

Mountaineer
DEFENDER

Magazine of the West Virginia National Guard

**Supporting the
War on Terrorism**

Special Issue

Mountaineer DEFENDER

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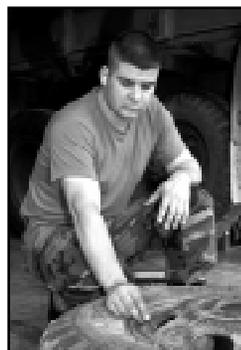
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On the cover...

Sgt. William Bart, 156th Military Police Detachment (Law and Order) instructor, demonstrates proper handcuff techniques for his Mosul Iraqi Police Academy students. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Heather Hilton, 16th MP Brigade Public Affairs)



The Adjutant General
Maj. Gen. Allen E. Tackett

State Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. Bruce E. Coleman

State Command Chief Master Sergeant
Command Chief Master Sgt. Robert D. Chandler

State Public Affairs Officer Layout and Design
Maj. Michael O. Cadle

Editors
Sgt. 1st Class Bob Powell
Spc. Sherree Casper

Special thanks to the following individuals for their assistance in layout and design:
2nd Lt. Benny Karnes
Senior Master Sgt. Rick Ware
Tech. Sgt. Jay Foster

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Send comments/contributions to:
State Public Affairs Office
WV National Guard
1679 Coonskin Drive
Charleston, WV 25311
or
defender@wvchar.nog.af.mil



Supporting the war on terrorism, and each other

As we face an uncertain future, I want to express how proud I am of the soldiers and airmen in the WV National Guard. We are busier now than ever before, and I understand the sacrifices being made by the soldiers and airmen and their families.

The WVNG responded quickly and decisively to the President's call to arms. Over 1,700 soldiers of the Army Guard are on duty supporting operations in the Middle East, and 500 of those just left West Virginia for their mobilization station. About 1,000 members of our Air Guard wings have completed one period of service, and some have already returned to the region.

This high operations tempo has resulted in a hardship for some of the families of our deployed members. To help families deal with issues that may arise, we established family assistance

centers across the state.

I encourage family members to use these centers when problems arise that require support from our military members who have not deployed, and I expect each and every military member left behind to take care of family issues when problems arise. Family support is vital to our success and must be done if the WVNG is to remain one of the best military organizations in the DOD.

This first edition of the "new" Mountaineer Defender focuses on the outstanding job our units are doing in support of the global war on terrorism. Our nation could not go to war without the WVNG, and our troops are proving their worth every day.

We do not know when our soldiers and airmen will be coming home. But I promise you that until our troops return, we will do everything we can



Maj. Gen. Allen Tackett

to support them and their families. Thank you for your patience and perseverance during these very difficult and trying times.

God bless you all.

CSM's Comments

Mobilizations bring out best in soldiers, families



Command Sgt. Maj.
Bruce Coleman

Soldiers in the WVARNG have seen many changes since Sept. 11, 2001, changes that only a few anticipated under any conditions. Being "first a soldier" has taken a place of higher priority in the lives of citizen – soldiers across the nation. I see a more disciplined, physically fit, and prepared to fight soldier than those in our past. This is a time of personal commitment

to readiness, MOS qualification and NCO education.

Nearly all WVARNG units/personnel have been either mobilized, alerted for mobilization, or supported units being mobilized during the last two years. The 157th MP CO deployed twice and the 229th ENGR DET deployed once and is alerted the second time. I have watched WV soldiers process through eight MOB stations and in every case they were simply the best. In many instances they

were so far ahead of their peers, that our soldiers assisted the MOB stations in processing other units/personnel. It was painfully clear that with few exceptions, the US Army was not prepared to deploy as many soldiers as was required. Our soldiers experienced the frustration caused by shortages in housing, transportation, training areas, and qualified personnel to conduct mobilization operations.

Family separations will always be the most difficult element the "Guard Family" deals with. There is no easy way to take control of this. The change in roles, the unknown, financial issues, sacrifices, loneliness, and other issues cause our soldiers and their families concern. Each situation is unique and personal to the individuals affected. Mobilizations test soldiers, families, relationships, individual patriotism, and the fiber of the United States of America.

In closing I want to tell each of you how proud you have made me during these trying times. I have a sincere respect and appreciation for the members of the WVARNG, their families, and their employers. Thanks to each and every one of you for making the United States of America what it is today.

156th establishes Iraqi police academy

MP Detachment training new police officers to assume security duties

Story and photos by
U.S. Army Sgt. Heather Hilton
16th MP Brigade Public Affairs

MOSUL, Iraq - The 156th Military Police Detachment (Law and Order), West Virginia National Guard, is not only setting the police force standard for Iraqi Police—they're creating it.

Currently attached to the 503rd MP Battalion, 16th MP Brigade of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the 156th MPs are preparing to graduate their second class of Iraqi Police Academy students in Mosul, Iraq.

