

Guardlife

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Cover: In the pit

Boom operator Staff Sgt. Marilia Rodriguez maneuvers the boom on KC-135R Stratotanker during a flight to Fort Sill, Okla., on March 12. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA.

Inside Cover: Moonlight maintenance

The flightline at the 177th Fighter Wing takes on an unearthly appearance during a long night exposure on March 12. Photo by Staff Sgt. Matt Hecht, 177FW/PA.



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Ready for their return

By Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, The Adjutant General - New Jersey

In the coming weeks, the Soldiers of the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team will return from their historic one-year deployment from Iraq. The brigade's return will mark the largest deployment of Citizen-Soldiers since World War II. On the day of their long awaited return, our warriors will reunite with friends and family and begin the transition back into their civilian lives.

On June 12 in Trenton, we will celebrate the brigade's return with a special homecoming parade and ceremony. This monumental event is proportionate to the historic significance of their deployment and return. The parade will begin at the World War II Memorial, located in front of the Statehouse, and will end at the Sovereign Bank Arena where families await their hero's entrance. Once the arena doors open for the families, they will be entertained and greeted by first-class performers and special guests. This will be a memorable day and a proper way to close the chapter for this monumental deployment.

When our Army and Air Servicemembers deploy, lives are placed on hold for the deployment cycle. Afterward, the transition back to civilian life can be challenging. We have been fortunate to receive assistance from various veteran and private organizations, government departments and agencies, senators, congressmen and other elected officials as we move forward, so that Servicemembers and the public understand our efforts and available resources to facilitate this transition.

I understand that deployments are not only difficult for Servicemembers, but, their families as well. However, the families face these challenges with as much sense of duty and courage as the deployed troops. In my eyes, the families deserve equal credit for their dedication and support.

In the latter part of 2008, the Secretary of Defense



Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth addresses the Soldiers of the 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion after the conclusion of their Departure Ceremony at Fort Sill, Okla., on April 9. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA.

established a national combat veteran reintegration program, affectionately known as the Yellow Ribbon program. The program was established to provide support and outreach to Soldiers and their families throughout the deployment cycle. Most importantly, reintegration activities will occur at 30/60/90-day intervals during post-deployment. Our organization and the Family Programs Office have established a robust program and are diligently working to ensure every returning Servicemember and family member receives the proper care and attention they deserve.

Care for our Servicemembers and families has been and continues to be my number one priority. The team is fully committed and well-positioned to provide the services to address any need. The New Jersey National Guard and its leaders have a solemn responsibility to all our Soldiers and families, today and in the future, to secure the benefits and services they deserve.

I look forward to the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's return and Welcome Home Parade/Ceremony on the 12th of June. I encourage all to attend the parade and show your support for our hometown heroes and brave families.

250TH TROOPS TRAIN IRAQI SOLDIERS

Story and photos by Pfc. Marissa A. Pavlak, UPAR, 250BSB

FOB Grizzly, Iraq – Sgt. Eugenio Santiago and Cpl. Tyrone Nichols, Soldiers from D Company 250th Brigade Support Battalion, coordinated training for Iraqi Soldiers from 3-37th Iraqi Brigade, on the new .50-caliber machine guns the Iraqi Army recently purchased.

“The Iraqi Army received new weapons they never owned before, so we got together to set up training for the soldiers,” said Sgt. Santiago.

Sgt. Santiago is originally from the 328th Military Police Combat Support Company. He was reassigned to D Company when his company was activated to deploy because his son, Sgt. Eugenio Santiago III, was in the same unit as he was and was also deploying. He was a .50-caliber machine gun instructor at Fort Dix and trained more than 15,500 Soldiers within two years.

Cpl. Nichols also worked at Fort Dix mobilizing and demobilizing Soldiers. After processing more than 25,000 Soldiers, he decided to volunteer to go overseas with his brother Spc. Kiem Robinson.

Sgt. Santiago, Cpl. Nichols and the Soldiers from 3rd squad, 3rd platoon, D Company, 250th, conducted a four-day class on the fundamentals of the .50-caliber machine gun. They trained the Iraqi soldiers on the basic operator tasks for the weapon, which included setting head space and timing, function checks, as well as loading and clearing procedures.

“The Iraqi Army was very eager to learn and work with the U.S. Soldiers,” said Cpl. Nichols. “It was an honor to train them on what will be one of their standard weapons.”

On the last day, the Iraqi soldiers conducted a familiarization fire in the test fire pit under the guidance of Sgt. Santiago and Cpl. Nichols, where they applied all the soldier skills they had been taught.

Each Iraqi soldier walked away with the confidence of being able to properly use the new weapons that will help them defend their country.



Above: Cpl. Tyrone Nichols inspects the chamber of the .50 caliber machine gun to make sure it is clear of any ammunition. Below: Sgt. Eugenio Santiago (l) and Cpl. Nichols (r) watch as an Iraqi Army lieutenant from the 3-37th Iraqi Brigade, charges the machine gun during the familiarization fire in the 250th's test fire pit.



'GREEN ZONE' RETURNED TO IRAQ

Story by Sgt. Bill Addison, JASG-C/PA; Photos by Staff Sgt. Shawn Morris, JASG-C/PA

The New Year marked a new beginning for the government of Iraq, when control of the "Green Zone" in central Baghdad was transitioned to the Iraqi government in a ceremony marking the first of many changes since the new Security Agreement went into effect Jan. 1.

Col. Steven Ferrari, Commander of the Joint Area Support Group – Central (JASG-C), the United States Army unit in charge of the Green Zone, spoke at a ceremony marking the turnover of the area's security to Staff Gen. Emmad Yassir Saed Salman Al-Zuhiri, Baghdad Brigade commander.

"Today is the first day of the security agreement going into effect between our two countries. Our mission is still to provide security and support to the Iraqi government, but truly we are a support element and they are in the lead," said Ferrari.

"The transition of Green Zone control from Coalition Forces to Iraqi forces is considered the first step in the implementation of this agreement. Here is Iraq taking another

step toward the future, signaling to its citizens and the international community the security responsibility for the Green Zone in the heart of Baghdad," he added.

Ferrari, Commander of the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team noted the historic aspect of the ceremony, turning the seat of Iraqi government back to the government of Iraq since the occupation by Coalition Forces five years earlier.

"Our mission is still to provide security and support to the Iraqi government, but truly we are a support element and they are in the lead."

"It's a good feeling because it's time for change. It's time to give the country back to Iraq. They're proud of their country, they're ready. We're here to support them for as long as they need us to be here. I think it's a great day for them and it's great to be part of this historic day," said Ferrari.

Al-Zuhiri's soldiers will begin a six-month training and certifications transition plan with U.S. forces. This transition may be extended up to six months by mutual agreement. Ferrari said he feels confident in the professionalism of the Baghdad Brigade.

"The Baghdad Brigade has been here for awhile, this is nothing new to them. We'll continue to support them."

Along with increased Iraqi Security Forces presence at the Entry Control Points (ECPs), new Iraqi flags and Arabic signs advising that the Baghdad Brigade is manning checkpoints in the GZ will mark a new look.

"For our part, on this day, during the ceremony for this important mission, we assure you that we are committed to the same goals – full implementation of the security agreement, complete transparency and full partnership," he said.

"Our focus right now is to ensure that working with General Al-Zuhiri's brigade, that they are trained and that they're ready to take full control and we can start pulling U.S. Soldiers off the checkpoints," said Ferrari.



Staff General Emmad Yassir Saed Salman Al-Zuhiri (I), Commander of the Baghdad Brigade, shakes hands with Col. Steven Ferrari, Joint Area Support Group-Central and 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Commander, during the ceremony to mark the turnover of security for Baghdad's International Zone to Iraqis.



Governor visits troops

Gov. Jon S. Corzine traveled to Iraq in January. During his trip, which was kept secret for security purposes, the Governor met with the Soldiers of the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Photo above: Gov. Corzine meets with 50th IBCT Soldiers at the Forward Operating Base Prosperity dining facility in Baghdad. Photo right: the Governor meets with Col. Steven Ferrari, Commander, 50th IBCT. Both photos by Spc. William Addison, 50IBCT/PA. Bottom right: Gov. Corzine embraces Capt. Kevin Welsh, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-102nd Cavalry Squadron, at Camp Bucca. Below: the Governor greets Lt. Col. Mark A. Pitera, Commander, 2-113th Infantry Battalion who is followed by Lt. Col. Dean Spencos, (r), Commander, 1-102nd Cavalry Squadron, at Camp Bucca. Both photos by Maj. Jason Fetterolf, 2-113IB/PAO.



ISR KEEPS WATCH

Photos and story by 1st Lt. Lawrence Robinson, Media Outreach Officer

"We were non-commissioned officer heavy when we got here," said Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance platoon leader 1st Lt. Michael Sterling. "That was a good thing because it gave us some experienced leaders to help train the troops who joined later."

The 2-113th Infantry Battalion's ISR platoon provides continuous intelligence for Camp Bucca's leaders and planners.

Sterling, a veteran of the Afghanistan campaign, is joined by Staff Sgt. Wayne Stine and Sgt. Ethan Letz. Both were members of the ISR before deployment, and helped get the platoon up and running. Stine assists Sterling with the planning and management.

