

at ease tops in Army

Wisconsin Guard helps in Louisiana

New mobilizations

Injured Soldiers heal at home

High-tech training at Volk Field

at ease

December 2005

From the top

The Wisconsin National Guard's Soldiers and Airmen continue to make history.

In the midst of the largest mobilization of the Wisconsin National Guard in decades, Wisconsin joined 53 other states and territories in a first-of-its-kind response to a domestic emergency in another state. The emergency, of course, was Hurricane Katrina. The response — not only from Wisconsin, but from all across the nation — was phenomenal.

Forty-eight hours after Katrina made landfall near New Orleans, Gov. Jim Doyle ordered the Wisconsin Guard to Louisiana. The first of more than 450 Wisconsin Soldiers and Airmen arrived on the Gulf Coast by air the next day, and the rest were headed south by the weekend.

Aside from the impressive work done by Wisconsin's National Guard, the way Task Force Wisconsin came together was nothing short of remarkable.

First, the unbelievable response of our Soldiers and Airmen. We needed about 450 volunteers. Even with 2,800 of our members on active duty, we probably could have had one thousand or more volunteers in Louisiana. Even when the Wisconsin mission was completed and our troops were being relieved by Guard forces from other states, many of our Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers and Airmen asked to be extended.

Second, the seamless joint force that the National Guard has become. Never before in our state have Army MPs stood in an Air National Guard hangar... alongside Air Guard security forces troops... prepared to board an Air Guard aircraft... under Army Guard leadership... destined for a Naval Air Station... to work with Guard and Reserve troops from other states... and with active-duty Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen... in support of civilian authorities... on streets of a major U.S. city in need.

And all of this occurred while 1,600 of our troops were deployed overseas and 1,200 more were training for overseas missions.

Wisconsin and the nation should be impressed with the capabilities and depth of America's National Guard. I know I am.

Finally, the Wisconsin Army National Guard family has lost three Soldiers since my last column.

Spc. Charles A. Kaufman, Company C, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, died June 26 from wounds sustained in Baghdad, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device was detonated near his Humvee. Kaufman, 20, was a resident of Fairchild and had been on active duty since June 2004.

Spc. Michael J. Wendling and **Sgt. Andrew P. Wallace**, both of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, died in Shaibah, Iraq, Sept. 26, after their Humvee was attacked by insurgent forces using an improvised explosive device and small arms fire.

Wendling, 20, was a resident of Mayville and an honors student at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

before he was mobilized with his unit in June.

Wallace, 25, was a well-respected teacher in the Oshkosh school district. Both had been stationed in northern Kuwait, where they had been providing convoy security support into Iraq for just over a month when they were attacked.

Please see stories on these three Wisconsin National Guard heroes on page 5.

Since the last issue of At Ease was published, 15 other Wisconsin service members lost their lives in service to their country:

- Army **Sgt. 1st Class Donald W. Eacho**, 38, Black Creek
- Army **Sgt. Andrew L. Bossert**, 24, Fountain City
- Army **Sgt. Mark A. Maida**, 22, Madison
- Army **Chief Warrant Officer 2 Joshua M. Scott**, 28, Sun Prairie
- Army **Spc. Eric J. Poelman**, 21, Racine
- Marine **Lance Cpl. John J. Mattek Jr.**, 24, Stevens Point
- Army Reserve **Capt. Benjamin D. Jansky**, 28, Oshkosh
- Army **Spc. John O. Tollefson**, 22, Fond du Lac
- Marine Corps Reserve **Staff Sgt. Chad J. Simon**, 32, Madison
- Army **Sgt. 1st Class Trevor J. Diesing**, 30, Plum City
- Marine **Lance Cpl. Ryan Nass**, 21, Franklin
- Army Reserve **Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Kading**, 32, Madison
- Army **Spc. Benjamin A. Smith**, 21, Hudson
- Army **Pfc. Anthony "Alex" Gaunky**, 19, Sparta
- Marine **Sgt. Andy Stevens**, 29, Tomah

Please join me in remembering their sacrifice and keeping their families in your thoughts and prayers, especially as we enter the upcoming holiday season.



Albert H. Wilkening
Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening

at ease

December 2005



at ease

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Current Guardmembers: *At Ease* gets your current mailing address from your unit records. No special notification is necessary.

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From a UH-1 Huey air ambulance, Staff Sgt Patrick Deuberry of the 832nd Medical Company scans the flooded streets of New Orleans for survivors of Hurricane Katrina. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Gorman.



Public Affairs team sweeps national awards

Take a moment to congratulate yourself on your taste in magazines. You are reading the best in the National Guard (all 54 states and territories) and the best in the Army, worldwide. Uncle Sam says so.

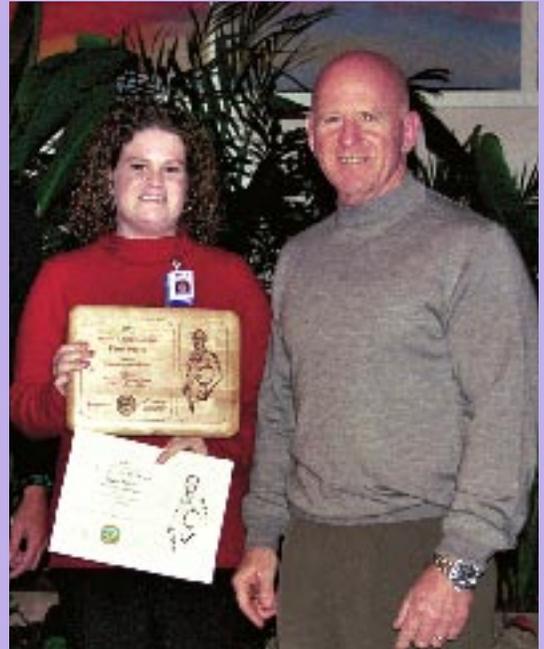
At Ease won first place in the color magazine division of the 2004 National Guard Media Contest.

Not content with that, we went on to win first place in the Army-wide Keith L. Ware Awards Competition, surpassing the magazine-format publications of the 1st Armored Division, the 14th Public Affairs Detachment (FORSCOM) and the 88th Regional Readiness Command (USARC).

The Secretary of the Army sponsors both competitions annually. The Office of the Chief of Public Affairs conducts judging with a goal of ensuring the best internal information efforts receive recognition for professional excellence and outstanding achievement. The competitions are also designed for professional development, with constructive feedback flowing from the judges to the participants.

A frequent photographic contributor to *At Ease*, Joe Oliva — a civilian with a sharp lens and a warm relationship with the Wisconsin National Guard — won a third place Keith L. Ware in the “contribution by a stringer photographer” category with his photo “The Mission Continues” in the October 2004 issue.

The Illinois-Wisconsin 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment also won second place in the Keith L. Ware Awards field newspaper category for *The Olympia Observer*, the command information newspaper of Task Force Olympia, while deployed in northern Iraq in 2004.



Kelly Bradley, editor of *At Ease*, accepts the Keith L. Ware award from Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, Chief, National Guard Bureau.

Changes

Brig. Gen. Roger A. Lalach was assigned as assistant adjutant general for the Joint Staff of the Wisconsin National Guard in September. Lalach began his military career in the Colorado National Guard in 1970, then entered the Wisconsin Army National Guard as a Medical Corps officer in 1989. Since that time, he served in a variety of medical positions, including assignments as a field surgeon, medical company commander, flight surgeon, and state surgeon. For five months in 2004 he served as a field surgeon in Baghdad, Iraq, before being assigned as the Army National Guard assistant to the command surgeon at U.S. Northern Command in Colorado Springs, Colo. Lalach is a civilian obstetrician/gynecologist in private practice in North Prairie, Wis. He was promoted to the rank of brigadier general after assuming his present position.

Lalach succeeded Brig. Gen. Bruce Schrimpf, who retired after more than 30 years' service in the Wisconsin National Guard.

Col. Charles E. Tucker is the new chief of staff for the Wisconsin Air National Guard. Tucker began his military career when he was commissioned as a captain and assigned as a staff judge advocate at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas. He served in other staff judge advocate and defense counsel positions in German and Turkey before he was assigned as instructor of law and assistant law professor at the U.S. Air Force Academy. In 1993 Tucker entered the Wisconsin Air National Guard at the 128th Air Refueling Wing, where he served as a legal officer and staff judge advocate. He has extensive experience in international law and has worked with both the U.S. State Depart-



Wisconsin is the Army National Guard's 2005 Gold Winner in the Army Communities of Excellence program. Front row from left: Col. Robert Ronge, Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Donovan, Warrant Officer Amy Hampton, Sgt. 1st Class Audra Bissen, and Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz director of the Army National Guard. Back row from left: Lt. Col. Daniel Sailer, Capt. Richard Morehouse and Col. Mark Mathwig.

ment and NATO.

Tucker succeeds Brig. Gen. Steve Foster as chief of staff. Foster is currently assigned to United States Northern Command in Colorado Springs.

In Memoriam...

Three Wisconsin National Guard members have been killed in Iraq since *At Ease* last went to press.



