent honorable and extremely efficient service in the Seven-teenth Connecticut Volunteers, and in the Veteran Reserve Corps. On June 24th, the Third Regiment followed the First and Second across Long Bridge to the "sacred soil" of Virginia, and encamped beside them at Falls Church, which was then the extreme and much exposed outpost of the Union lines. The Third here became a part of the First Brigade, First Division, of McDowell's "Army of the

scenes on that disastrous field, behaved with the firmness and the courage of a regiment of veterans.

Prior to this advance, General Dan. Tyler had been promoted to the command of the First Division of McDowell's army. Colonel Keyes, a West Point graduate and regular army officer, afterwards a major-general of volunteers, took command of the brigade.

In his official report of the Bull Run battle, Colonel Keyes says:

"At about two o'clock P. M., General Tyler ordered me to take a battery on a height in front. The battery was strongly posted and supported by infantry and riflemen, sheltered by a building, a fence, and a hedge. My order to charge was obeyed with the utmost promptness. Colonel Jameson of the Second Maine, and Colonel Chatfield of the Third Connecticut Volunteers, pressed

# Connecticut Military Department News

## First Company Governor's Horse Guards helps CTNG Soldiers, families

Pfc. MICHAEL DOWNES  
1<sup>st</sup> COMPANY GOVERNOR'S HORSE GUARD

The First Company Governor's Horse Guards has taken a lead in supporting Connecticut National Guard soldiers who are currently deployed overseas, and assisting their families. The troop co-sponsored a fundraising event with the Connecticut Credit Union Association to raise funds for the Connecticut National Guard Foundation on Dec. 16 and also took part in Operation ELF on Dec. 12.

Operation ELF was originated by Lt. Governor M. Jodi Rell, organizing Connecticut residents to support the troops and their families by donating new, unwrapped toys, as well as gift cards for grocery and discount department stores. Donations of fuel oil, Christmas trees, snow removal services and financial contributions were also made.

First Co., GHG collected a number of items and drove them to the State Capitol via horse truck, which was met by Rell. The troopers then delivered the goods to the CTARNG Armory. Items collected for care

packages for soldiers included holiday cards, local newspapers, DVDs, magazines, puzzle books, pre-paid calling cards and disposable cameras. Toys were collected for their children.

event surpassed its goal of raising \$25,000, and collected a total of \$27,047 for the CTNG Foundation, the single largest contribution it has received to date.

CCUA Chairman and CEO Kevin Stewart presented a check for the funds to Preziosi.

"I can't think of a better combination than that of the credit unions and the 1<sup>st</sup> Co. Governor's Horse Guards joining together to support the Soldiers of the National Guard, and their families," said Preziosi.

"On behalf of the Soldiers and the families I thank you."

"It's ironic that you are standing here thanking us, when we are the ones who owe you a tremendous

thanks," noted Stewart. "We are happy to do all we can to help those who are defending our nation and their families at this critical time."

The 1,100 deployed CTARNG troops have left behind 2,671 dependent family members, including 557 young children. Many of these families have struggled emotionally – and financially – during the active duty assignments of their loved ones.

The funds will be used to provide relief in a variety of ways.



Members of the 1st Co. Governor's Horse Guards with Lt. Governor M. Jodi Rell, as CCUA Board Chairwoman Kathy Chartier presents Louis Preziosi with a check for \$27,047. (Photo courtesy of the First Co. Governor's Horse Guard)

The Connecticut Credit Union Association and First Company Governor's Horse Guards co-sponsored the Dec. 16 fundraiser, which was held at the CCUA headquarters in Wallingford.

Members of various Connecticut credit unions and troopers from the First Company Governor's Horse Guards were joined at the reception by Rell, Louis Preziosi, Chairman of the CTNG Foundation, and William W. Dickinson, Jr., Mayor of Wallingford. The

## Foot Guard band entertains vets, donates books



The First Company Governor's Foot Guard Band (above) under the direction of Captain Laura O'Connell entertain the residents of the Veteran's Hospital in Rocky Hill on Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2003. This yearly tradition included musical selections of Christmas Carols, both played and sung by the band members, along with rousing marches. The highlight for the residents was when the band played American Salute-a medley of the marches from the 5 service units. After the concert, (below) First Company Major Commandant Dennis Conroy presented Commissioner Linda Schwartz with a sample of books for the hospital's library. In all, the First Company Governor's Foot Guard donated more than 30 boxes of books for the hospital. (Photos by Cpl. Kevin Cormack-1<sup>st</sup> Co., GFG)



On Saturday, Dec. 13, at the New England Air Museum, Bradley International Airport, the members of the First Company Governor's Foot Guard escorted Santa and Mrs. Claus for the Fantasy Flight program for children with serious illnesses sponsored by the Silver Liners Club. The Foot Guard Honor Guard led the parade that stepped off at 12:30 and was followed by Santa and Mrs. Claus. The Honor Guard then helped Santa with the distribution of gifts to the children in attendance. This year's event included more than 100 children from the Children's Medical Center. This is the 9th year the Foot Guard has participated in the Fantasy Flight program. (Photo by Cpl. Frank Castro, First Company Governors Foot Guard)



First Company Governor's Foot Guard Adjunct Lt. Christopher Cain reads the commission decree to the Honorable Mayor Eddie Perez of Hartford making him an Honorary Captain in the Foot Guard. Major Commandant Dennis Conroy presided over the ceremony that took place on Monday December 15th during the Foot Guard's monthly Battalion Review. Mayor Perez joins the list of Hartford Mayors that have served as Honorary Captains of the First Company Governor's Foot Guard. (Photo by Cpl. Kevin Cormack, 1st Co GFG)

## Wine tasting, chili cook-off

The Second Company Governor's Foot Guard will host a wine tasting at 1 p.m. and a chili cook-off at 3 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 25 at the New Haven Armory, Goffe Street.

Everyone is invited to enter their best chili in the cook-off by calling the Goffe Street Armory on Monday evenings at (203) 562-6593. Awards for the best chili will be given.

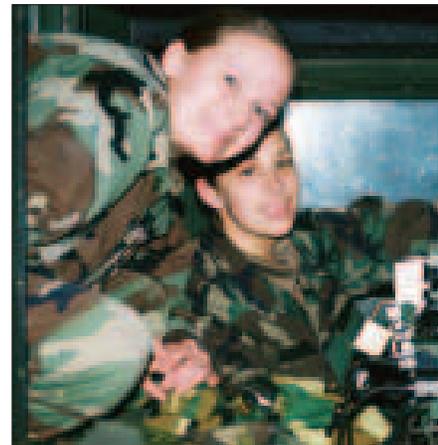


Members of the 118th Medical Company stand in formation during a send-off ceremony in their honor. The unit received word shortly before Thanksgiving that it was being called to active duty in the Global War on Terror. The 118th left for Fort Drum, N.Y. in December and was able to come home for a few days at Christmastime. (Photo by Spec. Jesse J. Stanley, 65th PCH)

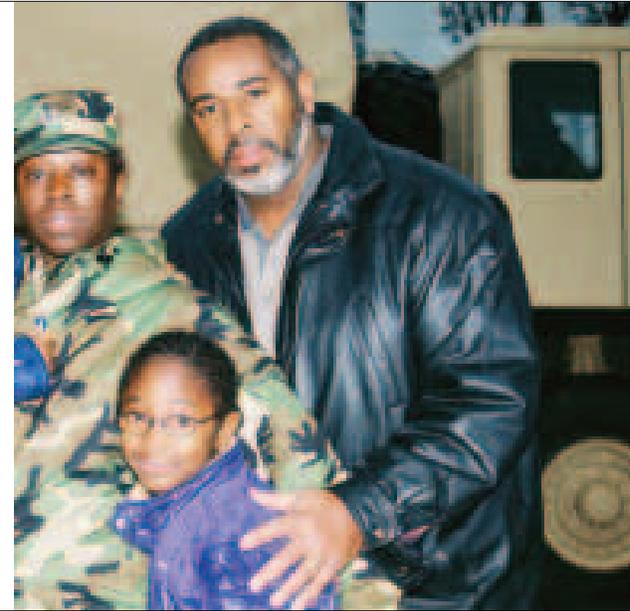


Capt. Valerie Smith of the 118th Medical Company takes a photo in her vehicle before leaving for Fort Drum, N.Y. Her unit has been activated in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Smith says she is very proud of her family and how they have supported her during the Sept. 11 attacks. (Photo by Spec. Jesse J. Stanley, 65th PCH)

