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Serving the New York Army and Air National Guard, Naval Militia, New York Guard and Families



FROM THE LEADERSHIP

Governor Says 'Thank You for Your Service'

On the afternoon of the 20th anniversary of 9/11, I had the opportunity to speak to a small number of National Guard Soldiers at the Jacob Javits Convention Center as a way to note the significant role the New York National Guard played in the state and city response to the Sept. 11 attacks.

It had already been a busy and emotional day, but I wanted the opportunity to tell a few of your fellow Guardsmen and women in person, how much I and all New Yorkers respected and valued the service of the Guard.

I want to share that message with all the 20,000 members of New York's military forces: the Army and Air National Guard, the New York Naval Militia and the New York Guard.

I respect and appreciate each one of you, because you have volunteered to serve our state and our nation. Most of you are citizen Soldiers. You are civilians and then, when duty calls, you put on your uniform and put yourself on the line for the rest of us.

That is extraordinary and I will always be humbled by the thought that you are out there. You are our neighbors, you are our teachers, you are workers and you are our friends, but you are also members of the military.

And when duty calls you put on those uniforms, you suit up and are willing to do something that I find so incredibly powerful: the act of courage to be able to put yourselves out there on the front lines.

Twenty years ago, the New York National Guard turned out on 9/11 and since then you and your predecessors have been there when needed: during ice storms, floods, and hurricanes, and Superstorm Sandy, and especially during this terrible pandemic.

More than 6,300 of you have been there on the front lines, conducting testing, transporting critical supplies, building a field hospital, providing food to those in need and ensuring that lifesaving vaccines are administered. You have been magnificent.

At the same time you've been turning out to serve in the frontlines in Iraq and Afghanistan.

When I was a member of Congress I had the opportunity to meet members of the New York National Guard in battle fatigues in Afghanistan. It looked like the moonscape when you flew over the mountains and you landed.

But once on the ground I met these most incredible individuals, human beings separated by thousands of miles from their families and loved ones from their normal lives, but they didn't think twice about it. They were there because they knew their country and their state needed them.

I consider, you the most courageous, the greatest, the most talented National Guard in



the nation. I know that you will be there for your friends and neighbors and fellow citizens when we have to call on you again in our moments of need.

Thank you for your service. I am proud to be your commander-in-chief.



Governor Kathy Hochul recognizes members of the New York National Guard's 369th Sustainment Brigade at the Jacob Javits Center, New York City, September 11, 2021 to mark the 20th anniversary of the attacks of 9/11. Hochul signed a proclamation that day recognizing the 69th Infantry, 101st Cavalry, 258th Field Artillery, 105th Infantry, 107th Corps Support Group and the 2nd Civil Support team, along with the 6,716 New York National Guardsmen who responded to the attacks between September 11 to November 17th, 2001. Photo by Don Pollard, Office of Governor Kathy Hochul.



"I consider, you the most courageous, the greatest, the most talented National Guard in the nation,"

-- New York Governor Kathy Hochul



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This Issue's Highlights:

Faces of the Force

- 4 Twins Serve Together on COVID-19 Mission
- 5 Expert Soldier Badge Awarded to four NY Soldiers

Around the State

- 6 Army Guardsmen Reflect on 9/11 Response

The Joint Force

- 8 Guard Hosts Israeli Home Front Commander
- 9 Long Island Troops Readied for Hurricane Henri
- 10 Racing Association Recognizes COVID-19 Responders
- 11 Father, Airman Son Share in COVID Mission
- 12 NY National Guard Marks 9/11 20th Anniversary
- 15 Governor Recognizes Guard for 9/11 Response

Army National Guard

- 16 NY Artillery Battery Rated Best in National Guard
- 17 Soldiers Honor 9/11 with Memorial Ruck March
- 18 10th Mountain CP Detachment Welcomes New Commander
- 19 'Wild Bill' Donovan Honored in Comic Book
- 20 Congress Honors Halrem Hellfighters
- 21 Former "Fighting 69th" Commander Now Leads 27th Brigade
- 22 101st Cavalry Gets New Commander
- 23 Cyber Soldiers Participate in Digital Exercise
- 25 Officer Sets New Weight Lifting Record

Air National Guard

- 26 106th Airman Aids in Delivery of Afghan Baby
- 27 NY Airmen Team Up with Brazilian Air Force
- 28 109th Wraps Up Greenland, Heads to Antarctica
- 29 Rescue Experts Participate in Azores Training

New York Guard and Naval Militia

- 30 Iraq War Veteran Takes Command of NY Guard

"The Spirit of Long Island" HC-130 Hercules aircraft, tail number 0222, which saw service during the Vietnam War and later assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing located at Francis S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base, Westhampton Beach, New York, until its decommissioning in 2019, is moved from the flight line to static display at the entrance of the base on Aug. 16, 2021. The move was done by Airmen from N.Y., Connecticut, Arkansas and active duty Air Force.



FRONT COVER: Guard Spc. Joshua Klotzbach, assigned to Bravo Company, 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion, emplaces a bangalore torpedo in a triple strand concertina wire obstacle during demolition training at Fort Drum, New York on July 14, 2021. Photo by Maj. Avery Schneider, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

BACK COVER: Capt. Christopher Kalesavich, assigned to Echo Company, 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation, pauses during his participation in the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade's rotation at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, July, 2021. Photo by Sgt. Jonathan Sivayavirojna, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade.

Twins Serve Together on COVID-19 Mission

Story by Capt. Mark Getman and Warrant Officer Edward Shevlin, New York Guard

NEW YORK -- Two sets of identical twins are among the 6,394 troops who have been part of the New York National Guard's COVID response mission that began in March 2020.

Specialists Armani and Artez Wilkins, both infantrymen assigned to the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, and Pfc. Jiralmi and Gizelle Lugo, members of the 369th Sustainment Brigade, served together to support New York's COVID-19 response.

Working together on the pandemic response mission has brought them closer together and broadened their military experience, both sets of twins said.

The Wilkins, who both live in Bayshore, went on duty together in March 2020 as the New York National Guard was tasked with assisting in New York's response to the emerging pandemic.

The mission was focused on trying to contain a COVID-19 outbreak in New Rochelle north of New York City in Westchester County.

The Wilkins, age 27, were assigned to missions cleaning the New Rochelle City Hall and local schools.

Later, the two were assigned to a COVID-19 drive through test site established at the State University of New York, Stony Brook.

"One of the things that I learned was understanding how people understand you," Armani said. "There were language barriers that sometimes made communications more difficult. But we found ways to put people at ease while keeping the process moving."

"I learned a lot about caring for

other people from my fellow team members and my daily interaction with the public," Artez said.

Unfortunately, they also both contracted COVID-19 together.

Artez had a few symptoms, but the virus hit his brother harder.

"I couldn't walk or breathe well for a couple of weeks and my memory also felt foggy for about the same duration," Armani recalled.

Both recovered and went back on duty, although they got split up on different missions.

Artez kept working at the Stony Brook test site, while Armani was assigned to the massive vaccination site at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in Manhattan.

The Lugo sisters joined the New York Army National Guard in February 2020. The 19 year olds from Queens enlisted to serve as human resource specialists.

"It was a joint decision to pick the same MOS," the two said. "Training together gave us both the confidence we needed to succeed," Giselle said.

A year later, they were back from training and volunteered for the COVID-19 mission and in March 2021, they both began working at the Javits vaccination center.

Initially, the two sisters worked in different sections. Jiralmi worked in the personnel section, while Giselle worked in the intelligence section.

Now though, they are both working in the personnel office.

"Having my sister by my side during AIT and now working together with her on the mission has been a great comfort," Giselle said.



New York Army National Guard Spc. Armani and Artez Wilkins, right, and Pfc. Jiralmi and Gizelle Lugo, on the roof top of the Jacob Javits Mass vaccination site in New York, on June 29, 2021. The two sets of identical twins have served together to support New York's Operation COVID 19 response. Photo by Maj. Michael O'Hagan, 106th Rescue Wing.

Being in different sections for a while was also a good thing, the two agreed.

"Not being with my sister all

the time and working in different sections taught me to be independent," Giselle added. **gt**

"Having my sister by my side during AIT and now working together with her on the mission has been a great comfort,"

-- Pfc. Giselle Lugo, 369th Sustainment Brigade

Expert Soldier Badge Awarded to four NY Soldiers

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- Four Soldiers became the first in the New York Army National Guard to earn the new Expert Soldier Badge on Oct. 1, 2021, following two weeks of training and testing at Fort Drum.

The four men joined another 950 Soldiers across the Army who have earned the badge.

Created in October 2019, the Expert Soldier Badge is open to all Soldiers who are not infantrymen, Special Forces Soldiers or medics. Those Soldier earn the Expert Infantry Badge and Expert Field Medic Badge.

As of July, according to Army Training and Doctrine Command, only 19% of the 5,000 Soldiers who have sought the Expert Soldier Badge have passed the course.

Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Blount, a member of the 427th Brigade Support Battalion; Sgt. Alexander Sonnevile and Spc. Nicholas Weber, both assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry; and Spc. William Neumeister, assigned to the 10th MCPD; had to successfully complete 30 Soldier tasks, complete a physical fitness assessment, and complete a timed 12-mile foot march.

The session run by the 10th Mountain Division allocated two weeks for training and testing. The first week, from Sept. 20 to 26, gave Soldiers a chance to review the skills. The second week, from Sept. 27 to Oct. 1, was the testing phase.

“Once we got there and we saw what it was all about and how challenging it was, it was pretty clear we were going to succeed or fail as a group,” said Blount.

“We would stand there and test each other while we were getting ready to go through the lanes,” Sonnevile said.

“With the 30 plus tasks that you have to perform near flawlessly it can get extremely stressful and overwhelming,” Blount explained.

The tasks are broken down into three lanes: weapons tasks, medical tasks and patrol tasks which involve things like map reading, transmitting a spot report and emplacing a Claymore mine.

Sonneville, a cavalry scout and team leader in the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry’s Alpha Troop, said it was “kind of overwhelming” to work through tasks involving the Mark 19 grenade launcher, the M-2 .50 caliber machinegun

and the M249 squad automatic weapon without making a mistake.

They also had to learn to break down the new M-17 Sig Sauer pistol because that is the pistol issued to 10th Mountain Division Soldiers.

Weber, a part-time college student and full-time security guard who is also a cavalry scout in Alpha Troop, said he also found the weapons lane challenging.

That was probably because it was the first set of tasks they had to complete and he had to get used to the system, Weber said.

He got interested in tackling the badge after talking to Sonnevile, Weber said.

“Because it is a new badge, and not many people have it, it was something I wanted to go for,” Weber said.

“Just having the word ‘expert’ attached to you is awesome,” he said. “And at the very least, if I failed, I know I would have learned a lot of stuff I could bring back to my unit.”

Neumeister, a signals intelligence analyst, said he signed up for the ESB competition when his chance to go to Air Assault School fell through.

Going to the ESB competition at Fort Drum was Neumeister’s last official act as a member of the New York Army Guard and the 10th MCPD, a unit which supplements the 10th Mountain Division headquarters.

He has since transferred to the Colorado Army National Guard’s 19th Special Forces Group, where he will serve as a full-time intelligence analyst.

Earning the ESB has been a real confidence booster as he moves into a full-time job with a highly specialized unit in Denver, Neumeister said.

The biggest challenge for him, Neumeister said, was learning a new skill, becoming an expert on it and then “completely brain dump” the information and master something else.

“I usually carry a note-



Spc. William Neumeister assembles and disassembles a M-17 Sig Sauer pistol during training for the Expert Soldier Badge at Fort Drum, New York, September 2021. Courtesy photo.

book with me and in two years in the Army I have filled in ten pages,” he said.

