

DMAVA HIGHLIGHTS

AUGUST 7, 2014

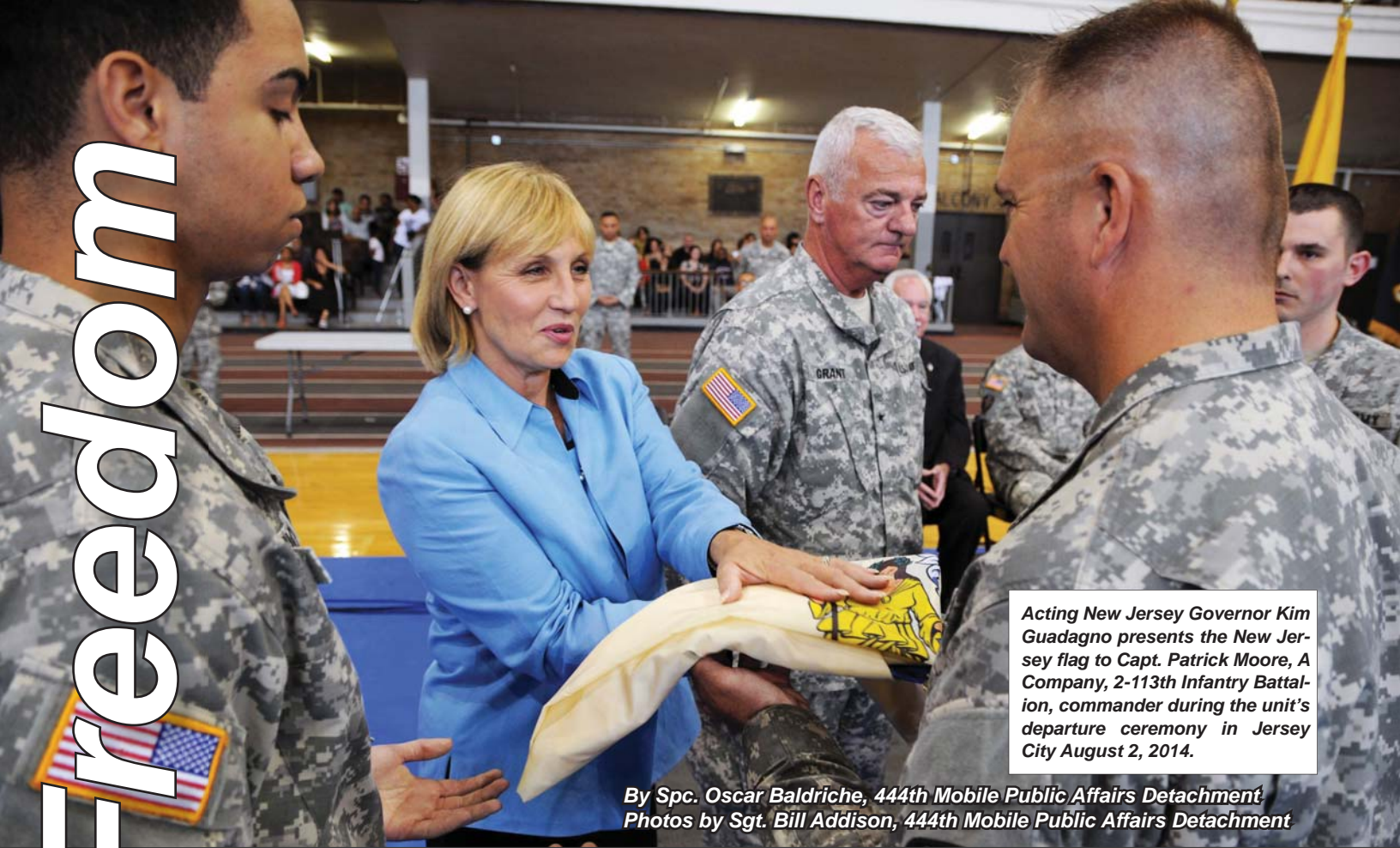
MAT 5 MONES ANA



Sgt. 1st Class Sam Rush, Logistics non-commissioned officer in charge, advises an Afghan National Army member at a Mobile Strike Force Vehicle Maintenance Facility. Story on Page 3. (Courtesy photo)



Faces of Freedom



Acting New Jersey Governor Kim Guadagno presents the New Jersey flag to Capt. Patrick Moore, A Company, 2-113th Infantry Battalion, commander during the unit's departure ceremony in Jersey City August 2, 2014.

*By Spc. Oscar Baldriche, 444th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
Photos by Sgt. Bill Addison, 444th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*



Above: Pvt. Brian Chacon of Alpha Company, 2-113 Infantry Battalion poses for a "selfie" with New Jersey Acting Governor Kim Guadagno after the unit's departure ceremony. Below: Pfc. Luis Chavarra poses for a family portrait.



