



MOUNTAINEER **DEFENDER**

Magazine of the West Virginia National Guard



**Camp Dawson —
America's premier
anti-terrorism
training facility**

Summer 2004



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On the cover:

The National Guard Joint Training Center at Camp Dawson

A montage of photos of the facilities at Camp Dawson, Preston County, where the West Virginia National Guard and the Department of Defense have established the National Guard Joint Training Center, the nation's first of two homeland security training bases. Read about it on Page 4

Photos by Maj. Todd Harrell, 196th MPAD, and the WVANG; photo illustration by Maj. Todd Harrell.



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Floods bring out best in Guard; new challenges will test our resolve

“WHEN IT RAINS, it pours.” This slogan was used to sell salt in the early 1900’s. It might be applicable to our organization today, representing very well what the National Guard has faced over the past few months.

The somber tone of Memorial Day, a day to remember lost loved ones, was darkened further by devastating floods that ravaged Southern West

Virginia. As usual, Guard members were first on the scene, providing immediate assistance to those in need. For almost a month, soldiers and airmen helped citizens in affected areas clean up and start the rebuilding process.

About 600 Guard members were called to state duty, many of whom had been home from Iraq for only a short time.

Families and employers were concerned, as was Guard leadership, that we were asking too much of Guard members. We made sure to call only those soldiers and airmen whose skills were required to do the job.

In small towns within Mingo, Wyoming and Logan counties, deployed Guard members performed with the same sense of urgency and professionalism they displayed while serving overseas.

I traveled frequently in flooded areas to give deployed troops an opportunity to voice concerns about the frequency of deployments. I heard them say over and over, “Yes, it’s tough. But this is our job. If we didn’t do it, who would?”

I would stack our soldiers and airmen up against any in the world. Their sense of duty and commitment to state and country will take them far, and will help our organization meet new challenges in the coming years.

Many of those challenges are already upon us.

The Air Guard in Martinsburg is beginning the transition from C-130 Hercules to C-5 Galaxy aircraft. More than 200 jobs will be created by this

conversion. About 90 percent of the base will be rebuilt, at a cost of more than \$200 million.

Recently, National Guard Bureau officials chose Camp Dawson as the East Coast site for a National Guard Joint Training Center. Training and exercises will be conducted there to prepare military and civilian first responders for terrorist or weapons of mass destruction incidents.

Dawson’s infrastructure will be expanded,

“When it rains, it pours.” It certainly seems that way. But the National Guard’s umbrella is large, and I am confident the men and women of the West Virginia National Guard will not let the rain dampen our future successes.



Maj. Gen. Allen E. Tackett
West Virginia Adjutant General

by more than \$100 million, to add classroom space and training ranges. **(Read more about this project beginning on page 4.)**

The conversion of aircraft at the Martinsburg base and expansion at Camp Dawson will begin this year. However, the challenges are tremendous if we are to see these projects through to completion. I am confident our Guard members are up to the task, and will meet these new challenges head-on.

“When it rains, it pours.” It certainly seems that way. But the National Guard’s umbrella is large, and I am confident the men and women of the West Virginia National Guard will not let the rain dampen our future successes.

Command Sergeant Major, WVARNG

A time like no other

THIS IS a time like no other in the history of the WVARNG. It tests every individual in the organization, those being deployed and those responsible for activities that support deployments.

I couldn’t be more proud of the members and support personnel of the WVARNG. Many units have redeployed, while others have taken their place in the GWOT. The homecomings have been wonderful and the awards dinners are great. Every soldier, family member and employer is deserving of that recognition, and much more.

I want to take this opportunity to thank each of you for what you



Bruce Coleman

We recently celebrated Independence Day. Remember those who made the United States great. Those continuing that effort through the GWOT need our prayers and support now more than ever before.

are doing and have already done for this nation. The WVARNG also owes a great deal of gratitude to the W.Va. Air National Guard for its continued support.

Command Chief Master Sergeant, WVANG

They depend on us

AS MEMBERS of the West Virginia Air National Guard, we are one team, one family, one fight.

We must maintain the passion to uphold the honor and traditions of those who served before us.

We must continue to embrace the opportunities as well as the obstacles we face in the near and distant future.

We must perform our duties using a high code of ethics.

We must continue to be the leaders and defenders of freedom.

As members of the West Virginia Air Guard, we must



Dan Chandler

strive to be the “best” in all we do while serving our communities, state and nation.

Our very existence as a nation depends on our jobs as the “quiet professionals.”

We only get one chance to serve our nation. We must do it right.

The United States of America and the citizens of West Virginia are depending on us.

National Guard Joint Training Center at Camp Dawson

*West Virginia general's foresight
leads to the nation's first facility
for homeland security training*

By Joseph C. Atkins
Mountaineer Defender

THE IDEA WAS CONCEIVED in the mid-1990s. At about the same time al-Qaida terrorists began plotting to attack America's financial and governmental capitals, a National Guard general in West Virginia had the foresight to realize that, for the nation's newest enemies to strike effectively, they could not hit the U.S. military head-on.

For Maj. Gen. Allen Tackett, adjutant general of West Virginia, the solution was clear — create national anti-terrorism training facilities for military and civilian first responders in his state.

First up in Tackett's vision, Memorial Tunnel, formerly part of the West Virginia Turnpike in Kanawha County. It would be followed by expansion of facilities at the National Guard's Preston County training facility, Camp Dawson.

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The Robert C. Byrd Regional Training Institute (foreground) was established at Camp Dawson, Preston County, in March 2002.

WVARNG photo

DAWSON

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But this was a United States before the horror of Sept. 11, 2001, awakened its leaders and citizens to global terrorism. A country that recently had won a half-century long Cold War. A nation of people complacent, almost isolationist, in their place in the world.

For Tackett, selling his idea to leaders at the Pentagon and the Capitol was no easy matter.

"Up until 9/11, everybody thought I was crazy and that it was a waste of money to get the tunnel up and running and to do things at Camp Dawson," Tackett recalled recently. "In the beginning, everybody was apprehensive.

"After 9/11, everybody thought I was a genius, [asking me] how did I know terrorists were going to strike?"

For the 42-year military man, though, the threat became obvious during the Persian Gulf War.

"In 1991, we went in [to expel the Iraqi military from Kuwait], and people saw us on CNN demolishing the third- or fourth-largest army in the world," Tackett said. "That sent a message that there's no way you can take on the U.S. military and win. So they learned that they'd have to hit us asymmetrically."

The seed was planted in the general's mind. By 1996, it was time to transplant that vision of an asymmetrical warfare training center into the minds of others.

"I put together a team in 1997, and put Col. Jim Hoyer in charge," Tackett said. "His team has pretty much come up with all plans for things to do at Camp Dawson. We're way beyond anybody else on training."

Hoyer understood the importance of the general's vision for the state and the magnitude of its implications for the nation.

His orders from Tackett were to take military-unique skills and work with law enforcement and civilian first responders to develop a prevention and deterrence capability against terrorism.

"Gen. Tackett recognized in the mid-1990s, after the first World Trade Center attack, Oklahoma City and Desert Storm, that we clearly needed to focus on new and future threats," Hoyer said. "It was a pretty important task to the overall security of the nation, and it had significant opportunities [for West Virginia] to take the lead and also to develop our economic base.

The next step was to convince Sen. Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., a powerful member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, to fund the projects. Byrd, no stranger to directing federal dollars into his home state, came through.

Plans for the National Guard Joint Training Center at Camp Dawson were announced by Byrd's office May 12.

"West Virginia will set the standard for



Photo by Maj. Mike Cadle, HQ WVANG

Members of West Virginia's 35th Civil Support Team practice decontamination procedures during an exercise at Camp Dawson's Volkstone site, an abandoned manganese plant used for weapons of mass destruction training.

Those who call Dawson home

- Army Training Site staff
- Mountaineer Challenge Academy
- C Company, 2nd/19th Special Forces Group
- Service Battery, 201st Field Artillery
- 229th Engineer Detachment
- Special Operations Detachment - Europe (SODE)
- 1st/80th Training Division
- 197th Regional Training Institute (All military units but 1st/80th are Army National Guard.)

homeland security training for the rest of America to follow," said Byrd, who now is the senior Democrat on the Senate's Homeland Security Appropriations Committee and Armed Services Emerging Threats Subcommittee.

About \$43 million in federal funds have been invested in Dawson and the tunnel. About \$5 million has come from the Legislature for the Robert C. Byrd Regional Training Institute at Camp Dawson.

The tunnel's Center for National Response opened in 2000. It is the nation's premier first responder training facility for weapons of mass destruction incidents (See **Spring 2004 Mountaineer Defender for full story**).

But why pick a remote National Guard facility near Kingwood for the East Coast national anti-terrorism training site (a second site, on the West Coast, which will work in conjunction with West Virginia, has not yet been selected)

"Dawson was chosen because Senator Byrd and the West Virginia National Guard put themselves ahead of all other states in

preparing first responders in our nation to respond to terrorist activities," Tackett said.

Tackett expects the Camp Dawson and Memorial Tunnel facilities to reach their full potential between 2008 and 2010.

"It will have changed significantly from the time I started as adjutant general in 1995," Tackett said. "We'll be training people from the DOD, all [military] branches, as well as civilian police and emergency responders."

Already, hundreds of military members, civilian first responders and, in June, FBI agents have trained at Camp Dawson.

Other countries also are expressing interest in training at the growing facility.

"We've met with a Philippine delegation," Tackett said. "And we're working out details as to how to train their first responders."

The camp will include an Integrated Special Operations Training Facility, which will house an urban combat set, indoor and outdoor firing ranges, a decontamination center, and buildings to practice high-rise entrances and exits.

Tackett said Dawson will build a three- to five-block urban set where emergency workers from around the country can train for terrorism emergencies. First responders will gain split-second access via WVU's Virtual Medical Campus and its high-speed telecommunications to medical expertise from around the world.

The camp also will include two 5,000-foot runways for airport and terminal defense training and hijack response training.

Off base, Dawson's expansion is having a positive effect on Preston County's economy.

