



# @ease Express

July 2012

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Agribusiness Development Team.  
Photo by 2nd Lt. Stephen Montgomery



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# roll call



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## on the cover

Capt. Jared Seidl, an engineering officer assigned to the 82nd Agribusiness Development Team, stands by an Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle before departing on a mission at Camp Wright, Afghanistan, April 2. The 82nd ADT is currently deployed to Afghanistan's Kunar Province to provide agriculture and agribusiness support to that region. 82nd ADT photo by 2nd Lt. Stephen Montgomery

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# From the TAG

Army values, Air Force values, sexual assault — one of these things doesn't belong.

In a recent Gallup poll, Americans were asked how much confidence they had in various institutions responding with one of three answers — “a great deal,” “quite a lot,” or “some, or very little.” The military is the number one public institution in the eyes of the American people with 75 percent indicating that they had a great deal of confidence (43 percent) or quite a lot of confidence (32 percent) in the armed forces.

That is exactly where we should be and the National Guard plays a key role in this public confidence. We have proven our enduring value for more than 375 years and the performance of our Soldiers and Airmen over the past decade has been unprecedented. We have mobilized multiple times for combat operations, responded at home



to terrorism and natural disasters, and have maintained a quality force of highly experienced guardsmen. No wonder the public has such high confidence in the military.

Despite the broad support, we also have challenges and one of them is sexual assault. We all come from different backgrounds but merge

around a simple notion — we are a volunteer force and we all chose to serve. We are privileged to serve and we live by a set of core values. The Army values are loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage. The Air Force values are integrity, service before self and excellence.

There is simply no place in our organization for sexual assault. It is unacceptable behavior and it is not tolerated. We have a system in place to support victims of sexual assault and we take action on allegations. I am personally responsible and my commanders are accountable for this program and we will not shrink from our duty.

You have a role, too — be a battle buddy or a wingman and uphold the integrity of the Wisconsin National Guard. The biggest challenge to this cancer is battle buddies or wingmen standing silently by when they should act. We wear the uniform of the United States and there is no place in our organization for sexual assault.

## From the Editor: Putting the ‘express’ back in @ease Express

If @ease Express was a hotel, we'd post signs saying something along the lines of: “Pardon the inconvenience while we renovate to serve you better.”

This online publication was originally intended to be a quick read. But it's hard to resist the temptation to go into detail when telling the great story of the Wisconsin National Guard. As a result, we have provided more than one avenue to read those great stories, but on the other hand we often tell you the same story more than once.

The solution, if you'll allow me another metaphor, is to offer a large sampler platter to give you a taste of each story. Embedded links provide readers the

opportunity to see the complete story and related photos or videos.

This effort has taken a little more time than we would have liked. We don't want to simply provide an aggregate publication — two or three paragraphs to tease you to click on the rest of the story. Reading @ease Express should still be a complete experience in its own right — which means significantly reformatting the stories you read here to sufficiently inform without discouraging you from exploring the complete story online.

Just as some appetizers on the sampler platter offer more generous portions than others, some stories in

@ease Express will provide more content for readers to linger over.

Other aspects of @ease Express will remain the same — hovering the cursor over some photos will call up additional images, and readers can still print out each issue if they desire.

Let us know how we are doing, and thanks for reading.

Sincerely,

Vaughn R. Larson  
Editor, @ease Express

# TRANSPLANTED

## 82nd ADT mission takes root in Provincial Reconstruction Team

**2nd Lt. Stephen Montgomery**  
*82nd Agribusiness Development Team*

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — The 58-member 82nd Agribusiness Development Team of the Wisconsin National Guard conducted its last mission May 9, just less than two months in Afghanistan.

The two-fold mission to the Agriculture Compound in Asadabad included attending a monthly District Extension Agent meeting and conducting

a key leader engagement with the Department of Women's Affairs (DOWA).

However, the change is largely administrative in nature. While the 82nd ADT is no more, its agribusiness Soldiers and Airmen will continue to oversee demonstration farms and build relationships begun in March, only now as part of the Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT).

**Continued on Page 5**

**Staff Sgt. Lindy Phenninger, a team leader assigned to 82nd Agribusiness Development Team's security platoon, provides security to other members of the 82nd ADT while on a mission at a demonstration farm near Asadabad, April 16. The 82nd ADT was at the farm to preform quality assurance checks of the farm's operations, assess crop health and identify future efforts of the 82nd ADT to the farm. 82nd Agribusiness Development Team Public Affairs photo by 2nd Lt. Stephen Montgomery**



Sgt. Curtis Tessman and Staff Sgt. George Nagel, both assigned to the 82nd Agribusiness Development Team's agriculture platoon, talk with one of the team's young professionals while on a mission to a demonstration farm in the Marawara district, May 6.

## 82nd ADT to continue mission as part of Kunar PRT

Continued from Page 4

"We will continue on with our mission," said Maj. Fred Oehler of the former 82nd ADT. "Tying the agriculture mission in with what the PRT is doing will ultimately strengthen our mission."

Oehler said that, because 80 percent of Afghanistan is involved in agriculture, much of the PRT mission relates to agriculture.

Capt. Sarah Bammel, who oversees the women's programs with the 82nd ADT and now the Kunar PRT, said the meeting with the DOWA revealed what projects and initiatives have been done in the past and what is planned for the future.

While larger cities such as Jalalabad and Kabul are fairly progressive — by Afghan standards — Asadabad and Kunar Province are still very much traditional. Limited work opportunities outside the home exist for women in Kunar, so DOWA and the ADT — and now the PRT — have explored ways women can work in the home and still help provide for their

families, such as chicken farming.

"Chickens are a cost-effective program," Bammel said. "We thought about bee keeping, but it is just too expensive to get started."

The remaining members of the 82nd ADT will be reassigned to various missions in the capital region.

"We are ready for what is next," said Col. Darrel Feucht, 82nd ADT commander. "The Soldiers and Airmen of this unit are some of the best Wisconsin has to offer. We have been able to reap the rewards of having conducted ourselves as the 82nd ADT for a time in Kunar Province, and can now be proud that we are part of Afghan and Wisconsin history."

The Wisconsin National Guard learned it would gain an agribusiness development team mission in 2010, and the unit trained for 12 months before [reporting for active duty](#) in February and completing [mobilization training](#) at Camp Atterbury, Ind.  

- [Related stories](#)
- [Related photos](#)



Sgt. 1st Class Christie Serns checks on the condition of some tomato plants while on a mission to the Central Kunar Demonstration Farm and Orchard, near Asadabad, April 23. Serns is an agricultural specialist with the 82nd Agribusiness Development Team. 82nd ADT photos by 2nd Lt. Stephen Montgomery

# ROAD RAGE



**Sgt. 1st Class Jim Wagner**  
MNBG E Public Affairs Office

RUDARE, Kosovo — Even a seemingly mundane task like removing a pile of dirt and concrete blocking a bridge on the outskirts of this small northern Kosovo town can quickly turn dangerous, as some Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers learned June 1.

The NATO peacekeeping mission Kosovo Force (KFOR) provides a safe and secure environment, but is also responsible for ensuring freedom of movement as part of UN Security Council Resolution 1244. Members of the Wisconsin National Guard's 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade helped plan and execute the mission to remove that roadblock. Ethnic hostilities remain more than a decade after NATO intervened in the Serbian conflict, illustrated in part by civilian-made roadblocks. This particular impediment blocked the main artery between the southern portion of Rudare and Mitrovica, and was one of nine roadblocks KFOR officials had determined prevented freedom of movement in the region.

The operation was conducted in the early morning hours, while most residents of the town were leaving for work. German and U.S. Soldiers quickly established vehicle control points and a security perimeter so the Portuguese-led KFOR Tactical Maneuver Battalion (KTM) could bring in the heavy equipment required to remove the substantial concrete, gravel and debris barrier.

Two KFOR soldiers were injured by gunfire during the operation after unidentified individuals in a violent crowd of protestors opened fire on security forces. Multinational Battle Group East (MNBG E) forces responded in self-defense, using tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition. The injured KFOR troops were not Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers. 

[Complete story online.](#)



At top, members of the Portuguese-led Kosovo Tactical Maneuver Battalion removed a roadblock on the outskirts of Rudare preventing freedom of movement to the people of Kosovo, June 1. Above, American and German Kosovo Force (KFOR) troops take a defensive posture after a hostile crowd became violent. At right, Sgt. 1st Class Jim Wagner, MNBG E public affairs office non-commissioned officer in charge, takes cover after unidentified individuals opened fire on security forces



# ROAD WARRIORS

## Training pays off for 1157th in Afghanistan



1157th Transportation Company members Sgt. Austin Reese of La Crosse, and Sgt. Brooke Ash of Fond du Lac, assemble a T-Hawk unmanned aerial vehicle during a class in Afghanistan. The vertical take-off and landing UAV will be used to scout for threats on roads. 1157th photo by Staff Sgt. Dominic Renteria

The Oshkosh-based 1157th Transportation Company is running on all cylinders with its convoy escort mission in Afghanistan.

“I am proud of what we have accomplished to date,” said 1st Sgt. Thomas Krueck of Waukesha. “Our Soldiers have embraced the mission and taken responsibility for what still needs to be done to reach our goals.”

“Our Soldiers are adapting to an ever-changing environment and demonstrating extraordinary poise and resiliency,” added Capt. Christian Menden of Green Bay, unit commander.

The 1157th was originally to conduct convoy missions in Kuwait, and learned of its new mission while preparing for mobilization training. The transportation unit received mobilization training at Camp Shelby, Miss., and additional training after arriving April 17 in Afghanistan.

That training came in handy in late May when a MaxxPro Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle driven by Spc. Chase Crull, of Hollandale, was hit by a roadside bomb. He sustained minor injuries but was more concerned about the well being of his fellow Soldiers. He comforted his crew, assisted the medic with other Soldiers and helped provide security.

“I was able to remember a lot of my training,”

Crull said. “Everybody acted accordingly.”

Crull rendered first aid with the assistance of some Soldiers, as other Soldiers provided security. He assisted with security until the quick reaction force arrived, at which point he was ordered to seek medical attention. However, he did not want to leave and instead continued the mission, displaying his heroism.

“I wanted to be there to help anybody else,” he said. “Never leave a fallen comrade.”

Staff Sgt. Dominic Renteria, a convoy commander, said the 1157th Soldiers are getting to explore Afghanistan on their convoy missions, and also interact with local nationals driving the supply trucks they escort.

“It has been very enlightening for many of the Soldiers who have never left America to see another culture and interact with them,” Renteria said.

### Online stories about the 1157th:

- [Wisconsin National Guard unit ready for Afghanistan](#)
- [Legendary NFL quarterback visits Wisconsin National Guard troops](#)
- [Wisconsin National Guard unit getting ready in Afghanistan](#)
- [Training pays off for Wisconsin Guard Soldier in Afghanistan](#)



**Above, Sgt. Sonia Buchanan, a Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldier who served with Special Operations Forces as a member of a Cultural Support Team, interacts with Afghan children in a local village Nov. 12, 2011. Buchanan and three other Wisconsin Guard Soldiers served as CST members.**

Photo courtesy Sgt. Sonia Buchanan

**At right, Master Sgt. Karen Dumke, Wisconsin Army National Guard, engages a local Afghan family at a local clinic during her deployment as part of a Cultural Support Team. Dumke worked with Special Operations Forces as a CST member.**

Photo courtesy Master Sgt. Karen Dumke



# SPECIAL OPS Mission

**1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson**  
Wisconsin National Guard

Four Wisconsin Army National Guard members were chosen to support Special Operations Forces missions in Afghanistan because they were women, but their success depended upon their abilities as Soldiers.

Three of the four shared some of their success stories with senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders, as well as leaders from other local reserve components, learned June 1 during the Wisconsin National Guard's senior leader conference at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Madison.