Charles Kaufman
1984-2005

Spc. Charles A. Kaufman, 20, Fairchild, died June 26 when he drove his Humvee over an improvised explosive device in Baghdad. Kaufman was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry.

Three months later, on Sept. 26, two members of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, were killed by another roadside bomb at Shaibah, in southern Iraq. They were Sgt. Andrew P. Wallace, 25, Oshkosh, and Spc. Michael Wendling, 20, Mayville. Spc. Jeremy Roskopf, Brownsville, a high school friend of Wendling's, also

was injured in the explosion.

Kaufman was a native of Jackson County, attended high school in Fairchild and graduated from Chippewa Valley Technical Institute, Neillsville. He joined the Wisconsin Army National Guard with his close cousin, Kelly Kaufman. Charles Kaufman's deployment to Iraq was delayed because of a serious injury sustained when he fell about 15 feet from a tree stand while hunting. He made a determined recovery and shipped out to re-join his unit in Iraq last January.

He was at the center of a close-knit family and enjoyed driving of all kinds, but especially driving his grandfather, Charles Kenneth Kaufman, for car rides. The elder Kaufman preceded him in death by six days.

Sgt. Andrew Wallace was remembered as a dedicated teacher and wrestling coach who loved his family and his country.

"He was proud to serve his country and he knew the risks that came with it," his father, Pete Wallace, told a local

newspaper after Andrew's death. "He preferred being out on the missions instead of back in the base."

Wallace, a six-year Guard member, was a physical education teacher at Oshkosh North High School and Emmeline Cook Elementary School. Administrators, fellow teachers and students expressed admiration for his enthusiasm and sorrow over his loss.

Wendling, 20, was a dean's list student at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee and played football, basketball and golf for Mayville High School. He and Roskopf played together on Mayville's conference champion golf team during their senior year — the year they also joined the Guard together.

Wendling's high school coach, Stu Strook, remembered him as an athlete who worked hard to improve himself.

"I would call him a grinder," Strook told a reporter. "He worked hard. He had a good heart."

Wendling was driving the humvee in southern Iraq when it hit the roadside bomb; Roskopf was top gunner and Wallace the team leader.

Wallace and Wendling became the 46th and 47th Wisconsin battle deaths of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Wisconsin Army National Guard has now suffered five fatalities in the effort.



Michael Wendling
1985-2005



Andrew Wallace
1980-2005

Civil Support Team Soldiers save lives

Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers on a convoy saved the lives of victims in a May 17 highway accident near Sawyer, Mich.

Eighteen soldiers from the 54th Civil Support Team and one from Joint Force Headquarters were en route to Fort Custer, Mich., for a training exercise when they witnessed the accident as it was happening. The driver of a van carrying seven passengers had lost control and veered across the median into oncoming traffic, colliding with two tractor-trailers.

Soldiers rushed to aid three critically injured victims who had been thrown from the vehicle. Two others were pronounced dead at the scene. The Guard team also controlled traffic from both directions and provided water and a tent for shade until all survivors were evacuated.

Although one of those treated eventually died, "all three of these people probably would have died if we hadn't performed lifesaving procedures immediately," said Maj. Steve Brewer, commander of the 54th CST.

Saying Good-bye

By Lt. Col. Tim Donovan
At Ease Staff

Four years after the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on America, the Wisconsin National Guard reached a milestone unseen since World War II: Three thousand Wisconsin Guard Soldiers and Airmen were on active duty and were either operationally deployed or bound for overseas missions in combat zones.

When the last issue of *At Ease* was published in mid-March, the Wisconsin Guard had just over 1,100 Soldiers and about 160 Airmen serving on active duty. A dozen officers and NCOs from Wisconsin's contribution to Joint Task Force Phoenix had been in Gardez and Kandahar for just over half of their year-long mission to help establish an effective national army in Afghanistan.

Nearly 300 men and women of the 1158th Transportation Company were closing in on a million miles of convoy operations throughout Iraq. Oak Creek's Battery B, 1st Battalion, 126th Field Artillery had 80 Soldiers securing Baghdad-area entry control points with M-16 rifles and M-4 carbines rather than M-109A6 Paladin howitzers. And 670 Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 128th

Spc. Ryan Jopek hugs his brother, Steven, good-bye during 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry's send-off ceremony at Volk Field in June.



Infantry were conducting patrols and raids in central Iraq while still reeling over the death of a Charlie Company squad leader, Staff Sgt. Todd Olson.

June brought more bad news: A third Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldier was killed in action in Iraq. Spc. Charles Kaufman, 20, died June 26 after an improvised explosive device exploded alongside his Humvee during a mission in Baghdad. Kaufman was a member of 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry's Company C, Arcadia.

In Madison, the 115th Fighter Wing was well into its third year of an air sovereignty alert mission, while Milwaukee's 128th Air Refueling Wing continued its support of Air Force mobility requirements around the world. All of the Wisconsin Air Guard's major commands were sending small combat support packages anywhere on earth they were needed, while Army Guard Soldiers were volunteering in small groups to serve alongside the Army's 176th and 155th Brigade Combat Teams and as individual "Armies of One" to fill other requirements wherever they were.

But more mobilizations were just over the horizon.

Some pre-activation alerts were rescinded, but others turned into mobilization orders for more than 1,800 Wisconsin Soldiers who were called to active duty in June, August, October and November.

Red Arrow mobilizations

June 23 was a historic day for the 32nd "Red Arrow" Infantry Brigade. From the Volk Field ramp, less than a mile from the brigade's headquarters, 82 Soldiers, including the brigade commander, headed out for Fort Hood, Texas. After working through a quick post-mobilization training schedule they hooked up with Army Reserve Soldiers to form the 377th Theater Support Command at Fort Polk, La., and then moved on to Camp Arifjan in southeastern Kuwait.

It had been three generations — more than 63 years — since the Red Arrow headquarters was last shipped overseas to be operationally deployed.

Almost exactly a year earlier one of the brigade's infantry battalions had stood on the same Volk Field ramp before they flew south to Camp Shelby, Miss., and eventually onward to Iraq. In summer 2005 three more Red Arrow battalions would stand in the same spot awaiting similar flights, similar missions.

The Red Arrow legacy, forged over the past 90 years, would be carried into a new century by a fresh generation of Red Arrow Soldiers.

As the historic mobilization of Wisconsin's National Guard continued, one familiar Wisconsin site was left out of the picture — at least for the moment. Fort McCoy had been a major mobilization station for Guard and reserve units called up for the Gulf War in 1990, and served the same important function for Balkans-bound units beginning in 1996 and again as Guard and Reserve units were mobilized for service in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Since September 11, 2001, nearly 2,000 Wisconsin



Spc. Mary Flynn

Sgt. Scott Doll holds his son, Kaden, at 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery's send-off ceremony in August.

National Guard Soldiers mobilized through Fort McCoy; but Wisconsin Guard units mobilized after June 2004 were sent south — most of them to Camp Shelby, Miss., just south of Hattiesburg.

1st Battalion, 128th Infantry was Wisconsin's first mobilized unit to prepare for an overseas mission under a concept called "immersion training" at Camp Shelby training areas designed specifically for Iraq. They wouldn't be the last.

By the time 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry arrived at Camp Shelby in June 2005, immersion training was no longer a new concept and the Iraq-style forward operating bases were well-worn from use by thousands of Guard and Reserve units. Mississippi's southern pine forests didn't look much like the

sandscape that awaited them in Kuwait and Iraq, but just about everything else looked and felt eerily similar to what the 127th Soldiers would experience once their mission began. Ninety-plus temperatures made the training at Camp Shelby more than uncomfortable, but the air would be even hotter — though drier — in Kuwait.

By mid-July, the 2-127th was about halfway through a grueling training schedule, with the battalion's four companies rotating through the various training sites. While one company was training in garrison, the others practiced convoy security operations, trained on a reflexive fire range or operated one of the forward operating bases.

FOBs

Camp Shelby's FOBs were set up to look and feel like the bases from which U.S. military operations are conducted throughout Iraq. Enclosed by strands of concertina wire, they featured buildings — shops, a police station, roadside stands, a mosque — and were dressed with beat-up cars. Arabic graffiti added

1158th Transportation Company



to the realism.

Outside the base, costumed actors portraying Iraqi villagers approached the FOB's entry control point, chanting in

protest of the Soldiers' presence there.

VILLAGERS: "No more U.S.A. No more U.S.A. Go home, U.S.A. Go home, U.S.A."

Soldiers manning the entry control point were quickly augmented by other 127th troops as the villagers came closer.

VILLAGERS: "Bush, Bush...Ali Baba [thief]. No more Ali Baba. No more U.S.A. No more U.S.A. Go home, U.S.A. Go home, U.S.A."

While some Soldiers dealt with demonstrators at the base's entry control point, a reaction force rushed to another area of the perimeter where an Iraqi civilian was attempting to breach the wire.

