



@ease Express

July-August 2010





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2009 Keith L. Ware Award winner
2009 Thomas Jefferson Award winner

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Even in the midst of two wars, the National Guard continues to transform and evolve to meet the challenges our nation faces. Recently, the Wisconsin National Guard was selected for two highly significant joint missions.

The first is a key component of the homeland defense mission. The Wisconsin National Guard was chosen to field a CERFP, or Chemical-Biological-Radiological-Nuclear-Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package. The purpose of this team is to respond to weapons of mass destruction incidents within the United States, should such a nightmare scenario ever unfold. Our nation is developing this capability and distributing within the ten FEMA Regions (Wisconsin is within FEMA region 5, an area that includes Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio). Traditional Guard Soldiers in medical, chemical and engineer units will be tasked to extract, decontaminate and treat victims of a WMD attack on U.S. soil, much in the same way the rapid reaction force is an additional homeland defense tasking for Guard units. This is a critically important and no-fail mission, and being selected as one of eight organizations to field a CERFP by 2012 speaks

From the TAG



Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar
The Adjutant General

volumes about our National Guard Soldiers and Airmen.

The second mission is an Agribusiness Development Team. This is a wholly National Guard initiative that leverages the agricultural skills many of our Guard members have, with the intent of helping Afghan farmers improve their methods and harvests. It is believed that Afghan farmers who can make a living and a profit from legitimate crops will be less influenced by insurgents there. Our Guard members will bring a rich agricultural heritage to the table, along with academic expertise

from land-grant universities in the state. Presently this team is being assembled and is expected to deploy in early 2012.

These new missions will continue to add value to our nation and is appropriate for us to continue looking for new opportunities to serve.

However, we are still heavily involved in the current conflicts. Our 724th combat engineer battalion is currently deployed and our 147th aviation battalion will join them in theater shortly — both serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom, which will conclude on Aug. 31, 2010 when these units will continue to serve in Operation New Dawn.

None of these tasks could be accomplished without you, the men and women of the Wisconsin National Guard. It is your reliability and your accomplishments and your work ethic that make the Wisconsin National Guard succeed. It is your talent and skill that makes our national leaders confident that the Wisconsin National Guard can do whatever job it is assigned, and do it well. It is my honor and privilege to serve as your commander as we move forward.

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Community bids farewell to Wisconsin Guard aviators



Soldiers of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment listen to the invocation during a sendoff ceremony June 18 at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison. The 147th will head to Fort Hood for several weeks of mobilization training before deploying to Iraq.
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
photo by Spc. Eric Liesse



A full house of family, friends and loved ones packed the Alliant Energy Center in Madison for a sendoff ceremony June 18 in honor of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, which reported for active duty June 17 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

This is the third deployment to the Middle East for the 147th in the past 10 years, and second since 2003. Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, told the nearly 300 deploying Soldiers and their families he knew why.

"It's no mistake that the Army reaches out to the Army National Guard, and the Wisconsin Army National Guard, and the 147th," he explained. "They know how good you are."

Dunbar recalled concerns, made in the early days of the global war on terror, about overtaxing the National Guard.

"Well, they didn't know the men and women of the Wisconsin Army National

Guard, did they?" he said.

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, agreed.

"The tremendous professionalism found in the Soldiers we have in the Wisconsin Army National Guard is second to none," he said.

Lt. Col. Martin Pond, commander of the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, charged his Soldiers to live up to the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage.

"Always do the right thing," Pond urged. "Make every decision as if your parents and family are with you. Bring your American values with you."

State Command Sgt. Major George Stopper asked Soldiers who had never deployed to draw on the experience of their fellow Soldiers who are already veterans. He also addressed the battalion's officers, non-commissioned officers and

Lt. Col. Martin Pond, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, and Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton display a Wisconsin state flag, a traditional gift to the commander of deploying Wisconsin National Guard units, during a sendoff ceremony June 18 at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

lower enlisted.

"Soldiers, you have the hardest job of all — you have to soldier," he said, referring to the requirement to rise to the occasion in difficult situations. "That's all we can ask of you."

Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz noted that this was not the first military sendoff ceremony he had attended.

"But this is the first time I've had a family member involved in the sendoff," he said, identifying the Soldier and drawing an appreciative response from the audience. "You will be in our prayers."

Leo Endres, Wisconsin district commander for the American Legion, presented two satellite phones with 6,000 minutes to Pond, and urged Soldiers to make use of their Family Readiness Groups.

National Guard leadership praised and thanked the families in attendance.

"As commander of these Soldiers, I can't thank you enough for everything you do to allow them to do what they do as Soldiers," Anderson said. "Families, ladies, you will receive 100 percent support from the Wisconsin Army National Guard — I guarantee that."

Stopper agreed.

"Families, thank you for entrusting us with your Soldiers," he said. "We will take care of them." 📷

Read the entire story at: <http://dma.wi.gov/dma/news/2010news/10112.asp>

128th Air Refueling Wing supports presidential visit

Staff Sgt. Nathan T. Wallin
128th Air Refueling Wing
Public Affairs

The Milwaukee-based 128th Air Refueling Wing played a supporting role in President Barack Obama's June 30 visit to the dairy state.

Air Force One touched down at General Mitchell International Airport around noon, where the 128th's security force, in coordination with the Secret Service and other government officials, had been preparing the base for his arrival.

This is the first time the 128th has supported a presidential visit, a Mitchell Field responsibility previously handled by the Air Force Reserve's 440th Airlift Wing.

After briskly departing the aircraft, the president greeted Gov. Jim Doyle, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and 128th Air Refueling Wing Commander, Col. Ted Metzgar.

Also standing ready to welcome and greet the president were more than 100 Airmen, including Senior Airman Justin Gruber, a crew chief in the 128th's Maintenance Squadron.

"It was pretty cool," Gruber said. "He came over to us really quick and I froze for a second."

"He looked at me, and I said 'Welcome, Mr. President,' and he replied, 'Thank you for your service,'" Gruber added.

Tech. Sgt. Kristen Henrichs, a military pay technician in the 128th's Finance Office, also met the president.

"He's very personable and friendly — he looked me right in the eye and said, 'It's nice to



President Barack Obama greets Airmen at the Milwaukee-based 128th Air Refueling Wing, Wisconsin Air National Guard, June 30. The president landed at the 128th en route to a town hall meeting in Racine. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Staff Sgt. Nathan T. Wallin

meet you,'" Henrichs said following the visit. "It was an awesome day — it's not every day you get to meet the president."

Soon after he greeted the assembled Airmen, the president was gone, his motorcade on its way to the town hall meeting at Racine's Memorial Hall, where he had the opportunity to meet another Wisconsin National Guard member. Army Staff Sgt. Emily Russell sang the National Anthem to begin the town hall meeting.

The president's appearance at the 128th Air Refueling Wing, though brief, was the second supported by the Wisconsin Air National Guard in the past eight months. The first occurred last November at Madison's 115th Fighter Wing. 🇺🇸



Col. Ted Metzgar, commander of the 128th Air Refueling Wing, Wisconsin Air National Guard, and Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett greet President Barack Obama upon his arrival in Milwaukee June 30. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Senior Master Sgt. Jeff Rohloff

Rocketing into the 21st century



A High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Battery C, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, launches a training round downrange at Fort McCoy June 26. The 121st is one of just a handful of

Army National Guard units to field and fire the HIMARS and completed its training and certification with a battalion live fire during annual training this year. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Jopek [Click here to see video](#)

Staff Sgt. Brian Jopek

112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

With the last rocket's glare, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery gave proof of their Soldiers' unflagging determination to certify on the military's most advanced field artillery weapon system.

The 121st Field Artillery — with batteries in Milwaukee, Racine, Plymouth and Sussex — took full advantage of a window of opportunity to train on and fire the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS. Members of Battery A, who deployed to Iraq with the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team in 2009, were not required to take part in this year's annual training but volunteered to do so for the opportunity to certify on the HIMARS.

"They wanted to be in on the tip of the spear or the tip of training and do a live fire mission with the HIMARS at Fort McCoy," said Battery A Commander Capt. Harvey Hubbard.

According to Lt. Col. Steve Sherrod, 121st Field Artillery commander, the battalion was not scheduled to field the HIMARS for a couple of years.

"Because of deployments and active duty rotations, we were asked to move forward and take an active duty slot

for fielding the system this summer," he explained. "As a lifelong artillery man, to get this new, latest cutting edge equipment is very exciting for the Soldiers and for me."

From the side, the HIMARS looks like it could be your average, everyday military issue from the Light Medium Tactical Vehicle (LMTV) family of trucks that has become prevalent in the U.S. military in recent years. However, the HIMARS replaces the tracked M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System, the battalion's primary weapons system since 2003.

Staff Sgt. Kelly Shurilla of Milwaukee is a section chief on one of Battery A's HIMARS. Shurilla was in the active army for three years and has served eight years with the National Guard — all with the MLRS, with the exception of 2006, when the 121st deployed to Kuwait to perform convoy escort duties throughout Iraq.

"They made it more efficient, easier to understand and fail-safe," said Shurilla, who has taken part in at least a hundred MLRS fire missions during his career. "Everything's quicker, from the computer software to the hydraulics working the launcher itself."

While the HIMARS has half the firepower of the MLRS, its lighter payload and wheeled chassis provide key advantages over its predecessor in speed and transportability by air in an aircraft such as the Air Force's C-130 Hercules, which is designed to operate

on short grassy runways if necessary. The Hercules can land in remote areas bigger planes can't and unload a HIMARS, which then has the capability to roll into firing position in a matter of seconds.

"I really don't see any disadvantages to the HIMARS," Shurilla said.

"HIMARS brings the 121st into the 21st century," Hubbard said. "A lot of active duty units are dying to get this system."

The 121st Field Artillery's HIMARS crews are now fully trained and certified on the system following completion of the battalion's annual training, which included a two-day live fire by all three firing batteries.

Hubbard said that as Battery A personnel prepared for their deployment with the 32nd Brigade, they did not know the 121st would be getting the HIMARS. This year's fielding and live fire certification, along with a planned annual training at Camp Guernsey, Wyo., next year to train with the 115th Fires Brigade, means a lot for the Soldiers who did not have artillery missions on their latest deployment, he said. 

Read the entire story at: <http://dma.wi.gov/dma/news/2010news/10121.asp>

Additional photos at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/wiguardpics/sets/72157624325155602/>

Wisconsin Guard's homeland defense role to expand

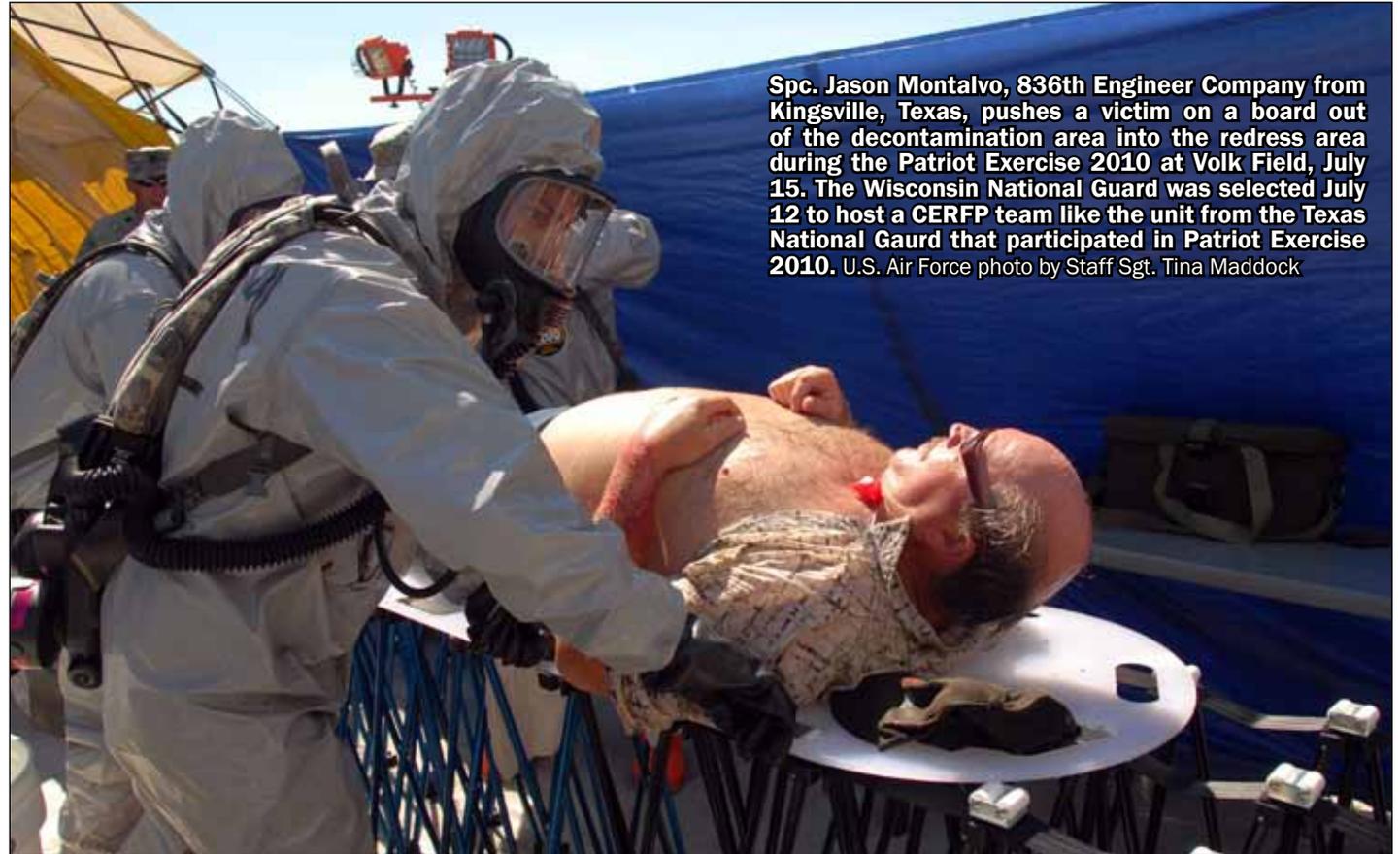
The Wisconsin National Guard was selected July 12 to be one of eight states to field new teams of up to 170 Soldiers and Airmen capable of rescuing, decontaminating and evacuating victims of a weapons of mass destruction attack on American soil.

