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TAG's MESSAGE

The future is upon us


Despite the return of our BSB and RSTA this summer, the New Jersey National Guard continues to support the Global War on Terrorism. In mid-September, we had a send-off for the fifteen Soldiers of the Embedded Training Team (ETT), tasked with training the Afghan National Army in tactical and technical skills. Newly designated Company A, 1st Separate Battalion – the historical title of the state’s first all African-American unit from the 1930-40s – they carry their new guidon into the front lines of the stabilization effort in Afghanistan.

The ETT provides experienced U.S. Army mentors and advisors to the Afghan Army in an effort to build a professional military for that country. Join me in wishing Lt. Col. John Langston and his team a successful deployment. The one-year deployment is part of Operation Enduring Freedom and is the second such mission for the Jersey Guard.

At around the same time, seventy-five Security Forces members of the 108th Air Refueling Wing left for a tour in Iraq. These Airmen will be responsible for base perimeter and entry control point security. Also, as members of a rapid response team, they will provide a highly-mobile reaction force to counter threats to the base. Lt. Col. Ronald Turk is leading this contingent in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Godspeed to them all.

Both Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom have put a strain on our nation’s military. In response to these challenges, the Department of Defense has adjusted its mobilization plan. Earlier this year I outlined some of the changes that the Army was implementing in order to ease the deployment schedule for Guard and Reserve forces. Some of those changes – deployments managed on a unit basis; 12 months maximum mobilization time; 9 months boots-on-ground – have remained intact.

I also said, “New Jersey units will not be among the six National Guard units remobilized sooner than originally scheduled.” I stressed that “We are still on track for 2010...no change!” Unfortunately, the reality on the ground has changed because of the new Army schedule for mobilization and in mid-October we received the Alert Order to begin preparing our 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team to go forward into theater sooner than originally planned. The new timeframe for mobilization is now summer of 2008 for stateside training...with overseas deployment to follow.

As we begin to ramp up preparations for mobilization, we must also prepare our families and employers – and ourselves -- for the inevitable leave of absence. As an organization made up of families...as a “Guard family”...we will do everything possible to support family members back at home. For your part, get to know your Family Readiness Group (FRG) ...your Family Assistance Center (FAC) staff...your chaplains...ESGR representatives...and the myriad network of organizations and benefits that exist to assist family members while loved ones are deployed.

These next few years will not be easy. However, the consequences of failure or shortfall are serious. As members of our nation’s armed forces, we are committed to the defeat of those who threaten our freedoms and way of life. The burden of the Global War on Terrorism has been borne by the American military. We have never shirked our responsibilities and we will continue to step up to meet them. If not us, then who else will bear this burden? You are all part of a great organization with a long history of patriotism, dedication and sacrifice. It will not be easy, but I am confident that we will prevail. 

Largest Security Forces deployment

Members from the 108th Security Forces Squadron, 108th Air Refueling Wing left for Operation Iraqi Freedom on Sept. 15. This is the third group that has been deployed since May 29; the wing has more than 70 members of the squadron deployed to Iraq. Lt. Col. Ronald Turk, squadron commander, took command of more than 250 active duty and National Guard Soldiers and Airmen upon his arrival to the air base. The deployed Airmen will perform air base security and are due to return to New Jersey in early summer of 2008.
The National Guard State Partnership Program offers civilian-military expertise to foster democracy, encourage economic development and promote regional cooperation and stability. To the Albanians, the State Partnership Program with New Jersey is an opportunity for their military to contribute to coalition operations throughout the region and to become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

ZALLHERR, Albania - Long before the State Partnership Program was created, President Woodrow Wilson, a New Jerseyan, stepped forward after World War I to aid Albania. During the Paris Peace Conference, Wilson fought against partitioning Albania, allowing the country to remain a separate, sovereign nation.

This summer, 88 years later, New Jersey is again supporting Albania – this time with a platoon of Soldiers from Alpha Company, 2-113th Infantry Battalion, to provide Albania the means toward inclusion as a member of NATO.

This Unit Level Exchange is the first military exercise of its kind in Albania. It was requested by the Albanian Armed Forces Joint Forces commander, funded by United States Army Europe, organized by the Embassy’s Office of Defense Cooperation and supported by the New Jersey Army National Guard. The infantry tactics shared with the Ready Reaction Brigade will go a long way toward their desire to become a member of NATO and ultimately of the European Union.

“Albania anticipates an invitation into NATO sometime in 2008,” said Capt. Dennis Stiles, Alpha Company Commander. “Cobra Company has recently successfully participated in a NATO level one self-evaluation and our hope is to build upon that success.”

One platoon from each of the respective companies was integrated to form the single
“Albania anticipates an invitation into NATO sometime in 2008. Cobra Company has recently successfully participated in a NATO level one self-evaluation and our hope is to build upon that success.” Capt. Dennis Stiles, Commander, Alpha Company

beautiful country and the eastern horizon a jagged spine of granite mountains. It was in the foothills of this region where the three-day field training exercise would showcase the knowledge and skills the combined platoon worked so hard to earn.

“Movement to Contact is the tool we will use to train their junior NCOs, the team leaders and the squad leaders, where the rubber meets the road. Out there on the lanes is where Soldiers are talking to Soldiers, breaching the language barriers, coming together – working as one team,” said Stiles.

