



MOUNTAINEER **DEFENDER**

BRAINS!
Surviving zombies and
other disasters

130th AW members
pay tribute to crash
victims

Aviation troops open
“Waffle House” in
Kosovo

201st FA Soldiers
mentor Kuwaiti troops



Magazine of the
West Virginia National Guard
Fall 2011

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On the cover:

The flag in front of West Virginia's capitol building stands at half-staff in honor of 21 Airmen of the West Virginia Air National Guard's 167th Fighter Squadron. The men were killed when their Douglas C-47B Skytrain crashed near Kanawha Airport (now Yeager Airport) 60 years ago.

Photo courtesy 130th Airlift Wing



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The Adjutant General

Throughout this next decade of the 21st Century our Nation will face many unique challenges.

One of the most unique is the asymmetric threat that will continue to attempt to overextend our military capabilities at the same time our Nation must reduce its deficit. It is this unique combination of challenges that will once again require the "Citizen Soldier" to step forward and answer the call.

Since September 11, 2001, the Guard has demonstrated it can, if properly resourced, conduct its war fighting mission, its homeland defense mission and its state active duty mission simultaneously and in an exemplary manner. Because of our cost effectiveness the Guard will become an important leader in reducing costs while at the same time continuing to improve and expand our National Defense capability. West



Maj. Gen. James A. Hoyer

Virginia Guardsmen continue to show the Nation that we in Fort West Virginia are ready to lead the way in the defense of our Nation, both at home and abroad.

In addition, I want everyone to know how truly proud I am of our recent hosting of the EANGUS conference. All of the feedback I received was positive. I can't say enough about the amazing work done by our soldiers and airmen and about the outstanding support we received from the community of Charleston.

Our local, state and national political leaders took time out of their busy schedules to show their support for their "West Virginia Guard". I heard from many visiting states that they envy the relationship we have with our elected officials. That relationship is a direct result of the outstanding work each and every one of you do day-in and day-out.

Thank you and your families for your dedication and service to our state and Nation. You are truly "citizen soldiers at their best" and American Patriots!

The State Senior Enlisted Leader

"It's a home run!" was just one of the many comments I received from several Senior Enlisted Leaders from around the country about the 40th Annual Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States Conference and the 38th EANGUS Auxiliary Conference.

The positive attitude of all the West Virginia Soldiers and Airmen was commendable. The upbeat attitude was evident the morning of the first work day.

The number of quality W.Va. speakers and amount of support demonstrated by state and federal representatives was the envy of everyone present.

The hospitality the Governor and First Lady expressed was first class at the Monday evening event. The Auxiliary Reception and WVNG display at the Culture Center, supported by Randall Reid Smith and staff, was extremely well planned and executed.

The Professional Development blocks of instruction were some of the best that many had

ever seen in the past. Junior Enlisted Soldiers and Airmen gained a lot from the information they received. The professionalism of the WVNG personnel was cited as commendable.

The Virginia State Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Carl Holcomb, said that "West Virginia has set the bar high for those who will follow as host states for the EANGUS National Conference." He also stated that "this conference will definitely go down as one of my most memorable events attended since joining EANGUS."

Enlisted Soldiers and Airmen of the WVNG can be proud of the mission they accomplished in such an outstanding manner. Their efforts once again have proved to all the other 53 states and Territories why the WVNG is second to none!

We accomplished each and every goal that was set in bringing the EANGUS Conference to our lovely state. We educated our enlisted Soldiers and Airmen on the importance of EANGUS and the value of the National Guard



Command Sgt. Maj. Vance

Professional Development program. This conference lived up to its theme "Almost Heaven in two thousand eleven."

I am truly blessed to serve with such a caliber of Soldiers, Airmen, and family members.

All of us here in West Virginia are extremely proud of our Guard and family members and their outstanding job performance!

Thank you for being a part of our Guard family!

The State Command Chief Master Sergeant



Command Chief Master Sgt. Bowe

As I write this, I just finished a fantastic 6 days at the National Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States Conference in Charleston, W.Va.

I want to start off by saying Thank You to all the members of the West Virginia National

Guard for their assistance in putting together, working, and attending this conference. The comments I received from those in attendance were by far the most positive I've ever heard.

I AW AFI 36-2618 "The Enlisted Force Structure," it is our responsibility to support the associations, like EANGUS, that support us. As junior enlisted and non commissioned officers, it is incumbent upon us to not only be a part of these organizations, but encourage those around us to do the same.

We all are aware of the debt problems our country is currently facing. We are starting to see that these issues will quickly begin to affect the National Guard and the military as a whole. Large budget cuts and base closures could be possible and we must do everything we can to ensure that we have the strongest possible voice on Capitol Hill to help us!

EANGUS is one of the strongest voices

we have when it comes to concerns of the National Guard, and the constant fight in front of Congress. On a daily basis, these advocates are there fighting to maintain our benefits, recapitalize infrastructure, and keep our existing manpower and equipment.

I want to close by asking if you are a member of EANGUS. If not, please visit the website www.eangus.org. On this website, you'll find out about the many things they do to help us. When you become an EANGUS member, you are helping yourself and your fellow Airmen and Soldiers. Regardless of why you joined the National Guard, you all have proven that you are here to serve your state and your nation. Why not serve your fellow enlisted members by becoming a member of EANGUS? Again, I must thank everyone for their work and attendance, and in making the National Conference a stellar success.