The team is known as a CERFP, a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package. Under the 2010 reorganization of the Department of Defense's domestic CBRNE consequence management enterprise, initiated during the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, the National Guard is to provide 10 homeland response forces — one for each FEMA district — as well as 17 total CERFP teams.

"The Wisconsin National Guard is honored to have a CERFP mission," said Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin. "Our staff worked hard and developed a sound proposal, and I know the men and women in the Wisconsin National Guard will quickly develop and validate this capability."

Wisconsin's CERFP team, expected to be up and running by 2012, will operate in FEMA Region 5, which also includes Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Indiana and Ohio. Illinois and Minnesota were already designated to host CERFP teams; Indiana and Wisconsin were among the eight states chosen July 12 to field CERFP teams. The Ohio National Guard was one of eight organizations originally tasked with providing a CERFP team to now field the larger homeland response force.

"We will be looking to these experienced units to help with this mission as we bring more capacity into the system," said Gen. Craig R. McKinley, National Guard Bureau chief. "This will bring an equilibrium of population, geography and threat to balance any



Spc. Jason Montalvo, 836th Engineer Company from Kingsville, Texas, pushes a victim on a board out of the decontamination area into the redress area during the Patriot Exercise 2010 at Volk Field, July 15. The Wisconsin National Guard was selected July 12 to host a CERFP team like the unit from the Texas National Guard that participated in Patriot Exercise 2010. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Tina Maddock

response needed in this no-fail mission."

The Madison-based 54th CST — one of 57 full-time National Guard civil support teams mandated by Congress and designed for emergencies or terror attacks involving weapons of mass destruction, natural disasters or toxic industrial chemical accidents — remains part of the new CBRNE consequence management enterprise. The scope of the CST is different from the CERFP in that it assists civilian first responders by identifying and assessing chemical,

biological and radiological agents. The CST is not equipped to conduct mass decontamination operations. The CERFP is designed for situations too large for a CST to handle alone.

Ten new full-time members will oversee the daily operations of Wisconsin's CERFP, but like most Guard capabilities, traditional Guard Soldiers and Airmen make up the bulk of the unit's staff. The CERFP will include medical personnel, engineers for search and extraction, chemical unit personnel

for decontamination, and a command and control section. The mission calls for a CERFP to respond to an incident site within 6 to 12 hours, usually by road. The headquarters for the Wisconsin CERFP has not been determined.

Besides Wisconsin and Indiana, other National Guard organizations assigned CERFP missions include Alabama, Puerto Rico, Louisiana, Kentucky, Nevada, Oregon, Maine, West Virginia, Colorado, Illinois, Florida, Hawaii, Virginia, Minnesota and Nebraska. 

Wisconsin National Guard tasked with mentoring Afghan farmers

The Wisconsin National Guard is building an agribusiness development team to help farmers in Afghanistan improve their techniques and reap greater profits from legitimate crops — and hopes to enlist the aid of agricultural academics in Wisconsin to develop an Afghan-specific agriculture training program for this mission.

The National Guard has used the agribusiness development team concept successfully in Central America for the past two decades, drawing on the rich farming experience of many Guard members. The Guard brought the concept to Afghanistan in 2007. The initiative capitalizes on the skills of its Citizen Soldiers, employing them in a way that will allow a developing democracy a safer and more productive way of feeding its people. The concept also stays true to the image of the Concord Minuteman, with one hand on a musket and the other on a plow.

The teams consist of approximately 60 Soldiers and Airmen, some of whom will perform a security mission to allow the team to operate without relying on assistance from other military units in the area. The agricultural experts will focus on animal husbandry, water and soil conservation, horticulture, irrigation, storage, and distribution and agribusiness education. The team will also assess local farming practices and environments to determine the best strategies to assist Afghan farmers.

Col. Darrel Feucht, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 64th Troop Command, will lead up the team, which is expected to deploy to Afghanistan within the next 18 to 30 months. Wisconsin Guard members with farming backgrounds have already been identified, and he will begin selecting volunteers to build his team.

In addition, Feucht plans to use the time before the deployment to establish



Members of the Task Force Warrior agribusiness development team, Nebraska National Guard, work alongside Afghan farmers who went to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, June 24, 2009, to learn how to assemble grain bins. A Nebraska group shipped the bins to Afghanistan, which are designed to store seed and harvested grain. The Wisconsin National Guard is beginning to assemble an agribusiness development team that will deploy to Afghanistan in early 2012. U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Lory Stevens

a working partnership with universities, professional farming organizations, perhaps even the Future Farmers of America — what the military refers to as “reach-back” resources — in order to tap into that academic expertise as needed.

“I think it’s a wonderful opportunity for the state, being one of the top agriculture states in the country,” said Feucht, who earned an agricultural sciences degree in 1985. “It’s something the people of Wisconsin can understand and appreciate — I think they will embrace this.”

Gov. Jim Doyle agreed.

“Wisconsin is perfectly positioned, with our rich farming history, to provide the expertise and practical know-how

to the farmers in Afghanistan that will help them succeed and make their nation prosperous and secure,” Doyle said. “I know that our Wisconsin National Guard members and our academic agricultural experts can make a real difference.”

More than 80 percent of Afghans work in agriculture, which accounts for about 45 percent of Afghanistan’s gross domestic product. However, since 1978 wars have cost the nation 40 percent of its irrigated farmland as well as a generation of farmers. Farming techniques are primitive by American standards, and the lack of refrigeration or pesticides limits the size and storage of harvests. To help counter this, other agricultural

development teams have worked to include farming classes in Afghanistan schools.

Gen. Craig R. McKinley, National Guard Bureau chief, said agribusiness development teams are playing a significant, nonkinetic, soft-power role in Afghanistan. These teams that draw on the civilian-acquired skills of National Guard members to help Afghan farmers improve agricultural practices came out of an initiative from Missouri and now involve multiple states.

“What [started] out to be an experiment now has turned into 12 teams,” McKinley said. “The land grant universities from all over the Midwest are now eager to put these ... teams out into the remote areas of Afghanistan to help ... Just something as small as trellising a crop, getting it up off the ground, has produced crop loads in excess of anything they’ve ever seen before.”

By helping transform farming into a successful livelihood in Afghanistan, military leaders hope that insurgent groups such as the Taliban will have less success recruiting new members. Improving the success of food crops may also diminish the appeal of growing opium.

Agribusiness development teams are one part of a broad agriculture strategy being implemented by the U.S. and Afghanistan governments as well as non-governmental organizations. The initiative will unite military, civilian and academia to bring the best farming and agricultural practices to a region of Afghanistan that could one day be considered the bread basket of that corner of the globe. To date, more than 1,000 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen have deployed in 18 agribusiness development team rotations.

Feucht said he hoped to maintain relationships with Afghan farmers after his team returns to Wisconsin. “This would plant a seed for follow-on programs,” he explained. 📷

Excellence is the rule at Wisconsin National Guard's 426th RTI

Spc. Alyson Berzinski
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers around the country are learning about the Wisconsin National Guard's award-winning regional training center at Fort McCoy.

The 426th Training Regiment, a major subordinate command of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, operates the 426th Regional Training Institute — a professional learning and career advancement facility housed in the Wisconsin Military Academy.

"Our mission is to plan, resource, and execute uncompromised training in a full-time facility," said Maj. Gary Thompson, the 426th Regiment administrative officer and assistant operational officer.

The 426th trains future leaders through its Officer Candidate School and Warrant Officer Candidate School. Along with these schools, the 426th also provides education for the basic field artillery and basic emergency medical technician Military Occupational Specialty qualifications and noncommissioned officer education system, truck driving, infantry, combat lifesaving and other courses.

"We have really evolved from the Wisconsin Military Academy Officer Candidate Schools to a full-fledged

regional training institute," said Col. Kenneth Koon, commander of the 426th Regiment and commandant of the Wisconsin Military Academy. "I see it continuing to expand."

The regiment is broken down into two separate battalions — the 1st Battalion Field Artillery and the 2nd Battalion Modular Training.

The field artillery battalion is a joint school house with the active duty artillery school at Fort Sill, Okla. Last year, the 426th's Field Artillery School House was named an Institution of Excellence after scoring more than 95 percent on their accreditation. Koon said the 1st Battalion, which focuses on towed artillery as well as forward observers and fire direction centers, conducts about one-third of all artillery school training for National Guard Soldiers across the nation each year. The battalion also provides live-fire exercises for its artillery non-commissioned officer courses.

Koon envisions the regional training institute program nationwide opening enrollment to active component Soldiers, which would be attractive due to a more compressed training schedule as well as closer training facilities in some cases. A potential risk, he noted, would be that the active component would fill most of the RTI school openings.

The Modular Training Battalion provides a variety of training for Soldiers, including large truck driving, emergency medical technician, infantry, state priority training for mobilizations, combat lifesaver, fitness training and master resiliency training. The 2nd Battalion's Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course has also been named a Center of Excellence, Thompson said.

The 426th Regiment is in the process of implementing a four-phase plan to create a third battalion dedicated to state priority training missions, which would in turn provide the 2nd Battalion greater opportunity to focus on military occupational specialty courses. Thompson said the four phases include selecting battalion staff, building programs around that staff, developing new simulator training and obtaining training space.

"We're thinking about what the Army needs to do next and applying it now," said Thompson about implementing a new battalion.

Koon said the 426th continually seeks to maximize its resources by integrating as many assets as possible, as well as making assets available. One of three Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer (HEAT) devices will be mobile so the 426th can provide this training opportunity at unit locations across the state.

"We're able to do live, virtual and constructive training and give that Soldier a full-bodied training experience," he explained. "A plethora of experiences builds confidence."

Each year the 426th plans their course calendars based on the availability of instructors and classroom seats. The training is put together in such a way that the courses will occasionally combine to conduct practical exercises and use each other's training skills for qualifications, said Thompson.

"Our goal is to train the squad as a weapon system," Thompson said. "So every time they act, it's as a team."

Additional long-range plans for the 426th include an enclosed live-fire range next to the Wisconsin Military Academy, and developing training packages that suit particular missions which require numerous skill sets.

Since Fiscal Year 2009, the 426th Regional Training Institute has assisted in the MOS training of more than 3,500 Soldiers. The students are not just from one state or region — they come from all over the world for training, Thompson said.

"The vision for the 426th Regiment RTI is to continue growing, looking toward the future," he said. "We keep looking for trends in how we train and what we're training in order to move forward." 

Wisconsin Guard training Soldiers to save lives on the battlefield



Spc. Alyson Berzinski
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

“Medic” is one of the first words heard when a Soldier is wounded on the battlefield. A Wisconsin Army National Guard training battalion has recently begun training Soldiers to answer that call.

The 426th Regional Training Institute’s 2nd Modular Training Battalion, located in the Wisconsin Military Academy at Fort McCoy, launched its first combat medic class in June, teaching emergency medical technician skills to seven Soldiers from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Massachusetts and Alaska.

According to Sgt. 1st Class Carlito Reyes, a combat medic instructor, the combat medic course consists of three phases. Next year the 426th will offer phases 1 and 2, and in 2012 all three phases will be offered. Phase 2 teaches military medical skills, and phase 3 teaches Soldiers to implement the skills learned during the first two phases.

Staff Sgt. Clint Vervoren, combat medic course coordinator at the 426th, said the inaugural course went very well.

“All seven students graduated and passed the national [EMT] registry test,” he said. “All the students walked away understanding the course and knowing what to do.”

The primary role of combat medics is to

Sgt. James Dokken, left, of the U.S. Army Reserve’s 1984th U.S. Army Hospital at Fort Richardson, Alaska, holds the head of a notional spinal injury victim as Sgt. Shannon Doty of the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s Medical Detachment installs a cervical collar during testing at The Wisconsin Army National Guard’s 426th Regional Training Institute on June 24. Staff Sgt. David Hottenstine, center, an instructor with the Wisconsin National Guard’s 2nd Battalion, 426th Regiment, observes and grades Doty, one of seven Soldiers going through Phase 1 of a three phase process to become combat medics.

112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Jopek

provide initial emergency medical care and evacuation to wounded Soldiers, supervise other Soldiers with medical training — such as combat lifesavers — as well as provide medical advice to their chain of command.

The combat medic instructors for the 426th are qualified Army Medical Department Instructors. Wisconsin has four AMEDD Instructors, three of which are located in the 426th Regiment, said Staff Sgt. David Hottenstine, a combat medic supporting the course. Some of the instructors belong to other Wisconsin Army National Guard units, such as the Wisconsin Medical Detachment and the 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment. Vervoren praised all his instructors.

“One of the comments we received is that the Wisconsin Army National Guard combat medics are some of the best instructors out there,” he said. “They did a real good job.”

Col. Kenneth Koon, commander of the 426th Regiment and commandant of the Wisconsin Military Academy, said the 426th seized the opportunity to pick up the combat medic training mission in 2008 when the Army Medical Command asked for support from the regional training institutes.

“As we grow our own [combat medics] in the state, we’ll have to recertify them,” he observed. “Not only did we grow a market, it’s one we have to sustain.”

The Wisconsin National Guard presently has 375 combat medics.

Koon said the 426th RTI also is able to teach and recertify combat lifesavers, who provide medical assistance at a level below that of combat medics. For example, the 426th certified more than 70 percent of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team as combat lifesavers for the brigade’s recent Iraq deployment. Koon said ideally the training would occur at the Wisconsin Military Academy, but modular teams can conduct the training at units across the state.