Master Sgt. Karen Dumke of Waupun, 1st Lt. April Nelson of Viroqua, and Sgt. Kristen Elegeert of De Pere agreed that military bearing was critical in working with what had been an all-male tactical environment.

"It was very important to get very involved," Dumke said. "I was very involved in everything on the [village stabilization team] site — maintenance, clean-up, sanitation, preparing meals, and also still doing missions. You're self-contained — you're taking care of your own house."

Sgt. Sonia Buchanan of Cottage Grove — who was not part of the June 1 presentation — said that the Special Forces team she worked with was upfront and honest.

"They said 'We requested that you guys are here. We realize that you are a necessity, and in order for us to gain [villagers' trust] we are going to need females here,'" Buchanan recalled. "But they were very hesitant about

**Continued on Page 9**

# Wisconsin Soldiers assist Special Forces as part of Cultural Support Team

Continued from Page 8

having females embedded with them and living amongst them. Once you show that you bring operational value to the team, they accept you in a heartbeat. Obviously, that's why we were there, to fill in the gap."

Engaging local Afghans proved to be a different challenge. Nelson said that being a woman in uniform made the villagers suspicious, but providing medicine and medical care quickly won them over.

"At first when we were there the men didn't understand that we were Soldiers and that our team was trying to communicate with them," Buchanan said. "They thought we were concubines.

"We're more of a third-gender type — they don't really understand how to classify us," she continued. "We're not like their women, but we're not a male Soldier. We're this third entity, a female Soldier, which is a new concept to them."

Nelson said that the suicide bomber and IED threats decreased once her team had established a regular presence in a local village, and she began providing care for their women, children and elder males. She learned that dehydration is a common issue, and educated mothers on child care basics.

"Push fluids, feed appropriately, don't stick things in their ears," she said, noting the local practice of inserting beans or onion skins into children's ear canals to combat earaches.

Dumke related how one particular village warmed up to the male Soldiers after continued visits from the female Cultural Support Team. She learned of one village that had not been visited, but Special Forces Soldiers assigned to the 95th Civil Affairs tried to discourage her



**Sgt. Kristen Elegeert engages a group of local women and children in an Afghan village while on patrol with Special Operations Forces. During her deployment, Elegeert worked**

**to establish a female clinic and increase Afghan government funding for an all-girl school.** Photo courtesy Sgt. Kristen Elegeert

from going there.

"But once we went there and began to engage the families, that one visit brought everybody out," Dumke said.

Elegeert worked to establish a female clinic and increase Afghan government funding for an all-girls school. She showed a video of her and her interpreter playing "Duck Duck Goose" with Afghan students.

"They called it 'Yak Yak Du,' or 'One One Two,'" Elegeert said. "The great thing about that is these girls, they never get to run around and giggle, so they really loved doing this."

All four described a hardscrabble existence for Afghan women — a combination of hard work out in the elements and subservience to husbands or males in the villages.

"They had no concept of doing

anything," Elegeert said. "When you asked them what their plans were, they'd say childbearing and taking care of their children. I'd ask them what they do for fun — they had no concept of fun whatsoever. They cook, they clean, they sew. Their only concern was money and medical care."

"In my area as well, females really didn't have dreams," Nelson said. "Even the kids, they want shoes and they want to stay warm. They ask you for a hat. An education is so far-fetched, it's such a crazy idea. 'Why would I want to learn how to write when I can't even afford food for my table?' They have no concept of anything except being alive and surviving."

"It's just day-to-day living, subsistence living," Dumke said. "It's all they know. It is very strange for us to go there. At the

same time, they're very welcoming. The women, the children, even the men would come outside or get on top of their homes or peek out. They were very curious about us and they would ask questions, like 'What does your husband think?' or 'What do your children do?'"

Buchanan recalled a young woman in Afghanistan who tried to escape an arranged marriage and came into a women's clinic suffering from hot oil burns.

"Women, they're not valued," Buchanan said. "I think, as a society as a whole, their view on relationships is so unlike ours. Their idea of caring is so different from mine. Like just communicating with the children daily, and watching how some of the parents

# Cultural Support Team members share their story

Continued from Page 9

treat their children. For me, it's a hard concept to grasp, but I understand that their culture is so different than ours."

"The villagers liked having us there, for the most part," Dumke said. "Not just the women, but the men, too."

Part of that acceptance came from being culturally sensitive.

"If we were going into a village we would put on a head scarf," Dumke said. "The [male Special Forces Soldiers] would sometimes wear the local garb, and that's to help build that relationship, to say that we are sensitive to the culture in the country and try to understand their culture — not change it in any way, but to be culturally sensitive and recognize that."

"Showing that you care enough to even try goes such a long way," Buchanan added. "Those are important things to them. Covering for women is important for them. What is it to me to wear a head scarf or a longer top? Nothing. But to them, it's everything."

Nelson showed a photo of 13-year-old Rafeullah with a severe cleft lip and palate.

"This is my success story," she said, smiling.

Rafeullah's father brought him to the clinic, face covered by a scarf. Nelson quickly obtained permission from higher headquarters to take the necessary steps to help the boy. While the two surgeries at CURE International Hospital of Kabul were free, funds were raised to cover the cost of transportation and lodging.

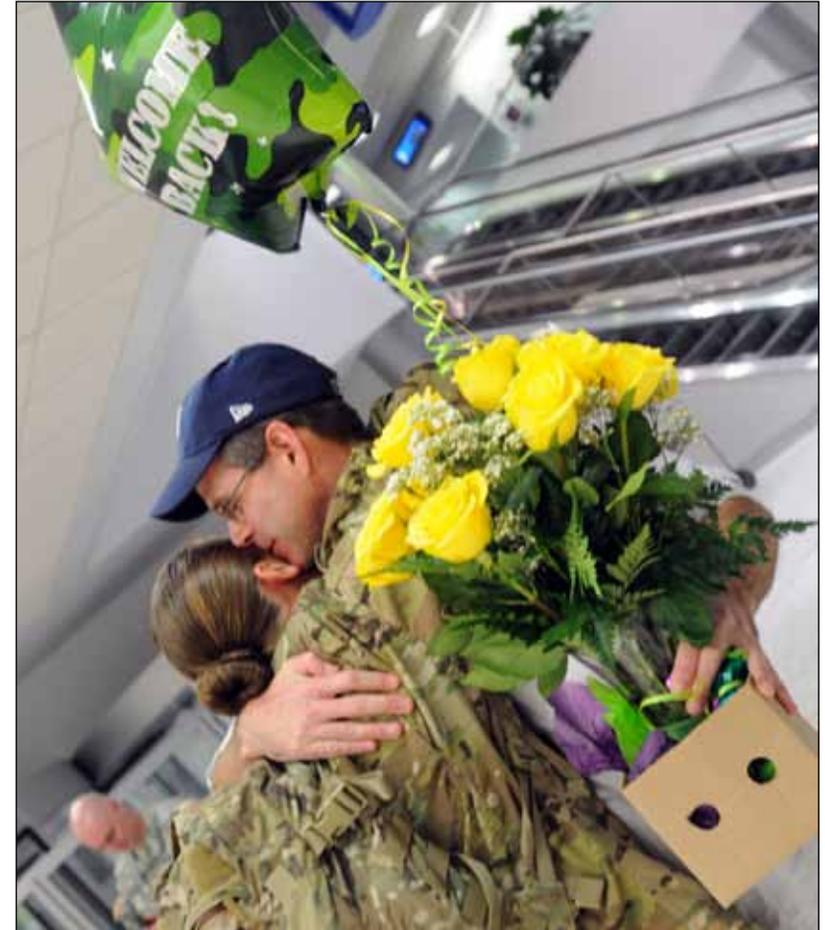
"The importance of me helping this little boy and his family is that village had a lot of Taliban and a lot of insurgents in it," Nelson explained. "With us doing this, the threat went way down — it almost disappeared. For the first time, they actually gained access to the village without having IEDs or firefights. That was a huge success."

The journey to Afghanistan began in early 2011, when the Army announced it was seeking candidates for the Cultural Support Teams. A physically and mentally grueling 10-day [assessment and selection](#) was held in March, putting candidates through a number of road marches, obstacle courses, long distance runs, tests and scenarios.

"They put themselves through the qualification course that, I would fathom a guess, many of us would have a hard time making it through," said Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard. "Not only the physical aspects, but the



**1st Lt. April Nelson is overcome with emotion as she is greeted by family and friends upon her return to Wisconsin after deploying to Afghanistan with the 3rd Special Forces Group Cultural Support Team. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photos by Sgt. Alyson Swanke**



psychological aspects of working with Special Operations Forces and the unique missions that those teams take on."

"I didn't really know what it involved, but I thought, 'Wouldn't that look awesome on paper?'" Nelson recalled. "Then I went to assessment and selection, and I wondered about what kind of decision I made. They threw rucks on our backs and said 'go.'"

Though she was selected, Nelson said the trainers cautioned her about if she could cope with what she would see on the deployment.

"So I went home and thought about it," Nelson said. "And I went from thinking this would really look good on paper to thinking this is how I can pay it forward, and help people that can't help themselves."

Despite the austere conditions, the dangers and the challenges, all four said the effort was worth it. Buchanan and Elegeert said they would do this type of mission again "in a heartbeat."

"In fact, I was trying to go again in October," Elegeert said.

"I would actually liked to have stayed maybe a couple months longer to meet more people and to build more relationships with some of those villager," Dumke said.

"It was very rewarding," Nelson said. "I believe once was enough. If I ever went back over to Afghanistan I believe it would be in a different capacity."

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, praised the Civil Support Team veterans.

"I didn't think it was possible to be any prouder of the Wisconsin National Guard," he said. "I'll never be able to prove it, but I'm positive that in Afghanistan where you went, there are girls with a whole different outlook on life because you walked into their lives. They saw an American female, a Soldier, doing something that they probably in their wildest thoughts hadn't thought of. Who knows what that's going to bring to Afghanistan in 10 or 15 years?" 🇺🇸

# Volk Field weather forecaster key part of mission success in Afghanistan

**Staff Sgt. Heather Skinkle**  
451st Air Expeditionary Wing

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Mission ready? Not if the weather forecasters said it's a no-go.

An often-overlooked Air Force occupation specialty is the weather forecaster. Who hasn't anguished over a weather forecast gone wrong or at an umbrella left in a stand because the forecaster predicted sunshine?

"Mother Nature is unpredictable sometimes," said Staff Sgt. Joshua Thorn, a 451st Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron weather observer, deployed from the Wisconsin Air National Guard's Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center.

Weather forecasting might be an imperfect science, but instead of hand-held pressure gauges that resembled Grandpa's box camera, mankind has progressed to satellites and computer systems to more accurately calculate weather trends.

"We use a combination of weather machines and balloons, satellites, modeled data, and physical observations to collect data and issue a forecast," Thorn said.

Modeled data is compiled from pre-existing weather forecasts and averages and funneled into a set of algorithms or a mathematical construct, to predict weather over a three-, five-, or even seven-day range, whereas SkewT — a website that depicts satellite data with real-time telemetry — is much more precise, Thorn said.

However, both are necessary for a complete picture of Kandahar Airfield, and on a larger scale, Afghanistan. With such a far-reaching capability, weather forecasting is an integral key to a flight's mission success. After all, deciding to fly a multi-million dollar airplane involves more than a weather-watcher looking out a window.

"We've positioned several weather stations around the airfield," Thorn said. "They have many attachments to gauge different things like temperature, dew point, wind, cloud height, and precipitation to give us a vertical atmospheric profile."

