



DMAVA HIGHLIGHTS

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May 29, 2014

Albanian military future, Jersey-made

Story by Staff Sgt. Wayne Woolley
Photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen



JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J. – To an observer, the camouflage-clad soldiers in the small classroom looked like typical officer candidates: young, fit and eager to learn.

But to Albanian Ambassador Gilbert Galanxhi, the 24 men and women being trained as part of an historic partnership with the New Jersey Army National Guard are nothing short of his country's future.

"With the passing of time, the passing of years, you will be the leading officers of the Albanian Army," said Galanxhi, who received his diplomatic training in America before rising to a top diplomatic post.

The 12-week officer candidate program marks the first time National Guard troops have trained officer candidates from an allied nation. The program, which began on May 9, represented two years of planning and coordination between the New Jersey National Guard and the Republic of Albania Armed Forces.

It marked a milestone in the relationship between the two military forces, which has evolved over nearly two decades of the State Partnership Program. The program assigns National Guard forces to serve as military advisors to evolving nations.

New Jersey's partnership with Albania allowed the former communist-bloc nation to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 2009 and led to five joint deployments to Afghanistan where the New Jersey Guardsmen and Albanian troops trained Afghan security forces.

Galanxhi visited the Albanian officer candidates to commem-

orate their successful completion of the first – and perhaps the most challenging -- phase of officer candidate school. During that phase, the Albanian candidates successfully demonstrated land navigation skills, survived harsh physical training and employed leadership skills during exercises designed to induce mental stress.

Galanxhi said the candidates would someday be able to establish an American-style officer candidate program in that country. He said the partnership between the National Guard and Albania depends upon that nation maintaining a skilled, professional defense force.

"We can contribute, we can be a real partner even for big and great nations such as the United States of America," he said. "I am very proud you are training in America, the champion of democracy, one of the most powerful and most democratic nations and one of the best friends of Albania."

He noted that Albania's history has been intertwined with the United States. It began when President Woodrow Wilson insisted that Albania maintain its sovereignty following World War I and continued as other presidents supported its adoption of a democratic government and entry into NATO.

He told the candidates the future of the Albanian military is in their hands.

"The only constant thing in this world is change, which very much depends on how you shape it, for better or for worse," he said. "I'm fully confident that with the knowledge and skills you get with this training, you will be able to shape the future of the Albanian Army for good."

HIGHLIGHTS

Side by Side

Story by Spc. Oscar Baldriche, 444th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

When Soldiers go overseas, saying goodbye to family and friends is a hard thing to do. But two Soldiers from Headquarters Co. 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion, New Jersey National Guard, won't have to say goodbye to everyone. They will be taking family with them.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 James J. Denhartog and his son, Pfc. Eric J. Denhartog are deploying to Kosovo as part of a United Nations security and support mission. The senior Denhartog, one of the New Jersey Army National Guard's most experienced pilots, will be advising the commander on aviation and supply missions, while his son will be supporting his team from the ground.

For the younger Denhartog, the deployment fits in well with why he enlisted in the first place.

"I wanted to be a part of something important," said Eric Denhartog. "Knowing that I am deploying with my father makes this really special. I am happy that I will be by his side and I am looking forward to working with him and making him proud."

Although both will be stationed together, there will be little time for family reunions.

"Both of us will be very busy but, knowing that we are involved in something that is bigger than ourselves, makes this unforgettable," said James Denhartog.

This will be James Denhartog's fifth deployment and the first for his son.

"Deploying with my son adds an interesting dynamic to things," said James Denhartog. "This is will be a very special time for us. The things we will do and the things we will experience will be memories that my son and I will always share."



Energy Conservation

Energy Conservation Tip of the Week

As your lights burn out, replace them with light-emitting diode (LEDs). LEDs are 75 - 80 percent more efficient than incandescent bulbs and last 25 times as long. In addition, they don't contain any toxic chemicals and are 100 percent recyclable at the end of their life. While they do cost more to purchase initially, LEDs will quickly pay for themselves through energy savings.

Did You Know?

DMAVA's "High Efficiency Lighting Program" (HELP) has the goal of upgrading every armory with LED and T5 lighting. Doing so will reduce DMAVA's lighting energy use by 75 percent, as well as lower maintenance costs. The program officially kicked off this month at Woodbridge Armory.

If you would like more information about our energy and water conservation efforts, please contact Christopher Moore, Energy Manager at christopher.moore@dmava.nj.gov.

