



# @ease Express

Volume 4, Issue 3 - October 2012

[Click here](#) to read about putting to rest the memory of a Wisconsin National Guard hero. Photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson





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*Express*

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The pages are designed to print out at 8.5-by-11 inches, giving you the option of reading At Ease Express off-line.

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## on the cover

A "missing man" formation honors the memory of 1st Lt. Jerome Volk during a memorial service at the Air National Guard base bearing his name July 11. Volk was the first Wisconsin Air National Guard member to lose his life in the Korean War. His remains have never been recovered. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

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# From the TAG

Congratulations to the Wisconsin National Guard on another great training year. In terms of end strength, we finished a little over 100 percent in the Army National Guard and just under 100 percent in the Air National Guard — but more importantly, we have high quality Soldiers and Airmen in our formations and we have high rates of readiness. This is our primary responsibility and I am proud of the team effort that got us here. We had great leadership from Brigadier Generals Anderson, McCoy and Legwold, who partnered with our commanders, enlisted leaders and staff to really improve our overall quality. Our recruiting and retention was professional and successful. Great job by all!

However, we weren't just training, as we continue to support our nation in various missions in harm's way. Just recently, the Governor and I visited the Headquarters element of the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade in Kosovo and we were thrilled to welcome them home last month, along with our aviation Soldiers from Company F, 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment and Detachment 1, Company B, 248th Aviation Support Battalion in West Bend who supported the KFOR mission. We also welcomed home many members of the 82nd Agribusiness Development Team from Afghanistan, who performed superbly despite many changes to the mission while preparing and while deployed.

We just recently mobilized the 229th Engineer Company for a deployment to Afghanistan, and Battery B of the 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery is also preparing to deploy to Afghanistan, where it will perform a HIMARS mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. We have also learned that the famed Red Arrow Brigade has been notified of an upcoming deployment to the Central



**Gov. Scott Walker and Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, greet approximately 30 Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers at the West Bend Armory Sept. 13, after the Soldiers completed a tour of duty in Kosovo.** Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

Command area of operations.

At the same time, the 115th Fighter Wing is preparing for mobilization later this fall, and many of our Airmen continue to deploy for up to six months as individuals and as small consolidated groups. Our 128th Air Refueling Wing continues to routinely support OEF with small rotations of aircraft and personnel, while the 128th Air Control Squadron prepares for another deployment in 2013.

While our optempo has slowed, the

Wisconsin National Guard continues to be called upon to serve our state and our nation, at home and abroad. This is consistent with the operational National Guard that we have built over 10 years of persistent conflict. We are the Wisconsin National Guard — we are and remain “always ready and always there.” Our organization is built on trust and quality — we are led by exceptional officers and NCOs, and our Soldiers and Airmen have never been better.

It is a new year for the Pentagon and the page has turned. For us — we remain the Wisconsin National Guard. There is nobody finer and I'm proud of each and every one of you. Thank you.

# WERC on the job in Kosovo

**Spc. Joshua Barnett**  
172nd Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP BONDSTEEL, Kosovo — How seriously does the Wisconsin National Guard take unemployment? With an unemployment rate among its members in excess of 13 percent, seriously enough to send two members of the [Wisconsin Employment Resource Connection](#) (WERC) to Kosovo June 11-15 to help Guard members there prepare for the workforce.

“If this was done at the demobilization station or reintegration, we feel it’s too late,” said Chap. (Capt.) Joseph Ledger, WERC manager. “They need to start thinking about what they’re going to do when they get home now, so they can go home to a job and not to unemployment, to better their family life.”

Ledger and Mark Sier, a civilian

contractor with WERC, helped nearly 200 deployed Soldiers with a résumé-writing workshop and job interview rehearsals. During the résumé workshop, each Soldier was given a template to craft their own résumé. Advisors were standing by, ready to offer assistance.

After creating a résumé, each Soldier then participated in a mock job interview. The interviews consisted of questions tailored to the type of position the Soldier expressed interest in.

The Soldiers’ résumés were forwarded to the Department of Workforce Development offices at the Veterans Affairs Center in each Soldier’s respective state. The Veterans Affairs officers will use the résumés to solicit federal, state and local employment opportunities on behalf of the Soldiers. ■

[Complete story online](#)



**Sgt. Eric Raatz, an intelligence analyst with the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade receives coaching on his résumé from Maj. Jon Ward, command judge advocate with the 157th, at a résumé and interview workshop at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, June 14.** 172nd Public Affairs photos by Spc. Joshua Barnett

# ON DUTY IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

**Sgt. 1st Class James Wagner**  
MNBG E Public Affairs

CAMP BUTMIR, Bosnia-Herzegovina — While the majority of the deployed Wisconsin Army National Guard's 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade Soldiers support NATO peacekeeping efforts in Kosovo, a smaller contingent are on mission in another Balkan state entirely.

Last year, as approximately 300 Wisconsin Guard Soldiers mobilized to support the Kosovo Force mission at Camp Bondsteel, five Badger State Soldiers found themselves flying to Camp Butmir in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The five took over positions supporting NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo and its European Union Force, the international peacekeeping effort that began in 2005 when active peace enforcement operations as part of the Stabilization Force ended in the region.

NHQSA has three primary missions: advise the Bosnia government on defense reforms in order to integrate with the European Union, oversee Camp Butmir and oversee NATO personnel in Sarajevo.

According to Lt. Col. Michael Smith, U.S. Balkans National Support Element commander, the Wisconsin Soldiers at Camp Butmir support all U.S. personnel to include Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps.

"As European Command's only direct reporting unit in the Balkans area of responsibility, the NSE protects and executes U.S. interests on behalf of the geographic combatant commander," he said.

In addition to sharing the same geographical area — the Balkan Peninsula — the missions in Kosovo and Bosnia share many similarities. NATO peacekeeping forces in both regions are there to prevent further bloodshed in the

wake of ethnic cleansing campaigns in the 1990s, while implementing measures to ensure subsequent flare ups don't occur in the region.

Only in the details are the mission requirements different. KFOR's primary responsibilities include actively providing a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement; EUFOR's mission is to oversee the military implementation of the 1995 Dayton Agreement, which ended the war between Muslim Bosniaks, Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats.

Pfc. Koty Slough from Oconto, a postal clerk who works in the National Support Element at Camp Butmir, said the people of Sarajevo and surrounding communities find the NATO presence here crucial to their country's long-term well-being.

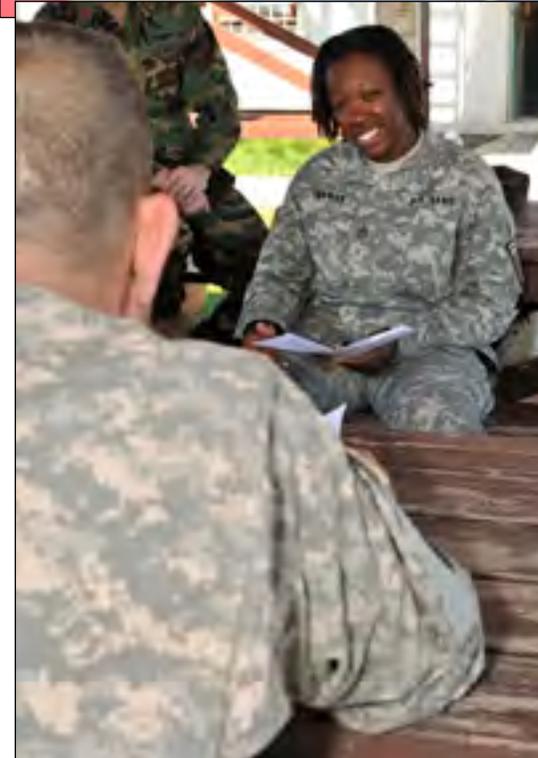
"Our military presence in Bosnia leaves the people with a feeling of security and comfort, knowing that if they needed help we would be able to assist," he said.

Slough is one of several Wisconsin Soldiers working in the NSE, supporting U.S. forces stationed at Camp Butmir. In addition to postal service, they provide logistics and personnel support during their year-long deployment.

Soldiers from more than 20 countries are deployed to Camp Butmir, and like the many challenges posed at Camp Bondsteel, where Wisconsin Soldiers in Kosovo are headquartered with Multinational Battle Group East, language differences are one of the biggest obstacles to properly executing a mission.

"Several people have come up to me and said, 'Hey, thank you for being here, it means a lot to our people,'" Slough said. "A friend told me once, whether good or bad, you will leave this city a different person. Cliché or not, I know now that is true and only in a positive way, for me and for those I have come to know."

[Complete story online](#)



Above, Pfc. Koty Slough, left, and Staff Sgt. Marvin Hannah participate in a flag retirement ceremony to properly retire the American Flag by cutting out the Union stars recently at Camp Butmir, Bosnia. At left, Staff Sgt. Tameka Thomas, National Support Element non-commissioned officer-in-charge, a Chicago resident and member of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, conducts an operational briefing at Camp Butmir recently. Thomas and four other members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard are deployed to Bosnia on a year-long deployment supporting NATO peacekeeping efforts. MNBG E photos by Sgt. 1st Class James Wagner

# UAV mission ends for Wisconsin Guardsmen

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

Wisconsin National Guard leaders, family and friends welcomed home six Red Arrow Soldiers June 6 at the Dane County Regional Airport from their deployment to Afghanistan where they operated the RQ-7 Shadow 200 unmanned aerial vehicle.

The Tactical Unmanned Aerial System (TAUS) Soldiers returned from demobilization training at Camp Shelby, Miss., where they concluded their approximate year-long mobilization in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“Congratulations and welcome home,” said Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

The six Soldiers, members of Company B, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, worked as a joint team in Afghanistan — providing a bird’s eye view to their brothers in arms.