Shelby's tailor-made training program served more than 2,300

ABOVE: Staff Sgt. Charles Congleton does a balancing act as he checks one of the 1158th Transportation Company's HETs.

LEFT: Soldiers from the 2-127th Infantry practiced entry control point operations with the added realism of actors portraying Iraqi civilians.



Sgt. Joe Streeter

RIGHT: Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening says good-bye to Spc. Rachel Bornitz and the rest of Company A, 132nd Support Battalion as they depart for pre-deployment training in Texas.

Norm Lenburg

Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers and prepared them as much as possible for the missions they would face once deployed.

But no amount of training, no matter how effective, can guarantee a Soldier in a combat zone will not be harmed.

The 127th Infantry had just arrived in Kuwait and assumed its convoy security mission in Iraq when two Soldiers from Company C were killed. Spc. Michael J. Wendling and Sgt. Andrew P. Wallace died in Shaibah, Iraq, Sept. 26, after their Humvee was attacked by insurgent forces. The Wisconsin National Guard had lost its fourth and fifth Soldiers to Iraqi insurgents.

Katrina strikes

The 127th Infantry was still at Camp Shelby when two fresh Wisconsin National Guard battalions arrived in August. 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery and 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry were both mobilized for security force missions in Kuwait. The two-month training schedule for the battalions had barely begun when Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast at about the Louisiana-Mississippi state line, then blew inland on a direct path for Camp Shelby.

Anticipating a devastating storm, troops from both Wisconsin battalions suspended their training and weathered 90-mph winds inside Shelby's hurricane-resistant concrete block barracks. Although the camp suffered considerable damage from the storm, the mobilization center was quickly back to business — thanks in part to the Wisconsin Soldiers who helped clean up storm debris. Wisconsin's two battalions made up a few days of postponed training and deployed to Kuwait in November, right on their original schedule.

Meanwhile, approximately 450 Wisconsin National Guard volunteers



took part in the nationwide Guard effort to provide direct relief to the devastated New Orleans area. (See story, p. 10.)

One other mobilized Wisconsin unit had a slightly different experience with the hurricane from 6,400 miles away in Baghdad. Battery B, 1st Battalion, 126th Field Artillery had been in Iraq on a security mission with Louisiana Guard Soldiers from the 256th Brigade Combat Team. For nearly a year, the Oak Creek Soldiers lived and worked with these Louisiana troops, many from the New Orleans area and most of those losing their homes.

Back in Oak Creek, the 126th's family support group collected clothing and other donations to help the Louisiana troops and their families. The packages were shipped south in time for the holidays.

No place like home

Also shipped in time for the holidays

— shipped home to Wisconsin after long overseas missions — were more than a thousand members of the Wisconsin National Guard. These included 80 Soldiers of Battery B, 126th Field Artillery; Wisconsin's 11 Soldiers of Joint Task Force Phoenix, home from Afghanistan; and 680 troops of 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry. The 1158th Transportation Company's 260 troops are expected home just before Christmas.

But as year-end 2005 approached, other units were just beginning their mobilizations to support Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The 232nd Military Intelligence Company mobilized 30 Soldiers in October and is training at Fort Polk, La.; and about 50 more from Company A, 132nd Support Battalion left in mid-November for pre-deployment training at Fort Hood, Texas.

2006 is shaping up to be yet another historic year for the men and women of the Wisconsin National Guard. ■

After the Storm

Wisconsin
troops respond
in historic
relief effort

By Larry Sommers
At Ease Staff

Wisconsin sent a tailored force of 461 Guard members to New Orleans, and they assisted hurricane refugees with urgency, pride and skill.

Task Force Wisconsin was mobilized and sent downrange rapidly, despite current troop commitments elsewhere, and included units well-suited



to the challenges posed by Hurricane Katrina.

Wednesday, Aug. 31, as TV showed a devastated New Orleans, Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle called for a Guard contingent to help the swamped coastal area. Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening ordered the creation of Task Force Wisconsin and

named Col. Dominic Cariello, 57th Field Artillery Brigade commander, to lead it. Joint Force Headquarters swiftly began activating members of Army and Air Guard units for hurricane relief duty.

Cariello and his small command cell departed Thursday, Sept. 1, for Louisiana.



Tech. Sgt. Paul Gorman

Sgt. Elizabeth Vacek, 32nd Military Police Company, provides a warm welcome and a few much-needed supplies to families returning to their homes in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

activity everywhere,” reported Spc. Tamra Bourne-Upright, Company A, 132nd Support Battalion. “Vehicles are being loaded, people are at their lockers packing bags, boxes, crates, tents, water, and various other things are being loaded into a 79 vehicle convoy. Where did all these vehicles come from?”

As the rest of the task force arrived by air and by road convoy over the next 48 hours, Wisconsin Guard members were in the first wave of fresh Guard troops, hailed as deliverers by local residents and the news media. By mid-September, when most of them redeployed to Wisconsin, the members of Task Force Wisconsin had chalked up numerous accomplishments:

The task force headquarters element from the 57th Field Artillery Battalion set up shop at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, Belle Chasse, La. They provided command and control for the Wisconsin task force and served as liaison between Badger State troops and the Louisiana National Guard’s Task Force Belle Chasse. The 64th Rear Operations Center, another Army Guard unit, sent 33 Soldiers and 12 vehicles with a trailer-mounted 30-kilowatt generator; they supported the command cell as command and control staff element at the Joint Operations Center.

Both Army and Air aviation assets played key roles. The 832nd Medical Company, an Army Guard air ambulance unit from West Bend, flew three UH-1 Huey helicopters to Belle Chasse and conducted operations from there starting Sunday, Sept. 4. The unit’s 32 deployed soldiers rescued 133 people and 13 pets while transporting more than eight tons of supplies and 243 additional passengers. Madison’s 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation, sent two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and 20 Soldiers to New Orleans. Working in tandem with the 832nd Medical Company, they transported 750 passengers and delivered more than thirteen tons of supplies. Both helicopter units remained in Louisiana through the end of September

Four assigned aircrew members from the 115th Operations Group flew Madison’s Air Guard RC-26

reconnaissance aircraft on missions out of Houston’s Ellington Field, using sensors to find individuals needing help and then direct search and rescue personnel to them. They also flew law enforcement support missions to assist the New Orleans Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The Wisconsin Army Guard’s C-26, operated by Detachment 52, Operational Support Airlift Command, flew Cariello’s command cell to Louisiana on Thursday, Sept. 1, and later flew several follow-on missions to and from the task force headquarters at Belle Chasse.

The Air Guard’s 128th Air Refueling Wing used three KC-135 aircraft and about a dozen aircrew members to fly ten missions to and from the Gulf Coast, transporting 247 passengers and 60 tons of cargo. The transport included flying Wisconsin Army and Air Guard police forces to Louisiana Sept. 2. Six days later, the unit’s Milwaukee air base became the reception processing center for nearly 180 New Orleans refugees transported from the Gulf Coast by chartered airliners.

On the ground, Army and Air police units conducted joint law enforcement operations to help return order to the Crescent City. The 32nd Military Police Company, Wisconsin Army National Guard, sent 45 troops, and they were augmented by 13 Air Guard Security Forces personnel from Madison’s 115th Fighter Wing and Milwaukee’s 128th Air Refueling Wing. The joint police force performed 30 missions, including eight base security missions, 22 escort missions.

The 1157th Transportation Company (supplemented by the 732nd Maintenance Battalion, 107th Maintenance Company, and 1158th Transportation Company) mobilized 104 Soldiers and 60 vehicles, mostly 5-ton cargo trucks, and drove in convoy to Belle Chasse, where they operated from an abandoned airfield. They provided ground transport for 197 passengers, including search and rescue teams, and 123 tons of supplies and cargo. Besides transporting people and things, Soldiers of the 1157th eagerly participated in search-and-rescue missions, using their high-profile vehicles to plow through high water in search of people trapped in houses. Since returning from the Gulf Coast, they have helped organize a volunteer group in Tomah to keep supporting storm victims, and the

“The drive into the New Orleans area was somewhat surrealistic,” Cariello recalled. “There were no city lights, just the pitch black darkness of a city without any power.”

Meanwhile, the logistical effort for Wisconsin’s follow-on forces was in high gear. “Once at the armory I see

community has adopted Waveland, Miss., as a sister city in need.

“For us and other National Guard families, the mission to New Orleans was only a beginning to connections with our southern neighbors,” said Deb Raabe, wife of Master Sgt. Douglas Raabe and secretary in the Guard’s state Surface Maintenance Office.

The 132nd Support Battalion sent 187 Soldiers and 68 vehicles and transported 180 passengers and 140 tons of supplies. Besides tractor-trailers and 5-ton and 2.5-ton cargo trucks, the 132nd provided fuel tankers, ambulances, and a wrecker. The fuel tankers carried Task Force Wisconsin’s JP-8 fuel — used for both aircraft and military ground vehicles — so the force’s operations would not impose an extra burden on scarce fuel supplies in the region.