“I filled that up immediately. My hand is a lot stronger now from taking notes, with how much I had to write,” he joked. 📖



From left, Spc. William Neumeister and Nicholas Weber, Sgt. Alexander Sonnevile and Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Blount pose for a photograph at Fort Drum, New York, October 1, 2021 after earning the Expert Soldier Badge. Courtesy photo.

Army Guardsmen Reflect on 9/11 Response

Story by Ryan Campbell, *Guard Times Staff*

LATHAM, N.Y. -- Three New York National Guard leaders who were part of the response to 9/11 20 years ago, said the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001 changed them, the National Guard and the world.

The headlines on September 11, 2001 were supposed to be about anything other than terrorism.

Was Michael Jordan at age 38 going to come out of retirement and back to the NBA? Was rain going to hamper voter turnout for the primary elections in New York City? Did a lightning strike on the World Trade Center towers the night before do any damage?

“Being in the military and serving overseas, I always knew that the U.S. was vulnerable to a terrorist attack,” said Edward Keyrouze, who was then a major in the New York Army National Guard. “It was just a matter of where and when.”

But he was still surprised and shocked when it did happen, Keyrouze remembered.

When the first and then suddenly the second of the Twin Towers were struck by aircraft, New York National Guard Soldiers began responding after getting over their initial surprise.

The New York Army National Guard “went to the sound of the guns” said Maj. Gen. Thomas Maguire, the adjutant general that day. Soldiers came into the armory before they could even be called.

The New York Air National Guard had already responded. The Northeast Air Defense Sector, a NORAD command manned by Guard Airmen, was already working to get fighters in the air and directing them towards the hijacked jets.

The 174th Fighter Wing had two jets airborne and trying to catch the aircraft that eventually crashed

in Pennsylvania.

By the end of September 11 over 4,000 Guardsmen were on State Active Duty with 1,500 on duty in lower Manhattan assisting the police.

Over 14,000 New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen were involved in the 9/11 response which began on September 11 and lasted into 2002.

Today, only 400 are still on duty with the New York National Guard.

Ed Keyrouze, now a civilian employee of the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs who administers the New York Guard, the state’s volunteer defense force.

Lt. Col. Todd Summers, the surface maintenance manager for the New York National Guard, and Lt. Col. William Snyder, the commander of the 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion, are two of those who responded on 9/11 who still serve.

Snyder was at work that morning in Buffalo teaching.

“I was teaching in class and a fellow teacher told me to turn on the news to see that a plane had hit the World Trade Center,” Snyder said. “At first I thought it was an



New York Army National Guard Maj. Edward Keyrouze assists at the still smoldering “rubble pile” at Ground Zero following the attack on the World Trade Center towers in Manhattan, New York, on Sept. 11, 2001. Photo courtesy of Edward Keyrouze.

accident, but as I was watching the news I saw the second plane hit the WTC and knew right there that it was an intentional attack.”

For the first time in modern memory, an attack on the United States was broadcast live on television, as it happened.

Todd Summers, also learned about the attack from television.

The New Windsor resident had just been commissioned as 2nd lieutenant after having enlisted in the 113rd Maintenance Company in 1989.

“I noticed a couple senior leaders of the directorate gathering and I joined in,” Summers recalled.

Summers said he immediately knew he had to contact his unit which was mobilized under the 369th Corps Support Battalion.

He reported to the 5th Avenue armory later that afternoon after the attacks.

“All of us, I was in shock of what occurred and was amazed at the devastation to the towers and the surrounding area,” Keyrouze said. “The dust and debris was everywhere and lasted for weeks.”

Keyrouze joined the Army Reserve in 1979 and after a stint on active duty, had made his way to the National Guard in 1987.

On 9/11 he was a major and the executive officer of the 531st Troop Command at Camp Smith Training Site near Peekskill.

His first assignment on 9/11 was to report to the 105th Airlift Wing at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh.

Stewart was the designated location for federal emergency supplies to be flown into downstate New York. Keyrouze was sent there to be liaison with the Air Guard.

Eventually, he was sent to New York City. He did wellness checks for the military police companies that were assigned to Ground Zero. He worked out of the 7th Regiment Armory on Park Avenue, just several miles away.

Snyder, from Buffalo, had joined the New York Army National Guard in 1996.

He said he always wanted to serve his country, while continuing to be a public school teacher, so the Guard was a way to have the best of both worlds.

At the time, Snyder was enlisted with the rank of specialist serving as a combat engineer.

“I had a feeling that I would eventually be called, but I got a phone call around 1300 from my unit telling me that I needed to leave work and head to the armory because we would be heading to

the city,” he explained.

At Ground Zero, Snyder stood guard near the docks by Wall Street.

“I spent most of my time searching people that came off of the ferries into New York City for work,” he said.

Summers also pulled guard duty in New York City.

“I served as a night shift OIC for a two-squad security team composed of members of my unit and the battalion,” he remembered.

“We secured the south east corner of Ground Zero where the New York Police Department command post was located in the vacated Burger King, next to where the South Tower stood,” he said.

The experience was overwhelming, Summers, Snyder and Keyrouze all agreed.

As New Yorkers, they had grown up with the Twin Towers being a symbol of their home state. Now they were gone.

“I recalled the Twin Towers being erected when I was a boy and had visited the site many times over the years when in Manhattan,” Summers said.

“It literally took my breath away to see the destruction, but at the end of the day I was a Soldier, an officer, with a duty to perform,” he said.

Even a day after the attack there was dust across lower Manhattan. Vehicles had been crushed by falling debris, there was a pall of smoke rising from what was now called “the pile” and papers fluttered around.

A horn would sound when there was concern that another structure would fall so everybody could run away. There was silence when a body was found and escorted away.

For Guard Soldiers who had served in the 1990s in a peacetime Army, this was overwhelming. Later, the three said it was a glimpse of what was to come in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“At that point I had not been to war but looking at the devastation, it felt like a war zone,” said Snyder. “Everything was covered in dust and we had to wear masks so we didn’t breathe any of it in.”

“I deployed three times,” said Snyder. “Once to Afghanistan in 2008, again to Kuwait in 2012 and my last one was to Ukraine in 2018.”

“I deployed with the 369th Corps Support Battalion as the battalion S4 in late 2003, we served two tours in Iraq, and returned in early 2005,” said Summers. “I later deployed again with the 642nd Aviation Support Battalion, along with the headquarters 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade in 2013 to 2014.

Michael Jordan did come out of retirement and the mayoral primary elections were indeed postponed. But most importantly, the world wouldn’t be the same.

“The world changed on 9/11,”



Local businesses were transformed to serve various functions such as command centers and medical facilities in order to facilitate the response from various agencies working at the still smoldering “rubble pile” at Ground Zero following the attack on the World Trade Center towers in Manhattan, New York, on Sept. 11, 2001. Photo courtesy of Edward Keyrouze.

Summers said. “The 10 years of my enlisted time prior to 9/11 is a faint memory overshadowed by my 20 plus years as an officer serving during our Global War on Terror.”

Snyder uses his experiences when he teaches students about 9/11 and what followed.

“Every year I teach about 9/11 and tell the kids about my experiences,” said Snyder. “It is weird, but I am teaching kids now that were born after the attack and really do not have any concept of what we went through as a country. I try to do my part to make sure that the kids understand and that we never forget what happened.”

The New York National Guard’s domestic mission hasn’t changed, though, the three said. While they deployed to combat they also responded to weather missions.

“I have been involved with every state activation since 2010 starting

with Operation Irene and Lee through 2011, Operation Sandy 2012...I have managed the New York Guard force for Operation Lake Ontario 2017, 2019, Operation Snowstorm and now COVID,” Snyder said.

Despite the changes in Iraq and Afghanistan since September 11, all said they were proud to have been part of the response.

“I was honored to respond to the attack, and the sights that I saw will never be forgotten,” Snyder said.

“I was once told by a friend, ‘I’m glad we have people like you, Todd, I just couldn’t do what you do,’ that’s all I needed to hear,” Summers said. **gt**

THE JOINT FORCE



Guard Hosts Israeli Home Front Command Leader

Story by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters

Maj. Del Gustave, assigned to the 24th Civil Support Team, briefs Israeli Maj. Gen. Ori Gordin, commander of the Israeli Defense Force Home Front Command, center, and Lt. Col. Hal Rekah, the Home Front Command liaison officer for the National Guard Bureau, during a capabilities brief of the CST for Home Front Command at Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, New York, June 28, 2021. Photo by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard.

NEW YORK -- Maj. Gen. Ori Gordin, the head of Israel's Home Front Command, shared lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and Israel's 11 day fight with Hamas, during a day long visit with New York National Guard leaders on June 28, 2021.

The New York National Guard, in turn, facilitated a meeting with New York City emergency managers and provided a look at the latest communication technology, and mobile chemical and biological materials analysis lab employed by the New York National Guard's Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams.

New York and Home Front Command formalized the relationship in 2019 with a bilateral security cooperation agreement.

"It's good to interact with our counterparts to build relationships," said New York Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Ty Lesane, communications team chief of the 24th Civil Support Team.

A common thread between both Israel's Home Front Command and the New York National Guard is the necessity to be ready and responsive when incidents hit, Gordin said.

Home Front Command is Israel's disaster response and civil defense force.

"When war or a large operation begins, the head of civil defense authority sets the rules for what is permitted all over Israel," Gordin said, "from schools to hospitals to public transportation. And that authority is me."

It is a very different approach compared to how the National Guard conducts its efforts in the states, Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, explained to the Israelis.

During Guard missions, forces are under the control of civil authorities, he emphasized.

The stark differences in authorities between the National Guard and Home Front Command are less visible to the communities we serve,

Gordin said. When the public sees a uniform, they know help has arrived.

"Our missions are quite different, but our capabilities are quite similar," Gordin said. "There are a lot of things we can learn from one another."

Gordin met with members of the 24th Civil Support Team at Fort Hamilton and learned about the communications and mobile lab.

"The Israelis were interested and impressed in our radio interoperability capabilities," Lesane said. "The CST and Home Front Command have similar missions."

Home Front Command has 26 geographically aligned rescue battalions, 13 chemical and biological warfare defense battalions, 14 military hospitals, eight light infantry battalions and six logistic unit manned by reservists.

Continued on Next Page

Long Island Troops Readied for Hurricane Henri

Story and photos by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard

NEW YORK -- As Hurricane Henri headed for Long Island on August 21, the New York National Guard mobilized 485 Soldiers and Airmen to respond.

The forecast indicated that heavy rain and 65 mile per hour

wind gusts could strike eastern Long Island. There was also a chance heavy rains could hit the Hudson Valley and the Albany area as well.

Instead, Henri made landfall around Watch Hill, Rhode Island.

“We got lucky,” said Air National Guard Lt. Col. Glyn Weir, the commander of the Long Island response force. “The path of the hurricane was supposed to hit the base directly, (but) the impact was minimal.”

The Long Island task force had 139 Soldiers and Airmen working jointly at the Air National Guard Base in Westhampton Beach and the Farmingdale Armed Forces Reserve Center.

“This was my first time as a joint task force commander,” said Weir, who commands the logistics readiness squadron of the 106th Rescue Wing. “It was great having an emergency operations staff who all knew their roles and responsibilities. They made the process go smoothly,” he said.

“We had 100% volunteers (from wing Airmen) for the debris cleaning mission and command and control,” he added.

The only support request for the team at Gabreski came from the New York State Police’s Troop L in Brentwood. The Troopers asked for a team of humvees to be available in case motorists were stranded in flooding on the Long Island Expressway.

“The overall morale was high when we had the task to assist the State Police,” Weir said. “This was a positive boost to service members who volunteered.”

Going on state active duty was new experience for Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Sarah Caicedo, a member of the 106th Rescue Wing’s logistics readiness squadron.

“It felt good knowing that we were getting called up to help our local community,” Caicedo

said. “This was my first domestic emergency activation since joining (in 2017). I was deployed to Africa earlier this year for four months, but I joined for this reason: to serve my community.”