Made up of 45 personnel, most of whom are state and federal-level law enforcement officers in their civilian jobs, the 156th MPs have created a curriculum and environment that are leading the way for the future of the Iraqi police force.

Lt. Col. Younis Mahmmoud, an Iraqi police officer with a master's degree in law, has been working hand-in-hand with the U.S. to create the program.

"This is a golden opportunity for



Staff Sgt. Mark Muncy illustrates self-defense techniques for his Mosul Police Academy students.



Staff Sgt. Greg Cook, assisted by an interpreter, demonstrates proper handcuff techniques to a group of students at the Mosul Police Academy.

police officers in Iraq to gain knowledge, to consult with other police," said Mahmmoud. "Because of the existence of the American structures, police in Iraq can now get the correct and proper training they have lacked for many decades."

Initially taught entirely by the 156th MPs with the help of interpreters, the three-week class is designed to teach former Iraqi police officers, policemen and military personnel internationally-recognized law enforcement procedures and techniques.

Compiled by the 156th MPs from both civilian and military training, the curriculum includes defense tactics, ethics, religious tolerance, Iraqi law, reacting to a hostage situation, responding to a domestic dispute, police duties, police reports, and, of course, physical training, explained Sgt. Derek Moore, an instructor from the 156th MPs.

Designed to eventually be taken over and taught completely by Iraqi police who have been through the course, the academy grows and improves daily, said Sgt. 1st Class Lonnie Bryson, the academy's U.S.

noncommissioned officer in charge.

"When we first started we had a lot of things to overcome. There was a mistrust between a lot of us (U.S. and Iraqi)," said Bryson.

"In just two classes we've come a long way to build a rapport with the officers. We're about honesty. We're about integrity. We've built credibility and people want to be here in this class."

The academy's first class consisted of 74 former Iraqi law enforcers between the ages of 16 and 40, said Sgt. William Bart, another of the 156th MP instructors. By the second class, all 120 available seats were filled.

The top four students from the first class were chosen to assist in teaching the second class. Eight will be chosen from the second class.

"We try and let them (former students) teach most of the classes, so next academy they can teach it all themselves and we will just be there to assist," said Moore.

As the three-week academy is taken over by those Iraqi police who have completed the courses at the top of

their classes, the mission of the 156th MP Det. will continue to expand.

“We’re moving the academy to a larger facility,” said Lt. Col. Don Lockard, the academy’s U.S. officer in charge. “We’re creating a brand-new 12-week program for those who don’t have any prior experience in law enforcement or security.”

The three-week program will still be available for intermediate students, and the 156th also offers correctional officer and security force training, explained Lockard, but the longer program is necessary in order to give everyone a fair chance at getting the most training.

“The Iraqis that I’ve met and dealt with are smart, they’re dedicated, and we’re giving them a chance to live up to that,” said Lockard.

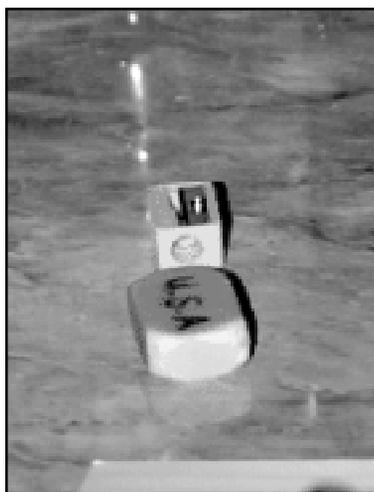
“It’s a great mission, being able to be here in a country where there is so much turmoil. We’re getting a chance to help give people the freedom they deserve,” said Spc. Davida Morris, a 156th MP and main security point observer at the academy. “They don’t have to live in fear anymore.”

“We like them. Not because they are military, but because they are here to help. Everyday we grow stronger.”

- Lt. Col. Younis Mahmmoud, Iraqi police officer, referring to his American counterparts

Standing guard on the academy rooftop in 122-degree weather, Sgt. Jerrold Friend from the 156th MP Det. agreed with his colleague.

“It’s hard being separated from family and not knowing when we’re going home,” he said, “But it’s a very worthwhile mission.



“There was no law and order in this country—the Iraqi people said the police used to be like mafia and everything was for money. We’re trying

An Iraqi student expresses his gratitude to American soldiers by writing “USA” on an eraser during a classroom session at the Mosullraqi police academy.



Training consists of classroom instruction and hands-on demonstration. Here, an interpreter translates a lesson to students at the Mosul Iraqi police academy as 156th soldiers look on.

to restore equality to the people of Iraq.”

Trained, graduated and clad in their new light blue Iraqi Police uniforms, which distinguish them from the old regime police force, Class 2 will hit the streets of the community ready to serve.

“Before, the old regime police instilled fear. Now we’re instituting community relations,” said Bart. “(They) give to the community instead of take away.”