Zombie invasion? Tips for survival



130th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

When you think “disaster” or “emergency,” what comes to mind might be floods, tropical storms, winter storms, hazardous materials accidents, power failures, resource shortages, drought, forest fires, and environmental contamination.

What about zombies?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently published a blog about what to do in the case of a “zombie invasion.”

“I think it offers good advice on how to get ready for the ever present threat of just about anything,” said Senior Master Sgt. Stanley D. Wriston, emergency management superintendent with the 130th Civil Engineering Squadron.

The CDC uses “zombies” in their posters as an attention grabber to get the public to take preparedness seriously.

“Most of us don’t like thinking about natural disasters, sheltering in place or anything else that takes us out of our comfort zone,” Wriston said.

“No doom and gloom for me! But for some reason zombies is

something we can sink our teeth into, or they into us,” he added.

In zombie movies like “Night of the Living Dead,” civilian society panics and collapses, while a few survivors struggle to stay alive.

“What’s a zombie attack? It’s nothing more than a disease,” Wriston said.

When a disaster or emergency situation strikes, people fall into one of two categories: those who need help and those who help.

If you’re struggling to survive, how will you be able to help?

As a West Virginia National Guard

member, who can be called to duty at any time, it is crucial that your family is prepared when you get the call to serve.

First, you need an emergency kit in your house.

Secondly, create an emergency plan with your family—where you would go and who would you call.

Pick two meeting places: one outside your home and one outside your neighborhood in case you can’t go home.

Also, make a list of emergency contacts—police, fire department, and an out-of-state contact to call to let them know your family is safe.

And, plan more than one evacuation route. “So the zombies don’t have a chance,” says CDC.

“When the unthinkable happens you can be ready,” said Senior Master Sgt. Wriston.

Whether you believe in zombies or not, you can’t deny that their presence in our movies is how some people face their fear of disasters or emergencies.

But why not be smarter than the zombies? Get a kit, make a plan, and stay informed!



West Virginia National Guard Deployment Update

Members of the **156th Military Police Company** are currently deployed to Afghanistan. Soldiers are expected to return to the Mountain State in early 2012.

Members of the West Virginia National Guard’s **Special Operations Detachment - Europe** are currently deployed to Africa. The unit is expected to return to the Mountain State next spring.

Members of **Company C, 1-150th Aviation** are currently deployed

to Kosovo. Soldiers are expected to begin return to West Virginia in spring, 2012.

More than 100 Airmen in the **167th Airlift Wing** remain deployed in support of current military operations in the United States and around the world.

More than 20 Airmen in the **130th Airlift Wing** are deployed around the globe for various AEF/ECS taskings.

Hoyer visits West Virginia troops in Kuwait

by Staff Sgt. Debra Richardson
201st Field Artillery Public Affairs

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait -- The Adjutant General of West Virginia, Maj. Gen. James A. Hoyer arrived at Camp Buehring in a cloud of dust. As the Blackhawk eased onto the tarmac, Hoyer hoisted himself out of the helicopter and made his way to a briefing room where 1st Battalion, 201st Field Artillery leadership awaited his arrival. Hoyer began his introduction by voicing appreciation for the unit's service, commitment and sacrifice.

"I thank you from two different perspectives: one from the West Virginia TAG and one from a parent of two kids," Hoyer said. "My wife and I thank you and your state thanks you for what you've done over the past year here."

Only weeks after W.Va. once again won the Army Communities of Excellence Award and days after Osama Bin Laden's death, Hoyer was intent on conveying more than just a sense of pride in his troops.

"Osama Bin Laden might be dead but this thing isn't over yet," Hoyer said. "The 10th anniversary of September 11th is coming up but that wasn't the first attempt on the World Trade Center; it was actually February of 1993. In February of '93, my oldest son was six months old. Now, he's a security policeman in the Air Guard. This thing went for an entire generation just as it relates to the Hoyer family and it's not over. The things we face and the things we need to address as a nation are not over and the threat is still going to try to over extend us.



The Adjutant General of West Virginia, Maj. Gen. James A. Hoyer, visits with Soldiers attached to 1/201st Field Artillery, West Virginia Army National Guard, during his visit with the battalion May 4. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Debra Richardson)

"I'm convinced it's time for the next greatest generation to step up for this country," Hoyer continued. "I'm even more convinced it's going to come from the National Guard, from our citizen Soldiers. A lot of that core will come from the West Virginia National Guard."

A second issue, and equally as problematic, is the recent budget cuts. For the past ten years, W.Va. Soldiers have deployed, offering alternative job outlets to those who couldn't find work on the civilian side. Many Active Guard and Reserve, or AGR, jobs were created to help sustain the high deployment tempo for the state. But as the Middle East begins to settle, the state of W.Va. will see fewer deployments; an accomplishment for the country but an employment issue for the Soldiers.

"We have to change the way we do things," Hoyer said as he explained the significant budget cuts and how they would affect the W.Va. National Guard. "Help me turn these challenges into opportunities."

Hoyer announced his top three concerns, unemployment, budget cuts and the prevention of suicide. He fervently asked each Soldier, regardless of rank, to keep those concerns in mind and

be patient as plans of action are enforced.

"I want to hear from you and the troops today," said Hoyer. "What's on your mind and what do I need to be doing to take care of you guys?"

During a brief focus group, Hoyer requested feedback from those who discussed issues such as the payment of college, availability of military schools and requests to remain deployed.

"You're the shining example of the phrase 'citizen Soldier' at your best," Hoyer said. "But we all have to remain focused on our mission and each other. Do not lose focus over these next 100 days; I need all of you back."