The platoon, which is comprised of reconnaissance and sniper Soldiers, was augmented by 2-113th rifle companies Soldiers.

"We originally had 16 guys, and we had trained together for about a year or so before we got here. Once we got to Camp Bucca and got the new guys, we were able to bring them along pretty quickly," said Stine.



Leading the way 1st Lt. Michael Sterling heads a protective service detail during a recent visit to Safwan.

Because the ISR's primary mission is intelligence collection, the platoon spends a great deal of time and effort developing human intelligence resources from among the local population, Iraqi military and police forces.

As a result, the ISR is constantly traveling throughout the area visiting towns, check points, police stations and military outposts in an effort to maintain a relationship that encourages mutual aid and support. They also maintain an observation post and communications relay station on Safwan Hill, the highest point in southern Iraq.

The Platoon serves as a Protective Service Detail for distinguished visitors. The focus of a PSD mission is to get the principal in and out of their meeting safely. They accomplish this by planning and rehearsals that enable the platoon to provide constant protection.

"We have been doing this long enough that a lot of things stay the same depending on where we're going, but there are always route planning, inspections and briefings that have to take place before the mission starts," said Letz.

Stine observed that the success of the ISR platoon is due to its Soldiers.

"These guys make my job easy."



Staff Sgt. Wayne Stine (l), Intelligence Reconnaissance and Surveillance platoon sergeant and an interpreter speak with an Iraqi civilian while providing security during a mission.

Bucca thanks local Iraqi leaders

Photos and story by Maj. Jason Fetterolf, 2-113IB/PAO

CAMP BUCCA, Iraq - A joint U.S. military leadership team representing Forward Operating Base Bucca hosted a first-time ever visit from sheiks, community leaders, Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police officials from the Safwan area at a belated Thanksgiving dinner Dec. 16, 2008, at the Camp Bucca Dining Facility.

The idea was to give thanks for sustained regional peace and to build a stronger partnership with local Iraqi leaders. An added benefit was realized when several sheiks said the visit completely erased their previous negative impressions of Camp Bucca, according to Louai Farhan, Bilingual-Bicultural Advisor.

"We found that everyone was welcoming; everybody tried to help us; everyone paid attention to us [in a respectful way]," noted Iraqi Army Lt. Col. Hasan Nadir Uda, Commander, 1st Battalion, 51st Brigade, 14th Division.

While not everyone at the event observed the same religion, language or cultural experience, interpreters and BBAs facilitated the U.S.-Iraqi communications and barriers were dissolved.

The master of ceremonies, Lt. Col. Mark A. Pitserski, FOB Bucca Base Defense Commander, 2nd Battalion, 113th Infantry Regiment, read the invocation prayer in Arabic before a traditional American Thanksgiving meal was served.

"His recitation [Lt. Col. Pitserski's] and other phrases in Arabic during his welcoming speech before the audience have added an excellent atmospheric fragrance of friendship," noted prayer author Farhan, who was



raised in Iraq and later emigrated to the U.S.

After the prayer, the meal was served by 2-113th Infantry Soldiers. Food included traditional Thanksgiving fare: turkey, roast beef, mashed potatoes, yams, green beans, cranberry sauce, cakes, with the addition of an Iraqi staple, chai. Although traditional Iraqi food could have been served, American food was purposely served to further extend respect to the Iraqi guests.

Initially quiet when escorted on to Camp Bucca by 1st Lt. Jason Cornwell, 2-113th Infantry intelligence officer, the Iraqi sheiks became more comfortable as the event proceeded.

"...As the get-together wore on, their level of comfort increased dramatically..." said Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas J. Clark, 2-113th Infantry Battalion.

Not only did the dinner foster communications, it built a bridge for communications in the future.

"The greatest reward is the relationship-building," said Clark. "What better way to ensure our security than to build a relationship with those occupying [the same] space?"

"'We must do this again' was spoken by several Iraqi officials [before departing], to include the Safwan Town Council President Hajji Munadhil Shnain Minahi," said Farhan.



Sgt. Shawn Pekrol, Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), 2-113th Infantry Battalion, serves an Iraqi Army warrant officer, turkey during the Thanksgiving meal on Dec. 16.



Sheik Sa'ad (l) and Maj. Douglas Brockmann, Executive Officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-113th Infantry Battalion, enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving meal at the Camp Bucca dining facility.

Brothers deploy to Iraq

Photo and story by Sgt. 1st Class Edwin Tejada, 2-113IB

CAMP BUCCA, Iraq - For some, the memories of growing up with siblings can be bittersweet. One rule was a constant: you took care of each other, no matter what.

This is the creed by which brothers Franklyn and Spencer Gomez have lived by their entire life, and has now taken on a new meaning here in Camp Bucca, Iraq.

Franklyn, 22, and Spencer, 20 have rarely been apart.

"Growing up, we were always together," said Franklyn. "We wound up in the same unit, doing the same job."

According to their mother, Nury Gomez, the Army-like discipline she instilled in her boys was necessary to keep them safe.

"We were a small family, it was just the three of us... and ever since they were little, I always taught them to take care of each other," she sighed during a phone interview.

Now alone at her home, Nury still supports her sons' decision to join the New Jersey National Guard.

"I've always liked the military... and they're boys who know good from bad, and I will always support them in their decisions," said Nury.

She has never wavered in her support, not even when she heard the news her sons, and only family in the United States, were being deployed to Iraq at the same time.

Both brothers were originally assigned to the same company, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-113th Infantry Battalion, both hold the same military occupational skill and rank, supply specialist and specialist.

Their deployment has changed their career unison. Franklyn is now assigned to Charlie Company, 2-113th Infantry Battalion, as a detainee guard. Spencer remained in HHC, filling his older brother's shoes as the lead supply specialist.

They work opposite schedules. Spencer works day shift, while Franklyn has become a creature of the night. However, their biggest challenge is not working with detainees or endless property inventories.



Brothers Spc. Franklyn (l) and Spc. Spencer Gomez joke around on the roof of a building at Camp Bucca. They rely on each other to get through the rigors of deployment.

"The biggest challenge of this deployment is not being able to tell my wife what I do," said Franklyn, who married just prior to deploying. "I could only tell her that I had a long, and OK day here."

Spencer's biggest challenge has been uncertainty.

"The hardest part is not knowing what's going on at home all the time," he said.

In spite of their challenges, both brothers have soldiered on, and lean on each other for support.

"My brother makes me feel like we're back at home," Spencer said. "I see him two or three times a week, and instead of talking about work, we play [Nintendo] Wii or talk about random stuff," he added.

Their mother, thinks this deployment will be a good experience for all of them.

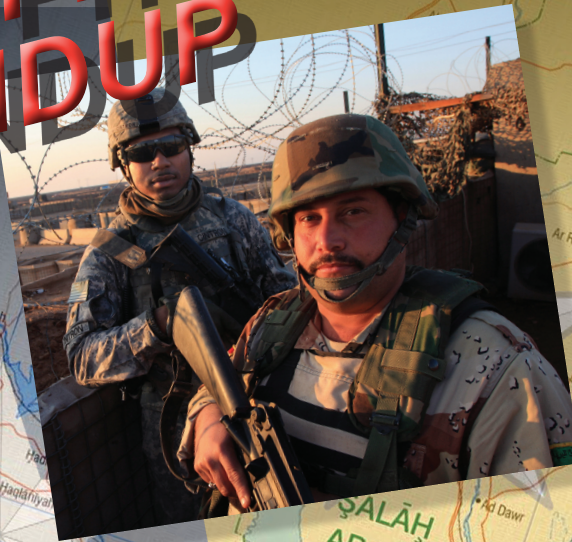
"This [separation] will unite our family even more," Nury said proudly. "This will be an experience that they will never forget and pass on to their own sons one day."

EYES IN THE SKY: CAV KEEPS WATCH - OVERHEAD

U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Max Kimmel (r), 887th Air Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, explains the function of the Scan Eagle Unmanned Aerial Vehicle to Master Sgt. Eric Evelo (l), Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-102nd Cavalry Squadron, and Maj. Dennis Williams (c), 306th Military Police Battalion, during a base defense briefing at Camp Bucca on Feb. 5. The base defense mission, to include the command and control of the UAVs, is led by Headquarters, 2-113th Infantry Battalion. U.S. Army photo by Maj. Jason Fetterolf.



IRAQ PHOTO ROUNDUP



Photos clockwise starting above: Spc. Samuel Cintron Jr., Bravo Troop, 102nd Cavalry Squadron, 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, guards an entry control point with an Iraqi soldier at Forward Operating Base Grizzly, Iraq. Photo by Sgt. Bill Addison, 50th IBCT Public Affairs. Spc. Heather DiNapoli, Bravo Company, 114th Infantry Battalion, 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, reads letters from home before starting a patrol outside Forward Operating Base (FOB) Cropper, Iraq. Photo by Maj. Jon Powers, 50th IBCT Public Affairs. Sgt. Ricardo Suarez, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 113th Infantry Battalion, 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team greets a local Iraqi child during a patrol outside Safwan, Iraq. Photo by Staff Sgt. Shawn Morris, 50th IBCT Public Affairs. A Soldier from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 113th Infantry Battalion, 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, patrols Safwan, Iraq. Photo by Staff Sgt. Shawn Morris, 50th IBCT Public Affairs. Sgt. 1st Class Juan Plata-Santos hoists the Stars and Stripes at the former Embassy-Baghdad. Photo by 1st Sgt. David Moore, 50IBCT/PA. First Lt. Jason Cornwell, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-113th Infantry Battalion, gives the "High-Five" to an Iraqi boy during a January visit to Safwan, in southern Iraq. U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Lawrence A. Robinson.