The 54th Civil Support Team, a joint Army-Air unit trained to identify chemical, biological and radiological elements in the field, sent two rotations of personnel and equipment, totaling 14 Soldiers and Airmen, two communications vehicles and one support vehicle with a trailer that served as a mobile command post. At first the unit used its specialized satellite and other communications technology to help establish critically-needed communications for all military assets in the area of operations, coordinating with



Staff Sgt. Thomas Sobczyk

Governor Jim Doyle, left, gives a hug to one of the littlest Hurricane Katrina evacuees as they arrive at the 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee. Community leaders and Air Guard members greeted Louisiana and Mississippi residents as they deplaned.

other CSTs throughout Louisiana as well as higher headquarters. The unit rotated personnel after 15 days and began a mission supporting the New Orleans Fire Department Hazardous Materials unit. CST members helped locate unknown radiological, chemical, and biological sources posing possible danger to the local population. The team remained on stand-by in Carvel, Louisiana, through Hurricane Rita and redeployed Sept. 27 with all personnel and equipment, when assured there were no remaining

missions for them.

Task Force Wisconsin made a lasting impression on many Louisiana residents. Brig. Gen. Hunt Downer, Louisiana’s assistant adjutant general, praised the Wisconsin contingent as “Can Do” Soldiers and Airmen who did what they were asked without hesitation, according to an e-mail to At Ease from Cariello.

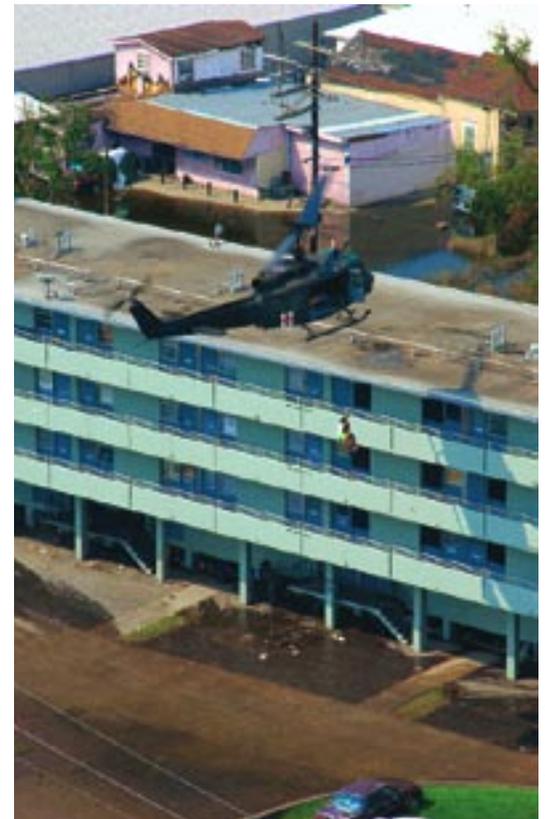
“I am glad to be able to say that I had the opportunity to command professional and dedicated Guardsmen,” the task force commander said. ■



Tech. Sgt. Paul Gorman

ABOVE: Staff Sgt. Dana McDowell, 115th Fighter Wing Security Forces Squadron, mans the turret of a Military Police Humvee providing armed escort to a convoy of military trucks.

RIGHT: Soldiers of the 832nd Medical Company hoist a Hurricane Katrina survivor from an apartment building surrounded by flood waters.



Tech. Sgt. Paul Gorman

Tech. Sgt. Daniel Knettle briefs a combined team of 115th Security Police and 32nd Military Police before an escort mission.



Tech. Sgt. Paul Gorman

A determined rescue

Days of search and rescue by Wisconsin National Guard helicopter crews paid off in lives saved. Here is the story of one dramatic rescue by an aircrew of the 832nd Medical Company, as told to At Ease by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Doug Determan, one of the unit's pilots:

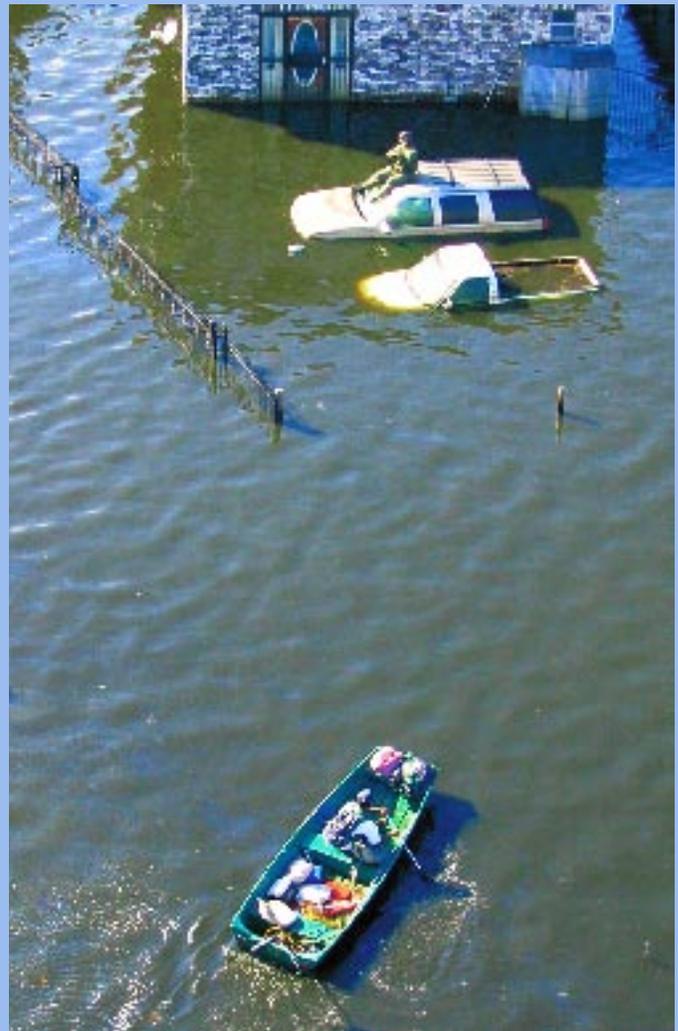
“We were out on a typical Search and Rescue mission in our UH-1 helicopter when we came across a man in a boat. Upon seeing us, the man signaled that he wanted to get out and immediately began tying the boat to a telephone pole.

“Unfortunately, with all the wires running to the pole, he was not in a location where we could hoist him out. Our crew chief, Sgt. Eric Leukert, used hand signals to communicate to the survivor that he needed to move to a better location. The man was clearly exhausted, and struggled to untie the boat and row out from under the wires.”

The confused man then paddled across the street and tied up to a light pole — leaving him again in an unreachable position for the helicopter. A frustrated Determan suddenly saw a solution: “I spotted a [Chevrolet] Tahoe about 1.5 blocks away and told the crew we were going to put our medic, Staff Sgt. Patrick Deuberry on top of it. This would allow for a safe rescue and would make it clear to the survivor where he needed to go. After Eric lowered Pat onto the Tahoe, the man again untied himself and started to row to the vehicle and medic.

“Sensing how exhausted the survivor was, Eric and I decided we would fly behind the man and use the rotor wash to push him over to the Tahoe. With some difficulty, Pat was able to help the man get on top of the Tahoe and Eric hoisted first the survivor and then Pat back into the helicopter. Chief Warrant Officer 3 William Richey [the pilot-in-command] and I then flew the man to Louis Armstrong International Airport to the triage center.”

Determan didn't have time to learn the man's name; the Huey and its crew were off on another rescue mission.



Staff Sgt. Patrick Deuberry waits atop a swamped car as an exhausted survivor of Hurricane Katrina approaches by boat, in order to be rescued by a Wisconsin National Guard Huey helicopter.

Photo courtesy of 832nd Medical Company

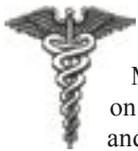


Physical therapist Ryan Swetkovich assists Sgt. Michael Peters with strength training during a physical therapy session at Franciscan Skemp Healthcare in Sparta.

 *Soldier
Caring*

Story and Photos by Kelly Bradley
At Ease Staff

At their home in Sparta, Sgt. Peters and his wife Emily, talk about what happened after he was injured overseas.



Outside the small, cream-colored house in Sparta, a car in the driveway displays an “I Love My Soldier” sticker. Inside, a calendar hangs on the refrigerator door, filled with appointments and important dates. In the living room, photos of friends and family decorate the walls, while a kitten stretches out in the early afternoon sun.

On his way out the door, Michael Peters gets a kiss from his wife, Emily, and a reminder of a get-together with friends later in the evening. Then he’s on his way to a physical therapy appointment paid for my Uncle Sam.

A sergeant in the 1158th Transportation Company, Wisconsin Army National Guard, Peters suffered a knee injury in Kuwait and had to leave his unit and return Stateside for treatment. But instead of languishing in some military hospital a thousand miles from home, he lives with his wife in his own house, works nearby, and remains on active duty while receiving treatment — thanks to a program for members of the Guard and Reserve, Wisconsin’s Community Based Health Care Organization.