“It was a big change, supporting the Marines,” said Sgt. Robert Haack, who was welcomed home by his parents, four sisters and extended family, “but as far as the

aviation side of the house, it was all pretty much the same and we knew what to expect.”

Lt. Col. David Sands, who became the battalion’s new commander while the Soldiers were deployed, was kept up to date on their progress and is glad to have them home.

“We’re very proud of the job you did over there,” Sands said, noting that all of Company B will benefit from their deployment.

“I believe it actually expands the experience of the entire unit,” he said. “That experience they gained will be shared with the rest of the Soldiers in our unit.”

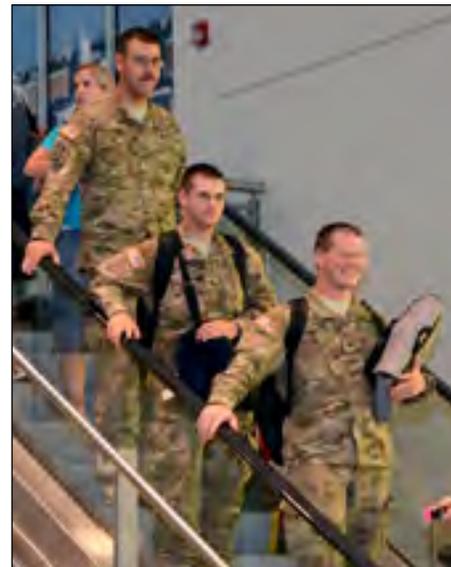
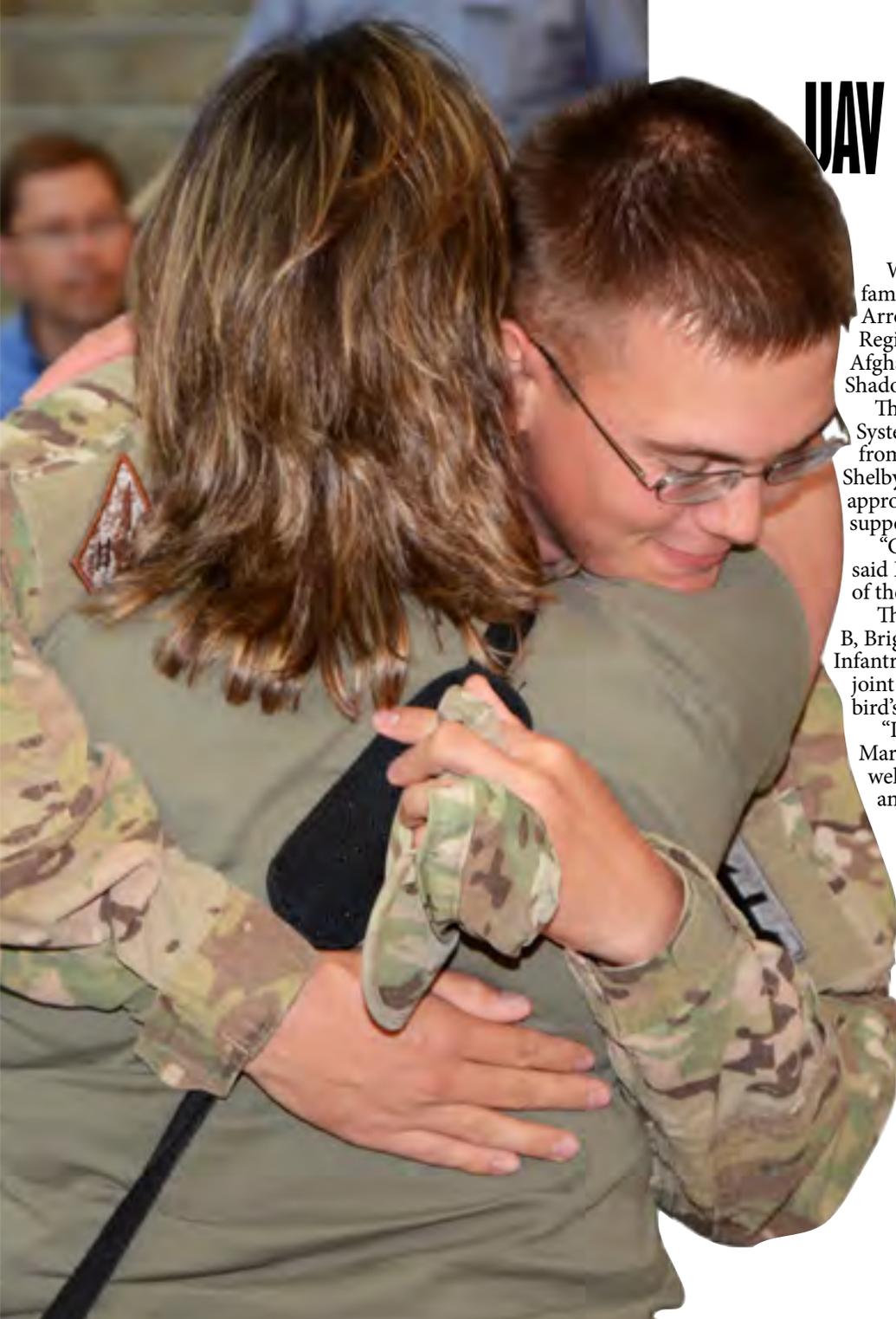
Annemarie, mother of Sgt. Zachary Michalak, said communication with her son was pretty good while he was deployed. The entire family would drop what they were doing whenever he’d call, she said, adding that she appreciated hearing from her son’s unit as well.

“I do have to say that [Staff Sgt. Lucas] Gordon always called and said the guys were doing a good job — I liked that feedback,” Annemarie said. “I’m very proud of all these boys, especially Robert, that they answered the call. I appreciate men and women who step to answer the call.”

[Complete story online](#)

**At left, Staff Sgt. Zachary Sargent, Spec. Justin Schumacher and Spc. Jacob Potter, of Company B, 32nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, anticipate meeting their friends and family, unit members and Wisconsin Guard leaders at the Dane County Regional Airport June 6.**

**Far left, Sgt. Robert Michalak embraces his mother, Annemarie, at the Dane County Regional Airport June 6. A total of six Soldiers returned home from a deployment to Afghanistan where they operated the RQ-7 Shadow 200 unmanned aerial vehicle in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.** Wisconsin National Guard photos by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue





**Col. Gary Ebben, Volk Field commander, presents Don Volk with a folded flag following a July 11 memorial service for 1st Lt. Jerome Volk (left), the first Wisconsin Air National Guard pilot to die in the line of duty during the Korean conflict.** Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

# A hero is remembered

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

More than 61 years after 1st Lt. Jerome Volk's F-80 Shooting Star fighter jet was shot down over the skies of North Korea, the Wisconsin Air National Guard base bearing his name held a formal memorial ceremony July 11 for his family and guests.

"He was my stable friend. He meant a lot to me," said Don Volk, 85, Jerome's younger brother and next of kin who kept alive the hope that Jerome's remains would someday be recovered and returned. After all these years, that day has yet to come.

"We waited nearly 62 years to find out whatever was going to happen," Don continued. "It's hard for me to talk about—I know we're never going to get anything back. I just decided, I'm 85, not in the best

of health anymore ... I want to close it out."

Jerome was born March 17, 1925 in Harvey, N.D., and after his family moved to Milwaukee, he graduated from Rufus King High School in 1943. Shortly after graduation he joined the U.S. Army's enlisted reserve corps and began air cadet training June 22. Six months later he was commissioned as a second lieutenant and flew P-51 Mustangs during the remainder of the war. Now a first lieutenant, Jerome joined the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 126th Fighter Squadron in January 1949, and was called to active duty with his squadron two years later.

Jerome's final flight — a strafing mission against communist Chinese forces

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**Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey Neitzel, Capt. John O'Brien and Col. Gary Ebben place a wreath at the memorial marker of 1st Lt. Jerome Volk during a July 11 memorial service at Volk Field. At right, a "missing-man formation" F-16 fly-over.** Wisconsin National Guard photos by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

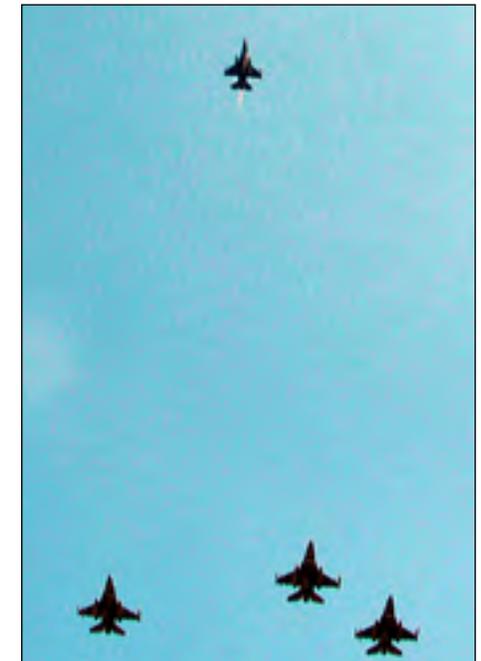


## Wisconsin Air National Guard hero honored

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in North Korea — began shortly after 3 p.m. on Nov. 7, 1951. About two hours after departing the U.S. Air Force Base at Suwon, South Korea, Jerome reported that his tip tanks — fuel tanks positioned at the wingtips — were not working and that he would return for repairs when he was down to 150 gallons of fuel. About seven minutes later the right napalm bomb was damaged, spraying napalm everywhere. Less than two minutes later the entire tail section came off, and the F-80 Shooting Star rolled uncontrollable at an estimated 200 mph. He was the first Wisconsin Air National Guard pilot killed in the Korean War.