“This is part of our core values, to put service before self,” Caicedo said.

In the Hudson Valley, 250 Soldiers and Airmen were mobilized at Camp Smith. Another 50 Soldiers from the 42nd Division were placed on duty in Troy.

Troops were prepared even as the threat of hurricane force winds diminished and flooding became the greater concern.

On Monday, August 23, the state announced that rainfall totals from Henri had exceeded 7 inches in Brooklyn and Central Park, more than 6 inches in Queens, and 3 to 4 inches in Westchester, Suffolk and Nassau counties. Power outages remained low statewide, with roughly 2,000 without power.

While there were reports of roads closed and cars stranded due to flooding, as well as downed trees and wires in multiple locations, city and county emergency managers had response efforts in hand. New York National Guard members were released and returned to normal duties on August 23.

Even for a near-miss hurricane, the experience builds confidence, said Airman 1st Class Adonyes Argueta Flores of the 106th Rescue Wing who previously served on COVID-19 response efforts.

“This was my first hurricane mission since joining,” Argueta Flores said, “and I expected it to be worse, but was glad it wasn’t.” **gt**



New York National Guard members assigned to monitor the weather in the Emergency Operations Center at the F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base, Westhampton Beach, New York, Aug. 22, 2021.

During the pandemic response, Home Front Command supported the Israeli Ministry of Health. The missions were similar to those undertaken by the National Guard: testing, warehousing of medical supplies and vaccinations.

Israeli Defense Force Lt. Col. Hai Rekah visited New York in July 2020 to learn from New York National Guard COVID-19 missions.

The better the two understand each other, the more effective and efficient they can be to save lives, said Army National Guard Maj. Guy Casarella, the 24th CST science officer.

“As warfighters, we can work in the same fashion and learn how each other does things, which will make us both better at countering terrorism,” Casarella said.

The opportunities for sharing best practices and learning from each other through bilateral exchanges in the coming year will benefit both organizations, Shields said.

“When the National Guard Bureau asked us about the bilateral agreement, we jumped at the opportunity,” Shields said, “and we hope to travel to Israel to spend more time learning together.”

“Sooner than later, I hope,” Gordin said with a smile. **gt**



Eleven New York National Guard joint service members pose in the winner's circle of the Saratoga Race Course for honors by Tony Allevato, right, representative of the New York Racing Association and Joel Rosario, winning jockey for the horse Pizza Bianca, during Military Appreciation Day on July 22, 2021.

Racing Association Recognizes COVID-19 Response

Story and photo by Maj. Jean Kratzer, Guard Times Staff

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. -- Twelve service members serving on the New York National Guard's COVID-19 response mission were honored by a New York Racing Association tribute to military members and veterans during Military Appreciation Day at the Saratoga Race Course on July 22, 2021.

The members represented the New York Army and Air National Guard, the New York Naval Militia and the New York Guard.

All spent the past seven months or more in the state's COVID-19 response mission, providing testing, medical supply warehousing or vaccine administration across upstate New York.

"The New York Racing Association is honored to recognize the service and dedication of the men and women of the United States military," said NYRA President and CEO Dave O'Rourke.

"And this year, we are especially honored to pay tribute to members of the New York State military forces for their service and commitment to keeping our communities safe during the pandemic," he added.

Army National Guard Sgt. Felicia Sciortino, assigned to the 152nd Brigade Engineer Bat-

talion, said the pandemic response both challenged her and rewarded her.

Sciortino said she "loved my position while working on COVID operations. I had the opportunity to learn so much more than my trained military skill sets."

Sciortino worked at Central New York sites for vaccination support and medical supply warehousing.

"We had a great team that all worked together, and we pushed ourselves hard so that our state could eventually go back to normal operations," she added.

The day at the track featured free grandstand admission for all military service members and veterans.

NYRA welcomed the New York service members to the winner's circle following the day's fifth race to acknowledge their unique role in the COVID-19 response.

The members were joined by the \$100,000 race's winning horse, Pizza Bianca, owned by Food Network chef Bobby Flay, and its jockey, Joel Rosario.

"It's been really humbling," said Airmen First Class Katelyn Erthal, normally assigned to the

106th Rescue Wing on Long Island, New York, who has served for more than a year of COVID response duties, including vaccination sites in the Hudson Valley.

"It's really nice to walk around and see all the appreciation over here," Erthal said, "The culture (of the race course) is very cool here as well; something I was new to."

New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen provided support to New York State Department of Health mass vaccination sites at 24 locations across the state and assisted in the operation of three Federal Emergency Management Agency sites in New York City.

Since the vaccination mission began in January, New York National Guard personnel have supported 4,013,057 vaccinations. New York National Guard medical personnel have administered 120,205 of those shots, as of October 15, 2021.

Along with running vaccination sites, the New York National Guard personnel on COVID-19 missions continue to staff 13 testing sites, assemble and ship COVID-19 test kits around the state, and conduct logistical support missions. **gt**

Soldier Father, Airman Son, Share Mission

Story by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard, and Maj. Michael O'Hagan, 106th Rescue Wing

NEW YORK -- The New York National Guard's vaccination mission at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in New York was a joint service family affair for Mike Bice and his son Dylan.

New York Army National Guard Col. Michael Bice served as the incident commander at the site from January 12 to July 16, responsible for 620 National Guard military personnel and another 400 civilian employees of Joint Task Force Javits.

Bice would be joined by his son, New York Air National Guard Senior Airman Dylan Bice, who served as the site liaison with the New York Police Department, making sure information was shared and provided daily security briefings to his father and other task force leaders.

While they vastly different responsibilities, serving in the same mission was a great experience for both of them, the two agreed.

"The ability to share a mission with my son as I wrap up my 30-plus year career is something I could have never imagined and will never forget," Colonel Bice said.

Airman Bice, who left active duty and transferred to the New York Air Guard in February, said serving with his dad was "a unique opportunity."

"Coming into the New York National Guard and given the chance to serve on a Task Force alongside

my father, the same man I watched my entire life as my role model, has been truly amazing," he added.

Colonel Bice, a Watertown resident, has been involved with COVID-19 operations at the Javits Convention Center since March of 2020.

The convention center was picked to serve an alternative care facility when it looked like New York City's hospitals might be overwhelmed by COVID-19 patients. The New York National Guard set up a field hospital in the convention center which was staffed by active-duty military medical personnel.

Colonel Bice was selected to serve as the commander of the New York National Guard element, operating the logistics and administrative functions at the convention center.

The senior Bice served as the Incident Commander, closing the hospital in June 2020 after successfully treating 1,095 patients.

In January, Bice returned to the convention center, this time serving as the incident commander for National Guard, New York State employees and contract medical personnel working at the mass vaccination center as Operation Gotham Shield.

These weren't the first times the older Bice had worked at the Jacob Javits Convention Center.

In 2001, as a New York

State Trooper, when his son was just three, he operated out of the convention center while supporting the state's response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks that brought down the twin towers of the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan.

While the older Bice served in the Army National Guard, his son said he decided to enlist in the Air Force in 2017 because he wanted to travel, and he liked the opportunities he saw in that service.

Besides, the Air Force recruiter "was the first to talk to me," he added.

Airman Bice served with the 59th Medical Logistics Readiness Squadron at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, after finishing his training. He transferred to the New York Air National Guard in February and volunteered to report to the Javits Center soon afterwards.

Having his son on the mission with him as been a point of pride, Bice said.

Seeing both family members working together illustrates how serving in the National Guard is often a family commitment, said Command Sgt. Major Robert Jenks, the senior enlisted leader for the Javits Center task force.

"This was a great opportunity for each of them to see what each other actually does, especially for Airman Bice to see his father overseeing the



New York Air National Guard Senior Airmen Dylan Bice with his father, New York Army National Guard Col. Michael Bice on the roof top at the Jacob K Javits Center mass vaccination site in Manhattan, July 2, 2021. Courtesy photo.

vast operation at the Javits Center as the Incident Commander," Jenks said.

"This has truly been a rewarding moment for them both," he added.

With the vaccination site now closed, Col. Bice returns to his traditional drilling status with the Joint Force Headquarters near Albany and his civil-

ian career as a New York State Trooper. Bice plans to retire from military service in the spring of 2022.

Airman Bice heads to a new assignment with the 2nd Civil Support Team at the Stratton Air National Guard Base near Schenectady. **gt**

NY National Guard Marks 9/11 20th Anniversary

Story by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters



Senior Airman Allen Bethancourt, a 106th Rescue Wing Base Honor Guard member, poses with the Flag of Honor at Gabreski Air National Base in Westhampton Beach, New York, Sept. 11, 2021. The flag displays names of those who died in the terror attacks on 9/11 and in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Photo by Senior Airman Kevin Donaldson, 106th Rescue Wing.

NEW YORK -- As New York and the nation commemorated the 20th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, the New York National Guard marked the event as well. New York Governor Kathy Hochul capped a series of remembrance events with a state proclamation honoring the National Guard for their service two decades ago.

Hochul presented the proclamation to Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the Adjutant General of New York and a contingent of 50 Soldiers at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in Manhattan September 11, 2021.

That event capped days of commemorations for the New York National Guard in armories and communities across the state.

"It's been a very emotionally draining day," Hochul said. "The reminder, first of all, when you wake up and you see the crisp blue skies, they just bring back the once beautiful, but ultimately haunting memories of a day twenty years ago. It just reminds us of the very human toll that that day took on us," Hochul said.

Three days earlier, Army General Daniel Hokanson, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, visited New York City and the World Trade Center attack site September 8 to thank National Guard personnel and first responders.

Hokanson said the National Guard was transformed after 9/11, rising to the challenges of mobilizations and overseas combat opera-



National Guard Soldiers place flags on the lawn of Joint Force Headquarters in Latham, New York, Sept. 7, 2021 as a memorial for the 2,997 victims killed Sept. 11, 2001. The flags were provided by the Association of the United States Army. Photo by Maj. Jean Kratzer, 42nd Infantry Division.

tions, making today's National Guard an operational reserve to the active component.

Today's Guard is a result of the events of 20 years ago, he said.

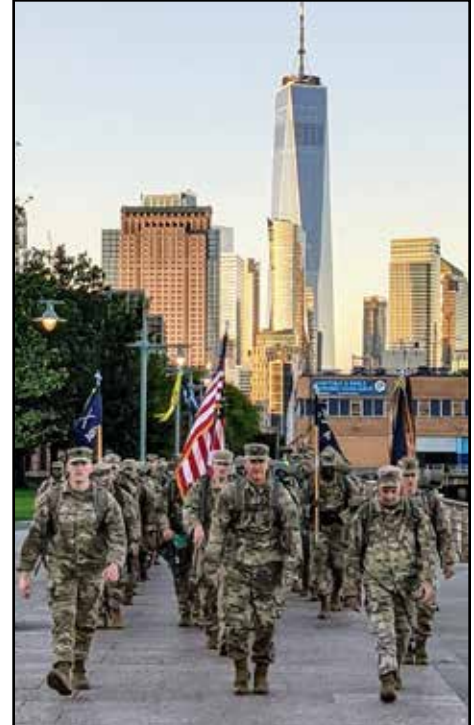
"Our world was transformed by the attacks of 9/11, and our mission with it," Hokanson said. "In our collective shock and grief, we grew stronger. We vowed never to forget, and we have kept that promise."

Hokanson and Shields placed a wreath at the World Trade Center Memorial Site, honoring the victims and recognizing the sacrifice of first responders and Guardsmen and women in the aftermath of the loss of the Twin Towers.

"As we remember, honor and mourn those we lost, we must also never forget the heroism and courage so many demonstrated that day," he said.

That theme of remembrance for a new generation was echoed by the Joint Force Headquarters during its event on September 10.