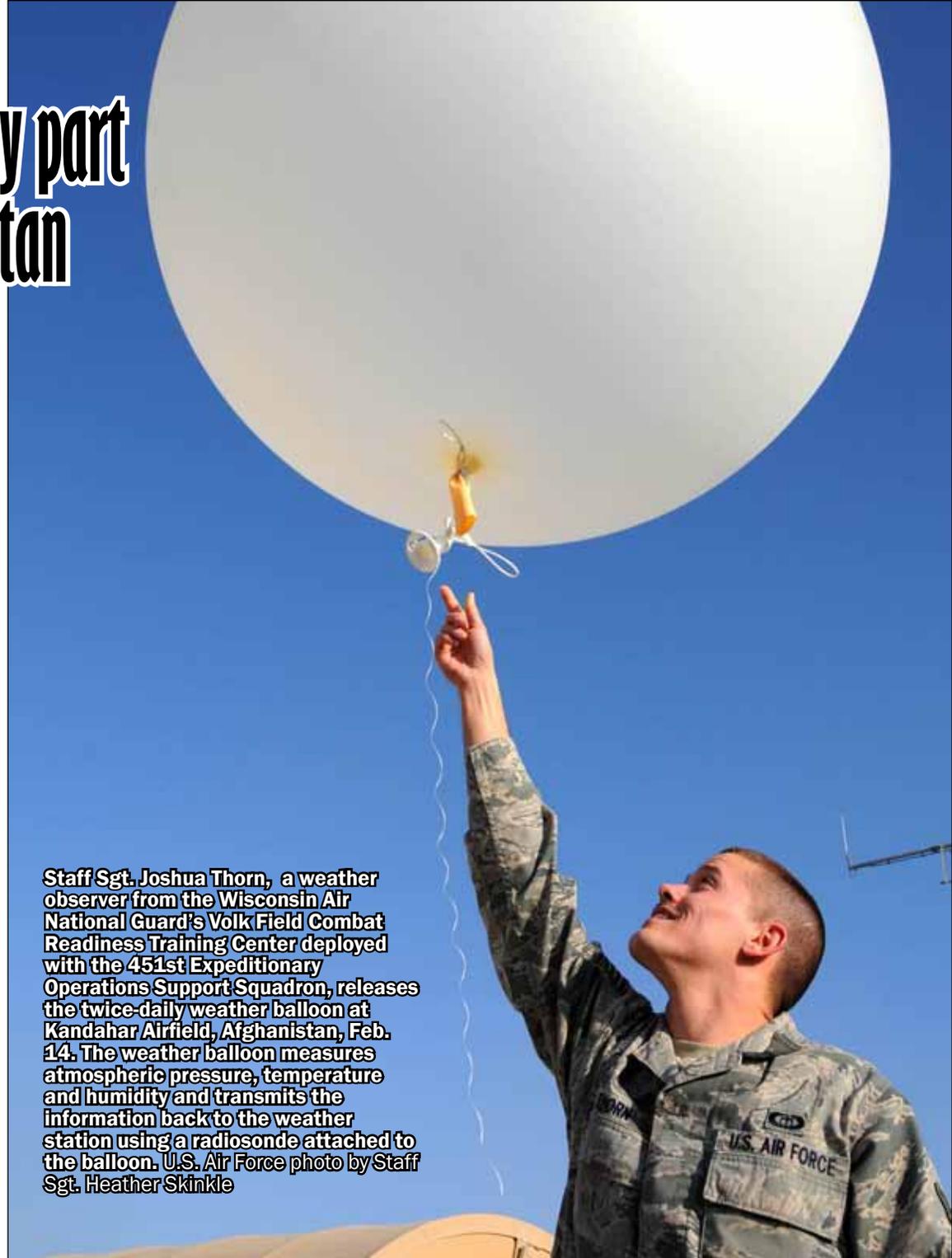
Assessing Kandahar Airfield's weather involves many pieces of equipment and a full-time staff. The KAF weather team — comprised of Air Force and NATO personnel — maintains a 24-hour operations tempo to run three weather sections at the base operations center as well as support another shift on the other side of the flight line.

Weather forecasts aren't just crucial to the pilots, though.

"Engineers ask us about precipitation amounts, say for a 5-10 year period," Thorn said. "Weather affects how they would go about building something here."

Whether it is a pilot, engineer, or Airman deciding on whether or not to don a jacket, the weather forecast affects everyone.

"The best part of my job is seeing how our mission briefs have an impact on operations," he said. 📷



**Staff Sgt. Joshua Thorn, a weather observer from the Wisconsin Air National Guard's Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center deployed with the 451st Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron, releases the twice-daily weather balloon at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, Feb. 14. The weather balloon measures atmospheric pressure, temperature and humidity and transmits the information back to the weather station using a radiosonde attached to the balloon. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Heather Skinkle**



**A Japanese soldier forces a wounded American Soldier to continue during the infamous Bataan Death March, which began 70 years ago on April 9.** Photo from the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force

**Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers (left to right) Lt. Col. Kerry Morgan, chief of staff; Lt. Col. Jon Russell, operations officer; and Maj. Matthew Beilfuss, deputy operations officer, cross the finish line of the 13.1-mile Bataan Memorial Death March at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo March 26. The Soldiers are assigned to Multinational Battle Group East. Task Force Falcon photo**

# Marching in memory of POWs

Twenty members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's [157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade](#) headquarters and 32nd Military Police Company — joined by dozens of service members from the U.S., Poland and Ukraine — recently honored the victims of the Bataan Death March by walking in their footsteps, as it were, in a memorial endurance event in Kosovo.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Hudson, a Wisconsin National Guard member assigned to Task Force Falcon, played a key role organizing the 13.1-mile march at Camp Bondsteel March 26, complete with gravel, paved roads and

large hills. He also took part in the heavy category which required participants to carry at least 35 pounds on their backs.

"Participating in the Bataan Memorial March was a fitting way to pay tribute to all the heroic service members who made the ultimate sacrifice defending the Philippine Islands during World War II," Hudson said. "All those who entered and took part did so out of sheer preservation and determination — not unlike the Soldiers who marched in the actual Bataan Death March."

Ninety-nine members of the [Janesville-based Company A](#), 192nd Tank Battalion,

Wisconsin National Guard, fiercely defended the Bataan peninsula in the Philippines for more than three months alongside fellow American and Filipino forces, until disease, lack of supplies and hunger compelled their surrender to the Imperial Japanese Army seven decades ago on April 9.

The Janesville Soldiers who served in one of two National Guard tank battalions — comprised of companies from Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, Minnesota, Missouri — deployed to the Philippines shortly after the United States entered World War II. Approximately 76,000 prisoners endured

the harrowing "Bataan Death March," an 80-mile forced trek to Balanga, the capital of Bataan. Prisoners of war who did not die of exhaustion, wounds or illness were stabbed, beaten or killed along the way — between 5,000 and 10,000 Filipinos and as many as 650 Americans before reaching Camp O'Donnell, where the death toll continued to mount. Only one third of the Janesville unit survived until their liberation three years later.

[Wisconsin](#) honors the service and hardship of these and other prisoners of war every April 9, designated since 2001 as [Prisoner of War Remembrance Day](#). 🇺🇸

# Wisconsin Air National Guard impacted by Air Force structure realignment plan

Wisconsin is among 31 states and territories to be affected by the Air Force's [force structure realignment plan](#), part of a plan to cut \$487 billion from the defense budget over the next 10 years.

If the proposal is approved by Congress, the Wisconsin Air National Guard's net loss would be 114 positions — including 16 full-time positions. The proposal would also reduce by two the Milwaukee-based 128th Air Refueling Wing's fleet of KC-135 Stratotankers, and retire the Madison-based 115th Fighter Wing's RC-26 airplane.

The manpower reduction would amount to approximately five percent of the Wisconsin Air National Guard's authorized end-strength of 2,290 Airmen and must be implemented by Oct. 1.

"This announcement is sobering," said Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, noting that the announced cuts were larger than anticipated and are expected to be implemented in only six months. "However, we will continue to accomplish our mission safely and effectively.

"We cannot ignore that these proposed reductions have real, significant, life-changing impact on our men and women in the Wisconsin Air National Guard," he continued. "I will work closely with my commanders to minimize the impact to our Airmen and families."

Dunbar's goal is to handle any cuts from the Air Force proposal through attrition to lessen the impact on Wisconsin Air National Guard members and families.

Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, Air National Guard director,

said that programs are being set up to retain as many Airmen as possible.

"[The Air Force Chief of Staff] has said that the Air Force is going to get smaller, and all of the components — Active, Guard and Reserve — are going to get smaller. It's now becoming a reality," Wyatt said.

"The Air National Guard has been here before," he added. "We need to continue to work with our active duty and Reserve counterparts to ensure we have the best Air Force possible. America's security depends upon us getting this force mix correct."

State adjutants general and governors have expressed their concern with the disproportional scope of the cuts. In a Feb. 26 [letter](#) to Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, the National Governor's Association "strongly opposed" what it described as "disproportionate cuts facing the Air National Guard." And in a Feb. 27 [letter](#) to the Senate Armed Forces Committee, all 54 adjutants general asked Congress to delay implementing the proposed plan until a proper review was conducted.

The Air Force's proposals are aimed at meeting the President's Budget for fiscal year 2013, which calls for reducing Air Force military end strength to 501,000 — with net reductions of 5,100 Air National Guard members and 4,800 Air Force federal active and reserve positions. Nearly one quarter of Air Force personnel are from the Air National Guard, but collectively provide 35 percent of Air Force capability for only six percent of the total Air Force budget. 



The U.S. Air Force's proposed force structure realignment plan, if implemented, would have a significant impact on Volk Field and the 128th Air Refueling Wing. Wisconsin National Guard photos





Jermale Euwing, a student at Milwaukee's St. Marcus Lutheran School, works on a project as part of the Wisconsin Air National Guard's STARBASE program April 30. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue



STARBASE Wisconsin, a Department of Defense-sponsored education initiative for fifth-grade students, held a ribbon-cutting ceremony June 18 at the U.S. Army Reserve Center in Milwaukee. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

## STARBASE Wisconsin launches high expectations for fifth-grade students

Two months after the first class of Milwaukee fifth-grade students entered a hands-on environment for science, technology, engineering and math, officials cut the ribbon for the Department of Defense-funded education initiative, [STARBASE Wisconsin](#).

Administered by the Wisconsin Air National Guard and based at the U.S. Army Reserve Center in Milwaukee, STARBASE Wisconsin provides 25 hours of interactive learning over the course of five weeks. Dr. Charisse Sekyi (pronounced SAYchee), STARBASE Wisconsin director, said the academic outreach program has exceeded her expectations.

"The activities are so engaging," Sekyi said. "It's such a rich curriculum, but it's very rigorous so there's some work that we have to do to meet the kids where they are and bring them up to where the curriculum is."

[STARBASE](#) is an acronym for Science and Technology Academies Reinforcing Basic Aviation and Space Exploration. Sekyi said teachers and school principals have told her that no similar program is offered in Milwaukee schools.

"A lot of elementary science education is not hands-on — it's paper-pencil-book," she said. "To be able to

bring this level of activity down to the elementary level is really phenomenal."

One student summed it up when she said, "That's the hardest class I've ever taken, but I loved it."

In its first round of classes, the STARBASE Wisconsin program graduated more than 60 5th-grade students from three Milwaukee schools — St. Marcus Lutheran School, Emmaus Lutheran School and Washington DuBois Christian Leadership Academy. The second group of classes includes students from Milwaukee's public school system. Since April, STARBASE Wisconsin has worked with 146 students from seven schools. They will serve 1,500 students annually beginning this fall — a significant portion of the estimated 5,000 fifth-grade students in MPS.

Col. John Puttre, STARBASE Wisconsin program manager, has been working with other Wisconsin Guard leaders for more than a year to get the program up and running.