“The other members of the strafing mission only witnessed a fiery ball,” Kevin Barry, Jerome’s great-nephew, said at the ceremony. Kevin wrote a 10-minute speech about his great-uncle when he



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# Remembering a fallen Wisconsin Air National Guard hero

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was in fifth grade, drawing from official military documents his grandfather provided. Now a college graduate, he updated the speech for the July 11 memorial.

Jerome was unable to position his wounded aircraft to eject, and the jet struck the ground at an 80-degree angle. After years of searching, he was presumed dead on Dec. 31, 1953.

The Wisconsin National Guard rededicated the part of Camp Williams used by the Air National Guard as Volk Field. The following year, the Wisconsin legislature officially approved the name change.

But the base is not Jerome's only namesake — Don named his daughter, who goes by the name Jerri, after the fallen Airman.

"My dad has relived to me the day he came home from work and his dad was standing in the big glass window — sobbing, shoulders shaking — and the military had just been there with the news that [Jerry] was missing in action," she recalled. "I think [my dad] will find a sense of peace with this. It means a lot to him to really honor his brother."

Kevin, Jerri's son, agreed.

"I think [this memorial] means a lot to my grandpa," he said. "I think it's coming to peace with the fact that we probably won't find his remains but that we don't really need to — this base is named after him and the Air National Guard clearly hasn't forgotten about it. I think his sacrifice has been immortalized."

Jerome's memorial marker joins the headstones of Pvt. Robert Williams, Lt. Col. Charles Williams and Brig. Gen. Hugh Simonson, as well as the memorial marker for Col. Jack King, in Memorial Cemetery at the foot of Long Bluff near the main gate.

Col. Gary Ebben, Volk Field



**Kevin Barry, great-nephew of 1st Lt. Jerome Volk, speaks during a July 11 memorial service at Volk Field. The ceremony included full military honors such as a color guard, rifle squad and a "missing-man formation" F-16 fly-over.** Wisconsin National Guard photos by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

commander, said he was honored to host the ceremony.

"It's certainly a personal event for them. It appears to have met a real need for them," Ebben said. "It's just a privilege and an honor to be a part of it."

Don said he would give the flag from the July 11 ceremony to his youngest daughter. His oldest daughter has the flag from the ceremony when Volk Field was renamed.

"The name will go on forever," he said of the Air National Guard base being renamed for his brother. "It meant something to my father — he was military, too. He was in World War I. He was a corporal. It meant a lot to him and my mother."

Kevin said that, despite never having the opportunity to know his great-uncle, he feels well acquainted with Jerome Volk.

"It is very evident that his spirit lives on through the efforts of both my grandfather and the Wisconsin Air National Guard," he said. 🇺🇸



# TOP GUNS

## ■ Red Arrow Soldiers make their mark among nation's top marksmen

**Capt. Michelle Baer**  
Wisconsin National Guard

Two Wisconsin National Guard members were named best snipers from more than 400 marksmen across the nation who gathered at Camp Robinson, Ark., April 22-28 for the 41st Winston P. Wilson Championship at the National Guard Marksmanship Training Center. This marksmanship competition offered Soldiers and Airmen an opportunity to test their marksmanship skills in a battle-focused environment using rifles, pistols, shotguns and machine guns.

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**Sgt. Shaun Buck, left, and Spc. Jerry Newman at the 41st Winston P. Wilson Championship April 22-28.** 32nd Brigade photo by Spc. Andrew Schneider

# Wisconsin Guardsmen earn top marks in sniper competition

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Realism, physical exertion and team coordination was displayed during the strenuous five-day sniper competition. The competitors accepted the challenge and pushed through with strength, pride and determination, making this event anything but “wimpy.”

At nationals, Sgt. Shaun Buck and Spc. Jerry Newman competed as a sniper team. They took first in five events — two were ties, including the ‘stalk’ event. They also won the “Keep In Memory” (KIM) ruck march, and alternate shooting positions. Overall, they placed first in total points which gave them the title of best snipers. In addition, they were also awarded the Chiefs 50, which denotes the top 50 marksman in the National Guard.

During the ‘stalk’ event they were flown out on Black Hawk helicopters, in the middle of the night, and dropped off at an unknown location. Once dropped off, they were given a grid coordinate. They had until 8 a.m. the next morning to conceal and camouflage themselves, and then find and engage their targets.

Shortly after that, they were tested by the stress fire event. Already stressed by sleep deprivation, loud noises and added distractions, they had to accurately engage their targets in a short amount of time.

Newman and Buck are members of Headquarters Detachment, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, based in Eau Claire. They credit their battalion commander Maj. J. R. Treharne for their success.

“He is a world class shooter and has spent a lot of time trying to start the state program back up to benefit the Soldiers,” Buck said.

“As a member of the All Guard Marksmanship team, it is my job to represent the National Guard in competitive events at the national level, and in turn use my skills to improve marksmanship proficiency within my unit and state,” Treharne said. “The purpose



**Sgt. Shaun Buck, left, and Spc. Jerry Newman.**

of a competitive marksmanship program is to create subject matter experts (SME) capable of winning competitive events and teaching, coaching, and mentoring other Soldiers to become proficient marksmen.”

Treharne said Buck and Newman spent countless unfunded hours practicing and preparing for the Wilson Matches, as well as considerable time sharing the knowledge they obtained through the competition helping to train other snipers.

“We are running a state-level Master Gunners course and participating in both regional and national level competitions,” Treharne said. “The final step will be to run an annual state-level competition.”

**Spc. Jerry Newman sights in at the 41st Winston P. Wilson Championship April 22-28.**  
32nd Brigade photos by Spc. Andrew Schneider

# Wisconsin National Guard continues to aid Afghan farmers

**Tech. Sgt. Christopher Marasky**

*Provincial Reconstruction Team Kunar*

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — As members of the International Security Assistance Force continue to help the Afghanistan government with stability and security, one key piece of terrain is the farmlands.

That's where members of Provincial Reconstruction Team Kunar's agricultural section, all members of the Wisconsin National Guard, come into play, as they use projects such as the 'demo farms' at the provincial and district level to teach Afghans new techniques for farming.

The Wisconsin National Guard's [82nd Agribusiness Development Team](#) deployed to Afghanistan in early April 2012, and [reorganized](#) to become the agricultural section of Provincial Reconstruction Team Kunar in mid-May.

"A large portion of the people in Kunar are subsistence farmers, in that they live off the food they produce on their farms," said Maj. Fred Oehler, a native of Lodi. "Over 80 percent of the province relies directly on agriculture, the need to improve in that area is vital."

These farms are small plots of land in which the land owners agree to let the district and provincial leadership conduct training on, as well as to try, different farming techniques in an effort to spread the training throughout the province.

"These local land owners are opening up their farms to allow people to come and get some hands-on training," said Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Beron, a Foxborg native. "We're showing people a number of different techniques, such as using green houses and intercropping, in order to show them more effective ways of farming, thus increasing yield and quality in the products."

In a country where the literacy rate is incredibly low, Beron said using projects such as the demo farms is of vital importance.

Another area where the farms teach

Afghan farmers improved techniques is in the pest management field, according to Staff Sgt. George Nagel, a native of Ogdensburg.

"One of the biggest challenges we face is that the farmers want a chemical solution to everything, much like we used in the U.S. back in the '40s and '50s," he said. "But there are a lot of problems that

come with that, so we're teaching them natural solutions such as biological control and natural predators."

As with many of the projects the PRT is working on, much of the responsibility in the coming months will be transferred to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and the team is here to help with the transition, Oehler said.

"What we're stressing to them now is that we won't be supporting the demo farms financially in the future," he said. "We've seen a lot of success with increased productivity and increased prices for the produce at market using some of the techniques learned at the demo farms." 

[Complete story online](#)

# Wisconsin's second agribusiness team prepares for Afghanistan mission

The classrooms included cattle stalls, sheep pens, fish hatcheries and farm fields, and the lessons covered soil and seeds, livestock, water management and even women's handicraft production. Not typical training for Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, but important knowledge for an atypical unit, the 97th Agribusiness Development Team, as it wraps up a five-day "Agriculture 101" crash course through the University of Wisconsin-Madison's [College of Agricultural and Life Sciences](#) (CALS).

"The unit's job over there will be to facilitate the food supply chain management of agribusiness," said Col. John Schroeder, 97th ADT commander. "A complete supply chain management from planting through marketing — working with universities, with the ministers at the village level, the province level all the way up to the national level."

Much as Wisconsin's first agribusiness development team, the 82nd ADT, was [reorganized](#) in May to become an element of the Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team, the 97th has also reorganized under the PRT concept and will only deploy up to one-quarter of its 60 members next year. Schroeder will not be among the deploying troops who will replace the 82nd ADT members in the Kunar PRT. About 80 percent of Afghanistan is involved in agriculture, making it a large part of the PRT mission.

The "Agriculture 101" training is similar to that given to the 82nd ADT last year. Capt. Craig Giese of Lodi, the officer in charge of the deploying ADT element, said the training will have his Soldiers and Airmen well prepared.

"This is going to give us a good baseline on how things should be," Giese said. "As long as we go there with a mindset that we're not going to change the world over there and we're going to implement small changes, we'll be okay. I think we'll do great things."

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Steven Artz of DeForest will be responsible for the unit's local economy purchases, but will also facilitate with Afghan locals to open up their own funding avenues. A supply and logistics specialist for nearly three decades, this will be his first deployment.

"I really thought it was pretty neat, what we were going to be doing, actually trying to help the Afghans take care of themselves and improve their lives," Artz said. "I was intrigued by being part of a smaller element like this with a very unique mission. It has proven to be very interesting."

Staff Sgt. Ross Templeton of Concho, Ariz. — attached to the Arizona Air National Guard's 162nd Fighter Wing — grew up on a small dairy farm in Wisconsin and will function as a forestry management specialist for this deployment, his first.