The Wisconsin National Guard is funding the first two years of the 426th Regional Training Institute’s combat medic training, Koon said. By 2012 the National Guard Bureau will fully fund the program. 

At this school, hitting the road means success, not failure

Spc. Carlynn Knaak

112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

More and more Soldiers are being steered toward the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 426th Regiment Regional Training Institute for training as military drivers — or more specifically, motor transport operators. One of the reasons for this is the 426th Regiment's 88-Mike course, named for the military occupational specialty designator, is the only regional training institute among the 24 that certify motor transport operators to be recognized with the Institution of Excellence Award from the Combined Arms Support Command.

"Soldiers are coming from all over the United States and even the world to take this course here," explained Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery E. Smoczyk, the 88-Mike course manager and truck master. "We were even fortunate enough a couple cycles ago to have an Army Soldier all the way from Korea."

In recent years the number of motor transport operator classes taught at the 426th Regiment has grown, from one course in 2008 to four courses this year. Next year the 426th plans to offer five courses.

The 88-Mike course currently consists of two phases, lasting a total of 28 days. Phase 1, which last 14 days, consists of the Soldiers getting acquainted with and driving 5-ton cargo vehicles such as the older M900 commercial heavy equipment transporter series and the newer M1083 standard cargo truck. In the next phase, students move up to even larger vehicles such as the M1074 Palletized Load System truck — a vehicle that can deposit its cargo bed payload on the ground and retrieve it.

"It's exciting to see students who have never driven anything larger than a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) become very confident and



Sgt. 1st Class Timothy S. Morris, an instructor with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 426th Regional Training Institute, directs a student driver who is turning a sharp corner using a palletized load system (PLS) at Fort McCoy June 19. The students are learning to operate large vehicles during their second phase of the four-week motor transport operator course. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Spc. Carlynn Knaak

comfortable at driving these very large vehicles," Smoczyk said.

The remainder of Phase 2 covers the tactical portion of driving the vehicles. "We integrate contemporary operational environment all the time into our training so the Soldiers are prepared for anything a combat situation throws at them," Smoczyk said. Those training scenarios range from snipers targeting the vehicles to kidnapping situations.

Throughout the 28 days of training the students are only in a classroom

environment for an average of four days. The remaining time is spent out with the vehicles, completing approximately 148 hours, or 1,500 miles, of driving.

Each class can handle up to 21 students, but the ideal number is 18.

"That gives us a wonderful opportunity to be more hands on with each student," Smoczyk said. "This course has some very intense training and the student to teacher ratio is usually three to one."

An added benefit to completing the course, Smoczyk said, is that Soldiers are

eligible to receive a commercial driver's license through the state Department of Transportation.

Col. Kenneth Koon, commander of the 426th Regiment and commandant of the Wisconsin Military Academy, pointed out that every type of large truck included in the 88-Mike course is available to the 426th. In addition, driving simulators available to the 426th provide excellent training scenarios without fuel costs, meaning that those funds can be applied to additional training opportunities. 

Grunt work emphasized in modular infantry skills course

Staff Sgt. Brian Jopek

112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

For past the past four years, Soldiers needing or wanting to learn the basics in infantry skills have been coming to the Wisconsin National Guard's 426th Regional Training Institute from bases all over the United States and the world.

"We have to meet the standard and make sure we're teaching what the book says we need to teach these Soldiers," said Sgt. 1st Class Scott Lowery, an infantry instructor with the Wisconsin National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 426th Regiment.

The two-week course, which includes computerized simulation training and a two-day field training exercise focusing on building and room clearing tactics or military operations on urban terrain (MOUT) is designed to teach infantry skills to Soldiers who are transitioning from another military occupational specialty (MOS) because of requirements by the Army or reorganization to infantry units.

While the standard is what the 426th instructors meet, Lowery said there are plenty of things to learn by everyone.

"We use the experience of the combat veterans taking the course," Lowery said. "We take what they've learned in theater, get that information from them, and share it with troops who may or may not have had the same experience while deployed to a combat zone."

Lowery, who entered the service as a truck driver in 1992, used his first MOS as an example. "Kicking in doors and doing MOUT operations is completely different than a truck driver who did convoy security for a year," he said. "That Soldier making that transition needs all the help he can get."

Pfc. Andrew Pritchard of New Richmond is an example of the type of Soldier the 426th caters to. Pritchard graduated from his advanced individual

training in February and was ready to go to his Chicago-based unit as a new military policeman. It was then he found there were no vacancies for him with the Illinois MP unit.

"I didn't even get to meet anyone in that unit," Pritchard said. He's now assigned to the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry.

Spc. Billy Jackson of the Indiana Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 151st Infantry, did five years in the Navy as a jet engine mechanic on F-14 Tomcat fighters on board the USS Harry S. Truman. After a break in service, he joined the Guard last

summer.

That sort of background for individual Soldiers isn't lost on the instructors.

"You can't take Soldiers at face value anymore," Lowery said. "Just because they're wearing E-3 rank doesn't mean they don't know anything. They have loads of experience, even if they don't have that much time in the Army."

As successful as the course has been, things are changing and the future of the course is in doubt. Four years ago, the first class had 36 Soldiers. The latest class had 12.

"Our class sizes are dwindling

primarily because brigade combat teams are now fully transitioned," Lowery explained. "There aren't as many Soldiers who need to switch to infantry." He said the majority of Soldiers who take the course do so because they want to be infantry.

Lowery said having those Soldiers go back to their units competent is important, but they should also be confident.

"They have to be able to step back into an infantry line unit, squad or platoon and be able to act as an infantryman, taking orders and taking care of business," he said. 

Summer safety campaign in full swing

Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell
Wisconsin National Guard

National Guard leaders are reminding Soldiers and Airmen that safety awareness does not take a vacation during the summer.

“[In the Army], we always train the composite risk management process and in our daily lives we often stop to think about what we’re doing before we do it,” said Wisconsin National Guard Safety and Occupational Health Manager, Col. Shirley Kubiak. “Our leadership must involve safety — I think every [training assembly] needs to begin and end with a safety message. By empowering our Soldiers to do the composite risk management, we’ll eliminate a lot of injuries and accidents.”

Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, agreed.

“We need to practice risk management because it is not enough to think of our own actions — we must anticipate the actions of others,” Dunbar recently told Wisconsin Guard members. “Many of our non-combat losses have been caused by people, other than our Soldiers and Airmen, acting irresponsibly. We have to be on point watching for the driver who has had too much to drink or the driver is so intent on texting the next ‘tweet’ that they cross the yellow line.”

Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of accidental deaths in the Army

A Wisconsin National Guard Soldier checks her mirrors on her motorcycle to ensure proper placement after putting on her safety equipment. Wearing a motorcycle helmet, reflective or brightly colored vest, over-ankle boots, long sleeves and pants and riding gloves is mandatory for all Wisconsin National Guard service members. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell

National Guard according to a recent National Guard Bureau memo announcing the 2010 Summer Safety Message. Speed and driving distractions like cell phones, text messaging and navigational devices, serve as the most common source of vehicle accidents.

Assessing risk in all activities — a process the Army calls Composite Risk Management — is a five-step cycle which identifies a hazard, assesses it, develops controls to reduce the risk and decide how much risk is acceptable for the activity.

Kubiak said that most of the reported injuries among National Guard members are from physical fitness training.

“After the winter season, people aren’t always prepared to do certain physical activities and they just jump into them so we see more broken limbs or muscle strains as a result,” she explained. “We also see more motorcycle injuries because, after the winter season, riders get back on their bikes and forget they need to reevaluate their skills after having been off the motorcycle for a few months.”

In an effort to keep safety at the forefront of Wisconsin service members’ minds, the safety office strives to educate all service members about safe practices.

“We have our own website and post monthly items that we think may be relevant for that month, such as food borne illnesses or barbecuing safety,” Kubiak said. “Our intent is to help [service members] incorporate safety into everything they do.”

Driving or sports recreational activities are not the only summer pastimes to which Guard members can apply safety awareness measures. Hydration, sun exposure and outdoor barbecues are examples of routine potential for injuries if care is not exercised.

To read the National Guard Bureau’s Summer Safety Message, and for additional information on composite risk management, visit <https://safety.army.mil>

NGB aims high with Milwaukee launch of high-tech recruiting effort

Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze
128th Air Refueling Wing

Expectations are sky-high for the National Guard Bureau's new interactive recruiting program which the Wisconsin Air National Guard launched at Summerfest.

The "Rise to the Challenge" tour program offers potential recruits a hands-on taste of the Air Guard through interactive simulations and mission-themed challenge kiosks, according to Master Sgt. Duane Butler, the marketing and outreach non-commissioned officer-in-charge for the National Guard Bureau.

In the refueling challenge, the player takes control of a B-2 Spirit "Stealth Bomber" and, using new augmented reality game play, the player has to fly up to a KC-135R Stratotanker to be refueled, Butler explained.

The recon kiosk challenges players to examine satellite photographs for 10 seconds, and asks the players to answer questions regarding minute details from the image.

Players face three challenges at the medical kiosk, where augmented reality scenarios are used to perform procedures such as CPR, maintaining an open airway, and stabilizing a patient with a neck injury, Butler said.

"We will be one of the first displays to use augmented reality in an interactive display," he said.

Augmented reality scenarios involve a real-world environment that can be manipulated by a player, and is akin to a realistic video game. The games and interactive scenarios available in the Air National Guard's new outreach program were built specifically for the display, Butler explained.

The recruiting tour will "let [people] know what the Air National Guard does and how it can help them achieve their goals," he said.

According to Senior Master Sgt. Connie Bacik, the recruiting and retention superintendent for the Wisconsin Air National Guard, the new recruiting tour aims to bring the Air National Guard to the forefront of military recruiting.

"We won't be even with our competitors," Butler said. "We'll blow them out of the water."

"I think we're going to dominate," said Master Sgt. Angela Petri, the

128th Air Refueling Wing recruiting office supervisor. "We're usually the underdogs."

The "Rise to the Challenge" tour took off Monday (June 21) at the 128th Air Refueling Wing by filming a "sizzle reel" of Air National Guard recruiters interacting with potential recruits and hired actors.

"The reason I picked the 128th Air Refueling Wing, and Wisconsin as a

whole, was because Wisconsin has one of the best recruiting teams and the 128th Air Refueling Wing has always been helpful," Butler said.

The new recruiting tour and outreach program began during this year's Summerfest in Milwaukee, Bacik said.

Butler said the "Rise to the Challenge" tour will visit 38 events across the nation, including fairs, sporting events and NASCAR races. 

Wisconsin Guard helps train civilian emergency responders

Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez
Wisconsin National Guard

About 120 personnel from more than 20 law enforcement agencies enhanced their awareness of weapons of mass destruction and learned about the resources available to respond to scenarios at a WMD Special Weapons and Tactics training event at Volk Field June 16.

The two-day training, spearheaded by the Madison-based 54th Civil Support Team, Wisconsin National Guard, ranged from briefings and equipment displays to hands-on training and tactical demonstrations at the Regional Emergency All-Climate Training Center and High Risk Entry Facility areas.

“[The training] not only presented situational problems that have interagency solutions, but it also presented cutting edge situations that we will have to address in months and years to come,” said Thomas Krsnich, a special investigator supervisor with Wisconsin’s Department of Natural Resources Environmental Crimes Unit.

The local, state and federal response agencies from Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois also learned about types of chemical, biological and explosive hazards, personal protective gear and the resources that are available to law enforcement agencies.

“I learned of a lot of resources that are available to us in case we do have to respond to calls,” said Larry Ostermeier, deputy sheriff for the Kewaunee Sheriff Department. “I thought the decontamination equipment was used one time. It turns out that most of it can be reused.”

The 54th Civil Support Team is Wisconsin’s full-time response team for emergencies or terrorist events that involve weapons of mass destruction or toxic industrial chemicals.

With the ability to rapidly deploy, the 54th provides initial advice on what an



Above, Staff Sgt. Sidney Butler, decontamination team leader with the Wisconsin National Guard’s 54th Civil Support Team, demonstrates and explains the decontamination process to two members of the Kewaunee Sheriff Department — Officer James Kleiman (left) and Deputy Sheriff Larry Ostermeier (right). At left, An explosives display shows members from more than 20 local, state and federal agencies in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois what different explosive hazards may look like and what they are made from. Wisconsin National Guard photos by Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez

agent may be, assists local first-responders in determining the nature of an attack, provides medical and technical advice,

and paves the way for the identification and arrival of follow-on state and federal military response assets. 

Civil engineer's experience aids in convoy training

Airman 1st Class Ryan Roth
115th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Just as professional sports teams are made up of a team of highly trained athletes with different skills, the men and women of the civil engineers from Madison have many Airmen with deployed experiences who make the team stronger and provide a wealth of knowledge.

The experiences of these veteran Airmen benefited the 115th Civil Engineer Squadron as they practiced convoy maneuvers during training in June.

"I have trained for years on convoy tactics but Iraq was the first time I used it, and I was grateful I had the training," said 1st Lt. Keith Hofkens, an electrical engineer from the 115th CES who just returned from a seven-month deployment in Iraq.

Convoys exist to transport man and machine from point A to point B. They are not successful by accident but require detailed training to ensure the safety of those in the convoy and the success of the mission they execute.

Hofkens participated in a provincial reconstruction team where he would go outside the wire and oversee the construction of schools and water treatment facilities. Doing this job required traveling in convoys on a daily basis to make sure the government's investment in Iraqi infrastructure was protected, he said.

"I have been talking to everyone in CE about my experiences," Hofkens said. "The tiring thing about this training is that we do not know if or when we will use it, but when I was in Iraq we used it, and it was a blessing to have the background in convoy training."

There is but one main reason why these men and women are driving around

in convoys learning to drive, defend and maneuver these vehicles, said Lt. Col. Kevin Philpot, 115th Civil Engineer Squadron commander.

"Our goal is to send Airmen to theatre and know they have the competency to survive and carry out their mission," Philpot said.