In W.Va. there's a Guardsman for every 400 people but the national average is one Soldier for every 2,000 citizens, Hoyer said. According to W.Va. department of Military Affairs and Public Safety, W.Va. also boasts the highest number of veterans, per capita, in the nation.

"Forty-three percent of W.Va. National Guard is either in college or has a college degree," Hoyer said. "We're an educated workforce. So let's continue to encourage our Soldiers to enroll in college and take advantage of their G.I. Bill benefits."

"You're part of the one percent of the population willing to step up and take on the responsibility of protecting this nation," Hoyer said. "I appreciate all that you do, what you guys are all about and the values that you focus on. What you do here and what you do back home are what make our country great."



Maj. Gen. James A. Hoyer talks water with Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Jack, the support operations non-commissioned officer in charge, or NCOIC. Jack, assigned to 1/201st Field Artillery, West Virginia Army National Guard, explained the tedious process of receiving, delivering and monitoring water use within the camp. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Debra Richardson)

Air National Guard tragedy remembered

by Senior Airman Jameel S. Moses
130th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (June 4, 2011) -- A Douglas C-47B Skytrain carrying 21 Airmen of the West Virginia Air National Guard's 167th Fighter Squadron, left Godman Air Force Base, Ky., April 8, 1951, to return to Charleston, W.Va., for the funeral of a fellow unit member who died in a plane crash -- they never made it. Four minutes away from their destination at Yeager Airport, formerly Kanawha Airport, the aircraft sent a transmission to the airport control tower at 11:56 a.m. advising them they were on their way in to land. Before the plane made it, however, it clipped the top of a hill and was vaulted over the top landing 50 feet on the other side. The right wing and part of the left wing were torn off at the second point of impact. According to witnesses, the entire hillside was streaked with fire after the plane skipped more than 400 feet, shearing off trees before bursting into flames and stopping. The crash, which left wreckage scattered over an area of 25,000 square feet, killed seven officers and 12 enlisted Airmen immediately and delivered fatal injuries to two more officers, according to an article in "The Charleston Gazette" published the day after the accident. The accident, which occurred a little more than 60 years ago, remains the worst in the history of the West Virginia Air National Guard. Nearby resident Jack Copen described the crash to Gazette reporter Robert D. Horan shortly after the accident.

"I was eating dinner about noon when I heard a sound like a big artillery shell going off," said Copen, who lived only a few hundred yards from the site of the crash. "I looked out the window and saw a string of fire across the top of the hill and motors rolling."

Copen then dispatched his wife, Eleanor, two and one-half miles to the foot of Polly Hill on Sandy where a call was placed to the airport notifying them of the crash. Copen and a neighbor, Goldie Seabolt, who was visiting for dinner, went to the crash site.

"We heard two men near the wreckage calling for help," Copen said. "Flames were within 100 feet of them. They said they were blind and couldn't see, but they could walk. The first thing they said was asking which way the airport was."

The two Airmen, the only to survive the initial crash, were then taken back to the Copens' house to have their injuries treated until ambulances arrived. Copen treated Capt. Harry K. Blackhurst and Maj. Isaac E. Bonfas for third-degree burns on their heads and much of their bodies.

Both men were transported to Staats Hospital where they succumbed to their



injuries, according to the Gazette article. Blackhurst died within 24 hours of the crash and Bonfas nine days later. The 19 others remained in the plane until after the flames were extinguished and the hot metal had cooled enough to safely enter. The bodies were charred from the flames leaving eight Airmen's bodies unidentifiable.

The Airmen were returning here to pay their respects and attend the funeral of Maj. Woodford W. "Jock" Sutherland, of St. Albans, who died when his F-51 Mustang collided with another fighter at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. More than 5,000 people attended a mass rite held at the Charleston Municipal Auditorium for the then 20 dead, whose average age was 25.

The tragedy is still remembered and the Airmen who lost their lives are still honored here.

A ceremony was held on April 8 marking the 60th anniversary of the crash. The 130th Airlift Wing's fire department sounded its sirens at the exact time of the radio call from the plane, and a wreath was laid on a memorial dedicated in the victims' honor at the time of the crash. A short video was also shown with photographs of the Airmen who lost their lives.

"I am glad to know the men and women of the 130th Airlift Wing continue to remember the men who lost their lives that gray, April morning six decades ago," said Syd Edwards, a resident of Pt. Pleasant writing a book on the crash and the men's brief lives titled "Native Sons - 21 Lives Left Unfinished", who attended the memorial ceremony.

"It is great to see they have not been forgotten by those who have inherited their legacy."





Engineer unit participates in mass training exercise

by Spc. Sara Yoke
153rd Public Affairs Detachment

FORT A.P. HILL, Va. (April 3, 2011) -- Rows and rows of green tents forming perfect lines housed Soldiers who hurried to secure all their equipment needed to spend the day on a weapons qualifying range.

From April 2 until April 4, more than 670 West Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers worked hard to qualify on different weapon systems in one of the largest brigade training events the W.Va. Army National Guard has ever organized. After months of preparation and planning, all elements of the 111th Engineer Brigade came together to train at Fort A.P. Hill, Va.

Sgt. Maj. Keith Hammack, 111th Eng. Bde. operation sergeant major, said that it was important for the different units in the brigade to come together so leadership could be exercised all the way down to the squad element.

“This type of event tears down walls and lets everyone know who is in their brigade,” he said. “This helps us all function collectively, especially as a fairly new brigade.”