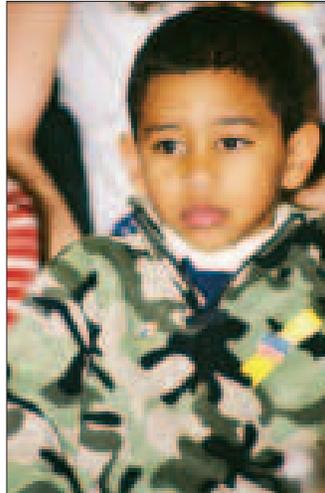
# 118th Medical heads to



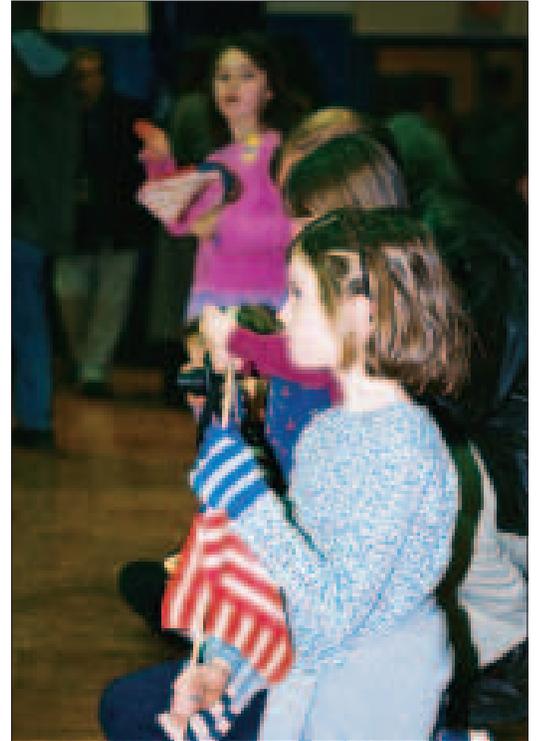
Two members of the 118th Medical Company take time to pose for a photo in their vehicle before leaving for Fort Drum, N.Y. for the validation process for active duty. (Photo by Spec. Jesse J. Stanley, 65th PCH)



...pany takes time to have a family photo taken before leaving for Fort Drum, N.Y. ...ration Iraqi Freedom and will be deploying to Iraq for 12 months in-country. ...how the children have stepped up to the plate to help at home ever since the ...nley, 65th PCH)



A young boy sits in the crowded bleachers of Newington High School and shows his patriotism and support of his loved one by wearing camouflage and the stars and stripes. He was there to participate in a send-off ceremony for the 118th Medical Company. (Photo by Spec. Jesse J. Stanley, 65th PCH)



Children lined up to wave flags during send-off ceremonies for the 118th Medical Company. (Photo by Spec. Jesse J. Stanley, 65th PCH)



# th al Co. o war



There's something about little girls and their daddies. Sgt. 1st Class Matt Baldoni of the 118th Medical Company gets a farewell kiss from his daughter before deploying in the Global War on Terrorism. The unit was being honored during send-off ceremonies held in their honor early in December. (Photo by Spec. Jesse J. Stanley, 65th PCH)



...take time to pose for a farewell ...rum, N.Y. to begin their ...ec. Jesse J. Stanley, 65th PCH)

# Wing hosts children's party for the holidays

From Page 1

Although the children smiled throughout the afternoon, it was difficult to get them to put their feelings into words for this article, parents, of course translated.

"It is a great time and the snow made it seem festive ... almost magical," said Maj. Jeffrey M. Knickerbocker, judge advocate officer, 103<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing who brought his daughter Bethany, age 4, for the second time.

"Austin liked the presents, Legos, he loves Legos," said Master Sgt. Sheryl Laporte, services technician, 103<sup>rd</sup> Services Flight, who brought her son, Austin, 9. "It was a great time for the kids."

"The highlight of the evening were the looks in the little kids' eyes," said Col. Jack Swift, vice commander, 103<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing. "The party was a nice little bit of warmth and good feeling for the kids and all the people working there."

Although scheduled until 4 p.m., with the bad weather the organizers suggested everyone head home at about 2:30 p.m.

"The kids' party was extremely well run, well organized and it was nice to see volunteers working hard to make this party happen but at the same time recognize we were in the middle of a Connecticut Nor-Easter," said Swift.

Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer won the last door prize.

"Rudolph told me he and Santa cannot bring toys back to the North Pole in the sleigh," said Master Sgt James Shewokis, crew chief, 103<sup>rd</sup> Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, who knows Rudolph well. "So he gave it to a nice young girl who was helping the USO with the party."



Bethany Knickerbocker, age 4, sits on Santa's lap as Santa's helper Deanise Shewokis (right) brings her presents at the 103<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing Children's Christmas party sponsored by the NCO Academy Graduate Association Chapter 28, in the base dining hall. (Photo by Maj. George Worrall, 103 FW Public Affairs)

## Officers Club of Connecticut January Events

**Saturday, Jan. 10**  
Karaoke Nite  
Buffet Served \$10

**Monday, Jan. 12**  
House Committee Meeting  
5:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, Jan. 14**  
A&A Society of Central Conn.  
Foot Guard Lunch 11:30 a.m.

**Thursday, Jan. 15**  
Board of Governors' Meeting  
5:30 p.m.

**Monday, Jan. 19**  
Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday  
Club Closed

**Monday, Jan. 26**  
Annual Meeting of Officers' Club  
Buffet Dinner for Members \$6  
6 p.m.

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.

Welcome our new chef, Saul Brown.

To book a party or event, call (860) 249-3624

## OFFICERS CLUB OF CONNECTICUT PRESENTS

A NIGHT AT THE BUSHNELL

# NUNSENSE

SATURDAY JANUARY 24, 2004 AT 8:00 PM

*Wahhahah!* The little sisters of *Wahwah* are setting their act on the road in an all star production of *Nunsense*, the award winning musical comedy. *Nunsense 20th Anniversary All-Star Tour* features five of America's best-loved comedians, Legends Kaye Ballard, Georgia Engel, Mimi Fiers, Darlene Love and Lee Hillenbrand. "Nunsense is right funny!" proclaims *The New York Times*.  
*Orchestra seating.*

**DINNER AT THE OFFICERS CLUB AT 4 PM**

### MENU

SOUP: Eggplant, Beef Green, Roasted Bean, Shaved Red Onion, Crumbled Feta, Rosemary Cream & Honey Mustard Dressing  
ENTREE: Salmon Wellington, Fresh Potato Sauce, Mashed w/ Baby Spinach & Mushroom, Wrapped in a Flaky Pastry, Served w/ House Cheese, or Herb-Crusted Baby Lamb Chops with Fresh Garlic Mint & Jus  
WINE: Vegetable Medley Purple Mashed Potatoes  
DESSERT: Raspberry w/ Raspberry Sauce

(Due to be seated at 7:30 PM (or earlier))

Price: \$80.00 includes Dinner, Bus & Theater. For Reservations call Virginia Scheller (860) 242-0778. Make checks payable to Virginia Scheller and mail to 41 West Rd. South Windsor, Ct. 06075

### NUNSENSE

Name \_\_\_\_\_ A Tix \_\_\_\_\_ Tel \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Beef \_\_\_\_\_ Fish \_\_\_\_\_  
Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

# Happy Birthday Army National Guard, December 13, Part 2

## World War II

All 18 National Guard divisions all saw combat in World War II, and were split between the Pacific and European theatres. National Guardsmen fought from the beginning.

Three National Guard units participated in the heroic defense of Bataan in the Philippines before finally surrendering to the Japanese in the spring of 1942. When the U.S. Marines needed reinforcements on Guadalcanal in the autumn of 1942, North Dakota's 164th Infantry became the first large body of U.S. Army troops to fight offensively in World War II.

In the European theater, one National Guard division, the 34th from Minnesota, Iowa, and South Dakota, was the first to arrive overseas, and among the first into combat, in North Africa. The 34th went on to spend the rest of the war fighting in Italy, and claimed more actual combat days than any other World War II division.

## The Korean War

The years following World War II saw the creation of the U.S. Air Force from what had been the U.S. Army Air Forces. National Guard flying units became part of the new service, creating the Air National Guard. The new reserve component did not have long to wait before its first combat test.

The Korean War began in June 1950 when North Korea invaded South Korea. Within two months, the first of 138,600 Army National Guardsmen were mobilized and National Guard units began arriving in South Korea in January of 1951.

By the summer of 1951 a large number of non-divisional engineer and artillery units in Korea were from the National Guard. In

November, two National Guard infantry divisions, the 40th from California and the 45th from Oklahoma arrived to fight the North Koreans and Chinese.

## The Turbulent 60's

The 1960's began with a partial mobilization of the National Guard as part of the U.S. response to the Soviet Union's building of the Berlin Wall. Although none left the United States, nearly 45,000 Army Guardsmen spent a year in Active Federal Service.

As the decade progressed, President Lyndon Johnson made the fateful political decision not to mobilize the Reserves to fight the Vietnam War, but to rely on the draft instead.

But when the bombshell of the Viet Cong Tet Offensive struck in 1968, 34 Army National Guard units found themselves alerted for active duty, eight of which served in South Vietnam.

Some National Guard units that remained in the U.S. still found themselves on the front lines.

As urban riots and then anti-war demonstrations swept parts of the country in the late 1960s, the Guard, in its role as a state militia, was called upon increasingly for riot control duties.

For the country as a whole, the 1960's were a period of social change. Those changes were mirrored in the National Guard, particularly in its racial and ethnic composition.

Beginning with New Jersey in 1947, the northern states began the process of racially integrating their National Guards.

The landmark Civil Rights Act of 1965 forced the Southern states to follow suit, and 25 years later African-Americans made up

nearly one-quarter of the Army National Guard.

African-American men had a history of militia service stretching back to colonial days; women, regardless of race, did not.

Because the Militia Act of 1792 and the National Defense Act of 1916 had referred specifically to "males", it took special legislation to allow women to join.

For 15 years the only women in the National Guard were nurses, but in the 1970s, all the armed services began expanding opportunities for women.

Following Army and Air Force policies, the National Guard saw its number of women recruits begin a steady rise that continues today.