Airmen trained in three basic areas: fighting positions, individual movements and convoy training. As the day progressed, the training became more intense and that was by design.

These Airmen learn in small steps and the training gets more complex as time goes on to make sure everyone is tracking, Philpot said.

With the need for military bases and infrastructure in Iraq and Afghanistan, CE needed to be on site to construct the buildings necessary for bases to become operational. Construction teams need convoys and CE must be able to safely transport vehicles and equipment in hostile territory.

"The purpose of a convoy is not to fight, but to get somewhere," Philpot said. "These men and women are briefed and then carry out the mission assigned because they are trained to do so."

Story with photos can be found online at:
<http://www.115fw.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123210138>

U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Ed Smith, 115th Fighter Wing Explosive Ordnance Disposal flight, lays a simulated pressure plate detonation device in the road during convoy training at Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center on June 12. Smith assisted in leading the 115th Fighter Wing Civil Engineering Squadron during annual training.

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Christen Bloomfield



Aviators showcase mobilization training to Wisconsin Guard leaders

Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez
Wisconsin National Guard

Mobilizing Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment briefed senior Guard leaders on their deployment preparation during a visit to North Fort Hood, Texas July 7-8.

The 147th has trained at Fort Hood for three weeks, getting acquainted with the equipment they will use and conducting missions simulating real-world scenarios similar to what they will encounter in Iraq such as personnel recovery, refueling helicopters and gunnery exercises.

“We are the aviation asset of United States Forces-Iraq South,” Lt. Col. Marty Pond, battalion commander, explained during a briefing to Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, Wisconsin Army National Guard commander, and state Command Sgt. Maj. George Stopper.

However, weather conditions and working with different entities has made the training challenging.

“There was a lot of rain last week from the tropical storm that passed through,” said Sgt. Maj. David Christianson, the battalion sergeant major. “The weather was a hindrance to flying missions. There are some new pilots that will get the stick time to bring them up to speed before leaving.”

“The training is challenging, especially in trying to work with so many entities and coordinating with different units,” said 1st Sgt. Robert Simonis of Company D.

Dunbar, Anderson and Stopper also held informal meetings with Soldiers at the dining facility and at different workstations to speak with Soldiers and gauge their morale. Troops were vocal and eager to spend time with the Guard’s top leaders.

“I’m glad they’re here,” said Spc. Brett

Reich, an aviation electronics specialist. “Coming out here and seeing what we’re doing ... it shows that they care.”

“I love these trips,” said Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, the Wisconsin Army National Guard commander. “I could do them every day.”

The 147th is scheduled to complete the mobilization process and head to Iraq in August, where the battalion will locate in Basra, Taji and Tallil. Once in Iraq, the battalion will conduct security and stability aviation operations to legitimize Iraqi national government.

The 147th first deployed a portion of the battalion to Iraq in March 2003 — the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The battalion will have the unique opportunity in being in Iraq again at the transition from Operation Iraqi Freedom to Operation New Dawn later this year. 



Air Force's top enlisted leader visits Wisconsin Air Guard

Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue
Wisconsin National Guard

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Roy detailed some of his priorities as the Air Force's top enlisted leader during a visit to Wisconsin's Volk Field Air National Guard Base and Combat Readiness Training Center July 13-14.

"Priorities for [me] are to make sure our Airmen are ready for a joint and coalition 'fight,' if you will, being a partner within that joint,

coalition team," Roy said. "Obviously, the things that are done here within the training center fit right within those means."

Roy is the 19th chief master sergeant of the Air Force and ultimately oversees the enlisted Airmen of the active duty, Guard and Reserve components. He was accompanied by Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Muncy, command chief for the Air National Guard, and other Air Force enlisted leaders on the two-day trip.

The leaders were able to observe the international 2010 Patriot exercise at Volk and neighboring Fort McCoy.

"It's good for me to come out and see this [training] because it helps me when I frame things back at the Pentagon as I'm asked for advice on different things," Roy said.

Roy serves as advisor to the chief of staff and secretary of the Air Force on an enlisted force that has seen a tremendous increase in demand for contingency support overseas. He addressed what it takes to continually be an operational force.

"The fact of the matter is we're a nation at war and we've been at combat for a lot of years," Roy said. "We need to continue to keep focus on the resiliency for our Airmen and their families."

He believes a steadfast mission can be difficult on the families and can be the most misunderstood concept of what it takes to be an Airman.

"I think Americans, in general, certainly appreciate what Airmen and their families endure," Roy said. "What's difficult is for them to fully understand what types of sacrifices there are."

One sacrifice for Airmen is continually adapting to an ever-changing mission.

"It falls back to 'What is it that the warfighter, what it is that the Guard, that our local authorities need from us?' You are and will continue to see a continual shifting of resources and missions to different locations," Roy said.

The fact that Guard members are diversely skilled in their civilian careers and are capable and experienced in maintaining proficiency in their military jobs, means they have the ability to evolve into capable warriors despite the mission or task at hand, Roy said.

"We have Airman today from across the Air Force ... primarily from the Guard and Reserve that are doing some unique missions that they weren't necessarily trained to do, but they have that capability," Roy said.

According to Chief Master Sgt. James Chisholm, Wisconsin Air National Guard command chief, this is the first time a chief master sergeant of the Air Force has officially visited Wisconsin Airmen.

"This is absolutely historic, that he was able to come and see what we have to offer here," Chisholm said. Volk's CRTC provides a year round integrated training environment (airspace, facilities, equipment) for units to enhance their combat capabilities and readiness. They are only one of four CRTCs in the nation.

Roy thanked Volk's leadership for continuing the important training mission, the local community for supporting all of the Airmen and their families, and although he couldn't meet with every Airman during his stay, he expressed his gratitude and thanks to all of the Airmen of Volk Field and the 128th ACS.

"What you do is important," Roy said. "It's important for the battlefield, it's important for the other missions, like humanitarian assistance, disaster relief missions and domestic operations," Roy said.

Reflecting on his visit to Wisconsin as well as other Guard units, Roy said Air Guard members have a great recipe for success.

"The thing that is relayed to me is the pride they have in being a Guardsman," he said. "Being prideful in your unit and your component ... we want every Airman to do that." 

Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy named best in nation

The [Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy](#), a program aimed at helping teens at risk of not graduating high school turn their lives around, was recognized as the best such program in the nation during a National Challenge workshop in San Diego on June 24.

This is the first time the Wisconsin program has earned the “Best All-Around” honor, according to Col. (retired) M. G. MacLaren, Wisconsin Challenge Academy director.

“It recognizes that our program conducts business very well on a day-to-day basis,” MacLaren said. “This year our peers had the chance to nominate programs for the award. It’s a very sweet situation when your peers say you do this better than anyone else — that makes this doubly humbling. There are some very good programs out there.”

Thirty-three Youth Challenge sites operate in 28 states. The National Guard program began in 1991 at the direction of the House Joint Armed Service Committee, and opened academies in 15 states by 1993. Wisconsin’s Challenge Academy started in 1998, and graduated its 24th class earlier this month.

Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, praised the academy staff.

“I can’t begin to tell you how proud I am of your continued efforts on the part of our students and Wisconsin,” he stated. “You continue to change lives and help create solid, productive men and women. To be recognized as the ‘best all-around’ program is truly exceptional, but it is the way you accomplished this honor that impresses me — you always focus on the students and never the award.”

MacLaren credited his staff’s hard work and consistency for the award.

“It’s like a baseball team,” he explained. “You can’t just have one good day — you have to do well every day to succeed.”



A Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy cadet for at-risk teens was named “Best All-Around” program from embraces family and friends following a graduation ceremony 33 such programs nationwide June 24. Wisconsin National last Dec. 19 at Mauston High School. The Wisconsin program Guard photo by Sgt. Andy Poquette

MacLaren said the award should bolster the confidence of the program’s political and military supporters, but did not think it would have much influence with the program’s clientele — troubled teens and their families.

“Parents are just concerned if we can help their kids,” he said. “That’s as it

should be.”

Over the past 12 years, more than 2,000 students — known as cadets — have graduated from Wisconsin Challenge Academy’s 22-week course. Located at Fort McCoy, the Challenge Academy reshapes the lives of at-risk 16-to-18-year-olds. A structured, military-style

environment and state-certified teachers and counselors combine to build cadets’ academic abilities, character, self-confidence, and personal discipline.

After graduating, cadets are paired with hometown mentors who offer guidance and encouragement in pursuing their new direction in life. 

UAV operations center moving forward

Plans are proceeding to build an estimated \$8 million operations center at Camp Williams for the RQ-7 Shadow 200, a tactical unmanned aerial vehicle fielded to a Wisconsin Army National Guard unit.

Company B of the Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team began training on the equipment at Fort McCoy last fall. Camp Williams is a Wisconsin Army National Guard facility where the 32nd Brigade is headquartered, and is also co-located with Volk Field, a Wisconsin Air National Guard base approximately 30 miles from Fort McCoy.

Larger and heavier than most remote-controlled aircraft one might find at a hobby store, the Shadow requires a rail launcher to become airborne and a suitable area for landing. It can reach heights of 15,000 feet but generally does not exceed 10,000 feet, and has a maximum range of 125 kilometers. The UAV also costs approximately \$40 per hour to fly, so it's not for the mere hobbyist.

The Shadow 200 has been referred to as a drone, a generic term for all UAVs, according to Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Sampson, readiness noncommissioned officer for Company B. However, he said the Shadow should not be confused with a Predator.

"The Predator is a larger aircraft, used primarily by the Air Force," Sampson explained. He also said the Predator can fly higher and is an armed vehicle, whereas the Shadow 200's payload is a camera.

The Shadow 200 will be used tactically for target acquisition, aerial reconnaissance and surveillance, and can also serve as a deterrent to hostile forces by its presence overhead — serving notice that they are being watched. But it also has domestic applications, as seen when the Shadow was deployed to assess the situation on the ground following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Sampson said the new technology



Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, enjoys a close inspection of the RQ-7 Shadow 200 unmanned aerial vehicle during a training exercise Nov. 2, 2009 at Fort McCoy. The 22-person UAV platoon, part of Company B, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, includes UAV pilots, camera operators, maintainers and support crew.

Wisconsin National Guard photos by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

translates to new training opportunities for both his unit and the 32nd Brigade.

Operating and maintaining the four UAVs will be the responsibility of a single platoon in Company B. Each aircraft requires its own launching crew as well as two operators — one to pilot the craft, and one for the surveillance camera. The Shadow Operating System computers, not human operators, land the UAV. All told, 22 Soldiers are required to support the four aircraft.

A Shadow crew trainer arrived at Camp Williams in February. The trainer, a work station replica, can facilitate two pilots, two camera operators and one maintainer.

Designs for the 10,298-square-foot building — which will provide training, maintenance, operations and storage space for the UAV platoon — are expected by October, with construction projected to begin in December of 2011 and conclude by December 2012. 

Mobilizing aviators receive special training for UH-60 Black Hawks

Spc. Eric Liesse

112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The Madison-based 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment has spent the past several weeks training in Wisconsin in preparation for their upcoming deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Much of that training has focused on the unit's UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters, which were fielded last year.

To get up to speed in time for their deployment, the 147th relied on a Mobile Training Team — an extension of the flight training school at Fort Rucker, Ala. The school-based M-model, or "Mike"-model, Black Hawk familiarization and training program at Fort Rucker lasts six weeks. The MTT program streamlines the course to five weeks that includes classroom time, flight simulators and aircraft flight time.

"This is an attempt to get our people done and trained up so we have a sufficient number of people to fight the fight," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Ron Leemon, one of the MTT instructors with the 147th.

"The [class] structure is pretty much the same," said Warrant Officer 1 Jesse Green, one of 10 current MTT course students. However, as most of the MTT course instructors here are 147th Soldiers who will deploy with the unit, Green said the training does have a different feel. "The instructor pilots have a vested interest in you, because they will be flying with you later on," he said.

"It's always great to have it here in Wisconsin rather than Alabama so we can be close to our family," said Warrant Officer 1 Andrew Jarosinski, another current MTT student. "I think we like the weather here better, too."

Both Green and Jarosinski finished their 15-month helicopter flight schools in April. However, at that time the Mike



Wisconsin Army National Guard pilots from the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment train on the Transportable Black Hawk Operations Simulator (T-BOS) at North Fort Hood on July 13. The T-BOS makes it possible to take training to pilots in the field or in garrison, saving precious time and resources. The 147th also trained on this simulator in Madison. Cubic/Omega Training Group photo by Ann Ciarico

model was not part of the initial flight school training. Both said they logged around 60 hours of flight time in the older UH-60A model Black Hawk.

"I think the biggest thing [about the MTT course] is the utilization of the equipment that's unique to the Mike models," Green said.

With the MTT course being at their unit, taught by fellow 147th Soldiers, the course also provides more specialized training.

"You can learn the standard operating procedures of the battalion," Jarosinski said, "since you're flying with people from the battalion."

"On paper, we're an air assault

battalion," said Capt. Jeremy Duffy, the battalion operations officer and Company A commander. But as the mission in Iraq evolves, so must the units.

"We're kind of a Jack-of-All-Trades, so to speak," Duffy continued. "We're prepared to do whatever we're needed to do."

At the time these helicopters came to Madison, the only other National Guard unit in the nation to have the Mike-model aircraft was the 147th's other half in the Michigan Army National Guard. That distinction makes the MTT course even more unique.

One major facet of the MTT course is simulator flight training. For the 147th's

deployment mobilization training, they are employing the Transportable Black Hawk Operational Simulator system.

As the name suggests, the TBOS system is a mobile simulator that the unit will take to Fort Hood for its mobilization training before deploying overseas.

"This is the first simulator the Army built that was derived, constructed and produced at the same time as the aircraft," said Ken Sparks, the TBOS system's Instructor/Operator, and a retired Army warrant officer Black Hawk pilot. "[Before this simulator], we were always behind the aircraft construction."