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HIGHLIGHTS

SOUTH JERSEY VETERANS JOB FAIR

aloft

MOUNT LAUREL

558 FELLOWSHIP RD, MT LAUREL, NJ

MONDAY, JUNE 9

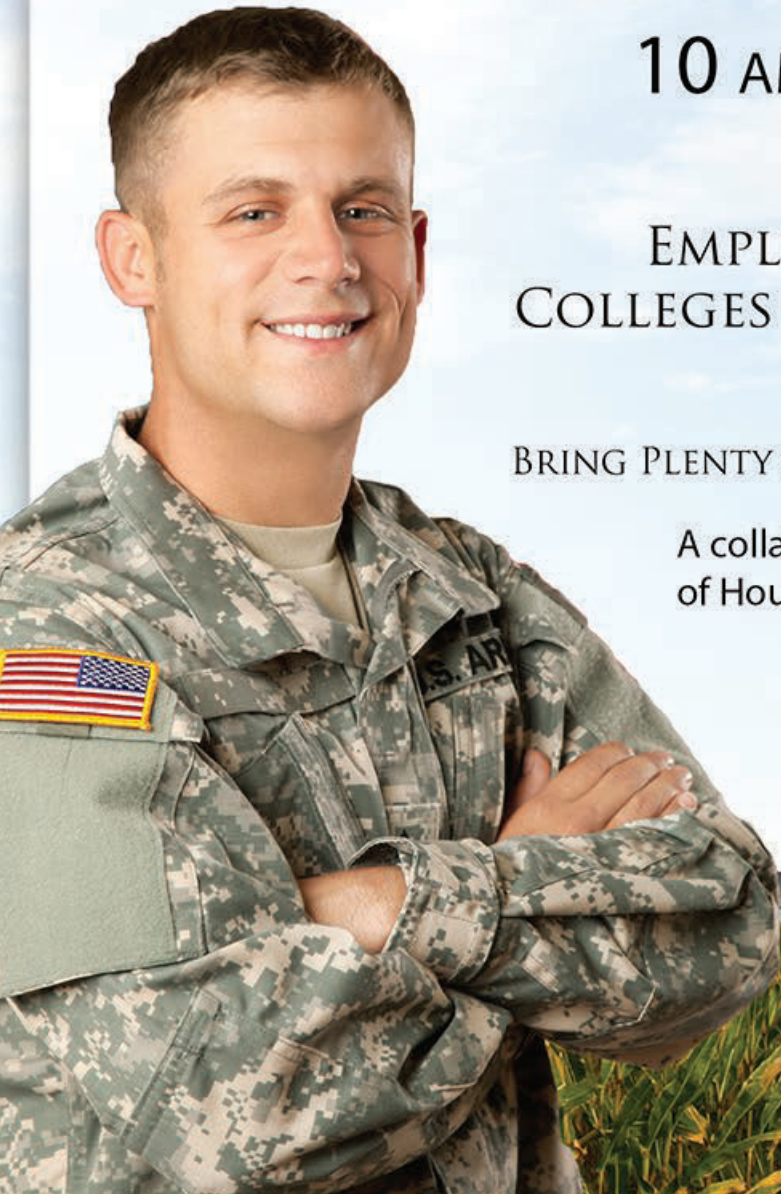
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STAFF SERGEANT JORGE OLIVEIRA



A crowd of Essex County Sheriff's Officers, New Jersey National Guard leaders, veterans and family members gathered at Essex County Veterans Memorial Park in Newark to unveil the statue of New Jersey Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Jorge Oliveira. The former Essex County sheriff's detective was killed in Afghanistan in October 2011 while serving with the New Jersey National Guard. The plaza at the park was dedicated to the 33-year-old Newark resident in November 2011. The sheriff's officers began a fundraising effort totaling nearly \$120,000 to design, build and install the statue. (Photo by Roman Martyniuk)

HIGHLIGHTS



New Jersey National Guard Soldiers and students from various Union County high schools supported the Union County Step Program and Bonds of Courage 10th anniversary celebration at the Westfield Armory May 22, 2014. Bonds of Courage is a non-profit organization that supports our troops, veterans and their families to build morale, and to meet needs involving jobs, health, families, and finances. (Courtesy photo)

NJNG's 1-150th Soldiers train at Cape Cod

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Nicholas Young, DMAVA/PA

Nearly 400 members of the New Jersey Army National Guard's 1-150th Aviation descended onto Joint Base Cape Cod, formerly known as Camp Edwards, to complete their 15 days of annual training in preparation for their upcoming deployment to Kosovo.