"Since we opened the RTI, we've hired close to 100 people, not counting the amount of people who've already come through there and the money they've spent in the surround-

Please see **VISION**, next page

Making a habit of Habitat for Humanity

Air recruits give to community before Uncle Sam

By Joseph C. Atkins
Mountaineer Defender

THE 130TH AIRLIFT WING has come up with a civic-minded plan to help get enlisted recruits in the delayed entry program ready for the rigors of basic training. And its initial phase has been well received by the community.

Seven trainees of the 130th Airlift Wing Student Flight at the Charleston air base volunteered to help Habitat for Humanity on a project for a Charleston family. The project was part of the trainees' pre-basic training.

Habitat for Humanity is a global organization that uses donations and volunteer labor to build or remodel houses for people of moderate to low income who would not be able to afford a house because of large up-front costs.

In March, the Air Guard sent seven trainees to a job site on Grove Avenue in Charleston where Habitat was refurbishing a house for the family of Greg and Lisa Clark.

"We're very pleased with the time they were there, and that they want to help us," said Tim Bollinger, Habitat's Charleston-area volunteers coordinator, of the Guardsmen. "It inspires the regular workers, volunteers who are already there. I think it gives them a deeper sense of accomplishment."

According to Master Sgt. Brent Clevinger, the Air Guard's coordinator for the Habitat project, although the trainees worked just one day during the March drill weekend, it meant a lot to them, as well.

"I think they got a good feeling helping in



Photo by Maj. Mike Cadle, HQ WVANG

Airman Amanda Horrocks, 18, of Edmond, W.Va., paints a wall in the garage of a house on Charleston's West Side. Horrocks was one of several recruits working on a 130th Airlift Wing Student Flight community-service project, helping Habitat for Humanity remodel a house for a low-income family.

the community. They were very positive about it," Clevinger said. "[It's good] when you donate your time to a worthwhile project and can see the fruits of your labor."

The trainees who saw those fruits were: Mark R. Cantrell, Jonathan A. Harvey, Amanda L. Horrocks, Joseph G. Lucas Jr., Danielle R. Massy, Robert A. Mullins and James A. Providenti.

"I got a lot of good feedback on the trainees — that they were hard workers," Clevinger said.

Bollinger agreed, saying the trainees broke up concrete, carried heavy construction mate-

rial and did some drywall work.

Clevinger, first sergeant for the 130th AW's Mission Support Group and a full-time St. Albans firefighter, said he wants to increase the Air Guard's work with Habitat and other community service organizations.

The 130th AW Student Flight Academy introduces new recruits to military customs and courtesies, drill and ceremonies, physical conditioning and Air Force History.

Student Flight trainees and WVANG State Headquarters members returned to the job site in June to help complete the project.

VISION

Continued from previous page

ing area of Camp Dawson," Tackett said.

In a May report in Pittsburgh's Post-Gazette, local officials praised the news about Dawson, especially the new jobs and potential for trainees to spend money in local area shops.

"In small, rural West Virginia, that's a big deal," Robyn Hess told the Post-Gazette.

Hess, who runs the Main Street Kingwood economic development program, said it was a win-win situation for Dawson and Preston County. "I see nothing but positive things coming from it," she told the Post-Gazette.

That upbeat economic vision obviously applies to Camp Dawson's main proponent.

"You look around West Virginia and com-

pare it to all other states," Tackett said. "We have no active duty bases. There's very little return of taxpayer money from the DOD. I thought West Virginia could benefit from this. There will be 150 to 200 jobs when it's done."

Camp Dawson was established in May 1909 and named in honor of Preston County native William M.O. Dawson, who was governor from 1905 to 1908. Interesting items in its storied history include the internment at Dawson of Italian prisoners of war during World War II and flight testing of the Marine Corps' V-22 Osprey in the 1990s.

Today, Dawson's 8,000 acres of land consist of four main areas: Pringle tract, Briery Mountain, Camp Dawson Proper and Volkstone. An abandoned manganese plant located on the Cheat River in the Volkstone tract will be used for hazardous materials and sabotage training. These areas provide a vari-

ety of habitats, including forests, riparian zones along the Cheat River, reclaimed strip mines and developed areas.

The West Virginia National Guard has access to another 40,000 acres through land-use agreements with neighboring property owners.

Other sites in the Mountain State also might become part of homeland security training.

"We're certainly looking at other tracts of land in Southern West Virginia for other ranges to enhance training in the future," Tackett said.

For now, the general said, construction and training at Camp Dawson and Memorial Tunnel will remain on track.

"West Virginia will be a leader in the nation to try to prevent terrorism in our home land," Tackett said.

Maj. Mike Cadle contributed to this article.

Starbase Academy teaches kids

By Joseph C. Atkins
Mountaineer Defender

STARBASE ACADEMY teaches kids to boldly go where few are choosing to go anymore. It sounds like Kirk, Picard, Janeway and Archer might be among its most notable graduates, but it's not a feeder school for Starfleet officers.

Starbase Academy is a DOD-funded product of the National Guard, and it provides a fun, interactive way for public and private schoolchildren in grades kindergarten through 12th to learn about math, science and technology. Its curriculum targets three key issues facing America's youth today: inadequate preparation in science, math and technology; a lack of personal direction; and substance abuse.

Starbase's mission is to attract at-risk children and prepare them for careers in engineering and other science fields. It exposes these kids and their teachers to real-world applications of math and science through simulations and experiments in aviation and space-related fields. It attacks substance abuse head-on with education on prevention, health, self-esteem and life-skills within a math- and science-based program.

In its way, Starbase urges kids to boldly go where fewer and fewer young people choose to go on the career path. Part of that urging is to prove false the perception in kids that science, math and technology are difficult and boring.

The West Virginia Air National Guard's 130th and 167th airlift wings host West Virginia's Starbase Academy programs out of Charleston and Martinsburg.

Retired U.S. Army Col. Dennis Christian is director of the program in Charleston. Air Guard Capt. David Frush, aircraft maintenance officer for the 167th, runs the Martinsburg program.

By the time cadets complete Starbase's five-day course work, they have learned about avionics, aeronautics, physics and space exploration, have trained on a flight simulator, and built and launched their own rockets.

The first Starbase Academy was established in Michigan in 1989 by Barbara Koscak, of the Michigan Air National Guard, with pilot and author Richard Racosky. A generous donation from the Kellogg Foundation made their dream take flight. It is now going at warp speed in 49 of the 50 states.

Starbase was established in Charleston in 2001 and at Martinsburg in the fall of 2002. About 3,000 Kanawha County cadets have graduated from the program in Charleston and just under 2,000 Berkeley Countians from the Martinsburg academy.

"We operate 12 months out of the year," said Charleston's Christian. "Students attend one day a week for four consecutive weeks — next year, it'll be five consecutive weeks."

Christian said the academy's focus on at-risk children — those in rural or inner city schools — is especially appropriate in this state.

"That covers most of the schools in West



Photo by Maj. Mike Cadle, HQ WVANG

Students in a recent Starbase class hold their ears, expecting the balloon to burst, as Starbase Deputy Director Chris Treadway uses a vacuum pump to explain the properties of air.



Virginia," he said.

Charleston's focus this year is on sixth-graders. Next year, it will be on fifth-graders.

"It can be modified for any grade," he said. "Most [academies] nationwide concentrate on fourth to sixth, with most in the fifth grade."

Martinsburg has been concentrating on Berkeley's fifth-graders since it opened its classroom doors. Its staff members have been highly successful in achieving their goals.

"We've been able to reach every fifth-grader in the public school system, and that's just great," Frush said. "We've gotten nothing but rave reviews from anybody that's had anything to do with it. About the only negative [comment] is that we can't do more kids and that [the program is] not longer."

West Virginia Starbase helps with science fairs, the Guard's Kids' Camp and several outreach programs.

Starbase cadets are taught 13 DOD-mandated core subjects, with a focus on aerospace studies, Christian said.

"They'll hopefully leave with a better appreciation for science, math, technology," he said. "We encourage them to pursue those in high school."

Avoiding drugs and alcohol is a particularly important focus for Starbase.

"A big part of avoiding substance abuse is exposing kids to the U.S. military," Christian said, adding that nationwide data indicate that the academies have produced an increased inter-

est in science and technology and a greater appreciation for the military. "A lot of these people have never been exposed to the military."

He said building an appreciation and interest in the science and tech fields is important to the nation's future.

"There are half a million science and technology jobs nationwide that are not filled," Christian said. "There are just not enough students to fill those positions."

The two West Virginia Starbase programs work with only Kanawha and Berkeley counties because of logistics, which translates to travel time. The kids attend classes from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., and the school systems are responsible for transportation (and food), so they must be within bus-commuting distance.

After they arrive, Christian said 22 to 36 cadets per class study the physics and chemical changes that occur when an object or system is forced from its original state. They also learn about space exploration (a recent teleconference with NASA Langley scientists was about the current Mars Rover expeditions) (**See accompanying report.**), how electric motors work, how airplanes, helicopters and rockets fly (where they get to use an airplane flight simulator), and what types of careers await them considering the connections between science, technology, society and career opportunities.

This career education is a big focus at Starbase. Cadets learn about careers in the engineering and technical fields, Christian said, and figure out if any of those connect

Please see **STARBASE**, next page

NASA brings Mars to Kanawha County

MARS CAME to Kanawha County this spring. Two NASA spokespeople gave an interactive demonstration on the Red Planet and NASA's exploration of it to students from Kenna Elementary School as part of the West Virginia National Guard's ongoing Starbase Academy distance learning program in the Coonskin Armory.

About 35 Kenna students were in Charleston for a video-linkup with children in Houston, Texas, Bowling Green, Va., and McLain, Va. They were connected to NASA's Langley Research Center in Southern Virginia. The children wore nametags with "call signs" that hinted of their favorite things about space.

Students were provided with Mars information beforehand, and then received additional instruction through a slide show and question-and-answer period. They then played "Mars Bingo," a game that brought that information back to the forefronts of their memory.