"Whatever it is you want to do in life — you know, after this, you can do it," he said to the first STARBASE graduating class. "You just have to put in a little effort and take small steps, and you can make or build whatever

you want ... even your dreams."

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, joked that the purpose of this program was not to recruit fifth graders into the military. However, he noted that many people seeking to enter the Wisconsin National Guard today lack the skills and knowledge required, relaying that one of the program's goals is to help fire the imagination of young students and help them develop technical skills for civilian and military opportunities.

"Our standards are incredibly high," Dunbar said. "If you wear this uniform, you have to be somebody special. So a chance for us to do something in partnership with the Milwaukee School District and in partnership with the community here in Milwaukee, and we're very excited about it.

"We won't solve all the problems with this little class," Dunbar continued, but we're going to solve some." 📷

### Stories online:

- [Wisconsin Air Guard helps Milwaukee youth get excited about education](#)
- [STARBASE Wisconsin seeks to build on early success](#)



# EXECUTIVE ENCOUNTERS

Wisconsin National Guard members have crossed paths with President Barack Obama in recent months



During a Feb. 15 visit to Milwaukee, three Airmen with the 128th Air Refueling Wing — Col. Mike Mayo, 128th vice wing commander; Senior Airman Justin Gruber, a KC-135R crew chief; and Airman 1st Class Darla Tokarski, a cargo specialist for the 128th's Small Air Terminal — each in their own way had contact with the president or Air Force One.

The president shook Mayo's hand twice, gave him his personal presidential coin and thanked Mayo for his service to our country. Looking back, Mayo said that walking up to Air Force One and greeting the president of the United States was special.

"It's one of those things that's kind of surreal," he said. "But it's an honor."

Gruber, whose job was to chock the aircraft, was mildly awestruck by the enormity of Air Force One and a presidential visit, yet he

**Col. Mike Mayo, 128th Air Refueling Wing vice wing commander, holds a challenge coin given by President Barack Obama, as Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett looks on Feb. 15.** 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Staff

Sgt. Jeremy Wilson

remained focused on doing his job well.

"Chocking an aircraft is chocking an aircraft. It's not a hard task, but you feel like you have to perform more," he said.

Tokarski had been in the Air Guard a mere 14 months at the time of the visit. Nonetheless, she was selected by her supervisors to drive the stair truck to Air Force One.

Driving the stair truck at a slow pace towards the aircraft, she didn't take her eyes off the Air Force One staffer motioning to her with hand signals.

"They told me not to look at the plane, just keep your eyes on the crew chief," she said.

Once Tokarski had placed the stair truck next to Air Force One and she had the vehicle in position, she heard and felt a "tap-tap-tap" above her head. A secret service agent at her side next to the stair truck leaned in and told her, "He's at your six."

"I looked in the mirror and, sure enough, he was right there," Tokarski said. "Most people don't get that close to the president. Had they told me, when I met with the recruiter, that I'd be doing this, it's too good to be true."

**Continued on Page 16**

# Wisconsin National Guard members cross President Obama's path at home and abroad



**Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Denise Jelenski-Hall, senior enlisted leader of the National Guard Bureau, speaks to the eight Guard members and their guests who were selected to represent the Army and Air National Guard at a dinner hosted by President and Mrs. Obama Feb. 29 at the White House. National Guard photo by Sgt. Darron Salzer**

The Wisconsin Air National Guard's Tech. Sgt. Cristian Bennett agreed with President Obama's statement that there had never been a night at the White House quite like the Feb. 29 dinner for Iraq war veterans.

"This evening we welcome, not the statesmen who decide great questions of war and peace, but citizens," Obama said. "Men and women from every corner of our country, from every rank of our military, every branch of our service, who answered the call."

"It was very reassuring to hear the words that they said," Bennett said of comments made by Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "All the leaders there were talking directly from the heart."

Bennett, a fighter team leader who has served for nine and one-half years with the Wisconsin Air National Guard, was one of nine National Guard members — and one

of only three Air National Guard members — selected to represent Wisconsin at the White House event dubbed "A Nation's Gratitude: Honoring Those Who Served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn." The event was a tribute to 78 Iraq War veterans and their families to honor them for their service, sacrifice and commitment to nation.

"It was very humbling to be chosen," Bennett said. "To have the president of the United States talking directly to us, it was overwhelming."

Bennett and his wife Rachel, of Evansville, sat approximately 25 feet from the podium where the president and other leaders spoke. The Bennetts also had the opportunity to shake hands with President and Mrs. Obama. This was his first meeting with Obama, even though he worked on the presidential security detail when Air Force One landed at Truax Field in 2009 and 2010.

"He is a down-to-earth person," Bennett said of the president.

Members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's [1157th Transportation Company](#) were among the U.S. troops President Barack Obama spoke with at Bagram Airfield May 1 during a surprise visit to Afghanistan.

"All I want to do is just say, 'Thank you,'" Obama said.

The sacrifices service members have made are what make America free and secure, the president said. Obama told the troops he had just signed the U.S.-Afghanistan strategic partnership agreement with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, which signals the transition to turning over Afghanistan's security lead to that nation's own forces.

"We're not going to do it overnight," Obama said. "We're not going to do it irresponsibly. We're going to make sure that the gains, the hard-fought gains that have been made, are

preserved."

The 1157th reported to Camp Shelby, Miss., in early February and conducted several weeks of mobilization training before arriving in Afghanistan April 17, where they are expected to serve for approximately nine months. The unit was reassigned to deploy to Afghanistan as a result of reallocation of forces by the Department of Defense.

**Capt. Christian Menden, right, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1157th Transportation Company, greets President Barack Obama during a surprise visit to Bagram Airfield May 1. The 1157th is preparing to take over a convoy escort mission in Afghanistan. 1157th Transportation Company photo by Staff Sgt. Dominic Renteria**



Complete stories online:

- [President Obama's Milwaukee visit begins, ends at Wisconsin Air Guard base](#)
- [Wisconsin Airman 'overwhelmed' by White House Iraq veteran tribute](#)
- [Wisconsin Guard unit meets President Obama in Afghanistan](#)



# Educating employers ON THE value of veterans

**Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, emphasizes the value veterans can bring to business organizations during the inaugural Wisconsin National Guard Business Summit March 30 at the Lambeau Field Atrium in Green Bay. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson**

More than 130 business representatives convened in the workplace of champions March 30 to learn about championship-caliber members available to their teams.

The goal of the inaugural Wisconsin National Guard Business Summit, held during the “[Year of the Veteran](#)” in the Lambeau Field Atrium in Green Bay, Wis., was to educate employers about the value military veterans can bring to their organization. The summit received significant support from the [American Legion](#).

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, asked those in attendance to make hiring veterans a priority. He noted that the national unemployment rate is 8.3 percent, but the national unemployment rate for veterans who served since 2001 is 50 percent higher — and that the Department of Defense recently estimated that unemployment among currently serving members of the National Guard and Federal Reserve to be more than 20 percent.

Dunbar noted that one reason employers don’t hire

veterans is because they don’t realize the value of veterans. He related that the skills, experiences and character veterans have developed should mesh with the qualities employers are seeking.

“In order to mine gold you have to literally move tons of dirt,” he said. “In terms of human capital, when it comes to our veterans, we in the military have already removed tons of dirt and these veterans truly are pure gold.”

He urged employers to understand the value of veterans and make hiring veterans a priority.

Mike Hinz, vice-president of driver recruiting for Schneider National — who makes hiring veterans and service members a [priority](#) — echoed Dunbar’s sentiments.

“I don’t want you to get the impression that all people coming out of the military are perfect,” Hinz said. “They’re not. But they have the raw materials, the raw skills and developed skills, the potential to be anything you want them to be in your organization.”

Hinz noted that the company’s founder, Al Schneider, recruited his first drivers from the Wisconsin National Guard 76 years ago.

Craig Benzen, marketing director with the Green Bay Packers, thanked the business representatives for attending the summit. He said that the summit coincided with the Packers examining players in the current free agency period and upcoming draft.

“It occurred to me that there are a lot of similarities between the type of players the Packers recruit and the type of workers most businesses are trying to recruit,” Benzen said. “The Packers are looking for players who are dedicated and loyal, who spends a certain amount of time perfecting their craft, somebody who knows there is a right way and a wrong way to do things, and guys who know what ‘team first’ means. These are the same values I think we’ve all witnessed in those serving in the military.” 📷

[Complete story online](#)



## Kudos from the commander-in-chief

Gov. Scott Walker thanked members of the Wisconsin National Guard May 18, the eve of [Armed Forces Day](#), for their commitment to the state and nation, and said he and other governors are committed to keeping a strong Guard.

“We’re committed to working with our congressional delegation in the federal government because we believe a well-prepared, well-armed [military] is important for our nation,” Walker said in Witmer Hall at Joint Force Headquarters in Madison, Wis. “But we also believe very strongly that the most efficient, the most cost-effective and the most practical way of doing that is investing in our Guard.”

Walker noted that Wisconsin National Guard members bring not

only their military training to the table, but their civilian work experience as well.

“That can’t be replicated anywhere else,” he continued, “so we’re going to continue to fight for that because we want a strong Guard in Wisconsin and the 49 other states, and throughout this country.”

Walker related an account where a woman approached him to meet her son’s commander in chief.

“She gave me this bracelet,” he said, pointing to one of two on his left wrist. “I told her I’d put it next to this one,” worn in honor of a fallen service member from Janesville. “It reminds me of how words can’t explain the debt of gratitude we have to all of you. To every one of you here, to the 10,000 strong in the Guard here in the state of Wisconsin, and to all others, in the Guard around

the country, in the Reserves and in the active duty service, for what you do as a commitment to your country. We just can’t thank you enough.”

Walker said he is frequently asked how Wisconsin service members cope with deploying multiple times.

“It’s part of our history — that’s who we are,” he explained. “From World War I, the ‘Greatest Generation’ of World War II, and Korea and Vietnam, two decades ago in Desert Storm ... every step of the way we’ve had a proud tradition that dates all the way back to those first Soldiers from Wisconsin, who went out in record numbers to fight in our nation’s Civil War.

“We’re proud because of our heritage,” Walker continued. “We’re proud because of who we are. Thank you for helping that live on.”

**1st Lt. Nicholas Plocar, of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, and Capt. Robert Killian of the Colorado Army National Guard, tackle the Commando Crawl — one of the 26 obstacles in the Darby Queen — April 13 at the Best Ranger Competition, Fort Benning, Ga. Army photo**



## Wisconsin Guard Soldier part of Best Ranger competition

A member of Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry finished in the top 10 of 51 teams in the [2012 Best Ranger Competition](#) at Fort Benning, Ga.

1st Lt. Nicholas Plocar of Sheboygan was one of seven Army National Guard Soldiers to take part in the grueling [60-hour competition](#), which ran from April 13-15. The [contest](#) featured road marches of 15.5-miles and 14.8 miles, the Army's toughest obstacle course known as the Darby Queen, urban operations, night land navigation, water confidence course, mortar range, rifle range with moving targets, jumping out of a helicopter and

swimming to shore, and skill proficiency demonstrations.

Plocar qualified for the Best Ranger Competition last November, and prepared for the event since Jan. 30 at the National Guard's Warrior Training Center at Fort Benning. He and Capt. Robert Killian of the Colorado Army National Guard made up Team 49, which finished in sixth place.

"A hardy congratulation goes out to Lt. Plocar," said Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard. "His accomplishment is reflective of the dedication and commitment that we see in all of the

Soldiers in the Wisconsin Army National Guard – but obviously reflective of the dedication that Lt. Plocar has to not only be the best possible ranger, but also a Soldier in the National Guard."

Team 49 spent the entire competition among the leaders, which included Soldiers from active duty Ranger and Special Operations units.