"I'm very excited," Templeton admitted. "I grew up in production agriculture and I was always involved in 4-H. I'm involved in the dairy production marketing board here in Wisconsin. I don't know that I expect to see that a lot in Afghanistan. A lot of what we're expecting to see is very, very small farms centered on keeping their families alive."

"Obviously the first thing we need to do when we get there is understand what they do and why they do what they do," Templeton continued, "and then take what we do and why we do what we do and try and merge those together to help them do what they want to do better." ■

[Complete story online](#)



**Judy Reith-Rozelle discusses characteristics of fruits and vegetables at various stages of growth with members of the Wisconsin National Guard's 97th Agribusiness Development Team during a graduate-level 40-hour crash course in agriculture July 23-27 through the Babcock Institute for International Dairy Research and Development at the University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech Sgt. Jon LaDue**

# TRAINING with the KING OF BATTLE



At top, crews from the 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery shoot a rocket from a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) as part of their annual training at Fort McCoy. Above, a battalion Soldier drives along with a crew in a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) as part of the unit's annual training at Fort McCoy. Wisconsin National Guard photos by Staff Sgt. Sean Huolihan

## Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue Wisconsin National Guard

After more than 10 years of continuous deployments, Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers continue to train and maintain their skills and proficiencies at stateside bases during annual training.

For some Soldiers in the 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, this year's annual training was also a chance to hone their skills for deployment. Bravo Battery of Plymouth is expected to deploy later this fall to conduct a field artillery mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

But Bravo's mission in June was to take part in traditional field training with the rest of the battalion.

"We shoot, move and communicate — that's what we train on during annual training," said Maj. Paul Kapinski, the battalion's operations officer assigned to Headquarters Battery.

The High Mobility Artillery Rocket

System (HIMARS) battalion — consisting of the Milwaukee-based Headquarters Battery, Bravo Battery, and Battery C and the 108th Forward Support Company in Sussex — worked together to accomplish eight missions, firing 30 training rockets across Fort McCoy June 28.

To meet the annual certification requirement, HIMARS units must successfully complete tasks down to the individual launcher and ammo section. This year, however, over the course of this and an annual training session in April, the 121st achieved battalion certification.

The last time the battalion deployed in 2006, it was to perform a convoy escort mission. Soldiers in Battery B are looking forward to finally deploy using the skills they devote most of their time to perfect.

"I don't believe the Wisconsin artillery has ever been used as an artillery unit in a contingency plan," Kapinski said. "It could be pretty historic for the battery." ■

[Complete story online](#)

Wisconsin National Guard's  
mass casualty response team is

# READY FOR DUTY

**Airman 1st Class Andrea F. Liechti**  
*115th Fighter Wing Public Affairs*

The Wisconsin National Guard now has a certified resource to call upon in the event of a natural or man-made disaster in the state.

About 150 Soldiers and Airmen of Wisconsin's Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear High Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package, or CERFP, trained June 2-14 at Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center before earning the certification June 15.

Wisconsin is the 18th state to become CERFP certified.

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, was pleased with the certification.

"This mission is critical to our nation's homeland defense," Dunbar said. "Wisconsin was privileged to be entrusted with it. The results of this exercise evaluation validate the confidence National Guard Bureau and the U.S. Northern Command has in us, and I am proud of [unit commander] Maj. Rochelle Maier and the entire CERFP — what an incredible team."

The CERFP certification program tests Army and Air National Guard members on their ability to successfully complete rescue efforts after natural or man-made disasters occur.

"This certification means Wisconsin residents can rest at ease if a natural disaster strikes," said Army 1st Lt. Adam Puhl of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry. "The CERFP team has been trained to provide support when the civilian relief efforts are running out of resources and before the federal relief efforts step in."



More than 150 Guard members were divided into three teams: search and extraction, decontamination and medical.

"It's nice to see how well the teams have gelled together since day one," said Lt. Col. Jennifer Schmidt, CERFP chief nurse and a member of the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 115th Medical Group.

The teams were evaluated on how well they worked together in disaster-simulated scenarios.

Wisconsin's CERFP team operates in FEMA Region 5, which includes Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Indiana and Ohio. ■

[Complete story online](#)

**Above, Airman 1st Class Jill Fredrickson, a medical services apprentice for the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 115th Fighter Wing, and member of the Wisconsin Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) uses colored ribbon to triage casualties during a June 13 training exercise at Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center. At right, CERFP members extract a "casualty" from a confined space. 115th Fighter Wing photos by Airman 1st Class Andrea F. Liechti**





# 105th Cav kicks off inaugural **SPUR RIDE**

**Sgt. Tyler Lasure**

*112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Eighty members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 105th Cavalry Squadron, entered a gauntlet of physical, mental and environmental challenges known as a Spur Ride Aug. 4-5 at Fort McCoy. — and 34 emerged with a pair of silver spurs and a coveted place in the Order of the Spur.

“The Silver Spurs for a cavalryman is a rite of passage and proves to the rest of your comrades that you are worth your salt,” said Lt. Col. Bill Kehoe, commander of the 1st Battalion, 105th Cavalry Squadron — commonly referred to as the 105th Cav. “It is an epic accomplishment for a cavalryman.”

This was the first Spur Ride ever conducted by the 105th Cav, a subordinate unit of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. The tradition of wearing spurs and the Stetson hats is unique

to the Cavalry, and earning one's spurs is held in the same regard as earning the expert or combat infantry badge.

Spur Rides vary from unit to unit, but it is the only method of joining the Order of the Spur. Competitors in the 105th Cav had to demonstrate their mastery of cavalry tasks — navigating between points, radio communications, first aid, weapons and hand grenade proficiency, detecting and placing mines, avoiding and identifying boobytraps, requesting artillery fire on a target, identifying enemy vehicle types, and completing an eight-mile road march in roughly two hours. Troopers were also tested on their knowledge of the history and traditions of the cavalry. 🇺🇸

- [Complete story online](#)
- [Photos online](#)
- **Related videos:** <http://goo.gl/h0oqq>, <http://goo.gl/17IZH>, <http://goo.gl/JAAL1>, <http://goo.gl/3fbwy>, <http://goo.gl/8jAEJ>

# CRASH *and* LEARN

Members of the 128th Air Refueling Wing and Company F, 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment conducted Combat and Water Survival Continuation Training for pilots and boom operators in June at Milwaukee's Lakeshore State Park.

Aircrew members were taken out into Lake Michigan by boats from the Milwaukee Fire Department and Coast Guard Auxiliary. They had to jump out of the boat into the lake to simulate a ditched aircraft scenario, in which they would be rescued from the water. Assisted by Aircrew Flight Equipment diver instructors, the crews swam into the clear water. A rescuing device attached to the hoist lowered toward them. Once they were secured, they gave the thumbs-up to be hoisted out of the water.

"This training was very valuable to us because we do a lot of training with the simulation with just a 200-pound dummy," said Capt. Randall Ramm, Company F commander. "It's the same mechanics, but you don't have the pressure and stress of hurting a live person, so this is really good for us. We don't do it over water very often, and any chance we can get to do live lifts is good because it puts the real element in the training we do."

"You just can't simulate what they actually did," explained Senior Master Sgt. Shane Loomis, an AFE instructor. "They experienced the physical and psychological effects of being dunked in the water and having to get rescued." ■

[Complete story online](#)



**UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopter Crew Chief Eric Leukert from the Army Aviation Supply Facility #1, West Bend, prepares to grab 128th Air Refueling Wing boom operator Staff Sgt. Ryan Reisen and pull him in to the Black Hawk to complete Reisen's safe 100-foot ascent from the waters of Lake Michigan, off the coast of Milwaukee.**

# PATRIOT 12



**1st Lt. Brian Faltinson**  
*Wisconsin National Guard*

Nearly 600 Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers and Airmen were among more than 1,100 military personnel — as well as local, state and federal emergency responders from across the nation — to converge on the Wisconsin Air National Guard's Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center July 13-20 for the National Guard's [PATRIOT 12](#) domestic response exercise.

PATRIOT 12 gauged the National Guard's ability to assist a variety of civilian emergency response agencies during a large-scale disaster or other domestic emergency. This year's exercise revolved around several powerful — but notional — earthquakes causing

catastrophic damage to the Appleton area. In the scenario, severe damage to roads, residential and public buildings as well as hospitals quickly overwhelmed local authorities, who requested assistance from state and federal agencies — to include Army and Air National Guard units across the country.

The exercise fits well within Air National Guard Director Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III's vision of the National Guard as the nation's first military responder to domestic emergencies. Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, stressed the importance of the National Guard training with civilian emergency response agencies.

"The country is relying on the National Guard, and they are relying on us to connect to the other parts of federal

government, state government and local government," Dunbar said. "That is what these exercises are about."

Wisconsin National Guard members participated either at the exercise site at Volk Field or at the Wisconsin National Guard Joint Operations Center in Madison. The nature of the exercise allowed the 32nd Military Police Company, the 54th Civil Support Team, the 724th Engineer Battalion and the Wisconsin National Guard Joint Staff to accomplish very different training goals.

Capt. Mindy Mingerink, 32nd MP Company commander, said the training makes her unit ready to assume responsibility as the Wisconsin National Guard's Quick Reaction Force. The QRF often is the first Wisconsin National Guard unit called upon to support

local authorities during an emergency. For one scenario, the unit set up road blocks to prevent people from entering a chemically contaminated area. Crowds of people approached the roadblock seeking information and assistance and were met by Sgt. Eugene Aten (above), who soon calmed the situation.