Soldiers trained on a diverse range of weapons, with their priority being qualifying on the M-16 rifle. A night-fire range was operated to give troops the chance to become comfortable hitting targets in the dark without any type of night vision equipment.

Soldiers fired at targets, only illuminated by a small chemical light. Tracer rounds lit up the path of their speeding rounds in the dark.

Other weapon ranges included the nine-millimeter pistol range, the 50-caliber machine gun and the M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon.

This collective training exercise required advance planning, preparation and adjustment. Originally the plan called for barracks for housing, but the situation changed when training budget was cut and when other service members who were training for deployment required the living space. Instead it was decided to bring in a mobile site with tents, mobile kitchen units and large tents for command centers.

An advanced party set up countless tents to house the brigade for three nights. Two mobile kitchen units were set up to feed



(Clockwise from left) Spc. Hollie Craft, 771st Troop Command Battalion, fires the 50mm machine gun during weapons training at Fort A.P. Hill, Va. A Soldier with the 111th Engineer Brigade performs a night-fire range during the brigade training event. Soldiers load rounds into magazines in preparation for weapons qualification. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Penni Harris, 153rd Public Affairs Detachment)

Soldiers for a morning and evening meal. A dining facility tent was erected and could seat more than 200 people. When finally finished, the advanced party had created a temporary tent city.

Despite a couple chilly nights, there were mostly no real complaints about the living situation.

“There have been good comments from troops on the ground,” Hammack said. “Of course we are our own worse critic, but from after action reviews, we will be able to make improvements for future training events.”



WEST VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD

Out and About



Spc. Adam Brenner, a college student at Davis and Elkins College in Elkins, W.Va., calls out to soldiers waiting for their turn to qualify. Brenner, assigned to A Company, 201st Field Artillery Battalion stationed at Camp Buehring, Kuwait was given the opportunity to act as a safety on the range due to his marksmanship and leadership skills. (U.S. Army photo by Maj. Gregory Heilshorn)



Maj. Gen. James A. Hoyer and his wife, Amy, ride in the South Charleston Armed Forces Day Parade. Army photo by Lt. Col. Todd Harrell, JFHQ Public Affairs Office)

Maj. Gen. James A. Hoyer, Adjutant General, West Virginia National Guard, signs the Common Ground Partnership Memorandum of Understanding at the West Virginia State Capitol June 13. The Common Ground Partnership is dedicated to providing services to high school students and special support for military families. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Anna-Marie Hizer, JFHQ Public Affairs Office)



Tech. Sgt. Devon Paskewich, a crew chief at the 167th Airlift Wing, seals a panel on the side of a C-5 aircraft, at the Martinsburg, W.Va. unit on April 7, 2011. The unit's C-5 aircraft have recently supported missions in Libya, Japan, Afghanistan, and Iraq, keeping both operations and maintenance personnel busy. (U.S. Air Force photo by MSgt Emily Beightol-Deyerle)



EOD technician working on an improvised operator and Yoke, 153rd

at



First Lady Joanne Jaeger Tomblin, West Virginia National Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. James A. Hoyer and Bishop Grove came together at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon, W.Va., for the signing of a memorandum of understanding that launched the Guard's Partners in Care initiative. Partners in Care is a voluntary relationship between faith communities and other similar organizations and the West Virginia National Guard. The purpose of this agreement is to provide faith-based support, counseling, funds, donations, grants, and other similar assistance to those members of the West Virginia National Guard and their families who need such assistance. (U.S. Army photo by Lt. Col. Todd Harrell)

May 21 (U.S.



Senior leaders of the West Virginia National Guard along with members of the 2nd Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne), attended a Dedication Ceremony for a monument honoring 2nd Bn. 19th SFG(Abn.), May 24 at Fort Bragg, N.C. (U.S. Army photo by Lt. Col. David Lester, JFHQ Public Affairs Officer)



Maj. Kelly Ambrose cheers as she closes in on the finish line of the Walk for a Cure on Charleston's Kanawha Boulevard. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Anna-Marie Hizer, JFHQ Public Affairs Office)

Sgt. Robert L. Lott, a member of the 753rd Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit WV Army National Guard, operates the Talon to check an empty building for possible explosives before sending in a reconnaissance team during a training mission on Feb. 5 at the Camp Dawson village training site. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Penni Harris, 153rd Public Affairs Detachment)



icans can use the PackPot to handle a full range of explosive devices. The machines can be carried by a single person and can endure rugged terrain. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Sara I Public Affairs Detachment)



Sgt. Katie Nesselrodt, an assistant to the Chief of Joint Staff, WVARNG, helps out at the bingo table during the 2011 Special Olympics in Charleston. (U.S. Army photo by Lt. Col. Todd Harrell, JFHQ Public Affairs Office)



Master Sgt. Jesse Hager, aircrew flight equipment continuation training instructor with the 130th Airlift Squadron, watches aircrew from the 167th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, egressing from their life raft, at a local public pool, Charleston, W.Va., June 3, 2011. The four aircrew from the 167th AES came to Charleston from Shepherd Field, Martinsburg, W.Va. for water survival training. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Shane Arrington, 130th AW Public Affairs)

167th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron gets wet

by Staff Sgt. Shane Arrington
130th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (June 3, 2011)

-- Four members of the 167th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron came from Martinsburg, W.Va. to take a water survival training course with instructors from the 130th Airlift Wing in Charleston.

The 167th AES is officially part of the 130th AW as of Oct. 1, 2010, but the physical move is set for a future date. While the unit as a whole has yet to move, that's not stopping them from training at their future home.