"Back's a little stiff," Plocar said during a meal break on Day 2, when Team 49 was in third place. "No mistakes today — hopefully that will put us right where we want to be."

Of the 51 teams that began the

competition at 6 a.m. April 13, only 34 made it past the first day to finish the event.

Col. John King, commander of the Ranger Training Brigade, said the competitors did not know the order or distances of the events.

"We've stacked the Day 1 as the hardest day in the three-day competition," he said. "They will move approximately 40-45 miles in the first day."

Plocar and Killian competed to the very end, finishing first in the final event.

Another [National Guard team](#) finished in third place in the 2012 competition. 

# Wisconsin Guard Soldiers test their skills in the Great White North

**1st Lt. Peter Owen**

*1st Battalion, 128th Infantry*

Five Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers were among the top finishers in an annual one-day military skills competition in Winnipeg, Manitoba, against teams from the Canadian Land Force Western Area and the Minnesota National Guard March 17.

1st Lt. Andrew Adey of Minocqua; Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Penttila of Inver Heights, Minn.; Spc. Israel Bursch of Blair; Spc. Aaron Cobosco of Eau Claire; and Spc. Zachary Pierce of High Bridge comprised one of 13 teams in the Skill-At-Arms Competition hosted by the 38th Canadian Brigade Group. The physically demanding day began at 5:30 a.m. with teams having no idea which events they would compete in — only that the events would take place during a road march.

Half an hour into the events, contestants arrived at an equipment cache; they could use whatever they found throughout the day, but they would have to carry that equipment all day as well. The Wisconsin team selected a set of binoculars and military nylon parachute cord.

Teams ran from one event station to the next, carrying their equipment and a 40-pound sandbag. Stations included first aid, basic map reading, distance estimation, marksmanship, assembling weapons from assorted components in a tote, and assembling a field stove to boil water.

“It is a unique opportunity to train and compete internationally as a team,” Adey said. “The Soldier skills were basically the same for both of our countries, so it provided a great opportunity to compete in the fundamental skills while building relationships with Canadian forces.”

At day’s end, Wisconsin finished in third place. Col. Nic Stanton, 38th Canadian Brigade Group commander, said that including National Guard teams from Wisconsin and Minnesota provided an excellent opportunity to interact, experiencing similarities and differences during a healthy competition.

“We were blown away by the hospitality the Canadians showed us,” Adey said, “and look forward to more chances to train with them.”



**Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Penttila, of the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, navigates through the Tough Nut obstacle as part of an annual one-day military skills competition in Winnipeg, Manitoba.**

Wisconsin National Guard photos by Sgt. Maj. Craig Boehlke

**A team of five Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers, from the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, maneuver through a low wire obstacle as part of an annual one-day military skills competition in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The Soldiers competed against teams from the Canadian Land Force Western Area and the Minnesota National Guard.**



# BRIDGING THE GENERATION GAP

Military organizations, including the Wisconsin Army National Guard, develop and enforce a distinct culture that influences every aspect of military life — how the uniform is worn and training is conducted to codes of conduct, and so on. This culture ensures a baseline of standards which facilitates the ability of individuals or units to communicate and function with one another.

Continuing that culture from one generation to the next requires effectively communicating the value of that culture, and overcoming any generational barriers that may interfere with that message.

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, recalled joining “pretty much a homogeneous group” of Baby Boomers as a young commander.

“We pretty much understood where each other came from — we had similar backgrounds, so we knew how to interact with each other,” Anderson said. “But

we are a much more diverse organization now.”

That diversity, according to Dr. Elisabeth Nesbit of the Denver Seminary, extends to worldviews and motivations, which translate into different reasons for joining or staying in the military, different approaches to accomplishing tasks, and different methods of social interaction.

“We need to look at generations as cultures, not as people that are older or younger than us,” Nesbit explained. “We value multiculturalism, we value diversity. But we haven’t applied that [across age groups]. If we start applying it that way, it takes some of the angst out of the process — that it’s not just an old person who doesn’t get me and it’s not just a young person who doesn’t have responsibility and doesn’t understand how the real world works.”

Nesbit defined three generations presently in the military — Baby Boomers (born between 1945 and 1964),

Generation X (born between 1961 and 1981) and Millennials (born between 1982 and 2001) — and outlined some broad characteristics of each. For example, she said Baby Boomers value “paying your dues,” identify themselves by their occupations, attach to organizations, and don’t require much affirmation. Members of Generation X, on the other hand, value competence over next-in-line promotion, are skeptical of organizations, have a strong sense of self-reliance and seek occasional affirmation.

“One thing about Millennials,” Nesbit said, “we don’t know who they are yet. They’re still figuring out who they are and what their place in the adult world is going to look like.”

If Generation X was the “latchkey generation,” Nesbit said the Millennials are the “helicopter parent” generation. They highly value regular affirmation and are very collaborative, working better in small groups than independently.

“Millennials have been told their whole lives that they can be whatever they want to be, but no one taught them how,” Nesbit said. She added that not every Millennial fits this broad definition, but that the definition was useful in bridging the generation gap.

Millennials are seeking mentorship, Nesbit said, but not finding mentors among Baby Boomers.

“We have a generation that is asking for it and doesn’t take it for granted,” she said

Anderson echoed the importance of mentoring the younger generation.

“I recognize that we have a lot of young folks in this organization, whether they are enlisted or young officers, who are going to be the future leaders of this organization,” he said. “I want to impart some of my experiences upon that younger group, and a big component of that is mentoring.”

[Complete story online](#)

# Green Bay Packers surprise Wisconsin Airmen at ceremony

**Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue**  
Wisconsin National Guard

A few members of the Green Bay Packers made a stop at the Madison-based 115th Fighter Wing May 19 to surprise about 300 unsuspecting Airmen as part of the annual Packer Tailgate Tour.

The Airmen assembled in a large aircraft hangar on base to hear comments from Brig. Gen. Joseph Brandemuehl, 115th FW commander, and to recognize some members of the unit who garnered state and national-level awards — then they learned of a few special visitors.

“I can’t think of a better way to wrap up a formal recognition program than to thank everybody involved,” Brandemuehl said to the crowd. “If you all want to turn around, we have a few players from the Green Bay Packers joining us here.”

The Airmen gave a stadium-sized roar of applause as six Packers exited the bus and walked toward the front of the hangar, giving game-day high-fives along the way.

Larry McCarren, who played 12 seasons with the Packers as an All Pro center, introduced the other five players on the tour — Wide Receiver Jordy Nelson, Kicker Mason Crosby, Safety Charlie Peprah, retired Guard Marco Rivera and retired Fullback William Henderson.

“It is an honor, true honor, and privilege to be in front of you today,” McCarren said. “We thank you so much for your service to the country and those that defend our country and defend our freedoms and allow us to play football ... they are the true heroes.”

Five of the six Packers to visit Truax Field are Super Bowl champions. But Nelson, who scored 15 touchdowns and led the Packers in receptions and receiving yards last season, gave his perspective on who the real champions are.

“All we do is play a game. You guys put your life on the line all the time,” Nelson said. “Thank you very much — we do appreciate everything you guys do.”

The Packers players answered questions, threw mini-footballs into the crowd, signed autographs and even signed a portion of an F-16 Fighting Falcon.

For the last several months, the 115th Fighter Wing has been preparing for a unit-wide evaluation known as an Operational Readiness Inspection, which will be held in July.

Senior Master Sgt. Brian Carroll, a supervisor for the 115th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, said coming together to have lunch and recognize a few Airmen with awards was great on its own, but then to share some moments with the Packers made it all the more enjoyable.

“It was pretty exciting,” Carroll said. “After thinking about it when I got home

— it helped us forget about the ORI ... it was kind of a three-hour breather. It was just a real relaxing afternoon.”

Carroll also said it was nice to see the younger Airmen enjoying the event so much — like Airman 1st Class Cassie Johnson, assigned to the 115th ammo flight, who was more than excited to meet the players.

“It’s always great hearing people say ‘thank you,’” Johnson said. “You have no idea how much it means ... and to have it come from someone you admire and you think of as a hero — it means 10 times more.” 📸



# Recruiters expand their game at UW

**Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue**  
Wisconsin National Guard

Soldiers of the Wisconsin National Guard scored a victory in the recruiting arena March 11, as more than 200 University of Wisconsin students took to the courts to participate in a National Guard 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament at the Camp Randall Sports Complex.

Olympic gold medalist and NBA player Tom “The Hammer” Hammonds joined forces with the National Guard and local recruiters to host a day of friendly competition and to inform the college-aged students of the benefits of joining the National Guard.

“I’m here to tell you that the National Guard is a tremendous option in your life,” Hammonds said. “You can start off in life going forward instead of backward.”

The tournament has been deemed a success by tournament officials —

generating more than 230 participants and 55 appointments to talk to a recruiter on-site or down the road. Overall, the visit to Madison produced nearly 600 qualified leads for recruiters to follow.

Hammonds as well as other event staff showed a motivational video synopsis of the National Guard and spoke about the many benefits of joining the Guard — such as paid tuition, work experience and serving their country.

Anya Covington, a senior forward for the Wisconsin Badgers women’s basketball team, attended the 3-on-3 tourney to take part in the challenge — she left with a greater understanding of the National Guard.

“I completely respect the military — the discipline and the training,” Covington said. “I feel like this event is really well done and I think the Guard is a great option for everyone.”

1st. Lt. Johnny Simmons, Wisconsin National Guard recruiting and retention

command, said he’s been all but begging to get the tournament to Madison since he initially heard about it a few years ago.

“A lot of kids are intimidated to talk to recruiters in school, but in a venue like this, it’s a relaxed atmosphere,” Simmons said. “Usually we don’t get these kinds of numbers in one day, listening to the message all at once.”

The 3-on-3 program, in its third year, has traveled around the country, visiting more than 30 schools and communities in an effort to find quality “leads” and promote the National Guard’s message to a nation-wide demographic of 17-24 year old college students.

“When all parties are fully engaged early in the program development and pre-promotion process and continue to be involved and collaborating during the tournament event, turnout is strong, the event atmosphere is fun, entertaining and educational ... for all who participate,” said Sgt. 1st Class Lisa Merrill, the tournament program manager.

Hammonds — a first-round draft pick in the NBA who played 12 seasons of professional basketball and won a gold medal with the 1986 U.S. National Basketball Team — said he likes being around basketball, but even more so when it’s for a good cause.

“It means so much to me because of the students,” Hammonds said. “I’m pro-National Guard for what the National Guard stands for — being able to affect lives in this country as well as abroad.”

[Complete story online](#)

**Tom “The Hammer” Hammonds speaks to more than 200 University of Wisconsin students at the Camp Randall Sports Complex in Madison as part of National Guard-sponsored 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament March 11.** Wisconsin National Guard photos by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue



UW student Donald Thomas participates in a basketball challenge.





**World Wrestling Entertainment Superstar Eve Torres (above) signs autographs for WWE fans Feb. 19 at the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Milwaukee recruiters office. Recruiters also offered fans posters, cards and other promotional items co-branded with the WWE and National Guard. Later that night, recruiters (top right) interacted with WWE fans at the Bradley Center in downtown Milwaukee just prior to the live pay-per-view event, "Elimination Chamber." The WWE and National Guard are exploring ways to expand their promotional partnership.** Wisconsin National Guard photos by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson



## Making a good team better

Just as World Wrestling Entertainment Superstars learn new moves to become more effective in the ring, Wisconsin Army National Guard recruiters are applying new techniques of their own to increase the success of their WWE partnership.

"If you don't have an understanding of what WWE is, then you really don't understand the talent or how to utilize it," said 1st Lt. Johnny Simmons, marketing officer with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's recruiting and retention battalion.