## The "Total Force" Goes to War

The end of the draft in 1973 ushered in a period of tremendous change for the U.S. military. Cut off from their source of cheap manpower and under pressure to cut costs, the active services realized they must make better use of their reserve components.

The Air Guard had been integrated into the workings of the Air Force since the mid-1950s. By the mid-1970s the "Total Force" policy resulted in more Army National Guard missions, equipment, and training opportunities than ever before.

The National Guard shared in the huge defense buildup initiated by President Ronald Reagan. In 1977, the first small Army National Guard detachment had traveled overseas to spend their two weeks of active duty training with regular Army units.

Nine years later, the Wisconsin National Guard's 32nd Infantry Brigade was deploying to Germany with all its equipment for the major NATO exercise REFORGER.

By the end of the 1980s, Army National Guard units were supplied with the latest weaponry and equipment - and would soon get a chance to use it.

In response to Iraq's invasion of oil-rich Kuwait in August 1990, Operation Desert Storm brought the largest mobilization of the National Guard since the Korean War.

More than 60,000 Army Guard personnel were called to active duty for the Gulf War.

As the air campaign against Iraq began Operation Desert Storm in January 1991, thousands of Army National Guard men and women, most of them from combat service and combat service support units, were in Southwest Asia, preparing for the ground campaign against the Iraqi forces.

Two thirds of those mobilized would eventually see service in the war's main theater of operations.

Occurring soon after the Guard's return from the Arabian Peninsula, hurricanes in Florida and Hawaii and a riot in Los Angeles drew attention to the National Guard's role in its communities.

That role has increased as the Guard, active for years in drug interdiction and eradication efforts, institutes new and innovative community outreach programs.

Today, the Guard is active both at home and abroad. During Fiscal Year 1997, the Guard deployed soldiers to more than 70 countries for missions and training while supporting more than 300 emergency call-ups domestically.

The trend in expanding mission scope and number continues for the Guard today.

*Information Courtesy of the Army National Guard.*

## The road from Kani Baska leads to remembering

### From Page 5

other villages of greater political and military consequence.

The effects of Saddam's chemical war against the Iraqi people linger to this day.

Those who survived the attacks still suffer; many will take medication for the rest of their lives. Certainly the valley still suffers. Most of the villages are abandoned. Kani Baska remains a fraction of its original size. You can see the suffering in the eyes of the elders, as once again an uninvited guest arrives, asking questions about that terrible day.

We didn't stay long. We were busy; we had a job to do. We asked our standard questions about the village and its sources of water; their methods of delivery and storage. We scribbled down the answers and began our tour. We wanted to see for ourselves their spring, their agricultural and domestic lifeblood. We wanted to scabble around the rocks and examine the geology.

We wanted to look inside their storage tank and take pictures of their spigots.

Suddenly we realized something was wrong. The children of Iraq are everywhere. They surround you from the moment you arrive in a village. They grab a finger or take your hand and walk with you. They wind around you like cats. There is a light in their eyes and it's the most honest praise you'll ever receive. It looks like hope.

But the children of Kani Baska were different. There weren't many of them; very unusual in a society that values large families. Some were slow, others had lazy eyes. One boy wandered aimlessly, directed here and there by an older child. Soon we were tapping each other quietly, pointing with our eyes. Whatever was shot into the valley in 1988 reduced fertility; damaged genes. Whatever was shot into the valley still lingers.

You could learn a lot about hospitality from Iraqi people. Cool water and hot Chai are always offered. It is rare not to be invited to

eat and a delicate matter to refuse. Generally we have several villages to visit on a given day; we invoke our busy schedule and the need to get on down the road. After we refused the elders invitation to eat, several men dashed into a nearby house and returned bearing armloads of large yellow apples. We accepted with thanks, said our goodbyes and left.

As we rolled out the radio squawked again. "Whatever you do," said the voice, "don't eat the apples."

A few kilometers from the village, windows in the convoy slowly opened. One by one apples dropped and bounded away. In our vehicle we were silent, lost in our thoughts.

A few days before Thanksgiving in 2003, on the road from Kani Baska our numbness lifted for awhile. It was more than a job again. We remembered who we were. We remembered why we came.

## Sen. Dodd joins families, returning troops for lunch



*After returning from visiting deployed Connecticut troops in Iraq, Sen. Christopher Dodd hosted a luncheon for family members of deployed troops as well as soldiers on leave and airmen who had returned from deployments. He relayed his observations of his trip and talked to lunch guests about their concerns. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Sr. PA NCO)*

## Military Matters



### 2004 pay raises, DEERS, concurrent receipt, Red Cross needs assistance

#### 2004 Pay Raises Now Official

The recently signed 2004 National Defense Authorization Act includes an active duty pay increase of at least 3.7 percent to all military members. Although the average pay raise is 4.15 percent, active duty Warrant Officers and Enlisted personnel will be receiving a pay raise that ranges from 3.7 percent to 6.25 percent with the largest percentages going to enlisted servicemembers E-5 and above. Commissioned Officers on the other hand will receive a flat 3.7 percent pay raise across the board. The new raises are effective on 1 January 2004, this means servicemembers will see the increase in their 15 January paychecks. To learn more about pay, see [www.military.com](http://www.military.com)

#### Army Updating ID Cards and DEERS for Deployed Soldiers

The Army is scrambling to renew identification cards for deployed National Guard and Army

Reserve Soldiers and update information for their family members in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System

(DEERS). With the extension of Guard and Reserve Soldiers on active duty in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, the Army estimates as many as 55,000 Soldiers will need new identification cards while still in the theater of operations.

In addition to the mobilized Soldiers affected, there are an estimated 95,000 family members who will require new ID cards, and also require updated information in the DEERS system to continue their eligibility for services and access to facilities. For more information, see [www.military.com](http://www.military.com)

The Soldier Airman Support Center, Newington, is currently updating the DEERS system with the new extension dates for our deployed soldiers. Any spouses needing a new ID card should call (860) 8778-6729 to make an appointment.

#### Concurrent Receipt Update

With the signing of the 2004 National Defense Authorization Act (NDA), military retirees with a VA rated disability of 50% or more will finally be given their due. Section 641 of the 2004 NDA marks the phase-in of Full-Concurrent Receipt. This means that

starting in 2004 disabled military retirees will start receiving both their military pension and a flat monthly amount based on their disability rating. The phase-in will occur over the next ten years with the bulk of the phase-in being front loaded in 2004. Unlike the Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC), Concurrent Receipt will be automatic; retirees will not be required to submit an application.

For more on Concurrent Receipt see columnist John Youmans' article archives at [www.military.com](http://www.military.com)

#### Red Cross Needs Assistance for Wounded Soldiers

The American Red Cross at Walter Reed Army Medical Center is looking for incidentals/comfort items for sick and wounded Armed Forces Personnel now recuperating at the hospital. When someone is stationed in Iraq, Afghanistan or elsewhere and is wounded or falls ill, they are immediately evacuated, and it can take weeks for their personnel effects to catch up with them.

The Red Cross is asking for donations

of any of the following:

- telephone cards of at least 30 minutes
  - rolling luggage (small), totes, carry-ons
  - individually wrapped snacks
  - magazines
  - notepads, pens
  - playing cards and games
  - sweat pants and shirts (all sizes)
- All items should be addressed to:  
ATTN: Barbara Green,  
American Red Cross  
Walter Reed Army Medical Center  
6900 Georgia Ave, N.W.,  
Washington, DC 20307-5001.

Checks should be made out to the American Red Cross. For more information, call (202) 782-2080 or e-mail [Barbara.Green.1@AMEDD.army.mil](mailto:Barbara.Green.1@AMEDD.army.mil).

Reservists Gain Commissary, Other Benefits

The fiscal 2004 National Defense Authorization Act offers reservists and their families unlimited commissary privileges, better health benefits and an overall average military pay raise of 4.15 percent.

## Education Essentials: The DANTES Learning Program

#### How are courses delivered?

Affiliated schools use an array of low- to high-tech delivery choices aimed at individual students, worldwide.

Although textbooks, pen and paper continue to be a standard of distance learning, advances in technology allow a variety of fast and efficient delivery systems.

Many schools encourage the use of E-mail to submit and receive course lessons and papers or to communicate directly with instructors or admission offices.

In these classes, assignments can go directly from the student's computer to the instructor's in seconds.

Others rely on computers for class interaction among students. Many use the Internet to deliver instruction on line, and several rely on satellite or cable delivery methods.

#### How do students enroll? It's really simple!

1. Students discuss goals with education counselors and the courses needed to meet them. Consult the catalogs described above, as well as specific distance learning catalogs from individual schools.

2. Verify that the course selected will meet

personal needs and will be accepted toward desired degrees, if required.

3. Complete the DANTES Distance Learning Enrollment Form for Service Members (DANTES 1562/31). This form is available at the Navy College Office/installation education center.

4. Students mail the first two copies with the total payment or credit card number to cover tuition, fees, and book costs directly to the school, signed by student and counselor or other certifying official. All personnel must consult with their local representatives of the Voluntary Education Program to clarify enrollment procedures.

5. The school will send books and lesson materials to the student.

6. When students complete the final lesson, the school will send a grade report to DANTES and the student. If reimbursement is authorized, student will receive payment either from DANTES or the Service, according to Service's policies.