Maj. Christopher Taylor, an aeromedical nurse with the 167th AES, said the training provided by the 130th AW instructors was beneficial.

"These guys know what they're doing," Taylor said. "The instruction was great, and the facility here was nice."

All fliers must go through water survival training, but for aeromedical personnel, they not only focus on saving themselves, but the patients and passengers they're responsible for as well.

"This training really opens up the eyes of the younger people coming in," Taylor said. "It helps people jump over the edge,

push themselves and get the training they need. They may not realize how important it is at the time, but when deployed, and the flight or fight mode kicks in, you remember your training ... and this saves lives."

Master Sgt. Jesse Hager, an Aircrew Flight Equipment Continuation Training Instructor with the 130th Airlift Squadron, instructed the life saving training course. To be qualified to train others in water survival and life saving techniques he had to go through extensive training - Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape, combat survival, water survival, parachuting classes and an instructor certification program.

"I have to be trained in all the things fliers are, with the exception of pilot or navigation training," Hager said. "I'm basically the ground guy who knows what the fliers need to know if something happens and they find themselves out of the air."

The responsibility of conducting training that could be used in a life or death situation isn't lost on Hager. He takes a lot of time to ensure his training scenario goes smoothly.

"It took a couple of days just to prep the equipment," Hager said. "The equipment

has to match our operational equipment for the best training. Just this morning before the training it took another two hours to prep the pool and have everything ready and safe."

"Knowing the training you provided could possibly save their lives, that's when the sense of responsibility really kicks in."

This was the first water survival training conducted for the 167th AES in Charleston. Hager said the key to the integration process is working together and adapting to the way each other does things.

"I think today was a good first page in building a relationship between us, the instructors and the aeromedical personnel."

Taylor agreed with Hager's assessment.

"Everything is looking good," Taylor said. "It seems we're being met here in Charleston with open arms and the training we did here today went very well."

The 167th AES personnel are required to have water survival training every three years to stay current. Taylor, who has put this training to use in a rescue operation downrange, said that it doesn't matter if you're brand new or have been doing this job for several years, refresher training is vital to mission accomplishment.

Serving up education: Aviation soldiers cook up waffles for a cause

by Staff Sgt. Anna Doo
200th Public Affairs Detachment

PRISTINA, Kosovo -- Members of C Company, 1-150th Aviation Battalion based in Wheeling, West Virginia, are just one example, among the many members of the Army, living the Army values. Selfless Service is one of those values. Soldiers are not just required to memorize the words; soldiers are expected to live them.

Here at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, in a large helicopter hanger, members of C Company, 1-150th hold a Waffle House every Sunday morning. Volunteers from the Task Force Aviation unit and occasionally other units, make waffles from 7 a.m. to noon. These volunteers take orders, serve customers and make waffles in the kitchen.

"It is a chance for those living and working on Camp Bondsteel to come together every Sunday morning to relax and enjoy each other's company while having some good food and fun in support of a good cause," said Capt. Francisco J. Figueroa, commander of C Company, 1-150th and a resident of Buckhannon, West Virginia.

As soldiers enter the hanger a sign reads, 'Your donations support local youth educa-

tion.' Members of C Company, 1-150th also volunteer their time and talents teaching English to local students twice a week as they prepare for the Test of English as a Foreign Language.

"A portion of the funds raised from the Waffle House will be utilized to pay for the cost of each student's TOEFL," said Figueroa. "Another portion will be used to pay for the students' meals while on Camp Bondsteel for a field trip."

The TOEFL exam will be held at the University of Pristina in November.

Sgt. 1st Class Matt Hogsett, of St. Clairesville, Ohio, and platoon sergeant with C Company, 1-150th, volunteered to act as the head cook because he wanted to make a difference. "I like cooking and was interested in making a lasting impact on Kosovo," said Hogsett.

The desire to help is also what led Wellsburg, West Virginia resident, Sgt. Kurt Campbell, a petroleum supply specialist to volunteer. "This all helps because a lot of kids cannot afford the TOEFL," said Campbell. "We wanted to assist them and open doors to a better future."

C Co., 1-150th's efforts also make a positive impact on the soldiers and civil-

ians stationed at Camp Bondsteel.

"I always hear positive comments from soldiers during the week," said Hogsett. "They tell me they are looking forward to Sunday."

For soldiers it is a win-win situation, allowing them to have a homemade breakfast while gathering together to relax, socialize and make a positive contribution.

"Education is the only way to give people hope; knowledge empowers people," said Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Deihl, non-commissioned officer in charge of patient administration with Task Force Medical. "We came here [Kosovo] to make a difference and provide for a better future and we can also do that by supporting the Waffle House."

Sgt. Monica Hepker, an animal care specialist agreed.

The money soldiers are donating goes to a good cause, as everyone needs an education, said Hepker. The kids are the future of Kosovo and education makes a long-term impact. Plus it is a great place to gather on Sunday mornings to relax and chat with fellow soldiers.

Sgt. Richard Kyle, from Fairmont, W.Va. and a crew chief with C Company, 1-150th takes orders and donations most Sundays and said he is impressed with the generosity and consistency of the soldiers.

"This is a good thing to do and every week we have about 100-150 soldiers come through and help us raise money for the TOEFL," said Kyle. "Donations are really good and the continued participation of our soldiers demonstrates their sincerity."

For those who have not tried the waffles Figueroa encourages you to come out.

"The Waffle House is open to soldiers, civilians and local nationals located or working on Camp Bondsteel," said Figueroa. "Come on out and try the 'Big Duke.' It is our most ordered waffle."