For example, WWE Superstars Eve Torres and Big Show have recently made public appearances at Wisconsin Army National Guard recruiting offices prior to live events in Milwaukee and Green Bay to draw WWE fans. Previously, WWE Superstars had met privately with National Guard members as a gesture of the corporation's support for the military.

"It will hopefully give some understanding that we're here," said Master Sgt. Gregory Backes of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's recruiting and retention battalion. "It kind of puts us on the map."

To make those public appearances pay off, recruiters are turning to technology and social media. Backes used Twitter to promote Eve's Milwaukee recruiting office appearance, uploading photos of Eve signing autographs from his smart phone with the Tweet message: "She's here!"

Backes is also developing QR — quick-read — codes to link Soldiers and recruits with recruiters' Facebook pages, informational pages on the National Guard website, and promotional events.

But the new initiatives are intended to enhance, not replace, the traditional recruiting efforts. Eve's visit to the Wisconsin National Guard's Milwaukee recruiting office included static displays of uparmored Humvees and an inflatable canopy to draw attention to the location.

"I absolutely love working with the National Guard, and all of the military," Eve said Feb. 19. "They are always some of my favorite appearances to do because everyone is just so appreciative and grateful and fun." 

[Complete story online](#)



**Members of the Wisconsin National Guard's Drug Control Program unload unwanted and unused pharmaceutical drugs April 30 in support of the Drug Enforcement Administration's Take-Back Initiative. The national project gave Wisconsin residents the opportunity to safely discard potentially dangerous pharmaceutical drugs. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Thomas J. Sobczyk**



## Take-Back effort continues to grow

**Tech. Sgt. Tom Sobczyk**  
128th Air Refueling Wing

The Wisconsin National Guard's [Drug Control Program](#) (DCP) helped collect more than 14 tons of expired, unused and unwanted prescription drugs during a one-day [national take-back initiative](#) April 28.

"The fact that this take-back went up 50 percent shows a continuing need," said James Bohn, assistant special agent in charge of the Milwaukee Drug Enforcement Administration office. "As the word gets out, more people are getting on board with the initiative."

The DCP has been integral in all four take-back initiatives sponsored by the DEA. Last Oct. 29 the DCP delivered more than 9.1 tons of discarded pharmaceuticals to the Milwaukee DEA office. Approximately 150 agencies were involved in the April 28 effort.

"If these drugs are not disposed of properly, they end up on the streets, in our sewage lines, our lakes and water supply," said Master Sgt. Jimmy Olive of the DCP.

The DCP transported the discarded pharmaceuticals April 30 from collection points at State Patrol offices in DeForest, Fond du Lac, Eau Claire, Spooner and Wausau to the Milwaukee DEA office. There the DCP assisted in building pallets and loading the prescription drugs on a truck bound for an incinerator in Indianapolis.

"We couldn't handle this volume if we didn't have this level of cooperation," Bohn said. "[DCP] provided manpower, equipment, resources and time. Everyone contributes, which allows us to do this kind of volume."

The DEA intends to conduct collections approximately every six months until a safe disposal process for prescription medication is completed. 



**A walk-through combined arms rehearsal May 12 and a real-time virtual combat scenario were significant parts of the 32nd Brigade's Warfighter Exercise May 7-16 at Fort McCoy.** Wisconsin National Guard photos by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

# Red Arrow **WARFIGHTER**

The 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team's Warfighter exercise, conducted May 7-16 at Fort McCoy, Wis., provided a virtual battlefield with realistic demands designed to hone battle management skills and point the Red Arrow in the right direction.

"This is something we used to do quite a bit back before 2001," said Lt. Col. Michael George, 32nd Brigade executive officer. "By and large, the young enlisted and junior officers have not been on staff as long as some of us older guys, so they have never been through one of these exercises. Then when you add in the complexity of all of our digital systems, that adds another component or dimension. When you look at what we've accomplished these past 10 days, I think it's extraordinary."

The Fort Leavenworth, Kan.-based Mission Command Training Program has put units ranging from brigades up through corps through the virtual wringer since the 1980s to teach commanders and their staffs how to manage offensive and defensive operations.

"We did every one of [the training objectives] well, some better than others, and some we did really well," Col. Martin Seifer, 32nd Brigade commander, said. "We took huge steps in the last 10 days."

"I think we learned a lot," added Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde. "We grew a lot in the last four days."

- [Complete story online](#)
- [Related story](#)
- [Related photos](#)

# MOVING ONWARD

## ■ Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers advance to regional Soldier, NCO competition

**Spc. Eric Liesse**

*112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

After a grueling three-day competition, the Wisconsin Army National Guard announced its 2012 State Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year April 22. Both Soldiers now advance to next month's Region 4 Soldier and NCO of the Year competition at Camp Grayling, Mich.

Sgt. Jeremy Smith, a Watertown, Wis., native with the Madison-based 54th Civil Support Team, beat out five fellow Soldiers to be named the State Soldier of the Year. Sgt. Darren Habermehl, a Muskego, Wis., native from Troop C, 1st Battalion, 105th Cavalry Regiment out of Reedsburg, Wis., won over seven other NCOs to take the State NCO of the Year title.

"It's been quite a competitive weekend, for sure," Smith said soon after winning the Minute Man statue. "A lot of the competitors are very good at what they do."

"I'm not going to lie — everybody wants to win, and I probably have a competitive streak as big or bigger than

**Continued on Page 28**

**Sgt. Darren Habermehl, above, the 2012 State Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, navigates the obstacle course April 21 at Fort McCoy during the state Soldier of the Year and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year competition. Inset, Habermehl and Sgt. Jeremy Smith, the**

**2012 State Soldier of the Year. They emerged from a field of 14 to advance to the Region 4 competition at Camp Grayling, Mich., where they will face National Guard Soldiers from six neighboring states. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Sgt. Megan Burnham**



# Soldiers vie for state title

Continued from Page 27

most,” Habermehl said. “I was really hoping that my scores... would put me on the top. And thankfully, it fell in my favor this time.”

“I think it’s been fairly close,” Smith said. “We were going over bonus points earlier with some of the other people trying to figure out who might be up. There’s still some things that you don’t know when they read the names. It was a great feeling. It’s definitely a great experience and something I’m never going to forget.”

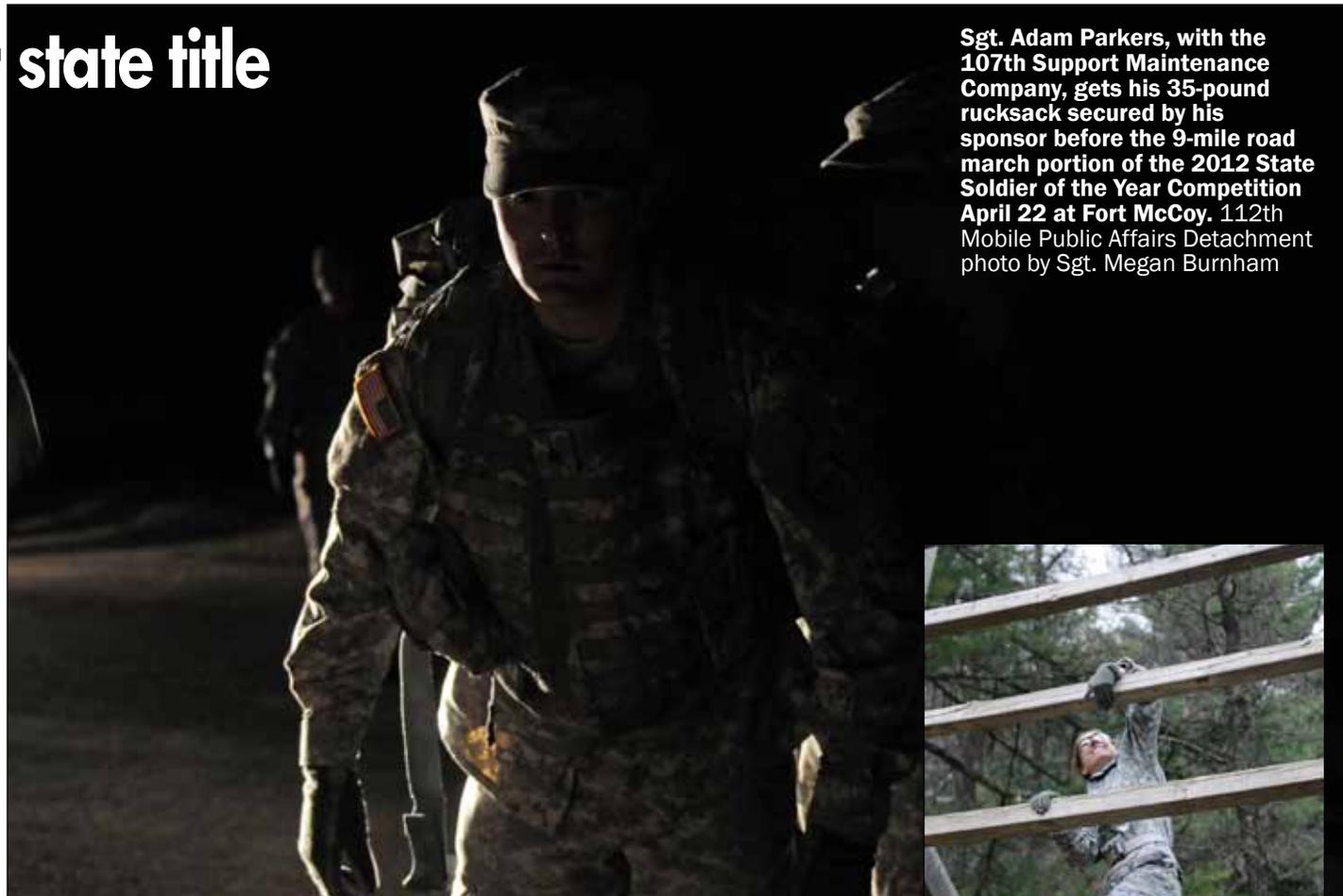
Competitors endured a grueling gauntlet of events: physical fitness test, a combatives tournament, a virtual firing range programmed with “shoot-don’t shoot” scenarios, life-fire pistol and rifle ranges, day and night land navigation courses, a written exam, combat water survival assessment, Soldier skill proficiency demonstrations, a confidence and obstacle course, a formal appearance board before senior noncommissioned officers, and a 9-mile road march.

Habermehl and Smith finished first in the combatives tournament in the NCO and Soldier categories, respectively. Habermehl was the first to finish the road march with a time of 1:44:57, and Smith was tied for second with a time of 1:47:13.

“[I] did some marching and some training for that definitely, ‘cause that’s not something you just want to pick up and do,” Smith said about the road march.

The Wisconsin Army National Guard has advanced at least one Soldier to the National Guard Bureau’s Best Warrior contest for the past three years, but the odds caught up with Wisconsin at this year’s regionals. Still, the experience will remain with Habermehl and Smith for the rest of their careers. 