Cape Cod and Eastern Massachusetts provided the 1-150th unique terrain to enhance training possibilities.

Active Duty Air Force personnel from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst's 818th Contingency Response Group joined the 150th to provide weather support, perform sling-loading of equipment and to run security forces missions alongside the 150th to make this annual training a joint effort.

"It couldn't have gone better. The way it was designed, is exactly how we executed," said Lt. Col. Glen McElroy, commander of 1-150th Aviation.

During the annual training, 1-150th pilots and crews maintained 17 helicopters and never had fewer than 16 operationally ready aircraft. In total, they logged almost 400 hours of flight time.

On the ground, 1-150th Soldiers conducted riot control missions and a simulated downed aircraft mission with the Air Force Security Forces personnel. Air Force weather specialists prepared weather forecasts and pre-flight briefs for the 1-150th pilots and command.

"Everyone cooperated flawlessly," McElroy said. "It's because of our troops' attitude, demeanor and professionalism that great joint training occurred."



A 1-150th Aviation's UH-60 Blackhawk conducts hoisting and sling loading operations May 16, 2014 at Joint Base Cape Cod.

In addition to riot control, downed aircraft and sling load training, 1-150th personnel completed EST 2000, rappel tower, land navigation, vehicle rollover training and a leadership reaction course to fulfill validation requirements of their pre-deployment training.



STATE APPROVING AGENCY

GI BILL BENEFITS



PUTTING VETERANS FIRST

Dear Colleagues

Welcome to the first edition of the State Approving Agency newsletter. As indicated in my recent announcement, it is intended to answer some common questions that certifying officials contact our office about on a regular basis as well as to communicate recent announcements from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Future issues will contain information on job fairs, conferences and other items of interest. Good reading.

What form do I use to enroll a student?

Certifying officials utilize VA form 22-1999 Enrollment Certification to certify the attendance of students. The Department of Veterans Affairs prefers all school to utilize their electronic software for this purpose referred to as VAONCE however there is a paper version available. Schools operating on a module basis should certify each beginning and ending date on the certification and indicate the clock hours of attendance per week. Certifying officials should calculate the tuition and fees for each module for chapter 33 Post 9/11 GI Bill recipients.

How do I certify a student who is pursuing an externship?

Assuming the school is approved by the State Approving Agency for this form of educational experience, certifying officials should certify the beginning and ending dates of the externship and specify the work hours per week.

How do I add a Certifying Official?

Schools that wish to add or change certifying officials must file VA form 22-8794. A copy should be filed with both the State Approving Agency and the Department of Veterans Affairs' Education Liaison Representative in the Newark Regional Office. Please note filing a new form overwrites the previous one on file so if a school wants to add a new official to the existing list, the former certifying official must also re-sign the new form to retain their name on the recognized list.

When does the school need to file 22-1999b?

The 22-1999b is used whenever there is a change to the initial enrollment certification mentioned in question 1. This could be for a revised tuition and fee schedule, beginning or ending date of a module or term, or the termination of a student's attendance at the school. Title 38 US Code specifies that all changes to initial certification must be completed and forwarded to the Department of Veteran Affairs within 30 days of the occurrence of the change.

For more information about GI Bill benefits regulations and procedures, refer to the Certifying Official Manual at http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/job_aids/SCO_Handbook_v3.pdf

ALBANIAN WOMEN LEAD FROM FRONT AT NJNG OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL

Story by Staff Sgt. Landis Andrews, 444th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J. –The trainees march in lockstep to the dining facility, a task they’ve carried out countless times before, but this situation is anything but ordinary. The black boots that march on the American military soil are occupied by a group of officer candidates from the Albanian army. The platoon sergeant shouting the marching cadence is a woman – a rarity in the former communist-bloc nation.

“It’s difficult being a woman in the Albanian army,” said Officer Candidate Ermiona Laci. “And, now I’m learning how to become an officer, which is even harder for women in Albania.”

Laci is among 24 male and female Albanian soldiers being trained as officers in an unprecedented program run by the New Jersey Army National Guard. The 12-week officer candidate program marks the first time National Guard troops have trained officer candidates from an allied nation.