Figueroa contributes the Waffle House's ongoing success to soldiers living the Army value of Selfless Service.

"All of the workers volunteer their time and talents to make the Waffle House a success," Figueroa said. "Everyone has been enthusiastic about sharing their skills, making friends and supporting a program that has the potential to change lives."



Each Sunday Task Force Aviation offers some home cooking to those stationed on Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. Fresh, hot, tasty waffles are made to order for the price of a donation. The money raised goes toward school supplies and tests for volunteer students in area schools who are learning English. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Anna Doo, 200th Public Affairs Detachment)

201st Soldiers mentor Kuwaiti border patrol

by Staff Sgt. Debra Richardson
1-201st Field Artillery

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait -- With more than 20 officers and senior enlisted soldiers observing, four Kuwaiti police officers dropped to one knee, crouching low beside the litter. As a helicopter approached, the policemen lowered their heads as small rocks and sand pelted them, causing a near blackout until the helicopter settled on the improvised helo pad. With a compelling sense of urgency, they made their way to the chopper and loaded the litter.

As the safety buckles were fastened, the pilot called an end to the simulation, and the observing crowd clapped in approval.

The medical evacuation exercise was conducted as part of a capstone event designed to demonstrate the success of a recent two-week Joint Security Force Exercises between the Kuwait Ministry of Interior's border police and the security forces of the 1/201st Field Artillery Battalion, West Virginia Army National Guard, stationed at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

"This was a joint decision between Kuwait and U.S. forces to increase security operations to prepare for the upcoming troop withdraw from Iraq," said 1st Lt. Justin R. McIntire of Charleston, W. Va. "Both sides want to ensure that security



A group of Kuwaiti soldiers return from carrying a casualty on a litter to the aircraft during a joint training exercise April 22 at the Khabari Crossing, Kuwait. During the exercise, the soldiers evaluated a casualty, called for rotary wing assets and effectively transported the casualty to the awaiting aircraft. The training exercise was part of a joint initiative to train the Kuwait border patrol to take over the Khabari Crossing. (U.S. Army photo by Angela Kyle)

operations can still be conducted and to ensure this border crossing can remain operational after U.S. forces withdraw."

The training covered a range of soldier tasks including basic weapons handling, the use of escalation of force, and vehicle searches. For eight hours each day, American and Kuwaiti officers worked side-by-side, each learning from the other.

"They were very professional and eager to both learn and share the different ways to conduct security operations," McIntire said. "Some of the senior police officers shared stories about some of the different situations they had encountered over the years while assigned to the Kuwait-Iraq border."

The Khabari Al-Awazem international border crossing, or Khabari Crossing, is known as the gateway to Iraq and though small, it plays a very influential role in stopping weapons and drug trafficking. Of important significance to the U.S. military is the safe passage of the sustainment convoys entering and leaving through the gateway.

"We will continue to work

with the Kuwaiti border police on a daily basis at the Khabari Crossing to help with any questions or concerns that arise," McIntire said. "We will encourage the unit that replaces us to work cooperatively with them and incorporate them in their daily tasks as we have done. I hope this will be a lasting relationship."

Several West Virginia Soldiers participated in the training including McIntire, Staff Sgt. Jeremy Bennett of Alderson, Cpl. Bradley Owens of Morgantown, Spc. Michael Wiley of Union, Spc. Craig Brown of Hinton, Spc. Jonathan Mersing of Grafton, Spc. Zachary Mills of Forest Hill, and Spc. Michael Neff of Sistersville. Spc. Steven Brady of Bowie, Md., was also part of the training.



Cpl. Bradley Owens, 201st Field Artillery Battalion, demonstrates how to apply a tourniquet during a joint training exercise with the Kuwaiti Border Patrol April 22 at the Khabari Crossing, Kuwait. Owens, a medic from Morgantown, W. Va., mentored Kuwaiti soldiers and spearheaded medical training during the program. (Right) First Lt. Justin McIntire, assigned to 201st Field Artillery, speaks with the Navy doctor and Kuwaiti sergeant major. The Kuwaiti soldiers demonstrated how to evacuate a casualty via rotary wing. (U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. Debra Richardson)



167th Airlift Wing establishes domestic military customs inspection program

by Master Sgt. Emily Beightol-Deyerle
167th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

MARTINSBURG, W.Va. (April 5, 2011) -- Eighteen Airmen with the 167th Airlift Wing are now certified Military Customs Inspectors. Lt. Col. Richard F. Sutherland Jr. said establishing the Domestic Military Customs Inspection Program at the base has taken nearly two and a half years.

"The members of the Deployment and Distribution Flight and the Security Forces Squadron have taken this and developed a very comprehensive program to ensure we stay in compliance with all regulations," said Sutherland, commander of the Wing's Logistics Readiness Squadron.

Tech Sgt. Ben Dillard, a passenger Service Supervisor for the 167th Small Air Terminal, has been instrumental in putting the program together at the unit.

Dillard said the late Sen. Robert C. Byrd wanted the capabilities at Shepherd Field.

"Senator Byrd desired for us to be able to clear customs at the 167th Airlift Wing, adding value to the unit and possibly open the door for an inland port to be established to bring more business to the Panhandle," Dillard explained.

There are limits to the inspections the Military Customs Inspectors (MCIs) can perform. The MCIs are authorized to inspect flights originating from foreign lands as long as the flights are of a military nature and all crew and passengers are active military, Guard, or Reserve personnel. Civilians on board any military aircraft can only be cleared by Customs and Border Patrol agents.