The 54th CST trained with their counterparts from Alaska and New Jersey, as well as an FBI evidence collection team. The 724th Engineer Battalion had two missions at PATRIOT 12. Its headquarters element commanded a National Guard Reaction Force, a support force to local authorities, and honed the coordination and planning skills needed to direct units during an emergency response. ■

[Complete story online](#)



**Above, Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, director of the Air National Guard, and Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, arrive at Volk Field for PATRIOT 12's Distinguished Visitor Day July 19.** National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Ralph Kaputaska



# Belting a home-run performance



**Sgt. Zachary Henningsen, a member of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Battery B, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, sings the National Anthem before more than 33,000 Milwaukee Brewers fans at Miller Park July 26. The Brewers offered a military appreciation promotion that evening. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson**

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

It's a long way from open mike nights in Milwaukee to singing the National Anthem on the Miller Park infield, but Sgt. Zachary Henningsen of the Plymouth-based Battery B, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery made it look easy.

"My dream is to become a world-famous rock star," Henningsen said moments before standing in front of more than 33,000 Milwaukee Brewers fans at the July 26 game against the Washington Nationals. "Who doesn't want to do something like that?"

Henningsen, 23, sang in the choir

during middle and high school in Mayville. After moving to Milwaukee he frequented open mike nights at various establishments to continue his love of singing.

"I enjoy it," he said. "I've never really been booed off stage."

Henningsen learned near the end of a recent National Guard drill weekend of the opportunity to attend the Milwaukee Brewers game through a ticket promotion offered by the Wisconsin USO. He asked his unit leaders about the possibility of singing the National Anthem before the July 26 game; after gaining their approval, he sent the Brewers organization an audition CD. Less than 10 days later he received the Brewers' approval.

"I was ecstatic," Henningsen said. "For any singer, to get on a national stage or have the opportunity to sing in front of tens of thousands of people is a dream come true."

Henningsen joined the Wisconsin Army National Guard nearly five years ago to "become part of something bigger and better than myself." And his musical aspirations continue to grow as well. Having already performed the National Anthem at Elkhart Lake's Road America and now Miller Park, he has his sights set on the biggest sports stage in the state.

"Maybe I'll do a Packers game this season," he said.

[Story online](#)



Marine Sgt. Maj. Bryan Battaglia, senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, delivers Gen. Martin Dempsey's top four priorities for the

armed forces and Department of Defense to Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers and Airmen at Volk Field July 25. DOD Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Sun L. Vega

# Military's top enlisted leader touts DoD priorities during Volk Field visit

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

The senior enlisted advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff outlined Gen. Martin Dempsey's priorities and the future of the National Guard during a town hall meeting July 25 at the Wisconsin Air National Guard's Volk Field.

Perhaps the most important topic Marine Sgt. Maj. Bryan Battaglia discussed with Volk Field Airmen and 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldiers was Joint Force 2020, which anticipates the composition of the armed forces by the end of the decade.

"While historically we're not that good at predicting the future, it only goes to show that we, as a nation or an armed force, have to be ready for a multitude of things," Battaglia explained. "We just have to ensure that, while leaner, we are still capable,

relevant, ready, trained and educated to conquer and achieve any emerging requirements that our president may direct."

Battaglia said that the Department of Defense's top strategic goal is to protect the homeland.

"If you read between the lines, that's going to include the Guard and Reserve," he said. Responding to a Soldier's question about the Guard's future, Battaglia said, "While you're going to go through some adjustment ... we need the Guard, and I don't think anyone is questioning that whatsoever."

Command Chief Master Sgt. Greg Cullen, senior enlisted advisor for the Wisconsin Air National Guard, said that comment from Battaglia was his biggest take-away from the town hall meeting.

Command Sgt. Maj. John Gipe, senior enlisted advisor assigned to the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for

Reserve Affairs, accompanied Battaglia and spoke to Soldiers about his vision of the Guard's future relevance as well as personnel and training requirements.

Another of Dempsey's priorities is to achieve national objectives in current conflicts. Battaglia said the services continue toward that goal every day, partly by maintaining resilience.

The third priority Battaglia discussed was keeping faith in the military family.

"If you happen to be called to an operational status and have to deploy somewhere, he wants you to be comfortable enough to know that while you are off doing the nation's bidding, your family will be taken care of," he said.

Battaglia was passionate about the final priority discussed — commitment to the profession of arms.

"Ask yourselves — why are you here?" he suggested. "Part of this renewing our

commitment to the profession of arms is reflecting. No other job requires an oath of enlistment to support and defend the constitution at all costs."

Command Sgt. Maj. George Stopper, senior enlisted advisor for the Wisconsin Army National Guard, noted that Battaglia devoted half of his time discussing Total Force Fitness, a program that addresses behavioral, psychological, physical and environmental fitness to achieve optimal well-being and performance under a variety of conditions. Stopper said the Wisconsin National Guard also promotes Total Force Fitness among its troops.

"The issues that affect Wisconsin are the same issues that are affecting the overall force," Stopper said. "It's encouraging to know that the most senior levels within DoD are focused on solutions to the same issues we are." 

[Story online](#)

# A glimpse behind Empire Shield's mission



**Lt. Col. Peter Riley, Joint Task Force Empire Shield commander, briefs key members of the Wisconsin National Guard June 28 about ongoing homeland defense programs there. Below, Brig. Gen. Scott Legwold, director of the Wisconsin National Guard Joint Staff, talks with a member of the New York Army National Guard on patrol in New York City's Grand Central Station as part of JTF Empire Shield June 28.** Wisconsin National Guard photos by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson



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

With the CERFP's (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Explosive Emergency Response Force Package) recent [certification](#), the Wisconsin National Guard has additional resources to apply to domestic emergency operations. To get a sense of how National Guard assets can integrate with local agencies, a team of Wisconsin National Guard members representing the Joint Staff and CERFP visited the New York National Guard's [Joint Task Force Empire Shield](#), which has conducted a state-duty homeland security mission since Sept. 11, 2001.

"We were able to visit with the command elements of JTF Empire Shield and discuss with them in depth and see first-hand how they conduct their missions and orchestrate their day-to-day missions," said Brig. Gen. Scott Legwold, director of the Wisconsin National Guard Joint Staff. "Our takeaways are truly learning from an organization that provides personnel to support homeland security day in and day out at multiple locations in a vast metropolitan area, which is not done in any other cities [currently] to our knowledge."

JTF Empire Shield has approximately 280 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen on state duty in three company-sized elements, patrolling vital transportation terminals in the New York City area and nuclear power plants north on the Hudson River. They coordinate daily with various law enforcement agencies and state agencies such as the New York Naval Militia — a state maritime agency comprised largely of retired Navy Reserve personnel.

Lt. Col. Peter Riley, JTF Empire Shield commander, explained that his troops support law enforcement, but their primary mission is to detect and deter terrorism.

"We're there for presence," added Senior Master Sgt. Edwin Mondezie, Jr., the JTF Empire Shield senior enlisted advisor. "It's so difficult, the role that we play. Even explaining it to the Soldiers, it gets difficult. We're one incident away from being good guys to, 'Why are they out there?' So we have to make sure at all times that we are supporting law enforcement, not doing our own thing."

Maj. David Hellekson, the Wisconsin National Guard provost marshal, was impressed with JTF Empire Shield's scale of operations.

"The interagency cooperation has to exist at so many different levels," Hellekson said. "That really drives home the importance of building relationships between those agencies so you can function and train, so when real stuff happens you're ready to go. You have those relationships established and methodologies established so you can act when you're needed to respond."

Capt. Jeremy Duffy, of the Wisconsin National Guard CERFP, agreed.

"The biggest thing was how they did the integration and joint service connection, the interagency cooperation between the police, fire and different law enforcement agencies," Duffy said. "As we stand up [the CERFP], that's going to be our biggest challenge — to figure out how we bridge the gap and create that cooperation for interagency training and application."

Duffy said one lesson learned from JTF Empire Shield is to request to train with agencies the CERFP will support in the event of a domestic emergency.

"That way they're really driving the train and we're not," Duffy said. "They're running the show and we're just there to supplement them."

Legwold said the information gained can be applied if the Wisconsin National Guard is ordered to augment local authorities. ■

[Complete story online](#)

# RHYTHM & BOOMS



**T**he Wisconsin National Guard howitzers that fire powder charges and the F-16 Falcon fighter jets that fly overhead during the National Anthem at the annual Rhythm and Booms celebration at Madison's Warner Park are more than just show — they are a tangible reminder of the assets, capabilities and missions found in National Guard units in communities across Wisconsin.

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The 115th Fighter Wing also hosted approximately 180 local civic and business leaders and their families at the Wisconsin Air National Guard base in Madison during Rhythm and Booms.

“This is our first event recognizing the Badger Air Community Council, an independent community council that’s standing up to support the 115th Fighter Wing Airmen,” said Brig. Gen. Joseph Brandemuehl, 115th commander. “It’s a great way to demonstrate to local civic leaders and leaders in the community what we have here at the fighter wing — our capabilities, what our mission is, what our people do, and the impact we have on the community.”

Among the prominent local business leaders behind the Badger Air Community Council, Brandemuehl said, are Pat Richter, Dave Anderson, Marv Siegert and Dave Lenz. Richter supported the annual Military Achievement Awards when he was an executive with Oscar Mayer Foods, and Lenz retired as a major in the Wisconsin Air National Guard’s 176th Tactical Fighter Squadron, a subordinate unit of the 115th Fighter Wing.

“We’re trying to show them behind the scenes what goes on — what goes into a fly-by, what goes into an event like this — that there’s a lot more behind it than just the jets flying over,” Brandemuehl continued. “There’s usually about 40 Airmen when you talk about the maintenance side of the house, just to get the jets airborne. It also gives them a slice of what we do on a daily basis Monday through Friday as well.”

The event included static displays of an F-16 jet, inert munitions, an F-16 flight simulator, and chairs and sound system for watching the fireworks.

Maj. Mike Palmer, who with Maj. Tim Dyer helped organize the event at the 115th Fighter Wing, said the unit was putting greater emphasis on telling its story to the community.