Jill Prince, a NASA engineer on the Mars Rover Project Team, explained the Rover program to the children. She talked about the two Rovers, Spirit and Opportunity, working on the planet now, how they were launched, how they successfully landed on the planet in January, and what they've been doing on opposite sides of Mars since then.

The kids created Mars "Landers" with paper, string, tape and a napkin for a parachute. Then they landed their spacecraft on the floor of the video conference room.

Afterward, the children were eager to talk about their Mars experience.

"I'm into science," said Jennifer Woods, whose "Kitty Hole" nametag showed her love for cats and extreme interest in black holes. "I didn't know about the dust storms on Mars. They pick up all this stuff; it makes the planet red."

The kids were encouraged to ask questions of the NASA representatives. They ranged from "How deep can the Rovers dig?" to "What are some missions for the next Rover?"

Prince told the kids that the next mission is an orbiter in 2005, then a digger that can do more than just skim the surface, as Spirit and Opportunity can now, in 2007, followed by an SUV-sized explorer on the surface in 2009.

"Comet Man" Kirby Price thought the presentation was "really cool."

"That was awesome. We got to answer questions, and ask them," he said. "The bingo was fun."

Classmate Reid Condee, a Yankees fan whose nonspace



Photo by Maj. Mike Cadle, HQ WVANG

Kenna Elementary students practice landing their Mars "Landers" during an interactive video teleconference with NASA engineers. The students created the Landers out of paper, string, tape and napkins.

call sign was "Pinstripes," was equally excited.

"I didn't think technology could be that fun," he said.

Of course, kids will be kids, and "Star Skater" Rob McGhee said his favorite part was that he and friend Taylor Pearson were the subjects of many video link close-ups.

Rachel Ross, call sign "Freckle Space," said the presentation increased an already strong interest she has in space exploration.

"This influenced me to try to go to Mars one day," she said.

Retired U.S. Army Col. Dennis Christian, the director of Starbase Academy, said he was pleased with the video linkup, and that Kanawha County Schools officials attending the presentation said they wanted to use Starbase for further science instruction.

"They want to target specific weaknesses [in science studies]," he said. "I told them, let's do it."

Christian said he hopes to get all the Kenna students from the NASA linkup back for a Sept. 21 uplink to the International Space Station. During that linkup, the children will get to talk live with astronauts living and working aboard Space Station Alpha.

— Joseph C. Atkins

STARBASE

Continued from previous page

with their own interests and aptitudes.

Goal setting also is a key part of the curriculum, where cadets learn the equation: Dreams + Action = Reality.

And while they're learning about science, math and technology, they're also being taught correct writing, editing, grammar and spelling, as well as civic responsibility and service to

benefit others in the community.

Christian said Starbase teachers range from Air Force and Army engineers and pilots to civilian doctors and dentists.

Because of the travel time to the Kanawha and Berkeley County Starbases, Christian and Frush said, the Air Guard is increasing its distance learning ability. That means sending the academy's resources out to the schools.

"[The DOD is] trying to pipe distance learning sites out to more remote areas," Christian said.

Frush said Martinsburg is providing schoolteachers far away from Starbase with the tools to achieve that goal.

"We're working on a loan program with classroom tool kits for Morgan and Jefferson [counties] with tools purchased from NASA," he said.

He said schoolteachers attend a summer academy that prepares them for instruction on the Starbase way to teach. And they get graduate credit from West Virginia University for attending.

"It's spreading," Frush said.

LRS stuns Services in softball tourney

By Maj. Mike Cadle
HQ, W.Va. Air National Guard

Clutch hitting by Logistic Readiness Squadron No. 1 and untimely defensive mistakes by Services Flight helped “Supply” beat a confident Services team 10-9 in the championship game of the 130th Airlift Wing Softball Tournament, held at the North Charleston softball complex on May 1.

Trailing 5-4 in the bottom of the sixth inning, Services exploded for five runs to take a seemingly insurmountable lead. LRS’s seasoned softball veterans took charge in the seventh inning, however, scoring five runs on four hits and three Services errors to take the lead.

The score might have been worse, but Services catcher Rachel Frye made a major league play, tagging LRS’s Richie Warner out



Photo by retired Chief Master Sgt. Kyle Campbell

Staff Sgt. Scott Melton of the Logistics Readiness Squadron gets one of his three hits in the championship game of the 130th Airlift Wing softball tournament at North Charleston softball complex on May 1. Melton led LRS to a 10-9 win over Services Flight.

at home as he tried to score on a Services throwing error from the outfield.

The bottom of the Services batting order could only muster one hit in its last at-bat, allowing LRS to take home the trophy.

Scott Melton led LRS to the championship, going 3-for-4 at the plate, while Chad Board carried Services with three hits. Services defeated a combined HQ, Airlift Wing/HQ, W.Va. Air National

Guard team 16-3 and Military Personnel Flight 14-2 to get to the championship game. LRS bested Civil Engineer Squadron 17-5 and LRS No. 2 20-8 to advance.

Staff Sgt. Adam Sparks, noncommissioned officer in charge of morale, welfare and recreation for the wing, said more tournaments are planned. Sparks added that specific sports haven’t been determined yet.

W.Va. Guard’s ‘Operation School Lift’ benefits Iraqi children

By Maj. Mike Cadle
HQ, W.Va. Air National Guard

School supplies might not be considered the most lethal weapon in the Army’s arsenal. But pens and pencils have become the most effective instruments for soldiers in the 1st Battalion, 150th Armor, as they try to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people.

West Virginia guard members are distributing school supplies throughout their area of responsibility, the Diyala region of Iraq, as a way of demonstrating to local residents that U.S. military forces are there to help.

Efforts to collect school supplies, dubbed “Operation School Lift,” began with a request from Lt. Col. Greg Wilcoxon, the 150th’s commander. As word spread in the Guard community, private businesses offered to help collect items for shipment overseas.

Radio station Star 95 and John W. Eye furniture store in Princeton are actively promoting the effort as part of their normal advertising campaigns, as is “The Wolf,” 96.1, the FM country-music station in Charleston.

Many schools in Iraq were devastated during the Iran-Iraq War and have not been rebuilt. Donated items will help Iraqi kids of all

Want to help the West Virginia Guard help children in post-Saddam Iraq?

■ Items can be delivered to the Dunbar Armory at 605 26th Street, Dunbar; John W. Eye furniture store in Princeton; or the Brushfork Armory at 2915 Old Bramwell Road, Bluefield.

Information about the types of items needed can be obtained by calling (304) 561-6140/6146.

ages — elementary, middle and senior high school — get back into school and off the streets, providing a safer environment within which 150th soldiers can operate.

Spc. Matt Pauley, a personnel administration specialist at the rear detachment in Dunbar, said the unit’s family readiness group has shipped more than 800 packages from the Dunbar Armory, one of two central collection points for donated items.

Information about the types of items needed can be obtained by calling (304) 561-6140/6146.

Back injury can't keep Matt Izzo down

MP left behind when unit deploys makes sure comrades receive 'care'

By Joseph C. Atkins
Mountaineer Defender

IF YOU'VE been deployed to Iraq or have a loved one who has been, you've probably already heard the name Matt Izzo. Even if you haven't, Matt Izzo knows you or your loved one. And he's worked tirelessly to make sure the tour of duty for West Virginians in the Middle East has been as comfortable as possible.

You see, Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Matt Izzo organized and coordinated the shipment of more than 90,000 pounds of mail and care packages to Mountaineers in Mesopotamia.

Izzo, who holds bachelor's and master's degrees in criminal justice from Marshall University, is a military policeman with the 156th Military Police detachment out of Monaville, Logan County. When his unit was deployed last year to set up a police academy in Mosul, Iraq, back surgery kept Izzo at home. But he wasn't about to abandon his unit.

"I started looking for ways to help them from here," he said. "And I'd spent 19 months over there in the Marine Corps [as a corporal in the Persian Gulf War] and knew how important mail and packages were. So I decided to figure out a way to get care packages to them."

His first step was to get permission from his employer to set up collection stations for care package items to send to the 45 deployed



Staff Sgt. Matt Izzo

members of the 156th MP Det.

Izzo is vice president and director of security for City National Bank, where he deals with fraud, forgery, embezzlement and security issues for 60 of the bank's locations. A lot of people walk in and out of those 60 banks ever day.

"I turned to City National Bank and asked their permission to set up a collection point for my unit," he said.

Izzo's request was heartily approved by the bank's top officers. Then something else wonderful happened — West Virginia's citizens answered the call.

"Before I knew it, [a] radio station contacted me and asked how they could help," Izzo said. "Donations started pouring in."

The bank gave Izzo some moderate space in one building to keep

the collected material, but that soon became too small. The collection point was moved to a larger area, and that too was quickly outgrown. In no time at all, Izzo's project to get mail and care packages to comrades in the 156th MP unit had generated a landslide of support.

They had more than the 156th could use, so Izzo decided to spread the wealth.

He contacted with the Family Assistance Center in Charleston to get rosters of the other West Virginia units deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom and their staging areas.

Now, the flood of donated goods and correspondence would benefit all West Virginia Guard and Reserve members deployed for OIF. Getting the care packages donated had been the easy part, Izzo found out. Getting them to the troops was to prove vexing. It seems the Defense Department has a rule against funding shipment of care packages. This problem had Izzo stumped, until CNB, his employer, stepped in again.

"Our CEO, Jerry Francis, happened to pop in one weekend when volunteers were compiling the packages and took time to find out what roadblocks we had, so we told him about funding problems," Izzo said.

Francis told Izzo to use CNB shipping. "Within 30 seconds, he solved my problems," Izzo said. "And 90,000 pounds of care pack-

ages later, here I am."

Izzo's small idea to support his 45-person unit, which blossomed into the larger project he has coordinated for more than a year, has been noticed by more than just his employer, the military brass and fellow soldiers. The state government has recognized Izzo and his wife, Susan, for their effort.

"My wife and I were named Distinguished West Virginians by Gov. Bob Wise. "Since we started this, [Susan] has become a member of state Council for Family Readiness Groups [for the Guard]. She deals with the FRGs and all the programs for support, as well as Kids' Camp."