N.J. hold



ds sendoff for 1-150th

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA



STATE HONORS DEPARTING AVIATORS

Photos and story by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA

"New Jersey is doing its part and we are so proud of you," said Governor Jon S. Corzine to the Soldiers of the 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion and their families.

The 250-plus Soldiers, who hail from all of New Jersey's 21 counties, were joined by family members, friends, Senators' Robert Menendez and Frank Lautenberg, Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, The Adjutant General of New Jersey and veterans group leaders at a standing-room-only Departure Ceremony at the War Memorial in Trenton on Jan. 25.

The battalion was leaving for pre-mobilization training at Fort Sill, Okla., and then on to Iraq.

"Freedom isn't free," Corzine said. "It comes with great sacrifice from men and women in uniform, and from families that are here."

During the ceremony, the 1-150th's colors were brought forward and with the assistance of the Governor, The Adjutant General, Lt. Col. Mark Preston - the unit's former commander and Lt. Col. John Scannell, the current Battalion Commander, the Iraq Campaign Streamer was affixed to the unit's guidon. The streamer was awarded to the 1-150th for wartime service during Operation Iraqi Freedom from November 2004 to November 2005.

"Wherever there was a need for an American Soldier, the New Jersey National Guard has been there," said Maj. Gen. Rieth. "The day that you put the uniform on to serve our nation, each and every one of you are an American hero."

"Years from now you will be able to proudly say you had an impact, a positive impact, on the global war on terrorism," said Scannell.



First Update

TASK FORCE



Photos top to bottom: Aviators (l-r) Warrant Officer 1 Kris Sofchak, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Tim Lelie, Sgt. Ken Avvy and Sgt. Bill Harpe carry Spc. Jessica Brooks during simulated medical evacuation training. Sgt. Jose Miranda (l) and 1st Lt. Bethanie Schultz (r) come under simulated fire while training at the military operations on urban terrain site. Governor Jon S. Corzine shakes hands with 1st Lt. Tiffaney Mohammed after the Departure Ceremony. Governor Jon S. Corzine addresses the Soldiers of the 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion. All photos by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA.

By Wayne Woolley, NJDMAVA/PA

Gov. Jon S. Corzine and Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth led a delegation of elected officials, civic leaders and employers to Fort Sill, Okla. on April 9 for the departure ceremony for the Iraq-bound Soldiers of the 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion.

"While you are focused on your mission and unit, know that this administration is deeply committed to caring for your families and also with working with your employers to make sure that your jobs will still be there upon your return home," Corzine told the Soldiers after the formal ceremony ended.

The New Jersey Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Pentagon-sponsored organization that protects the employment rights of military reservists, organized the one-day trip that also included a barbeque with the troops. The state ESGR committee has organized more than a half dozen trips over the past year that allowed more than 400 employers, elected officials and civic leaders to travel to locations around the country to observe the troops of the New Jersey National Guard in action.



GSAB WELCOMED HOME

Photos by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA



The 34 Soldiers of the A, 2-104th General Support Aviation Battalion received a hero's welcome at the Joint Training and Training Development Center on Feb. 6.

The leadership of the both the New Jersey Army and Air National Guard, along with family members and friends, attended the Welcome Home ceremony.

The Soldiers – UH-60 Blackhawk pilots, crew members and ground support personnel – were deployed for a year in support of operations in Kuwait and Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Battalion is based at Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst.

The process began four days earlier when a contract airliner touched down at McGuire Air Force Base. As the Soldiers exited the aircraft, they were met at the bottom of the steps by members of the New Jersey Army and Air National Guard leadership led by Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth.

The circle was completed when, after gathering their gear, the Soldiers took a bus to the Fort Dix chapel where they were met by their loved ones.



Photos counterclockwise top to bottom: Chief Warrant Officer 4 Robert V. Drapala is reunited with his daughter. Sgt. Donald E. Seymour meets his newest little Soldier. GSAB Soldiers are greeted during the Welcome Home ceremony. GSAB commander Capt. Sean M. Roughneen (l) returns the national colors to U.S. Rep. Leonard Lance (c) as Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth (r), The Adjutant General of New Jersey observes.

Richardson takes charge

By Spc. Pablo G. Vizcaino, 444MPAD

Chief Warrant Officer Five Robert J. Richardson assumed responsibility for the post of Command Chief Warrant Officer at a ceremony Feb. 7, at Joint Force Headquarters' at Fort Dix.

Richardson assumed the top warrant officer position in November 2008. Richardson said his top priority will be to boost the ranks of the Warrant Officer corps.

Richardson serves as the personal advisor to Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, the Adjutant General, on all matters related to the New Jersey Army National Guard Warrant Officer program.

Richardson enlisted in 1968 and rose to staff sergeant before some friends suggested he look into the warrant officer program.

"When I learned about it, I saw that being a warrant officer was a great career choice," Richardson said. It's a path he wants more NCOs to consider. Although 98 percent of the state's aviation slots for warrant officers are filled, about 30 percent of the positions in the other specialties are vacant.

"I'm going to try to solve this (shortage) by focusing



Chief Warrant Officer Five Robert J. Richardson (l) is congratulated by Chief Warrant Officer Three David B. Edwards (r) after the Change of Responsibility Ceremony on Feb. 7.

more on those stand-out NCOs who would be a perfect fit for the program," Richardson said.

"READY FOR EVERYTHING"

By Spc. Landis Andrews, 444th MPAD

The passing of the New Year brought back familiar training to the New Jersey National Guard and the 50th Finance Battalion in Flemington.

On the first drill weekend of the new year, the guardsmen of the state's finance department put down their pencils and picked up light-sticks for the purpose of Civil Disturbance training.

Instructed by Sgt. 1st Class Dany Colon and Sgt. Dewey Johnson, the eager soldiers of the finance battalion brought AR 500-50 to life.

"This training is more advanced and comprehensive," Master Sgt. George Osborn said. "In the past it was just an overhead projector and slides. Now we are able to get hands-on experience with the newest equipment available to us."

In a simulated riot, the leader bellowed out commands as the squad thunderously roared behind their four-foot shields. The light-sticks were not the only show of force. Every movement was carried out with a ground-shaking stomp and a disconcerting boot-drag. The rowdy mob had no doubts that the wedge formation was coming directly for them.



With a grin plastered across his face, Colon loved every minute of it.

"This is what I do," said Colon. "I have 18 years of law-enforcement experience, so I enjoy bringing my knowledge to this training."

The students had just as much fun as the instructors and Pfc. Santiana Marisol was a testament to this.

"It's really entertaining," Marisol said, "and at the same time it gets you ready for anything you may face."

Whether it is a domestic disturbance or missions across the pond, Marisol and the other soldiers are always prepared.

"In the National Guard you are a soldier first," she stated, "so you have to be ready for everything."

177th Med Group receives top award

Photo and story by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA

The National Guard Bureau announced that the 177th Fighter Wing Medical Group has been awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

"This prestigious award is a testimony to the outstanding and dedicated service by the men and women of the 177th Fighter Wing Medical Group," said Brig. Gen. Maria

Falca-Dodson, Commander, New Jersey Air National Guard. "Your contributions have made the difference – both here and abroad. Congratulations and thank you for your commitment, dedication and resolve to our great state and nation."

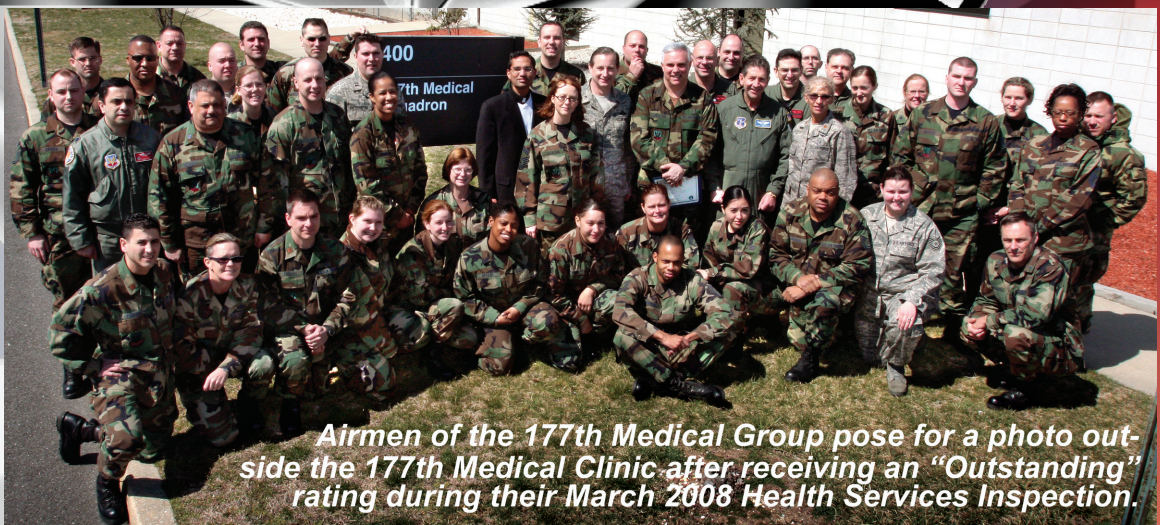
This is the second time the Medical Group has received the award. The first was in 2003 as a subordinate unit with the Wing. The award was created in 1954 and is presented to any Air Force unit which performs exceptionally meritorious service.