“If you look at the role we play and how efficient we do the job, we’re trying to tell that story to the rest of the world,” Palmer said. “We know times are tough right now and money’s tight, and we think we have a very efficient, highly educated group of people that we want to see continue forward into the future to keep the base open and defend our country at an efficient cost.”

“This is our way of showing gratitude for their support,” Dyer said.

Back at Warner Park, the public also demonstrated its appreciation for the Wisconsin National Guard, as handshakes and “Thank you for your service” became a common refrain heard near the howitzers. 

[Click on this image for additional photos](#)



# Employers urged to accelerate plans to hire veterans

**Panther Racing Team Owner John Barnes encourages local employers to consider hiring veterans and current service members as part of Panther Racing's employment initiative June 16 at The Milwaukee Mile.** Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson



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

With unemployment for Wisconsin National Guard members at twice the state average and about one-third higher than the national average, Wisconsin National Guard and [Panther Racing Team](#) officials emphasized the pressing need to turn the corner quickly to a group of local employers at an employment initiative June 16 at The Milwaukee Mile on the Wisconsin State Fairgrounds.

[Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar](#), adjutant general of Wisconsin, explained that a Guard member's employment status has a direct impact on his or her overall readiness and ability to serve.

"When the young men and women willing to serve this nation in a combat zone multiple times comes home to unemployment and can't provide for their families, we're going to lose that Soldier or Airman because they have to take care of their families," Dunbar said.

"That is why we asked you to join us today, to enlist you in this mission that's so important to us," said John Barnes, Panther Racing Team owner. "No matter what else is said up here, we're here for one reason and one reason only — to get these guys jobs and make sure their lives are up to the standards they deserve."

Spokespersons as varied as JR Hildebrand, National Guard car driver for Panther Racing, Wisconsin National Guard senior enlisted advisors [Command Sgt. Maj. George Stopper](#) and [Command](#)

[Chief Master Sgt. Gregory Cullen](#), and TriWest Healthcare Alliance President and CEO Dave McIntyre extolled the desirable qualities of veterans and National Guard members — practical experience, strong work ethic, leadership, education and professionalism.

"There's a very tangible quality they bring to the table that, frankly, from a self-interested perspective as an employer, makes a great difference," McIntyre told employers. "I've been employing thousands of folks who come out of uniform, and their families — there are no better employees that you can find."

Some of the representatives attending the employment initiative — Time Warner and Prudential among them — currently have their own initiatives to hire veterans whenever possible, and took the opportunity to network with like-minded companies. Others, such as Roland Lauterbach of Oberlin Filter Company, wanted to learn more about involvement with the National Guard.

"Today is the start of your race — the CEOs, the entrepreneurs and business owners here," Barnes said. "It's very easy to leave here motivated, to hear these great people and what they've done. It's another thing to go home to your community and make a difference. Each one of you has the opportunity to make a difference. If you hire just one Guard member or spouse, you've made a huge difference." ■

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

# New commander takes charge of **RED ARROW**

**Spc. Alexandria Hughes**  
32nd Brigade Public Affairs

After more than 33 years of military service — including the last two as commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's largest brigade — Col. Martin Seifer of Seymour, formally transferred command of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team to Col. Tim Lawson of Cambridge.

"I had my time and it was great," Seifer said, "but it's time to hang up the boots and let somebody else do it.

"Tim is a terrific Soldier and a terrific leader," Seifer continued. "I've known him since we were both majors. He will do a terrific job as commander of the 32nd IBCT."

Seifer assumed command of the 32nd in 2010 shortly after the brigade returned from a yearlong mobilization and deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. It was the largest overseas operational deployment in the Wisconsin National Guard since World War II.

During his tenure as commander, Seifer focused on ramping up training and refitting the brigade in terms of personnel and equipment in preparation for future missions.

Seifer was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for his accomplishments. He plans to continue working for Schneider International.

Lawson has 21 years of military experience to draw from — 10 years active service and 11 years in the Wisconsin Army National Guard — including combat arms and armor officer, military intelligence, recruiting battalion commander and state operations officer. He transitioned to infantry to command the 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry.

"It's good to be home," Lawson said. "It's good to be a part of this organization. It's good to be back at that level of tactical thinking — of combat arms. I'm happy to be in this position. I'm very fortunate to be in the shoes I am today."

Lawson said he is looking forward to working with Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde, senior enlisted advisor for the 32nd. Lawson and Conde worked together for 18 months in the 127th Infantry as well as a 2009 deployment to Afghanistan.

"CSM Conde and I go back a ways," Lawson said. "He



**Above, Command Sgt. Major Rafael Conde holds the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team's guidon to begin the symbolic "passing of the colors" in which both Col. Martin Seifer's command and Col. Tim Lawson's command is recognized by Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, and Conde, during the change of command ceremony June 24 at Camp Williams.**



**At left, Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, presents Seifer with the Meritorious Service Medal for his exceptional career and success as commander of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. 32nd Brigade photos by Spc. Alexandria Hughes**

[Story online](#)

new commander.

"The greatest thing about Col. Lawson is that he is a Soldier's commander," Conde said. "There will not be a Soldier within six months who will not know his name — not because he yells, but because he gets out and he talks to his Soldiers and still meets every expectation." ■

is the epitome of what a noncommissioned officer should be, and as a command sergeant major — there is none better. That's speaking from an active duty and National Guard status. The man can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere."

Conde, in turn, expressed confidence in the brigade's

# Graduating beyond at-risk pasts



**Above, Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch and Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, present certificates to Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy cadets during a formal commencement ceremony at Stevens Point Area Senior High School June 9. At left, cadets prepare to perform drill and ceremony.** Wisconsin National Guard photos by Capt. Michelle Baer

**Capt. Michelle Baer**  
*Wisconsin National Guard*

More than 100 young adults from 38 Wisconsin counties celebrated an important milestone in their lives as they officially graduated from the first phase of the [Wisconsin National Guard Youth Challenge Program](#) during an official ceremony June 9, at Stevens Point Area Senior High School.

“You all are choosing to be here today, by choosing a life of prosperity and goodness,” Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch, the ceremony’s keynote speaker, told the cadets. “You are making the tough choice and you are leaders.”

“You represent the very best of America, the very best of Wisconsin, and the funny thing is months ago you would have never said that about yourselves,” she continued. “Today, you represent the best of our state, and I am so proud.”

Kleefisch joined Wisconsin National Guard leaders, Challenge Academy staff,

family, friends and spectators to honor the young men and women celebrate how they’ve changed their tune and their future.

“The Challenge Academy has been the best thing that has ever happened to me,” Honor Graduate Abby Odden, of Lake Geneva, Ill., said. She plans on attending Madison Gateway to earn a nursing degree. During her time at the Academy she wrote a song in appreciation for the cadre, titled “[I’ll take these lessons.](#)”

“Today is a celebration of where these kids are headed and where they have been,” said Peter Blum, Challenge Academy acting director. He emphasized that, despite the commencement ceremony, they do not graduate from the program for another 12 months. After graduating, cadets are paired with hometown mentors who offer guidance and encouragement in pursuing their new direction in life. ■

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

# From kids to cadets



**Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy candidates take an oath and become cadets during the Aug. 3 A-Day ceremony at Fort McCoy, Wis. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Michelle Baer**

**Capt. Michelle Baer**  
*Wisconsin Army National Guard*

For Sabrina Kerr of Fort Atkinson, the challenge in the [Wisconsin National Guard's Challenge Academy](#) program at Fort McCoy came early.

Like other at-risk 16-to-18-year-olds, Kerr agreed to submit to a structured, military-style environment, where state-certified teachers and counselors build participants' academic abilities, character, self-confidence and personal discipline. She exceeded the cadre's expectations during the first 10 days, but struggled with homesickness and left the program three times during the second week.

A-Day, or Acceptance Day, is when

Challenge Academy candidates have to make a choice — tough it out, take the oath and become a cadet, or go home.

"They are busy today transforming themselves from candidates to cadets," Peter Blum, Challenge Academy acting director, said Aug. 3, the Acceptance Day for Class 29 candidates. "We are evaluating the candidate's performance within the first two weeks. If they don't conduct themselves like they want to be here, then we ask them to leave."

Kerr was not alone in struggling with being away from family and friends, along with the total change in daily routines or withdrawal from bad habits. She acknowledged that her lifestyle before attending Challenge Academy involved

staying up all night, sleeping all day and eating junk food.

"I knew I had to stay," she said. "I wanted to change and go to college. I wanted to be sober and have a relationship with my mom."

Kerr admitted it was challenging to accept the regimented schedule and the culture shock that comes with building a different lifestyle.

"You have to push yourself through it," she said.

Austin Beoisle of Neenah, a fellow cadet, has already noticed an improvement in discipline and self-respect.

"Here, I mean something to somebody, and everybody means something to me," he said. "We help each other with everything"

Kerr said that part of succeeding at

Challenge Academy is being able to work past the emotional hardships that will arise from being away from home and learning to make better life choices.

"But I am a strong person, and I can do it," she said. "And that is why I am still here. I feel proud to be here."

"I know that this is who I am going to become for the rest of my life," Beoisle said. "It feels good to have the acceptance of my family. Through this program, I can turn my life around and head in the right direction."

After graduating from the 22-week residential phase of academy training, cadets are paired with hometown mentors who offer guidance and encouragement in pursuing their new direction in life. ■

# Exercise puts agencies on same wavelength

**Tod Pritchard**

*Wisconsin Emergency Management*

Getting information and data to the right people at the right time can save lives during a disaster. That's why more than 200 people representing two dozen federal, state, county, tribal, local and volunteer agencies — to include the Wisconsin National Guard and Wisconsin Emergency Management — gathered at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds May 31 to take part in "SIMCOM 2012."