And CNB rewarded its security vice president and director, as well. The bank sent Matt and Susan Izzo on a two-night stay at The Greenbrier — all expenses paid — to show appreciation for the project.

In addition to shipping care packages to the troops, Izzo meets units returning from the front lines. And those on the receiving end of those shipments caught the staff sergeant who'd been left behind somewhat off guard.

"Having soldiers come up to me and — not knowing me from Adam — show their appreciation to me for the care packages was just tremendous," he said.

The war is ongoing, and West Virginians are still deployed. Matt Izzo is still hard at work for them.

119th retiree honored for support of families

By 1st. Lt. Amanda Mullins
119th Engineer Company

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. John Harman was recognized by Adjutant General Allen Tackett and members of the 119th Engineer Company during the unit's homecoming celebration in May at the Clarksburg Armory.

Harman, past 201st Field Artillery Battalion command sergeant major and a Persian Gulf War veteran, became the caretaker of the Buckhannon Armory when the 119th deployed to Ft. Story, Va, in April 2003.

He worked tirelessly for families of deployed soldiers, and his prior military knowledge and compassion for Guard families gave peace of mind to 119th soldiers who were facing several months away from home.

130th honors FRG volunteers

By Maj. Mike Cadle
HQ, W.Va. Air National Guard

Unit family readiness group volunteers were honored by 130th Airlift Wing commanders April 27 during a ceremony at the Charleston air base.

About 35 people turned out to show support for 130th volunteers, who accumulated more than 2,700 hours of personal time in 2003 supporting wing activities. According to Wing Family Program Coordinator Sharon Peters, the value of their personal time amounted to more than \$50,000.

FRG volunteers were present at every deployment and homecoming. They coordinated several other events for unit families, including an Easter egg hunt, an evening with Santa and presentation of \$50 savings bonds to graduating seniors of 130th members.

Volunteers received a certificate and pin. Those donating more than 200 hours received a watch emblazoned with a C-130 over an outline of West Virginia.

"Because of these volunteers, our family readiness group contributes immensely to the welfare of the unit and families," Peters said, adding that, "sometimes, FRG support is taken for granted, but I could not do what I do without them."



Photo by Lt. Col. Linda Smiley, HQ WVANG
Employers attending the National Guard In-state Bosslift
on April 23-25 at Camp Dawson lift off in a UH-1 Huey.



Photo by 201st Field Artillery
Maj. Randall Batiste (left) and Sgt. 1st Class
Nickolas Lambruno, 201st Field Artillery
stand for a photo with Italian forces in Iraq.



Photo by W.Va. Army National Guard
"Hellcats" from HQ and HQ Battery,
201st FA, get ready for a convoy.



Photo by the 196th Mobile Public Affairs Det.
Capt. Paula Sydenstricker of
the 196th MPAD readies her
camera to shoot in Iraq.



Iraq
AR s

Photo by 30th Combat Brigade

Soldiers from the 150th Armor and 30th Combat Brigade shaved their heads to support a 6-year-old girl from Concord, N.C., diagnosed with cancer.



Photo by 167th Airlift Wing
A Martinsburg-based C-130 Hercules displays the West Virginia flag upon its return from Iraq.



Photo by 167th AW Family Readiness Group
The 167th Airlift Wing's Family Readiness Group supports the troops at a rally in downtown Martinsburg.



Photo by Staff. Sgt. Emily Beightol, 167th AW
The grave of Capt. Charles C. Ettlesen in the American Cemetery in Luxembourg. Ettlesen was a WW II-era pilot in the 369th Fighter Squadron, predecessor to the 167th AW.



Photo by 150th Armor
Civil Defense Corps members and 1st/150th soldiers secure the scene of a roadside bomb blast. Noone was hurt in the explosion.

Photo by 201st Field Artillery
Spcs. Brandon Pontis and Robert Maser, 201st FA, rest during a convoy mission in Iraq.



'The tip of the spear'

1092nd Engineers star in unnatural role in Iraq theater

By Joseph C. Atkins
Mountaineer Defender

ON THE FRONT LINE against the raging waters and the devastation of West Virginia's most recent floods were the men and women of the West Virginia National Guard. In Southern West Virginia, many of those citizen-soldiers were members of the National Guard's 1092nd Engineer Battalion, so recently returned from the Iraq theater of operations that they barely had time to unpack before being deployed to the flood zones.

Still fresh in their minds were the scenes of death and life, carnage and creation, desperation and hope, that Iraqis and coalition forces experience every day.



Photo by 1092nd Engineer Battalion
Soldiers with the 1092nd Engineer Battalion teach Iraqi Civil Defense Corps members proper firing techniques at a weapons qualification range in al-Kut, Iraq.

The 1092nd became, as one its members called it, "the tip of the spear" in the fight to wrest control of Iraq from extremists and terrorists and to rebuild after the destruction caused by war and decades of Saddam Hussein's tyranny.

And they did much of it in roles not normally associated with combat engineers.

"We did a lot of non-traditional things," 1092nd Operations Officer Maj. David Shafer said with more than a little understatement.

Nearly 500 West Virginians from the

Clarksburg, Gassaway, Moundsville, Parkersburg, Richwood, Spencer and Weston armories deployed March 26, 2003, for action in Iraq. All of them came home safely — one soldier received a Purple Heart but suffered non-life-threatening wounds, according to Shafer.

At times, the 1092nd took hostile fire on a daily basis.

"We did point security — protecting contract workers who were rebuilding [oil]

Please see 1092nd, Page 16

167th med techs save lives in Iraq

By Master Sgt. Sean E. Cobb
447th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

SAVING lives is top priority for Air Guard medical technicians deployed to a medical facility near Baghdad International Airport, even if they must work outside the job specialty for which they were trained.

Martinsburg-based 167th Airlift Wing members, assigned to the 447th Expeditionary Medical Squadron, conduct multiple jobs during a daily shift, said Master Sgt. Bill Wnek, a 167th AW member and the squadron's nursing services superintendent.

Medical technicians are responsible for the emergency room and trauma ward, ambulance response, aero-medical evacuations, immunizations, X-rays, pharmaceutical dispensing, laboratory work, medical record

maintenance and blood supply management.

Although they receive initial training in all these fields, back home the technicians usually only do one of these jobs at a time, the superintendent said.

"In a combat environment, we don't have the luxury of staying within our specialties," Wnek said. "We need to branch out and help everywhere we can."

Response times have to be quick when people's lives are at stake, so trainers familiarize med techs with the squadron's area of responsibility and train them on radio procedures, in addition to their basic emergency-care duties, said Tech. Sgt. Sterling Castillo, a 447th EMEDS independent medical-duty technician.

For airmen who thought all they would be



Photo by U.S. Air Force
Staff Sgt. Daniel T. Schiro, 23, of Martinsburg (left), a medical services craftsman, prepares a patient for X-ray.

doing in Iraq was sick-call duty, these experiences will leave them with plenty of stories to tell, said Dr. (Lt. Col.) Gary Benedetti, the squadron's chief of medical staff and an orthopedic trauma surgeon.

"These technicians perform as well as people at any major hospital trauma center in the States," Benedetti said.

130th airmen support Army convoy ops

IT HAS BEEN SAID that an Army lives on its stomach. If true, military operations in Iraq would come to a halt if not for members of the Air Guard's 130th Airlift Wing, who are risking their lives making sure rations get to soldiers on the front lines.

Five vehicle operators from the Charleston base's Logistics Squadron were deployed to Iraq in February to support U.S. Army convoy operations supplying coalition ground forces throughout the country.

Staff Sgt. Josh Cassell of Nitro, Staff Sgt. Brad Sergent of Hurricane, Staff Sgt. Richard Persinger of Oak Hill, Staff Sgt. George Terry of Belle and Senior Airman Pat Cook of Fairdale, serve as drivers, machine gunners and grenade launchers for convoys. West Virginia's guard members trained at the Army's Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and Fort Dix, N.J., to prepare for deployment.

Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau sees these deployments



Photo by 130th Airlift Wing

(l to r) Staff Sgts. Josh Cassell and Brad Sergent, Senior Airman Pat Cook and Staff Sgts. Richard Persinger and George Terry stand for a photo before escorting an Army convoy on a resupply mission in Iraq.

as part of a commitment to sustaining a ready, reliable and relevant force. "We are transforming the way we fight, the way we do business and the way we work with others so we can be a more efficient and accessible force."

Orders for the airmen run through October. According to officials at Air National Guard headquarters in Washington, D.C., more than 150 Air Guard vehicle operators have been deployed to Southwest Asia since January.

Four 111th soldiers recognized for service in Kuwait

West Virginia Guardsmen volunteered to stay behind while rest of unit returned home

By Maj. Garrett Cottrell
111th Engineer Group

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait — Four soldiers from the West Virginia Army National Guard's 111th Engineer Group out of St. Albans recently completed a five-month deployment with the U.S. 3rd Army in Kuwait.

Lt. Col. Derrick Ballreich, Maj. Garrett Cottrell, Staff Sgt. Beau Corbett and Spc. Chad Murphy volunteered to stay in Southwest Asia to help fill a void created in February when the rest of the unit returned to West Virginia. The soldiers provided cost estimating, concept designs and construction management for all logistical nodes in Kuwait and Southern Iraq.

The soldiers were recognized for their service at a 3rd Army Headquarters ceremony here. Col. Albert Marin, senior staff engineer for the 3rd Army, presented Ballreich with the Defense Meritorious Service Medal and Cottrell, Corbett and Murphy with the Joint Service Commendation Medal.

"It was a true honor to work with these men," Marin said, "and I would be proud to have them serve on my engineer team in the future."

Ballreich, Corbett and Murphy returned to West Virginia on May 10, receiving a warm welcome from members of the 111th and family and friends. Cottrell is redeploying to Afghanistan for five months to work with the 25th Infantry Division in the reconstruction of that war-torn former Taliban-controlled country.