"We are all extremely proud of the Medical Group's hard work and dedication and it's good to see them get the recognition they deserve," said Col. Robert C. Bolton, Commander, 177th Fighter Wing.

"The competition was extremely keen," said Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, Director, Air National Guard. "Each winner is commended for having been selected from an outstanding group of nominees."

The Medical Group joins an elite group of 36 Air National Guard units nationwide in receiving the prestigious award. The Medical Group received the award for the period from March 30, 2006 to March 30, 2008. During that time, the Group provided support for Operations' Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Jump Start, Arctic Care and Task Force Grizzly. Unit Airmen have supported the State Partnership Program between New Jersey and the Republic of Albania by training numerous Albanian doctors, nurses, and technicians in emergency medical technician certification courses.

In April 2006, the Group deployed to Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea in support of the Korea-United States Combined Forces exercise. The unit set up an Expeditionary Medical Support hospital in less than a week and provided training to the 8th Medical Group. As a result, the 177th received numerous accolades from Pacific Air Force, the 8th Medical Group Commander and the Air National



Airmen of the 177th Medical Group pose for a photo outside the 177th Medical Clinic after receiving an "Outstanding" rating during their March 2008 Health Services Inspection.

Guard Chief of Medical Plans and Readiness Division.

"The dedication and commitment of the members of these organizations enable the Air National Guard to fulfill its commitment to the missions of peacekeeping, humanitarian relief, domestic improvement, and most important of all – defense of America," said Lt. Gen. Wyatt.

During Operation Arctic Care 2007, the Air National Guard Surgeon General specifically requested that the 177th Medical Group to be the first Air National Guard unit to support the Operation, which is a joint military exercise involving all branches of the service.

The Medical Group was recognized as the top performing unit in the villages of Selawik and Noorvik. While deployed, the Airmen reattached a young girl's finger tip, performed more than 2,000 optometric and dental examinations, and promoted a massive health care program involving substance abuse, sex education and preventive medicine to more than 2,000 native Alaskans.

In addition to their support for national and international operations, the Group also received an "Outstanding" rating during their March 2008 Health Services Inspection—their second consecutive "Outstanding" rating. To add to this accomplishment, they put together an HSI Consultation Team to assist other Air Force units in preparing for these inspections, which are considered among the most difficult medical inspections in the Air Force. The 177th Team visited four other units; three of which have been inspected and attained either "excellent" or better ratings on their inspections.

"These Airmen are true professionals who have taken an interest in helping out other units and ensuring that they succeed," said Col. Bolton.

108TH TOP RESERVE CE UNIT

By Tech. Sgt. Barb Harbison, 108ARW/PA

Virtually every unit thinks they are the best, but when they get an award naming them “Outstanding Unit” – everyone knows they are the best. And the best Civil Engineer Unit in the Air Reserves for 2008 is part of the New Jersey Air National Guard.

The 108th Civil Engineer Squadron, 108th Air Refueling Wing, received the 2008 Major General Robert H. Curtin Award for the Air Force Outstanding Civil Engineer Unit Award – Air Reserve Component Category. The Squadron had also received the 2008 Col. William L. Deneke Outstanding Civil Engineer Unit Award from the Air National Guard.

Commanded by Lt. Col. Paul Novello, the squadron is comprised of more than 90 Airmen and 18 civilian employees. These men and women fill the trades of builders: electricians, plumbers, heating and air conditioning technicians; heavy equipment operators; pest management; and, readiness activities: nuclear, biological and chemical detection and decontamination and disaster response.

To be named the Reserve Component Civil Engineer Squadron of the Year, the 108th CES had to toot their own horn about all the great things they had accomplished in fiscal year 2008.

An ongoing project since the 2005 BRAC has been the new missions and reorganizations of the 108th ARW. The CES has been working hard to upgrade and renovate the facilities for the wing's new missions. Plus, they have been aggressively working to meet requirements of McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst megabase.

“I could not be prouder of the accomplishments of the men and women of the 108th CES,” said Lt. Col. Novello.

“I am very happy for the unit to get some well earned recognition. While this award covers a period of time, CE has in the past, and always will give it our all, and strive to be the best. I am honored to be a part of this team.”

While work was bustling at their home base at McGuire Air Force Base, more than one-third of the squadron volunteered for AEF deployments to Iraq, Kuwait and Qatar. A 40-person team

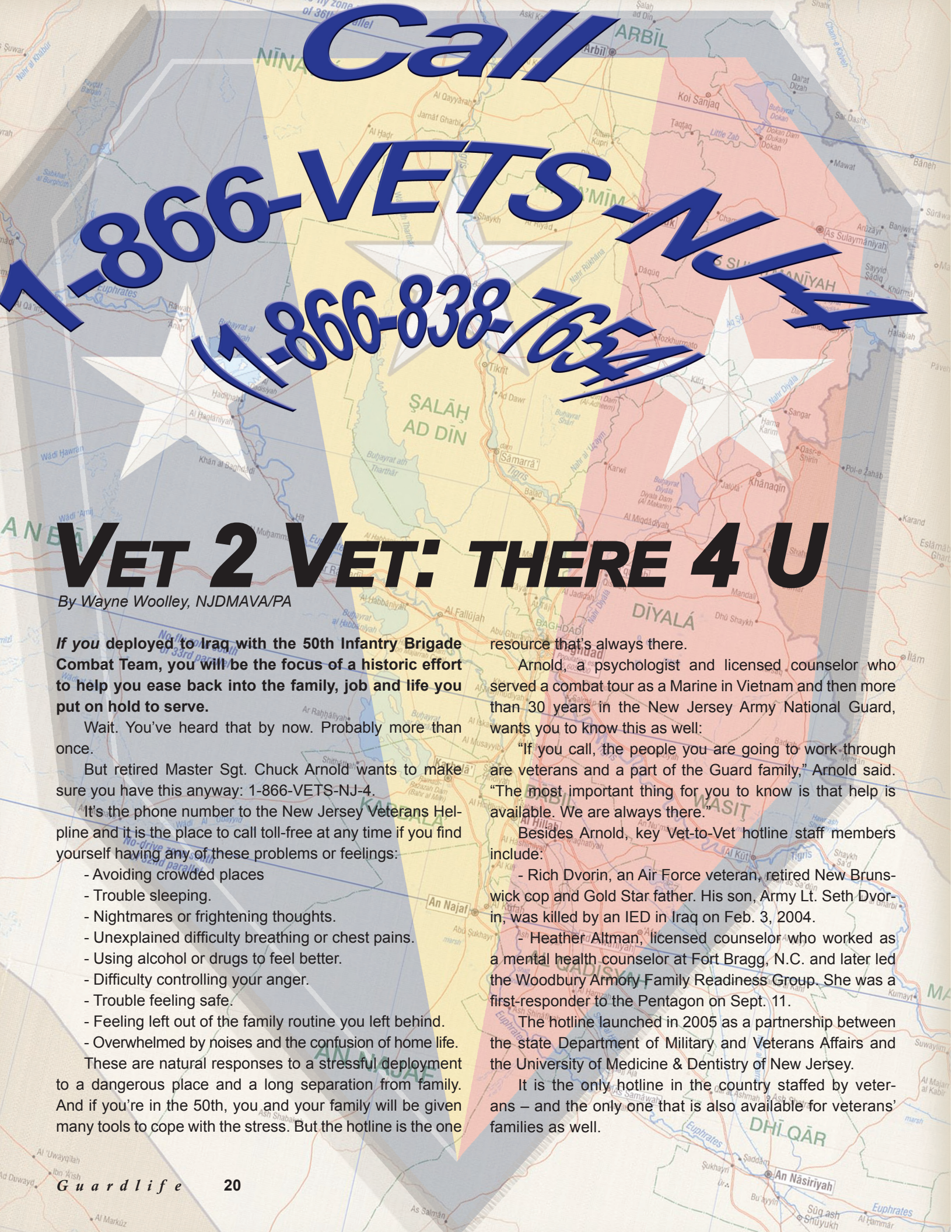


Lt. Col. Paul Novello (r), Commander receives the 2008 Major General Robert H. Curtin Award for the Air Force Outstanding Civil Engineer Unit Award – Air Reserve Component Category from Wing Commander Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cuniff (l) during an awards ceremony at the 108th. Photo by Staff Sgt. Eric Erbe, 108ARW/PA.