#### Fees and Services

Costs vary for each course and institution. Fee information is found in the institutional information page within each of the three catalogs. Customer service from the participating schools have agreed to the following:

- Provide rapid turnaround time for initial ordering and distributing of course materials and for grading lessons and examinations.

- Provide transcript services to the Military student in accordance with policies set forth in the school's catalog. Military personnel should contact their local education counselor for additional information.

### HANDYPERSON HOTLINE

CALL  
(860) 209-0770

TODAY  
TO VOLUNTEER YOUR  
SKILLS

For deployment-  
related  
questions, call  
1-800-858-2677

## IOM Creates Web Site for Veterans

WASHINGTON (Dec. 17, 2003) - The Institute of Medicine (IOM) has created a new Internet Web site with information about a variety of military-related health issues.

"IOM's new Website is one more tool available to veterans, health care practitioners and others interested in the well-being of our veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi.

The Web site, at [veterans.iom.edu](http://veterans.iom.edu), has separate sections for health care issues affecting the last four major military conflicts - World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Gulf War. At each section, visitors can read electronic versions of IOM-produced reports or purchase publications.

Other sections list IOM's completed reports and reports in progress, while another area contains studies about chemical and biological agents suspected of causing health problems for military members. There is also a section with reports and information about deployment health.

Part of the National Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Medicine is a nonprofit organization that provides advice on matters of biomedical science.



CHIEF MASTER SGT.  
WANDA WAWRUCK

## Enlisted Update

### Wrap-up and New Year outlook/Hail & Farewell

Happy New Year! I hope that 2004 finds you and yours healthy. At the close of 2003

we continued to welcome returning members from the Wing and the Air Control Squadron.

We also received three significant improvements with regards to our benefits:

First, TRICARE was expanded to include unemployed members who are without health coverage and those placed on orders may receive immediate coverage.

Second, the Military Tax Relief Act of 2003 provided a tax deduction for overnight travel expenses of members serving more than 100 miles from home and extends the military pay tax exclusion to those serving in contingency operations.

Third, commissary privileges now include unlimited access to all members and their families.

All great benefits and made possible by some of the professional organizations I highlighted in my September article.

These quality-of-life improvements would not have been possible without your support.

The outlook for 2004 looks similar to the past two years. Our operations tempo will remain steady and our professional organizations will continue to push for more quality-of-life benefits.

We will also see some changes in professional development and uniform requirements.

I will cover some these changes below and will close with a hail to our new Wing Command Chief and farewell to our current 103d Fighter Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant.

The fiscal 2004 National Defense Authorization Act recently signed by the President will get us off to a good start by; first, a minimum pay hike of 3.7 percent with additional increases to mid and senior NCOs and midgrade officers and second, provide immediate medical and dental screenings for reservist who are assigned to units that are alerted or notified of mobilization.

We can also expect changes in professional development from the Air Force Doctrine Center (AFDC) and improvements to the NCO Academy correspondence course from the College of Enlisted PME.

First, officers and SNCOs can expect to receive a hard copy of the Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD 1) from AFDC in the spring. If you are interested in an advanced copy, members may download

an electronic version from military computers by accessing the AFDC web site at [www.doctrine.af.mil](http://www.doctrine.af.mil).

Members currently enrolled in NCO Academy correspondence course 6D & 6E have the option of converting from this course to the new NCO Academy correspondence 00006 through March 31.

Eligibility for enrollment remains the same, however, the following significant changes were made: (1) passing score is 70, (2) course is cut to three volumes, and (3) there are no volume review exercises.

Lastly, Jan. 1 marks the effective date for the mandatory wear of the new metallic nametag.

The new nametag is worn on the service dress jacket, maternity jumper and pullover sweaters *only*. For more specific information, please contact the members of the Military Personnel Flight (MPF).

As the Fighter Wing prepares for an Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI), we will also say farewell to Chief Bob Gillanders, who is no stranger to most in the state of Connecticut.

With more than 39 years of service with the Air National Guard, he has been active in the community, family support, counterdrug program, and is one of the pioneers of our STARBASE program.

A kid at heart, his talents have become instrumental in educating children of all ages. A smile on his face and a friendly greeting to all he meets, Chief Gillanders will be missed by the troops during Unit Training Assemblies.

Rest assured, Chief "Gilly" as he is affectionately known, will not be a stranger to us. Please wish "Gilly" a healthy and lengthy retirement.

With farewells, come hails; please welcome our new 103d Fighter Wing Command Chief, Chief Robert Hall.

Chief Hall comes to us from the 103d Air Control Squadron in Orange.

With approximately ten years of active service prior to joining the Connecticut Air National Guard, Chief Hall has a vast background in Radio, Communications, and Computer systems.

I have personally had the pleasure of working with him and he is a very approachable person who most recently acted as the First Sergeant for the 103d Air Control Squadron while members of the unit were deployed.

I look forward to working with Chief Hall in this capacity and I know you will as well. Congratulations Chief, and we welcome you to the Wing.

Again, Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you in your respective units.

## Guard Voices

### Secretary of Defense's congratulatory message to the U.S. Armed Forces

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate each man and woman in America's Armed Forces for the honor of being named this year's "Person of the Year" by Time magazine. It is an honor you have earned not only this day, or this year, but throughout your volunteer service.

Ever since the Minutemen first mustered to America's defense in the early days of our nation, America's fighting forces have stood ready, at a moment's notice, to defend the lives and liberties of our citizens whenever and however they were threatened. Through two world wars, and dozens of smaller conflicts, the American soldier has never foundered and has carried the light of liberty to millions who suffered under countless tyrants and dictators.

During the long, cold struggle against communism, U.S. forces, with our stalwart allies, were the watchmen who stood sentry on the frontiers of freedom - until freedom prevailed, and communism collapsed under the weight of its tyranny.

With this new century have come new battles in a new kind of war - the global war against terrorism. And again, America's fighting forces are at the front - taking the war to the terrorists and bringing freedom to millions who, for decades, had lived in fear.

What remarkable feats you have accomplished since this war began: two nations liberated from brutality and oppression; 50 million people freed to live out their futures without fear; many senior al Qaeda operatives captured or killed; and terrorist cells discovered and dismantled.

Last Holiday Season, the Iraqi people suffered under the boot of a brutal dictator who murdered innocent citizens. Today, thanks to you, that same dictator - found cowering in a hole of his own making - now awaits justice for his heinous crimes. Each of you helped make that possible. And in so doing, you have made every American proud of who you are and what you do for all of us every day.

Time magazine called you the "face of America, its might and good will," - and that you are. You are also the face of America's determination to stop the new tyranny of

terrorism. And that you will do, because in addition to all that is new - new threats and challenges, a new mission, a new way of fighting, new technologies, and a new kind of war - you bring to the fight the oldest of virtues: honor, integrity, courage, dignity, and discipline.

September 11th, 2001, ushered in a new era, but the world still looks to America for leadership and strength. As our commander in chief, President Bush, said when this war began, "If America wavers, the world will lose heart. If America leads, the world will show courage."

I know that America will not waver. I know this because you represent America's heart and America's courage. You stand, as you have always done, on the front line between freedom and fear. And you are doing a magnificent job. The American people are properly proud of you.

There will likely come a day when terrorists can little threaten the world; when nations no longer harbor or support them, because the price for doing so has become too high; when terrorism as a method of waging war or oppressing a people has been as thoroughly discredited as we have seen slavery and piracy discredited. And while we are not there yet, and we may never be there completely and finally, we are making giant steps forward - thanks to your determination and your courage.

Each of you has paid a personal price. Some of your comrades have made the ultimate sacrifice. For all you are and for all you do, you have the thanks of a nation, which is proud of your service and grateful for your sacrifice.

To all of you stationed far from home and loved ones this Holiday Season, know that our hearts and prayers are with each of you and with your families, who also sacrifice.

Congratulations on the well-deserved honor of being named Person of the Year! You deserve it. May God bless you and keep you safe, and God bless America.

**Donald H. Rumsfeld**  
Secretary of Defense

## Proud to serve

While serving in the Connecticut Army National Guard, AGR force for more than 16 years, I always felt that I had sold my country short. I was never deployed before and felt that I really didn't get a chance to take care of my country, the way she has taken care of me.

I finally discovered not too long ago while on deployment with the TF 192 CM Bn that every mission is important. And the mistakes that we may make during this mission will better ourselves for the next.

I am proud to serve with great leaders and mentors starting from the top Lt. Col. Karvelis

and Command Sgt. Maj. Norkun. Our mission and our efforts toward this mission have been up beat since day one.

There is no better feeling then working as a team Officers and Enlisted alike, taking care of soldiers and the camaraderie between us. There is no doubt in my mind that when we are called to duty again, we will stand forth as a Task Force second to none.

**Sgt. 1st Class Malone**  
TF 192 Cm Bn, Ft Monmouth NJ

# Homefront

## In defense of Connecticut's children: *Saving lives during this holiday season*

**CAPT. ANNE-MARIE GARCIA**  
DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION ADMINISTRATOR

December was "National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month." December and January often mean holidays, time with family and friends, good food, good times and parties. This can also mean many occasions during the holiday season where alcohol is served and you have to contend with drinking and driving.

While it may be something we don't want to think or worry about, social drinking is a real concern with potentially serious and devastating outcomes. Although driving impaired is a year round concern, the holidays bring a tragic increase in its incidence. Therefore, December was recognized as, "National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month." Do you know?