Previously, flights returning from overseas without cargo would be directed to a U.S. port of entry such as Bangor, Maine,

or Dover, Delaware to clear customs. With the customs capabilities at the unit, these flights can fly directly into Martinsburg saving time and money.

Col. Richard M. Robichaud, commander of the 167th Airlift Wing's Operations Group, estimates that "this will shave at least three hours on a trip as well as save the taxpayers on average about \$30,000 in flying hour costs."

According to the Customs and Border Patrol's official Web site, everyone who arrives at a U.S. port of entry must be inspected to keep illegal material from entering the U.S. while also facilitating the flow of legitimate travel and trade.

MCIs are the first individuals on the plane when it lands. The MCIs assume control of the crew and cargo until they have been cleared to re-enter the country. During the inspection, the MCIs ensure all custom's documentation is correct, all personal bags are inspected and crew members are in good health.

They also act as agriculture inspectors to prevent the introduction of foreign plant and animal diseases, parasites and other foreign pests into the country.

According to Dillard, "All trash that has come in contact with dairy, meats, or other overseas food products must be tightly sealed in a yellow leak proof bag."

He added that it is important for unit members to know that the yellow trash bags be used only for regulated trash.

Because most air bases are in close proximity to international airports there are very few units that detail their Airmen as MCIs. Many units' Small Air Terminal handle regulated garbage, but few handle the regulated garbage and perform customs inspections.

"The folks here have been very positive about taking on the additional responsibilities as always," said Sutherland.



Staff Sgt. Patrick Ware, Tech Sgt. Ben Dillard, and Senior Airman Terry Whittington demonstrate procedures for handling regulated trash inside the designated regulated trash shed at the 167th Airlift Wing on April 1, 2011. The unit recently certified 18 Airmen to act as inspectors for the Domestic Military Customs Inspections Program. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Emily Beightol-Deyerle)



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(Above) Participants in the West Virginia National Guard Best Warrior Competition work out one scenario during their land navigation and road march. The three-day competition included events such as physical training, weapons qualification and general warrior task training. (Left) Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Lester, 197th Regional Training Institute, gives Staff Sgt. Willis Thomas on the Precision Lightweight GPS Receiver during the Best Warrior Competition at Camp Dawson. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Anna-Marie Hizer, JFHQ Public Affairs Office)

Soldiers participate in Best Warrior competition

by Sgt. Anna-Marie Hizer
JFHQ Public Affairs Office

CAMP DAWSON, KINGWOOD, W.Va (April 3, 2011) -- A select group of Soldiers participated in the West Virginia National Guard's Best Warrior Competition, held at Camp Dawson near Kingwood, W.Va., the weekend of April 3.

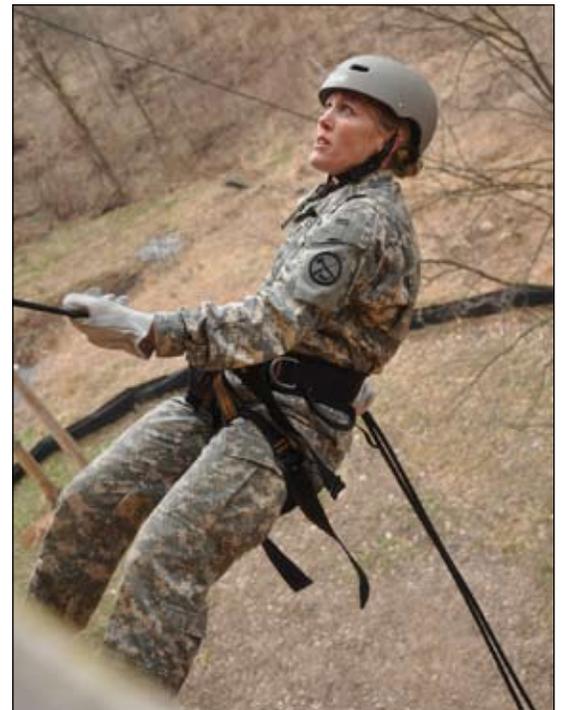


Troops from units around the state participated in land navigation, warrior skills tests, weapons qualification, water survival tasks and a Sergeants' Major board. Many of these events were back-to-back and competitors often had the added stress of weather -- which was rainy, cold and snowing most of the weekend.

Despite conditions and physical trials, spirits remained high as participants cheered each other on and remained focused on each new challenge.

In addition to the physical elements, Soldiers had to show their mental acuity as well. Competitors were asked to name certain senior staff members of the West Virginia National Guard, the Army and the Department of Defense. These tasks were often presented during moments of physical strain.

Soldiers later donned their Class A or Army Service Uniforms for a formal board with State Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Vance, Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin Harry, Army National Guard command sergeant major. Soldiers were quizzed on regulations and current events, among



(Above) Sgt. Jasmyne Huffman navigates the rappel tower during the Best Warrior Competition. (Left) Sgt. Thompson plots points on a map prior to the land navigation portion of the competition.

other tasks.

When points were tallied, two individuals presented with knowledge and skill above the rest. Staff Sgt. Willis Thomas, 197th Regional Training Institute was named the 2011 West Virginia National Guard NCO of the Year, while Spc. Nicholas Bonnett, 119th Sapper Company, was awarded Soldier of the Year. Both participants advanced to the Regional Best Warrior Competition.