The main goal of the program is to assist the Republic of Albania Armed Forces improve the quality of its leaders to reach the same standards held by other member nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Albania joined the military alliance in 2009 after more than a decade of training conducted by the New Jersey National Guard through the State Partnership



Albanian Officer Candidates Ermiona Laci, left, and Anita Gruda, right, stand in front of their table at the dining facility at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., May 29, 2014. The candidates will remain standing until two additional candidates join them at their table, which required four candidates per table. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen/Released)

Program, which pairs the National Guard with developing nations.

The secondary goal of the program is to ensure that the future commanders of Albania’s military understand that leadership has no gender.

Albania is a patriarchal society that expects women to take care of the family and tend to the house. Even women in the army are not seen as equals. This is something Laci and the other female candidates hope to change.

“I do the same training as the men, but they do not look at me as equal to them,” Laci said. “The women do the secretary and [indoor] jobs and the men do the tough jobs. They don’t respect women with [indoor] jobs and don’t want women to have the same jobs as them.”

Officer Candidate Anita Gruda says she wants more than the gold lieutenant bar that comes if she graduates. She wants the respect of her peers.

“I am in a tougher position because it’s more than the instructors watching me,” she said. “The men in the class are looking at me because they think I’m not good enough.”

This doesn’t intimidate the Tirana native. It only motivates her.

“It feels good to be in my position because I am showing everyone that I can do what they think I can’t. Completing this program means more than rank. It means I did a tough thing and I should be respected.”



Albanian Officer Candidate Anita Gruda, right, addresses Republic of Albania ambassador Gilbert Galanxhi, center, and Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff, left, The Adjutant General of New Jersey, prior to ceremony where members of Albanian Officer Candidate Class 001 transition from Phase One to Phase Two of the New Jersey Army National Guard OCS program. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen/Released)

HIGHLIGHTS



US Family Health Care, a Tricare Prime option providing a civilian based managed care network, will be holding Question and Answer sessions to provide information for servicemembers and families.

USFHP pushes forward effective Jan. 1, 2014, and they are adding an extra benefit to their already robust benefit package! Eye glasses for \$0 to low cost. To hear more about USFHP and this added benefit, come to one of their upcoming information sessions listed below:

Fort Dix Housing Community Center
Bldg. 1134 Hemlock Street, JB-MDL
June 2 and 23 / 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Contact: Josephine Grey at 347-501-2308

JB-MDL McGuire Library
2603 Tuskegee Airmen Ave, JB-MDL
June 16 / 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Contact: Pam Kwiat at 646-341-2545

**JB-MDL McGuire Housing
Jim Saxton Community Center**
3811 South Boiling Street, JBMDL
June 10 and 19 / 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Contact: Pam Kwiat at 646-341-2545

108th Wing Airmen & Family Readiness Office
3327 Charles Blvd, JB-MDL
June 25 / 1 to 4 p.m.
Contact: Pam Kwiat at 646-341-2545

Picatiny Arsenal Army Community Service
Bldg. 119, Dover, NJ
June 10
Contact Darrel Hutchinson at 646-354-0126

Pemberton Community Library
16 Broadway Street, Brownmills, NJ
June 30 / 12 to 4 p.m.
Contact: Pam Kwiat at 646-341-2545

Mount Laurel Library
100 Walt Whitman Ave, Mount Laurel, NJ
June 18 / 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Contact: Josephine Grey at 347-501-2308

Camden County Veterans Affairs
3 Collier Dr., Lakeland Complex, Blackwood, NJ
June 2, 9, 16 and 23 / 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Contact: Wil Acosta at 646-300-1312

NJDMAVA Bldg
IASD Section,
101 Eggerts Crossing Road, Lawrenceville, NJ
June 16 / 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Contact: Josephine Grey at 347-501-2308

177th Fighter Wing
Bldg. 229, 400 Langley Rd., Egg Harbor Twp, NJ
June 5 / 12 - 4 p.m.
Contact: Josephine Grey at 347-501-2308

NJNG Jersey City Armory
678 Montgomery Street, Jersey City, NJ
June 5, 12, 19 and 26 / 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Contact: Darrel Hutchinson at 646-354-0126

NJNG Toms River Armory
1200 Whitesville Road, Toms Rive, NJ
June 5 / 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Contact: Pam Kwiat at 646-341-2545

NWS Earle
Bldg. C29, 201 Highway 34 South, Colts Neck, NJ
June 18 / 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
Contact: Pam Kwiat at 646-341-2545

Call 1-800-241-4848 option 3 or visit www.usfhp.net for more information.

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