Without CBHCO, Peters would be living and attending physical therapy at Fort Benning, Ga., — separated from his wife, family and friends, and without a job — until his injury heals or he is medically discharged from the Guard.

Any Guard or Reserve Soldier who is injured or develops a medical condition overseas while on more than 30 days active duty, and cannot stay with his or her unit, may be eligible for the voluntary program, which brings Soldiers back to Wisconsin to recuperate, work in military jobs, and receive treatment closer to home.

Headquartered in Madison, the CBHCO was set up originally for Wisconsin Soldiers but now also serves Soldiers in Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Indiana. The unit is staffed mainly by mobilized Soldiers of the Wisconsin National Guard’s 13th Medical and Dental Detachment, but Soldiers from other states augment the force.

“Wisconsin was one of the first five states to stand up a CBHCO,” said Capt. Kathy Marschman, commander of the

Wisconsin unit. There are now eight such programs, and the whole continental United States is covered, she said.

Each Soldier has a case manager, typically a nurse, to monitor medical care and act as the Soldier’s TRICARE liaison. A platoon sergeant is also assigned to track the Soldier’s progress through the system and military job performance. Each participant speaks with his or her platoon sergeant daily and case manager weekly.

“We coordinate their civilian care and monitor the Soldier’s progress and appropriateness of that care,” said Maj. James Grey, a case manager and 13th MEDD nurse. “Problems can manifest when a Soldier is away from their family. Part of rehabilitation is getting back to work — they get better quicker.”

Spc. Chad McCafferty, a radio operator who deployed with Company B, 118th Medical Battalion, in 2004, was accidentally shot in the leg during live-fire training. After surgery in Kuwait, he ended up at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC.

“My mental state really fluctuated at Walter Reed,” McCafferty recalled. “I was disappointed to have to leave the unit, frustrated at the prognosis of my nerve damage healing and seeing others with limbs missing — it was depressing.”

If McCafferty hadn’t able to join the program, he would still be convalescing at Walter Reed.

“I was injured on February 13, 2004, and my doctors still don’t know when I will be healed,” he said. “While at Walter Reed I would have had to find my own housing and the Army only pays so much towards it.”

CBHCO monitors Soldiers until they can return and serve with the Guard or Reserve. If they are not able to return, they are processed to discharge through the medical board.

“I’ve healed a lot faster here at home and learned a lot of life lessons,” Peters said. He has improved his strength and is now able to run.

“I really appreciate this type of service for our Soldiers,” said Emily Peters. “It’s a blessing.” ■

ready for



By Larry Sommers
At Ease Staff

Terrorists using weapons of mass destruction face a tougher challenge now in Wisconsin, thanks to the 54th Civil Support Team, Wisconsin National Guard.

The joint team has high-tech sensors and analytical equipment and knows how to use them. Arriving quickly, they survey for chemical, biological and radiological agents. They analyze samples of suspicious substances on the spot in a mobile lab to give solid information to decision-makers charged with protecting the public.

The CST passed a formal evaluation July 28 by external evaluators from 1st U.S. Army, based on a scenario-driven exercise staged at the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant at Baraboo.

The external evaluation was preceded by a series of training lanes at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., in April and by day-long exercises June 29 at the Dane County Coliseum and July 26 aboard a passenger vessel at the Port of Milwaukee. In each case, the CST did its work swiftly, efficiently, professionally.

While the June 29 exercise was going on, the Wisconsin Guard's new Joint Operations Center conducted a parallel internal exercise a few miles away, at the Guard's simulation center on the east side of Madison. It was the first exercise for the new JOC, formed as part of the National Guard's recent emphasis on joint operations. The center's mission is to plan and coordinate a response and facilitate the use of state and federal military assets.

The 22 Army and Air Guard members who constitute the 54th CST are full-time Guard members, and the team is continuously on call for potential WMD-related emergencies.

The 54th passed the 1st Army evaluation process in late July and expects to be certified as a state WMD civil support team once formalities are completed within the Army and the Department of Defense.

But the team is already at work protecting Wisconsin.

On Monday, Aug. 15, they rolled out based on a call from the Fort McCoy Fire Department. The department was faced with a mysterious white powder on a flak vest in a sealed container. The vest was among equipment returned from Iraq. The Fort McCoy Fire Department has equipment and training to perform initial testing and analysis on its own, but normally relies on the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene in Madison for backup testing, to double-check its results. In this case, the state lab recommended using the 54th CST instead.

The team sent operations, survey, and mobile lab people to Fort McCoy and completed the operation with a same-day analysis that set the command's concerns to rest.

"It was a matter of providing excellent support to the community," said Capt. Mike Rothschadl, 54th CST deputy commander, "and that's what we're designed for." ■

Sgt. Thomas Mitchell stands by to back up the 54th CST entry team during a July 26 exercise in Milwaukee. A backup team was positioned to help the entry team cope with unforeseen problems.

Sgt. Jim Wagner

{ postcards from afghanistan }



By Lt. Col. Mike Gourlie
Task Force Phoenix

Eleven Wisconsin Army Guard Soldiers spent a year in Afghanistan fighting rebels, building the new Afghan National Army, and garnering indelible memories.

Mobilized in June 2004 as fillers for an Indiana brigade, they were to train and mentor the ANA's Central Corps in Pol-e-Chakri as part of Coalition Joint Task Force Phoenix III, the command charged with standing up the country's new army.

But plans changed, and ten of the 11 were sent to build regional forces in two of the liberated nation's four outlying regions. The mission was to train and mentor a corps of Afghan Army soldiers — the first regional commands in the history of Afghanistan. The job included overseeing base construction and fielding two brigades plus corps headquarters in each region.

Col. Todd Nehls was assigned to command the eastern Regional Command Advisory Group, headquartered with the ANA 203rd Corps in Gardez. Sent to Gardez with Nehls were Lt. Col. John Van De Loop, the G1 (personnel) mentor; Lt. Col. Steve Roberts, G2 (intelligence) mentor; Lt. Col. Joe McGrath, G3 (operations) mentor; Lt. Col. Dick Govier, G4 (logistics) mentor; Sgt. Major Jim Bethke, senior enlisted mentor to Afghan troops; Sgt. 1st Class Steve Fenske, logistics NCO; and Sgt. Jason Manning, operations assistant and driver.

Lt. Col. Mike Gourlie became the G1 mentor for the ANA 205th Corps in the southern region near Kandahar, and Sgt. 1st Class Tom Vinje served there also as logistics assistant.

Maj. Greg Schlub remained with Central Corps, as the G4 mentor.

The eastern and southern regions embrace the mountainous border zone where the Taliban, Afghanistan's despotic former rulers, still have influence. The southern region includes Kandahar, the center of the Taliban movement.

The Americans would have to train and mentor green Afghan *kandaks* — battalions — in the midst of an ongoing war. In their second night on station, the Gardez contingent became a quick reaction force and rescued Afghan soldiers under attack. Both groups came under rocket and mortar attacks during their stay and all personnel participated in combat missions with their Afghan Army counterparts. As the year progressed, an insurgency developed in the two regions, with military tactics, weapons, and ethnic backgrounds eerily similar to those found in Iraq.

Convoys became targets of remote-controlled improvised explosive devices and ambushes as warmer weather returned in the spring. Suicide bombings, almost unheard of in Afghanistan, grew more commonplace — one at a mosque in Kandahar killed 20 and injured twice that many. A mine planted just north of Gardez claimed the lives of four Indiana National Guard Soldiers in April.

Still — training had to go on, logistics had to be improved and the humanitarian needs of Afghan civilians had to be met. And the members of Coalition Task Force Phoenix had to do what it took to keep their own morale high.