The State Interoperable Mobile Communications Exercise, held the past few years in Madison, is designed to display, educate and test mobile emergency communications. The goal is develop relationships and understand the capabilities of other agencies before they are needed in a real emergency.

During the exercise, participating agencies worked together in four groups on practice exercises involving incident command structures and incident action plans. They also played out scenarios to simulate the challenges in emergency communications across different platforms.

"We had a lot of participation from different agencies with various communication platforms," said Donna Haugom, director of the Jefferson County Office of Emergency Management. "I believe this was a great learning experience, and hope it can continue with different counties throughout the state."

Participants involved in SIMCOM 12 included ARES/RACES (HAM radio operators); the Civil Air Patrol; Dane County; Dodge County; Federal Emergency Management Agency; FBI-Milwaukee; Jefferson County; La Crosse County; Menomonee County; Milwaukee County; Minnesota Emergency Management; Ozaukee County; Shawano County; USA Disaster Relief Corps;



U.S. Department of Justice; Washington County; Waukesha County; Winnebago County (Ill.); Wisconsin Emergency Management; Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources; Wisconsin National Guard; and the Wisconsin State Patrol.

Participating Wisconsin National Guard units included the Joint Operations Center, Joint Information Systems, 54th Civil Support Team, 128th Air Refueling Wing, 128th Air Control Squadron, 115th Fighter Wing and the 724th Engineer Battalion serving as the National Guard Reaction Force. The Minnesota National Guard's Joint Operations Staff also took part in the exercise.

The exercise was funded by a U.S. Department of Homeland Security grant through the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance. It was hosted by the Wisconsin National Guard's Joint Operations Center, Wisconsin Emergency Management, and Jefferson County Emergency Management.

[Story online](#)



**At top, Cyndi Skodinski of the Washington County Sheriff's Department takes part in the SIMCOM 12 communications exercise, while members of the 115th Fighter Wing staff a communication cell May 31 at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. More than 200 people representing two dozen agencies took part in the exercise.** Wisconsin Emergency Management photos by Tod Pritchard

# READY and SET

**Airman 1st Class Andrea F. Liechti**  
115th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The Madison-based 115th Fighter Wing has been deemed mission ready to deploy aircraft and personnel overseas in support of contingency operations, following a demanding Operational Readiness Inspection conducted July 13-18.

An inspection team from the Air Combat Command evaluated the 115th Fighter Wing in command and control, deployment processing, employment readiness, information operations and force protection. Eight teams and 37 Airmen were recognized as superior performers in the inspection, and eight ACC inspector general coins were awarded.

“This is a direct reflection of the caliber of the men and women of this Wing,” said Col. Rickey Rodgers, inspection team chief. “We were truly impressed with the professionalism, devotion and dedication to the mission displayed throughout this inspection. This is a phenomenal Wing, a great organization.”

“We only get better with people from the outside looking at us,” Brig. Gen. Joseph Brandemuehl, 115th Fighter Wing commander, said after the ORI results were announced. “There’s no question in my mind today we are a better, stronger organization because of [this inspection].”

Rodgers described the ORI as an intrusive inspection that examines areas which may miss daily scrutiny. Maj. Mike Palmer, 115th Maintenance Operations Flight commander, elaborated on that definition.

“The ORI is an evaluation of the unit’s capability to transition from peacetime readiness to a surge operational posture and includes actions normally occurring prior to the outbreak of hostilities,” Palmer said. “It [showcased] the efforts of the 115th Fighter Wing in various functions to safely prepare our unit to deploy as an aviation package to support world contingencies. The goal of the ORI is to ensure the 115th is a combat-ready unit.”

“The 115th got the mission done,” Rodgers said.

All functional areas of the Wing participated in the inspection, Palmer said. The 115th Airmen completed five Operational Readiness Exercises in preparation for the inspection and continued to show their dedication by working 12-14 hour days to ensure tasks were completed quickly and accurately.

ORIs typically take place every two to five years, Palmer said. The 115th plans to complete its next ORI during the summer of 2014. But for now, Airmen throughout the fighter wing embraced the opportunity to share in the inspection experience.



“The 115th Fighter Wing has an extraordinary group of Airmen who, under the command of Brig. Gen. Brandemuehl, continue to demonstrate their dedication to excellence,” Palmer said. ■

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

**Above, Tech. Sgt Nathan Aslesen, left, Senior Airman Benjamin Ripp, center, and Airman 1st Class Randal Stiemke – munitions system specialists for the 115th Fighter Wing – assemble aircraft munitions July 15 as part of an Air Combat Command Operational Readiness Inspection. At right, Staff Sgt. Steven Lee, left, and Staff Sgt. Conrad Johnson weigh a liquid oxygen servicing cart.**

115th Fighter Wing photos by Master Sgt. Paul Gorman



# OPEN HOUSE

Approximately 2,500 people took advantage of the opportunity to see current and vintage military aircraft — parked on the runway as well as demonstrating aerial capabilities — at the biennial open house at the Wisconsin Air National Guard's [Volk Field](#) June 2.

The open house provided the public a first-hand view of what Volk Field Air National Guard Base is all about, according to Maj. Chris Hansen, open house chairman.

"We're located in a small community area, so it is important that they not only know what takes place here, but understand why it is such a great location for military training of various facets," Hansen said.

Col. Gary Ebben, base commander, said the open house was a way for Volk Field to give something back to the community.

"One of our primary goals is to be good community partners and neighbors, leveraging our mutual interests," Ebben said. "The open house allows the community to see the types of capabilities we offer — not only for combat operations, but also for all hazards domestic response."

Ebben said the open house was "a home run."

"By all indications, everyone attending had a very enjoyable experience," Ebben said.

**Continued on Page 31**



Owen Jones, 9, of Mauston, and Ryan Sabby, 5, of Lake Delton, peer out the tail windows of a KC-135 Stratotanker Refueler from the Milwaukee-based 128th Air Refueling Wing June 2 during Volk Field's open house. Wisconsin National Guard photos by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

## at Volk Field



A vintage B-25 Mitchell — a World War II bomber — takes a celebratory lap following an aerial demonstration June 2 at the Wisconsin Air National Guard's Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center open house.

# Volk Field open house a success

Continued from Page 30

Nearly 40 general aviation aircraft flew in to experience landing at a military base. Seventeen aircraft were on display, to include a B-1 Lancer (at right) from Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota, a KC-135 Stratotanker from the Milwaukee-based 128th Air Refueling Wing, an F-16 Falcon from the Madison-based 115th Fighter Wing, and a UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter from the Madison-based 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Battalion.

An F-86 Sabre, a Korean War-vintage fighter jet that was to be part of the open house's salute to the Korean War, cancelled its appearance due to maintenance issues. The Wisconsin National Guard Museum on post as well as other static displays focused on the Korean War.

The open house featured 22 exhibits, ranging from a vintage military ambulance to a K-9 police dog. The Wisconsin National Guard's 54th Civil Support Team and the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team's Shadow Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (lower right) were also on hand to explain their missions to the public. L39 Albatros Czechoslovakian trainer jets, stunt planes and a Commemorative Air Force B-25 Mitchell — a World War II-era bomber — took part in flying demonstrations. A "5K on the Runway" run/walk event was also held. ■

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





**Jim Rebolz (third from right), national chairman of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, presented Schneider National of Green Bay with the inaugural Extraordinary Employer Support Award May 30 in Witmer Hall at Joint Force Headquarters, Madison. The award recognizes Schneider's long-standing support of the military as well as former service members. Also pictured are members of the Wisconsin National Guard, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve and U.S. Navy Reserve. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson**

## National ESGR honors Schneider National

Green Bay-based Schneider National experienced another first May 30 when it received the inaugural Extraordinary Employer Support Award for large employers from the [Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve](#) (ESGR).

Jim Rebolz, ESGR national chairman, said the award was created approximately 45 days earlier.

"We had no way, in the Department of Defense, to recognize [ongoing support](#)," Rebolz said, noting that Schneider National was also the first recipient of the Secretary of Defense Freedom Award in 1996, when only one award was given per year.

"I think if you looked up 'employer support to the veteran' in the dictionary, you'd see a picture of Schneider National right there," said Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin.

Mike Hinz, vice president for driver recruiting at Schneider National, said that "hundreds and hundreds of our employees" are from the National Guard and the Reserves.

"We greatly appreciate the recognition ... for doing something that you're passionate about and truly believe in," Hinz said, "and that is putting our great men and women currently serving and prior service in a career where they can leverage all the investment our nation has made in them. That's what I believe we do at Schneider National — take the investment from the United States and its citizens and put those men and women into jobs where they can do great things across our country.

"It's a real privilege for us," Hinz continued. "There is an absolute patriotic good feeling we get by doing the right things, by making sure we have a strong National Guard and strong Reserve forces, because they've got jobs in communities. We all know that a fully employed and fully engaged Reservist or Guardsman makes a better Soldier, a better Sailor, a better Marine, because they have a stable base. And that's what we hope to do." ■

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



## Venerable Rustic Inn closed, for now

**Rob Schuette**  
*The Real McCoy*

The Rustic Inn, building 2000 at Fort McCoy, closed its doors for the foreseeable future Aug. 24.

Steve Ard, Fort McCoy Exchange general manager, said the closure is due to the dramatic loss of troops that used the facility on the west side of the cantonment area. All employees who worked at the facility were transferred to other Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) organizations.

The Rustic Inn will be maintained in a ready-to-use status and will be reevaluated next year for possible reopening during the summer training surge and as patronage dictates, Ard said. In the meantime, the facility will be available for unit functions.

The Robin Hood Sandwich Shoppe, located in the Exchange's Specialty Express Food Court, building 1538, began offering breakfast sandwiches, juice and milk daily from 7-10:30 a.m.

on Aug. 17.