“Just as we have learned new information from the academy, we suggest a program— maybe television, maybe newspaper— to give the community the knowledge of what is happening at the academy and how the police are dealing with the people now,” said Maj. Abd Albasit, a former police officer and Class 2 student.

“For example, when they are arrested, they now have the right to stay silent until they have a lawyer. It is good for the good people... but it will be harder to teach the bad people.”

“We couldn’t ask for a better crew,” said Lockard. “And the support is nothing short of outstanding. We couldn’t do it without the support—from the Mosul Police Department, from the 101st (Airborne Bn.) and from the 503rd (MP Bn.).”

Interpreters and former law enforcement officers are even coming out of exile and retirement to help with the mission, explained Moore.

“They’ve seen what went on... they’re anxious to make this place more of a democracy,” said Moore. “They really want to change. They’re ready to change.”

The 156th MP Det. expects to fill all 120 seats for Class 3, as well. Lockard said the program will move to a larger facility, and the soldiers hope it will continue to grow and help the country in its development toward freedom and democracy.

“We like them,” said Mahmmoud about his American counterparts, “Not because they are military, but because they are here to help. Every day we grow stronger.”

'Attica' home to 157th MP

Company

Story by Staff Sgt. Russell West

157th MP Co. Soldiers oversee Iraqi prisons, adapt to local culture

DIWANIYAH, Iraq - On June 10, 2003, the 157th Military Police Company assumed duty at the central jail of Diwaniyah, Iraq. The prison, known as Attica, has a maximum occupancy of two hundred prisoners. Their responsibility is to provide force protection for the facility and American personnel operating within its compound and train the Iraqi Police to American standards for internment facilities. Training objectives include proper searches of personnel, vehicles, and equipment; detainment of suspects; defensive operations; and proper riot control techniques, in addition to other minor tasks.

West Virginia soldiers quickly found themselves in a unique role. In addition to battling extreme heat (temperatures routinely reach 140 degrees in the summer months) and infestations of sand-fleas and mosquitoes, the soldiers became immersed in a culture very foreign to their own. Often, the soldiers discover the armed guards they are training served in the Iraqi Army, which is a somewhat unsettling revelation.

Complicating matters, clashes and misunderstandings sometimes occur due to the different cultures. One Iraqi

tradition in particular has caused problems — the firing of weapons during a wedding celebration. This problem is magnified during the night when soldiers have a more difficult time assessing whether the gunfire is hostile or celebratory. The night Saddam Hussein's sons were killed, Iraqis celebrated with a massive onslaught of celebratory fire. This resulted in a very tense evening for the 157th.

Soldiers have also found themselves working hostile crowds intent on seeing their imprisoned relatives. Several times prisoners within Attica rioted, requiring soldiers of the 157th to quell the disturbances. 157th soldiers reacted professionally and with distinction, earning the recognition and praise of other MP companies operating at the prison.

The 157th is supervising two other prisons in addition to Attica. One is in the town of Al Hela and the other is in Najaf. All three locations are south of Baghdad in an area dominated by Shiite Muslims, opponents of Saddam Hussein's regime and victims of his atrocities. While no word of redeployment home has been received, the soldiers are executing their missions with unceasing professionalism, realizing that their role in Iraq is crucial to the success of democracy in Iraq and the broader war on terrorism.

152nd commander thanks soldiers, families

By Capt. Bill Frank

CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait - Flexibility and cooperation have been the important lessons learned to date for the company. Since we were alerted we have had to remain flexible. We have been adjusting and changing to fit the circumstances that have arisen. Often without logic or reason, plans and activities change. As you know, these changes don't happen in a vacuum or to just one person.

In a small organization such as ours, a change in one place always has an impact somewhere else. What has been consistent with the 152nd is that no matter the changes, the soldiers continue to perform as they should, which is a testimony to the quality soldiers we have in this unit. Their professionalism is something that can never be taken away from the troops and, for that, I am thankful. They perform under circumstances that would cause most to quit or feel sorry for themselves.

Our soldiers have done all they have been asked by me and by their country. Their performance exceeds military standards and exceeds, in my opinion, that of their active duty counterparts.

Our soldiers perform not because of their chain of command but because there is a job to be done. Consider-

ing the adversity they have endured, the separation from their family, the constant changes, the heat, and other factors, they have had what most would call good reason to complain, to quit, to be dissatisfied. But, still they do what is asked and do it well.

Everyone should be proud of our soldiers. But, it is not just them that I am proud of, because I know it is not just the soldier who is making a sacrifice. If no one else tells the families, I want them to know that I recognize and appreciate the sacrifice they are making for our country. For it is not just the soldier that has had to deal with ups and downs, with changes to plans and with hardships. You, the family and loved ones of the soldiers, have been right there enduring and sacrificing. You are the unsung hero behind every soldier.