- An alcohol-related motor vehicle crash kills someone in the United States every 30 minutes and non-fatally injures someone every two minutes (NHSTA).

- In 2002, an estimated 17,419 people died in alcohol-related crashes; that's 41 percent of the year's total traffic deaths (NHSTA).

- Approximately 1.4 million drivers were

arrested in 2001 for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics; this is an arrest rate of one for every 137 licensed drivers in the United States. Ask yourself these questions: Have you ever awakened in the next morning after a night of drinking and initially not remembered how you got home – only to realize you drove yourself?

Or, do you remember driving home, but you realize that you should not have driven the night before and you know you are lucky to be alive? Too many American adults have found themselves in this situation. Alternatives to driving drunk or impaired Rather than go to a party and tell yourself you "will be careful" or "only have a few," make an alternate plan for the end of the evening so you will not be tempted to get behind the wheel in the belief that you can drive home safely. A few

alternatives include:

- Designate a sober driver
- Call a taxicab
- Stay the night where you are

If you are going to be hosting a holiday party or family gathering, you can help in other ways as well:

- When your guests arrive, collect their car keys; that way, when they are ready to leave, they must get a second opinion on whether they're sober enough to drive home Provide non-alcoholic beverages

If serving alcohol, make sure to provide your guests with enough food, some of which should be filling and hearty, throughout the event

- Have cards with cab company phone numbers easily accessible
- Invite all guests to spend the night

While having a couple of drinks and getting behind the wheel may not seem like a big deal, it can turn into a huge expense. Impairment starts with the first drink. That last drink can cost you thousands of dollars:

- Vehicle towing and storage fee
- Increase in car insurance premiums
- Court/attorney fees
- DUI class fees
- Jail time
- Loss of driver's license
- Missed work days

As we celebrate the holiday season, we can all help save lives by preventing impaired driving. To locate a drug and alcohol abuse treatment program near you, go to: [www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

For additional advice, you may call one of the Referral Help lines operated by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration's center for Substance Abuse Treatment: 1-800-662-HELP 1-800-228-0427 (TDD).

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 Carpe Diem

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CHAPLAIN (MAJ.) KEVIN P. CAVANAUGH

Robin Williams popularized that phrase in the movie

Paul, who began as one of the most zealous persecutors of early Christians, had a life-changing experience, and became a pre-eminent leader of Christianity.

Augustine, on the other hand, spent most of his younger years unconcerned with religion and morals.

Augustine's conversion was gradual, hastened by the prayers of his poor mother and the witness of Saint Ambrose, who became his mentor.

Here's the point: people change.

We all change. Who we are changes every day. We are constantly remaking ourselves.

What we were yesterday isn't necessarily what we will be tomorrow.

In order to direct our energy toward the future we must often ask forgiveness of God and those whom we may have injured – and then let go of the past.

In our hearts we all know that we are not perfect — and our friends and family know it too! That's OK.

The important thing is that we recognize our call to mirror God's goodness and that each new day brings us a fresh new opportunity to "Be all that we can be."

May God Bless you and your loved ones in the New Year!

"The Dead Poets Society."

Since then "seize the day" has been a slogan for those who think that they should do whatever "feels good."

There's another meaning – the one intended by Horace, the Roman poet who coined the phrase "Carpe Diem," to mean take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves.

This concept is especially meaningful as we begin a new year.

Leave the baggage behind! If you have not always been the best that you can be, you automatically qualify for entrance into the human race.

None of us is perfect. God knows that and we all know that. In fact many of the people that we revere as having been closest to God have overcome enormous flaws and failings.

I'm the pastor of two Catholic churches, Saint Augustine and Saint Paul – each named in honor of an exemplary Christian who undoubtedly shocked friends and family when he dedicated himself to serving Jesus.

## Concurrent receipt pay reality

Military retirees will begin receiving both retired pay and Veterans Affairs disability compensation as the disability offset is phased out.

Previously, the offset reduced the amount of the military retiree's pay by an amount equal to any disability payment received from the VA.

Legislation authorizing concurrent receipt of both forms of compensation was signed by President Bush on Nov. 24. The legislation will deliver billions to more than 200,000 disabled military retirees and takes effect Jan. 1.

Public Law 108-136 (Sections 641 and 642 of Public Law) authorizes a 10-year, phased elimination of the VA disability offset to retired pay. This will affect servicemembers with nondisability retirements, without regard to years of service.

Those who retired as a result of a service-related disability are also eligible. They must have at least 20 years of qualifying service. In all cases, the retiree must be rated at least 50-percent disabled by VA. Today, more than 200,000 military retirees meet the criteria required to receive an increase in their retired pay, said VA officials.

This legislation expands the field of eligibility for combat-related special compensation to include retirees with 20 years of qualifying service, who have a combined disability rating of less than 60 percent. It expands eligibility for a tax-exempt payment to replace retired pay lost to the concurrent receipt ban and is open to retirees with 20 or more years of service and

disabilities tied to combat or combat-related training. Reserve retirees are included; however, people who retired under Temporary Early Retirement Authority are not.

While this change expands the number of veterans currently receiving CRSC from about 4,800 today, eligible retirees may not receive both concurrent receipt payments and combat-related special compensation at the same time. The act requires an annual "open season" to be conducted to allow veterans eligible for both concurrent payment and CRSC to choose between the two options. Details on how the annual open season will be conducted will be published separately.

Because the act also repeals the authorization for special compensation for the severely disabled which provides veterans benefits for those with disabilities greater than 60 percent, about 37,000 SCSD recipients will be the first to see increases to their retired pay effective Jan. 1 for the payment dated Feb. 2.

People with the Defense Finance and Accounting Service are working closely with the VA to implement this legislation and issue the payments to all eligible retirees as soon as possible, said DFAS officials. When full implementation is completed, payments will include monies that are due retroactively to Jan. 1.

Interested military retirees should watch for updated information on the myPay and DFAS Web sites. Information on veterans' benefits is available at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

# Community groups, citizens, business support Guardsmen and families during holidays



Cendant Mobility presented a check for \$25,000 to the Connecticut National Guard Foundation. Present were Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond Zastaury, Brig. Gen. I.J. Zembrzuski, Lt. Gov. M. Jodi Rell, Cendant Mobility President/CEO Kevin Kelleher, Kim Hoffman, Eric Bowles, Bill Maxwell and Gerry Pearce.



This year's Officer Dining In raised funds through its fine program that were donated to the Connecticut National Guard Foundation. Making the presentation to Foundation Chairman Louis Preziosi is Lt. Col. Mark Rousseau on behalf of the Dining In's organizing committee.



The 1st Company Governors Horse Guard collected a truck full of toys and presented them to Lt. Gov. M. Jodi Rell as part of Operation ELF).



A Freedom Tree, made of metal, doorknobs and locks was presented to the Connecticut National Guard by its creator and is on display in the second floor foyer of the Hartford Armory.



AAAA presented a check for \$2,000 to the CTNG Foundation.



The Crowley Auto Group collected and donated this truck full of toys for Operation ELF. They also donated thousands of dollars in pre-paid phone cards for deployed Soldiers and Airmen, as well as making a donation of \$1,000 to the Connecticut National Guard Foundation.

## Guarding Your Rights

### Legal Affairs: SSCRA, SCRA defined

CAPT. TIMOTHY TOMCHO  
JAG OFFICE

American law is, at least in theory, designed as a system that promotes the efficient allocation resources by rewarding behavior that benefits society and punishing behavior detrimental to society.

The Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 (SSCRA), a law with which all soldiers and airmen should be familiar, is consistent with the theory, designed to promote military service by alleviating some of the burdens that may arise from military service. The SSCRA states its purpose (50 U.S.C. App § 510).

"In order to provide for, strengthen, and expedite the national defense under the emergent conditions which are threatening the peace and security of the United States and to enable the United States to more successfully fulfill the requirements of the national defense, provision is made to suspend enforcement of civil liabilities, in certain cases, of persons in the military service of the United States in order to enable such persons to devote their entire energy to the defense needs of the Nation, and to this end the following provisions are made for the temporary suspension of legal proceedings and transactions which may prejudice the civil rights of persons in such service . . . ."

The SSCRA of 1940 is essentially a reenactment of the 1918 statute, passed as a result of hardships being endured by servicemen serving during World War I.

Congress has acted to again reenact and strengthen civil protections afforded to servicemembers.

Congress passed Senate Bill 1136, "Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA)," and presented it to the President on December 12, 2003.

The President is expected to sign it by the time this article is printed. Once signed, the old "SSCRA" will be reenacted as the new "SCRA."

Its stated purpose, similar to the 1940 version, is to enable servicemembers to devote their entire energy to the defense needs of the Nation by affording protections by temporarily suspending judicial and administrative proceedings and transactions that may adversely affect the civil rights of servicemembers during their military service.

The SCRA updates the law and expands civil protections provided to servicemembers. The law will maintain the "most popular" provision, the six percent interest rate on most debts incurred before entering active service, strengthening the provision by specifying forgiveness of excess interest.

It will also continue to protect

servicemembers from evictions (and raises the monthly rent ceiling to \$2,400 from its current \$1,200, with a provision for annual adjustments to keep the law current) and foreclosures.

A new provision of the law will allow termination of an auto lease without penalty, so long as the military order to active service (or for permanent change of station) exceeds 180 days.