167th Airmen thank hometown for community support

Flag presented to Morgan County

by Staff Sgt. Sherree Grebenstein
167th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

BERKELEY SPRINGS, W.Va (May 15, 2011) -- In a gesture of appreciation for all of the support that their hometown has given them over the years, members of the West Virginia Air National Guard's 167th Airlift Wing presented an American flag to Morgan County officials Saturday night to be flown over the new downtown courthouse.

With 10 fellow Airmen by his side, Senior Master Sgt. Scott Wachter, a lifelong resident of Berkeley Springs, presented the flag to Mayor Susan Webster as Morgan County Commissioners Brenda Hutchinson and Brad Close looked on.

Capt. Carmela Emerson, a nurse assigned to the Wing's medical group, spearheaded the idea of presenting a gift to the community. She said the group is open to all Airmen from the 167th Airlift Wing and other veterans who have put down roots in that part of the Eastern Panhandle.

"They have given us such wonderful support over the years," Emerson said. "I felt it was important to thank the citizens of Morgan County for their prayers, cards, donations and gifts while we were deployed."

She said the outpouring of heartfelt support for the Airmen from citizens, schools, businesses, employers, churches and local officials has not gone unnoticed. Presentation of the flag may have been a simple gesture, but she hopes it speaks volumes of the great appreciation felt by the Airmen.

Future plans also call for the group, which currently numbers more than 30 members, to present a plaque with its member's names and ranks engraved for display at the courthouse.

"Just another way to thank Morgan County for all of their support," Emerson said. "I just can't say enough about all of the support everyone has given us over the years."

Wachter, the first sergeant for the Wing's Maintenance Squadron, said the American flag presented to local officials



Airmen from the 167th Airlift Wing who call Morgan County home presented local officials with an American flag Saturday night to fly at the new courthouse in downtown Berkeley Springs, W.Va. Pictured in the first row, from left: Berkeley Springs Mayor Susan Webster, Tech Sgt. Sylvester Payne Jr., Staff Sgt. Luke Shambaugh, Staff Sgt. D.J. Zahnow, Master Sgt. Michael Darby, Master Sgt. Robert Bowers, Morgan County Commissioner Brenda Hutchinson and Morgan County Commissioner Brad Close. Second row, from left: Tech. Sgt. Gretchen Close and 1st Lt. Sarah Law. Third row, from left: Senior Master Sgt. Scott Wachter, Chief Master Sgt. Roland Shambaugh Jr., Capt. Carmela Emerson and Senior Airman John Unger rounding out the back row. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Sherree Grebenstein)

has never been flown before and he hopes it finds a permanent home atop one of the courthouse's three flagpoles.

"It's a brand new flag that is going to be dedicated to the citizens of Morgan County," he said. "The first time it will ever be flown is over the courthouse here."

"We wanted to make sure that it went up prior to Memorial Day," he added.

Wachter said the community is "tried and true."

"Anytime any service member that lives in Morgan County has ever gone overseas whether for any of the operations that are presently going on in the past there has always been an outstanding support," he said.

Webster was raised in a military family with her father serving in the United States Army for three decades.

"I very much understand the love of country, the love of community," she said. "I have always very much believed that if you live in a community you owe the community and that is what our military has done for us. For them to want to give something back like this, I don't have words to thank them for what they do and yet they want to recognize the people of Morgan County."

"They deserve every bit of our support," Webster said.

Chief Master Sgt. Roland Shambaugh, chief of the loadmasters assigned to the base in Martinsburg, said Sept. 11, 2001, marked a milestone for those in uniform.

"We have encountered the highest operation tempo ever since then," said Shambaugh, who is also a native of Morgan County.

"In the 30 years that I have been around the military, the citizens of Morgan County have been very gracious supporting all of the sons and daughters that serve in uniform.

"I think it's nice that we can give a little something back and show our appreciation."

Tech Sgt. Gretchen Close, who has also lived in Berkeley Springs her entire life, said her hometown has given her so much and has supported her in her deployments as well as being in the Air National Guard itself.

"It's very important for young and old alike to see that people from Berkeley Springs are giving back to the community and nation," Close said. "There's no place like home and once you're here you can't get out," she said with a smile.

News You Can Use

Free tutor service available to military families

The Defense Department offers military families access to free, online tutoring at Tutor.com. The site offers professional tutors who can assist with homework, studying and test preparation. Services are available to students of any age -- from kindergartners to high school seniors -- with help offered in more than 16 subjects.

Once online, the student and tutor work together in a virtual classroom, where they can chat, draw on a shared whiteboard, upload files and browse the Internet together.

Active-duty servicemembers, National Guard and reserve personnel on active

duty in a deployed status, Defense Department civilians in a deployed status and their dependents are eligible to participate. Families who aren't eligible can access the service for a fee.

People can sign up by visiting <http://www.tutor.com/military>.

Operation Homefront

An organization entitled "Operation Homefront" has announced the expansion of their 2011 Military Child of the Year Award and opening of the nomination period. Beginning in 2011, the award will be given to an outstanding military child from each Service. Nominations are

being accepted until January 31. Additional information is available at <http://www.homefrontonline.com/article.asp?articleid=1888>.

Walt Disney Orlando tickets for military members, retirees

From Oct. 24, 2010 to Oct. 1, 2011, active and retired U.S. military, National Guard or Reserves, may purchase four-day Walt Disney World Armed Forces Salute tickets for themselves and up to five family members or friends for \$138 per individual.

Three-day passes may also be purchased for \$99 each.

For more information, visit <http://www.shadesofgreen.org/4day.PNG>.