Capt. Kastriot Cera, Cobra Company Commander, plans to maximize the impact of this training. “Our experience will be shared not only inside my company, but within the battalion and inside the brigade,” he explained. His soldiers will be the instructors for future training within the Albanian army, and more importantly will become the leading edge of Albania’s deployed forces in the Global War on Terrorism.

For three days, 24 hours a day, two squad leaders were acting as one, two riflemen were acting as one, and while they shared the infantry specific tactics and procedures, the more beneficial cultural understanding and friendships began to evolve. Ruck marching from patrol base to objective, up and down the foothills, the relationships were forged through physical effort and have laid the foundation for future ULEs.

With each successive rotation, the New Jersey connection to Albania grows stronger and President Wilson would surely be pleased with the N.J. Army Guard’s role in it.

Pvt. Timothy Gadsden (left) helps an Albanian soldier adjust a pair of MV-PVS-7B Generation 2+ night vision goggles while Spc. Matthew Castro watches.
ZALLHERR, ALBANIA - The morning sun had just cleared the mountain range when the line began to form.

Village children lined up to receive something very special. From the expectant looks on their faces you would have thought it was a candy or a toy; instead it was a vaccination. New Jersey Army National Guard Medics brought 500 doses of Hepatitis A to vaccinate the local girls and boys.

“It is always great to take care of kids,” said Capt. Paul Villalon. “When you treat a child you make his life better now and in adulthood.”

The mission was conducted from a small community clinic in Zallherr. Parents and children jammed into the tiny hallway and waiting room but this enthusiasm evaporated when they got into the chair.

Normal childhood instinct took over and panic set in. The Soldiers did their best to calm them and reward them with the standard American after-shot treatment – a lollipop.

“It was a great team effort,” remarked Villalon. The medics exhausted their 500 doses in approximately three and a half hours.

In addition to the humanitarian mission, the medics supported the 2-113th Infantry during their mission. The medics saw some of the usual annual training injuries like sprains or eye abrasions and saw unusual ones like trench foot, on one Albania Soldier. The collection of volunteers assembled by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Cosmanic, State Combat Medic, was chosen on very specific criteria: “The medics here are the ones I would want to work on me,” said Cosmanic.

“Much of this work was not training, it’s doing the real thing...when we treated a patient we affected his life.”

During that same period, an Air Guard team led by Lt. Col. Frank Casty of the 108th Medical Group with Maj. Eric Erickson, 177th Medical Group and Senior Airman Erin Fassold, 177th Logistics Readiness Squadron, taught Rapid Reaction Brigade doctors, dentists, medics and nurses U.S. and NATO compatible training.
Practicing the age-old adage that “one good turn deserves another,” the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) of the New Jersey National Guard hosted members of the Albanian Army during the brigade’s Annual Training at Fort Drum, N.Y.

In July, Albania hosted members of the 50th IBCT’s, Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 113th Infantry for training during Phase I of a Unit Level Exchange (ULE) program. This is part of the ongoing bilateral relationship that the New Jersey National Guard has with the republic of Albania, which is part of the State Partnership Program, sponsored by the National Guard Bureau and European Command.

“I’m here with one platoon of my company for accomplishing the second phase of the Unit Level Exchange,” says Capt. Kastriot Cera, commander of Cobra Company, 2nd Battalion, Rapid Reaction Brigade, Albanian Army. “We are here to gain experience from the U.S. Army.”

Reminiscient of what the U.S. Army refers to as ‘Train the Trainer,’ Cera will take the knowledge he and his soldiers learn back to Albania with him.

“This experience will be shared, not only inside my company, but inside my battalion, and inside my Rapid Reaction Brigade, so it will be expanded, not just inside the platoon and company, but wider,” Cera notes.

Phase I consisted of squad tactics centered on Movement-to-Contact training in a wooded environment in the hilly countryside of Albania. Here in Phase II at Fort Drum, members of Cobra Company will train together with Soldiers from Alpha Company at the Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) site at Training Area 13 Alpha, something the Albanians haven’t had much experience with, according to Cera.

“The MOUT operation range is really great,” says Cera, whose company will deploy to Afghanistan sometime next year. “I myself will give this idea to the higher command. We really will get a lot from this range during this operation.”

While Jersey Guard members were busy explaining MOUT tactics to Cobra Company, they were not there to train them in the traditional sense.

“Integrated Operations with Allied Forces are really the goal of the Rapid Reaction Brigade,” explains Capt. Dennis Stiles, of Bravo Company, 2-113th Infantry, and the project officer for the ULE. “We are not necessarily here to teach them specifically anything, but to familiarize them with how allied forces would operate.” This is an important goal for the Republic of Albania, which is looking to join NATO sometime in the next 18 months.

As with any multinational operation, there are ups and downs during the execution of training, and this operation is no different according to Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Ropel of Alpha Company, 2-113th, who is supervising the training at the MOUT site.

“I think the major problem is the language barrier, which we are actually trying to resolve from every level possible — use of interpreters, use of sign language, and everything else that we can come up with.”

Ropel, who spent some of his active-duty time as a member of the 10th Mountain Division here at Fort Drum, does note the good side to the training “They’re very well-trained soldiers. They have good knowledge about basics, about our NATO techniques as well and they are using them.”