As commander of the 152nd MP Det., I thank you and appreciate what you have already done and what you still have to do. We have a ways to go, but we will endure. We will maintain. And in the end, we will know that when our country asked we stood up and did our duty, endured the hardship and the fear of the unknown, each in their own way. So, for that you have my gratitude and my thanks.

Nothing moves unless the 1257th

Story by Capt. Paula Sweeney
Det. 1, 196th PAD

The crowd gathered as they waited with anticipation for their loved ones to come home. The crowd grew louder as the buses rolled around the corner. The members of the Huntington-based 1257th Light/Medium Transportation Company were home.

The unit returned Aug. 23 after a five-month deployment to West Point, N.Y. Their mission was to support the 2/5 Infantry Battalion and the academy cadets during summer training.

“It is a breath of fresh air to get back to families, jobs and to just be home,” said 1st Lt. Kim Greene.

Several commanding officers gave quick five-minute speeches. One of the speakers was Adjutant General Allen Tackett.

“You were called upon to go to

active duty, to do a job, and you did that job well. We are glad to have you home,” Tackett said.



Maj. Gen. Allen Tackett gives a big thumbs up to members of the 1257th during a welcome home ceremony Aug. 23. Capt. Todd Miller is at the podium. (Photo by Pfc. David Dyer)

The unit was supposed to go overseas, but instead provided force protection for our future officers.

“Sometimes you may not get the mission you want, but a mission is what you had and we thank you for a job well done,” said Assistant Adjutant General John Barnette.

Capt. Todd Miller commands the 1257th. “It feels great to be home and it is great to see all the support here to welcome us home,” Miller said.

Frema Wilson was the family support coordinator while the troops were away. Her husband, Spc. Joe Wilson, said he and the other troops were thankful for the group’s efforts.

“Basically, my wife just tried to hold the unit together while we were away.”

Lt. Col. George Mayo summed up the mission. “Whatever the challenge you were ready, and nothing moves unless you move it.”

Truck drivers out from behind the wheel

1863rd TC mission involves security, force protection at air bases

Story and photos by
Spc. Sherree Casper, Det. 1 196 PAD

A West Virginia Army National Guard unit is making history with its deployment in support of Operation Noble Eagle.

The 1863rd Transportation Company based in Oak Hill is the first unit in more than 15 years to augment security for the Mountain State’s two air bases.

In February, 2003, 68 soldiers from the 140-member transportation unit were mobilized for the mission to augment the Air Force’s security forces at the 130th Airlift Wing in Charleston and the 167th Airlift Wing in Martinsburg.

“The reason why we are augmenting is the need to sustain a higher force protection level and the activation of the Air Force’s security

forces since 9/11,” said Capt. Thomas G. Cook II, commander of the 1863rd.

As 35 members of 1st Platoon found themselves pulling security duty at Charleston, 33 soldiers from 2nd Platoon were dispatched to Martinsburg to provide additional security support there.

“The unit as a whole appreciates the opportunity to be selected and given the opportunity to work with both the 130th and 167th,” Cook said.

It’s the first time in the unit’s history that it has ever been tasked to provide base security. But troops appear up to the challenge. Standing guard at the 130th Airlift Wing’s main gate with Senior Airman Kelly Allen by her side, Pfc. Helen Lambert checks the identification of drivers entering the base.

Although a truck driver, Lambert



Pfc. Helen Lambert (l) and Senior Airman Kelly Allen question a driver entering the main gate at the Charleston air base.

likes her new role providing security. “They have been real good here,” she said of her blue counterparts.

Allen is a member of the base’s security police. “They are doing a really good job. They have the hang of things now,” Allen said of her Army National Guard counterparts.



LEFT: The 130thAW joined five ANG units and one AF Reserve unit to form the largest collection of C-130 aircraft in the world. (U.S. Air Force photo)



RIGHT: The family of Sgt. Dennis Jackson, Co. C 1092nd EN BN, decorated a vehicle in honor of 1092nd soldiers serving in OIF. (Photo by Maj. Mike Cadle)

RIGHT: Maj. Keith Fletcher, 167thAW, walks with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld as he visits an air base in Southwest Asia. (DOD photo)



LEFT: Maj. Todd Harrell, Det. 1, 196th PAD, gives candy to Afghan children. (U.S. Army photo)

Answering at home a

BELOW: Col. Bob Kincaid, commander of the 111th EN GP, promotes Jeff Lacy to Staff Sgt. during a ceremony at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. (Photo by Maj. Ron Garton)



LEFT: Sandy Fealy, FRG president at Co. A, 1092nd EN BN, conducts a family readiness meeting at the Gassaway armory. (Photo by Maj. Mike Cadle)





RIGHT: The 119th EN Co. FRG posted pictures of their loved ones deployed for Operation Noble Eagle. (Photo by Maj. Mike Cadle)