Friends and family saluted the Soldiers of the New Jersey Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 113th Infantry on Saturday in Jersey City as the unit prepares to deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The company will be conducting security support for the Naval support Activity Bahrain-Isa Air Base. The unit has deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and Iraq since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

Capt. Patrick Moore, the company commander, said he felt good about the team he's about to lead overseas.

"If there is one thing that I can say about this unit, this is exactly who I wanted to work with," Moore said.

In addition to having a proud history and veteran leadership, Alpha Company will also be taking 19 new soldiers who just graduated from basic training.

One of the new troops, Pvt. Brian Chacon said he's eager for the experience.

"This hit me by surprise, but I have a lot of good people and leadership around me," he said. "My family is proud and I am proud that I am doing something important with my life."

Brig. Gen. James Grant, Chief of the Joint Staff, and Acting Governor Kim Guadagno were also there to pay tribute to Alpha Company.

"It is a humbling experience to stand here before you," Grant said. "All of you make me proud because all of you have chosen to be here today."

"You are the faces of freedom," said Guadagno. "You are our heroes. All of you set the example by acting on your beliefs. As a mother, as the Acting Governor, I commend you. Godspeed and God bless."

AMERICANS, ALBANIANS AND AFGHANS NONE AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY

By Lt. Col. Jesse Arnstein, CJIATF 435 Public Affairs Director



Logistics officer in charge Capt. Michael Sojka discusses maintenance procedures with Afghan National Army members at the Mobile Strike Force Vehicle Maintenance Facility. (Courtesy photo)

Three nations, three cultures, three languages, with one common goal: Sharpen the tip of Afghanistan's spear.

Military Advisor Team 5 (MAT 5) is a joint New Jersey National Guard and Albanian Army unit that trains the Afghanistan National Army's (ANA) Mobile Strike Force (MSF) to rapidly put firepower where needed.

"We witness daily the juxtaposition of western military tradition with the Afghan culture in all its divergent richness and history," said Capt. Ryan Bailey, MAT 5 executive officer.

One distinct advantage of having Albanians on MAT 5 is they share the same religion (Islam) and many traditions with the Afghans. This fosters an instant comfort and rapport between the Albanians and ANA soldiers.

During the Ramadan month (this year in July), many Muslims fast during the daytime. The Albanians can relate to the challenges of working in a weakened state.

"You challenge your body and challenge your mind during Ramadan. During the month that you fast, a lot of good things also happen as a result" such as improving discipline," said Albanian Army Capt. Altin Kaca.

The shared profession of arms also helps to form an instant trust between the Albanian and Afghan soldiers even though their upbringings were vastly different.

The Albanians were raised with a western influence and moderate living standard.

The ANA soldiers were raised in a generation where many children were not taught to read and write, homes did not have

electricity or running water, and a radio was the only link to the outside world.

But two invaluable traits the Afghan soldiers obtained are enthusiasm and passion, and it's MAT 5's mission to help channel this fervor towards creating an effective fighting force.

The enthusiasm starts at the top. ANA Command Sgt. Maj. Guloum Hazrat always bellows a hearty welcome and a throws a huge hug around Sgt. Maj. Mark Rizzo upon arriving at training. "His willingness to protect the Albanian and American soldiers through ANA security measures has been resounding," said Rizzo.

As combat advisors, all 23 MAT 5 members are experts in their individual war fighting functions; infantry, armor, artillery, logistics, intelligence, medical, and more.

MAT 5 Combat Advisors are paired up with their ANA counterparts and train in a wide variety of disciplines. Subjects include land-mine awareness, battlefield medicine, vehicle mechanics, literacy, hand-held mine detectors, and counter land-mine tactics.

The training is performed at an ANA military compound in the Kabul area in classroom and field settings.

The initial round of training was so productive that MAT 5 segued to "graduate" level training, conducting train-the-trainer courses in master driver, master gunner, counter-insurgency training and the military decision making process.

MAT 5 members take particular satisfaction as they see the effects of their mentorship. "Many of the students have only been in the military for two years. The greatest reward is seeing you've

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MAT5 HONES AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY

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lifted their spirits with teaching them a skill in their profession,” said Bailey, the executive officer.

A typical mission begins early in the morning at MAT 5’s forward operating base. Team members receive a pre-mission brief covering the day’s mission, cultural sensitivities, convoy procedures, threats, and objectives.

Then the six Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAP) set out through the Kabul streets bound for the ANA compound.

On a recent mission, MAT 5 leadership met with Afghan Brig. Gen. Shor Gul, the MSF Brigade Commanding General who served them refreshments of tea, nuts, raisins, and candies as local custom dictates. The good-natured discussion on operations is interspersed with jokes.