And while training at the MOUT site is initiated by members of the 2-113th Infantry, Soldiers from both countries can benefit from the cross-pollination of tactics and techniques and the preparation that comes with it.

“It makes training more demanding, it puts much more demands on the Soldier,” says Ropel. “It demands that our Soldiers be much more professional, to pay much more attention to details, and also develop both [countries’] Soldiers at the same time.”
The desert stretches for miles – an abundance of nothing. Slashing across that vast space is the fence – a black line that separates the faded blue sky and the dull sand and sagebrush landscape.

Thirty-seven Airmen from the 177th Civil Engineering Squadron spent their annual training assigned to Task Force Diamondback – part of Operation Jump Start at Yuma, Ariz., – building the fence separating the United States and Mexico from August 18-31. While the mission is a combined Air and Army effort, the command and control is under the Arizona Army National Guard.

“Working with the Army Guard is significantly different for this group,” says Maj. James Layton Jr., Commander, 177th Civil Engineering Squadron.

This fence, when done, will be part of a 900-mile long barrier between the U.S. and Mexican border. It does not extend the entire length of the border because certain portions are inaccessible and there isn’t a need for the fence to be built there. In some areas, sensors or vehicle barriers are being installed. In locations where there are roads or towns near the border – specifically Yuma where the 177th Civil Engineers deployed – primary, secondary and tertiary (chain link) fences are being built.

The primary fence is made up of 1,400 pound sheet steel panels that are eight feet wide by 14 feet tall. Running along the center – top to bottom – is an I beam with two metal collars attached – one about five inches from the bottom and the other five feet above it. The panels are trucked in from, of all places, Mexico.

Beginning at 6 a.m. until 2 in the afternoon the CE Airmen split into two groups.

“One team worked south of Yuma on the hybrid (primary) fence,” states Capt. John M. Cosgrove, 177th Civil Engineering Squadron. “The other team worked on a secondary fence in San Luis which is about eight miles to the west of the hybrid fence site.”

At the San Luis site, Master Sgt. Bill Brown and his group work with a team of full-time Army and Air Guardsmen placing the foundations for the fence, which in this case is a heavy steel mesh. Closer to the town of San Luis, Tech. Sgt. Howard Achilles and his crew load the foundations on a flatbed 18-wheeler and truck them out to Brown’s site.

At the main site, an Airman attaches a clamp to the top of a panel; a crane lifts the panel, which is then guided by a three-man team over the bollard, once it is in place, the crane lowers the panel until the collars slip over the bollard (poles attached to sheet metal plates that serve as anchors for the panels); then the panel is dropped with a loud crash, the clamp is released, the crane operator taps (slams) the panel into a more upright position, straightens the next free bollard and the...
August is not the time to be in Yuma. When you go online, you learn that this is the second hottest place in the U.S.; right after Death Valley. During the day, the temperatures averages above 110; at night it drops to a pleasant 95. There is no shade and it rained — if you count a sprinkle — on the day CE left.

The process starts over — for the rest of the day.

The first day — August 20, is the learning curve day; everyone is figuring out what to do and how to do it; the CE Airmen learn how the process works, and promptly go on and break the record for installing the most panels in one day — 192. Eight days later, they broke that record again and installed 218 panels.

“The cooperation between the Army and Air was great,” notes first time CE deployer Staff Sgt. Sam DeMaio III. “They brought us up to speed really quickly and we were able to accomplish the mission successfully.”

Further down the fence line are the arc welders. All work along the fence is nasty — but this is plain brutal. Each panel has to be welded to the bollard, which line up next to the edge where one panels joins with the next panel. Two Airmen teams adjust the level of each panel — meaning manually adjusting the 1,400 pound panel with crowbars and sledgehammers to drive wedges to keep them in place. Then a welder comes along, drives another wedge into the panel forcing it next to bollard and welds the two together.

“The 177th installed 1,055 steel panels of primary fence for a total of 1.4 miles. While 103 foundations and 94 mesh panels were installed at the San Luis site,” continues Cosgrove. According to the Desert Sentinel, the Arizona National Guard Public Affairs Office official Operation Jump Start magazine, “62 units from 35 states have come to Arizona to help with the tactical infrastructure border mission.”

No other CE team has come close to accomplishing what the 177th did during its tour with Task Force Diamondback.

Fifty Airmen from the 108th Civil Engineer Squadron’s PRIME BEEF team deployed in support of Operation Jump Start, Nogales, Ariz., from August 18 - 31; the first time annual training has been coupled with an operational requirement. “This deployment provided an excellent opportunity for other AFSCs to cross-train and work in other career fields,” stated Lt. Col. Paul E. Novello, Commander, 108th Civil Engineer Squadron. The Airmen were dispersed to four separate sites with four missions: filling and grading two sections of road - one was a mile and half long and the other a two-mile length. “The terrain we were in was very mountainous, creating numerous challenges for the team to overcome,” continued Novello. At Ephraim Ridge probably the most rugged worksite, three pole transformers were replaced and two others were hooked up, increasing visibility and security in the sector. The last mission entailed repairing incorrect welds performed by an earlier unit on the bollard fence. “The re-enlistment of one of my unit members is directly related to this mission. All in all, this was one of the best, if not the best deployment we have been on,” observed Novello.
Units representing Army National Guard, as well as the 108th Air Refueling and 177th Fighter Wings of the New Jersey Air National Guard participated in the New Jersey National Guard's 24th Annual Governor's Military Review was held on Sept. 16.