I could not be prouder of the accomplishments of the men and women of the 108th CES. Lt. Col. Paul Novello

went to RAF Mildenhall, England for several weeks to work on construction projects, including erection of a security fence, five facility renovation projects and excavation of an area in support of an archeological dig. During the summer of 2008, 30 members of the squadron deployed to Croatia for two weeks for a humanitarian mission during the 2008 Adriatic Aurora exercise. The Airmen worked with a civil engineer unit of the Croatian Army to construct a playground for the local school and replace a roof on the community center.

Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cuniff, commander, 108th Air Refueling Wing, said, “As changes in missions and personnel have occurred in the Air National Guard, and particularly the 108th ARW, during the past few years, the 108th Civil Engineer Squadron has consistently shown its strengths. These men and women certainly deserve this award telling the rest of the Air Force that they are the best of the best.”



Call 1-866-VETS-NJ 1-866-838-7634 VET 2 VET: THERE 4 U

By Wayne Woolley, NJDMAVA/PA

If you deployed to Iraq with the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, you will be the focus of a historic effort to help you ease back into the family, job and life you put on hold to serve.

Wait. You've heard that by now. Probably more than once.

But retired Master Sgt. Chuck Arnold wants to make sure you have this anyway: 1-866-VETS-NJ-4.

It's the phone number to the New Jersey Veterans Helpline and it is the place to call toll-free at any time if you find yourself having any of these problems or feelings:

- Avoiding crowded places
- Trouble sleeping.
- Nightmares or frightening thoughts.
- Unexplained difficulty breathing or chest pains.
- Using alcohol or drugs to feel better.
- Difficulty controlling your anger.
- Trouble feeling safe.
- Feeling left out of the family routine you left behind.
- Overwhelmed by noises and the confusion of home life.

These are natural responses to a stressful deployment to a dangerous place and a long separation from family. And if you're in the 50th, you and your family will be given many tools to cope with the stress. But the hotline is the one

resource that's always there.

Arnold, a psychologist and licensed counselor who served a combat tour as a Marine in Vietnam and then more than 30 years in the New Jersey Army National Guard, wants you to know this as well:

"If you call, the people you are going to work through are veterans and a part of the Guard family," Arnold said. "The most important thing for you to know is that help is available. We are always there."

Besides Arnold, key Vet-to-Vet hotline staff members include:

- Rich Dvorin, an Air Force veteran, retired New Brunswick cop and Gold Star father. His son, Army Lt. Seth Dvorin, was killed by an IED in Iraq on Feb. 3, 2004.
- Heather Altman, licensed counselor who worked as a mental health counselor at Fort Bragg, N.C. and later led the Woodbury Armory Family Readiness Group. She was a first-responder to the Pentagon on Sept. 11.

The hotline launched in 2005 as a partnership between the state Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey.

It is the only hotline in the country staffed by veterans – and the only one that is also available for veterans' families as well.

177TH GETS NEW COMMANDER



Above: Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, The Adjutant General of New Jersey; Brig. Gen. Maria Falca-Dodson, Commander, New Jersey Air National Guard; Col. Randall S. King, outgoing Commander, 177th Fighter Wing and incoming Commander Col. Robert C. Bolton, along with Airmen of the 177th Fighter Wing salute during the playing of the National Anthem at the Wing's Change of Command Ceremony on Feb. 8. Photo by Master Sgt. Shawn Mildren, 177FW/PA.



Photo bottom left: Incoming Commander Col. Robert C. Bolton (r), accepts the 177th's Colors from Brig. Gen. Maria Falca-Dodson (l), while 177th Command Chief Master Sgt. Michael R. Francis (c) observes during the Change of Command Ceremony held at the Wing. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA. Col. Bolton has a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1983 where he received his commission through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program. After flying F-15s with the 27th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Langley Air Force Base, Va., Bolton joined the 177th where he has served in numerous positions including detachment commander on two counter-drug deployments, operations officer for the F-16 C-model conversion and the air-to-ground upgrade program. On September 11, 2001, Bolton stepped in as the unit's alert operations and scheduling officer, and later served from September 2003 to January 2006 as the alert detachment commander. In February 2006, he deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom as the assistant operations officer. Bolton, a command pilot, has more than 5,400 flight hours including 1,600 as an instructor pilot.

A 'Yellow Ribbon' chases away the blues

By Cadet Amelia Thatcher and Pfc. Saul Rosa, 444th MPAD

It's been several months since the New Jersey Embedded Training Team returned from Afghanistan, but the combat tour's events are just starting to sink in.

In the relaxed, cushy surroundings of the Mt. Laurel Westin Hotel, ETT Soldiers received the second of three Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program post-deployment briefings and were encouraged to "get it all out."

"It's not a benefit," said Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, The Adjutant General. "It's an entitlement."

According to trainer Sgt. 1st Class Robert Price, the transition from military to civilian life has improved "a hell of a lot" since his previous deployment to Iraq in 2003.

"It's what I like to call the group hug thing," he said, describing the former demobilization period. "There's standard medical, dental, health stuff, and then one group discussion for like an hour, that's it. Then it's 'Okay, you're back home, go to drill.'"

But for Price, a 28-year veteran who served in Bosnia, Iraq, and now Afghanistan, this time is different.

The post-deployment period of the brand-new Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is crucial to Soldiers returning from a combat zone. Spread over several drill-like weekends post-deployment, Price's training team is at a crossroads. Sixty days out from redeployment, their April briefings consisted mainly of issues in mental health, including anger management, substance abuse prevention, compulsive behaviors prevention and suicide prevention.

According to Yellow Ribbon Support Specialist Jack Stoffa, the 60-day period is especially vital to the Soldiers' well-being and particularly to this group, which was responsible for training the Afghan army and police.

"Everything starts to hit right about now," Stoffa said. "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder... these guys have seen stuff."

Outreach Counselor Jose Burgos of the Ewing Vet Center works constantly to improve the mental health services available to veterans like Price.

An Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran himself, Burgos knows first-hand the importance of post-deployment counseling, months or even years after returning from war.

"I'm the poster boy for PTSD, and I'm not ashamed," Burgos said. "It affects you and it affects your family."

Across the hallway, soldiers of the 2-104th General Support Aviation Battalion completed the first set of briefings, which focused on the programs available for returning Soldiers. This "thirty-day" group, having been home for a mere month after being at war, received more generalized briefings about family issues, education benefits, stress management, money management, chaplain support and problems at work.

"There is so much out there," said Anna Richar, the joint family support consultant for Military OneSource. But a Soldier has to make the first phone call, she added.

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program consists of four phases: pre-deployment, deployment, demobilization, and post-deployment/reintegration. From the time Soldiers are first informed of an upcoming deployment until the day they get back, both they and their families are educated in all aspects of the support available. Services include Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve, Military OneSource, the National Guard's Education Support Center, the N.J. State Family Programs Office and both state and federal Departments of Veterans Affairs.

AIRMAN TAKES DIVERSITY AWARD

By Staff Sgt. Brian Carson, 108ARW



Master Sgt. Ferdie Bautista (center, front row), Information Manager for the 108th Maintenance Squadron, was the Individual Air Diversity Award Winner for 2008.

This award is given to the Air National Guard Airman who best promotes workplace and community diversity while maintaining the core values of the Air Guard.

Bautista competed against Airmen from the 54 states and territories.

His leadership of Asian Pacific Heritage Foundation helped Bautista meet the benchmarks for the award.

As foundation chairman, Bautista integrated Guard and Reserve members into an organization that was previously run exclusively by active duty members.

And he's the Equal Opportunity counselor for his unit.

"Everyone has something positive to offer," he said. "It doesn't matter what they look like or how different they appear."

JERSEY GUARDSMAN: SKIING, SHOOTING, COMPETING

Staff Sgt. Rose Examilotis, 444th MPAD and Wayne Woolley, DMAVA/PA

Inspiration to try the biathlon came to New Jersey Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Marc Winans as he watched his girlfriend, Sgt. Erin Graham, a Vermont Army Guard Soldier, race in the grueling sport that combines Nordic skiing and shooting.

Problem was, Graham competed at the elite level and Winans, a decent marksman, knew nothing about cross-country skiing.

So last February, at age 35, he started to learn.

"One of the hardest things I have ever done," said Winans, a saxophone and clarinet player in the 63rd Army Band.

He must have gotten some good pointers.

Because on March 9, Winans raced in the 2009 National Guard Bureau Biathlon Championships in Jericho, Vt., making him the first Jersey Guardsman in recent memory to compete in the prestigious event.

He placed 39th in a field of 55 in the 10 kilometer sprint in a respectable 46 minutes. He finished the 15 kilometer race in 1 hour and 14 minutes, about 28 minutes behind the winning group, but more than a half hour before the final racers.

Not a bad showing for a Jersey guy competing in a field dominated by troops from states known for winter weather, like Vermont, Minnesota, North Dakota and Montana. Eight-



New Jersey Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Marc Winans racing at the 2009 National Guard Bureau Biathlon Championships in Jericho, Vt. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Karin Kasupski, Vermont Army National Guard.

teen states sent nearly 80 athletes to the championships.