'First West Virginia' gives new meaning to fire support

**By Chief Warrant Officer 2
Ronald L. Eagle, Jr.**
201st Field Artillery

CONVOY SUPPORT CENTER CEDAR, Iraq — "Fire support" has taken on new meaning for West Virginia's 1st Battalion, 201st Field Artillery. The "First West Virginia" National Guardsmen have traded their howitzers for more mobile small caliber weapons and armored Humvees.

Their new mission - protect vehicle convoys hauling critical supplies and equipment to coalition forces operating throughout Iraq.

Unconventional missions are the norm for many field artillery units in Iraq. Since the end of major combat operations, field artillery units have been restructured to provide security for convoys or to haul away captured enemy ammunition — missions artillery units normally aren't trained to accomplish.

Training for the 201st began at Fort Drum, N.Y. Soldiers were taught proper procedures for convoy operations in the bitter cold of upstate New York before deploying to Camp Virginia, Kuwait, in February. In Kuwait, Guard members underwent additional convoy training, including a live-fire exercise, and requalified on the M-16. Weapons qualification gave the troops a confidence boost as they had first qualified in minus 40 degree weather at Fort Drum and wanted the chance to fire in the desert environment in which they would be working.

Temperatures in Kuwait were about 120 degrees higher than at Fort Drum. Guard members stayed at Camp Virginia for about 30 days to acclimate to the weather and await equipment shipped from Fort Drum.

Convoy Support Centers Cedar, Navistar and Scania became home to the battalion's soldiers when the 201st moved north into

Iraq. The 201st is assigned to the 197th Field Artillery Brigade, a National Guard unit from New Hampshire that acts as higher headquarters. The 201st shares brigade missions with two other field artillery battalions, the 2/147th Field Artillery from South Dakota and the 3/178th Field Artillery from South Carolina.

Operation Iraqi Freedom is proof positive of the importance the Mountaineer citizen-soldier holds during peace-time drills. National security depends on our ability to reorganize and train for the unconventional battlefields. Operation Iraqi Freedom is proving the West Virginia National Guard can keep pace with active-duty forces and, in some cases, exceed their performance.

History will once again record that the "First West Virginia" not only kept pace, but adapted to change, accepted a nonstandard mission and succeeded in all that was expected of the battalion.

Guard fights floodwaters

By Maj. Mike Cadle
HQ, W.Va. Air National Guard

GUARD TROOPS were deployed for flood duty in early June, as the three inches of rain that fell on Memorial Day led to massive run-off and small-stream flooding, devastating many communities in Southern West Virginia.

About 600 guard members were called to state duty by Gov. Bob Wise to clean up flooded towns in Wyoming, Logan and Mingo counties. Guard leaders flew over the affected areas in a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter with West Virginia Office of Emergency Services officials and county emergency services directors to assess the damage.

According to Brig. Gen. John Barnette, assistant adjutant general for the Army National Guard, this flood was different from many of those in the past.

"River flooding was a problem," he said. "But the bigger problem was creek flooding and run-off in isolated areas of each county."

Engineers often bear the burden of flood recovery operations, and this time was no different. Soldiers in the 1092nd Engineer Battalion only recently returned from overseas. Their equipment and personal belongings were still in transit, which posed unique challenges for soldiers called to duty on short notice.

To avert this problem, heavy equipment was



Photo by Maj. (Chapl.) Bruce Reed, WVARNG

Guard members help residents and businesses clean up in Wyoming, Logan and Mingo counties after Memorial Day flooding.

borrowed from Virginia, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency authorized the Guard to purchase uniforms for soldiers who, in some cases, deployed to flooded areas with only one set of clothing.

119th Engineer Company soldiers also played a large role in recovery operations, although soldiers from practically every non-

deployed unit in the state were called to assist. Recovery efforts included clearing roads and hauling debris from roadsides to transfer points, where it was picked up and transported to landfills by the Department of Highways.

Air and Army Guard cooks also provided more than 12,000 meals to flood victims.

Recovery operations ended June 19.

1092nd

Continued from Page 14

refineries," Shafer said, "convoy escort for the second-ever Air Force ground convoys [the first were in World War II], and we trained the ICDC [the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps] in al-Kut.

"As you can imagine, there were some language and cultural barriers [training the ICDC], but we were highly successful."

In November, the Army's first Stryker Brigade Combat Team entered action and worked its way toward Northern Iraq.

"We provided engineer support for the first Stryker brigade ever to see combat," Shafer said, "which means we ensured mobility [built roads], countermobility [stopped the enemy by laying minefields], and survivability for the unit. And we built base camps, mostly in Samarra and in and around Mosul."

Stryker operations attacked pockets of resistance, much like that the Marines faced in Fallujah, and overran them.

"We sealed off cities so the Stryker Brigade could go in and get their high-value targets," Shafer said, adding that the Stryker commanding officer, Col. Michael Rounds, labeled these targets "knuckleheads."

Operations in which the 1092nd took part

were: Ivy Blizzard, with the 4th ID against holdouts in Samarra; Buford in the Sunni Triangle; Desert Scorpion in Balad; Arrowhead Blizzard, a 2nd ID Stryker operation in Samarra; and Arrowhead Polaris in Mosul.

The 1092nd built the U.S. logistical supply area at Cedar II, in An Nasiriyah, and Scania, the convoy rest-and-refueling area between An Nasiriyah and Baghdad.

These areas were virtually sprung from the desert sand.

"They start out with a wide spot in the road, and we turn it into a nice area with force protection," Shafer said. "We put berms all around it, put in a gravel parking lot."

One of the larger projects for the engineers was creating the force protection — and confiscated Iraqi munitions protection — for the ammunition supply point on the edge of Cedar II.

"We installed 15 miles of concertina wire," Shafer said, and in 140-degree heat, "the guys did it without any heat-related injury."

While based at An Nasiriyah, the 1092nd built roads, rebuilt three schools, "a lot of nice things for Iraqis," he said.

Shafer said interaction with the locals is one of his best memories of the year spent in theater.

"There were these kids, cute little, dirty kids. They were very interested in Americans.

We'd give them candy and food and water," he said. "Lt. Fred Hill had a Nerf football, and we taught them how to throw it. They were used to soccer and they kept wanting to kick it, and a football doesn't roll very well."

"When we left, we gave them the football."

The gap between the haves and have-nots also looms large in Shafer's memories of Iraq.

"Iraq has a lot of huge contrasts," he said. "I've been in Saddam's palaces and I've been in dirt-floor shacks."

"It's incredible, the contrast -- the wealth the minority [Sunnis] had in Iraq."

West Virginia engineers did a great deal to bring Iraq's have-nots into the 21st century. Shafer said the unit's humanitarian works — in addition to its combat — ranged from Kuwait all the way north to the Iraq-Syria border.

"There were three schools and two orphanages we refurbished. One of the schools had been an anti-aircraft site [during the U.S.-led invasion] and had munitions stored there. Of course, it was all bombed out."

West Virginians rebuilt that school.

Shafer is understandably proud of the 1092nd.

"No other engineer battalion worked in as many areas of Iraq as we did, [and] none were there as long as we were," he said. "I have a lot of pride in what the battalion accomplished."

Eastern W.Va. civic leaders fly overseas on 167th's wings



Trip offers chance to see deployed 167th AW Guard members

Twenty-seven business leaders from the Martinsburg area stand for a photo with their military escorts at Lajes Field, Azores. Community representatives from the eastern panhandle traveled with the 167th Airlift Wing in April to visit 167th members stationed in Germany who were, supporting military operations in Kosovo.

Photo by U.S. Air Force

By Maj. Mike Cadle
HQ, W.Va. Air National Guard

CHARLESTON —

EASTERN Panhandle civic leaders crisscrossed the globe in a Martinsburg-based C-130 Hercules aircraft in April, getting a close-up view of how the 167th Airlift Wing is supporting the global war against terrorism.

Twenty-seven people from differing social, political and business backgrounds visited four countries in five days, including Sembach Air Base, Germany, temporary home to members of the 167th who were flying missions into Kosovo.

Howard Strauss, president of the Berkeley County Commission, said it was an honor to see people from the state contributing to the war effort. "This is the first time I've had an opportunity to thank them for what they're doing to ensure our freedom."

Group members were lodged at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, a key transit point for the movement of troops and supplies throughout Europe and Southwest Asia. Gen. Robert

"Doc" Foglesong, a Mingo County native and commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe, gave the group a whirlwind tour of the base and briefing on USAFE operations.

Spangdahlem Air Base was the final stop on the group's tour of Germany. There, civic leaders learned how fighter aircraft are used in combat and met West Virginia airmen serving their first tour in the Air Force.

More than 71,000 U.S. military troops are based in Germany, a fact that surprised Rick Wachtel, chairman of the Eastern West Virginia Regional Airport Authority and general manager of WRNR Radio. "I had no idea U.S. bases in Germany are so important to protecting America's freedoms," he said.

The group's itinerary included stops in the Azores Islands [Portugal] and Iceland, where native West Virginians served as tour guides. The highlight for many on the trip was the opportunity to meet with these young airmen.

"One of the hardest things I do in my job is say goodbye to National Guard troops leaving their families to go to war," said Christy Morris, cabinet secretary for the West Virginia



Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Beightol, 167th AW

Berkeley County Commission President Howard Strauss checks out an MH-53 Pave Low helicopter assigned to the "Jolly Green Giant" rescue squadron at Keflavik Naval Air Station, Iceland.

Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety. "To go where they are deployed and say thank you is an honor and privilege I can't begin to explain."

'Bosslift' gives employers hands-on experience

By Maj. Jeff McCray
Coordinator, W.Va. Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

The West Virginia Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve hosted the annual In-State Boss Lift from April 23-25 at Camp Dawson near Kingwood. More than 75 employers and committee members enjoyed a unique hands-on experience at Camp Dawson.

The participants were housed in the newly-constructed Robert C. Byrd Regional Training Institute. The events began with a golf tournament at the Preston County Country Club.