The ceremonies opened with music performed by the 63rd Army Band and a flyover of UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters from the 1st Battalion, 150th Assault Helicopter Company.


Governor Jon S. Corzine, who earlier was honored by a 19-gun salute by B Battery, 3rd Battalion, 112th Field Artillery, commended the assembled Soldiers and Airmen for their continued service in defense of state and nation.

Accompanied by Maj. Gen. Rieth, Governor Corzine then reviewed the troops. Brig. Gen. Maria Falca-Dodson, the Deputy Adjutant General, served as this year's Commander of Troops. The ceremony also included presentation of various awards to members of the state’s forces. Governor Corzine also recognized several civilian residents for their support of the National Guard during the last year.

The ceremonies concluded with a final flyover by a 108th KC-135E Stratotanker and two 177th F-16C Fighting Falcons.
A slight movement catches the eye, the rustling of leaves and distant sounds of snapping twigs provide telltale signs. Suddenly, an enemy pops up and Soldiers hidden in the canopy burst forth into action.

At first glance, it seems to be business as usual, as Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry, 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) conducts lanes training as part of their Annual Training here in Fort Drum, NY, but then again, appearances can be deceiving.

Everything is changing in the National Guard. Switching to the more mobile and self-contained BCTs requires many of New Jersey’s Guard units to transform in order to better meet the challenges of today’s battlefield. So, as is expected from the guys who are used to going into the thick of things, the 1-114th is taking on this transformation head on.

Surprisingly enough, the 1-114th’s Executive Officer Maj. Joe Boucher tells us, the transition has been “fairly easy,” as the unit goes into the end of the transformation’s second phase, continuing to meet all the goals set out by the state. More than just easy, the transition from mechanized to light infantry has been beneficial, as Boucher adds that by taking the “track” away, the unit now spends less time on maintenance and more time dedicated to actual training.

“It does a lot for the morale of the troops when you give them new equipment,” Boucher explained, mentioning some of the new equipment the unit has, and is expected to receive.

Besides getting the newest gear for their soldiers, currently being fielded in a phased approach, they have also received some brand new Light Medium Tactical Vehicles, which they’ve found to be a tremendous asset. As for what the future holds, they expect to receive some awesome high-tech gear sometime next year, such as Blue Force tracking and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs).

New gear, coupled with a painless transition, has the 1-114th in high spirits during this AT. Pfc. Lee Whitehouse offers a positive view on the training, primarily that unit cohesion continues to improve, and as everyone gets to know each other better, it leads to better training overall, an important factor that he believes will help in any possible future deployments.

So while you may no longer see any mechanized tracks on these dusty Fort Drum roads, you will still continue to see the footprints of these dedicated soldiers from the 1-114th as they march on toward the next part of their training.
For some Cavalry Soldiers, transforming to an Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) may seem like a two-mile sprint, but for members of the 102nd Cavalry Squadron, 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, it’s a walk in the park.

“It’s all coming together…it’s a natural,” said Spc. William Shawger, of Alpha Company.

Members of the 102nd are finding Annual Training at Fort Drum a time to strengthen, improve and build on what is now commonly referred to as Reconnaissance, Surveillance, Target, Acquisition (RSTA). According to 1st Lt. John Craddock, of Charlie Company, “the troops absolutely love the transition.”

Much has changed in regards to engagement. Once protected by armor, the RSTA Soldiers now rely on the M-16 rifles, MK-19 Grenade Launchers, M-249 Squad Automatic Weapons, 50-caliber machine guns and a radio for protection.

Switching tankers to infantrymen may have taken the man out of the tank, but not the Soldier out of the man. Fighting speed remains strong for the once armored Soldier.

As drastic as the changes in weapons are, so is the training. Where it was once difficult during Annual Training, not to mention drill weekends, to work out the logistics and maintain the tanks, now the RSTA soldiers have the flexibility to drill with their new weapons.

“We can keep the equipment with us,” said Craddock. Because of this, the Soldiers have plenty of time to cross-train into their new Military Occupational Specialty codes (MOS).

Scheduled drills are beneficial and enjoyable. Easy access to and low maintenance of weapons make training reliable. Staff Sgt. Mitchell Costa of Charlie Company said, “You ask any one of the troops what they like about drills or AT, and they will say shooting, training and learning about their MOS.”

Mounted scouts seem to take the challenge with confidence. Capt. Noel Lyn-kew, Commander of Bravo Company, said “the learning curve is exponential…and the trigger time behind weapons is phenomenal.” Many characteristics that made them successful as tankers are identified in their new position. Firing commands, working in crews, executing tactical movements and vehicle weapons are familiar terms to the tankers.

After firing more than 32,000 rounds in four days, Staff Sgt. Donald Sullivan, of Charlie Company, who is a prior Marine, said, “This is the stuff that’s going to save us…we smoked a lot of rounds, we came out here to work and that’s what we did!”