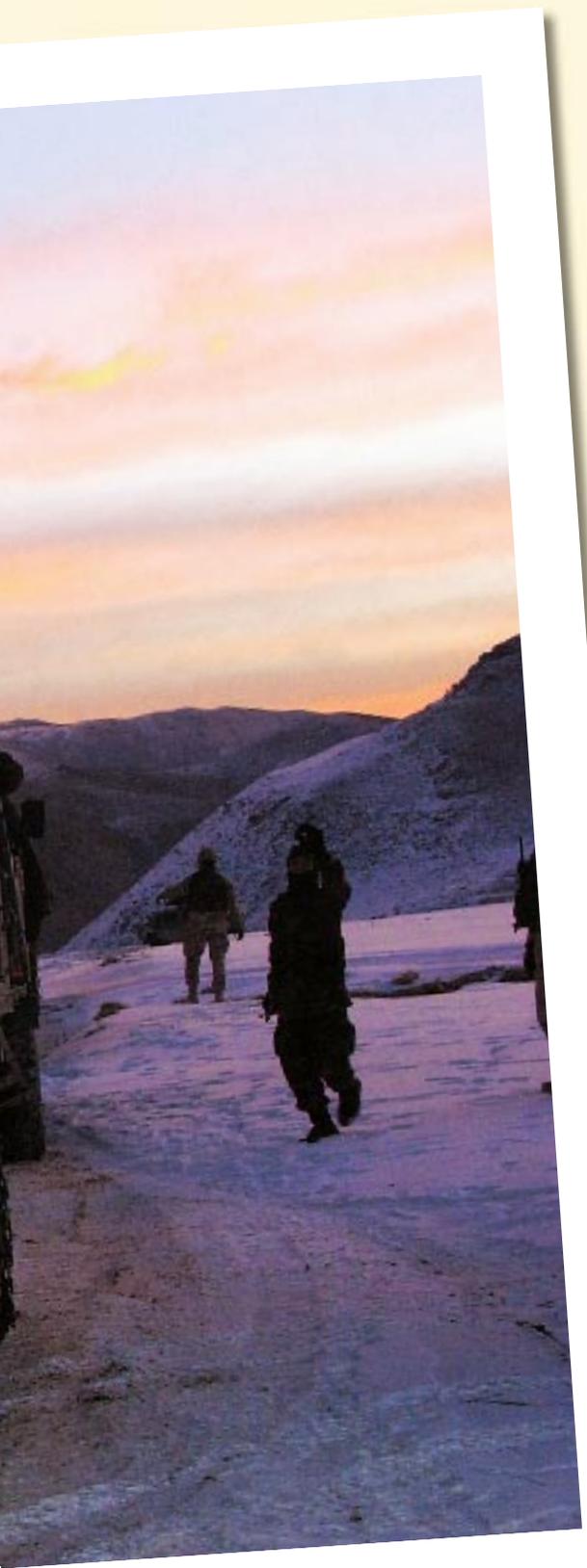
Near the end of their year-long stay, Gourlie posed a series of questions to himself and his fellow Wisconsin Guardsmen. The questions, and a few representative answers, are printed below.

Describe the impact of your group's efforts locally, regionally and nationally.

Nehls: Locally we have established a tremendous relationship with numerous villages and residents. Our shoe/school supply drive produced over 600 boxes from 300 individuals and organizations representing 16 states.

Regionally we have fostered a spirit of support of the Afghanistan National Army by local leaders. Through many tea sessions, civic projects, and military support to the people we have garnered a great deal of respect from the area populace.

Our greatest achievement felt nationally was our critical role in the presidential elections last October. Tasked with multiple military operations



Afghan soldiers rumble across a wintry landscape to their next mission.

The children of Afghanistan look toward the future with hope.



and security of a Regional Ballot Counting Center, we received a great deal of publicity. We also demonstrated our ANA proficiency thru numerous military ops yielding arrests, seizure of weapons, and public safety.

Gourlie: Bringing security and stability back into the Kandahar region, especially during the national elections, has to be the highlight of our involvement in the southern region.

Second was the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program that saw the standing down of 10,000 Afghan militiamen, who turned their equipment in to the Ministry of Defense.

Third, the opportunity to take part in humanitarian efforts that included clothing and school supply drives for a local Afghan community in addition to a community cleanup effort and school enhancements.

What individual accomplishment means the most to you, and why?

Roberts: Earning the respect of our Afghani counterparts. Despite the language barrier, our Afghani counterparts respect our experience and professionalism.

Vinje: I think the biggest accomplishment is training the Afghan drivers; they loved to learn and worked

hard to accomplish what they did! Working with the 38th Kandak log officer has been great. Literally we started from scratch and we have come a good distance, being able to see a difference in things is very satisfying.

Describe any humanitarian efforts your group was involved with:

Schlub: I was personally involved in efforts to establish a school in the provincial home of one of the leading officers in the G-4 section.... This school's construction will probably begin after I leave the country, but I was a contributing factor in its inception.

Van De Loop: Many, many shoe and school supply drops.

Roberts: Building wells, delivering shoes and school supplies to innumerable villages, building checkpoints.

What was your greatest disappointment and why?

Schlub: Some of the cultural norms regarding health and safety of personnel are pervasive and deeply held. Just recently there was an accident resulting in the deaths of two ANA captains. The "driver," ironically, was in the back seat of the vehicle — he was using his safety belt.

The two captains, riding in the front seat, were not wearing their safety belts. Both of the captains perished, while the "driver" walked away unharmed.

Gourlie: The tragic loss of life and limb which seems so prevalent in a third world country. It covers everything from accidents, disease, famine and weather to combat and landmines. Having dealt with many of our ANA combat casualties, seeing their young lives ended or tragically altered due to injury, is an indelible memory. It was the toughest thing personally for me to deal with while over here.

How did what you experience differ from what you expected?

Vinje: I didn't plan on having this much an impact on a group of people. You really feel like you are helping them build a part of their nation. When we go out and work with them training-wise, you are always being watched by many eyes; in some ways you feel like a rock star with them. That is something I never expected at this point.

What did you learn about yourself on this deployment that you didn't know before?

Roberts: That I can live a whole

season without watching a Packer game with a beer in my hand!

Govier: Anything beyond nine months away from family is too long.

Vinje: I learned that I could be a contributing member of a highly effective team in a world-wide fight against terrorism's influence. As a mentor to the ANA, I find that I am working toward world peace, albeit on a very local level.

Describe the best and the worst of working with a foreign culture while trying to establish an Army.

Van De Loop: The Afghan clock seems to tick much slower than ours! But they are very eager to learn and implement our ways.

Vinje: The best is the young soldiers that are willing and want to do good things. Many have tasted what it is like to be free, and really want to stay that way. The corruption in the government is bad, many of the older people know no other way and it can get disheartening.

What was your most memorable combat experience while in Afghanistan?

Van De Loop: Responding as part of a quick reaction force to frantic pleas for help from an ANA detachment that was under attack. Running across the desert in complete darkness at an unseen enemy with tracers flying all about was a gut checking experience.

[Col. Nehls refers to the same incident:]

Nehls: Second night down-range, 6 ANA commandos were under attack 3 kilometers from our compound.... As they screamed for help over the radio and we observed the tracer fire, I directed Lt. Col. Van de Loop and Sgt. Manning to accompany myself and the remaining commandos as a quick reaction force. We deployed in black-out driving with PVS-7 night-vision goggles, stopped short of the contact, ran the remaining one kilometer; the

ACM [anti-Coalition members = "bad guys"] was fought back to the mountains. We called for illumination rounds from the Provincial Reconstruction Team [friendly Afghan forces] mortars and their QRF as well. As we observed them coming to our aid, they were also ambushed in an area we had just traveled through.

The following night... we again were pelted with rockets. Van de Loop and Manning observed an ACM observation post crew fleeing the high ground, and I directed them to give chase. At the same time the PRT sent mortar rounds down-range, narrowly missing Van de Loop and Manning.

Three Army Commendation Medals with "V" devices were awarded for valor during this time period.

Gourlie: Coming under a mortar attack while stopping for fuel on a cross-country convoy and then averting an apparent secondary ambush by discovering their location first. To fire after we had discovered their position would have been suicide.

What will you miss the most when you leave?

Roberts: The outstanding shower and latrine facilities!

Vinje: The other soldiers that will be left here, I will leave a piece of me with them because they will be headed down range with a new *kandak*, and of course the members of the *kandak* that I have worked with. They will be heading in a nasty part of the country and it will be hard to let go of them like that.

Gourlie: Our interpreters — I've learned more about their culture through them and have established a friendship that will be difficult to leave behind.

Schlub: I will miss the feeling of accomplishment of high-order goals in the realm of world peace. When I return to my civilian position, I will not be able to say that I contribute, directly, to the reduction of terrorist activities in the world arena. This is what I will look back on, in my advanced years, as the thing that I miss most about my one-year tour of duty in Afghanistan. ■



The new Afghan National Army — a strong mix of confidence, resolution and uncertainty.

The Stars and



A Noteworthy Contribution

By Larry Sommers
At Ease Staff

Silence is golden, they say.

Tell it to the 132nd Army Band.

The band's accomplished musicians have a knack for inserting appropriate music where sound works better than silence.

Since September 11, 2001, the band has performed 109 times in support of troops. The majority of these occasions are send-offs and welcome-homes for mobilized troops, according to Sgt. Chris Hudson, the

band's readiness NCO.

At the start of Operation Desert Storm in 1990, Wisconsin Guard leaders resolved that no Wisconsin Guard member or unit would return from war without a strong show of support. And that would include music — even if circumstances dictated a small brass ensemble, rather than the full band.

Throughout the Gulf War of 1990-1991, that pledge was kept. Soldiers and Airmen departed and returned to Wisconsin with band music playing. Since the nation returned to a war footing after the September 11 attacks,

the 132nd Army Band has kept the tradition alive, never missing a chance to honor mobilized troops.

The band also supports troops by playing for military graduations, changes of command, and occasional large events such as this past Memorial Day's state headquarters ceremony honoring Spc. Michelle Witmer and other Wisconsinites recently killed in action.

When the band plays for mobilizations or other troop-related events, "I know how important it is not only to this unit but to the United States

government," said Staff Sgt. Jim Skelton, a clarinetist with 25 years in the band. Skelton remembers the band's playing for "Wisconsin's Salute to America's Spirit," a patriotic event held at the State Capitol just days after September 11: "It brought tears to my eyes. I was so proud of what we were doing, so proud of the country, that we were coming together."