"We must remember September 11th because it changed us," Shields said to the headquarters staff and civilian employees. "It changed New York City. It changed our state. It changed our nation. It changed the very nature



New York Army National Guard Lt. Col. Joseph Whaley, commander of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, leads more than 100 Soldiers of the battalion on a 9.11 mile roadmarch to commemorate the battalion's response efforts on 9/11 in lower Manhattan, Sept. 11, 2021. Photo by Maj. Avery Schneider, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.



National Guard Soldiers assigned to Joint Task Force Empire Shield provide security to assist New York City law enforcement during remembrance ceremonies at the World Trade Center for the 20th anniversary of 9/11, September 11, 2021. Courtesy photo.

of our National Guard. It changed everything."

To commemorate 9/11, National Guard personnel joined the Association of the U.S. Army in laying out 2,977 small American flags



Headquarters staff attend the 9/11 remembrance at the Joint Force Headquarters in Latham, N.Y., Sept. 10, 2021. The ceremony took place in front of a backdrop of 2,977 small American flags, representing those killed during the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. Photo by William Albrecht, Guard Times Staff.



Soldiers of the 53rd Troop Command hold a 9/11 remembrance ceremony at Camp Smith Training Site, New York, Sept. 11, 2021. Courtesy photo.



Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief, National Guard Bureau, places a flag and pauses to remember West Point classmate Douglas Gurian, among the almost 3,000 names engraved in the 9/11 Memorial during his visit to New York City Sept. 8, 2021. Photo by Master Sgt. Jim Greenhill, National Guard Bureau.

to honor the victims killed that day.

Standing in front of this backdrop, Shields noted that on Sept. 11, National Guard Soldiers and Airmen distinguished themselves.

When the Twin Towers fell, New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen went to their armories and bases even before the mobilization order went out, Shields said.

"In the finest tradition of the National Guard, and indeed the entire United States military, our Soldiers and Airmen ran to the sound of the guns, ready and able to respond as needed," he said.

Commemorative events of September 11th were held at armories and air bases across the state during unit training assemblies.

Before sunrise on September 11, Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry stepped off for a 9.11-mile remembrance road

march in lower Manhattan, departing their armory at Lexington Avenue to the World Trade Center memorial site and back.

In upstate New York, Army Brig. Gen. Isabel Smith, Director of the Joint Staff, joined with elected officials and 9/11 first responders at the Saratoga Gerald B. Solomon National Cemetery in Schuylerville, N.Y., for a remembrance event with more than 200 community members.

Smith, who served in the aftermath of 9/11 with the 53rd Troop Command, extolled the commitment of those who rushed in for rescue and recovery efforts.

"The fortitude and perseverance of our first responders, which included Guardsmen, police officers and fire fighters, was just admirable: it was heroic," Smith said.

On Long Island, the 106th Rescue Wing con-

ducted an event during their drill weekend.

Col. Shawn Fitzgerald, the wing commander, remembered the first responders who rushed into the World Trade Center to save lives.

"As thousands fled the burning buildings, hundreds rushed in and made the ultimate sacrifice, a sacrifice relatable to this wing and our motto: "That others may live," Fitzgerald said.

In his appearance with Hochul, Shields praised the contributions of the joint force at home and overseas over the past two decades.

"20 years later, the New York National Guard continues its proud tradition of service – both overseas and here at home," he said.

"We are committed to our motto – Always Ready, Always There," Shields said. **gt**



NY National Guard Honors Korean War MIA

SCHUYLERVILLE, N.Y. — New York Army National Guard Soldiers provide military honors to salute a Korean War Soldier whose remains were laid to rest September 20, 2021, 71 years after he fell in combat. An Army National Guard honor guard provided funeral honors and a firing party for the interment of Army Cpl. Walter Smead at the Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery. Smead, who grew up in Hadley, went missing in December 1950 near Hagaru-ri, North Korea during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir. He served in Alpha Battery, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division. His remains were among those handed over to the United States by the North Korean government in 2018. Photo by Sgt. Andrew Valenza, Joint Force Headquarters.

Governor Recognizes Guard for 9/11 Response

Story by Maj. Avery Schneider, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

NEW YORK -- On the 20th anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks, members of the New York National Guard were recognized by Governor Kathy Hochul for their service during and after that tragic day.

When airplanes struck the twin towers of the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11, 2001, New York National Guard members rallied at armories and air bases across New York. They were the first military responders to Ground Zero and in the skies above.

"In my opinion, they never got the recognition they deserved," Hochul told a room full of New York Army National Guard Soldiers at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center.

"It's twenty years overdue, but I'm here to set that straight because I have seen what you've done. And I know what you continue to do."

Hochul presented Maj. Gen. Raymond Shields, Adjutant General of New York, with a citation recognizing the thousands of men and women of the state's Army and Air National Guard, its Naval Militia and the New York Guard.

In the months following the attack, they provided security and logistics support to recovery workers and the people of New York City, guarded 19 airports and conducted combat air patrols. Most of the Soldiers and Airmen who were part of those missions also deployed overseas as part of the Global War on Terrorism, serving in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"But when duty calls they put on these uniforms, they suit up and are willing to do something that I still find so incredibly powerful,"

-- New York Governor Kathy Hochul



Governor Kathy Hochul recognizes the New York National Guard with members of the 369th Sustainment Brigade at the Jacob Javits Center in Manhattan, Sept. 11, 2021. Photo courtesy of Don Pollard, Office of Governor Kathy Hochul.

"20 years later, the New York National Guard continues its proud tradition of service, both overseas and here at home. Since 9/11, more than 25,000 members of the New York National Guard have deployed to combat zones around the globe, while here at home we have responded to Super Storm Sandy, the COVID pandemic, and the attack on the United States Capitol on January sixth," Shields said.

Hochul also marked the day by announcing the signing of three bills into law which expand the criteria that define first responders who participated in the World Trade Center rescue, increase

accessibility to apply for World Trade Center benefits, and expand the definition of first responders to include communication workers such as public safety dispatchers and emergency operators. She has also proposed legislation to allow National Guard members who responded to Ground Zero to qualify as veterans under New York State Law, entitling them to benefits for serving under state emergency orders but not on federal active duty.

Making the announcement inside the Javits Center held special significance, as it had been a command post for first responders in the aftermath of 9/11. Two decades later, it became home to hundreds of Guardsmen who served in support of the state's COVID-19 response mission – first as a field hospital which treated 1,095

patients, and later as the largest mass vaccination site in the United States providing close to 647,973 vaccinations to at least 346,000 New Yorkers.

Many of those Guardsmen were in the audience during the announcement, and five shared the stage with Hochul, Shields, and Alan Steel, President and CEO of the Javits Center.

Hochul said she is humbled by the thought of National Guard members who are everyday neighbors in the community.

"But when duty calls they put on these uniforms, they suit up and are willing to do something that I still find so incredibly powerful. The act of courage to be able to put themselves out there on the front lines, to do what they're required to do and do it for all of us." **gt**

NY Artillery Battery Rated Best in National Guard

Story by Maj. Jean Kratzer, 42nd Infantry Division

NEW WINDSOR, N.Y. -- Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery has been recognized as the most outstanding Guard artillery battery in the country by the Field Artillery School.

The Alexander Hamilton Award was presented to the battery by Brig. Gen. Andrew D. Preston, the commandant of the Field Artillery School and Army Chief of Artillery, during a ceremony held at the unit's home at the Armed Forces Reserve Center on September 11, 2021.

The annual award recognizes the most outstanding National Guard field artillery unit in the country and Preston traveled to personally give the battery the award for 2020.

"I rarely distinguish the difference between the active duty Army and the National Guard," Preston said, "But over half of the military's field artillery is in the National Guard; we are one force and one team, and I am honored to recognize this year's best field artillery battery."

"It's a complete honor to also be in New York to recognize this battery on 9/11," Preston added.

The battery was recognized for meeting Army standards for training, logistics, maintenance and Soldier fitness, while also playing a key role in the New York National Guard response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Alexander Hamilton Award was created in 2002 and is named after American Statesman and Continental Army artilleryman Alexander Hamilton.

Hamilton went on to shape the Constitution and served as the nation's first Secretary of the Treasury.

Lt. Col. Marc Lindemann, the commander of the 258th Field Artillery, praised the Soldiers of Alpha Battery for winning the award for 2020.

"Their versatility in the face of adversity to overcome pandemic-related challenges but also maintain tactical proficiencies was incredible," Lindemann said.

The award was based on the unit's mission execution, training, deployment service, equipment maintenance, logistics program, Soldier fitness, family readiness and community service. The unit's Soldiers were evaluated on their performance from October 2019 through the end of September 2020.



Army Brig. Gen. Andrew Preston presents the Hamilton Award Streamer to Capt. Daniel Rodgers and 1st Sgt. Brian Badgero, the command team of Alpha Battery of the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery during a ceremony in New Windsor, New York, Sept. 11, 2021. Courtesy photo.

During the period, the Soldiers conducted training and firing exercises with their M119A3 105-millimeter howitzers, trained on individual Soldier skills and played key roles in the state response to COVID-19, Lindemann said.

The battery also achieved perfect scores on both maintenance and logistics inspections.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the battery's Soldiers also played important roles in the New York response, Lindemann said.

The battery distributed millions of meals to vulnerable New York City residents and helped administer thousands of COVID-19 tests, while still conducting training during drill weekends, he said.

The battery of 75 Soldiers is commanded by Capt. Daniel Rodgers.

"The last year was challenging, with activating Soldiers and having our force spread out across the multiple missions. But the Soldiers and Leaders we had, banded together and still accomplished anything and everything that we still had to get done," said Staff Sgt. Drew Brown, the battery's training sergeant.

1st Sgt. Brian Badgero, the battery's senior enlisted leader, said he was proud of his Soldiers for all they had done.

"They have come a long way in the past year and continue to maintain readiness and proficiency in their jobs," Badgero said. **gt**

Soldiers Honor 9/11 with Memorial Ruck March

Story and photos by Maj. Avery Schneider, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team



Top photo: Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry assemble outside their historic Lexington Avenue Armory before dawn on Saturday, Sept. 11, 2021 for a 9.11 mile ruck march to commemorate the 20th anniversary of 9/11 in New York. Below, Soldiers and colors of the battalion on the march.

NEW YORK -- Soldiers honored the victims of the September 11 and their fallen comrades in the Global War on Terror with a 9.11 mile ruck march through Manhattan.

On September 11, 2001, Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment were among the first military forces at Ground Zero, supporting first responders after the twin towers of the World Trade Center were destroyed.

Even before orders were issued, they had rallied at the historic Lexington Avenue armory.

“Nobody had to be called. We didn’t need to use our alert rosters. Everybody just showed up. People just knew to be here,” said Lt. Col. Joseph Whaley, commander of the battalion. He was a 24 year old infantry officer in the headquarters company for the 9/11 response.

When the call came twenty years later to honor the memory of the 2,977 lives lost, no one had to be ordered. 117 Soldiers showed up voluntarily, though more would have come.

“We turned people away because we wanted to make sure that the family members [at Ground Zero] had their time. We didn’t want to take the stage by any means. We limited it and still had an overflow of people,” Whaley said.

With battalion colors and the American flag held high at the front of their formation, the Soldiers set off in the early morning darkness.



As they crossed midtown, passing ambulances and police cars flashed blue and red lights in recognition. As they marched down the West Side Highway, early morning joggers and bikers stopped to capture the moment on cell phones and call out messages of motivation.

“It means everything,” said 2nd Lt. Olano Gayle, a Bravo Company platoon leader. “Walking by, seeing the people videoing, clapping, just looking, I felt a great sense of pride.”

When the Soldiers returned to the armory, a moment of silence was observed at 8:46 a.m., the time the first plane crashed into the World Trade Center, and a wreath placed at the unit memorial

to its 19 Soldiers killed in action in Iraq.

For Soldiers like Gayle who represent the newest generation – too young to remember the events of 20 years ago, but inspired by them – the event keep the memory of 9/11 alive. It’s why leaders intend to make it an annual tradition.