Emergency simulation is one of the main advantages of a simulator. "All we do here is reset the device's program," Sparks said, "and in 20 seconds, we're back." This reusability, coupled with a roughly 1/10th cost compared to actual Black Hawk flight operations, gives these advanced simulators a true edge.

"When I come in [a simulator]," Duffy said, "I'll practice emergency stuff I couldn't do in the aircraft. However, for a less experienced pilot, they may come in and practice just starting and taking off."

"It's good to practice a lot of the emergency procedures in a fake aircraft," Jarosinski said, "so you don't have to break a real one."

The MTT course, however, is not exclusive to Madison — or even the military. Duffy explained that even customs officials who use M-model Black Hawk helicopters use the MTT program for familiarization. Roughly half of the students in Green and Jarosinski's course belong to units from other states.

"[The MTT course] is kind of a mixed bag because we're training units too, who will deploy down the road," Duffy said.

The 147th reported to Fort Hood in late June for several weeks of mobilization training, and are expected to spend the remainder of their 12-month deployment in Iraq.

Wisconsin officials, Nicaraguan delegation share emergency management techniques

Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell
Wisconsin National Guard

The Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs hosted a Nicaraguan delegation recently to share emergency management practices, as part of the state partnership program.

Since 2003, the Wisconsin-Nicaragua partnership program has resulted in dozens of exchanges to share knowledge, best practices and experience while building closer ties between the two militaries.

Seven members of the Nicaraguan delegation participated in a May 25-28 visit including Brig. Gen. Mario Perezcassar, the Nicaraguan chief of civil defense. Their primary purpose was to unite [Wisconsin Emergency Management](#) and Wisconsin National Guard officials with their counterparts from Nicaragua to discuss future exchange opportunities that can increase both organizations effectiveness in this critical area.

Geographically, Nicaragua is located in a precarious region where natural disaster is a year-round threat. The rainy season can bring hurricanes, floods or mudslides, and there's always the potential for earthquakes from one of the three fault lines that run through the area. Tsunamis resulting from earthquakes and volcanic activity from one of Nicaragua's six active volcanoes are both ever-present threats. And there is always the threat of fire.

Despite the threat, the Nicaraguan Army remains prepared for anything.

"As a national army, we are ready to face and respond to these natural disasters because of their frequency," Perezcassar said. "Our plan for emergency management allows military commanders to organize the different risks they may face in their respective territories, [giving] them the [ability] to utilize their available resources and create their own plan of action, which becomes the basis for each contingency plan."



Brig. Gen. Mario Perezcassar, Nicaraguan chief of civil defense, relates information about his home country to Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton, as Brig. Gen. Scott Legwold, Wisconsin National Guard chief of joint staff, looks on during a May 26 visit to the state capitol building. The visit was part of a May 25-28 trip by Nicaraguan military officials to share emergency response information with Wisconsin Emergency Management and the Wisconsin National Guard. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell

The visit also included a tour of the Regional Emergency All-Climate Training Center (REACT) at Camp Williams, Wis., a training facility which certifies emergency responders in a variety of catastrophic disaster management techniques.

"We wanted to show the REACT center to the Nicaraguan delegation because they have a great interest in further developing their own search and rescue unit," said Capt. Joe Davison, State Partnership Program coordinator. "Perezcassar recently deployed to Haiti with a platoon of search and rescue personnel and they saw some of the more advanced equipment and techniques used by other search and rescue teams from the U.S. They want to learn some of the

advanced techniques that are taught at the REACT center."

According to Davison, the goal is to eventually bring soldiers from the Nicaraguan search and rescue unit to the REACT center to increase their ability to respond to emergencies at home.

The Nicaraguan search and rescue team deployed to Haiti for approximately two months with 35 personnel. During that time, they are credited with saving the lives of six Haitians.

"In the area of disaster preparedness and response, Nicaragua has a wealth of experience as they are vulnerable to many environmental threats," said WEM Director Scott Legwold.

During the upcoming 2011 Vigilant Guard exercise — which is scheduled

to simulate a major earthquake at the New Madrid seismic zone affecting approximately 19 states in the mid-western, southern and eastern region — the Wisconsin National Guard will respond to several localized "emergencies."

"We will be working with our Nicaraguan partners prior to the exercise and sharing our contingency plans in a variety of scenarios to learn from each other," Legwold said. "During the actual exercise we are planning to have a group of Nicaraguan emergency management officials present to observe the crisis planning and response phases. We anticipate learning a lot from them in the area of disaster preparedness and response."

The Wisconsin National Guard and the Nicaraguan military both have a very similar role in emergency management, supporting their respective civilian emergency management agencies sharing the responsibility to plan and respond to natural disasters and other emergencies that take place within their respective borders.

"Helping Nicaragua develop its capacity to respond to natural disasters may be the most important aspect of our partnership," Davison said. "The world saw the different outcomes between Haiti, a country that had very limited ability to self-respond in a major disaster, versus Chile that took great measures to prepare for major disasters. We want to make sure Wisconsin does everything it can to assist Nicaragua now in preparing for natural disasters that they are sure to face in the future."

"We appreciate the interest you have in our country," Perezcassar said. "You're always there during our most difficult situations and this visit is proof that Wisconsin has an interest in sharing their experiences so we can learn from them when we're affected by natural disasters." 🇺🇸

ACE of base: Air Guard gives area students practical work experience

Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze
128th Air Refueling Wing

Six Milwaukee-area students are participating in the Aviation Careers and Education program at the 128th Air Refueling Wing here.

The ACE program allows students to work alongside the Airmen of the 128 ARW, and it teaches them things that will be beneficial in the civilian workforce, said Master Sgt. William "Bugs" Moran, the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of war readiness.

Moran said he has two ACE students working with him, accomplishing tasks such as warehousing, storing and retrieving parts, and inventorying.

"The guys keep track of what they did every day, which applies toward job experience," Moran said.

Tracking each day's work and maintaining a steady log of what the students have done will help them when they apply for jobs and write their resumes, Moran said.

Beng Cha, 19, is a freshman student studying computer engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and is also in the ACE program.

"I want to learn more about aviation," Cha said. This is his fourth year with the ACE program and his third year working with the 128th Air Refueling Wing.

Cha said the best parts of the ACE program are meeting new people and learning from them.

Adrian Wells, 18, is a recent graduate of Rufus King High School, Milwaukee, where he excelled at football and wrestling. Wells said he is starting his second year with the ACE program.

Wells said he enjoys the ACE program because it gives him work experience and it allows him to experience the outside world.

"I want to join a video game company, and then advance from there," Wells said, speaking of his future. "Maybe I'll start



Beng Cha, 19, and Adrian Wells, 18, organize sleeping bags under the supervision of Master Sgt. William 'Bugs' Moran, the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of war readiness, at the 128th Air Refueling Wing on June 23. The 128th ARW hosts Milwaukee-area youth during a seven-week Aviation Careers and Education program designed to provide youths with work experience for their future careers. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze

my own."

Jerry Vongkhamsay, 17, is a senior at Rufus King High School, Milwaukee, and is also starting his second year with the ACE program. He is working with Airmen in the 128th Air Refueling Wing headquarters facility.

"The program is a good experience because it teaches leadership, how to work with others and how to manage time,"

Vongkhamsay said.

Vongkhamsay said he wants to attend a local college and major in computer technology.

"I hope to gain more knowledge about computers, meet more people and learn how things are run," he said. "I'm thinking about joining [the military], but I'm not sure yet."

Vongkhamsay said the ACE program

has helped him in his daily life.

"Since I'm usually quiet and shy, it taught me to talk with people and work well with others," he said.

The ACE program has been met with success in the past, helping today's youth transition into careers.

"You'll see people transitioning from student to career," Moran said. "It does work." 📷

Quilters wrap up order just in time

When the Soldiers of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment arrived at Fort Hood, Texas June 20, more than 400 quilts were waiting there for them.

That's a tribute to the army of volunteers who support the Camo Quilt Project — a venture Plymouth resident Linda Wieck began shortly after her son-in-law Todd Richter, now a sergeant 1st class with the Wisconsin Army National Guard, deployed to Iraq in 2006.

According to Wieck, American Legion member Mike Rohan requested 404 quilts for the 147th — a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter battalion which will head to Iraq in several weeks — less than three weeks ago. That's a tall order by any measure.

"I think my volunteers do their best work under pressure," Wieck said.

One quilt was presented to Lt. Col. Martin Pond, commander of the 147th, during a sendoff ceremony Friday, June 18 at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison.

"This is one of the most beautiful gifts I have ever seen," Pond replied, prompting a standing ovation from the battalion.

Voice trembling with emotion and nerves — she had never addressed Soldiers at a sendoff ceremony before — Wieck spoke to the battalion about how her son-in-law's fellow Soldiers saw his custom quilt, made of Army Combat Uniform-patterned material, and asked if she could make more. More than 4,700 quilts later, she is still making quilts for deployed or deploying service members.

"I don't get sick of it," she said after the

ceremony. "[My husband] Duane asks me if I'm ever coming home. I love doing it."

Su Timmerman of Madison began volunteering for the Camo Quilt Project in May 2009, and has made more than 300 quilts since then.

"It's something that is so useful," she said of the quilts — a thin quilted blanket with cotton batting approximately 45 inches wide by 72 inches long — about the right size for an army cot, suitable for a twin mattress. The quilt folds lengthwise in thirds and rolls up into a tight package about 15 inches long and 5 inches diameter, held in place with four attached straps. Thanks to donated materials and labor, service members do not pay for the quilts. "It just makes me feel proud that I can do something beneficial."

Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, praised the program.

"I think it's wonderful," he said. "The quilt is fabulous. What's special about it is this group of volunteers, these sweet ladies, thinks so much of our Soldiers to make these quilts. It's a perfect metaphor for the citizens of Wisconsin and their support of our Citizen Soldiers." 

Lt. Col. Martin Pond, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, accepts a quilt from Linda Wieck, founder of the Camo Quilt Project, during a sendoff ceremony June 18 at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison. The 147th will conduct several weeks of mobilization training at Fort Hood before deploying to Iraq. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

Rhythm & Booms salutes Wisconsin National Guard



The Wisconsin National Guard has supported the annual Rhythm and Booms celebration for the past 18 years — this year with cannons, an F-16 flyover and a UH-60 Black Hawk display. This year, Rhythm and Booms returned the favor, dedicating the Independence Day bonanza to those same Soldiers and Airmen.

“The Wisconsin National Guard has been a partner of ours from the beginning,” said Terry Kelly, Rhythm and Booms organizer. Dedicating this year’s celebration was a way to recognize that Wisconsin Guard members deployed last year in numbers not seen since World War II.

“In the last year alone, more than 3,500 members of our Wisconsin National Guard were actively employed in the

dangerous areas of the world — Iraq and Afghanistan,” said Gov. Jim Doyle. “We have seen so many brave men and women give of themselves and sacrifice so much for all of us.”

Doyle thanked Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, for his leadership through “difficult and very trying years.” Dunbar, in turn, recognized the 10,000 Soldiers and Airmen of the Wisconsin National Guard.

“It is an honor to be the adjutant general and a privilege to command the greatest National Guard in the United States of America,” he said.

The U.S. Army lent a hand in the tribute, sending its Golden Knights parachute team to perform two “jumps”

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A Wisconsin Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter prepares to land at Madison’s Warner Park on July 3 as part of the Rhythm and Booms celebration. The helicopter later ferried the U.S. Army Golden Knights from Warner Park back to Truax Field, where they would prepare for their second jump of the day.

Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson [Click on photo to see video](#)



The Wisconsin National Guard has been a partner of ours from the beginning.

- Terry Kelly

Rhythm & Booms salutes Wisconsin National Guard

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during the event. One of the Golden Knight members carried a Wisconsin state flag on the first jump, while another carried a Wisconsin National Guard banner on the 2-mile descent to earth.

"We're just trying to get the crowd fired up for the Fourth of July," said Staff Sgt. Howard Sanborn, a third-year member of the Golden Knights. "It's a great opportunity for us and for [the public] to see what the military is about."

Sanborn said his team assisted National Guard recruiters at Rhythm and Booms, in keeping with the Golden Knights' dual mission of acting as a conduit between the American public and Army recruiters and as military ambassadors to the public. They succeeded in impressing 4-year-old Arth Vijay of Sun Prairie.

"They're super heroes," he said of the Golden Knights.

The salute also went beyond the National Guard. During the 35-minute fireworks show, 136 flares were set off as "Taps" played, in tribute to the men and women from or with connections to Wisconsin who lost their lives in military service to their nation.

Joel Goldman, from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has been attending Rhythm and Booms for the past decade, and brings friends with him each year. He spent some time visiting the Soldiers operating the four 105-mm howitzers that provided hourly reports as well as the firepower for the fireworks finale.

"My father served in Korea," he explained.

Mark Zingsheim of Madison brought his daughters Kelsy, age 2, and Morgan, age 5, to see the Black Hawk helicopter that flew in for a static display. His brother recently returned from a deployment to Iraq.

"She loves playing with the buckles," Zingsheim said of Kelsy. "That's her

favorite thing."

Sgt. Jesse Drexler, from the Marshfield-based Battery A, 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery, was participating in his third Rhythm and Booms event.

"I love it," he said. "It's exciting, the people and the atmosphere. The crowd reaction is amazing."

When the fireworks ended with a final cannon salute, approximately 250,000 people confirmed Drexler's statement.  

A warm welcome for the 32nd 'Red Arrow' Brigade



Thousands of Wisconsin Guard Soldiers marched through Stevens Point Saturday [June 19] kicking off the 'Back from the Sand' celebration where friends, community leaders and government officials thanked the families and the nearly 3,200 Soldiers who deployed with the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team for their service and sacrifice to Wisconsin and America.

"In my eight years as governor, [the Wisconsin National Guard] has been asked to perform more than at any time in history, and it has excelled," Gov. Jim Doyle told the crowd during a formal ceremony.