In today’s world, there are no guarantees of what will happen, but the 102nd Cavalry knows that whatever they’re called to do, they will be well-equipped, trained and with men they can count on.
As you headed down the sandy road towards Artillery Firing Point 14 on Fort Dix you noticed something was different.

Barriers funneled you to an Entry Control Point where you are greeted by a sign 'Welcome to FOB Steel' while Soldiers carefully checked who and what entered.

Once inside you notice the tents lined up neatly behind a semi-circle of artillery pieces, where the 230 Soldiers of the 3-112th Fires Battalion, 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) are living for two-weeks in the same place with their cannons.

"It is a first time for us, we consolidated and made a FOB (Forward Operating Base)," said Lt. Col. Brian K. Scully, commander of the 112th.

Soldiers in the past slept in a separate bivouac area away from the guns, but now all the firing batteries, the headquarters and the support element shared in the duties of manning the gate, providing perimeter guards and having a Quick Reaction Force to respond to opposing forces attacks. All movement to and from the Forward Operating Base was done in convoys with road movement orders; and everything is done to the Army standard added Scully.

"It is definitely different...more combat like," said Spec. Shadiq Shakir, who has been with the battalion eight years. A lot more training has taken place not just with the guns."

The Warrior Task Training is an integral component of this year's annual training period and those tasks are performed year round according to Scully.

It is especially important for the 3-112th Fires as batteries of this battalion have been deployed twice performing Military Police missions in Iraq, Germany and Italy.

"It is a question of balance. We have to balance the non-standard versus the standard FA (Field Artillery) mission. We are keeping the FA core competencies alive by the live fire we are doing," noted Scully.

The gun crews did not mind the temperatures in the 90's and high humidity as they eagerly awaited a fire mission. The radio cracked with coordinates of the target and the crew quickly adjusted the tube as Spc. James Urcinole, with his massive arms and upper body made it look easy to lift the nearly one hundred pound projectile onto the carrier.

Within seconds the round was loaded into the breech, charge placed, the primer set, and lanyard attached and with a steady, swift movement Urcinole sent the round downrange as the ground shook around the 27-ton vehicle.

One of the 330 rounds scheduled to land in the impact area could be the last from the 155mm guns of the New Jersey Guard’s M109A5 howitzers.

"This is kind of a history-making AT," explained Scully. "After this we convert to the M119A2 105mm towed howitzer."

It was thought to be the last firing of the self propelled howitzers at last year’s AT as the 3-112th Field Artillery transformed into the 3-112th Fires Battalion.

"Things have a way of changing," noted Scully, who along with the rest of the battalion eagerly await the new equipment.

Master Sgt. Michael A. Steck, Jr. will not see the first firing of the towed guns as he turns 60 years old in November. This is the last AT for Steck, who has been a cannoneer since 1985 and despite his age, he is ready to serve.

"I would do it in a minute; if they said tomorrow let’s go, I’m there."
The formation of the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) has had its share of challenges for Soldiers, like new jobs, new armories and a slew of new unit designations.

Last summer the 2nd-102nd Armor Battalion and 250th Signal Battalion, faded into history, but the personnel became the nucleus of the 50th Brigade Special Troops Battalion (BSTB).

“It is a unique organization to the New Jersey Army National Guard and to the Army in general,” said Lt. Col. Kenneth S. Schechter, commander of the battalion that serves as the combat support element for the IBCT.

The battalion includes a headquarters, Signal, Military Intelligence and Engineer companies and has Military Police and Chemical Reconnaissance platoons, providing a wide range of options to the IBCT commander.

The final piece of the Special Troops was put into place in February, so this new battalion decided to do something unique during their first Annual Training together at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa.

The whole battalion of more than 130 Soldiers from E-1 to O-5 boarded three busses and left for Gettysburg National Military Park.

“Sort of us ushering in our new identity and connecting with that, and we are using the Battle of Gettysburg to help us do that,” said 1st Lt. Jason E. Mull, executive officer for the BSTB Engineer Company and one of the organizers of the field trip.

But it was much more than the stop and look at monuments sightseeing tour, this trip had actually branch-specific lessons taught by the senior leaders before moving to the next location.

“Know the weaknesses of your enemy,” was the response from crowd when the Military Intelligence Company Executive Officer 1st Lt. David Field asked why intelligence is important.

Using an artillery piece as his podium near the site of the first day of battles between Union and Confederate soldiers on July 1, 1863, Field led the discussion on information and its use in warfare.

“We are forming a foundation here,” stressed Schechter as he spoke about team building and bringing the unit together.

The trip to Gettysburg was a reward for plenty of hard training earlier in the two weeks.

That training included weapons qualification, Warrior Training Tasks (WTT) and Army Warrior Task Battle Drills, such as reaction to IED’s or an ambush and removing wounded Soldiers out of vehicles.

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“Know the weaknesses of your enemy,” was the response from crowd when the Military Intelligence Company Executive Officer 1st Lt. David Field asked why intelligence is important.

Using an artillery piece as his podium near the site of the first day of battles between Union and Confederate soldiers on July 1, 1863, Field led the discussion on information and its use in warfare.

“We are forming a foundation here,” stressed Schechter as he spoke about team building and bringing the unit together.