Winans hopes to raise awareness within New Jersey National Guard about biathlon and military programs that can offer exceptional athletes an environment to train and compete.

The National Guard Bureau biathlon program's mission is to develop the highest levels of skiing and rifle marksmanship necessary to improve the combat ability of individual Soldiers and to represent the National Guard and the U.S. Armed Services in national and international events, including the World Cup and Winter Olympics.

Air Force flight surgeons train Iraqi counterparts

Col. William Dodson, 108th Air Refueling Wing, assigned to the Coalition Air Force Training Team, advises seven Iraqi air force and Iraqi army physicians during the aero-medical evacuation class at the flight surgeon course at New al-Muthana Air Base, Iraq, April 20. The training teaches the Iraqis how to convert a UH-1 Huey Helicopter and a C-130 Hercules Aircraft from a passenger transport to an aero-medical evacuation medevac transport. This is the third class of Iraqi flight surgeons that will be graduating from the four week course. The course, which is currently taught by Iraqi flight surgeons and the Coalition Air Force Training Team will be fully taught by the Iraqis during the next course. After completing the course, the Iraqi officers will be responsible for doing physicals on candidates that want to fly in the Iraqi forces and taking care of the current aircrew members. U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jacqueline Romero.



G VOLUNTEERISM



Spc. Mindy Yeon (l), Human Resource specialist with the 119th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion and Staff Sgt. Walter Kienzle (second from left), Combat Arms, 177th Fighter Wing Security Forces, help students from the Sovereign Avenue School in Atlantic City prepare donated items for shipping to military members deployed overseas on Dec. 18. The "Oceans Apart, But Never Far From The Heart" care package drive was arranged by school teacher Courtney Mitchell, volunteer for the 177th Family Support Office and wife of 177th Master Sgt. Dan Mitchell. Photo by Master Sgt. Andrew Moseley, 177FW/PA.

NUTTER RUN BENEFITS SOLDIERS

By Officer Candidate Ana Bolanos, 254th Regiment

Officer Candidates Class #52 is hosting the 5th Annual SGT Sam Nutter 5K Run on May 31 at the National Guard Training Center at Sea Girt.

The run will start at 10 a.m. and will be followed by a presentation of the proceeds to the beneficiary family and an awards presentation for the runners with the best time in the different age groups for males and females. There will also be a barbeque and live music.

The Sam Nutter Organization was created in 2005 and is administered by the Officer Candidate School of the New Jersey Army National Guard to raise funds to benefit National Guard families in need. Each year, a charity 5 kilometer run is planned in remembrance of SGT Sam Nutter, a former OCS candidate whose terminal cancer did not stop him from assisting the OCS class and staff.

In 2006, the beneficiary was Ashleigh Ryann Gwinn

who was diagnosed with Krabbe Leukodystrophy. The next year, proceeds went to Caitlyn McGuire who was and still is trying to beat her battle with cancer. Last year's beneficiary was Dina Hickman, who at the age of six months was diagnosed with Neurofibromatosis Type I. This year all proceeds will be donated to the family of Sgt. Raul Aponte who is currently deployed with the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. The Aponte family home was struck by lightning during a storm in 2008 and caught fire, leaving them without a permanent residence and under heavy financial burden.

If you would like to participate in the run, donate, or sponsor a runner, please go to www.nutterrun.com for more information call (877) 428-4774. Registration is encouraged prior to the event, but can be done up to 30 minutes before the race starts. All ages can to participate in the run.

'THE MAJOR' STALKS THE RING

By Spc. Landis Andrews, 444MPAD; Photo courtesy Asylum Fight League

Maj. Jonathan Lapidow lives and breathes the warrior ethos. And that's before he even puts on his uniform.

The 36-year-old New Jersey Army National Guard officer is a budding mixed martial arts competitor, versed in jiu-jitsu, wrestling, boxing and Muay Thai martial arts.

Up until three years ago, Lapidow never considered getting in the ring. Then he served a tour in Iraq. When he returned, a friend asked him if he wanted to train.

"I figured, hell, I just spent a year in a combat zone and survived that. How bad could it be to train to fight?" said Lapidow, a helicopter pilot who serves full-time in Recruiting and Retention Command.

He competed in his first match on March 14 and for his ring moniker, they called him "The Major."

They also called him the winner.

He won his bout in a lightning-fast 24 seconds, forcing his opponent, Kyle Malone, to submit.

Lapidow caught Malone in a guillotine, a headlock style chokehold, and Malone tapped the mat to indicate he'd had enough.

Despite the strong start to Lapidow's career, he sees the sport as more than an outlet for his competitive instincts. He also sees a golden opportunity to interest young people in the National Guard.

To that end, he's begun the process of creating the New Jersey National Guard MMA Combatives Team. It will afford any National Guard Soldier the opportunity to receive training in mixed martial arts disciplines.

"If you want to get training like this as a civilian, it's going to cost you at least \$150 per month, and that's only for one or two disciplines. With the combatives team the training will be provided for you during times when you would normally report for duty. So, essentially, we are paying you to train," said Lapidow.

Lt. Col. John Sheard, the recruiting and retention commander, believes offering the opportunity for that kind of training will attract worthy candidates to the New Jersey Guard.

After all, the Jersey Guard has already established a relationship with the Asylum Fight League, the organization that gave Lapidow his first match.

"I've been marketing with Asylum for quite a while now. Right now, the National Guard logo is in the center of the ring. But when Jon started working in this office it all came together," Sheard said. "I sat down with the president of the league and he was more than willing to give us a shot."

Lapidow – and his corner crew and fans – serve as a



veritable billboard for National Guard recruiting.

"When I'm out there fighting, I'm representing the Guard. My whole team is wearing 1-800-GO-GUARD T-shirts, ring girls are throwing Go Guard shirts into the crowd, the logo is draped behind me and we have trucks in the parking lot," said Lapidow. "We want kids to know that they can take part in MMA if they just join the National Guard."

The National Guard brand is no stranger to marketing in the sports arena. The logo appears on the car of NASCAR driver Dale Earnhardt Jr., at Rutgers football games and in the stadium of multiple minor league baseball teams to include the Somerset Patriots and the Trenton Thunder.

This combatives team will work as a pipeline for worthy contenders to get sanctioned fights through the partnership between the National Guard and the Asylum Fight League, which is the number one rated MMA association in New Jersey. However, competition is not the only goal of this team.

"Qualities that you need to be successful in the mixed martial arts arena are perfect for all Soldiers," Lapidow said. "Being physically fit, being mentally focused and having this kind of drive is the cornerstone of military personnel. Being a part of this team, even without the competition, will drastically improve you as a Soldier, as an athlete and as a person."

Lapidow imagines getting enough National Guard troops to field a full-fledged team, similar to the MMA All-Stars from Fort Drum, N.Y. This collection of Marines, Sailors and Soldiers will be traveling from upstate New York to Fort Dix to take on contenders in the Asylum Fight League.

Realizing that his opponents will be from other services heightens his sense of urgency.

"Now, not only will I be fighting for myself and the National Guard, I will be representing the strength of the Army," said Lapidow.

REUNION BRIEFINGS: *bridging the gap*

By Spc. Landis Andrews, 444th MPAD; Photo by Kryn Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA

Thousands of families across the state went through the gut-wrenching ordeal of saying goodbye to husbands, wives and children at the start of the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's historic Iraq deployment.

Welcoming them home will be a joyous event, for sure. But the days, weeks and months after the deployment ends won't be without stress, or even heartache, as Soldiers try to ease back into lives that went on without them for a year.

With that reality in mind, the National Guard has been conducting a series of reunion briefings for the families of the deployed troops.

Marie Durling, the assistant family programs director, has been using these forums to try to lower families' expectations.

"If you're expecting your Soldier to drop their bags and run in slow motion towards you while you stand there with your arms wide open, you might be let down," Durling said during a briefing at the Lawrenceville Armory in early April. "Don't expect that beach fantasy because your Soldiers have been through a different experience than you have and that may not be what they want."

Families from across New Jersey have participated at meetings in every armory and all of the reunion briefings have followed the same routine.

Durling focuses her talk on the adults, covering everything from family finances to rekindling romance. State youth coordinator Amanda Ballas talks to the children, covering everything from home safety and letter writing to learning how to express their feelings to their returning parents.

"Children don't take things as well as the adults do," Ballas said. "You have to talk to them on their level because there is a lot more confusion."

That's an issue that Sara Luchenta is already facing.

"My daughter was just a baby when her Daddy left, and

now she's walking and talking," Luchenta said. "My husband missed a very crucial part of her life."

Her husband, 1st Lt. Jeffery Hager is expected to return home with the 50th Chemical Company, but his daughter is a bit apprehensive about meeting her father for the first time.

"She has been waking up crying in the middle of the night because of nightmares that when Jeff comes home he won't know who she is," Luchenta said. "She is worried that her dad won't recognize her and know that she is his daughter."

The 32-year old mother of two has her own reservations about her husband's return. "Before he left I didn't drive but while he was gone I had to get my license. Now I'm used to driving everywhere and taking the kids wherever they need to be. It's going to be hard giving up the keys when I've gotten so used to being in control," Luchenta said.