"Yours is a storied unit and you have added to that history," he said. "You have done your duty and you have made Wisconsin proud."

The celebration was hosted by the city of Stevens Point and possible due to generous contributions from Sentry Insurance, USO of Illinois/Wisconsin and numerous other organizations.

"Stevens Point symbolizes all communities in Wisconsin," said Stevens Point Mayor Andrew Halverson. "This event is one of the proudest moments in my time as mayor. All we want to say today is 'welcome.'"

During training and while in Iraq, the brigade was organized into 27 company-sized units. Rather than operating as a brigade, the 32nd was tasked with a variety of missions throughout Iraq. These missions included forward operating base administration, base defense, area security, quick reaction forces, freedom of movement security support, detainee guard force operations at theater internment facilities, closing the largest internment facility in Iraq, transferring detainees, operating an academy to train Iraqi corrections officers, inspecting detention facilities, securing and administering the International Zone in Baghdad, and turning over U.S.-controlled properties back to the government of Iraq. The brigade's Soldiers operated around the clock, most of them working at least

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12 hours a day — day after day, week after week, for eight full months in Iraq.

“It was a great honor and a great privilege to lead so many unbelievably great Soldiers,” said Col. Steven Bensed, commander of the 32nd Brigade. “When I took command of this brigade I asked you for loyalty, duty, integrity and initiative. You did all of those things and more. Thank you.”

The day-long celebration began with the parade

followed by the formal ceremony that included not only Gov. Doyle and the brigade commander, but also several state legislators, five members of Congress, National Guard leaders and a special guest from the Department of Defense: Dr. Clifford Stanley, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

“On behalf of the Secretary of Defense, on behalf of a grateful nation, we are just so thankful for your service, for what you’ve done and what you continue to do,” said Stanley.

Maj. Gen. Raymond Carpenter, acting director of the Army National Guard, said, “This homecoming gave an opportunity for us at the national level to say ‘thanks’ to the 32nd and to Wisconsin for their sacrifice for the last year and a half.”

Stanley and Carpenter also visited one on one with Soldiers and family members prior to the event, to personally thank them for their service.

Janell Kellet, the lead volunteer for the 32nd Brigade’s family readiness group, was impressed with Stanley’s visit.

“He knows what it’s like to be a military family and how it can be difficult, yet how our families can pull together and support each other,” she said of Stanley, a retired Marine. “He just really seems to get it.”

Stanley said he was listening to FRG volunteers as well as brigade leaders and bringing information back to the secretary of defense on topics such as tracking individual augmentees and understanding

the effectiveness of policy matters such as mandatory demobilization briefings.

The day’s festivities continued with live entertainment, family friendly games and rides, and an opportunity to visit with community members who came out to show their support.

Otto Manthey, a World War II veteran of Company A, 632nd Tank Battalion in what was then the 32nd Division, broke into tears when he recounted his 654 days of combat service and his affection for those that still wear the Red Arrow.

“These young kids from the 32nd are coming back,” said Manthey. “That’s why I’m here.”

Don White agreed. A 20-year veteran of the 32nd Division, who joined in 1947, came to the celebration following this year’s Red Arrow Old Timer’s Club convention at Fort McCoy.

“I wouldn’t have missed it,” he said, “I’m very proud to have served in the 32nd — what a swell bunch of guys.”

The 32nd Brigade, augmented by six other Wisconsin Army National Guard units, was ordered to active duty Feb. 1, 2009 and deployed to Iraq in April and May following two months of training at Fort Bliss, Texas. They returned to Wisconsin in January, 2010.

“You can be proud as Soldiers and residents of this great state of Wisconsin and across the nation that the best of the best is standing before you today,” Bensed said.  



Members of the Wisconsin National Guard Marathon Team, after finishing second overall at the 2010 National Guard Lincoln Marathon Championships on May 1. This was the best finish for the Wisconsin team since winning the overall title in 1988. Submitted photo

Wisconsin Guard marathon team runner-up at national meet

Five of the seven Wisconsin National Guard members to take part in a National Guard marathon qualified for this year's All-Guard team — a first for Wisconsin.

Attending the National Guard-Lincoln Track Club Marathon in Lincoln, Neb. on May 1 were: Capt. Mike Western of Waverly (Iowa), 128th Air Control Squadron; Capt. Seth Kaste of Sun Prairie, 128th Air Control Squadron; Staff Sgt. Jason Kirch of Prairie du Sac, 106th Engineer Detachment; Tech. Sgt. Melanie Peters of Windsor, 115th Fighter Wing; Tech. Sgt. Mike Zeigle of Sun Prairie, team captain, 115th Fighter Wing; Master Sgt. LeRoy DePas of Kaukauna, 115th Fighter Wing; and Spc. Nathan Lee of Eau Claire, 106th Engineer Detachment.

Forty-seven states and territories sent Guard teams to this year's race, the National Guard marathon championships and the qualifying race to select the All-Guard Marathon Team. Western, Kirch,

Kaste, Zeigle, and Peters all qualified for this year's All-Guard team, which competes in race events throughout the country and participates in recruiting and retention activities.

Western was the top Wisconsin finisher with a time of 2:53:33. Kirch came in at 3:02:48, followed by Kaste at 3:05:16. The combined finish times of Western, Kirch and Kaste put the Wisconsin team in second place overall out of the 47 states and territories competing. Wisconsin won the event in 1988.

Peters finished fourth in the 35-39 age group at 3:34:32; Lee finished in 4:17:00, and Zeigle took first place in the 55-59 age group with a time of 3:07:07. DePas competed in the half-marathon event.

Western and Kaste ran together on their high school team in Cadott, Wis. In college, Western, Kaste and Kirch ran as members of the University of Wisconsin-Stout team. 

Milwaukee-based security forces Airmen prepare to deploy

Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze
128th Air Refueling Wing

Seventeen Airmen assigned to the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing Security Forces Squadron have completed combat skills training at Fort Dix, N.J. The training is part of a 180-day deployment to the Transit Center at Manas, where the members will provide air base security for the 376th Air Expeditionary Wing.

The Airmen received a send-off June 23 from their families, Wing senior leadership officials and other security forces team members at Sijan Hall. Four members have already left for the Transit Center at Manas, while the remaining members will deploy later this month.

"I'm proud of them for being willing to go again," said Maj. Glenn Evenson, the 128th Air Refueling Wing security forces' commander.

Evenson's comment underscores the volunteer status of the team members.

Security forces team members are

able to sign up for deployments, rather than being ordered to go overseas, according to Master Sgt. Mark Warner, the 128th Security Forces Squadron training manager.

"This is what we do," Warner said.

The 128th Air Refueling Wing family support office is prepared to help the family members who stay behind while their loved ones go overseas.

"It's a challenging time for families," said Elaine Schachelmayer, the Airman and Family Program manager. "I just want to remind [the families] that we're here. We'll walk the walk with them."

The security forces team members spent approximately one month at Fort Dix to complete their combat skills training prior to deploying overseas. Combat skills training is a mandatory program for all service members, designed to reinforce war fighting skills, teach battlefield first aid techniques and hone necessary attributes for enduring a lengthy stay in hostile environments. 



Seventeen security forces team members assigned to the 128th Air Refueling Wing, Milwaukee, WI, pose for a group photograph before boarding a bus to Fort Dix, NJ, June 23. The team members completed approximately 30 days of combat skills training at Fort Dix required for overseas deployments. 128th Air Refueling

Wing photo by Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze

Volk Field co-hosts large-scale National Guard exercise

Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez
Wisconsin National Guard

Approximately 1,100 troops from 23 states and three different nations have converged on the Wisconsin Air National Guard's Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center, as well as Fort McCoy, for the Air and Army National Guard's annual Patriot Exercise July 10-24.

The goal of the exercise is for coalition nations and National Guard units to enhance their domestic and combat defense capabilities in real-world training scenarios while working in a joint environment that is not normally available at their home station.

"The Wisconsin National Guard is proud to be able to host the Patriot exercise which creates an environment where Soldiers and Airmen can develop their skills and expand on their ability to operate in a joint environment with military and domestic emergency responders," said Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin. "Volk Field is a crown jewel among National Guard training centers, providing real-world scenarios for service members as well as civilian responders to practice emergency response plans for domestic operations."

This year, Wisconsin National Guard troops completed their portion of Patriot with a two-day large-scale all-hazard response domestic operations scenario supporting civilian counterparts at Volk Field July 14-15.

The training scenario involved a collision between a school bus and a freight train transporting multiple hazards, causing a derailment. Participants benefitted from rail and cargo simulators, damaged structures, mannequins, and live fires and explosions. To add a sense of urgency, adult and children volunteers acted as victims.

"Volk Field and Fort McCoy have the facilities and ranges we need for the types of scenarios we conduct and it's centrally located in the country for participating units," said Air Force Lt. Col. George Gosting, the director for this

year's exercise. Gosting also said troops have indicated they feel the training has been realistic and has enhanced their preparation to provide domestic support.

Volk Field is one of only four Air

National Guard Combat Readiness Training Centers in the nation which provides a year-round integrated training environment with state-of-the-art facilities for units to enhance their combat capabilities and readiness. 

Program prepares Guard recruits for training — and life

Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell
Wisconsin National Guard

Today's Soldiers require different skills than even a few years ago as the demands of modern military missions continually change. To prepare Wisconsin Army National Guard recruits for the mental, physical and emotional challenge they will face at basic combat training, the Recruit Sustainment Program teaches new Soldiers what to expect — and do — to keep them in step with this ever-changing environment.

"The Recruit Sustainment Program's primary mission is to prepare newly enlisted Soldiers to succeed at basic and advanced training," said Master Sgt. Joshua Reed, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the Green Bay-based RSP Delta Company. "This in turn supports the [unit] commander's mission and reduces our training pipeline losses which provides the Wisconsin Adjutant General with a more operational and ready force."

The less amount of time a recruit spends between signing up and shipping to basic training means a lower attrition rate. The goal is to get a recruit shipped within 120 days of joining.

"We perform in-ranks inspections and drill and ceremony daily, we want these

Pvt. William Funk performs three to five-second rushes during a Recruit Sustainment Program training weekend at the Green Bay armory May 23. The RSP trains newly enlisted Army Soldiers in the core skills they need to succeed at basic and advanced training.

Wisconsin National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell

skills ingrained in each recruit before they [ship to basic training]," said Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Liske, a platoon sergeant for the RSP. "The more they learn here the less stressful basic training will be.

"They can't absorb everything we throw at them so we work on repetition to make sure they have a good grasp on basic skills," Liske added. "We're not as hard [on them] as drill sergeants but we are strict."

Pfc. Dan Grosso, a new recruit who is scheduled to ship to basic training in August, began attending RSP drill weekends in February.

"This is giving me the knowledge I need for when I get [to basic training]," Grosso said. "Without the RSP, I'd be a slacker and wouldn't be in the [physical] shape I'm in or know what to expect."

Pvt. Tyler Klozotsky, a Soldier who completed basic training and is waiting to ship to advanced individual training where he'll learn to be a medic, was pleased with what he learned before he left for basic training too.

"I was one of six people who passed the [Army physical fitness test] at basic," Klozotsky said. "Back here, I share my experience from basic training and help out with the new recruits."

New Soldiers learn what will be expected of them whether it's in regard to discipline, tradition or physical requirements. By reducing the amount of uncertainty, the individuals' comfort level is increased allowing them to be more mentally prepared to accomplish the tasks ahead.

"Today kids' fitness levels are trending down, which makes it more of a challenge to prepare them to overcome those physical challenges at basic training," Reed said. "The current generation of kids is used to instant gratification and is very tech savvy; sometimes it takes some additional coaching to get them to understand you have to work hard to achieve certain goals. This doesn't mean they are bad kids or incapable of military service, most are still highly motivated

and want to serve their country but we as trainers at the RSP need to be cognizant of the challenges the kids will face."

Instilling the Army "Warrior Ethos" creates a strong foundation of training that allows the recruit the ability to achieve success while attending basic and advanced training. The Warrior Ethos internalizes Army fundamentals as vows — "I will always place the mission first; I will never accept defeat; I will never quit; I will never leave a fallen comrade."

"We have seen a tremendous increase in the success rate of our Soldiers attending training," Reed said. "The success rate has improved by approximately 18 percent. Our drill attendance rate for non-[military occupational specialty qualified] Soldiers has increased by more than 24 percent."

Pvt. Ashley Enderby, a recruit who completed basic training last year, is awaiting her next school where she will become qualified as light-medium truck driver.

"RSP has prepared me well," she said. "I was one of the only privates who knew what they were doing. I felt like I was on top of my game."

Enderby and other Soldiers who completed basic training are a step ahead of those recruits still waiting to attend basic. Platoon sergeants develop the new basic training graduates by assigning them small leadership roles within the RSP.

"They ask me to lead formations or small groups to perform simple tasks," Enderby said. "It makes me feel like I know what I'm doing and gives me an opportunity to feel what it's like in a leadership position."

The returning basic training graduates help to monitor and correct small groups of new Soldiers and will lead groups of 10 to 20 people.

"When they take charge, they're building confidence and more leadership skills at the age of 17 years old than many 30-year-

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Staff Sgt. Patrick Gieseke demonstrates how to search a detainee's hands to a group of Soldiers as they practiced detainee search methods during a Recruit Sustainment Program weekend at the Green Bay Armory May 23. The exercise is a standard part of Soldier training and was one of many demonstrated and practiced during the weekend.

Wisconsin National Guard photos by Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell



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old civilians,” said Sgt. 1st Class Chad Kurowski, a platoon sergeant with the RSP.

“Our service members are singled out at basic training because they know what’s going on,” Kurowski continued. “They know how to wear their uniform, how to talk to a [non-commissioned officer] or an officer, the correct way to do [physical fitness training] and how to [execute] drill and ceremony movements.”

The changes in the new recruits aren’t just evident in the military environment; they often shine through in the Soldier’s civilian life.