BELOW: Brig. Gen. "Speedy" Lloyd, commander of the WVANG, penned a message to Osama Ben Laden on a GBU-12 bomb carried by French Mirage 2000 aircraft supporting the OEF mission in 2002. Lloyd commanded the 376th AEW in Kyrgyzstan. (376th AEW photo)



BELOW: Spc. Davida Morris, 156th MP Det., pulls security on the rooftop of the Mosul Iraqi Police Academy. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Heather Hilton)



g the call... nd abroad

BELOW: This sign, built after the first Gulf War, greets US troops entering Kuwait. (U.S. Army photo)



BELOW: Members of the 111th EN GP in group formation at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. (Photo by Maj. Ron Garton)



BELOW: Sgt. Maurice Parent, 156th MP Det., instructs a student at the Iraqi Police Academy on unarmed self-defense techniques. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Heather Hilton)



130thAW mobilizations at highest level since Desert Storm

Security Forces on duty since 9/11; aircrews, maintenance personnel anticipate future deployments to Southwest Asia

**Story by Capt. David Lester
130thAW Public Affairs Office**

The 130th Airlift Wing saw the activation of over 350 of its airmen in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Initially, the 130th Security Forces Squadron was activated to provide home station security following the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

Then, the call came on March 4 to activate about 180 operations, maintenance and support personnel. They deployed with six of the unit's C-130 aircraft to an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia.

The 130th joined other ANG C-130 units from Tennessee, Missouri, Kentucky and Delaware, and an Air Force Reserve C-130 unit from Niagara Falls, N.Y.

"This is the largest grouping of C-130 assets in the world," said Col. Randall Jones, 485th Air Expeditionary Wing operations group commander. "This shows the vital role reserve forces play in the employment of the U.S. military machine."

However, the work wasn't easy.

While a majority of the C-130s arrived quickly, additional aircrew, maintenance and support personnel arrived sporadically over a three-week period. During this time the personnel

at the base spent time erecting tents for new arrivals, building offices and launching aircraft.

"The unit members did a fantastic job of prioritizing the day-to-day tasks to set up shop and still focus on the mission," said Col. Jimmie L. Simmons, 485th AEW vice commander. "In this environment it would have been easy to focus on just getting the tents for living quarters set up, but that did not happen."

Once established, the 485th AEW flew hundreds of missions throughout the region until the unit was disbanded in early May.

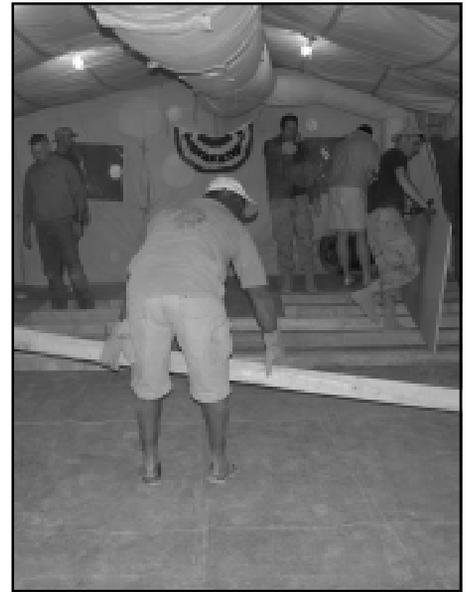
As the 485th AEW began to draw down, the majority of the members of 130th were assigned to the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. While based in Qatar the members of the 130th AW continued to support C-130 cargo missions throughout Southwest Asia.

Other areas of the base began deploying as the war in Iraq developed. Members of the 130th Aerial Port Squadron were activated and sent to Rhine-Main Air Base, Germany, where they processed cargo and passengers into and out of the region. In June, approximately half of the APS members who had been deployed to Germany were sent to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, joining other unit members already there.

Also during the height of the war, nine members of the Services Flight were deployed to Thumrait, Oman.

Throughout the war there were several deployments of

Tech. Sgt. Bill Hash (r) and Senior Airman Justin Ocheltree work on a C-130 engine. (Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Dave Boyles)



Aircrew members build a floor in a sleeping tent at their first base, a bare base site in Southwest Asia. (Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Dave Boyles)

130th airmen into the region.

"Each of our airmen and their families have made incredible contributions to the global war on terrorism," said Col. Timothy L. Frye, 130th AW commander. "They have been trained to high standards and their skill, commitment and pride are evident to all."

In the months following the declaration of the end of major combat operations, members of the wing began returning home. The final group returned to the U.S. on Sept. 3.

While some of the activated airmen were returned to the states, many others are anticipating a return trip to the region. The 130th will play a vital role in the Air Force's rotation plan.

"Whatever job our people have been asked to do, they've done it well," said Frye. "No matter the location or sacrifice, they've stood up to the challenge and served with honor and dignity. Both they and their families have displayed great courage over the past many months, and I am honored to serve with such great Americans."