When not fully engaged in troop support activities, the band also performs in Wisconsin communities to make friends for the Guard, drum up patriotic spirit, and inspire possible future

recruits.

But amidst the band's many upbeat missions, there is one that is always solemn: The rendering of taps at veterans' funerals. With millions of World War II veterans reaching their final years, the 132nd Army band has performed at almost 900 funerals since September 11. One bugler is usually assigned, and one or two other band members are often included in the detail to help fold the Stars and Stripes for presentation to the dead veteran's survivors.

"It's *always* an honor for me to be asked to perform taps live," said Sgt. 1st Class John Meyers, who in 22 years with the band has rendered musical honors at hundreds of funerals. "I figure this is the least I can do for what that veteran did, serving his country."

The band was organized shortly after World War II, by combining the 32nd Division's several regimental bands into one divisional band. In 1967 the band was relieved from its divisional assignment and reassigned as a headquarters and public affairs asset of the whole

Wisconsin National Guard. Its instrumental combinations include a full concert band, two jazz bands, a Dixieland group, two brass quintets, a saxophone ensemble, an easy listening combo and a new woodwind quintet.

"As our mission states, we improve morale, assist recruiting efforts, support civil affairs and community relations through the use of music," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brad Anderson, the band's commander.

"But that hardly expresses the impact we have on the Guard or the communities we visit. We bridge the gap between the National Guard and civilians who have little or no knowledge of the Guard. We also support our troops and their families as they deploy or redeploy. The music we provide is intended to help make the sad moments a little more comfortable and the festive moments a little more memorable.

"I couldn't tell you why music has such an effect on people, but having heard the silence in comparison, I can assure you it really makes a difference." ■

And on that note:

58

132nd Army Band members

109

performances in support of troops since September 11

900

funeral performances since September 11



Lt. Col. Tim Donovan

OPPOSITE PAGE: The 132nd Army Band plays during the send-off ceremony at Volk Field for the 32nd Infantry Brigade Headquarters last summer.

LEFT: The 132nd Army Band heads back to the hangar at Volk Field after playing for a unit at a plane-side welcome home ceremony.



ON

Target

VOLK FIELD SYSTEM AIR



Like moths to a flame they come — F-16s, F-15s, F-18s, B-52s, B-1s, AWACS — winging in from Wisconsin, the greater Midwest and beyond, attracted to Volk Field's training airspaces.

The prime attractant is Volk's Air Combat Training System, a computerized radio-telemetry grid extending over 7,000 square miles of west-central Wisconsin. It's one of only four such systems in the Air National Guard that allow aircrews to hone their combat flying skills through instant playback.

Each aircraft scheduled to use the Volk ACTS is fitted with a wing-tip ACMI (Air Combat Maneuvering Instrumentation) pod. During the exercise, the ACMI pod feeds signals through a network of 18 antenna towers and three microwave data-links to a central computer on the ground at Volk Field. Exercise controllers at Volk can watch aircraft altitudes, speeds, headings, bank angles, etc., in real time. All data is recorded and can be played

back later for the benefit of aircrews either in the Volk ACTS control center or at their home stations.

"It's an excellent debrief tool for the flyers to pick out lessons learned," said Maj. Dave Tessmer, officer in charge of the system.

The system became a teenager this year, having gone operational in 1992 as a training aid primarily for air-to-air encounters between fighters. In the years since, enhancements have been added that make it a more versatile training tool.

The system can track up to 36 aircraft at a time, making it ideal for running multi-aircraft exercises such as Volk's annual Northern Lightning and National Guard Bureau's Patriot exercise, held in June and July, respectively. Even large aircraft such as B-52 bombers get valuable training, because ACTS is linked with a separate system that realistically simulates a surface-to-air threat, prompting the bomber crew to respond with



DS PILOTS IN TRAINING

By Larry Sommers, *At Ease Staff*

electronic countermeasures and evasive maneuvers.

Aircrews visiting Volk for pilot training can land and view the tapes of their exercises immediately. But many units that use the system frequently, such as Madison's 115th Fighter Wing and Air Guard units from nearby states, return to their home fields without ever landing at Volk. They have facilities at home station for reviewing their flying exercises, and they keep ACMI pods handy to rig their planes with before making the flight to Volk-controlled airspace.

The Volk system has 101 ACMI pods, most of them on loan to the flying units that use them. The pods and the rest of the system are kept in good working order by full-time employees of a civilian contractor, Ahntech.

"ACTS is used for every type of mission that we fly," wrote Maj. Bryan Cook, weapons and tactics officer, in an e-mail to *At Ease*. "We use it for Air to Air training for basic missions like Basic Fighter Maneuvers up to

multiple air to air defense roles such as Defensive Counter Air and Offensive Counter Air. We also use ACTS for air to surface missions such as Surface Attack Tactics as well as our Large Force Employment exercise using multiple airframes from all over the US." ■

ABOVE: Maj. Dave Tessmer, seated, and Master Sgt. Troy Jahn scrutinize telemetry data from a Volk Field training mission while civilian contractor Robert Van Treese, foreground, monitors the equipment.
Larry Sommers

ABOVE LEFT: 115th Fighter Wing ground crewmen, from left, Tech. Sgts. Kevin Bluske and Mike Owen and Senior Airman Nick Stehling install an ACMI pod on the wing of an F-16 fighter at Truax Field, Madison. *Tech. Sgt. Paul Gorman*



COMBAT

By Sgt. Jim Wagner and Spc. Mary Flynn
At Ease Staff

The uniform is a Soldier's resume. If you know how to read it, you can tell at a glance the Soldier's qualifications, achievements, and experience.

Since September 11, 2001, some 4,000 Wisconsin Army National Guard members have added an entry under "experience" — the "Shoulder Sleeve Insignia—Former Wartime Service," commonly known as the combat patch.

It's worn on the right sleeve above the U.S. flag, by active-duty Soldiers who perform duties within a theater or area of operations designated a hostile environment. Soldiers must have remained in the area, exposed to the threat of enemy action or fire, for 30 days or longer.

Since operations began in Afghanistan and Iraq, Wisconsin Army Guard Soldiers have been on active duty in the combat zones, patrolling the streets of Baghdad and delivering donated clothes to children in remote villages like Orgun-E, Afghanistan. When Soldiers return to the U.S. and resume reserve status, they're authorized to continue wearing the unit patch of the outfit they served with overseas.

Soldiers assigned to more than one major command in the hostile-fire area can choose

PA A C H E S





4



12



13



14



15



16



17

which unit's insignia to wear as a combat patch. Thus, two Soldiers from the same Wisconsin Guard unit, who deployed and redeployed at the same time, may wear different combat patches. Guard units that sent small groups of Soldiers on detached duty to different commands within the combat zone may have Soldiers sporting several different combat patches. (See the text box below for an admittedly incomplete list of deployed Wisconsin Guard units and the combat patches their members may be authorized to wear.)

Regardless which unit's patch a member is authorized and elects to wear, the very presence of a combat patch tells of experience gained the hard way. As the Guard continues to play an essential role in global military operations, it's likely more Wisconsin troops will add this entry to their resume — one they cannot get from even the most advanced training, but only by going to war. ■

1. 1st Cavalry Division
2. 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment
3. 3rd U.S. Army
4. 3rd Infantry Division
5. 1st Armored Division
6. 4th Infantry Division
7. 32nd Infantry Brigade
8. 82nd Airborne Division
9. 2nd Infantry Division

10. 42nd Infantry Division
11. 18th Military Police Brigade
12. I Corps
13. 1st Infantry Division
14. XVIII Airborne Corps
15. 75th Field Artillery Brigade
16. 25th Infantry Division
17. 101st Airborne Division

WISCONSIN UNITS - AUTHORIZED PATCHES

829th Engineer Company

101st Airborne Division or 3rd Army

332nd Rear Area Operations Center

82nd Airborne Division or XVIII Airborne Corps

1st Battalion, 147th Aviation

75th Field Artillery Brigade, 244th Aviation Brigade or 3rd Army

229th Engineer Company

4th Infantry Division

724th Engineer Battalion

130th Engineer Brigade or 420th Engineer Brigade

32nd Military Police Company

2nd Cavalry Regiment, 18th Military Police Brigade, 89th Military Police Brigade or 1st Armored Division

Det. 1, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

2nd Infantry Division, 25th Infantry Division or I Corps

232nd Personnel Support Center

377th Theater Support Group or 3rd Army

Company B, 118th Medical Battalion

2nd Medical Brigade or 44th Medical Command

264th Engineer Group

1st Infantry Division

1st Battalion, 128th Infantry

278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, or 42nd Division

Joint Task Force Phoenix

76th Infantry Brigade or 25th Infantry Division

Battery B, 1st Battalion, 126th Field Artillery

103rd Field Artillery Brigade, 256th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, 3rd Infantry Division, or XVIII Airborne Corps

1158th Transportation Company

7th Transportation Group

32nd Infantry Brigade

32nd Infantry Brigade

WISCONSIN GUARD LEARNS FROM THE PROS



A Nicaraguan Air Force MI-17 helicopter and crew respond to a simulated injury during mine clearing operations. A Nicaraguan Air Force soldier is hoisted down to the accident site to hook up the casualty evacuation basket.