The second day began bright and early at the rappelling tower. Employers were given training by members of the 2nd Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group. Rappelling was followed by a rubber boat infiltration demonstration followed by the "Pierce Lake Regatta." Employers in three different boats competed

for bragging rights as they navigated Pierce Lake in Zodiac boats.

Employers were given a ride aboard a UH-1 Huey helicopter. They then "trained" on the skills engagement trainer and wrapped up with a question-and-answer meeting hosted by Maj. Gen. Allen Tackett. Representatives from the Army National Guard, Air National Guard, and Army, Navy and Marine Corps reserves presented deployment updates and discussed future commitments of forces.

Air Guard chief's retirement anything but 'Speedy'

Brig. Gen. V. Wayne Lloyd hangs up his wings after leading Air Guard

By Maj. Mike Cadle
HQ, W.Va. Air National Guard

CHARLESTON — BRIG. GEN. V. Wayne "Speedy" Lloyd retired April 30 after serving 37 years in the West Virginia Air National Guard, including the last five as commander, the Air Guard's top post.

"My only sorrow in leaving is I feel I still have a lot to contribute," Lloyd said, pondering his last day in the military. "But it's time to turn it over to other people with fresh ideas and let them try to make things even better than they are now."

Lloyd, 60, of Charles Town, led the Air Guard through the tumultuous period after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, perhaps the busiest time in the state militia's history. Watching replays of the World Trade Center towers falling, Lloyd knew the West Virginia Air Guard would be utilized heavily in the coming conflict.

The attacks also struck a personal chord in Lloyd. He lost a friend when the hijacked American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon. "I made up my mind to be a part of the response, to contribute in a more significant way," he said.

Well-known in the Department of Defense for his leadership qualities and knowledge of Air Force operations, Lloyd was dispatched in March 2002 to the former Soviet Republic of Kyrgyzstan. There, he commanded an international force of about 2,300 troops,



Brig. Gen. "Speedy" Lloyd gets the customary dousing with a fire hose after his last flight as a military member of the 167th Airlift Wing. Lloyd retired from the Air Guard after 37 years of service.

Photo by 167th Airlift Wing

which included military forces from the United States, Australia, Denmark, France, Netherlands, Norway, South Korea and Spain.

Lloyd returned to West Virginia in July 2002, but was tapped again in March 2003 to take a vital position at the Air Force's command center in Qatar.

Serving as the director of mobility forces, Lloyd directed the delivery of military forces and supplies within Southwest Asia and developed a blueprint for the rotation of C-130 units into the region, a roadmap that remains in use today.

But the highlight of his career, according to Lloyd, is the Martinsburg-based 167th Airlift Wing's performance in 1998 on an Air Force Operational Readiness Inspection. Lloyd, commanding the 167th at the time, said he is proud that his unit received an "outstanding" rating from the Air Force, signifying the readiness of the unit to go to war.

"The effort our young men and women put

toward that evaluation helped me be better prepared to carry out my missions in Kyrgyzstan and Qatar supporting the war on terrorism."

Lloyd accomplished many other feats in his long career. "Those things are not important right now," he said. "What's important is that we [West Virginians] have two of the premier units in the Air National Guard. They are representing the state in an outstanding manner all over the world, and everyone knows about them and their capabilities."

Lloyd cedes control of the Air Guard to Brig. Gen. James B. Crawford III. "I wish Jim well, and I am confident he will do a good job and continue to challenge both air bases to do bigger and better things."

Lloyd will continue as the deputy adjutant general for the Air Guard, a full-time state position, to advise Maj. Gen. Allen Tackett, adjutant general of West Virginia, on the Martinsburg unit's conversion from C-130 Hercules aircraft to C-5 Galaxy aircraft.

W.Va. Guard leaders host military officers from Peru

By Maj. Mike Cadle
HQ, W.Va. Air National Guard

West Virginia National Guard leaders hosted a delegation of Peruvian military officers in March, giving the foreign officers a first-hand look at how Guard and Reserve forces are organized, trained and equipped to augment U.S. active duty forces.

Adjutant General Allen Tackett guided the Peruvian officers through a series of briefings about the West Virginia Guard's structure and capabilities before escorting them on tours of National Guard facilities and the state Capitol.

Tours included stops at Headquarters, State Area Command and the 130th Airlift Wing in Charleston; 2nd Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group in Kenova; Memorial Tunnel in southern Kanawha County; and the Robert C. Byrd Regional Training Institute at Camp Dawson, Preston County.

Visits by Peru's military and civil authorities occur as part of the National Guard State Partnership Program. The program, which began in 1994 as a way of helping former Soviet-bloc countries move toward democratic government, is designed to foster civilian-military relations and assist in developing democratic institutions and market economies.

West Virginia and Peru will join forces for another partnership



Photo by Capt. Todd Miller, HQ WVANG

The National Guard hosted a farewell dinner for members of the Peruvian military in March at the Fifth Quarter restaurant in Charleston. The Peruvians visited West Virginia as part of the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program.

event in December, when senior Peruvian officers travel to West Virginia to participate in a series of discussions on political, economic, and social issues relating to military operations.

Selflessness earns respect

Bridgeport flight-operations NCO W.Va. Guard's 2003 woman of year

By Joseph C. Atkins
Mountaineer Defender

PATRICIA C. KISHMAN, a sergeant first class with the West Virginia Army National Guard's Fixed Wing Aviation Training Site in Bridgeport, has been named the state Guard's Special Emphasis Woman of the Year Award winner for 2003.

Kishman, 43, runs the training facility's operations center, where she does the work of three people because two billets have been eliminated.

Her many jobs include gathering weather and NOTAMs (Notice to Airmen — information pilots need to know pertaining to a specific airport) for briefing pilots, filing flight plans with flight services, following flights via radio to monitor pilot activity, notifying maintenance when incoming aircraft need service or fuel, and entering and maintaining all flight-related data entry and files.

She also mans the switchboard, monitors traffic in and out of the facility's gate, handles the base GSA vehicles, distributes the mail, performs administrative duties and ensures students have everything they need while training at the FWAATS.

And she's the assistant supply NCO, to boot.

In his nomination letter about Kishman, Master Sgt. Kevin Wood, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Bridgeport facility, said initial concern that Kishman had no experience in flight operations quickly was allayed by her actions during a natural disaster.

"In just four short days, [Kishman] was left alone working the office for two weeks due to flood duty," Wood wrote. "We were all amazed at how quickly she picked things up."

Wood said what has impressed him most about Kishman is "her willingness to help others, and to sacrifice for a good cause," including spending two weeks of personal leave

helping her brother's unit, the 2174th Mobilization Unit In-processing Center in Virginia, with the build-up for war.

Kishman's brother, Army Maj. Bill Burns, said his sister's calming effect on his personnel made the big job of mobilization to a war footing easier.

She made time during off-duty hours to help Burns' young female soldiers achieve personal goals, such as preparing for promotions. And she lent them a ready ear when they needed to vent about the hardships of being away from their children. Her actions helped the soldiers be more productive, Burns said.

With Kishman's many jobs, one that is closest to her heart is working with young soldiers and bringing new soldiers into the Guard.

"I really like recruiting," she said. "I like to serve, and I look for other people who are like me — who want to help their community, to serve, to come into the military to help — not to get what the military can do for them."

Kishman even recruited brother Bill back into the Army. He'd taken early retirement under the Clinton administration, but little sister later talked him back into service.

Kishman is a Preston County native and graduated from Terra Alta High School. She earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from West Virginia University and is a high-ranking student in the business administration master's program at Mountain State University of Beckley. She travels from Bridgeport to MSU's Parkersburg campus at least once a week to achieve that goal.

"I don't compete much with other people, but I always compete with myself," she said. "Doing the best that I can at work, school and home is important to me."

Kishman's drive toward achievement is evident in all her endeavors. She also has completed the Real Estate Agents and Real Estate



Photo by W.Va. Army National Guard
Sgt. 1st Class Patricia C. Kishman is presented with a plaque by Mag. Gen. Allen Tackett after her selection as woman of the year.

Brokers schools, and is a graduate of the Real Estate Institute. Additionally, she is a notary public who rarely charges fees for that service.

She attributes her drive to her mother, who did not gain higher education but instilled learning into her children.

"She rubbed off on me. My mother was deprived of education, but always loved learning," Kishman said. "I'm the same way; I love learning."

Recognition as her branch's Woman of the Year for West Virginia caught Kishman off guard. She knew she'd been nominated, but didn't expect anything to come of it.

"It was probably the biggest surprise of my life," she said. "When Master Sgt Wood called me, I didn't believe him. I thought there was a selection process. I thought he was tricking me. I said, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah. You're funnin' me. It took quite a while for it to sink in.'"

Kishman considers her nomination and ultimate winning of the award a true honor.

"All my career, I've spent my time making sure soldiers around me got their awards and recognition," she said. "It makes me feel like the Guard appreciates me. I never had to have that recognition in life. It was really overwhelming when I did get it. It shows me that they appreciate what I've done. And that means a lot."

Special Forces return

West Virginia soldiers in Task Force 191 returned home in June after the longest deployment of any forward operational base in Afghanistan.

Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 2nd Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group soldiers were attached to Task Force 191, along with units from Washington, Utah and Florida.

While deployed at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, Task Force 191 racked up 112 Bronze Stars, two Silver Stars and 259 Army Commendation Medals.

Members of 152nd & 156th MPs home

Members of the West Virginia National Guard's 152nd and 156th Military Police Detachments returned home in April from extended duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The units were deployed from their Mountain State homes last year.

Friends and family greeted returning 156th soldiers when the unit arrived at Yeager Air National Guard base April 18. The town of Moorefield turned out to show support for 152nd soldiers returning to the Moorefield armory April 23. Many of the people greeting their returning guard members wore "Welcome Home" T-shirts and held similarly marked signs and American flags.

Sgt. Jeff Taylor, 22, of the 156th, told a Charleston Gazette reporter that 14 months away from home taught him something about Iraqis, West Virginians and himself.

"It was really hard for most people," he told the Gazette. "You taught somebody who didn't speak anything like your language. Somebody who didn't understand the values of American society. 'You're always in a combat zone,' he added. 'But we stuck together. We formed a family, as you do in every unit.'"