“Parents are so supportive because they see a night-and-day difference in their [children] between their junior and senior year of high school,” Kurowski said of the Soldiers who enlist and ship to basic training before their final year in high school. “Discipline, responsibility and integrity play a big role in the change. If everyone in society lived by these Army Values, how great would we be?”

Since the RSPs inception in 2005 the attrition rate of new enlistees who did not go to basic training has decreased dramatically, improving the statistics of Soldiers successfully completing basic and advanced training.



Soldiers disassemble radio equipment after a voice communication exercise which tested their knowledge on radio transmission protocol and the phonetic alphabet. The task is considered a common task which is tested regularly to ensure Soldiers know how to transmit radio messages properly.



Pvt. Ashley Enderby takes charge of a formation of Soldiers before dividing them into small groups to participate in activities such as voice communications, three to five-second rushes or climbing a rock wall. Enderby, a basic training graduate, is attending advanced training as a transportation specialist this summer.

“[In 2005] the ship rate for new Soldiers was 77 percent,” Reed said. “By 2008 it moved up to 84 percent. [Currently] we’re at a 94 percent ship rate which is an incredible improvement which

supports our mission of providing the adjutant general with [qualified] Soldiers that are fit, trained and ready to deploy in support of the Wisconsin Army National Guard.”

Wisconsin Airman recounts role in Haiti relief mission

Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze
128th Air Refueling Wing

A Wisconsin Air National Guard member returned last month following 71 days supporting the relief effort in Haiti.

Master Sgt. Craig DeLorme, a pest management supervisor with the Milwaukee-based 128th Air Refueling Wing's Civil Engineer Squadron, arrived in Haiti on Feb. 23 — traveling throughout the city of Port-au-Prince during his deployment, visiting military camps and the camps of displaced persons to treat water and manage any infestation problems.

DeLorme said he and a co-worker visited nine military bases around Haiti to assess for pest infestation.

"We walked around, pointed out problem areas and decided how to handle them," he said.

His co-worker, he said, was an Airman from the Iowa Air National Guard in Sioux Falls.

"I couldn't help them as much as I wanted to," DeLorme said of the displaced persons camps. He said supplies were always in short order, and dirty standing water increased the mosquito problem.

"It was a losing battle," he added. "All I could do was drop mosquito dumps into the water."

The amount of refuse and debris created a breeding ground for pest infestations, he said. Military bases were in a slightly better situation.

"Most of the bases were following what we told them to do," he said. "The bases were set up correctly."

During his time in Haiti,



DeLorme said he worked with a variety of military forces, starting with an Air Force civil engineering unit, and then moved on to help the Army and Navy with their pest problems. He also worked with medical groups, kitchen staff members and various inspectors.

"It was truly a joint task force," DeLorme said, adding that he helped the Brazilian relief workers with showers and clean water.

He said there were several obstacles to overcome while he was conducting his mission. MREs were the only food source for the first week of the deployment, communications within the camps suffered difficulties, and people were generally very busy and couldn't provide many answers to questions he posed, he said.

"We did the best we could with what we had," he said. "There



Master Sgt. Craig DeLorme, center, gathers with Brazilian soldiers in a makeshift camp in Haiti. DeLorme deployed to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on Feb. 23 to assist in the international relief effort following a devastating earthquake on Jan. 12.

At left, Master Sgt. Craig DeLorme, a pest management supervisor with the 128th Air Refueling Wing's Civil Engineering Squadron in Milwaukee, stands with Haitians holding bags of food near a food distribution center in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. DeLorme deployed to Haiti on Feb. 23 to assist in the relief effort by reducing the pestilence in the affected area and helping to ensure clean water was available. Photos submitted by Master Sgt. Craig DeLorme

weren't a lot of complaints."

Destruction and pest infestations did not encompass all of DeLorme's experiences, though.

He said he took food to orphanages and helped to hand out the items, which were mostly MREs from camp that people donated from their supplies.

"We went to orphanages because they were safe," he explained. "We couldn't give food on the streets because rioting would break out."

By the end of his deployment, DeLorme said the situation had improved, mostly at the military sites.

"There were 15 cases of malaria when we got [to the bases in Haiti]," he said. "There were none when we left."

He said temporary neighborhoods were just getting started when he left Haiti.

DeLorme returned to Wisconsin May 5, and has since resumed his career as a correctional officer in Oshkosh, the city he calls home. 📷

Wisconsin Guard general to play key role in mobilization training

Wearing more than one hat can be challenging, Brig. Gen. Dominic Cariello said, but it can also be rewarding.

Cariello, land component forces commander for the Wisconsin Army National Guard, officially began his duties as First Army Division West's deputy commanding general of operations May 20 during a ceremony at Fort Hood, Texas.

"It's a fine balance between my civilian job, my National Guard job and my role as deputy commanding general for Division West," he acknowledged. "My employer is very supportive, because it is additional time, and it falls outside of the traditional realm of weekend training."

In that role he will direct culminating training exercises, observe rock drills — walk-through training rehearsals — attend joint assessments to determine appropriate training packages for mobilizing reserve component units, and validate training. He will also advocate a reserve component perspective to mobilization training, such as an understanding of the time required for part-time Soldiers to accomplish home-station training.

The culture difference between active Army and reserve component Soldiers is not the only gap Cariello has the opportunity to bridge in his additional role. As the military transitions from Iraq to Afghanistan, he intends to use his experience as the commander of an embedded training team from 2005-06 to guide training. He said there are significant differences between the two theaters in the global war on terror — language and culture among them.

"The [improvised explosive devices] in Iraq are not the same as in Afghanistan," Cariello said, noting that IEDs are more powerful in Afghanistan. "The culture is different — in Afghanistan you don't have to be as careful about offending someone, but you have to be more direct and you have to get people there to work



Brig. Gen. Dominic Cariello speaks at First Army Division West's Fort Hood, Texas, headquarters during a ceremony welcoming him as the division's deputy commanding general of operations May 20. Cariello is a Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldier and most recently served as Wisconsin's assistant adjutant general for Army. Division West trains and validates mobilized Army Reserve and Army National Guard units for deployment to combat or other contingency operations and, as directed, also trains units of the active Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and United States partner nations. Division West Public Affairs photo by Sgt. 1st Class Gail Braymen

together. In Iraq the police and the army work together — in Afghanistan they are getting there." He added that buildings are constructed differently in Afghanistan, insurgents use civilians as shields more frequently, and the need to involve local police and governors requires joint training.

Cariello said he pursued the additional responsibility at the urging of Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin.

"One thing he said is he would like to see his general officers get involved in these dual hat assignments that would help Wisconsin," Cariello said. "[Brig.] Gen. Dunbar said there's a lot we can offer our National Guard, not just Wisconsin — we have knowledge and value we can share across the United States. It creates a support advocacy."

Cariello said these are exciting times for the National Guard, and part of that is observing how the heightened operations

tempo from multiple deployments is leading the Wisconsin National Guard to transform its mindset and also transform as an organization. He hopes that other general officers in the Wisconsin National Guard will look into dual hat assignments as well.

"This is something we need to continue," he said. "Yes, it's a lot of work, but someday all this fun will be over. We've got to strike while the iron is hot and make our mark." 

Seasoned veteran to continue serving Red Arrow

Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue
Wisconsin National Guard

After more than 32 years of military service, including combat tours in Iraq, Afghanistan and Vietnam, one of the Wisconsin National Guard's last serving Vietnam veterans is hanging up his uniform but will continue to serve Wisconsin's Soldiers — and their families.

Command Sgt. Maj. Ed Hansen, Manitowoc, will soon be using his military experience to serve the men and women he's grown to love over the years as a family readiness support assistant for the 32nd Brigade.

Hansen addressed the "Red Arrow" Soldiers for the last time as their command sergeant major during a formal ceremony at Camp Williams Saturday (July 10).

"For me, it's just one more way to serve," Hansen said. "And what better way to serve than to continue to take care of the families?"

In his new role, Hansen will provide administrative support to the brigade's new commander, Col. Martin Seifer, on issues related to the Family Readiness Support Program including monitoring the recruitment and training of family readiness group volunteers.

He will also serve as a liaison between the commander, family readiness group leaders and volunteers, and the Wisconsin National Guard Family Program. Hansen admits his experience with the brigade will help him, but he still has much to learn.

"I know a lot of the families and I know the brigade," Hansen said. "Those relationships have been long established. Even with being familiar with the brigade, I've never served in this position, so I need to come up with a new battle rhythm ... a whole new mindset."

Lisa Klutz, Wisconsin National Guard family program director, acknowledged Hansen will have to adjust, but remains optimistic.

"It is a challenge to take yourself out of the role of an enlisted advisor, and take a step

back and assume a different role," Klutz said. "I am confident, however, that he will make the transition smoothly and the volunteers and commanders will be comfortable working with him."

Janell Kellett, 32nd IBCT Family Readiness Group lead volunteer, has worked with Hansen for three years throughout the entire course of the preparation, mobilization, deployment and return of the 32nd Brigade. She welcomes him to his new position.

"I think he is just fantastic," Kellett said. "When you talk to him, you know that he really cares about the Soldiers, really cares about the families and he wants to do what he can do to help."

The former 32nd Brigade Commander Col. Steven Bensed, who served side by side with Hansen for the last two years, expressed his gratitude to Hansen for continuing to serve.

"His experience and knowledge in all areas of Soldier training and readiness over the years make him an invaluable tool for commanders and he is one of the best NCOs I've ever worked with," Bensed said. "There is no doubt in my mind that he will excel in this position."

"He is a forward thinker who always looks for the positive in every situation," Bensed continued. "He understands Soldiers and their challenges. He understands the values of family and the fragility of its integrity when Soldiers are deployed."

Klutz agreed.

"I really think he would do well at any job he chose to pursue," Klutz said. "But, he chose to continue to serve the Soldiers of the Wisconsin National Guard and their families. I think that not only says a lot about who he is as a Soldier, but as a person as well." 



Command Sgt. Maj. Ed Hansen renders a salute during the National Anthem at a 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team change-of-command ceremony at Camp Williams July 10. Hansen transferred responsibility to Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde, but will continue to serve the "Red Arrow" Soldiers as the Family Readiness Support Assistant for the 32nd Brigade. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue

Changing of the guard for the Red Arrow Brigade

Capt. Joy Staab

Wisconsin National Guard

The Wisconsin Army National Guard's 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team returned from a successful yearlong deployment to Iraq earlier this year and is now moving forward with new leadership following a change of command ceremony July 10 at Camp Williams.

Col. Steven Bensend and Command Sgt. Maj. Edgar Hansen formally transferred leadership of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team to Col. Martin Seifer and Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde.

Hansen assumed the responsibilities of command sergeant major in July 2006. Bensend took command of the 32nd Brigade in February 2008 and together they immediately began preparing the unit for its upcoming deployment to Iraq.

Under their leadership, the 32nd Brigade deployed to Iraq in the largest overseas operational deployment of the Wisconsin National Guard since World War II. They were tasked with a variety of missions including base defense, detainee guard force operations at theater internment facilities, closing the largest internment facility in Iraq, transferring detainees, operating an academy to train Iraqi corrections officers, securing and administering the International Zone in Baghdad, and turning over U.S.-controlled properties back the government of Iraq.

For their accomplishments, the 32nd Brigade headquarters company received the Joint Meritorious Unit Award and several other companies received Meritorious Unit Citations.

The 32nd Brigade consists of nearly 3,500 soldiers assigned to 46 separate units across the state and has deployed twice in support of Operation Iraq Freedom.

Hansen, a combat veteran of campaigns in Iraq, Afghanistan and Vietnam, received a waiver to delay his military retirement past age 60 in order to

deploy with the 32nd. He retired from the National Guard at the end of July.

"Remember," Hansen said during the ceremony, "you can take the Soldier out of the Army, but you can never take the Army out of the Soldier."

Hansen will continue to serve the Guard by working as a civilian for the family assistance program in Appleton.

"Carry on the culture [of the 32nd Brigade]," Bensend said to the incoming leadership. "Do what's right every time, take the high road no matter how difficult it may be, and always have the loyalty to take care of your Soldiers, because Soldiers have the loyalty to follow the examples of their leaders."

Bensend has completed more than 32 years of military service and will continue his career on the Wisconsin National Guard's Joint Staff, and plans to spend more time with his wife, Leslie, and sons, John and Luke.

The new leadership team has more than 58 years of combined military service and is ready for their new positions.

"I'm going to take this opportunity to ensure we become the best Soldiers we can," Conde said. "Our families, our friends, our state, our nation are all dependent upon us."

Conde is a combat veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan. He and his wife, Jennifer, are residents of River Falls and have five children — Blake, Lindsay, Erica, Katrina and Michael. He works full time at Chartwells Dining service as a district manager.

Seifer has also completed two tours of combat duty, the most recent during the 32nd Brigade's recent tour to Iraq where he served as an installations director. When not on military duty he serves as a project manager at Schneider National Inc. — an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve award recipient.

"We do not know when the next chapter of the Red Arrow story will be written," Seifer said after the change



Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde and Col. Martin Seifer, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team command sergeant major and commander, prepare to cut the official cake during a change-of-command ceremony at Camp Williams July 10.

Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue

of command ceremony. "But in today's current operating environment we must continue to lean forward in our foxhole, as an operational [Guard] we must be more prepared and ready than in the past when called upon our by our state and federal leaders. And we intend to do just that."

Seifer and his wife, Denise, are

residents of Seymour with their daughters Kalyn, Alexandria and Kendra. He is a graduate of Logan High School, La Crosse, and holds an associate degree in information services from Fox Valley Technical College and a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. 



Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, welcomes the 30 National Guard Soldiers of the 724th Engineer Battalion who voluntarily returned early after approximately three months of deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and are going through demobilization at Fort McCoy.



Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, Wisconsin Army National Guard commander, stresses the importance of the demobilization and reintegration process at Fort McCoy to the 30 National Guard Soldiers of the 724th Engineer Battalion who voluntarily returned after approximately three months of deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Wisconsin National Guard photos by Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez

Some Guard Soldiers return early from Iraq deployment

Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez
Wisconsin National Guard

Efforts to draw down U.S. military forces in Iraq included a platoon-sized group of Soldiers from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 724th Engineer Battalion, who began their demobilization process at Fort McCoy in mid-July after serving approximately three months in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

While the battalion continues its route clearance mission in Iraq, the Soldiers who voluntarily returned early — 23 from Wisconsin, five from Pennsylvania and two from Puerto Rico — now serve as a "test run" for the demobilization process for when the rest of the unit returns.

"So far, the demobilization process has been going smoothly for this group," said 1st Lt. Jared Seidl, a personnel officer in the 724th rear detachment.

Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, and Brig. Gen.

Mark Anderson, Wisconsin Army National Guard commander, stressed the importance of the reintegration and demobilization process to Soldiers during a July 14 visit to Fort McCoy.

"Take your time reintegrating," Anderson said. "Make sure you get your questions answered and take advantage of all the resources available to you and your families."

"You have skills the average person your age doesn't have and the public gives you great respect for putting on the uniform you wear," Dunbar said.

The adjutant general added it was great to have the Soldiers back home, and encouraged them to speak up if they have any questions regarding educational benefits and health or employment issues.

More than 500 Soldiers — the majority from Wisconsin, the rest from Pennsylvania and Puerto Rico — deployed to Iraq in late April and are scheduled to return early next year. 📷

Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell
Wisconsin National Guard

“As a young officer, I never knew what the senior leadership’s expectations were of me,” stated Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

Anderson’s statement got the attention of his audience as he addressed a room full of officers and warrant officers July 15 at Joint Force Headquarters’ Witmer Hall, Madison.

“As a junior officer, even as a battery commander,” Anderson continued, “I wasn’t quite sure what my battalion or brigade commander expected of me to get to those senior positions – like becoming a major in the Army National Guard.”

Now as the commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, one of Anderson’s goals is to emphasize career mentorship, leadership development and career progression of officers at all levels of leadership.

“My philosophy is that an officer should be like a pentathlete; proficient in a series of events and not just an expert in one,” Anderson said. “The goal is to develop a well-rounded individual who is not only capable and competent in their area of expertise but also experienced in a joint environment [and has served with] headquarters, staff commands and so forth.”

According to Anderson, junior officers gain their basic leadership experience out in the field with their soldiers. However, as an officer continues to rise in the ranks, it’s operational assignments that set an officer apart from their peers.

“We are getting more opportunities to attend training courses and want to offer opportunities for officers to take assignments at national level positions, like the National Guard Bureau,” Anderson said. “The exposure and experience that you bring back ... after attending a senior service college or U.S. Army War College ... has a considerable impact in our organization. I want our officers to be successful and as competitive as possible, not only here in the state but at the national level too.”



Officer mentorship key to career success

In an effort to continuously improve the WI Army National Guard, there has been a greater emphasis on leadership selection boards. Battalions and brigades hold senior leadership boards where they look at their entire officer corps for future assignments and move people around with career management in mind. The board, which convenes for approximately two days, determines where officers are best suited.

“There are very open and honest discussions about our officers’ strengths and weaknesses,” Anderson explained. “The conversation is not intended to ‘beat up’ an officer, but every individual is talked about – with input from the command from which they reside – to get a good picture of their skill set. We ask questions like, where do we need to place them to help them achieve their goals based on their desires.”

To support these discussions, the board relies on feedback from each officer regarding their goals and accomplishments, as well as their officer evaluations and suggestions from the rated officer’s command. This information is managed through the Officer Career Management program, a tool for the

senior leadership to constructively review officers.

“For every position within the Wisconsin Army National Guard, we nominate officers that we believe – based on eligibility, the input each officer provides through the OCM program and the input from the senior officers – are best for the position,” Anderson said.

The responsibility to make one’s goals known however, is on the individual officer.

“When you fill out your officer evaluation review support form, be thorough,” Anderson emphasized. “Address the goals and objectives that you have, what you’ve achieved as well as the goals you did not. If you leave it blank, it leaves [the officers who rate you] to wonder if the rated officer even cared about the goal.”

OCM allows young officers to ensure that leadership gets a full sight picture of their goals and who they are.

“You have the opportunity in OCM to pick any job you want,” said Col. Kenneth Koon, director of manpower and personnel for the Wisconsin National Guard. “Just because you’re assigned to a particular unit, doesn’t mean you

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, emphasized the importance of setting career goals and seeking a mentor for personal development July 15 at Joint Force Headquarters’ Witmer Hall, Madison. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell

can’t select another job outside your command.”

Career mapping, an area under development, helps officers identify the key assignments throughout their career that will help them get the experience they need to achieve that goal. A mentor is essential to this process.

“I don’t think we put enough emphasis on the value of having a mentor,” Anderson said. “I recommend that throughout your career, get to know an officer who is one or two grades above you and ask them to mentor you. Peer mentors are helpful too, ask for their feedback. A mentor can help you understand where you need to go and what you need to get there.”

“We must always seek out and embrace new opportunities for additional responsibility,” said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Lynn Ryan, the command chief warrant officer for the Wisconsin Army National Guard. “I encourage you to initiate contact with your leadership, ask for their feedback.”



Senior Master Sgt. Marlin Mosley, an instructor boom operator for the 128th Air Refueling Wing, Milwaukee, and his wife, Jessica Mosley, stand near the ball field at Miller Park on July 11. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze

Wisconsin Airman recognized during Brewers game

Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze
128th Air Refueling Wing

The Milwaukee Brewers recognized Senior Master Sgt. Marlin Mosley, an instructor boom operator and the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of operations and training at the 128th Air Refueling Wing, during the pre-game events of the July 11 baseball game at Miller Park.

Mosley was recognized for his achievements throughout his military career and for his contributions during recent deployments. The Brewers displayed Mosley's career biography, several photos of him performing his duties, and a live-feed of him and his family, which was broadcast on the stadium's Jumbotron.

"Words can't even explain the privilege

this is," Mosley said.

According to Mosley, 128th Air Refueling Wing Commander Col. Ted Metzgar, chose the 25-year veteran as the first choice to receive the community's recognition.

Mosley said he was deployed to Transit Center at Manas in 2008 as the chief boom operator, was the acting first sergeant and flew refueling missions.

One year later, Mosley said he deployed to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, where he flew the most refueling missions in a three-week period.

"It was an honor to be chosen, it is a privilege to serve this nation, and this is more than I could ask for," Mosley said.

Mosley was accompanied by his wife, Jessica, his children Kendall, Myles and Kellen, and several friends and family members. 📷

Integrating service members from war to workforce

Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell
Wisconsin National Guard

Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers and Airmen have worked hard during their deployments to get the job done overseas. As those service members return to civilian life, high unemployment and an uncertain economy threatens their ability to work hard in the civilian sector.

Despite the unemployment statistics, Wisconsin veterans have an improved chance of landing a job through the help of various National Guard and state resources which aim to promote veteran employment in the civilian work force and support their reintegration to a "post-deployment normal."

"We have partnered with the Department of Workforce Development, the state Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Legion and planned 20 [job fairs](#) across the state," said Col. Kenneth Koon, director of manpower and personnel for the Wisconsin National Guard. "We've held them at armories, the veteran's assistance center in Milwaukee, [college campuses] and have more scheduled throughout the state through mid-October. These job fairs are for all veterans, not just [Iraq or Afghanistan] veterans."

The Wisconsin National Guard has put together a "plethora of resources to reintegrate [service members] back into society after deployment," Koon said. These services include proactive support to help service members return to their jobs or find a new one.

"It's about resiliency, and one's ability to problem solve and overcome barriers to keep one's self-worth intact," said Bob Evans, director of psychological health for the Wisconsin

National Guard. "Employment is crucial — it's not just economic, but also lends to how we value ourselves. A lot of our self-worth is tied up in our employment status."

A recent survey published by the Society of Human Resource Management inquired employers of service members about the benefits and challenges they face by hiring a veteran. As part of the study, they also asked about programs designed to support veterans returning to work following a deployment. The study uncovered that 66 percent of employers are providing employee assistance programs to help service members transition back into the work place. Additionally, 58 percent are providing skill training to refresh workers' abilities on the job and 48 percent are providing flexible work hours to allow for a comfortable transition.

"We're trying to put our arms around a global opportunity," Koon said. "We've partnered with law enforcement, department of workforce development, Wisconsin department of veteran's affairs and the Society of Human Resource Managers is just a natural extension of what we do."

"We're trying to make this connection to SHRM because we think we can offer them more support to their employee assistance programs and help them to retain good employees and make them better in the long run," Koon continued. "We want to help employers understand that a service member isn't [necessarily] unruly or unhappy, it's just that sometimes they need time to reintegrate." 📷

Story with photo can be found online at: <http://dma.wi.gov/dma/news/2010news/10142.asp>

Veterans, Families, Retirees

Veterans' headstone medallion available for order

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is offering bronze medallions to attach to existing, privately purchased headstones or markers, signifying a deceased's status as a veteran.

"For Veterans not buried in a national or state veterans cemetery, or those without a government grave marker, VA is pleased to offer this option that highlights their service and sacrifices for our country," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki.

The new item can be furnished instead of a traditional government headstone or marker for veterans whose death occurred on or after Nov. 1, 1990, and whose grave in a private cemetery is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker.

Under federal law, eligible veterans buried in a private cemetery are entitled to either a government-furnished grave marker or the new medallion, but not both. Veterans buried in a national or state veterans cemetery will receive a government headstone or marker of the standard design authorized at that cemetery.

The medallion is available in three sizes: 5 inches, 3 inches and 1 ½ inches in width. Each bronze medallion features the image of a folded burial flag adorned with laurels and is inscribed with the word "Veteran" at the top and the branch of service at the bottom.

Next of kin will receive the medallion, along with a kit that will allow the family or the staff of a private cemetery to affix the medallion to a headstone, grave marker, mausoleum or columbarium niche cover.

More information about VA-furnished headstones, markers and medallions can be found at <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hm/hmtype.asp>.

VA is currently developing an application form for ordering the medallion. Until it is available, applicants may use the form for ordering government headstones and markers, VA Form 40-1330. Instructions on how to apply for a medallion are found on the VA Web site at www.cem.va.gov/hm_hm.asp.

Veterans with a discharge issued under conditions other than dishonorable, their spouses and eligible dependent children can be buried in a VA national cemetery. Other burial benefits available for all eligible veterans, regardless of whether they are buried in a national cemetery or a private cemetery, include a

burial flag, a Presidential Memorial Certificate and a government headstone or grave marker.

The new medallions will be available only to veterans buried in private cemeteries without a government headstone or marker. Families of eligible decedents may also order a memorial headstone or marker when remains are not available for interment.



VA operates 131 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico and 33 Soldiers' lots and monument sites. More than 3 million Americans, including veterans of every war and conflict — from the Revolutionary War to the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan — are buried in VA's national cemeteries on more than 19,000 acres.

Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from the VA Web site on the

Internet at www.cem.va.gov or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 1-800-827-1000.

Temporary TRICARE fix announced

President Barack Obama signed a bill June 25 that delays until the end of November a drop in the amount TRICARE and Medicare will reimburse physicians.

The issue dates back to the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, when Congress passed a deficit reduction bill that tied Medicare reimbursement to the gross domestic product. Since then, payment rates have fallen faster than anticipated, raising concerns that physicians may turn away Medicare and TRICARE patients.

"Kicking these cuts down the road just isn't an adequate solution to the problem," Obama said after signing the delay. "It's untenable."

TRICARE reimbursement rates are essentially based on Medicare rates. Those rates were scheduled to drop by 21 percent by April 1, 2010. Should reimbursement rates change, TRICARE will allow up to 60 days for business systems to align with the new rates.

Troops, vets urged to submit claims

Defense Department officials want to ensure that anyone whose military enlistment was involuntarily extended under the so-called "stop loss" provision applies to receive a stipend by the Oct. 21 deadline.

An estimated 145,000 service members are eligible to receive \$500 for each full or partial month served in stop loss status.

During a "DoD Live" bloggers roundtable July 28, Lernes J. Hebert, the department's acting director of officer and enlisted personnel management, said tens of thousands of applications have been processed, but the department is far from having received claims from every eligible service member. As a result, he said, officials are trying to get the word out so eligible people can apply by the deadline.

One concern, Hebert said, is that some current or former service members assume they're ineligible, or that they don't want to spend time applying for what may turn out to be no return at all. But turnaround is quick and the form takes very little time to complete for what could turn out to be a significant payoff, he added.

"If there's any question if you're eligible — go ahead and apply," Hebert said. "Most of the individuals who have gone through the process say [the form] takes about a half hour to complete. The average pay out is between \$3,000 and \$4,000, so that's a pretty good return on your investment."

All service members, veterans and beneficiaries of service members whose service was involuntarily extended between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009, are eligible for the special pay.

"This is to get the word out, so that nobody is left wondering come Oct. 22," Hebert said. "It's a full-court press."

Army Maj. Roy Whitley, the Army's project manager for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay, also participated in the roundtable. Whitley said the Army has processed about 44,000 claims, adding that he believes there are more troops out there who don't know to apply for their stop loss special pay. But without that application on hand, he added, the Army can't do anything for the soldier.

"We can always pay you," Whitley said. "We have plenty of time to look at claims. We just need to get you in."

Hebert said the Defense Department's stop loss website at <http://www.defense.gov/stoploss> has all the information about the special pay and includes the application form. He emphasized that service members who aren't certain about eligibility may qualify despite their memory or knowledge of the situation.

"Whether you think you're eligible or not, submit the application," Hebert said.

Parting shot



Members of the 115th Fighter Wing Security Forces Squadron take part in a land navigation training exercise at Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center June 13. The week-long combat exercise was part of yearly training for unit members. Wisconsin Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Stephen Montgomery