Coffee will be available only at The Daily Grind, a coffee shop also located in building 1538, and at the Snack Avenue inside the Express. The Daily Grind is open Monday through Saturday at 6:30 a.m., and Sundays at 9 a.m.

Katie Mason, Specialty Express manager, said the coffee machine at the Rustic Inn will eventually be transferred to Robin Hood. She added that Specialty Express will also take over operation of the Rustic Inn mobile food truck that delivers food and beverages to training sites at Fort McCoy.

Ard said the post is studying the option to have vending machines offer breakfast-type foods at the Community Activity Center outdoor area at building 2000.

For more information about Specialty Express services and hours, call 608-269-5604, ext. 101 or 608-388-4343. ■



**Drew Dix, a Vietnam veteran and Medal of Honor recipient, presents Sgt. Jeremy Smith, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Soldier of the Year, with a signed copy of a book of quotes from Medal of Honor recipients during Panther Racing's "Hometown Hero" award June 16 at the Milwaukee Mile. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson**

## Wisconsin Soldier of Year honored as Hometown Hero

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

Roaring around a mile-long paved oval at speeds approaching 200 miles per hour. Being introduced as a Hometown Hero to approximately 20,000 race fans. Shaking hands with a Medal of Honor recipient.

All in a day's work for Sgt. Jeremy Smith of Watertown, Wisconsin's [Soldier of the Year](#).

"It was an exciting experience. I'm here to represent Wisconsin as best as I can," Smith said June 16. "It's a very humbling experience that someone would want to join the Guard after seeing me around here, but it's a really cool opportunity."

Smith is a member of the Madison-based 54th Civil Support Team. He won the state Soldier of the Year competition in April and has been representing his fellow Soldiers ever since.

"These opportunities are out there for

any Soldier — they're just kind of using me to fill in," Smith said. "I think the unit is very, very proud of me."

The president of Panther Racing, John Barnes, presented Smith with a large plaque and a replica of the No. 4 car.

"On behalf of Panther Racing, you inspire all of us to do our jobs better, be better people and to work harder," Barnes said. "I want to thank you for what you do for the Wisconsin National Guard."

Smith appreciated the recognition and hospitality, but admits he's still adjusting to the limelight.

"When you come from the military, you don't necessarily stand out all the time," Smith said. "You usually work as a team or a group. Being singled out is something I'm not necessarily used to. I'm just glad I can make my family proud of me. They raised me well and this is a testament to them." ■

## Wisconsin Guard member honored by law publication

Lt. Col. Robyn Blader capped off a six-month deployment to Afghanistan, where she served as chief of military justice at Camp Phoenix, by being named the [Wisconsin Law Journal's Woman of the Year](#).

Blader received the honor June 21 at the Pfister Hotel in downtown Milwaukee, one day after returning to Wisconsin and a mere nine days after departing Afghanistan. The Association for Women Lawyers said Blader was selected for her service and sacrifice to the military and the state's legal community.

"She is an example of excellence and has opened doors for other women to follow," said one judge. "She has served her community — both large and small — with her considerable legal skill, drive and energy."

Blader earned her law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1995, and founded Blader Law Office LLC in 1997.

While in Afghanistan, Blader represented the Army command in cases involving the 11,000 tenants from the eight camps of the Kabul Base Cluster. She also served as deputy staff advocate for Task Force Hydra, the command unit in Kabul, and supervised a legal office that provided services for all camps.

Among the more dramatic matters Blader handled overseas involved captured Afghans with suspected ties to al Qaeda. She made the legal determination to release two back to the Afghan National Police and to send another to the Parwan Detention Facility for further handling by the U.S. military.

Blader was also involved with volunteer work for a number of Afghan causes. In April, she received a Military Outstanding Volunteer Service medal for her work with volunteer organization Operation Outreach Afghanistan, which helps build and remodel schools.

"Children here attend school under tarps held up by wooden poles and dilapidated tents under the hot sun," she said. "There are no sewers, no water, no electricity, no heat and no playground



**Lt. Col. Robyn Blader, a legal officer with the Wisconsin Army National Guard, with Afghan school children earlier this year. During her recent deployment to Afghanistan, Blader volunteered with Operation Outreach Afghanistan, which helps build and remodel schools. Photo courtesy Lt. Col. Robyn Blader**

equipment."

Blader also worked with Afghan women to improve their life skills and serves as project manager for the construction of wells, health clinics and roads through other humanitarian projects.

Back at home, she uses a combination of her military experience and family law background in her work to help deployed American Soldiers whose spouses file for divorce or who are cut off from their children.

"These issues weigh very heavily on Soldiers in a combat environment," Blader said.

Blader helped develop Wisconsin's Code of Military Justice, which was codified in the state statutes in 2008. The code allowed the Wisconsin National Guard to process court-martial actions for the first time.

Blader plans to return to her Wautoma practice, which law partner Jeanne Zamzow has maintained while she was away. She also will return to her post as regional defense counsel for Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan. ■

*This story by Mary Reardon is reprinted with permission by the [Wisconsin Law Journal](#).*

## Dunbar to remain state's top military officer

Gov. Scott Walker announced July 3 the reappointment of Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar as the adjutant general of Wisconsin.

"Major General Dunbar has demonstrated over the past five years that he is a proven leader," said Walker, who is the commander-in-chief of the Wisconsin National Guard. "I know he will effectively lead the Wisconsin National Guard through the challenges of the future."

Dunbar became the state's 30th Adjutant General on Sept. 1, 2007, when he assumed command of the 10,000-member Wisconsin National Guard from Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening. As Adjutant General, Dunbar oversees the state's Emergency Management division, chairs the Governor's Homeland Security Council, and is the governor's Homeland Security Advisor. He also serves as the vice-chair on FEMA's National Advisory Council.

"I am honored and humbled to be reappointed as Wisconsin's Adjutant General and I am grateful to Gov. Walker for his leadership and confidence," Dunbar said. "I am also grateful to my wife, Colleen, for her love, friendship and support of a career with many demands."

"It is my distinct privilege to continue in this capacity and serve with the outstanding Soldiers and Airmen of the Wisconsin National Guard and the exceptional civilian professionals at Wisconsin Emergency Management and within the Department of Military Affairs," Dunbar continued. "I am very proud to lead them and pledge to do my very best to be worthy of their service and this reappointment."

Dunbar began his military career in 1983 and completed pilot training in 1985. He has served as KC-135 functional manager at the National



**Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar**  
Adjutant General of Wisconsin

Guard Bureau, staff member for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, executive officer to the director of the Air National Guard, and commander of the 141st Operations Group.

In 2005, he became commander of the Milwaukee-based 128th Air Refueling Wing of the Wisconsin Air National Guard. There he commanded more than 900 Airmen and was responsible for maintaining worldwide unit readiness.

Dunbar has volunteered for and deployed on contingency missions including Operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and Northern Watch. He commanded the 385th Expeditionary Operations Group in 2004 and 2005, supporting Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom with C-17 and KC-135 operations.

As adjutant general, Dunbar has mobilized more than 6,000 Soldiers and Airmen for combat operations and led the state through five declared Stafford Act emergencies.

Dunbar is a Drexel Hill, Penn., native. He and his wife, Colleen, currently reside in New Berlin. ■

## Retiree Activities Office

The Retiree Activities Office (RAO) is located in the Department of Military Affairs at 2400 Wright Street, Room 160, Madison. The office is open Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:30-11:30 a.m., except on holidays.

Our phone number is (608) 242-3115, our toll free number is 1-800-335-5147, ext 3115. If you call at a time when the office is closed, please leave a message on our voicemail. Please be sure to leave your name and phone number. Our e-mail address is: [widma.retiree@wisconsin.gov](mailto:widma.retiree@wisconsin.gov)

## 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 Guard members for their service.

The 2013 How to Nominate letter of instruction and information on how to make a nomination can be downloaded

The RAO mission is to act as an interface between the active duty and retired communities, keep retirees and widows of retirees (all ranks and services) informed on matters related to their military status, provide appropriate information and services as necessary including TRICARE, Military ID Cards, Survivor Benefits, Death Reporting and much more. The RAO also maintains a list of toll-free phone numbers, Web sites and e-mail addresses for additional information. ■

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.

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. ■

## Retiree pay to go electronic by March 1, 2013

A U.S. Treasury mandate will soon require the Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS) to pay military, civilian and retired customers by electronic funds transfer. Beginning March 1, 2013, most of you who receive paper checks will receive your pay directly to your savings or checking accounts. You can get ahead of the rush by setting up direct deposit now.

For those customers with a myPay account, simply log onto myPay at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx> and enter your bank routing and account numbers. DFAS will require about a week before pay is deposited in your checking or savings account.

Military retirees and annuitants without a myPay account can complete the FastStart Direct Deposit form at <http://www.fms.treas.gov/eft/2231.pdf> and send

it to DFAS, U.S. Military Retired Pay, P.O. Box 7130, London, KY 40742-7130.

Former spouses of military retirees should complete a Direct Deposit Authorization (Form 1059) at <http://www.dfas.mil/dms/dfas/rapay/pdf/1059.pdf> and mail it to DFAS, Garnishment Operations, P.O. Box 998002, Cleveland, OH 44199-8002 if they do not have a myPay account.

Military members or civilian employees paid by DFAS should contact their base finance office, employer's Customer Service Representative (payroll liaison) or human resources office to start direct deposit if they're unable to access myPay.

Those needing additional assistance can call DFAS customer service at 1-800-321-1080 (for retirees and annuitants) or 1-888-332-7411 (for military and civilian employees). ■

# Parting shot



Members of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery practice combat maneuvers at Fort McCoy in August. The unit is preparing to deploy to Afghanistan for a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) mission. Wisconsin Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Sean Huolihan