Julio Quiniones must also be prepared to relinquish some control, but in a more domestic arena.

"My wife used to write all of the checks and do most of the work around the house," Quiniones said. "I got

used to doing things my way at home and being in charge of everything, including the checkbook. Giving that up might be hard."

Quiniones, the husband of Master Sgt. Mariana Soto-Quiniones, was reassured that he would not have to hand over the spending power so suddenly. "[Durling] said that it's good not to jump right back into the way things used to be because they might not be ready for so much responsibility yet. That means I can still be in charge for a little while longer."

After the briefing in Lawrenceville, many of the family members who attended said they felt better because they learned their particular worries were actually common concerns.

"My main thing was to find out about getting the money situation straight. Now that those questions are answered we can work on planning our vacation," Luchenta said. "We're going to Disney World!"



NEWS GUARD FAMILIES CAN USE

Compiled by the Guardlife Staff

SCRA explained

The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act covers all National Guard members while on active duty. The protection begins on the date of entering active duty and generally terminates within 30 to 90 days after the date of discharge from active duty.

The SCRA provides a wide range of protections for individuals entering, called to active duty, or deployed servicemembers. It is intended to postpone or suspend certain civil obligations to enable service members to devote full attention to duty and relieve stress on the family members of those deployed servicemembers. A few examples of such obligations you may be protected against are: outstanding credit card debt, mortgage payments, pending trials, taxes and lease terminations.

The Act expands current law that protects servicemembers and their families from eviction from housing while on active duty due to non-payment of rents. Under the new provisions this protection would cover housing leases up to \$2,720.95 per month – and then be adjusted annually to account for inflation.

SCRA clarifies limits to six percent interest on credit obligations incurred prior to military service or activation, including credit card debt. Please note that this law only covers debt incurred prior to military service.

The Act will prevent states from using the income earned by a servicemember in determining the spouse's tax rate when they do not maintain their permanent legal residence in that state.

If you haven't already taken advantage of the SCRA, please look into it so that you get the full benefits allowed to you under the law. Remember that only a lawyer can advise you on legal matters.

Family Readiness increases grants

The New Jersey National Guard State Family Readiness Council has increased the amounts of family and business grants up to \$5,000 and \$10,000, respectively. Both grants are known as TIER I grants.

TIER II family grants are also available to New Jersey Army and Air National Guard non-deployed servicemembers who served on State Active Duty or State Missions (e.g., hurricanes, floods, border missions) for more than 20 consecutive days. Servicemembers meeting these criteria are eligible to apply for a financial hardship grant up to \$1,500.

Applications are available at all New Jersey Army and Air National Guard Family Assistance Centers.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTERS

108TH AIR REFUELING WING

3327 Charles Blvd.
McGuire AFB, NJ 08641
POC: Doug Ridgway
doug.ridgway@njmcgu.af.mil

JERSEY CITY ARMORY

678 Montgomery Street
Jersey City, NJ 07306-2208
POC: SFC (Ret) Bernard Sims
bernard.sims@us.army.mil

LAWRENCEVILLE ARMORY

151 Eggert Crossing Road
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648-2897
POC: Jane Hackbarth
jane.e.hackbarth@us.army.mil

MORRISTOWN ARMORY

430 Jockey Hollow Road
Morristown, NJ 07960-0499
POC: SFC (Ret) Robert Kraemer
robert.kraemer@us.army.mil

POMONA NJNG FAC

400 Langley Road
Egg Harbor Twp, NJ 08234
Air POC: CMSgt (Ret) Paul Gunning

paul.gunning@njatla.af.mil
Army POC: CSM (Ret) Michael Hughes
michael.hughes@njatla.af.mil

SOMERSET ARMORY

1060 Hamilton Street
Somerset, NJ 08873
POC: John Hales
john.a.hales@us.army.mil

TEANECK ARMORY

Teaneck & Liberty Roads
Teaneck NJ 07666-0687
POC: SFC (Ret) Janis Shaw
janis.m.shaw@us.army.mil

TOMS RIVER ARMORY

1200 Whitesville Road
Toms River, NJ 08753
POC: Maria Morro
maria.morro1@us.army.mil

WOODBURY ARMORY

658 North Evergreen Avenue
Woodbury, NJ 08096
POC: Michele Daisey
michele.daisey1@us.army.mil

or call 1-888-859-0352



Guardmembers, become A Recruiting Assistant and for every person you recruit into the New Jersey Army or Air National Guard you earn \$2,000. Logon to <http://guardrecruitingassistant.com/> pick your branch of service, fill out the application and you are on your way to helping someone make a great career choice and some serious cash for yourself.



Short Rounds: New Commander, H New friends, Keys to the FOB and Ta



Alvarado to command schoolhouse

Brig. Gen. John Nunn (r), Assistant Adjutant General-Army presents the colors of the 254th Regiment to incoming commander Col. Walter L. Alvarado (l) during a change of command ceremony at the National Guard Training Center in Sea Girt on April 4. Alvarado replaces Col. James T. Corrigan, who served for the past two years as the commander of the schoolhouse. Photo by Spc. Robert Neill, 444MPAD.



Making butterflies

Students from the Gloria M. Sabater Elementary School, teacher Connie Richmond and 2nd Lt. Richard Lee, 444MPAD Support Battalion work on the Butterfly Tree project at the school decorated foam butterflies and dedicated a fallen service member who served in Iraq or Afghanistan. The ceremony was held on Jan. 23 of more than 580 graves at the cemetery. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Grant, 444MPAD.



Armed with teddy bears

Soldiers of the 2-113th Infantry Battalion, New Jersey Army National Guard, pose with Iraqi children they gave stuffed animals to, near Safwan, Iraq, March 1. The humanitarian effort was spearheaded by Staff Sgt. Heriberto Maldonado, Bravo Company, with stuffed animals donated by his family and friends. Special thanks to Girl Scout Troop 269 of Glenrock, N.J. Photo by Maj. Jason Fetterolf, PAO, 2-113th Infantry Battalion.



Key to Freedom

Capt. Eric Montoya, (l-r) Charley Keuscher, deputy group-central command liaison for the Group, the prime minister's office, director general of reconstruction, FOB Freedom during a ceremony in Iraq. Photo by Staff Sgt.

honoring the fallen, Legal awardee, making a powder



School in Vineland, with help from E. Company, 250th Brigade. Children from 31 classrooms dedicated each one to the memory of a fallen soldier. The assignment culminated in 100 butterflies for Arlington National Cemetery.



Ayars top ANG Paralegal of the Year

Tech. Sgt. Anna C. Ayars, 177th Law Office Superintendent displays ANG Paralegal of the Year - CMSgt Councilman Award. Ayars received the award on Jan. 23 at the Annual Survey of the Law Conference held in Denver. The award is presented annually to a member of the Air National Guard selected as the most outstanding paralegal of the year, based upon demonstrated superior job performance, exhibition of leadership qualities, significant positive self-improvement and contributions within the Air National Guard and the local community. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA.



Freedom

Forward Operating Base Freedom mayor; 1st Sgt. [Name] mayor; Col. Steven Ferrari, Joint Area Support Center; present Mohammad Salman, national reconstruction minister of Iraq; Ali Al-Yasri, director general of the operations, GOI, and Dr. Mawafek Al-Kuramany, a key to the ceremony marking the property's transfer back to the Iraqi government. Photo by Shawn Morris, JASG-C/PA.



Foot Soldier

Master Sgt. Myles Cappiello with the Joint Training and Training Development Center, applies powder to his feet as participants continue along the 26.2-mile route of the 20th annual Bataan Memorial Death March, held April 6 at the White Sands Missile Range, N.M. An estimated 5,300 people participated in the event. Photo by Dustin Perry, Fort Bliss Monitor.

NEW JERSEY NATIONAL GUARD

New Jersey Army National Guard

To Sergeant Major (E-9)

Thomas S. Decker

To First Sergeant (E-8):

John J. Hegyi
Patrick A. Kildea
Douglas W. McNeil
Stephane M. Millhollin
Marc D. Winans

To Master Sergeant (E-8)

Joseph J. Bosotina
Daniel A. Braun
Sean M. Farrell
Daniel E. McCarthy
Jacek K. Niemynski
Valerie L. Nutter
Peter J. Quinlan Sr.