“It’s important that we bring [young Soldiers] and walk them through the footsteps that their leaders walked through before,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Jason Zeller, the 69th’s senior non-commissioned officer and another 9/11 veteran.

“I think it’s important they hear the story from us.” **gt**

10th Mountain Division Command Post Detachment Welcomes New Commander

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Warren Wright, 10th Mountain Command Post Operational Detachment

**“It’s not full-time or active duty versus the National Guard.
We’re all Soldiers,”**

-- Lt. Col. Al Phillips, Commander, 10th Mountain Division MCP-OD

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- The New York Army National Guard’s 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) Main Command Post - Operational Detachment officially welcomed its new commander during a change of command September 13, 2021.

During the ceremony, Lt. Col. Alvin Phillips assumed command of the MCP-OD, as it is referred to, from outgoing commander, Lt. Col. Brian Bonanno.

“Congratulations (Lt. Col.) Bonanno,” said Maj. Gen. Raymond Shields, the New York Adjutant General, during the ceremony. “During your tenure, you’ve improved the overall training of the (unit) and increased its readiness. You have continued to develop the MCP-OD concept as part of the 10th Mountain Division.”

Shields welcomed Phillips to the MCP-OD team, stating he’s confident in the new commander’s ability to take the detachment to the next level while emphasizing the importance of ensuring the continued priority of mission readiness and taking care of people.

Phillips comes to the MCP-OD from an assignment in South Africa, where he served as a bilateral affairs officer for the New York Army National Guard and South Africa State Partnership Program.

“It feels full circle to take command,” Phillips said. “To command is really indeed a privilege,

not a right, and I’m very proud to do so.”

Bonanno’s next assignment will take him to the U.S. Special Operations Command Central at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, where he will serve as an effects planner. He served as the MCP-OD commander since 2019, where he oversaw the unit through the implementation of the new Army Combat Fitness Test as well as ensuring continuous mission readiness throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It’s different going from being the commander making the decisions to being a staff officer again, to make recommendations for the commander,” Bonanno said. “When you’re a commissioned officer, you spend most of your time as a staff officer, not a lot of time as a commander. So, I enjoyed the last two years greatly doing this and I know I’ll enjoy my new role down there being a planner.”

The 10th Mountain Division Main Command Post Operational Detachment, based in Syracuse, N.Y., is the reserve component augmentation detachment of the Army’s 10th Mountain Division, providing personnel expansion and increased mission capabilities to the division headquarters.

The MCP-OD provides the headquarters with added professional support in areas such as intelligence, operations and logistics.



Lt. Col. Alvin Phillips, right, the new commander of the New York Army National Guard’s 10th Mountain Division (LI) Main Command Post - Operational Detachment, officially takes charge of the detachment for the first time following a change of command ceremony at Fort Drum, New York, Sept. 13, 2021.

“These are key positions that a division staff cannot do without when they deploy forward to theater,” Phillips said about the 10th MCP-OD’s mission.

The detachment previously deployed with the 10th Mountain Division headquarters to Iraq in 2018. While there, they provided augmentation to the division’s intelligence, fire control, operations, personal security and others, enhancing the division’s capabilities throughout the deployment.

Phillips added how vital it is for the 10th MCP-OD’s Soldiers to maintain their skills, continue to hone their training, and stay up to date on their required military and professional coursework to ensure the seamless integration into division staff when called upon.

“At the end of the day, they’re the ones filling those positions (within the division staff),” he said. “It’s not full-time or active duty versus the National Guard. We’re all Soldiers.”



Soldiers from the New York Army National Guard’s 10th Mountain Division (LI) Main Command Post - Operational Detachment stand in formation and salute during the National Anthem as part of a change of command ceremony at Fort Drum, N.Y., Sept. 13, 2021.

'Wild Bill' Donovan Honored in Comic Book

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

LATHAM, N.Y. -- William "Wild Bill" Donovan, the New York National Guardsman and Buffalo lawyer who commanded the 69th Infantry Regiment in World War I and went on to become America's top spymaster in World War II, is the latest subject in a series of digital comics about Medal of Honor recipients.

Published by the Association of the United States Army, is scripted by noted comics author Chuck Dixon, who has written comic books in the Batman and Punisher series, and provides a quick outline of Donovan's life.

The comic focuses mainly on an October 14-15 battle near Landres-et-Saint Georges, France in 1918 during which Donovan led the 69th, renamed the 165th Infantry Regiment by the Army, in a bitter struggle to take the main German line during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

The 165th, which was part of the 42nd Infantry Division, was assigned to join in an assault on the German main defensive line known as the Kriemhilde Stellung.

In that two-day battle, Donovan led his regiment from the front, scouted forward at night to find weaknesses in the enemy line so the attack could be renewed, continued to lead his men after being hit in the leg by machinegun fire, and eventually ignored an order to resume the attack when he determined it was not possible.

Donovan was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, his second, for his role in that battle and eventually that award was upgraded to the Medal of Honor in 1923.

He returned to Buffalo joined the New York National Guard and organized a troop of the 1st Cavalry Regiment. In 1916, when the

New York National Guard was sent to the Mexican border after the incursions of Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa, Donovan went too.

When the United States entered World War I, Donovan joined the 69th Infantry and was given a promotion and command of one of the regiment's battalion. Those Guardsmen gave him the nickname "Wild Bill" because of his endurance during training and coolness under enemy fire.

In France, Donovan was also awarded a French Croix de Guerre and a Distinguished Service Cross for action in the summer of 1918.

After the war he became part of a network of businessmen who kept track of what was going on overseas and provided information to his old law school classmate Franklin Roosevelt who was now president. He undertook fact-finding missions for Roosevelt, which resulted in his meeting Winston Churchill and having lunch with King George VI.

As the U.S. prepared for World War II, Roosevelt made Donovan head of America's civilian intelligence effort. In 1942 that operation became the Office of Strategic Services which was the predecessor of the CIA and Donovan was made a one star general.

Donovan controlled a world wide network of 13,000 OSS agents and was later promoted to major general.


The New York National Guardsman from Buffalo is the only American to have received the Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal, and the National Security Medal, the highest award for intelligence work.

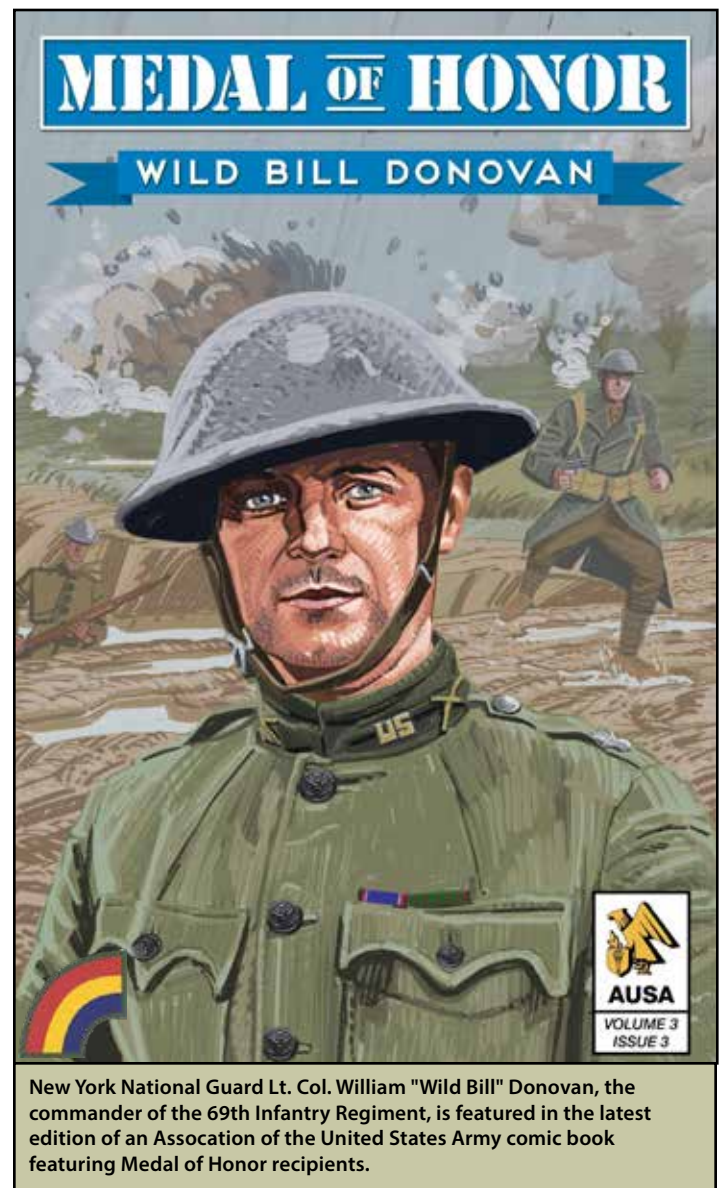
Donovan died in 1959 from dementia.

The comic is the eleventh issue in the Association of the United States Army Medal of Honor series, which launched October 2018. A release in July 2020 told the story of Sgt. Henry Johnson, a member of the New York National Guard's 369th Infantry who was awarded the medal posthumously in 2015.

The Association is producing four new issues in 2021 featuring Jacob Parrot, the first Soldier to

receive the Medal of Honor; Native American Soldier Mitchell Red Cloud Jr., who was awarded the medal posthumously during the Korean War; and Roger Donlon, the first recipient from the Vietnam War.

To read the Wild Bill Donovan comic online or download a free copy, readers can visit www.ausea.org/donovan. 



Congress Honors Harlem Hellfighters

Story and photos by Sgt. Jordan Sivayavirojna, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade

NEW YORK -- The halls of the Harlem Armory were crowded on August 13, as U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer and as Representative Thomas Suozzi announced Congress had voted to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 369th Infantry Regiment.

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian award bestowed by Congress and acts of service to the security, prosperity, and national interest of the United States.

This makes the 369th the third African American military unit to be awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, following the Tuskegee Airmen in 2007 and the Montford Point Marines in 2011.

The Harlem Hellfighters, as they are known, became famous for never losing a man as a prisoner and fighting in the front lines longer than any other American unit in World War I.

“We are glad to finally give them the recognition they deserve,” Schumer said.

French Deputy Consul General Damien Laban also attended the ceremony and praised the men who fought with the 369th Infantry.

“On behalf of France, we owe them an eternal debt,” Laban said. “They were exemplary men and true American heroes,” he said.

New York Army National Guard Col. Seth Morgulas, the commander of the 369th Sustainment Brigade, said the Soldiers of the Harlem Hellfighters today appreciate the honor bestowed on those who went before them.

“As we continue to recognize feats of valor and bravery from the past, young and future Soldiers will be inspired to follow the same paths,” he said.

Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Curtis Moss, the senior enlisted Soldier in the modern day Hellfighters, said the recognition was an honor.

“Because they were a colored regiment, not a lot of attention was paid to them when they returned,” Moss said.

A Congressional Gold Medal must be sponsored by two-thirds of the members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, Suozzi said, highlighting the bipartisan support.

President Joseph Biden approved the measure, and the United States Mint will create a coin to commemorate the person or group’s achievement. **gt**



New York Senator Charles Schumer, discusses the award of a Congressional Gold Medal honoring the 369th Infantry Regiment, an all-Black New York National Guard unit which fought in World War I, with Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, at the New York National Guard’s Harlem Armory on Friday, Aug. 13, 2021 in New York City.

Representative Tom Suozzi, the Congressional representative for the 3rd District of Queens and the north shore of Long Island, poses for a photo at center with members of the Harlem Hellfighters Association and the family of World War I Soldier Sgt. Leander Willett, who served in the 369th Infantry Regiment, following a ceremony announcing the award of the Congressional Gold Medal to the 369th Infantry. Suozzi led efforts for the recognition on behalf of the Harlem Hellfighter Association.