A gift for Fatemah

By Spc. Sherree Casper
196th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

A FOB DANGER, TIKRIT, Iraq — N 8-MONTH-OLD Iraqi girl has been flown to Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, to undergo surgery to remove a birth defect.

U.S. officials on both sides of the Atlantic cut through mounds of red tape to get her here. The diplomatic work extended from the enlisted ranks all the way up to senators from West Virginia and Ohio, and the secretary of defense.

And now, doctors believe surgery might not be needed for Fatemah Hassan.

Instead they have opted to treat a cavernous hemangioma — which has enlarged to the size of about two softballs — with chemotherapy. The abnormal growth of a blood vessel affects the right side of her face, neck and upper chest.

Via an e-mail, Dr. Gayle Gordillo, a pediatric and plastic reconstructive surgeon at the Columbus hospital, advised that whether Fatemah will need surgery depends on how she responds to the chemotherapy treatments.

"It is possible that she will need some surgery, but the best outcome would be if the tumor resolved without it," Gordillo wrote. "Hard to say exactly how likely she is to need additional interventions besides chemotherapy. I can tell you that 80 percent of children with this lesion respond to the chemo regimen we are using for Fatemah."

Gordillo persuaded the medical facility's board of directors to waive all costs for Fatemah's surgery. The doctor expects that the baby and her 21-year-old mother, Baday Amir Abdel-Jabar, will be treated at Children's Hospital for about two months. The pair are staying with a Kurdish family in Columbus while Fatemah is an outpatient.

Fatemah's mother and father, Khaleel, sought help from U.S. soldiers deployed near their hometown in Mandali, not far from the Iranian border. The couple took their only daughter to the front gate of Forward Operating Base Rough Rider.

West Virginia Army National Guard Lt. Col. Todd Fredricks answered their prayers.

Fredricks, the state ARNG's senior flight surgeon, worked with the Iraqi Ministry of Defense in Baghdad and the Coalition Provisional Authority for the baby to seek medical attention in the United States. A West Virginia Guardsman for eight years, Fredricks

practices emergency and aerospace medicine in Marietta, Ohio.

The Parkersburg resident and member of the 1st Battalion, 150th Armor, Fredricks has connections with Columbus' Children's Hospital.

Fatemah was born Oct. 1, 2003, with this birth defect. Her mother took her to doctor after doctor in Iraq, searching for a cure. Even the doctors at a hospital in Baghdad told the family there was nothing that could be done.

Faced with a worsening of the birth defect, family and friends encouraged the parents to take their daughter to U.S. soldiers because "they have better care."

Baday hopes the operation succeeds, but she is afraid of what might happen if it fails. It's every parent's worst fear.

Baday told combat medic Spc. Mariana K. Beshai, who acted as a translator and chaperone, that she wanted to thank everyone that helped make this possible for her daughter.

"She hopes God blesses them here and transports them home safely," Beshai said of the soldiers supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Lt. Col. Michael Brumage, a surgeon for the 1st Infantry Division who hails from Fairmont, played a key role in coordinating the endeavor to get Fatemah into U.S. care, but he credits Fredricks with "getting the ball rolling."

"This has definitely been a joint effort between Ohio and West Virginia," Brumage said.

A long, laborious process wrought with red tape seems to have come to an end.

"This has been like an octopus," is the way Brumage described the behind-the-scenes efforts to get Fatemah's birth defect treated at Children's Hospital.



Photo by Sherree Casper, 196th MPAD

Baday Hassan enlisted the help of WV soldiers to get her 8-month-old daughter, Fatemah, to the U.S. for treatment of a birth defect.

hearts and minds of these people.

"They will see that we are their friends, and it will hopefully let them know that we are worthy of their trust and friendship.

"I care deeply for Fatemah and her family, and she is just one of several children we are working on to get care in the USA."

By helping children like Fatemah, Fredricks believes the people of Iraq will see the "gentleness behind our great strength" as an Army.

"They will see, I hope, the intrinsic nature of who we are," he said. "A soaring eagle holding the arrows of war, with his eyes on the olive branch of peace. That will be a great message, I think. I cannot wait to see how she grows. She is the face of the new Iraq."

At one point, Brumage contacted fellow West Virginian Gen. Robert H. "Doc" Foglesong, commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe, to facilitate transportation back to the United States.

In addition to being state natives, the two men also share another common bond - they are both West Virginia University alumni.

Brumage is awed by the events leading to Fatemah's odyssey to health through West Virginia, Ohio and the U.S. military.

"It's a strange coincidence," he said. "It really makes you wonder if it is a coincidence at all."

The agonizing days of waiting and endless attempts at coordination have paid off for those involved.

"I have great hopes that she will get the care she needs and I am so glad that we were able to work together to get this done," Fredricks said.

"This is an example of how we can work with the Iraqis to change the

'It's another world over here'

Iraqis in remote village gets W.Va. hospitality from 150th soldiers

By Spc. Sherree Casper

196th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

AL-AURLOON, Iraq — STAFF SGT. Howard Branham paused for a moment before getting into his humvee while preparing for a visit to a remote village near the Iranian border.

"Prepare to have your heart broken," said Branham, acting platoon sergeant for the 3rd Platoon of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor.

The West Virginia Army National Guardsman from Delbarton, Mingo County, is no stranger to Al-Aurloon, near the Iranian border. In fact, the residents there welcome him and his fellow soldiers with open arms.

"They think I am an Iraqi," Branham said matter-of-factly.

Perhaps they think that because, over the few months since his arrival in Iraq with the 150th, Branham has made a concerted effort to learn the language and culture of those he is trying to help. In return, many in the village appear to appreciate the gesture. The trust and rapport are evident.

As the convoy of humvees rolled into the desolate, dusty and muddy village, children stopped playing and turned their attention to the heavy armored vehicles approaching.



Photo by 150th Armor Staff Sgt. Howard Branham, 1/150th, holds an Iraqi child on one of the unit's visits to a local village.

When the convoy stopped, the children insidiously made a beeline for the soldiers.

Smiles, hugs and the thumbs-up signs greeted the Americans. Many villagers hoped 2nd Lt. John D. Radnoczi had come with some good news.

The villagers live in abject poverty and are in desperate need of running water, which is high on the list of bare necessities required. Radnoczi, leader of the 3rd platoon, wants a water well dug in the village, and Army funding already has been approved for the project.

Until then, 3rd Platoon soldiers hand out bottles of clean water, a gesture greatly appreciated by the villagers.

"They drink out of the same water they have to bathe in," said one soldier, a look of sadness in his eyes.

Opening their hearts to the villagers' dilemma, soldiers from the 150th have called back home in an effort to have much-needed school supplies sent over for residents in the villages they visit.

Phone lines to churches and charity organizations back in the Mountain State have been busy. Although it might take up to a month to receive care packages, soldiers are eager to help out.

Rebuilding a nation is paramount here. Soldiers say helping Iraqis become self-sufficient is key, and they believe there is no better way than to educate future generations that will oversee the rebuilding of this war-torn country.

Remnants of poverty in the village remind Americans that they are assisting a country that has yet to catch up to the 21st century.

Still, said Sgt. Chris Shamblin of Charleston, the locals in each village are eager to share what little they have with the Americans.

Mounted as a gunner atop one of the humvees, Spc. Jason Mann gazed around as his vehicle pulled off.

"It's another world over here," said Mann, a Bluefield resident.

"[I don't] ever want to hear about people back home complaining about not having anything," he said, looking around the Iraqi village. "They just don't know."

A little bit of the Mountain State in Iraq

150th Armor Battalion GIs balance humanitarian, security missions

By Master Sgt. Mike Welsh
30th Brigade Combat Team

FOB ROUGHRIDER, Iraq — Soldiers in West Virginia's 150th Armor Battalion are juggling separate but complementary missions, helping Iraqi nationals in rural areas satisfy basic human needs while providing for their security and that of coalition forces.

"I was raised better than to ignore these people," said Staff Sgt. Howard Branham of A Company, based in Williamson, W.Va. Soldiers of the 150th are serving as part of the 30th Brigade Combat Team, which is assigned to the 1st Infantry Division.

Branham and his team have

been conducting assessments of the villages and small towns in the Diyala region of east-central Iraq, long neglected by Saddam Hussein.

"What they need is water - electricity, schools, and good clean water," Branham said. "The majority of the Iraqi people keep asking for schools."

Many of the remote locations lack any formal schools.

A Company also is working with the Iraqi Border Police, patrolling the Iraq-Iran border.

"We're conducting night patrols, doing some joint training and operations with the IBP," Branham said.

West Virginia soldiers have caught smugglers bringing every

type of contraband into Iraq. Route clearings are particularly dangerous for the unit's soldiers, as they must identify improvised explosive devices on endless miles of highway and dirt roads.

On a recent mission, A Company secured the perimeter of an exploded IED.

"Looks like some sort of burned out tank hull," reported Staff Sgt. Edward Johnson, peering through the scope on his M-4 carbine as his squad dismounted from its Humvee and cautiously worked its way around the blast site.

Fortunately, no one was wounded when the IED detonated.

The Iraqi Civil Defense Corps

reported the IED to coalition forces, and A Company was tasked to secure the site. ICDC personnel were instrumental in the entire operation and continue to contribute to the security mission in Iraq.

Soldiers from A Company are trying to coordinate projects in their area that will improve the quality of life for Iraqis.

Coalition forces are unique in that men like those from A Company can conduct effective combat patrols while demonstrating a compassionate desire to help those in need.

"I grew up around coal camps in West Virginia," Branham said. "In my family, if you had something, everybody had something."