SCRA strengthens the default -judgment protection. Defaults entered during a period of protected military service or within sixty days after termination of service may be reopened during the period of service or within ninety days after termination of service, so long as the service prejudiced the servicemember's defense and a meritorious defense to the underlying action exists.

Certain stays of execution for judgments, attachments and garnishments against a servicemember for the period of military service or within ninety days thereafter are also permissible.

Servicemembers who seek to utilize the protections afforded them under the SSCRA or SCRA are advised to seek the advice of an attorney.



### House and Senate 'Buy-in' on Tricare

JOSEPH AMATRUDA  
PRESIDENT, NGA CT

An agreement reached between the House and Senate, on October 29, will allow members of the National Guard to buy health insurance through Tricare.

Unemployed Guardsmen or those who are not offered health insurance through their employers will now have the opportunity for a Tricare "buy-in" that will give them health care coverage.

Under the plan, a single Guardsman or reservist would pay about \$420 per year for Tricare coverage or \$1,450 per year for the Guardsman and his or her entire family.

The only provision not included in the conference agreement was one that would have reimbursed families the difference between Tricare coverage and the cost of their own health insurance.

This was the third attempt this year by NGA CT and other service organizations to allow Tricare coverage for Guard and Reserve personnel when not on active duty. Right now, more than 20 percent of Guard members do not have health care coverage. This package will serve as a recruiting and retention tool and make mobilization much easier.

The amendment to the \$87 billion supplemental bill was a bi-partisan effort co-sponsored by Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., and Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who previously wanted to study the Tricare issue further but changed his mind after a trip to Iraq. It was an issue also heavily supported by Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-VT, co-chairman of the Senate National Guard caucus.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was opposed to the plan and said he would recommend the president veto an authorization package that contained Tricare coverage for Guard and Reserve personnel because it was too expensive. With this package as part of the president's own supplemental bill, a veto is highly unlikely.

*(Editor's Note: Since this column was written, the president signed the Defense Authorization Act into law.)*

Watch next month's Guardian for information and registration forms for the NGA CT Annual Meeting and Dinner Dance to be held at Foxwoods Resort, Saturday, March 20. This year's guest speaker will be Jim Vicevich from WTIC-radio.



RONALD E. LEE, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. (RET.), USAR  
CT-ESGR PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHAIRMAN

### Gov. Rowland signs ESGR proclamation

November was a busy month for military service personnel as well as for the CT-ESGR. On Friday, Nov. 14, members of CT-ESGR and other dignitaries met with Connecticut Governor John G. Rowland to witness his signing of a Proclamation declaring "Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week".

As Governor Rowland sat at his desk, flanked by uninformed representatives from the Connecticut Army National Guard (Brig. Gen. I. J. Zembruski and Spec. Al Kim), Marine Corps Reserve (Lt. Col. David Kilbourn), Navy Reserve (Cdr. Andrew DiPuccio), Air National Guard (Maj. Barbara Luhn), and Coast Guard Reserve (Senior Chief Brad Blatchley) as well as CT-ESGR State Chairman Lewis Vasquez and other volunteer members, he joined President George W. Bush and the other states' governors in showing Connecticut's support for its "Citizen Soldiers" who are serving in the military forces while also holding down a civilian job. This historic nation-wide show of support comes at a significant time when thousands of National Guard and Reserve Component members are

serving on active duty, both at home and abroad, in support of our Country's War on Terrorism.

The Proclamation sent a strong message of support for the Guard and Reserve by declaring the week of 16-23 November 2003 as Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Week. The proclamation recognized that America's employers are directly linked to our nation's defense by sharing their most precious asset, their employees, who are fighting for our freedom and democracy.

The CT-ESGR's activities continued throughout the month and into the next month and beyond as the volunteers continued to do anything and everything possible to support the members of the military, their families and their employers. CT-ESGR volunteers conducted numerous mobilization and demobilization briefings, USERRA briefings, and Employer Outreach efforts such as a "Briefing with the Boss" ceremony on Dec. 4 at the State Capitol building where fifty Connecticut employers, many of whom were depicted in a visual display along the walls of the concourse between the Legislative Office Building and the Capitol Building.

These employers were recognized for the outstanding support given to their National Guard and Reserve Components employees based upon their willingness to go beyond the minimum required by law (USERRA) and also as a result of "My Boss Is A Patriot" nominations sent in by employees who greatly appreciated what their employers had done to support them and, in many cases, their families.

Equally as important, the CT-ESGR began moving into its first official office space as a result of an unused building, which was once a day care facility near the State Veteran's Home in Rocky Hill, being made available by Commissioner Linda Schwartz, Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs. The CT-ESGR Headquarters in located at 196 West Street in Rocky Hill. CT-ESGR is working on obtaining donated furnishings, office equipment and a toll-free telephone number which will give employers and Guard and Reserve members the opportunity to either call or come in to personally discuss issues and concerns with trained ESGR ombudsmen or staff personnel. Everyone is invited to visit the headquarters office whenever possible, just to stop in to say "Hello."

# Inside OCS

## Something different about officers: One OC explains his choice

OC Eric Roy  
OCS CLASS 49

Since basic training I have viewed officers as the most squared away, high speed soldiers in the military. NCOs are high speed and hard charging, as well, but there was just something different about officers.

I knew that to be in that position officers have put forth substantial hard work and sacrifice. Anyone who is willing to dedicate so much for others deserves respect and admiration.

As a private, I wanted to work for them. I wanted to do all I could to make our mission a success. Seeing someone so motivated only encourages others to follow suit. I knew that I wanted to become a military officer in the course of my military career.

Becoming an officer was a different situation from being one. I knew I wanted to become one, but wasn't sure how to do so.

I was aware of ROTC and various military academies such as West Point, but I never really heard of alternate paths, such as OCS.

Until recently, I was not sure if I could become an officer.

Military academies were out of the question since I was almost complete with college. As for ROTC, I had inquired about it, but I felt it was not the right choice. While looking into ROTC, I came across another option, OCS.

I found out that many of the officers I had served under during my career had chosen this path to earn their commission.

They all had lots of good things to say about the training and why it would be the right choice for me. I could continue to fulfill my military commitments, attend college, and maintain a personal life, all while becoming an officer.

OCS is a demanding yet rewarding obligation. The TAC staff continuously creates a stressful atmosphere for us.

This situation is beneficial to us because it gives us both the ability to make decisions under pressure and complete difficult tasks as a team.

We learn to look out for each other and use our new knowledge to complete missions.

When we succeed, we feel that much better about ourselves. We gain self-confidence which is vital to making decisions and leading troops.

When we are unable to complete a task, the TAC staff discusses with us how we failed and gives us suggestions on how to succeed in the future.

This aspect teaches us self-discipline and motivates us to be successful. Our classroom instructors provide us with the necessary knowledge to be successful officers.

More importantly, they provide an atmosphere away from the TACs, where we can concentrate on our studies.

We participate in open discussion concerning both what we are learning and how it applies to us as future leaders. Here we can fully grasp concepts, as well as, share different perspectives.

We all understand the purpose of Officer Candidate School. Upon completing OCS, we will lead a platoon of Connecticut Army National Guard Soldiers.

With the current world situation and the role the National Guard plays in military operations, we, as officers, are responsible for the safety and well being of many lives.

Therefore we must understand the significance and importance of what it is we are doing now as candidates.

OCS is the time and place to make mistakes. When we make mistakes now, we can learn from them and move on.

When we graduate, we will not be afforded any opportunities to make mistakes, without them being very costly. OCS gives us the necessary tools to be successful leaders.

We learn to interact with other Soldiers in a positive manner, and how to motivate and sacrifice for each other.

We gain the self-confidence and discipline key to being a good leader.

When I graduate and take charge of a platoon, I know that I will have what it takes to lead my Soldiers, whether it is during drill weekends or during activation and combat.

## Why Diversity?

### Connecticut National Guard 2004 Black History Month Celebration Feb. 6

During these extraordinary times, America looks forward to new challenges and opportunities with a reinvigorated sense of unity and common purpose.

We are a vibrant nation, thanks to the creativity, fortitude, and resilience of people of every background.

During National Black History Month, we celebrate the many achievements and contributions made by African Americans to our economic, cultural and political development.

This year, the Connecticut National Guard is extremely proud to dedicate our 2004 celebration to the "Harlem Renaissance."

On Friday, Feb. 6, The Connecticut National Guard, in conjunction with the United States Postal Service, will host its 2004 Black History Celebration at the Klein Memorial Auditorium, 910 Fairfield Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut 06605.

The event will take place between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00p.m.

We will be featuring several artists who will be performing music and dance, as well as reciting poetry of the era.

There will be a presentation of awards for winners of the "Recognition of Connecticut Black Students in Academics" contest with a reception following the formal program.

The reception will include refreshments.

We encourage both military and civilian participation at this most interesting and educational event.

To confirm your attendance at this event, RSVP to Spec. Kristy Mullan at (860) 878-6721.

In the early 1900s, particularly in the 1920s, African-American literature, art, music, dance, and social commentary began to flourish in Harlem, a section of New York City.

This African-American cultural movement became known as "The New Negro Movement" and later as the Harlem Renaissance.

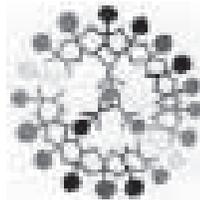
More than a literary movement, the Harlem Renaissance exalted the unique culture of African-Americans and redefined African-American expression. African-Americans were encouraged to celebrate their heritage.