Year full of challenges, accomplishments at 167thAW

Story by 2nd Lt. Andrew Schmidt
167thAW Public Affairs Officer

For the second consecutive year, the 167th Airlift Wing answered the call of duty in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

Unit members deployed to multiple locations in support of operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and Coronet Oak and, despite the return of about 175 airmen in August, many still find themselves deployed.

Gov. Bob Wise visited the base in March as the unit prepared to deploy. Speaking to unit members in a packed fuel cell building, Gov. Wise said he felt privileged to stand in front of the wing as the state's governor. He added that the wing distinguished itself many times by its devotion to service and exceptional performance and said he considered the 167th to be the "highest-rated unit in the country."

The unit experienced a severe incident in July, as about 20 members were injured when the C-130 carrying them home from Puerto Rico encountered turbulence off the coast of Virginia. Most of those hurt suffered only minor injuries, but several members stayed behind at Portsmouth Naval Medical Facility to recover, returning home several weeks later.



Megan and Samuel Irwin are all smiles as they greet their dad, Tech. Sgt. David Irwin, who was returning from SW Asia. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Robert Levernigh)

The plane was flown back to the base after an eight-person maintenance team cleared it to fly.

Soon after, the 167th celebrated one of its largest homecoming events ever, with about 175 unit members returning Aug. 1-2 from duty in Southwest Asia and Puerto Rico.

About 300 friends and family members were on hand to greet those coming home. Adjutant General Allen Tackett and Joe Martin, Secretary of the Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety, also attended.

While deployed, wing members conducted resupply and combat airlift operations, and also transported VIPs around the region.

In addition, one of the 167th's C-

LEFT: Maj. Jeff Lane, 167th AS, sees his children, Samantha and Jackson, for the first time in five months. Samantha broke her foot while Lane was deployed. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Beightol)

RIGHT: Maj. Gerald Stuck, 167th AS, hugs his wife, Lanessa, during a homecoming ceremony at the base. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Beightol)

130H's flew the 10,000th C-130 flight hour of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The majority of those returning from Southwest Asia had been there for about five months. Another 75 unit members returned after supporting operations in Puerto Rico.

Those deployed were thankful for the hard work of the Family Readiness Group, which worked tirelessly to help family members left behind. Group members conducted a series of base open houses to inform families of benefits and entitlements available to them during deployments.

But FRG members went way beyond simply holding meetings. According to volunteer Joy Enders, sometimes the best support that members could offer was just being there.

"The first week (after deploying) was probably the hardest on families when they couldn't communicate with their loved ones," she said. "But, family members understand that, like them, we're a family under the 167th family."

As the year closes, the 167th finds its members deployed once again. The Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron is manning a mobile aeromedical staging facility in Southwest Asia. In addition, about 100 airmen left in October for a rotation to SW Asia.

As Chief of Staff Lt. Col. Roger Sencindiver recently said, it is easy to see why 167th members continue to be deployed – it's because they are good at what they do. "They are some of the best."



Mission is “WIN-WIN” for soldiers of 119th

Story by 1st Lt. Amanda Mullins
119th EN Co.

FORT EUSTIS, Va. - Soldiers in the Army are commonly asked to perform work outside their chosen field. It is uncommon, however, for those soldiers to also be given the opportunity to refine the skills needed for their primary job at the same time.

Such is the case for members of the 119th Combat Support Equipment Engineer Company, activated in June. The 119th was scheduled to deploy to Iraq but ended up at Fort Story and Fort Eustis in Virginia working security at the installation gates and augmenting patrols as part of Operation Noble Eagle.

“Some members of the unit, myself included, were disappointed not to be overseas at first, but there is a good group of people here,” said 1st Lt. Brent Schultz, 119th officer in charge of personnel at Fort Eustis.

While Schultz and the other members of the unit are at Fort Eustis patrolling the gate, another group of 119th soldiers are at Fort Story. They are not only patrolling the roads on the base, they are improving them as well.

This results in a “win-win” situation for the soldiers and for the posts. The engineering opportunities for the soldiers are endless, and they are getting “stick time” on the heavy equipment. The soldiers refine their engineering skills and the bases get improved roads.

“It is been a good experience for some of the younger troops in the unit,” said Staff Sgt. Darrell Sears, supervisor for back road cut and fill operations. “They get to see the result of the work they do on the roads and get a chance to get licensed on different equipment.”

Five soldiers are transported daily between Fort Story and Fort Eustis in order to get experience on the heavy equipment and to take a break from force protection duties at the installation gate.

Many of the roads to training areas on Fort Story were not passable prior to the unit’s arrival. The 119th has put an extensive arsenal of dump trucks, bulldozers, loaders, compactors, water distributors, and other heavy equipment to work combating an unfamiliar element - sand.

“We’ve got a wide variety of equipment, but sand is different for us,” said Sgt. Jeffrey Jenkins. “We are used to dirt, so sand has been a little bit of a challenge.”