Deployment update



Deployment of W.Va. Guard across the globe since 9/11

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Special Operations Detachment — Europe | 1257th Transportation Company |
| 2nd Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group | 1st Battalion, 150th Armor |
| 1092nd Engineer Battalion | Operational Support Aviation |
| 1863rd Transportation Company | 3664th Maintenance Company |
| 157th Military Police Company | Det. 1, 196th Mobile Public Affairs |
| 156th Military Police Detachment | Detachment |
| 111th Engineer Group | 1st Battalion, 201st Field Artillery |
| 152nd Military Police Detachment | 119th Engineer Company |
| 146th Aviation Company (Air Ambulance) | 229th Engineer Detachment |
| 130th Airlift Wing | 167th Airlift Wing |

Dawson hosts '04 officer, enlisted association conferences

Camp Dawson was filled to capacity as guard members and their families from across the state traveled to Kingwood in June for the 2004 National Guard Association of West Virginia officer and enlisted state conferences.

This year's conference began with a golf tournament on Friday, June 11 at Preston Country Club. Rain might have dampened the ground, but not the spirits of 56 golfers who braved the stormy conditions. Waterlogged duffers were able to complete only 12 holes on the 18-hole course. The winning team consisted of one active member and three retirees from the Air Guard - Capt. Ted Smith (HQ, WVANG), retired Senior Master Sgt. Bob Reynolds, and retired Master Sgts. Dave Miller and Dave Bosley.

Rain continued into Friday night, forcing the Hawaiian luau indoors at the Regional Training Institute. Volunteers did a great job of preparing a chicken and pork feast with all the fixins'. Everyone's favorite beverages were served, and many door prizes given away. Fun was had by all, and a little too much fun was had by some!

Saturday's events began with a 5K run through Camp Dawson. Chief Master Sgt. Steve McCollam, command chief master sergeant of the 130th Airlift Wing, took first place with a time of 20 minutes, 52 seconds. The joint portion of the business meeting began promptly at 9 a.m. with annual reports by Army Brig. Gen. John Barnette and Air

National Guard Association of West Virginia officers for 2004-2005:

President: Lt. Col. Ed Muth, ARNG
 President-elect: Maj. Mike Cadle, ANG
 Vice president: CW3 Jeff Warfield, ARNG
 Secretary: Capt. Melissa Shade, ANG
 Treasurer: Maj. Bill Crane, ARNG
 Executive Committee:
 Col. Bob Kincaid, ARNG
 Lt. Col. Marion Musilli, ARNG
 Lt. Col. Paul Muth, ARNG
 Lt. Col. Don Lockard, ARNG
 Maj. Dennis Boggs, ANG
 Capt. Rosie Smith, ANG.
 Retiree representative:
 Col. Ramon Lopez, ARNG
 Lt. Col. Mike Pitzer, ANG

Enlisted Association of the National Guard of West Virginia officers for 2004-2005

President: Master Sgt. Chris Tusing, ANG
 VP, Army: Sgt. Maj. (ret.) Gary Conley, ARNG
 VP, Air: Tech. Sgt. Tom Young, ANG
 Secretary: Master Sgt. Sherry Claus, ARNG
 Treasurer: Sgt. Priscilla Minter, ARNG
 Past Pres: SFC Butch Sheppard, ARNG
 Enlisted representative, Air:
 Senior Airman Ronnie Shaffer, ANG
 Enlisted representative, Army:
 vacant

Force Brig. Gen. James Crawford. Officers and enlisted then separated to conduct separate business meetings.

The officer business meeting included the presentation of scholarships for undergraduate college study. Recipients were Trinity Burch, daughter of Col. Mel and Abby Burch, and Jason Richardson, son of Maj. Herb and Kavin Richardson. Resolutions were reviewed and election of officers for 2004-2005 was held before the meeting adjourned.

Enlisted association attendees focused on improving membership by exploring ways to attract enlisted soldiers and airmen to the association. New officers were elected for the

2004-2005 year.

Air Force Gen. Robert "Doc" Foglesong, commander of United States Air Forces in Europe and a native of Mingo County, was the guest of honor and speaker at Saturday night's formal dinner. Foglesong complimented the Air Guard on its support of Operation Joint Forge mission in Europe. He also relayed comments from his mother, who still lives in Mingo County, about the outstanding work the National Guard was doing cleaning up Mingo County after the devastating floods that hit on Memorial Day. The 249th Army Band provided music for the evening's festivities.

News you can use

Job program benefits veterans, Guard members

"Helmets to Hardhats" is a new program administered by the U.S. Army that helps veterans and Guard/Reserve members get jobs in construction industries.

Sponsored by all building and construction trades organizations in the United States, the program collects information on potential job candidates and refers them to opportunities in construction industries.

For more information, call (866) 741-6210 or complete the on-line registration at www.helmetstohardhats.org.

Scholarship information available online

Service members, veterans and their families can search through millions of dollars in military related scholarships by going to www.military.com and clicking on the education link on left side of the page.

VA Web site has links for mobilized Guard members

Mobilized Guard members and families can find useful benefit information at www.vba.va.gov/jeff/res_guard.htm.

DD Form 214s available online

Military veterans and next of kin of deceased military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents.

DD Form 214 and other vital documents needed for employment and to prove benefit eligibility can be accessed at www.vetres.archives.gov.

New medals available for GWOT service

Soldiers and airmen might be eligible for the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal or the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.

Contact unit administrator or personnel office to determine eligibility.

TRICARE benefits obtainable for travelers

Accessing health care while on vacation can get complicated. TRICARE Prime covers emergen-

cies including injuries threatening someone's life, limb or eyesight, but the beneficiary still must get in touch with the primary care manager.

The PCM should be notified within 24 hours to initiate a record of the care received. Urgent care also is covered, but TRICARE Prime beneficiaries must contact their PCM to obtain authorization before seeking care.

Contact Master Sgt. Lisa Valvo in the Human Resources Office, at 561-6425, for questions about TRICARE while out of your home area.

Deployed member voting procedures explained

Deployed service members remain eligible to vote in their home districts. Family members of deployed soldiers must go to the local court house and get an absentee ballot to send to the deployed Guard member.

Family members should first try to determine if the military member is registered, as that will have a bearing on procedures that must be followed.

County voter's registration offices will have procedures for registering deployed service members and submitting absentee ballots.

Call your local voter's registration office for more information.

TSP announces toll-free telephone assistance

Thrift Savings Plan account or transaction information can now be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-877-968-3778.

TSP participants or beneficiaries can use the automated service at any time, or speak to a customer service representative from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

TSP is a retirement savings plan for federal technicians, AGRs and traditional Guard members similar to 401(k) plans offered by private employers.

Federal technicians with questions call Staff Sgt. Chrystal Weikle at 561-6424. Military members should contact their personnel office.

Civilian jobs protected for Guard members on duty

Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act provides civilian job protection for Guard and Reserve members.

USERRA requires employers to return members to positions of sim-

ilar function, pay and status upon return from military duty. Other protections include promotions, continuation of health benefits and pension contributions. **BOTTOM LINE:** Military members are to be treated as if they never left.

Military members have responsibilities also, and must comply to protect their rights.

General questions about the law should be directed to Maj. Jeff McCray, state Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve coordinator, at 561-6438.

Military members who feel they have a claim against an employer should contact Maj. Bill Crane (Army Guard) at 561-6390 or Lt. Col. Linda Smiley (Air Guard) at 561-6434.

Employer support awards available through ESGR

Civilian employers are being asked to sacrifice as Guard and Reserve troops deploy more often.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve has several awards available to recognize civilian employers who support their military reservist employees.

"Patriot Award" is the initial award and easiest for which to nominate employers. Employers get a DOD certificate of appreciation and a "Patriot" lapel pin. State and national awards are also available.

Log on to www.esgr.org and click on "military members quick links" and "reward your employer" link.

Contact Maj. Jeff McCray, state ESGR coordinator, at 561-6438 or log on for more information.

Martinsburg VA to sign up those eligible for benefits

Martinsburg Veteran's Administration officials will be at the Air National Guard base in Martinsburg on Aug. 3 and Aug. 7 at 9 a.m. to register military personnel eligible for VA benefits.

A wide range of benefits is available to qualified individuals. Military members need to bring their DD 214 to determine eligibility.

Call Chief Master Sgt. Billy Gillenwater, 167th AW, at DSN 242-5079 for more information.

Sea World Adventure Park tickets discount

Check pricing and order tickets via phone by calling Commander Navy Region Southwest Military Ticket Program at (619) 767-6000. Tickets will arrive by mail within seven business days. Overnight

service is available for a small fee.

3.5% military pay increase expected for 2005

House and Senate Armed Forces Committees approved a 3.5 percent base pay raise for military members. Pending any changes, pay raises will go into effect after the Defense Authorization and Appropriation Acts are passed. Raises are scheduled to become effective Jan. 1, 2005.

'One stop' site for Guard member, family problems

Defense Department has established a "one stop" place to go when service members or family members need assistance with any kind of problem.

It's called "Military One Source" and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Individuals providing assistance have a least a master's degree in social work or some kind of counseling service and are trained specifically to deal with everyday difficulties that a military family might face.

The program works well for National Guard members and Reservists because they tend not to be close to military installations.

For assistance, call toll-free at 1-800-342-9647.

Out-of-pocket R&R costs can be reimbursed

Members who paid for stateside travel last fall when participating in CENTCOM's R&R leave program can be reimbursed for expenses.

DOD is developing regulations to explain who is eligible and how the money will be distributed.

Pres. Bush signed the law Apr. 22 to cover airline tickets, mileage and other travel costs for members who used the emergency leave program through Dec. 19, 2003.

Those affected used the R&R leave program that allowed a 15-day break for those who had combat tours of one year or more.

Stay tuned for more information.

Civilian pay tax free for members in combat zones

Guard members serving in a combat zone who are receiving full or partial pay from their civilian employer are not required to pay tax on those earnings.

Go to the IRS Web site, at www.irs.gov, for more information.



Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Buddy Palla, 130th Maintenance Squadron

Two C-130 Hercules aircraft are buttoned up and prepared for the next day's missions as the sun sets over Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait, in November 2003. The Charleston-based 130th Airlift Wing has been deployed to Southwest Asia since December 2002, and has been supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom since March 2003.

State Public Affairs Office
West Virginia National Guard
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Charleston, WV 25311