The Harlem Renaissance transformed African-American identity and history, but it also transformed American culture in general.

Never before had so many Americans read the thoughts of African-Americans and embraced the African-American community's productions, expressions, and style.

Joining us this day as our Keynote

speaker will be Dr. Gayle Pemberton, Professor of English and African-American Studies, Wesleyan University.



Professor Pemberton earned her B.A. from the University of Michigan, and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in English and African Language and Literature from Harvard University.

Her courses are: *Harlem Renaissance, Race and Film*, and a seminar on literary masters *Edith Wharton and Henry James*.

She is a former Ford Foundation, W.E.B. Du Bois Institute and John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellow.

Her book, *The Hottest Water in Chicago: Notes of a Native Daughter* was first published in 1992, and her work appears in several anthologies and books.

Her current work is on African American women and cinema. Professor Pemberton came to Wesleyan in 1994 from Princeton University, where she had been Associate Director of Afro-American Studies.



## Health & Fitness

### Your Health Matters: *Are you at risk for glaucoma?*

SUBMITTED BY CAPT. KATHLEEN L. KING, APRN  
INFORMATION FROM THE NATIONAL EYE INSTITUTE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

#### What is glaucoma?

Glaucoma is an eye disease in which the normal fluid pressure inside the eyes slowly rises, leading to vision loss—or even blindness. This brochure is about open-angle glaucoma, the most common form of the disease.

#### What causes it?

At the front of the eye, there is a small space called the anterior chamber. Clear fluid flows in and out of the chamber to bathe and nourish nearby tissues.

In glaucoma, for still unknown reasons, the fluid drains too slowly out of the eye. As the fluid builds up, the pressure inside the eye rises.

Unless this pressure is controlled, it may cause damage to the optic nerve and other parts of the eye and loss of vision.

#### Who is most likely to get it?

Nearly 3 million people have glaucoma, a leading cause of blindness in the United States. Although anyone can get glaucoma, some people are at higher risk. They include:

- Blacks over age 40.
- Everyone over age 60.
- People with a family history of

glaucoma. Among Blacks, studies show that glaucoma is:

- Five times more likely to occur in Blacks than in Whites.
- About four times more likely to cause blindness in Blacks than in Whites.
- Fifteen times more likely to cause blindness in Blacks between the ages of 45-64 than in Whites of the same age group.

#### What are the symptoms?

At first, there are no symptoms. Vision stays normal, and there is no pain. However, as the disease progresses, a person with glaucoma may notice his or her side vision gradually failing. That is, objects in front may still be seen clearly, but objects to the side may be missed. As the disease worsens, the field of vision narrows and blindness results.

#### How is it detected?

Many people may know of the “air puff” test or other tests used to measure eye pressure in an eye examination. But, this test alone cannot detect glaucoma.

Glaucoma is found most often during an eye examination through dilated pupils. This means drops are put into the eyes during the exam to enlarge the pupils. This allows the eye care professional to see more of the inside of the eye to check for signs of glaucoma.

#### How can it be treated?

Although open-angle glaucoma cannot be cured, it can usually be controlled. The most common treatments are:

#### Medications:

These may be either in the form of eye drops or pills. Some drugs are designed to reduce pressure by slowing the flow of fluid into the eye. Others help to improve fluid drainage. For most people with glaucoma, regular use of medications will control the increased fluid pressure. But, these drugs may stop working over time. Or, they may cause side effects. If a problem occurs, the eye care professional may select other drugs, change the dose, or suggest other ways to deal with the problem.

#### Laser surgery:

During laser surgery, a strong beam of light is focused on the part of the anterior chamber where the fluid leaves the eye. This results in a series of small changes, which makes it easier for fluid to exit the eye. Over time, the effect of laser surgery may wear off. Patients who have this form of surgery may need to keep taking glaucoma drugs.

#### Surgery:

Surgery can also help fluid escape from

the eye and thereby reduce the pressure. However, surgery is usually reserved for patients whose pressure cannot be controlled with eye drops, pills, or laser surgery.

#### What research is being done?

A large amount of research is being done in the U.S. to learn what causes glaucoma and to improve its diagnosis and treatment. For instance, the National Eye Institute (NEI) is funding a number of studies to find out what causes fluid pressure to increase in the eye. By learning more about this process, doctors may be able to find the exact cause of the disease and learn better how to prevent and treat it. The NEI also supports clinical trials of new drugs and surgical techniques that show promise against glaucoma.

#### What can you do to protect your vision?

Studies have shown that the early detection and treatment of glaucoma, before it causes major vision loss, is the best way to control the disease. So, if you fall into one of the high-risk groups for the disease, make sure to have your eyes examined through dilated pupils every two years by an eye care professional.

To learn more about glaucoma write: National Eye Health Education Program, 2020 Vision Place, Bethesda, MD 20892-3655.

### Fit for Life: *Runners and Non-Runners Unite!!!*



Spec. Mike Dudley (Army National Guard-Bend, Ore. 1249<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion), stepped into second place for the Armed Forces Cross Country Team, and placed 27th overall (38:14). Dudley said he joined the Armed Forces team because, “It gives me an opportunity to compete, to travel and to meet new people.” Here Mike wins the Lincoln Marathon, 2003

The National Guard recruits and sponsors runners at all levels of fitness. During the last century National Guard Soldiers and Airmen have earned Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals in World and Olympic competitions in a variety of sports.

We enjoy watching other guard members excel but we may also draw upon their success to improve our own health and fitness.

We have dozens of Connecticut Airmen and Soldiers that have run races both CONUS around the world.

The Adjutant General Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno’s desire is to reconstitute CTARNG’s running team during 2004.

We are compiling a roster of guard runners who want to run competitively or learn to run better at a variety of distances and environments.

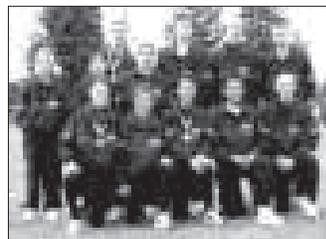
My e-mail addresses are:  
james.finn@po.state.ct.us  
or james.finn@ct.ngb.army.mil.

Whether you have run races before or first time, we are here to coach you. Whatever your preferred or “willing to learn” distance: 5K, 10K 15K, ½ Marathon, Marathon, Steeplechase, or Cross Country, please contact me.

We want to train and sponsor our Airmen and Soldiers to participate in the Inter-service Competitions.

Information regarding the Lincoln Marathon and qualifying for the “All-Guard Team” will be published shortly.

G. I. Milers Unite!!!! . . . .



Vancouver, Wash.-Athletes representing the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps cross country teams, united to race in the Armed Forces Cross Country Championship, held in Vancouver, Wash., Feb. 6-7. The Armed Forces Championship is held in conjunction with the U.S.A. Track and Field National Cross Country Championship, which allowed the Armed Forces team to compete against elite runners.



Retired Col. Frank E. Herrelko Sr., carries the Olympic flame during his leg of the 2002 Olympic torch relay in Washington on Dec. 21. Herrelko, who is 88 years old and a World War II vet.

## Sports

# UCONN walk-on finds discipline, camaraderie in football, Guard

Sgt. 1st Class DEBBI NEWTON  
STATE SENIOR PANCO

Some members of his unit call him Rudy, after the Notre Dame football player made famous by a movie of the same name.

In the movie, a young boy dreamed of someday playing football at Notre Dame, and despite being told by everyone around him he would never get in to the famed university, let alone play football there, through perseverance, dedication and hard work, Rudy eventually earned a walk-on position on the team, led his teammates onto the field for one of the biggest games of his senior year, and even played in the game.

Nick Berube, like Rudy, loves football. He loves the fun, he loves the competitiveness, he loves the camaraderie.

A sergeant with Headquarters/Headquarters Company, 169th Aviation Regiment in Enfield, Berube has played his last, and only, college football game. He will graduate from UCONN in May with a degree in Family Studies, and a lifetime of memories.

"I played in our last game at Memorial Stadium against Kent State," said Berube, a cornerback for the Huskies. "I was supposed to play in the game against Army, but didn't get the chance. I was looking forward to being able to legally hit an officer!"

Berube played junior varsity ball on his high school team, and while he didn't play much, his parents were at every game.

"They've always been very supportive," he said. He played cornerback and runningback during high school.

Berube joined the National Guard during his junior year in high school to help his parents out financially with college. He said they were going to have three kids in college at the same time and the Guard seemed like a good option. He attended basic training in the summer between his junior and senior years in high school, then completed his advanced training before starting college.

He didn't go out for the UCONN team his freshman year, but did become friends with some of the players. One of them lived on the same floor in his dorm, and Berube was always asking him how practice was. The friend eventually convinced Berube he should give the walk-on try-outs a shot. In the winter of 2001, during his sophomore year at UCONN, Berube and three other hopefuls went to the try-outs. All four made the team.

Of the 103 players on the team, 82 are there on scholarships, so that doesn't leave much room for non-scholarship athletes, according to Berube.

With most of the college football games being played on Saturdays, and many of them being away games, there could have been problems with scheduled drills

coinciding with games, but there wasn't.

"Both the Guard and the team were very lenient about conflicts," said Berube. "I would make up drills that fell on days of our home games, and I would generally drill when we had away games."