Former 'Fighting 69th' Commander Now leads 27th Infantry Brigade

Story by Maj. Avery Schneider, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team



FORT DRUM N.Y. -- Col. Sean Flynn, a veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, who served on 9/11, took command of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team during a ceremony on July 17.

Flynn took over from Col. Robert Charlesworth who has headed the brigade since 2019.

“Under the command of Col. Charlesworth, the brigade accomplished tremendous tasks at both the tactical and strategic level, all while supporting COVID operations across the state,” said Maj. Gen. Thomas Spencer, commander of the 42nd Infantry Division.

Upon assuming command, Flynn thanked his Soldiers for their selfless commitment to their community, their states and their nation.

“Your service at home and abroad over these past 20 years have been decisive in preventing both individual loss here, as well as another massive attack on our homeland,” Flynn said. “And though the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan are ending, the natural and manmade threats against our families, against our peace and prosperity and, sadly, against all of humanity have no end. Thank you for sacrificing your time at home. Thank you for sacrificing at your place of business and your livelihood, to stand ready between the unthinkable dangers of this world and those that we love.”


For Flynn, the new command represents a return to the 27th.

He began his career in the Army National Guard with the brigade’s historic 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, as a platoon leader, company commander and eventually battalion commander. In honor of his time with the battalion, two Irish Wolfhounds – the mascot of the 69th – were part of the formation of troops at the change of command ceremony.

Prior to joining the Army, Flynn served in the U.S. Air Force from 1994 to 2000, with active duty assignments as a Public Affairs Officer for the 81st Training Wing in Biloxi, Mississippi and the 354th Fighter Wing in Fairbanks, Alaska.

Flynn earned his commission in 1994 through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps.

His major operational deployments include Operation Spartan Shield in 2020, Operation Enduring Freedom in 2012, Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004, Operation Noble Eagle in 2001, and Operation World Trade Center in 2001.

Flynn is the author of *The Fighting 69th: From Ground Zero to Baghdad*, a narrative non-fiction account published in 2008 about the evolution of the National Guard from a strategic reserve to an operational force in the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001. 

Col. Sean Flynn visits with Irish Wolfhounds Maybeline and Billy, mascots of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, at Fort Drum on July 17, 2021. Flynn, the former commander of the historic battalion known as "the Fighting 69th," assumed command of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team during a ceremony in which the dogs stood in formation with Soldiers. Photo by Command Sgt. Maj. Jason Zeller, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment.



101st Cavalry Gets New Commander

Story and photo by Sgt. Alexander Rector, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

Col. Sean Flynn, the commander of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, invests Lt. Col. Jason Secrest with the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment's colors during a change of command ceremony in Niagara Falls, New York, July 28, 2021.

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. -- Lt. Col. Jason Secrest, a veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, took command of the New York Army National Guard's 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment, during a change of command ceremony here on July 28.

Secrest took command from Lt. Col. Bradley Frank who has headed the squadron since 2019.

The 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment is headquartered in Niagara Falls and is comprised of more than 400 Soldiers in four companies, known as troops. Elements of the squadron are located across Western New York in Buffalo, Jamestown, Niagara Falls and Geneva.

"I could not be more proud of your service to this state and nation through these trying years," Frank told his Soldiers during his farewell address. "You have pushed me to be a better leader from day one, and for that I will always be grateful."

Frank led the squadron through a successful warfighter exercise and saw many of his Soldiers activated in support of New York's response to the coronavirus pandemic where they staffed test sites, assembled test kits, and assisted the Office of the Chief Medical Exam-

iner of New York City.

Following the January 6 insurrection at the nation's Capitol, Soldiers from the squadron were called to serve during the 59th presidential inauguration and follow-on security missions in Albany and Washington.

Frank will continue his service with the New York Army National Guard as the operations officer for the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters in Troy, N.Y.

During the change of command ceremony, the squadron's colors were transferred from Frank to Secrest, signifying the change in authority. Historically, the colors of an Army unit indicated the location of the commander on the battlefield. The tradition allows Soldiers to see who they should follow in battle.

Following the change of command, Frank was presented with the Meritorious Service Medal in recognition of his dedication and commitment to duty during his command of the squadron.

Upon assuming command, Secrest reflected on the trajectory of his Army career.

"This feels like coming home," he said. "The happiest moment of my life was marrying

my beautiful wife Stacey. This will be my new second."


For Secrest, the new command represents a return to the cavalry.

He began his career in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard as a platoon leader and later company commander with 1st Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment.

The 101st Cavalry is the reconnaissance squadron of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. The squadron also carries the lineage of the 1st Battalion, 127th Armor Regiment, which converted into the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry when the New York National Guard reorganized in 2005-2006.

The squadron deployed to Afghanistan in 2008 and again in 2012.

The squadron, with additional support from the 27th Brigade, deployed to Ukraine in 2017 to support the training of Ukrainian soldiers.

Secrest has held multiple positions in the Army, National Guard Bureau, and New York National Guard staff, culminating in his assignment as Deputy Incident Commander for Joint Task Force Javits in support of COVID-19 response operations. 

Cyber Soldiers Participate in Digital Exercise

Story by Spc. Michael Kerr, 138th Public Affairs Detachment

SEA GIRT, N.J. -- When infantrymen load their magazines, and pilots check their fuel levels, the service members of the Cyber Protection Team 173 sharpen their skills for a different fight.

Their battlefield can't be seen or heard, but the cyber warriors trained to defend computer networks from enemy attack at the New Jersey National Guard's training facility in Sea Girt, New Jersey.

Known as "CPT 173" the joint New York-New Jersey unit, is participating in Cyber Shield 2021; a virtual incident response exercise that gave cyber Soldiers an opportunity to prepare for and react to the types of real world scenarios they would respond to, with Soldiers operating out of both Camp Williams, Utah and Sea Girt, NJ from July 10-24, 2021.

"Anything in our supply chain, from fuel transport, the manufacturing of munitions, or even a power plant can be a target of cyber warfare, and Cyber Shield is how we train to respond to these situations," said Master Sgt. Jody Doherty, the noncommissioned officer in charge of CPT 173.

The exercise provided an opportunity for approximately 900 participants across the nation, including service members from all branches of the United States military and multiple industry partners to analyze potential threats or vulnerabilities and plan their responses in a coordinated fashion, Doherty added.

At the unit level, Cyber Shield gave CPT 173 a chance to train in a more focused capacity and execute tasks that would not be possible during a regular drill weekend especially with much of their work being done remotely due to COVID-19 concerns.

"This is a special opportunity for us, being able to work side by side and see each other's faces," said Spc. Miles Gaitan, a cyber operations specialist assigned to CPT 173. "Our team is a wealth of knowledge, and we all share our skills and assets to get the job done."

In modern times where technology is rapidly advancing and integrated into every aspect of military operations Cyber Shield has become more important than ever to the readiness of cyber Soldiers, Doherty said.

"You never know when an attack is going to happen, you just know that you need



New York National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Cyber Protection Team 173 participate in Cyber Shield 2021 at the Army National Guard Regional Training Institute, in Sea Girt, New Jersey, July 10-24, 2021. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Pietrantonio, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

to be ready," explained Sgt. David Kablan, an information technology specialist assigned to CPT 173 and second-time participant in Cyber Shield. "I think of it almost like a basketball game where we are always on defense, and the offense is targeting whatever weak points they can find.

"We know they are going to try to score, but our goal is to have an answer for any and every shot they take," Kablan said.

One of the top priorities for this year's exercise was to add a legal representative to the team due to the sensitivity of the information Soldiers are working with.

Capt. Daniel Baek, the deputy staff judge advocate for 53rd Troop Command, participated in Cyber Shield for the first time and said he was excited to contribute legal advice.

"I try my best to be a force multiplier here, not to stop or slow down the exercise but to make their work as smooth as possible," Baek said. "My job is to make sure we can still achieve the objective in a legal way."

These Soldiers make a tremendous sacrifice to be here, as all members of the team are employed within the same fields of work that they practice in the military and some even com-

muting from outside of the state, Doherty said.

"The team environment we've built and commitment to the mission is what keeps me coming back," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Pedro Dominguez, who lives in Miami and is operating out of Utah for this year's Cyber Shield. "In my service career I was searching for a place where I would be able to apply myself fully, and every Soldier on the team is doing exactly that."

With their talents in such high demand, many Soldiers stay in the unit because of the relationships they have built and their commitment to service, according to Doherty.

"We have a motto here, we train people to leave but we treat them to stay," said Doherty. "No matter what level an individual is at when they come into the unit they continue to develop their skill sets, and it's always a joy to watch these Soldiers grow and improve."

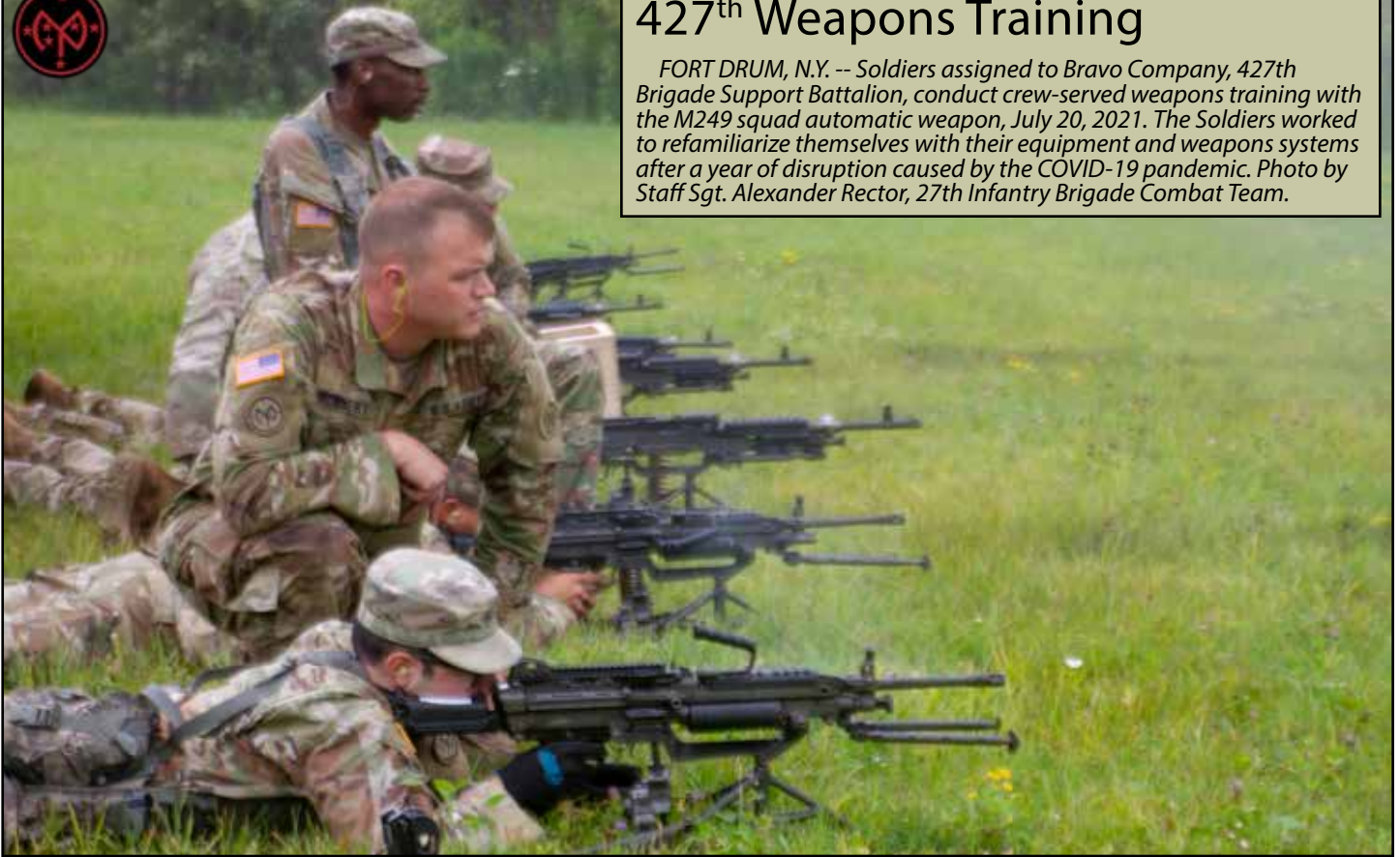
With this the 2021 exercise behind them, the Soldiers will be applying the skills they have polished in both their civilian and military lives to make our digital world safer, said Major Richard Meehan, the team commander.