By Maj. George Mason
*State Partnership
Program Coordinator*
Photos by Capt. Eric Leckel

In countries formerly torn by war, land mines are a hazard to people and livestock. Nicaragua is no exception, but its government and army have been working for fifteen years to clean up the minefields laid down during the nation's civil war of the 1980s.

Eleven Wisconsin National Guard members traveled to Nicaragua July 24-30 to see how skilled Nicaraguan military engineers are de-mining their countryside. In an exchange coordinated through the State Partnership Program, nine combat engineers of the 724th Engineer Battalion, one Spanish language interpreter from the 115th Fighter Wing, and the program's coordinator, Maj. George Mason, visited the Nicaraguan Humanitarian De-mining School in Los Brasiles, northwest of Managua; a de-mining camp near San Fernando village on the Nicaragua-Honduras border; and the minesweeping detachment near Jinotega where the de-mining equipment is stored when not in use.

The engineers of the 724th are skilled at breaching minefields and destroying improvised explosive devices — combat tasks requiring speed, high-tech equipment, and a fine balance of risk versus elapsed time. But removing mines from the land in peacetime, after a conflict has

Nicaragua



ABOVE: Sgt. Segundo Garcia of the Nicaraguan Corps of Engineers demonstrates the removal of soil near an antipersonnel mine.

BELOW: A Nicaraguan soldier stands next to rubber waterproof caps from Soviet PMN-2 antipersonnel mines. These caps are discarded along the edges of a cleared row as they are found. They are not hazardous.

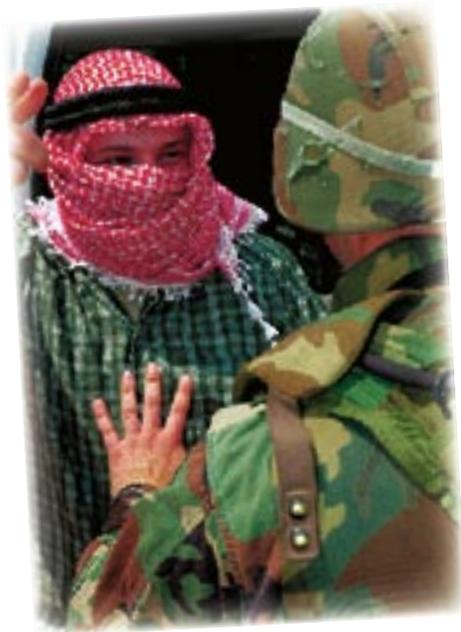
concluded, is a different mission. The physical environment of Nicaragua has fostered erosion, vegetation growth, and the movement of mines and deposition of materials on top of them over the 20 years since they were placed. Wisconsin troops observed the slow and painstaking efforts by Nicaraguan experts to locate, survey, and clear the minefields with minimal risk to troops and civilians.

“It is hard to appreciate the massive effort required to de-mine this border until you see how rugged this terrain is,” Mason said. “The Nicaraguans have removed 350,000 mines from their country with minimal accidents, truly an amazing record.”

The Nicaraguans plan to send a team to Wisconsin in June 2006 to learn about U.S. military and civilian methods for IED and bomb location, removal and destruction. ■



[AT 2005]



By Larry Sommers
At Ease Staff

Now it's for real. Annual Training for hundreds of Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers is no longer a theoretical exercise.

Members of 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery, and Headquarters Company, 32nd Infantry Brigade, already had mobilization orders in hand when they arrived at Fort McCoy June 3. Instead of looking for a two-week break "playing Soldier" in the woods, they were keenly interested in anything that might improve their chances in the Middle Eastern sands.

The Army was determined to oblige, providing the most realistic war training in anyone's memory. Gone were the loose woodland tent formations of yesteryear as soldiers learned to live in "forward operating bases" like the FOBs they would occupy in Iraq.

Vital to this training is the operation of entry control points — traffic choke points on the way into an FOB, needed for force protection but subject to risky and unpredictable action on the part of local residents.

Fort McCoy's 1/338th Training Support Battalion, an Army Reserve unit under 2nd Brigade, 85th Division, set up a sample entry control point at FOB Zulu, a practice lane just north of the fort's cantonment area, previously used as a practice enemy prisoner-of-war camp.

First, the Soldiers received classroom

Preparing for combat



Soldiers of the 32nd Infantry Brigade carefully check individuals and vehicles in Entry Control Point training at Fort McCoy. *Photos by Maj. Scott Carey*

training on ECP operations, according to Maj. Scott Carey, officer-in-charge of the training. Then they were given a sand table orientation to the entry control point.

"This training also included cultural awareness training, vehicle search training, and personnel search using actual Iraqi citizens," Carey said. The units "slept in tents, operated the ECPs, trained in the FOB how they would if deployed to Iraq."

Besides the artillery and headquarters troops, the 32nd Military Intelligence Company also took the training. All three units belong to Wisconsin's famous 232nd "Red Arrow" Infantry Brigade.

In line with the "theatre immersion" training concept, the units organized into teams that took turns operating the ECP. With Iraqi citizens and others playing the role of civilians on the battlefield, Soldiers had to distinguish between people with and without legitimate ID cards and to separate civilians seeking food, water, or jobs from "insurgents trying to fake their way into the FOB."



When the Red Arrow units left Fort McCoy June 17 en route to deployment, they were as well prepared as Stateside training could make them. ■

Based on information provided by Maj. Scott R. Carey, 1/338th Training Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 85th Division; and Maj. Robert Giblin.

Checklist important for retirees, families

A survivor's checklist can help retirees and their families avoid unwelcome surprises, according to U.S. Navy Capt. Karl Bernhardt, director of retired and annuitant pay for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

Surviving spouses or family members must notify DFAS promptly when a military retiree dies.

"Unfortunately, many have no idea that action is required to notify DFAS of the death in order to avoid overpayments of retired pay," Bernhardt stated in a recent news

release. DFAS is required to recover all overpayments.

"In many cases, the survivors don't know the requirements or procedures," Bernhardt said. "Months later, they are burdened with collection efforts."

Checklists are available from service and veteran organization Web sites to help surviving spouses and families navigate the transition when a military retiree dies.

DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay Services maintains a customer contact center (800-321-1080) staffed with experts in all aspects of retired pay. More information can be obtained

from:

- Military Officers Association of America www.moaa.org/Publications/SurvivorChecklist.asp
- Air Force Retiree Services Branch www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afretire/
- Army Retiree Services Office www.armyg1.army.mil/rso/mission.asp
- Defense Finance and Accounting Service www.dod.mil/dfas/money/retired/

DoD increases SGLI coverage to \$400,000

The Department of Defense increased the maximum coverage under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance to \$400,000 and automatically insured all eligible members for that amount on Sept. 1. The monthly premium, continuing at the rate of \$3.25 per \$50,000 of coverage, jumps to \$26.00 for full coverage at the \$400,000 level.

These changes do not affect coverage under Family SGLI, which will continue under previously existing elections.

Soldiers or Airmen who wish to decline or reduce the coverage must complete a new SGLV 8286 form (September 2005 version) and must do so by Sept. 30 to avoid the September premium. Units have been asked to process elections as expeditiously as possible to avoid the necessity for corrections in financial transactions.

The new SGLV 8286 form is available on the Department of Veterans Affairs Web site at www.insurance.va.gov.

Events

New round of marriage enrichment workshops

The Wisconsin National Guard Family Program and chaplains have teamed up to offer couples a Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program at locations statewide.

PREP is an educational and practical application opportunity to learn what works in marriage. PREP is not group therapy and does not include denomination-specific teachings.

The PREP workshop is free. Spouses of military members need to be put on invitational travel orders so they can be reimbursed by the government for travel to and from the event. The hotel expense and meals will be provided at no cost. Also, the Wisconsin National Guard is allowing service members to attend in a paid status.

Room reservations will be completed by the Family Program Office. To register, call Caroline Morgan at **1-800-292-9464**.

Workshop dates and locations:

Dec. 9-10, 2005	The Waters - Minoqua
Jan. 20-21, 2006	Best Western Trail Lodge - Eau Claire
Feb. 17-18, 2006	Elizabeth Inn - Plover
Mar. 17-18, 2006	Country Inn - Waukesha
Apr. 21-22, 2006	The Land Mark - Egg Harbor
May 19-20, 2006	Radisson Inn - Madison
Jul. 14-15, 2006	Marvin M. Schwan Retreat - Trego
Aug. 18-19, 2006	Paper Valley - Appleton



Sgt. Zach Zuelsdorf, a Soldier with 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, engages his enemy at the Live Fire Shoot House, while training at Camp Shelby, Miss. Read about this battalion and other mobilized Wisconsin National Guard units starting on page 6. *Sgt. Joe Streeter*

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