- [Complete story online](#)
- [Related photos](#)
- [Related video](#)



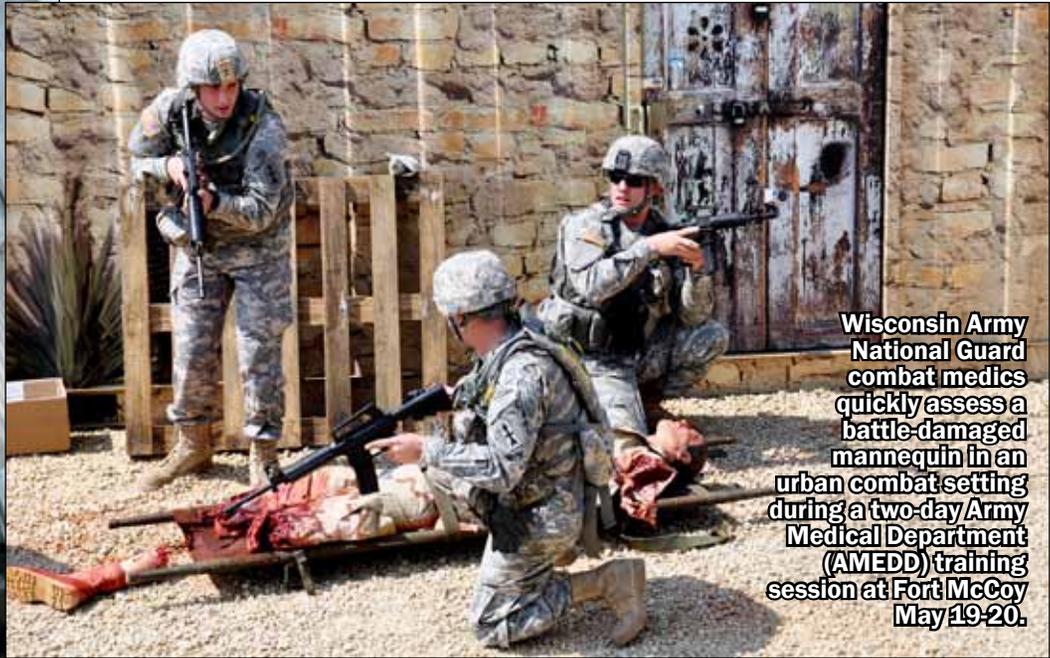
Sgt. Adam Parkers, with the 107th Support Maintenance Company, gets his 35-pound rucksack secured by his sponsor before the 9-mile road march portion of the 2012 State Soldier of the Year Competition April 22 at Fort McCoy. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Sgt. Megan Burnham

**Spc. Kevin Radke, from Troop C, 1st Battalion, 105th Cavalry Regiment, makes his way through the Over, Around and Through station for the Army Warrior Tasks event of the 2012 State Soldier of the Year competition April 21.** 112th Mobile

Public Affairs Detachment photo by Spc. Eric Liesse



Staff Sgt. Anna Christian, Wisconsin Medical Detachment, scales the reverse climb during the obstacle course portion of the 2012 State Soldier and NCO of the Year competition April 20 at Fort McCoy. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Sgt. Megan Burnham



**Wisconsin Army National Guard combat medics quickly assess a battle-damaged mannequin in an urban combat setting during a two-day Army Medical Department (AMEDD) training session at Fort McCoy May 19-20.**

# TRAIN AS THEY FIGHT

**Spc. Jeremy Schaller from Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 105th Cavalry, positions a casualty in a litter as part of a tower extraction scenario at Fort McCoy May 19. Wisconsin National Guard photos by 1st-Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson**

Extracting wounded Soldiers from guard towers and collapsed structures. Engage a sniper while evacuating bleeding Soldiers from a complex ambush in an Iraqi village. Performing life-saving measures in a field environment, and providing medical care at a battalion aid station.

Those were among the tasks on which approximately 200 Wisconsin National Guard medical professionals were tested May 19-20 at Fort McCoy in a demanding and realistic medical training event.

According to Sgt. 1st Class Clint Vervoren, a combat medic instructor at the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 426th Regional Training Institute, the two-day event was designed to expose medics to situations they normally wouldn't deal with on a drill weekend or during annual training.

"We as a group in the AMEDD (Army Medical Department) conference committee felt that these were tasks ... could be taught to the junior medics

throughout the state and give them a good hands-on experience," he said. "Different units deal with different situations, whether it be a battalion aid station or an ambulance company. [Here] they got a taste of every piece the Army has to offer.

Sgt. 1st Class Cara Butterfield, also a combat medic instructor at the 426th RTI, said the medics at the training event ranged from having more than 20 years experience to having just graduated combat medic school three months ago.

Spc. Hollie Helgerson of the Waukesha-based 135th Medical Company acknowledged that it was no mere classroom exercise.

"Just being here and being able to go through scenarios, any time we get to do that is really good for us," she said. "The training is really the best part of this, actually getting to do what we are trained to do."

- [Complete story online](#)
- [Related photos](#)

# A grand celebration



**2nd Lt. Leslie Bamba, Tennessee Army National Guard, and Sgt. 1st Class Rodgie Parker of the Alabama Army National Guard cut a cake celebrating the 1,000th master resilience trainer to be certified during a Feb. 13 ceremony at the National Guard Master Resilience Trainer (MRT) Training Center-Wisconsin in the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Wisconsin Military Academy at Fort McCoy.** Wisconsin National Guard photos by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson



**Master Resilience Trainer students listen as Lt. Col. Maureen Wiegl, the National Guard Bureau's division chief of Soldier and family support, addresses them during the Feb. 13 ceremony.**



**Maj. Sylvia Lopez, a trainer at the MRT Training Center, and Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, spoke during the ceremony.**



When Maj. Sylvia Lopez, a trainer at the MRT Training Center-Wisconsin, began her master resilience training with 14 other Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers at the University of Pennsylvania in January of 2010, she didn't imagine that two years later she would be celebrating the 1,000th National Guard master resilience trainer.

"I think that really speaks to the collaboration of all these folks," she said of the various National Guard representatives taking part in the ceremony. "Without this collaborative effort, we would not be here."

"This is a big deal for the Army National Guard," Lt. Col. Maureen Wiegl, division chief of Soldier and Family Support at the National Guard Bureau, said by videoconference during a Feb. 13 ceremony at the MRT Training Center, formerly referred to as Guard Resilience University. "We truly believe that comprehensive Soldier fitness and the well-being of Soldiers and families depends greatly on the success of this program."

Resilience itself has been described as the ability to bounce back from adversity, once thought an uncommon trait but now known to be learnable and teachable. The master resilience program is a train-the-trainer component of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness, a program launched in 2009 designed to measure and improve resilience and psychological health across five dimensions — emotional, family, social, physical and spiritual.

2nd Lt. Leslie Bamba, a member of Troop G, 2nd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment in the Tennessee Army National Guard, was the youngest Soldier enrolled in the class containing the 1,000th MRT.

"I've learned a lot," Bamba said. "I think there's a lot of really good stuff that [Soldiers in Tennessee] can apply, not only with their Soldier requirements and responsibility but a lot of stuff they can use in their daily lives to make them better, stronger people."

Sgt. 1st Class Rodgie Parker, a member of the 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Command in the Alabama Army National Guard, said he plans to assist his unit commander, who completed the MRT course at Fort Jackson, S.C.

"I learned a little bit about me," Parker said. "At my point in my career there are still plateaus and still places I want to go from here."

- [Complete story online](#)
- [Related story](#)



Wisconsin Army National Guard's Maj. Dave Brown, Jr., and his wife, Rachel — winners of the CBS reality program "The Amazing Race" — react to a greeting from Bucky Badger, along with Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, friends and others at the Dane County Regional Airport May 7 following their victory which aired the night before. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue

## Wisconsin Guard couple conquers 'Amazing Race'

The Wisconsin Army National Guard's Maj. Dave Brown, Jr., and his wife, Rachel completed an unusual reintegration exercise by winning the CBS reality program "[The Amazing Race](#)" May 6.

"I truly feel my involvement in the military best prepared me for a competition such as 'The Amazing Race,' whether it be attention to detail, leadership style and abilities, or who I am as a person," Dave said prior to the series premier in January. "I not only strive for victory, but I expect it for myself."

Dave is currently the professor of military science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has served in the military for more than 16 years as an intelligence officer, Black Hawk pilot and a recruiting and retention executive officer. He has been a member of the Wisconsin Army National Guard since 2000.

The [Browns](#) competed against 10 other couples in the reality show's 20th season



with the intent to reconnect following Dave's recent year-long deployment to Iraq with the [1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment](#) in support of Operation New Dawn. Along the way they became the most prolific duo in the show's history by winning eight different legs on their way to the overall victory, host Phil Keoghan said during the finale.

The couple emerged from the trying 25-day globe-trotting contest victorious, and richer in experience, resilience, and the pocketbook.

"When Dave was gone for a year it was so hard and I really didn't know if we'd make it," Rachel said during the season finale. "Because it was so hard when he was over there, we had no communication. It was the worst year ever, so it was awesome to spend the month together."

Rachel is a UW graduate and a project manager at [Epic](#) systems, a Verona-based health care software company. 

[Additional photos online](#)

## Hall of Honor welcomes latest inductees

Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Kerry Denson of Lake Mills, Brig. Gen. (Ret.) James Krueck of McFarland, Col. (Ret.) Timothy Pfrang of Sussex, and Col. (Ret.) David Schumacher of Onalaska, are the latest to join the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Hall of Honor, which began in 2000.

"We get a chance, once a year, to recognize some outstanding Soldiers that have served the Wisconsin National Guard and the U.S. Army in a very exemplary fashion," said Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin National Guard. "This year is held special to my heart because of the four gentlemen that are being recognized today."

Densen, who devoted nearly 41 years of service to the U.S. Army and Wisconsin National Guard, likened his time as a leader to that of a band director — stating he merely picked the songs and the Soldiers alongside and beneath him were the ones to actually play the "music" or accomplish the mission.

"Today when I receive this award, I do so on behalf of the thousands of quality, professional leaders ... that are spaced today, not only across Wisconsin, but around the world," Densen said.

Krueck, who served as an enlisted Soldier, warrant officer and commissioned officer over the span of his 42-year career, said he was surprised and humbled when he learned of his selection to the Hall.

"I served on one of the best teams in the United States — the Wisconsin Army National Guard — for over 40 years," Krueck said. "I really don't see this as an individual award — I see it as a team award."

Pfrang, who began his more than 30 years of service in the Army Reserves, joined the Wisconsin Guard in 1974 and worked with many different entities of the Wisconsin national Guard as a mobility readiness officer.



DENSEN



KRUECK



PFRANG



SCHUMACHER

"I just want to thank all the hundreds and perhaps thousands of Soldier and officers that I worked for, the civilian people that I got to interact with ... for the opportunity to serve and be value added to the state and country," Pfrang said.

Schumacher, who served in the Wisconsin Guard for his entire 30 years of service, said his initial reaction to hearing he would be inducted into the Hall was that of "surprise and humble gratitude."

"Candidly, I immediately thought of the long list of Soldiers I know and served with, who in my view, are more deserving of this tremendous honor," Schumacher said. "I had 30 wonderful years in the Wisconsin Army National Guard — and I would do it all over again without hesitation." 

- [Complete story online](#)
- [Additional photos online](#)



The 147th Aviation Regiment Family Readiness Group from Wisconsin and Michigan was recognized as the best in the Army National Guard during an official ceremony at the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes Feb. 17. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue

## Wisconsin Guard FRG honored as best in class

Department of Defense leaders recognized a group of Wisconsin Army National Guard family readiness program volunteers at the Pentagon Feb. 17 as some of the best in their field in supporting the military families of deployed service members.

Family Readiness Group volunteers from the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment were presented the 2011 Department of Defense Reserve Family Readiness Award in the Hall of Heroes as the top FRG in the Army National Guard.

Edith Pond, family readiness group program manager for the 147th, said representing the Army National Guard was an incredible honor.

"To have the opportunity to receive support from our community, as well as provide support for our community has been just wonderful overall," she said, "to come together due to the sacrifices of the Soldiers of the 147th ... and to also serve in our way."

"We're obviously very proud," said

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard. "When the families are taken care of, the Soldiers can focus on what they need to do."

Pond said pre-deployment programs and support from local clubs and organizations helped set the Soldiers and family members of the 147th up for success. The group of volunteers adopted the motto, "Moving Forward, Giving Back." This brought the families of deployed Wisconsin Soldiers together to participate in many events

"We gave back to those that supported us by hosting blood drives and a water station for the American Legion at their national convention," she said. "We also did the same for the Madison Mini-Marathon in support of our Soldiers."