The trip to Gettysburg was a reward for plenty of hard training earlier in the two weeks.

That training included weapons qualification, Warrior Training Tasks (WTT) and Army Warrior Task Battle Drills, such as reaction to IED’s or an ambush and removing wounded Soldiers out of vehicles.
“One of the last good deals in the Guard,” is how Lt. Col. Rick Keasey, Air National Guard Liaison officer, Geilenkirchen, Germany describes a rotation at the NATO airbase.

The 108th Air Refueling Wing deployed a contingent of specialists and crew members for their second time in 2007 for two weeks in August.

The past 14 years, air refueling units have come to Geilenkirchen for two-week rotations to fuel the AWACS airplanes that fly from the base.

For 44 weeks a year, Guard units fly one to two flights a day. Outside of a real world emergency, the flights do not fly from 10 p.m. until 8 a.m., nor do they fly on weekends; giving good reason for crews and their maintainers to enjoy their visit to Germany.

The trips not only includes pilots and boom operators but also specialists from the many sections that are in the wing such as Avionics, Propulsion, Supply, Fuels, Mission Operations Center (MOC) and crew chiefs.

Senior Master Sgt. George Phillips, a Sortie Generation Supervisor with the 108th came to Geilenkirchen on the wing’s first mission to the NATO base in 1993. He returned a second time in 2005 and was back for his third trip with the wing.

Phillips, who has deployed throughout the U.S. and around the world said that many people like to do repeat trips to this NATO base. He added that since there is no night flying, sometimes during the second week of summer deployments, crew and several specialists may fly to a base in Great Britain for a couple days to do night refuelings.

Senior Airman Albert Grice, an avionics specialist was on his second trip to Geilenkirchen. After working on the plane during the week, he was looking forward to taking a trip to several local cities.

“At 23, I have been to most of the countries in Europe,” he said. “Where else could that happen?”

Program helps military members find jobs

Vet Career Connect is a program that matches a veteran’s specific abilities and interests with jobs requiring those specific abilities.

After participants complete a Caliper Profile, which is an on-line self assessment, they will receive an Individual Developmental Guide outlining personal motivators and areas of developmental opportunity. Participants will then have the opportunity to place their profile results, their resume and military achievements onto a database which will be viewed by New Jersey companies who have indicated a strong interest in employing veterans.

Vet Career Connect program is available at no cost to service members. In order to participate in this program, or if you have additional questions please email or call Barbara Foos, Project Administrator, at 609-524-1228 or bfoos@calipercorp.com.
News Guard Families Can Use
Compiled by the Guardlife Staff

Family Readiness Grant Program

From the N.J. State Family Readiness Council

Family Grants are available to New Jersey Guard members mobilized longer than 90-days within a one-year period, and their families must be experiencing financial hardship. Business grants are available to New Jersey Guard members who have been mobilized longer than 90-days also within a one-year period and were self-employed business owners at the time of being mobilized.

The State Council has supported family activities, welcome home events and has awarded grants in excess of $200,000.

For more information on grant criteria or to apply for a grant call 1-888-859-0352 or contact the Family Assistance Center nearest you.

Helmets to Hardhats

Helmets to Hardhats is a program that connects Guard members with career training and employment opportunities within the construction industry.

The program is administered by the Center for Military Recruitment, Assessment, and Veterans Employment. Eligibility requirements include: being at least 18 years of age, an honorable discharge, a high school diploma or equivalent, pass a drug test and be physically fit to perform work.

For more information logon to: www.helmetstohardhats.org/

Family Assistance Centers

108th Air Refueling Wing
3327 Charles Blvd.
McGuire AFB, NJ 08641
POC: Laura Forrest
laura.forrest@njmcgu.ang.af.mil

Jersey City Armory
678 Montgomery Street
Jersey City, NJ 07306-2208
POC: Janis Shaw
janis.m.shaw@us.army.mil

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

Morristown Armory
430 Jockey Hollow Road
Morristown, NJ 07960-0499
POC: John Hales
john.a.hales@us.army.mil

Pomona NJNG FAC
400 Langley Road
Egg Harbor Twp, NJ 08234
POC (Air): Paul Gunning
paul.gunning@njatla.ang.af.mil
POC (Army): Michael Hughes
michael.hughes@njatla.ang.af.mil

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

Teaneck Armory
Teaneck & Liberty Roads
Teaneck NJ 07666-0687
POC: SSG Joe Collery
joe.collery@us.army.mil

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

Woodbury Armory
658 North Evergreen Avenue
Woodbury, NJ 08096
POC: Heather Altman
heather.altman@us.army.mil

Or call 1-888-859-0352

Are you Red for the Post Deployment Health Reassessment?

Is your AKO stoplight Red for my Medical Readiness? Is AKO telling you that you are to complete your Post Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA)? Want to know how to fix this?

PDHRA seeks to identify proactively potential health issues before they become chronic conditions. The PDHRA provides healthcare providers with health data that can help in the assessment of health conditions. Soldiers who red flag themselves will receive health care before they become chronic conditions. PDHRA provides healthcare providers with health data that can help in the assessment of health conditions.

Soldiers who red flag themselves will receive health care before they become chronic conditions. PDHRA provides healthcare providers with health data that can help in the assessment of health conditions.