"We've built an elite team, and I could not be more proud of our Soldiers," Meehan said. **gt**



427th Weapons Training

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- Soldiers assigned to Bravo Company, 427th Brigade Support Battalion, conduct crew-served weapons training with the M249 squad automatic weapon, July 20, 2021. The Soldiers worked to refamiliarize themselves with their equipment and weapons systems after a year of disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo by Staff Sgt. Alexander Rector, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.



Medical Command Leadership Change



CAMP SMITH, Cortlandt Manor, N.Y. -- Army Maj. Gen. Michel Natali, the assistant adjutant general of New York, passes the guidon of the Medical Command to Col. Matthew Liepke, the incoming commander of Medical Command, during a change of command ceremony on July 17, 2021. Liepke is taking over from Col. Jamie Green.

Officer Sets New Weight Lifting Record

Story by Maj. Avery Schneider, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- 1st Lt. Nicholas Trentanelli, a military intelligence officer, set a new record for weight lifting in the “1,000-Pound Club” at Fort Drum on July 21.

Trentanelli, the executive officer of Delta Company, 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, lifted a combined 1,550 pounds at the Atkins Functional Fitness Facility.

He beat the previous 1,000-Pound Club record for the Army’s 10th Mountain Division, set by an active duty Soldier by 325 pounds.

“It feels really good beating all the active duty guys, especially as a National Guard unit,” Trentanelli said.

The 1,000-Pound Club is a well-known feat among powerlifters. To join, an individual must complete three events and the combined weight lifted must equal 1,000 pounds or more.

Trentanelli lifted progressively heavier weights in three attempts for each event. His final attempts included a 520 pound squat, a 430 pound bench, and a “seal-the-deal” deadlift of 600 pounds.

The weights for squat and bench were the most he had ever lifted in each event.

It was during ROTC training in 2014 that he took his first Army Physical Fitness Test. He didn’t get a perfect score and it drove him to spend more time in the gym.

Last July, when he took the new Army Com-



New York Army National Guard 1st Lt. Nicholas Trentanelli, executive officer of Delta Company, 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team shows off his “1,000 pound club” t-shirt at the Atkins Functional Fitness Facility at Fort Drum, New York on July 22, 2021. Photo by Staff Sgt. Alexander Rector, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

bat Fitness Test for the first time, Trentanelli scored just six points shy of a perfect 600.

In March, he completed his first official powerlifting competition in Latham and set a state bench press record for the 93 kilogram weight class.

Now, with his name on the 1,000-Pound

Club board at Fort Drum, he is planning his next challenge: running a marathon in the fall.

For anyone looking to take the Fort Drum record from him, Trentanelli said, “I hope somebody tries.”

“I’d love to see somebody get close to it, specifically a National Guard [Soldier].” **gt**



Soldiers Throw Mets First Pitch

CITI FIELD, Queens, N.Y. -- New York Army National Guard Spcs. Nicholas Rios, assigned to the 719th Transportation Company and Mackenly Villatoro from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 369th Special Troops Battalion, were chosen to throw out the first pitch at a New York Mets baseball game on July 29, 2021. Rios, at right, threw out the first pitch while Villatoro served as catcher. The two Soldiers served on Joint Task Force Javits and were recognized for their COVID response service by the Mets and the USO. Courtesy photos.



106th Airman Aids in Delivery of Afghan Baby

Story by Capt. Francine St. Laurent, Operation Allies Welcome

JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J. -- The woman's foot pressed into the top of the Airman's collar bone where it connected at her right shoulder.

In the Airman's other hand was a cell phone, hoisted straight into the air. All ears in the room strained to hear the Pashto translator on the other end.

The nurse's words to the Airman when she arrived at the hospital still hung in the air.

"Are you cool with blood and guts and stuff?"

"Today I am. Here we go."

Staff Sgt. Scarlett Yates had never witnessed a birth before, let alone helped deliver a baby. She's in logistics, after all.

"Normally I'm in the warehouse moving boxes or processing something on our supply system."

A logistics specialist assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing at Francis S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base, Yates volunteered to support Liberty Village at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in support of Operation Allies Welcome.

The Department of Defense is providing transportation, temporary housing, medical screening and general support for at least 50,000 Afghan evacuees at suitable facilities, in permanent or temporary structures, as quickly as possible. Liberty Village is one of eight locations and is supporting 9,300 Afghans.

Yates was working in a facility for patients in quarantine for infectious diseases. At around 6 p.m. one evening, a pregnant woman and her husband arrived.

"They had gone to the hospital

because she was due," Yates said. "She started having contractions and she tested positive for COVID."

Not dilated enough to deliver, the hospital transported her to the quarantine facility expecting that she would likely deliver the following day. Yates said the woman's medical paperwork was misplaced during the transport and her medical history was relayed via a translator when they arrived. The husband could understand some English, but the woman could not.

An hour later, her water broke.

The medics arrived on the scene to transport her back to the hospital and the couple asked if Yates could come with them.

"They were more comfortable with me because I knew their medical history," Yates said. "Since I did and since the family was more comfortable with me because they now have known me a little bit more, I ended up going with them."

Yates rode in the ambulance with the woman and her husband rode in a vehicle behind.

Traditionally, the hospital would call a translation line when you arrive, she said. However, they didn't have a Pashto translator available. They needed to call back to Liberty Village for a translator.

It was a busy night at the hospital with an emergency and two other babies being born around the same time, Yates said.

A midwife and nurse were assigned, but there were not the extra staff available to help get mom into a birthing position. Typically, four people assist.



New York Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Scarlett Yates, assigned to the 106th Air Rescue Wing, sorts through a box of donated books for Afghan children at the temporarily medical isolation dormitory at Liberty Village, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, Sept. 27, 2021. Photo by Master Sgt. John Hughel, Washington Air National Guard.

"Because I had to be in there to hold my phone for the translation because they didn't have anyone that could speak Pashto, I ended up assisting with the birth," Yates said. "I asked them, 'What do you need me to help with? How do I need to be of assistance? Just tell me, just give me a job so I can do it.'"

The baby girl was born at around 3:30 a.m. on September 7.

"At one point, they asked if dad wanted to cut the umbilical cord," Yates said. "Dad was OK, didn't want to cut the umbilical cord, so they actually let me."

The nearly Labor Day baby is one of six babies born since Liberty Village opened.

Yates said the experience bonded her with this new family.

"It is a very cool process being a part of someone being born," she

said.

For all Afghan guests in the facility Yates worked in, the experience is one of building trust and learning the personalities and preferences of the families staying there.

"You get to know them. You get to know their story, what they left behind, what they're looking forward to, what their citizenship status is," she said. "You really have that bond."

The family moved back to their temporary lodging this week.

The babies of Liberty Village begin their lives surrounded by hope for the future. Signs in Dari and Pashto posted around the community read, "Better Every Day!" For this young family, that could not be more true. **gt**

NY Airmen Team up with Brazilian Air Force

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*, and Airmen 1st Class Daniel Farrel, *106th Rescue Wing*

WESTHAMPTON BEACH, N.Y. -- Eighty Airmen participated in a 10 day Brazilian Air Force training operation at Campo Grande Brazil in August as part of the New York National Guard's State Partnership Program relationship with the Brazilian military.

The 105th Airlift Wing, based at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, transported two HH-60 Pave Hawk rescue helicopters and 57 personnel to and from the Brazilian Air Force Base at Campo Grande in the southern Brazilian state of Mato Grosso in two C-17s.

The Airmen left on August 19 and returned to New York on August 31.

The bulk of the 80 personnel were 47 Airmen from the 106th Rescue Wing's 101st Rescue Squadron, which operates the HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters, and the 103rd Rescue Squadron, which is manned by pararescue Airmen.

Joint Tactical Air Controllers from the 274th Air Support Operations Squadron, which is based at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse, were also part of the mission.

Exercise Tapio 2021 was search and rescue exercise designed so military organizations could train together and share experiences and best practices for combat search and rescue, according to Lt. Col. Chris Baker, the commander of the 103rd Rescue Squadron and the exercise project officer.

The joint exercise simulated war scenarios, to include helicopter infiltration and extrication, rescues which required a rope to access the patient, separated survivor scenarios, and an urban operation with a vehicle extrication and mass casualty event, he said.

The exercise was the latest event in a relationship that the New York Air National Guard and the Brazilian Air Force started building in 2019, Baker said. Airmen from the 106th were part of a delegation which traveled to Brazil and took part in classroom work sessions and briefings on structure and rescue, he said.

During the training, the Brazilians and Americans got the chance to familiarize with each other's aircraft and tactical practices.

In one mission the American Aircrews flew both Brazilians and 106th Rescue Wing pararescue Airmen during an infiltration mission.

The American and Brazilian aircrews also practiced flying together on missions.

The tactical air control parties from the Unit Here also got a chance to work with Brazilian Airmen to call in simulated missions.

The tactical environment on the ground was made more realistic by the use of simulated munitions said Tech Sgt. Dylan Crawford, a



A Brazilian airman passes information to pararescue Airmen from the New York Air National Guard's 106th Rescue Wing while participating in Exercise Tapio 2021, a Brazilian Air Force exercise at Campo Grande Air Base, Campo Grande, Brazil. Photo by Anderson Soares, Brazil Air Force.

103rd Rescue Squadron pararescueman and team leader during the exercise.

Exercise participants carried weapons firing simulated munitions similar to those used in Airsoft gun, he explained.

In fact, the Brazilian Air Force contracted with a professional Brazilian airsoft team skilled in urban combat simulation to act as firing

aggressors, Crawford said. This added to the challenge as 106th pararescuemen provided tactical combat causality care.

Training together in a simulated combat environment gave both Brazilians and Americans the chance to get to know each other better explained Col. Jeff Cannet, the 106th Rescue Wing Operations Group Commander who served as the exercise mission commander.

"Do we speak the same language? Not English versus Portuguese - what I mean is operational language," he explained.

"Do they do the same maneuvers we do? Do they clear rooms the same way we do? Do they hoist and hover the way our Jollies (helicopters) do? What do we need to establish as rules of engagement and standard operational procedures to keep everybody safe and on the same page?" Cannet said.

"They were ready to execute... it's a partnership and a relationship I can see blooming over time. I think there's a lot of value in that," Cannet said. **gt**



A New York Air National Guard Pararescue Airman (center) assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing works with Brazilian Air Force Airmen to prepare a simulated casualty for transport while participating in Exercise Tapio 2021, a Brazilian Air Force exercise at Campo Grande Air Base, Brazil. Brazil Air Force photo by Anderson Soares.

109th Wraps Up Greenland, Heads to Antarctica

Story by Jaclyn Lyons and Airman 1st Class Jocelyn Tuller, 109th Airlift Wing

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Scotia, N.Y. -- The Airmen of the 109th Airlift Wing wrapped up their support for Greenland science missions in September and then turned around and launched aircraft to Antarctica in October to support National Science Foundation research at the South Pole.

From March to September, 109th aircrews flew 678 hours and delivered 1.3 million pounds of cargo, 32,000 gallons of fuel and 910 passengers to locations across the Greenland ice cap.