Bailey is astute in the Afghan culture. They discussed current events and Bailey expressed sympathies for a fallen Afghan soldier. Though a translator is used, he peppered the discussion with Dari phrases such as “good morning,” “thank you,” and “very good.”

After the key leader engagement concluded, the boots hit the Afghan dirt and pavement. MAT 5 members broke off into small groups and conducted training with their Afghan counterparts.

Sgt. 1st Class Samuel Rush is responsible for vehicle maintenance training on mobile strike force armored scout vehicles. “It’s not just performing the training, but also establishing a process. We teach the ANA soldiers to identify the problem, complete paperwork, order new parts, and ensure adequate inventory.”

Recently, the team discovered that the wrong hydraulic fluid was placed in the vehicle brake system. The MAT 5 and ANA sol-

diers worked together to resolve a potentially disastrous situation. “Learning from the Americans and Albanians is very special,” said ANA vehicle mechanic Samiullah (who goes by a single name as many Afghans do). Samiullah and his comrades encircled the trainers, eagerly hoping to learn as much as they can.

Lead medical trainer 1st Sgt. Stephen Cosmanic brims with zeal when describing the ANA medics he trains, “These medics are so thirsty for knowledge and becoming better medics. The first day we met with the medics, they were opening their trauma bags and pulling items out and asking, ‘What is this for?’ We went through every item in the bags that they carry and how and when to use it in a tactical environment. We went over all three phases of combat casualty care, from care under fire, tactical field care to casualty evacuation.”

Cosmanic added that the biggest challenges they face are the sustainment of medics and follow on classes. “Once we were complete with the basic classes, we focused on the NCOs and doing train the trainer classes, empowering the young NCO Corps with the knowledge and pride in their profession.”

After the day’s training is complete, MAT 5 Soldiers load up into their MRAPs and head home, tired, but with a feeling of accomplishment. The work is demanding, and at times dangerous, but the unique gratification is treasured.

“I speak for every man on the team when I say that the look of appreciation in the eyes of our Afghan counterparts when we’ve helped them accomplish a readiness goal, is one of the most rewarding experiences of being a combat advisor,” said Bailey.

And the satisfying feeling of accomplishment is an emotion soldiers of all three cultures share together.

Operation Sustainment Warrior 14 at JT2DC

655th Regional Support Group Soldiers from Army Reserve commands from across 14 states trained on various training aids, devices, simulators and simulations at the New Jersey National Guard's Joint Training and Training Development Center at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J. to improve their combat readiness and maintain their skill-sets in an extended combat training exercise known as Operation Sustainment Warrior. The RSG Soldiers tested their skills on the virtual convoy trainer (a five station driver simulator), the virtual interactive combat environment (V.I.C.E.) and the Army's marksmanship trainer, Engagement Skills Trainer 2000. The 655th's Soldiers also practiced military operations in urban terrain in the JT2DC's four indoor MOUT lanes.



(Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Nick Young/Released)



US Family Health Care, a Tricare Prime option providing a civilian based managed care network, is adding an extra benefit to their benefit package - eye glasses for \$0 to low cost. They will also be holding question and answer/information sessions for servicemembers and families at various locations in New Jersey.

Fort Dix Housing Community Center

Bldg. 1134 Hemlock Street, JB-MDL

Aug. 11 and Sept. 15 / 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Contact: Josephine Grey at 347-501-2308

JB-MDL McGuire Library

2603 Tuskegee Airmen Ave, JB-MDL

Sept. 8 / 3 to 7 p.m.

Contact: Pam Kwiat at 646-341-2545

JB-MDL McGuire Housing

Jim Saxton Community Center

3811 South Boiling Street, JBMDL

Aug. 22 and Sept. 25 / 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

Aug. 7 and Spet. 17 / 1 to 4 p.m.

Contact: Pam Kwiat at 646-341-2545

Picatinny Arsenal Army Community Service

Bldg. 119, Dover, NJ

Aug. 19 and 26 / 10 am. - 12 p.m.

Contact Darrel Hutchinson at 646-354-0126

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

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VETS HAVEN GETS NEW FURNITURE



Volunteers from the New Jersey American Legion and Phillipsburg High School students from the Stateliners football and soccer teams, the Key Club and the Future Farmers of America, unload, assemble and arrange furniture at Veterans Haven North in Glen Gardner, N.J. on July 30, 2014. The New Jersey American Legion purchased \$167,000 worth of wooden beds, dressers, desk, chairs and nightstands for the residents. (DMAVA photos by Staff Sgt. Nick Young/Released)



E-mail your Highlights submissions to: mark.olsen@dmava.nj.gov

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