Besides the leniency each gave him in scheduling, he saw many other similarities between the Guard and the team. He said discipline and fitness both play big roles in each aspect of his life.

"The Guard helped me become more disciplined and that helped with football, I was never late for a team meeting. The Guard also helped me with taking a leadership role on the football team. Football helps me to stay in great shape, and also gives me added discipline."

Berube also likened football camp to basic training.

"It's about the same," he said. "At football camp they get us up at 6 a.m., we have breakfast, we practice all day, go to bed, with bed check, around 10:30 p.m. Long, hard, physical days like basic."

Again, with football camp, there was the possibility of conflict with his Guard unit's annual training.

"The team was very understanding," he said. "They knew I had a commitment here and I did my two weeks." Berube has also been able to complete his two weeks at PLDC, needed to get his sergeant's stripes.

"The guys on the team have all been very supportive, many of them have fathers that have been in the military," said Berube. "They ask questions about the Guard all the time, and always want to know if I'm being deployed everytime they hear about another unit being sent overseas."

Berube's company commander, Capt. Richard Anderson, is very pleased with the additional skills and leadership Berube brings to the unit because of his experiences with football.

"He is one of our best Soldiers," said Anderson. "He's dependable, reliable. He's quiet and easy-going. He's an exceptional young man. One of our cooks was recently deployed, and Berube stepped in and picked up the load without being asked. Many of the traits he needs in football have carried over into his Guard career."

Anderson said he has tried to help Berube as much as possible with scheduling conflicts, especially as it pertains to school.

"He brings a lot to the unit that he's gotten from football," said Anderson. "He's brought team leadership, and he's a team player. He's just always there when we need him. He's a key player in the unit, in the morale of the unit and in the integrity of the unit."

When asked why someone who did not



Sgt. Nick Berube and some of his memorabilia from his days as a walk-on player for the UCONN Huskies football team. Berube is a member of Headquarters/Headquarters Company, 169th Aviation Regiment in Enfield. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Senior PA NCO)

play much in high school, and did not even try out his freshman year, would think he had a shot at making a college football team as a walk-on in his sophomore year, Berube just smiled.

"I play for the fun, for the love of the game," said Berube. "It's the competitiveness. I'll always play football. Maybe arena football or flag football for. You just grit your teeth and keep going."

## Retirees' Voice Medicare legislation scary

Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) John Bednarz

First, let me wish you all a wonderful Holiday Season and a bountiful and healthy New Year.

The President is expected to sign into law the "Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003" on Dec. 8. (*Editor's Note: The act was signed into law after the writing of this column.*) Here is one of the scariest pieces of legislation I have seen in a long time.

Everyone is looking at it and wondering in what way it is going to affect them. One of the most significant features of the act is that it will introduce an outpatient prescription drug benefit.

My first question was, if they do that, would they insist that we who are now enjoying the TRICARE Pharmacy benefits, give that up to enroll in their plan. The Medicare plan is voluntary, but charges an annual late penalty for each year you fail to join.

The TRICARE Management Activity is saying their pharmacy benefits will continue as a separate program. The new bill allows that participation in the Medicare Pharmacy Program is voluntary and allows persons with another pharmacy program to retain their plan. It also allows that if you involuntarily lose your TRICARE coverage for any reason (such as widows or widowers), you do not have to pay an annual penalty if you subsequently enroll in the Medicare plan because you were in an authorized alternate plan.

The TRICARE Pharmacy benefit provides excellent coverage and is available through military facilities, retail pharmacies and mail order. Thus it is unlikely that the vast majority of uniformed services beneficiaries will find it advantageous to enroll in the

Medicare pharmacy benefit.

Because of the 'giveth and taketh away' nature of our Congress, Representative Tom Davis (R-VA) introduced H.R. 2631 to protect federal retirees from losing their Federal Employee's Health Benefits (FEHB) pharmacy plans in the future. This does not include military retirees, so Representative Ed Shrock (R-VA), at the urging of Military Coalition members, was kind enough to submit H.R. 3390 to protect TRICARE for Life beneficiaries in the future. Here again is where a strong grassroots effort is needed to ensure passage of these two pieces of legislation.

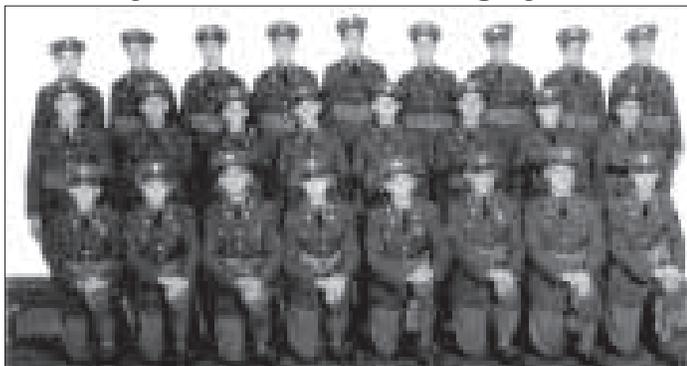
Other changes to Medicare include and affect all seniors, not just uniformed service beneficiaries. The Part B premium is going to be tied to your income beginning in the year 2007. If your individual income is more than \$80,000 you will pay more and if you are a couple with an income of more than \$160,000, you will be paying more.

Also the bill will introduce new enhancements and private plan offerings. This is where that insurance provider AARP comes in. As an example, you can enroll in a 'Medicare+Choice' program and TRICARE will reimburse your co-payments. It also includes provisions for a pilot program in 2010 (the Comparative Cost Adjustment program) that could result in increased Part B premiums, if sicker patients gravitate to private plans in the test sites.

The bill increases the Medicare Part B deductible to \$110 in 2005 and indexes it to inflation for subsequent years. This should have a minimal effect on uniformed services beneficiaries, since the deductible is payable by TRICARE.

If you have any questions about your TRICARE benefits, contact your local TRICARE Service Center for assistance. The TRICARE website is at [www.tricare.osd.mil](http://www.tricare.osd.mil)

## Do you know these guys?



Company F, 2nd Battalion, 102nd Infantry, Waterbury, Conn.

If you have a picture of historical nature to share with our readers, email if possible to [debby.newton@ct.ngb.army.mil](mailto:debby.newton@ct.ngb.army.mil) or mail to Sgt. 1st Class Debby Newton, Public Affairs Office, National Guard Armory, 360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105-3795.

## 102nd Infantry Regiment looking for assistance

The 102nd Infantry Regiment Association is planning to provide a plaque for the new building being constructed at Camp Rowland in honor of Col. (Ret.) Robert Nett.

The plaque will be unveiled at the Nett Leadership Hall dedication.

Nett, a longtime Connecticut resident and member of the Connecticut Army National Guard, is one of only two Connecticut National Guardsmen to have received the Medal of Honor.

When he was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry, Nett was activated for World War II. He received the Medal of Honor for his actions during that war.

He was commanding Company E of the 305th Infantry on Dec. 14, 1944 when the company attacked a reinforced enemy battalion which had held up the American

advance for two days in the Philippine Islands. His company advanced against heavy machine gun and other automatic weapons fire with Nett spearheading the assault.

During the fierce hand-to-hand battle that ensued, Nett killed seven deeply entrenched Japanese with his rifle and bayonet and, although seriously wounded himself, continued to lead his men forward, refusing to relinquish his command.

Again, he sustained further serious wounds while continuing the battle. Eventually he turned over command of the company and sought medical attention.

To find out how you can be part of this effort to honor Col. Nett, contact the Association at 290 Goffe Street, New Haven, CT 06511-3303 or Paul D. Viola, Association Vice-President, at (860) 349-8816.

Visit the  
**Connecticut Guardian**  
on-line at  
[www.ct.ngb.army.mil](http://www.ct.ngb.army.mil)

# LEADS

Locating Enlistments by Awarding Dedicated Service

This is a statewide incentive program to reward all STARNG 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** = Camelback 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 ABCOM + Assault Pack
- **6 Leads - Enlistment** = Trip to Chief's 54 Awards Ceremony in Washington D.C.

# Employment Opportunity

CRECt ANNOUNCEMENT  
01/01/04

CRECt  
200 North Street  
Bldg 605, Camp Howard  
Hartford, CT

tel: (860) 881-4214

### Front Desk Billing (Hotel) Clerk

Part-time (Up to 20 hours) - \$9.00/hour

Friday Evening: 3:30p.m.—8:30p.m.

Saturday: 7:30a.m.—8:30p.m.

Sunday: 7:30a.m.—4:00p.m.

Looking for a responsible person (at least 18 years of age) able to work independently. Would be responsible for scheduling/billing usage, checking in/out guests, issuing keys, direct housekeeping priorities and completing minimal documentation.

## Coming Events

### January

Jan. 1

New Year's Day

Jan. 6

Send-off Ceremony

102nd Infantry

Hartford Armory, 6 p.m.

Jan. 14

NGACT Executive Board Meeting

Jan 19

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

### 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 13-16

EANGUS Legislative Workshop

March 20

NGACT Annual Conference and Dance

March 26

Women's History Celebration

March 27

EANGUS Area 1 Caucus

### April

April 14

NGACT Executive Board Meeting

April 26

NCOES Graduations

## In future issues

Connecticut's Guardian Angels

A10 Artist

Joint Force HQ Update

Dealing with Long Term Illness

Returning Guardsmen Tell Their Stories

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