A Wisconsin unit FRG has won the award in five of the last seven years. Melanie Kleinheinz credits the training Wisconsin gives to FRG volunteers at the beginning of the deployment cycle. 📷

[Complete story online](#)

## Wisconsin Army Guard earns top ACOE award

According to Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, receiving the top award in the [Army Communities of Excellence](#) competition is a reflection of the steps already taken to improve as an organization, as well as a commitment to keep improving.

"It's been a journey and it's going to continue to be a journey," Anderson said shortly after being presented with the Overall Winner award during a May 1 ceremony at the Pentagon. "Just because you get the top spot doesn't mean you stop trying to improve. If anything, this is going to force the organization to take that next step and continue to try and get even better."

To that end, key members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard attended a National Guard Bureau workshop in St. Louis, Mo., days after the ACOE awards ceremony to learn about the best practices of other Guard organizations nationwide.

"The National Guard Bureau's ACOE Best Practice Conference is a great

opportunity to learn what is going well with other organizations who participate in the ACOE program," said Lu Ann Slegler of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Strategic Plans and Initiatives Office. "It is an opportunity to benchmark off of other states and to implement what is going well to foster a culture of continuous process improvement — to streamline our processes and eliminate waste — in order to support our Soldiers and their families."

Last year Wisconsin was the [Gold First Place](#) winner, or second overall, in the National Guard category of the ACOE competition.

The ACOE Awards program follows a 12-month evaluation in which Army, National Guard and Reserve installations are judged against Army priorities and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program criteria. Participants are not judged against each other. The assessment considers the overall quality of military environment, facilities and services. 📷

[Complete story online](#)



Wisconsin Army National Guard Army Community of Excellence (ACOE) team members, flanked by members of the U.S. Army's Installation Management Command, were on hand to receive a trophy, ACOE flag and monetary award at the Pentagon May 1 as the overall winner in the National Guard category of the ACOE Award competition. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

# Wisconsin Army Guard aviation officer receives Gen. Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award

Capt. Nils Henderson of Holmen, a flight operations officer with the Madison-based 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment and former commander of Company A, was one of 27 officers nationwide — and one of only seven Army National Guard officers — to receive the Gen. Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award May 24 in the Pentagon Auditorium.

Gen. Ray Odierno, Army chief of staff, and Judge James Mathews from the General Douglas MacArthur Foundation, presented the awards.

The MacArthur Leadership Award program recognizes company grade officers who demonstrate the ideals of duty, honor and country, with the goal of promoting and sustaining effective junior officer Army leadership.

Henderson said receiving the award was a great honor.

“The award recognizes the success of those around me,” he said. “I had the chance to serve with an outstanding company with phenomenal leadership. That had a huge role in our overall success.”

Lt. Col. Stephen Watkins, battalion commander for the 147th, along with Wisconsin Army National Guard Chief of Staff Col. Kenneth Koon and Brig. Gen. Scott Legwold, director of the Wisconsin



**Wisconsin Army National Guard Capt. Nils Henderson of Holmen was among seven Army National Guard Soldiers and 22 overall Army recipients of the 2011 General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award, presented by Army Gen. Ray Odierno, the Army chief of staff, during a ceremony at the Pentagon Auditorium in Arlington, Va., May 24.** Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Darron Salzer

National Guard Joint Staff, were on hand to see Henderson receive the award.

“That was certainly an honor, and appreciated,” Henderson said.

Odierno said that the nation stands in good stead with young leaders living up

to MacArthur’s tenets of duty, honor and country.

“General MacArthur is undoubtedly one of the greatest military leaders that our nation has ever produced,” Odierno said, “and it is an honor to be

here amongst some of our greatest and strongest assets — our talented young leaders.”

Before presenting each of this year’s recipients, Odierno noted the role in which each Soldier served in as a leader came with its own set of unique challenges.

“Company grade leadership is about leading our nation’s sons and daughters at the tip of the tactical spear ... and as company grade [leaders] you have the most impact on our young Soldiers,” he said.

This year marked the 25th year of the award, with 622 recipients to date, Odierno said.

In his closing words, he said that it was ironic that the strategic depth of the all-volunteer force of the Army was not in the hands of senior generals, but directly in the hands of the junior officer corps.

“I am frankly humbled to be in your presence,” he said. “We need leaders like you to be at the forefront ... guiding our transition to a leaner more agile force that remains adaptive, innovative, versatile and ready as part of the Joint Force 2020.

“You are the future of our Army, the future of our nation.”

Capt. Bill Barthen of the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s 132nd Brigade Support Battalion received the MacArthur Leadership Award in 2010.

[Complete story online](#)

## Wisconsin Challenge Academy cadets attend Youth Foundation Champions gala in Washington, D.C.

Lindsey Millard, Neillsville, never thought she would have the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., and attend a dinner with guests that included actor/singer/songwriter Tyler Hilton, NASCAR driver Dale Earnhardt Jr., Indy driver J.R. Hildebrand, and WWE Superstar Kofi Kingston.

In October of 2008, both of Millard’s parents passed away in a truck driving accident. Shortly after their death she shut down and completely fell apart. It took her almost two full years to start functioning again, but by that time she was so far behind in school she wasn’t sure what to do. That was, until she made the life-changing decision to attend the Wisconsin Challenge

Academy, a program that provides high school dropouts a second chance to succeed.

Millard, along with fellow Challenge Academy graduates Yadira Guadarrama of Beloit and Emily Hribal of Kenosha, attended the seventh annual National Guard Youth Foundation Champions Gala Feb. 28 to raise awareness for the “Silent Epidemic” of soaring high school dropout rates. The Gala featured celebrities, members of Congress and the Senate, governors, senior National Guard and military members, corporate and community leaders, Challenge Program directors and cadets from across the country.

In addition to the Gala, Millard, Guadarrama and

Hribal received a tour of the capital arranged by U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson’s office, observed a Senate session, visited the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian, and toured Washington’s monuments.

“Attending the Gala and being surrounded by so many important people who believe in the Youth Challenge Program was amazing,” Millard said. “Also, visiting the Lincoln Memorial, as President Lincoln has always been an icon to me.”

Since graduating the Challenge Academy in December 2011, Millard has received her high school diploma and is now taking courses to become a certified nursing assistant.

## Wisconsin Guard members recognized for PA work

Public affairs professionals in the Wisconsin National Guard garnered nine top awards, including five first-place awards, in the National Guard Bureau's 2011 Media Contest.

[At Ease Express](#), the official publication of the Wisconsin National Guard, was named the National Guard's best web-based publication for the second straight year. In 2009 it took second place at the National Guard level, but advanced to take first place in the Army and Department of Defense competitions.

[WisGuard Live](#), a command blog which launched in 2011, also took first place. Sgt. Tyler Lasure of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, took first place for his [story](#) on two Wisconsin Guard members who competed in the Boston Marathon. [WisGuard Live](#) and Lasure's story each received a third place award in the Army's Keith L. Ware competition.

Tech. Sgt. James Michaels of the 128th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs Office was named "Outstanding New Broadcaster" in the Air National Guard, and also earned a first place for his [television sports report](#) on Capt. Jason Park.

Tech. Sgt. Sarah Franzen of the Wisconsin National Guard Public Affairs Office received a second place award for a [video segment](#) in the "I Am the Wisconsin National Guard" series. 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson took second place for a [story and photo](#) from the 2011 Rhythm and Booms celebration.

Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue of the Wisconsin National Guard Public Affairs Office received a third place award for his [WisGuard Live blog commentary on motorcycle safety](#). Tech. Sgt. Tom Sobczyk of the 128th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs Office also took third place for graphics illustration with a [Red Ribbon poster](#).

"I couldn't be prouder of the Wisconsin National Guard Public Affairs team," said Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant

general of Wisconsin. "They have led the transition to the digital age while preserving a legacy of excellence in media professionalism."

The National Guard Bureau Public Affairs Office received more than 800 entries from 44 states. Top finishers will advance to the Army and Air Force level contests. 📷

## WING-PAO director earns national accreditation

Lt. Col. Jackie Guthrie, the director of public affairs for the Wisconsin National Guard, earned an [APR+M](#) (Accredited in Public Relations + Military Communication) certification April 14, becoming one of only 19 APR+Ms worldwide and the first actively serving member of the National Guard and U.S. Army to be certified.



Guthrie, of Sun Prairie, successfully completed a 90-minute oral readiness review presentation and a three-hour plus computer-based exam that tested her [knowledge, skills and abilities](#) in public relations and [military public affairs in joint operations](#) to earn the certification she'd been working toward for more than a year.

"While the personal accomplishment means a lot," Guthrie said, "it's really about demonstrating not only my competence in public relations but, more importantly, how public affairs support military operations and using that knowledge every day on behalf of the Soldiers and Airmen I represent."

"Lt. Col. Guthrie is a consummate professional," said Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, and Guthrie's supervisor. "Under her leadership, the Wisconsin National Guard public affairs office has won numerous awards and her vision is evident in our social media strategy. This latest

credential reflects her commitment to continuous improvement on a personal and professional level, and I am very proud of her accomplishment."

How the military practices public affairs has come a long way in the last 20 years, Guthrie explained. "When I joined it was about press conferences, press releases and pretty pictures," she said. "Now it's about the important role communications plays in military operations from planning through execution."

Guthrie has more than 20 years of public affairs experience acquired as a Department of the Army civilian public affairs specialist and a Soldier serving the National Guard, U.S. Army Reserve and the Army — not only in Wisconsin, but throughout the world. She is also an adjunct instructor in the communications department at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and commands the Monroe-based 64th Rear Operations Center. 📷

[Complete story online](#)

## Nominations open for Hall of Honor

Nominations are being accepted for the 2013 Wisconsin Army National Guard Hall of Honor until Friday, Nov. 30, 2012. This prestigious award represents the highest honor Wisconsin's Adjutant General can bestow upon former Wisconsin Army National Guard members for their service.

The 2013 How to Nominate letter of instruction and information on how to make a nomination can be downloaded from the Retiree Activities Office (RAO) web site at: <http://dma.wi.gov/dma/retirees>. Printed copies of the documents are available upon request through the Hall of Honor program administrator.

Due to current regulations, the Department of Military Affairs is unable to provide copies of retiree records to non-DoD employees, but copies of needed records will be attached to nomination packets before they are forwarded to the Hall of Honor selection board.

Nominators should therefore put extra emphasis on the narrative portion of their nomination.

Questions about the Hall of Honor program and the nomination process can be directed to Staff Sgt. Jason Walters, by e-mail at [jason.r.walters@us.army.mil](mailto:jason.r.walters@us.army.mil) or phone at (608) 242-3011 or 1-800-335-5147 ext.3011. 📷

## Free online tutoring offered to military children

The Department of Defense MWR Library Program and Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program provide online tutoring and homework help from Tutor.com at no charge to students in National Guard, Reserve and Active Duty military families, regardless of deployment status. Tutor.com for military families allows students to connect to a live tutor online at any time for help with homework, studying, test prep, proofreading and more.

Access to Tutor.com for Military Families is free 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All students worldwide can use the online service, regardless of where they attend school. Military members can get eligibility details and create an account at [www.tutor.com/military](http://www.tutor.com/military).

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For more information, contact Meg Sauvé at 347.819.2939 or [msauve@tutor.com](mailto:msauve@tutor.com). 📷

# Parting shot

Legendary NFL quarterback Brett Favre looks inside a MAXX-PRO Mine Resistant/Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle during a visit to the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1157th Transportation Company March 26 at Camp Shelby, Miss. Favre and his wife Deanna, who live in nearby Hattiesburg, Miss., asked to visit the unit, which was completing mobilization training in preparation for a deployment to the Central Command theater of operations. The 1157th is currently conducting convoy escort operations in Afghanistan. Wisconsin National Guard photo