Before the 119th began battling the narrow and tarnished roads at Fort Story, its members had to battle the news of being called up for duty and leaving behind families.

“My biggest thing was looking for what had to be done to take care of my family back home,” said Sears, a husband and father of two.

However, since the 119th ended up in the Virginia Beach area, the soldiers are only about 400 miles from home and get a chance to see their families on days off.

“It’s a big stress relief for the families to visit,” Sears said. “They come down to Fort Story or I go home about every eight to 16 days. It makes a major difference.” Sears said that everyone has the same opportunity.

Although Schultz originally wanted to join the fight in Iraq, he said there are a lot of people over there (Middle East) who would be content with dealing with the beaches, roads and local communities around Story and Eustis.

“At first I really wanted to deploy, but I can’t complain about it now.” Schultz said. “There are guys over there who would love to be where I’m at now.”

Editors Note: Since this article was written, 59 members of the 119th were released from duty due to changing mission requirements. After outprocessing through the mobilization station at Camp Atterbury, Ind., the soldiers returned by charter bus to the Clarksburg armory on Oct. 9. They will remain on active duty until Nov. 3 to use accumulated leave.

111th Engineer Group plays major role in OIF redeployments

Story by Maj. Ron Garton
111th EN GP

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait - The 111th Engineer Group, based in St. Albans, was mobilized in March and arrived at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait in May to take over engineer command and control operations from the host 416th Engineer Command.

“Our transition here has gone smoothly because of the design section,” said 1st Lt. Mark Harry. “The 416th ENCOM was more than helpful. The staff has welcomed us by integrating us into the way they do things.”

The 111th deployed to Camp Arifjan in two detachments: the first group arrived May 15 and the second

group arrived May 27.

“The interaction between the two units went smoothly,” said Col. Robert Kincaid, commander of the 111th Engineer Group. “I contribute this to the professionalism of all of our organizations. We have a common mission, which makes things easier.”

The group’s primary task is to provide command and control for redeployment engineer tasks in Kuwait. The 111th is assisting units transitioning through this area for deployment to either their home station or to a follow-on mission in the region.

This is done through maintenance of the camps, facilities and infrastructure around Camp Arifjan.

150th mobilizes, may end up in Iraq

Mission changes from tanks to dismounted infantry operations

Story and photo by SSgt. Chuck Joseph, Det 1, 196th PAD

BLUEFIELD, W.Va. – West Virginia is making its latest contribution to the war on terror as a local armored battalion is mobilized here for a possible deployment to Iraq.

The 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Regiment will join its parent unit, the 30th Enhanced Separate Brigade, North Carolina, for this mission. The brigade was mobilized Oct. 1 and deployed to Ft. Bragg, N.C., for additional training.

The West Virginia communities of Welch, Williamson, Dunbar, Alloy and Beckley host the line companies of the battalion and will be directly affected by the mobilization of about 450 soldiers. The duration of the deployment is unknown, according to the battalion's operations and training officer, Maj. Robby R. Scarberry.

Scarberry, a veteran of three deployments while on active duty, understands the significance of augmenting an active duty division with national guardsmen. "The active duty forces need to have a rest," he said. "So, the National

Guard has to step up and continue the war on terrorism."

Scarberry doesn't hesitate to voice his opinion of the war on Iraq and terrorism. "The bottom line is: I hope that I do this so that my kids won't have to in the future."

The battalion faces a great challenge before it steps foot in Iraq. They have to make the transition from an armored unit that's prepared to fight a tank war, to an infantry unit that can conduct combat support operations.

So, their M1A1 Abrams tanks are going into storage, and they will submerge themselves in a sea of intensive mission-specific training that will take approximately three

"The bottom line is: I hope that I do this so that my kids won't have to in the future."

- Maj. Robby Scarberry

months to complete.

Battalion Executive Officer Maj. Roy L. Bourne is confident his soldiers will convert without fail.

"The soldiers that we have now will be up to it," Bourne said. "We just rotated through the National Training Center and did an outstanding job."

The team spirit is evident in the ranks of the 150th. Many prior-service soldiers hurried to recruiters when they heard about the upcoming deployment, and soldiers from other units transferred to the 150th.

Spc. Gary Boardwine repairs the transfer case on a HHC, 1-150th AR utility truck at the Brushfork Armory motor pool on Sept. 25, 2003, in preparation for the unit's deployment to Ft. Bragg, N.C.

Spc. Gary W. Boardwine, a vehicle mechanic in HHC re-enlisted so he could go. Boardwine said, "I just want to be a part of it."

Battalion Operations NCO Sgt. Maj. Paul Osborne feels the unit won't have any trouble making the conversion from armor tactics. "We know we'll get more infantry training and we already have a bunch of former infantry soldiers and scouts. So, we have a good base of experience."

The unit converted from a scout unit to armor in 1993. So, many senior NCOs and officers have armor and infantry backgrounds.