Incentive Flights Available

Contact the 108th ARW Public Affairs Office at (609) 754-4173 or by email at PA.108ARW@NJMCU.ANG.AF.MIL. Open to all NJNG Guardmembers and their spouses.

Guardlife 19
sign up with the G-RAP program and become a Recruiting Assistant. For every person you recruit into the New Jersey Air National Guard you will earn $2,000.

Logon to http://guardrecruitingassistant.com/ pick the Air Guard path, fill out the application and you are on your way to helping someone make a great career choice and some serious cash for yourself.
**SHORT ROUNDS**

**LIEUTENANTS, FIRST SHIRTS, GRADS AND CAMPOREE**

**OCS at 50**

Nineteen graduating Officer Candidate School (OCS) Class 50 Soldiers were joined by their families and peers on August 5 at the National Guard Training Center, Sea Girt. Along with the highest of expectations, OCS Class 50 also carries with them another distinction, the continuation of a tradition started in 1958 by the first graduating OCS class of the New Jersey OCS program. These second lieutenant’s are the latest graduates in the tradition that has seen 2,827 gain their gold bar from the New Jersey OCS program. Photo by Spc. Pablo Vizcaíno, 444MPAD.

**1st Sgt. Returns**

First Sergeant Dan Mitchell, 177th Fighter Wing Security Forces, returns after a four-month deployment serving as the first sergeant with the 755th Expeditionary Support Squadron at Kabul, Afghanistan. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA.

**Newest CST Grads**

The newest members of the 21st Civil Support Team (WMD) (left to right) 1st Lt. Sony Stab, Pfc. Jeffery Whalen, Spc. Michael Issenman and Sgt. Arnold Young graduated from the Civil Support Skills Course at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., on August 30. The course teaches students the fundamental skills involved in civil support team operations, including blocks of instruction on anti-terrorism, chemistry, hazardous materials, and responder operations. Photo by Maj. Jesse Arnstein, 21CST(WMD).

**TAG addresses Scouts**

Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, the Adjutant General, speaks to Boy Scouts about their role in Homeland Security during the New Jersey State Police Boy Scout Camporee held at the New Jersey National Guard Training Center (NGTC) on Oct. 6-7. Approximately 9,000 Boy Scouts from all 21 counties converged on Sea Girt for the event. Not since the World War I mobilizations has Sea Girt seen this many tents. The Army Guard provided water trailers and personnel to keep them filled to ensure that the Scouts were well hydrated at this, the largest encampment ever on the NGTC grounds. Photo by Kryn Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA.
ETT bids farewell

By Spc. William Addison, 444MPAD

As the 15 members of the Embedded Training Team (ETT) embark on their journey to continue the New Jersey Army National Guard’s mission of training Afghani soldiers, they bear with them the symbol of another legacy, the guidon of Company A, 1st Separate Battalion.

The presentation of the colors took place September 20 at the ETT’s farewell salute at the Joint Training and Training Development Center, Fort Dix.

The ETT will be spending the next year training the soldiers of the Afghanistan army in the standards of the United States Army. Their main mission is to help the Afghanistan Army provide security to the region itself.

“This is truly a unique and critical mission as we help to build a professional army in Afghanistan,” said Maj. Gen Glenn K. Rieth, Adjutant General of the New Jersey National Guard. “They’re going to show them what the American standard is,” he added.

“We have a robust group of individuals that bring a lot of different skill sets into the mix,” said Lt. Col. John E. Langston, ETT team chief, about the readiness of the Soldiers to perform the task at hand.

The team has been preparing since February, training to improve their individual Soldiering skills, weapons marksmanship and physical fitness. “I think all of this combined experience helps us gel into a tight team that will be able to help the Afghan people,” said Langston.

Some even have first hand experience working with the Afghanistan army.

“You can’t teach these guys how to fight, they’ve been fighting for thirty years,” said Staff Sgt. Michael Tumminelli, ETT company mentor.

This is Tumminelli’s second tour to the region adding that the key to success is updating cultural awareness.

“What you need to do is treat them with respect, adhere to their cultural rules and regulations and pretty much keep your level of focus high at all times,” he said.

But as the members of the ETT look forward to the mission ahead, they carry with them a reminder of the past under the motto “Sans Peur,” Without Fear.

It was this motto that retired Capt. Spencer C. Moore, who was a member of Company C, 372nd Infantry Regiment in 1940, wanted to make sure the ETT members understood as he presented the battalion colors.

Company A, 1st Separate Brigade was formed on September 25, 1931 after many African-American citizens of Newark, Plainfield and Orange became discouraged by the fact that there were no “Colored” units in the New Jersey National Guard. This fact was echoed by the many African-Americans who fought in World War I and now had no way to pursue their military career.

Soon after, Company B was formed, commanded by “Negro” officers.

Company A made their name in 1934, when the cruise ship “Morro Castle” caught fire near the Sea Girt National Guard Camp. The men of Company A manned life boats and rowed out to the ill-fated ship. Many lives were saved due to their efforts.

“It’s a bit inspiring taking on that legacy, but not only because I’m African American,” said Langston. “It’s the spirit of volunteerism that we want to exchange here along with the colors.”