The wing conducted an extended "season," starting in March and running through September, providing support to National Science Foundation research sites, two months longer than typical seasons in past years.

Starting the missions a month early allowed the wing to conduct

more training at Raven Camp, the Greenland training location the 109th uses to train on snow and ice landings and arctic operations.

"Going up in March was beneficial to get the initial put in of Raven Camp," said Major Jacob Papp, the 109th's chief of Arctic operations.

"This allowed us to keep a cadre of instructors and evaluators current to then provide instruction for the following on flight period," he said.

Along with the weather and flying long distances to austere locations, dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic still raises challenges for the Airmen, according to Papp.

On October 4, the wing launched the first of three aircraft heading for Antarctica to support National Science Foundation

Research from December 2021 to February 2022. The other two planes left October 15.

The Airmen deployed in October because COVID-19 health restrictions required quarantines and longer than normal layovers along the route from New York to New Zealand, which serves as the final staging area for Antarctica.

The wing deployed 184 Airmen to operate out of the National Science Foundation's McMurdo Station, flying missions throughout the continent to move personnel and supplies.


"Until the end of January, we will stay on the continent and fly on continent missions," said Maj. Shay Price, the wing's Antarctic operations officer. "This time frame is what we typically call the 'wheeled gap.'"

The gap is when conditions

prohibit wheeled aircraft from operating and ski-equipped aircraft are the only option for airlift in Antarctica.

Normally shifts of Airmen rotate through McMurdo Station, and a typical Antarctic season runs from October through March. This year the same 184 Airmen will remain on location throughout the three-month support season.

The 109th's primary mission for the 2021-2022 support season is resupplying science stations on the West Antarctic Ice Sheet and the Amundson-Scott South Pole Station, Price said.

At the end of the season, the wing's Airmen will make intercontinental trips from Christchurch, New Zealand to McMurdo Station. 

Former 109th Commander Receives One Star Rank

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Scotia, N.Y. -- Returning to the base she previously commanded, Brig. Gen. Michele Kilgore was promoted to one star general during a ceremony held at Stratton Air National Guard Base on August 6, 2021.

Kilgore commanded New York's 109th Airlift Wing from October of 2017 to December of 2020, the world's only airlift wing capable of operating in the South Pole, with their ski equipped LC-130 Hercules aircraft. The promotion comes with her new position at the Pentagon, working for the strategy division of Headquarters, Air Force.

"She has been a leader inside and outside the cockpit," said Chief Master Sgt. Denny Richardson, command chief of the New York Air National Guard.

Maj. Gen. Timothy LaBarge, commander of the New York Air National Guard, called it a "great week for the Air Force" as he spoke shortly Kilgore had her new rank pinned on.

With a traditional "publishing of the orders," Kilgore's daughters Erica and Abby placed her new one star rank on her service dress shirt. Her father, William Meyer and step father, Terry Price and pinned the stars on her service dress jacket. Photo by Senior Master Sgt. William Gizara, 109th Airlift Wing



Rescue Experts Participate in Azores Training

Story by Airman 1st Class Daniel Farrell, 106th Rescue Wing

LAJES, Portugal -- Fifteen Airmen from the 106th Rescue Wing participated in a NATO search and rescue exercise in the Azores led by the Portuguese Air Force July 27 to 30.

Known as ASAREX 2021, (Advanced Search and Rescue Exercise) the exercise included elements from the U.S. Coast Guard, the Royal Canadian Air Force, and Portugal's Maritime Police, National Guard, Border Police and Civil Protection Force, as well as the Portuguese Air Force.

Pararescue Airmen and a HC-130J Combat King II search and rescue plane from the 106th took part in the exercise, which was based out of Portugal's Air Base No. 4 at Lajes on Terceira Island.

The Portuguese provided P-3 Orion ocean reconnaissance aircraft, the C-295M, C-130 H and UH-101 Merlin helicopters along with a destroyer, the NRP Viana Do Castelo.

"I was very impressed by the amount of resources that the Portuguese had put into this exercise," said Master Sgt. Ryan Dush, a pararescueman from the wing's 103rd Rescue Squadron.

The training scenarios for ASAREX 2021, provided new challenges for the 106th's Airmen, participants said.

Instead of looking for a ship, they had to locate a 20 man life raft.

"This was a lot more fine tuned searching for the patients," Dush explained.

First, two pararescuemen boarded the HC-130 Combat King II at their base and took a 6 hour flight toward the Azores.

Once on site the crew had to locate the target life raft and the two "survivors" on board. Once the raft was located, the aircrew coordinated with the Pararescuemen for the jump out of the plane.

Then the parasescuemen simulated medical treatment of the survivors on board the raft and coordinated with a rescue boat for a transport to safety.

For the aircrew flying the 106th HC-130J during the rescue, this exercise was an opportunity to train the coordination with the pararescuemen jumping and also the deployment of a MA-2 Sea Rescue Kit, said Maj. Ian D'Amico, the HC-130 pilot for the mission.



Airmen assigned to the New York Air National Guard's 106th Rescue Wing, who participated in ASAREX 2021, a NATO search and rescue exercise hosted by the Portuguese Air Force in the Azores at the end of July, 2021, pose for a photo at the Portuguese Air Force Air Base Number 4 in Lajes, on the island of Terceira. Courtesy photo.

"We don't get to deploy MA-2 Kits often, so this was an awesome opportunity for our Aircrew Flight Equipment members to package them and for us to deploy them," D'Amico, a 102nd Rescue Squadron pilot, explained.

Ultimately, this exercise was an opportunity to exchange experiences and knowledge on a multinational level, according to

Master Sgt. Matthew Zimmer, a 103rd Rescue Squadron pararescueman and jumpmaster during the exercise.

"Cooperation and interoperability among international rescue operations is vital and everyone involved in this exercise took the steps necessary in assuring that cohesion," added Zimmer. **gt**



Former President Honored

MENANDS, N.Y. -- The commander of the New York Air National Guard marked the 192nd birthday of President Chester Arthur with a wreath from President Joseph Biden at his grave in Albany Rural Cemetery on Tuesday, Oct. 5.

Maj. Gen. Timothy LaBarge was joined by Command Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey Trottier, the senior enlisted leader for the 109th Airlift Wing, in laying the wreath.

Each year, former presidents are honored on their birthday with the presentation of a wreath from the current president at their gravesite by military leaders.

"It is a great honor to represent the president and to be here today," LaBarge said.

Chester Arthur, who served from 1881 to 1885, was charged with providing leadership to a country in transition, LaBarge said in his remarks.

Photo by Senior Master Sgt. William Gizara, 109th Airlift Wing

Iraq War Veteran Takes Command of NY Guard

Story by Warrant Officer Edward Shevlin, New York Guard

CORLANDT MANOR, N.Y. -- New York Guard Col. Peter Riley, a veteran of the war in Iraq, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general and took command of the New York Guard during ceremonies at the Camp Smith Training Site, Sept. 17, 2021.

Riley, who retired from the New York National Guard after 30 years of service, replaced Brig. Gen. David Warager, who has led the New York Guard since May 2018.

Following a 30 year career in the Army National Guard, Riley said he was enjoying retirement when the COVID-19 pandemic struck. He promptly joined the New York Guard, he said, because “the opportunity to serve again, especially during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to assist with all of the vaccination sites made my decision easy.”

Following his promotion to one-star rank, New York State Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Ray Shields oversaw the traditional change of command ceremony between Riley and Warager.

“Pete is a proven leader, a leader who cares about Soldiers and a leader who gets things done,” Shields said after the transfer of colors, signifying the change of command.

Riley’s military experience finds him well suited to his new role, Shields said.

Soon after joining the New York Guard, Riley became commander of the COVID response force in upstate New York, a force that included 600 service members.

The ceremony marked the capstone of the weeklong annual training for more than 160 New York Guard volunteers, highlighting academic and field training for the force.

The New York Guard’s proven response

capability over the past 20 years make it an integral part of the New York Military Forces for disaster response, Riley said.

“The New York Guard does face many challenges,” Riley said about the future. “The Guard needs to be flexible, proactive and anticipate the most dangerous, not just the most likely, scenarios in an uncertain environment.”

Looking back over his career, Warager said he witnessed the evolution of the New York Guard.



New York Guard Brig. Gen. Peter Riley, the incoming commander of the New York Guard receives the unit colors from Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, during his change of command at Camp Smith, New York, on Sept. 17, 2021. Photo by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard.

“It has been the honor of a lifetime to be the commanding general of the New York Guard,” Warager said. “The New York Guard gave me the chance to serve in the military and serve my fellow citizens. I watched and participated as the New York Guard evolved from the reserve ‘cadre’ force that I originally joined to today’s New York Guard, called to serve on state active duty multiple times in the last few years.”

Riley previously served in the Army National Guard as the commander for Joint Task Force Empire Shield in New York City from 2011 until his retirement in 2019.

“I just want to say what an honor and privilege it is to lead the New York Guard,” Riley said. “For over 100 years the New York Guard has served the people of New York. The New York Guard will be ready, willing and able to continue to serve all New Yorkers no matter what terrorist threat or natural disaster occurs.”

Riley currently works as the Director of Veterans Services at Pace University.

Warager retired from service after a career in the New York Guard spanning 36 years.

His service included deployments for the National Guard response to 9/11 for Operation Trade Center and the New York Guard response efforts during Super Storm Sandy in 2012.

“I have had the privilege of working with truly wonderful people in the New York Guard and other New York Military Forces,” Warager said. “I take satisfaction in knowing that Brig. Gen. Pete Riley, with his team of staff and commanders, will take the New York Guard to even greater accomplishments.” **gt**



NY Guard Trains Leaders

CAMP SMITH -- Members of the New York Guard participate in the Guard's Primary Leadership Course on September 17, 2021. Held during their annual training, the Soldiers conducted field training where they learned communication tasks and land navigation. The training is designed to continue the development and skills of New York Guard volunteers and prepare them to be leaders. Photo by Sgt. Michael Bilski, New York Guard.

New York Naval Militia



Landing Craft Upgrades

VERPLANCK, N.Y. -- New York Naval Militia Petty Officer Maria Serani of the Military Emergency Boat Service maintenance team replaces a circuit breaker panel in landing craft LC-350 to replace the automatic tracking device with new 4G Verizon devices. The devices are part of a fleet wide program that tracks the movement and location of the Naval Militia's boats. Courtesy photo.

Water Navigation Training for Marines



Naval Militia Marks 130 Years of State Service

NEW YORK -- The New York Naval Militia observed 130 years of continuous service in June 2021. The New York Naval Militia was organized as a Provisional Naval Battalion in 1889 and was formally mustered into state service as the First Battalion, Naval Reserve Artillery, on 23 June 23, 1891. One year later the Naval Militia was called to duty to protect steam ship passengers during the 1892 cholera quarantine at Fire Island.

Lt. Cmdr. J.W. Miller, below, reports to Maj. Gen. Josiah Porter, the Adjutant General of New York, that 190 members were first mustered into service in 1891. Courtesy photo.



SLOATSBURG, N.Y. -- Marine Reserve Staff Sgt. John Eckhardt and Sgt. Jon Oliveras, both of the New York Naval Militia, conduct navigation training during Tropical Storm Henri, Aug. 23, 2021. Eckhardt and Oliveras are assigned to the Military Emergency Boat Service Detachment 21. Courtesy photo.



Top Sailor for 2021

LATHAM, N.Y. -- Petty Officer 1st Class Wilson Fenty, a machinery technician from New Rochelle, was awarded the New York Naval Militia's Josephthal Trophy for 2021. The trophy, named for Rear Adm. Louis Josephthal who commanded the Naval Militia from 1925 to 1929, has recognized top Naval Militia members since 1929. Fenty joined the Naval Militia in 2012 and joined Joint Task Force Empire Shield in 2018. He is leads the Military Emergency Boat Service Detachment 1. Courtesy photo.