Osborne has seen the train-up plan and feels it is more than adequate to prepare the soldiers for what they may face. "We have several months to train a bunch of tankers in infantry tactics, and the final test will be at JRTC." JRTC is the Joint Readiness Training Center located at Fort Polk, La. The unit has to perform there before deploying to ensure a successful transition from armor to infantry tactics.

Bourne is confident his soldiers can adapt and understands the importance of proper preparation. "We are going to do everything necessary to make sure the soldiers are trained and equipped properly before we go anywhere."

The change in mission is not surprising to many of the 150th soldiers. The unit has a long lineage and history dating back to the Revolutionary War and, since then, has changed missions several times. Now, they will transition to infantry once again and could deploy overseas, possibly to Iraq.

The soldiers seem to be undaunted by the tough and arduous task ahead. They hope to live up to the unit's motto - "WE CAN TAKE IT."



Groups lighten the burden, bring people together

**Story by Maj. Mike Cadle
State Public Affairs Officer**

While frequent deployments are difficult for soldiers and airmen, family members are the ones who bear the burden of the high operations tempo we are experiencing. This burden is greater when families are located far from Charleston and the headquarters designed to assist them.

Enter family readiness groups. Their mission? Support family members as they struggle in the absence of their loved one.

“If the families at home are secure knowing that they have a support system, the soldiers can complete their mission,” said Capt. Allen Martin, the National Guard’s state family readiness coordinator.

Family readiness groups offer support to families through meetings and activities designed to help lessen the pain of separation for those left behind, if only for a short while. The

shared sense of loss often creates a bond within the group.

“This group is a way for the ladies to not feel so alone,” said Sgt. 1st Class George Bragg of the **150th AR** in Bluefield. “They can express their concerns and fears by talking to other soldiers’ wives.”

Coordinators have been creative in scheduling activities for their groups. The **130th Airlift Wing** family group in Charleston has an evening with Santa and an Easter egg hunt for the children of deployed airmen. Members of the readiness group at **Co. A 1092nd EB** in Gassaway are having a Mary Kay makeup party this month for their members, according to Sandy Fealy, president of the group.

Other groups are raising money to promote support for the troops and to plan welcome home celebrations for the soldiers. Soldiers in the **157th MP Co.** have been deployed for 18 of the last 22 months, and their families are

tackling a number of projects as they await the return of their loved ones.

“We don’t know when they are coming home, but we want to get a welcome home committee ready,” said Tricia Edwards, wife of Sgt. James Edwards.

As West Virginia soldiers and airmen answered the call to duty, so did family members who took on the burden of establishing and maintaining family readiness groups.

“If this works like it’s supposed to or even close, it will be a good thing,” said Staff Sgt. Robert Kennett, **150th AR**, as his unit prepared to mobilize.

He only needs to look at the success of the other family readiness groups across the state. During this difficult time, they continue to lighten the burden the families must bear.

Spc. Benjamin Wilson and Spc. Sherree Casper, Det. 1, 196 PAD contributed to this article.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Military Points of Contact

Capt. Allen Martin (48273)	1-800-79GUARD
Family Readiness Coordinator	
Sgt. 1st Class Alice Legg	304-561-6361
TRICARE	
Sgt. 1st Class Brian Cline	304-561-6382
SGLI/DEERS/ID Cards	
Lt. Col. Mike Barber	304-561-6323
JAG/Legal Assistance	
Sgt. 1st Class James Gregory	304-473-5214
Sgt. Steven Rohr	304-473-5211
Military Pay	
Maj. Karen Woodrum	304-561-6366
Education Office	
Ms. Kathy Kidd	304-561-6306

Family Assistance Centers

Charleston FAC, 1679 Coonskin Dr., Charleston, WV 25311	1-866-986-4326	1-304-561-6545	1-304-561-6377
(fax)			
CHARLESTONFAC@WV.NGB.ARMY.MIL			
Parkersburg FAC, 1500 Blizzard Dr., Parkersburg, WV 26101	1-866-986-4322/	1-304-485-7401/	1-304-561-6105/ 1-304-561-
PARKERSBURGFAC@WV.NGB.ARMY.MIL			(fax) 6106
Fairmont FAC, 1516 Mary Lou Retton Dr, Fairmont, WV 26554	1-866-986-4323/	1-304-363-1721/	1-304-561-6021/ 1-304-561-
FAIRMONTFAC@WV.NGB.ARMY.MIL			(fax) 6023
Bluefield FAC, 2915 Old Bramwell Rd, Bluefield, WV 24701	1-866-986-4324	1-304-589-7185	



Tech. Sgt. John Tucker's girlfriend, Natalie, looks out over a foggy flightline while waiting for the plane carrying Tucker to depart the 167th AW, Martinsburg, for Southwest Asia. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Robert Levernigh)

State Public Affairs Office
West Virginia National Guard
1679 Coonskin Drive
Charleston, WV 25311