The Jersey Guard members will be leaving Fort Riley, Kan., in the beginning of November prior to starting the one-year deployment to Afghanistan.
### New Jersey Army National Guard

#### Promotions

- **E-3:**
  - Nicholas V. Caruso Jr.
  - Stephen R. Cervini Jr.
  - David J. Chaika Jr.
  - Matthew P. Ebenpesa
  - Danny J. Escobar
  - Evangelista Elizalde
  - Gregory S. Fletcher
  - Juana E. Garrett
  - Matthew J. Garzio
  - Zek A. Goeb
  - Angel L. Gonzalez
  - Kesha M. Harris
  - Nicholas A. Iacovou
  - Robert D. Jacoby
  - Timothy J. Jardincio
  - Dewey A. Johnson III
  - Michael D. Joswick
  - Lauren E. Kuchar
  - Laurie R. Leskanic
  - Sean C. McDowell
  - Steven Molina
  - Houdine L. Moore
  - Stephen T. Moore
  - Quintessa S. Nash
  - Elizabeth A. Obobikah
  - Francisco A. Ortiz
  - Neckhear H. Paayo
  - Joseph Perkins
  - Matthew J. C. Petrush
  - Alexander I. Plazt
  - Edwin Rodriguez-Santillan Jr.
  - David J. Schriver
  - Marc A. Scozzafava
  - Javier M. Sojos
  - Allen E. Sperry
  - Maria E. Teodor
  - Kelly A. Wiest
  - William S. Woll Jr.
  - Richard L. Wine.

- **E-4:**
  - Adam P. Butterfield
  - Rasheedul I. Chowdhury
  - Michael H. Cifelli
  - Andrew J. Clayton
  - Brian J. Costigan
  - Joseph S. Cottone
  - Lloyd M. Deans
  - Marya E. Espinal
  - Anthony J. Espósito Jr.
  - Michael B. Fox
  - Shawn O. Harris
  - Jovette J. Hernandez
  - Devon K. Hooper
  - Marcial B. Martinez
  - Joseph J. McGovern
  - Alexander I. Mendoza
  - Norma J. Mocci
  - Craig R. Morrison
  - Matthew G. Mullin
  - Deborah C. Navedo
  - Evin P. Ramiah
  - Albert C. Sbarro Jr.
  - Sasha T. Sherard
  - Keshma H. Smith
  - Michael S. Torstrup Jr.
  - Alkesh R. Trivedi

- **E-5:**
  - Christopher D. Braine
  - Christian S. Dimeo
  - Angel O. Ferrer Jr.
  - Eric R. Symonds
  - Raymond Aviles
  - David S. Rupert
  - Julian Londono
  - Angel L. Torres
  - Jean P. Ortega
  - Albert Veltri Jr.
  - David L. Hanks
  - Luis M. Silva
  - Joseph A. Swansinger
  - Eric R. Symonds
  - Angel L. Torres
  - Brian E. Washington
  - Randall D. Williams
  - Robert C. Williams

- **E-6:**
  - Antonio S. Etheridge
  - Timothy A. Fitch
  - Robert J. Manoff
  - Bryant Obando
  - Savonte A. Parker
  - Andrew H. Roff
  - Dante F. Rosini Jr.
  - Carlos E. Santana
  - Jennifer S. Santos
  - James T. Townsend
  - Paul E. Watson Jr.

- **E-7:**
  - Anthony Dittzo Jr.
  - Melissa A. Munez
  - Jasmine E. English-Mitchell
  - David B. Sheridan
  - Joey L. Simpson II
  - Philip J. Vitale

### New Jersey Air National Guard

#### Promotions

- **E-3:**
  - David R. Crenshaw
  - Jose T. Cruz
  - Brit D. Dziedzic
  - Roger L. Ford Jr.
  - Daniel Guzman
  - Kimberly M. Hanks
  - Robert S. Reilly
  - Jonathan Hillebrand
  - Victor M. Irizarry
  - Stephen R. Janeczko
  - Andrew A. Mendoza
  - David A. Michaels
  - Rafael M. Moura
  - Patrick J. O'Flaherty
  - Jefferson P. Otero
  - Fernando Ospina
  - Vihal Patel
  - Xavier N. Ramirez
  - William F. Richmond
  - David S. Rupert
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  - Norma J. Mocci
  - Craig R. Morrison
  - Matthew G. Mullin
  - Deborah C. Navedo
  - Evin P. Ramiah
  - Albert C. Sbarro Jr.
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  - Jean P. Ortega
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  - Melissa A. Munez
  - Jasmine E. English-Mitchell
  - David B. Sheridan
  - Joey L. Simpson II
  - Philip J. Vitale

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### Congratulations to All!

With yellow smoke providing cover and concealment, Pfc. Marc Louden, left, and Spc. Ken Christian charge through a door during the final moments of an Urban Operations Field Training Exercise during Annual Training at MOUT (Military Operations on Urban Terrain) Site 13A at Fort Drum, N.Y. Louden and Christian were part of a combined assault team, which included members of Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 113th Infantry and Cobra Company, Rapid Reaction Brigade, Republic of Albania Armed Forces. The Albanians were training with the New Jersey Guardsman as part of a Unit Level Exchange with the State Partnership Program. Photo by Spc. Robert Neill, JFHQ-NJ/PA.