To Sergeant First Class (E-7):

Adrian Alvarez
Ricardo Charles
Edwin Cruz
Jose T. Cruz
Shawna M. Frey
Todd J. Geweke
Carlton A. Gittens
Jerome Grant
Daniel Guzman
James M. Hammer
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Franklin E. Pinili
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Graca M. Ruivo
Susan E. Stephens
Angel L. Torres
Louis E. Tuck
Kerry L. Williams
Eric J. Zucker

To Staff Sergeant (E-6):

Raymond Aviles
Irving Baez
Marcus J. Baker
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Ishwann Q. Dixon
David I. Engelhardt Jr.
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Russell Huth Jr.
Yuhao Liang

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Joel Reyes
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Danny Sanchez
Dennis M. Shanahan Jr.
Gregory C. Small
Douglas E. Tackach
Hung Q. Tang
Kandar Q. Taylor
Mark S. Ussery
John A. Vasquez
Robert P. Waterman
Julio M. Zuniga

To Sergeant (E-5):

Frederick C. Abline
Saleem Y. Ali
James E. Bellerose II
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Gerald M. Castillo
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Christopher E. Crum
Daniel Cruz
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Jonathan U. Fiorentino
Frank Griseta
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Richard A. Swaim
Michael Torres
Mark S. Truss
Cragg B. Utman II
Wendy I. Velasquez

To Specialist (E-4):

Ramon Abreu
Richard J. Adair
David R. Addertonenright
Sergio A. Agudelo
Christian Y. Alfaro
Alexander Alli
Alejandro Alvarado
Manuel Alvarado-Febres

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Christian T. Baierwalter
Shawn P. Baxley
Daniel M. Bender
Kasper Biskup
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Cesar Cuba
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Andrew S. Davis
Ivin H. Davis
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Zachary J. Faist
Byron F. Falconi

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Lynn R. Jones
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Se H. Kim
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Godson Noel
Stanley R. Noel
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Daniel D. Oquendo
Karina Ordonez
John G. Osorio
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Bhavinkumar P. Shah
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Pernia D. Ward
William T. Warner
Shane E. Weddle
Brian M. Wesley
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Nasheem Q. Whye
Anthony H. Wright
Adriano A. Yanez
Sarah F. Zadoyko
Douglas A. Zirkle Jr.

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Jennifer Abreu
Gersande Accilien
Ryan A. Albright
Stephen J. Allay
Jose A. Ayala
Walida S. Barr
Jorge E. Beltran
Royce L. Benefiel
Rajaan L. Bey
Thomas C. Bonsall III
Shannon E. Brennan
Jerry A. C. Brown
Timothy L. Campbell-Cromartie
Lucas B. Campos
Albert Caraballo Jr.

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 Charles W. Crossman Jr.
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 Kenia A. Cruz
 Vincent Damiano
 George M. Delgado
 John F. Derienzo-Parks
 Erik J. Doucette
 Jessye N. Echevarria
 Ryan Z. Enger
 Victoria I. Feliciano
 Randall J. Ferrara
 Jennifer C. Figueroa
 Jose R. Garciapolanco
 Salvatore J. Giammarco
 Tejay A. Gilliam
 Muneer A. Gonsalves
 Jacob J. Gowdy
 Harvey Green Jr.
 Bryan M. Greten
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 Moses Guzman
 Joseph D. Harang
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 Jorge L. L. Hinojosabarba
 Peterson Hyppolite
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 Daniel A. Jones
 David L. Jones
 Joseph R. Kemmler
 James J. Kennedy IV
 Cullis K. King
 Amouzouvi F. Kluvi
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 William J. Larson III
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 Kim A. McGrath
 Lamont McKnight
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 Danyell M. Mitchell
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 Wilber Roman
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 Norman A. Williams
 Brian Willis Sr.
 Coco C. Wilson
 Timothy A. Witts
 Kyle H. Wydner

To Private (E-2):

Tyree A. Adkins
 James E. Anderson
 John P. Bargeman
 Benilde S. Barroquero
 Carlos M. Barzola
 Crista S. Behlin
 Santa A. Britt
 Travis J. Bushe
 Johany Castillon
 Damian D. Colon-Dejesus
 Raheem S. Conerson
 Rincon P. Coy
 Lawrence J. Davidson
 Tony Demarco
 Henri O. Diate
 Dustin D. Ducksworth
 Diego N. Filgueiras
 Kenneth Flores
 Josiph T. Gaviria Lopez
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 Rigo T. Gutierrez
 Jason R. Hattersley
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 Sean P. Howard
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 Ryan S. Mendia
 Jason E. Mueller
 Ronny Nunez
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 Peter P. Rohloff
 Efrain Rosado III
 Jarmaine Salce
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 Theodore F. Shaffer
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 Leo Sotomayor Jr.
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 Justin M. Webb
 Daniel A. Wescoat Jr.
 Mark K. Williams
 Christopher J. Woods
 Thomas D. Yawger
 Julieth A. ZuletaIozano

New Jersey Air National Guard To Chief Master Sergeant (E-9):

Eugene W. Graziano Jr.
 Kate S. Urie

To Senior Master Sergeant (E-8):

Anthony Christmas
 Maria C. Hamlin
 Tori M. Hill

Stephen D. Jones
 Daniel T. Mitchell Jr.
 Michael J. Sylvester
 Ronald T. Tuminelli Jr.

To Master Sergeant (E-7):

Keith M. Bertram
 James J. Colavita
 Julio E. Davila
 Stephen L. Diambrosio
 Alphonso J. Hughes
 Erica A. Nelson
 Elizabeth G. Nixon
 Michael A. Ripp
 Francis A. Spence
 Christopher R. Taggart
 David E. Terrill
 Denise M. Torres
 Christina Vidro

To Technical Sergeant (E-6):

Miguel G. Badillo
 Stanley J. Carroll
 Joseph S. Coladarc III
 Purvis R. Coley Jr.
 Robert W. Douglas
 Bryan S. Fernandez
 Liam M. Frank
 Samantha L. Gerofsky
 Martin F. Haniffy Jr.
 John W. Harris
 Kenneth R. Knowles
 Tracy L. Lube
 Emil C. Martinelli III
 Brian G. McDewitt
 Olivia M. McMahon
 Felicia C. Ramadhin
 Jose A. Reyes
 Luminada Santiago
 Michael F. Sears
 Kirk E. Sherry
 Gregory M. White
 Wayne R. White II
 John D. Whittaker
 Dorothea C. Wynter

To Staff Sergeant (E-5):

John E. Allen
 Stephen T. Atkinson
 Eligio Batiz
 Daniel P. Bevins
 Chantel T. Bullock
 Russell J. Carney
 Lauren W. Carter
 James V. Cervone
 Alexander Cherena
 Kristopher M. Chiola
 Jessica A. Craig
 Pedro E. Cuadra III
 Tara M. Cullen
 Thomas W. Curtis
 Lennard D. Gilbert
 Frank R. Incognito

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 Craig A. King
 Matthew S. King
 Stephen W. Klotz Jr.
 Daniel P. Lahart Jr.
 Heather L. Lucyk
 Thomas W. Mabey II
 Michael A. Mattola
 Miracle G. Mays
 Corey E. McPherson
 Mary L. Milligan
 Marcos A. Murillo
 Sean M. Nitahara
 Michael J. Pando Jr.
 Gary S. Parks
 Janice Rivera
 Eric V. Scott
 Scott M. Sendrick
 Jose M. Villegas-Ortiz
 Heyward D. Wiggins IV
 Brandon C. Wood
 Joseph J. Zavisliak III

To Senior Airman (E-4):

David I. Brown
 Anthony D. Emerson
 Thomas M. Foulds
 David J. Heitman
 Christopher L. Krampitz
 Jennifer L. Robledo
 Jennifer S. Santos
 Nathan R. Schaefer
 Latoya M. Taylor
 Michael P. Walsh Jr.

To Airman First Class (E-3):

Rita Abate-Marco
 Micheal J. Ayers
 Richard J. Bellwoar Jr.
 Jeffrey M. Campbell
 Nicholas E. Carpenito
 Jace Cartagena
 Laurant B. Cavanaugh
 Kelly B. Chen
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 Willie Cruzmoya
 Jonathan J. Dambrosio Jr.
 Kyle E. Dean
 Patrick B. Degrazia
 Jason T. Dever
 Carl I. Dickey
 William T. Dougherty
 Testertroy D. Emerson
 Brittany A. Eure
 Christopher J. Fifth
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 Ryan W. Fogarty
 John F. Franze
 Amanda C. Garrison
 Eiler A. Gomez
 Caitlin R. Green
 Jacob M. Harris
 Nathaniel V. Jackson
 Roman Justino Jr.

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 Manuel Montoya Jr.
 Saul E. Nieves
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 Richard J. Ples
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 Catalina Prieto
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 Lewis C. Weber
 Ryan L. Woods
 Christopher A. Young

To Airman (E-2):

Anthony J. Foster
 Dominick J. Santo-Pietro Jr.

New Airman:

Andrew M. Cuomo
 Alisha K. Elliot
 Randy R. Gutch
 Alison M. Jones
 William E. Lopez
 Davaughn A. Palmer
 Shannon M. Peterson
 Kristina M. Reinhard
 Douglas M. Sim

Congratulations To All!

Compiled by
 Master Sgt.
 Daniel J. Caldarele
 (Army Guard promotions)
 and Master Sgt.
 Paul B. Thompson Jr.
 (Air Guard promotions)

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LAST ROUND - BROTHERS



Capt. Sean M. Roughneen (l), Company A, 2-104th General Support Aviation Battalion, returned on Feb. 2 from a year-long deployment in Southwest Asia, says good-bye to his twin brother, Capt. Joseph E. Rough-

neen (r), 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion, as his unit leaves New Jersey for pre-mobilization training before deploying to Iraq. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA.