



@ease Express

September-October 2011

[Click here](#) for more about how the Wisconsin National Guard observed the 10th anniversary of 9/11. Wisconsin Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Ryan Roth



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A Wisconsin National Guard rifle team stands at port arms during the official ceremony at the state capitol in Madison commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks on America. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Senior Airman Ryan Roth

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From the TAG

We just commemorated the 10th anniversary of the terror attacks on America. This was a moment when time stood still and our nation changed. We've had others — Pearl Harbor, the day President Kennedy was assassinated. We all know where we were and we all have a personal story. Our National Guard has a story as well.

There is value in remembering — or, put another way, never forgetting — the events of that tragic day. There is also great value in looking forward from that day, to see where we have gone as an organization and what we have become.

When the Pentagon contemplated mobilizing the National Guard for sustained operations in Afghanistan, and later in Iraq, there were many who thought that doing so would break the National Guard. On the contrary — not only did it not break us, it has made us stronger.

That should not be surprising, when you consider the enduring value of the National Guard. We have always responded to our nation's need. We have grown up in an America that has maintained a robust active duty standing military force, but before World War II that was not the case and we were a militia nation with a much smaller active duty component. Today's National Guard is a fulfillment of the total force vision and the all volunteer force with one exception — the National Guard is no longer a theoretical concept but a proven capability.

But we have not achieved this transformation at the expense of our



Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar
The Adjutant General

state mission. Even as we deployed hundreds and thousands of our men and women to support the global war on terror, we maintained our capability to assist local authorities in natural disaster response efforts. In addition, we sent help to other states, such as the Hurricane Katrina response in 2005. Earlier this year we called National Guard troops to active duty to support local authorities during a major winter storm, and in September we sent Soldiers from the 724th Engineer Battalion to two northern Wisconsin counties to help clear timber debris from a series of strong July storms.

Our National Guard has never been more ready, reliable or relevant. We have never been more combat-hardened or experienced, and we have never been more accessible. This is a posture we want to maintain.

I believe that the Wisconsin National Guard brings great value to Wisconsin, and similarly the National Guard brings great value to our nation. I believe that the nation can and should rely on the National Guard to continue to be an operational National Guard. While the need to maintain a strong active duty military is well understood,

the National Guard has proven it can take more of that responsibility going forward and continue to meet our homeland security requirements at home. Given our capability and unmatched cost effectiveness, this will not likely be overlooked as our nation's leaders seek to address our national fiscal crisis while preserving national security.

The strides we have made over the past 10 years reflect the character of the men and women in the National Guard, from the enlisted members fresh out of boot camp to the senior leaders who have effectively leveraged their knowledge and abilities to help transform the National Guard from a Cold War strategic reserve to an operational force with strategic depth. It also reflects the courage, sacrifice and support of families, communities and employers. When our nation mobilizes the National Guard for operations — it mobilizes our families, communities, and employers as well. We connect Main Street to the war effort.

As we move forward, I am confident that we will face future challenges with the same passion, character and professionalism that we have displayed over the past 10 years.

It is truly an honor and a privilege to serve with you.



Above, Gov. Scott Walker presents Col. Jeffrey Liethen with a Wisconsin state flag during a sendoff ceremony Sept. 16 at the 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee. At right, a heartfelt farewell. 128th Air Refueling Wing photos by Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey Rohloff



2nd Lt. Nathan T. Wallin
Wisconsin National Guard

Elected officials, senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders, family and friends gathered at a large hangar at the 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee Sept. 16 to bid farewell to approximately 150 Soldiers of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

The Soldiers — members of the brigade's headquarters company as well as the 32nd Military Police Company — will serve alongside more than 700 National Guard Soldiers from seven other states, as well as six other nations, as part

of a NATO-led peacekeeping mission in Kosovo known as [KFOR](#). The 157th will serve as the brigade headquarters unit for Multi-National Battle Group East, also referred to as Task Force Falcon.

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, recognized the Soldiers preparing to deploy as well as their families.

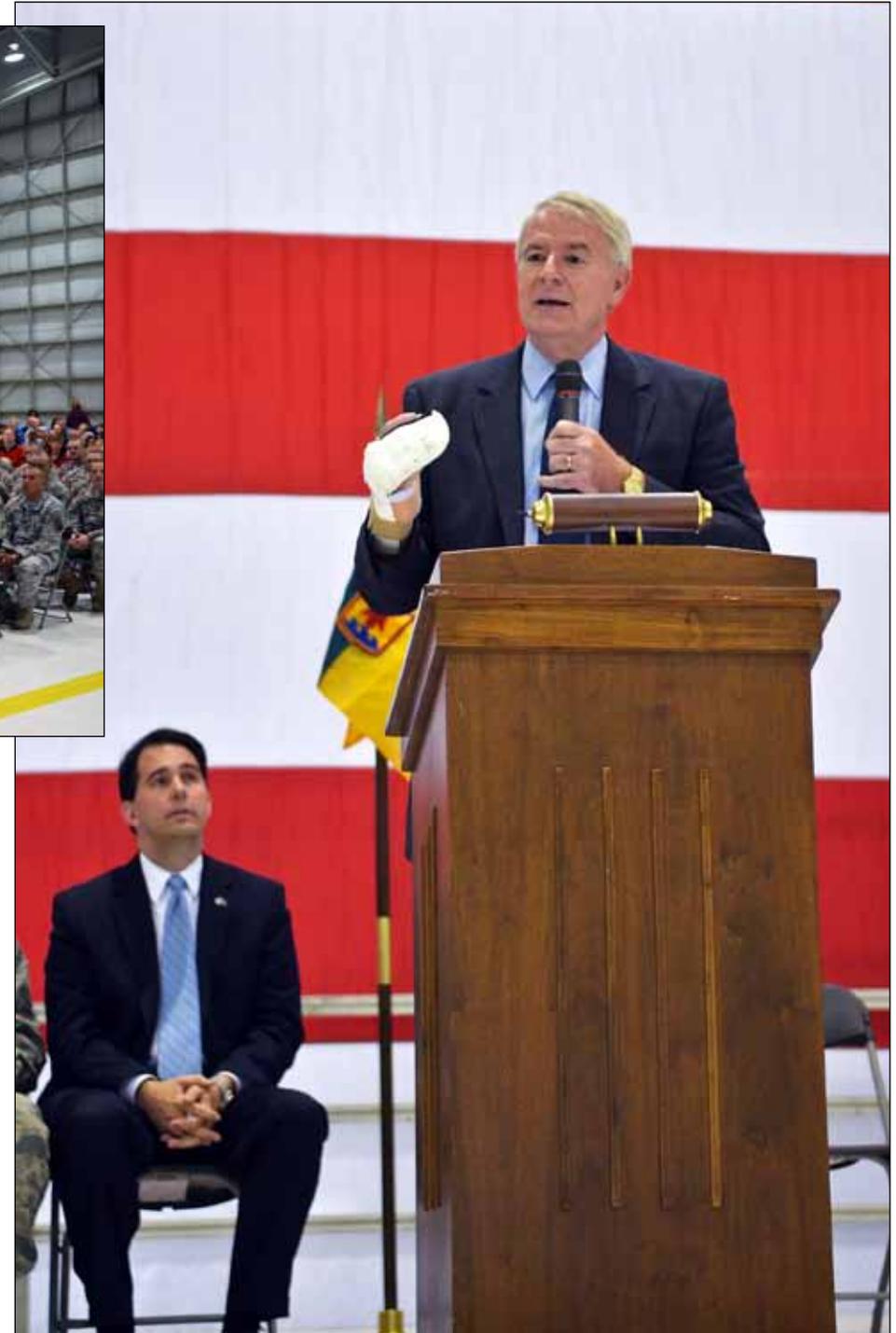
"You can count on us," he said. "We'll do our job for you, as I know you'll do your job for the United States of America."

Gov. Scott Walker thanked the Soldiers for their continued dedication.

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Above, Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, addresses deploying Soldiers from the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade during a sendoff ceremony Sept. 16 at the 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee. At right, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett speaks to deploying Guardsmen as Gov. Scott Walker looks on. 128th Air Refueling Wing photos by Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey Rohloff



157th MEB Guard members headed to Kosovo

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“Thank you for your service already,” Walker said. “Thank you for being here today for this deployment. Most of all, thank you on behalf of a grateful state and a grateful nation.”

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett also praised the deploying Soldiers.

“You are making a sacrifice for everyone in this community,” he said.

Walker presented Col. Jeffrey Liethen, brigade commander, with a state flag and asked the deploying Soldiers to remember

the people of Wisconsin every time they looked at that flag.

Immediately following the ceremony, the deploying Soldiers departed for Camp Atterbury, Ind., for pre-deployment training. They will take part in Kosovo-specific mobilization training in Germany before arriving in Kosovo around Thanksgiving.

A maneuver enhancement brigade includes military police, civil affairs, engineering, signal and chemical units, and is designed to provide command and control and freedom of movement for a designated area.  



Gov. Scott Walker got a first-hand look at storm cleanup efforts by the Wisconsin National Guard and other state agencies in two northern Wisconsin counties Sept. 23.

“After surveying the cleanup effort, I was truly amazed by the good work being done to repair the damage done by storms over the summer,” Walker said. “I’d like to thank the local elected officials, hardworking state employees at numerous agencies, the Wisconsin National Guard, state legislators from the area and other

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Approximately 50 Soldiers from the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s 724th Engineer Battalion used chainsaws, wood chippers, front end loaders and back hoe loaders, along with muscle power, to clear timber Sept. 19 felled by a powerful storm in northern Wisconsin. The Soldiers have been clearing selected areas in two northern Wisconsin counties since Sept. 6. Wisconsin National Guard photos by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

Soldiers from 724th Engineer Battalion clean up storm debris in northern Wisconsin

Continued from Page 6

interested parties for coming together to take decisive action to help deal with this massive blowdown.”

Approximately 50 members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 724th Engineer Battalion have been working since Sept. 6 to clear branches, limbs and tree trunks from roadsides in Burnett and Douglas counties. The powerful July 1 storm toppled trees across 130,000 acres in six northern Wisconsin counties. The storm debris in the rights of ways pose a safety and fire hazard.

“This is really helping our local townships,” Bobby Sichta, Burnett County Emergency Management director, said Sept. 19. “[Without the National Guard's assistance,] it would be more expensive to local townships. They've already spent hundreds of thousands of dollars.”

Sichta said that the storm damage for Burnett County was estimated at \$1.8 million, and that many towns have taken out loans to pay for initial debris clearing efforts.

The Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers began the mission as an Innovative Readiness Training project, which allowed existing federal funds in the training budget to be used. The Department of Defense revoked its IRT approval Sept. 8, and Walker placed the Soldiers on state active duty. Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, engaged leaders at the National Guard Bureau to restore federal funding Sept. 9 via additional annual training orders.

The state Department of Corrections has approximately 30 inmates in three teams, two male and one female, assisting the National Guard in clearing storm debris. The state Department of Natural Resources and Department of Transportation are also involved in different aspects of storm recovery.

The 724th Engineer Battalion and local officials had identified more than 162 miles of road as having the greatest need of debris clearance. As of Sept. 22, the Guardsmen had cleared close to 86 miles, or just over 52 percent. Maj. Brandon Manglos, officer in charge of the cleanup effort, explained that weather and density of fallen timber in some work areas have hindered the cleanup pace somewhat.

“You've got six toppled logs on top of each other in some places,” he said Sept. 19. “It takes a while to be safe.”

However, Guard members have picked up the pace where possible, clearing more than eight miles of roadside Sept. 22. This was accomplished by working two teams in tandem, so that one team — with heavy equipment, wood chippers and chain saws — completes



Above, Gov. Scott Walker expresses his gratitude to members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 724th Engineer Battalion for their work in storm debris cleanup efforts in northern Wisconsin Sept. 23. 724th Engineer Battalion photo by 1st Lt. Kevin Decker



At left, 724th Soldiers haul downed branches to a large wood chipper to clear the right of way along a road in northern Wisconsin Sept. 19. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

work at its area and “leapfrogs” the second team to begin work farther down the road.

“We adjust our tactics,” Manglos said.

Dunbar praised the “Men of the North,” many of whom just returned from a deployment to Iraq, for their efforts.

“This is the Guard at its best,” he said. “Deployed overseas in support of contingency operations, and then responding to the needs of our community a few months later. It means an awful lot to the folks who live here.”

The 724th cleanup mission, originally scheduled to conclude on Sept. 30, has been extended until Oct. 12. By the end of Sept. 24, the National Guard had begun cleanup efforts in each of the 11 assigned townships. 📷

A Wisconsin National Guard unit continues to hone its skills for responding to threats of weapons of mass destruction in the state.

The [54th Civil Support Team](#), a full-time joint Army and Air National Guard unit based in Madison, took part in a five-day exercise named “Operation Bay Watch” in Sturgeon Bay, Wis. The exercise scenario depicts a domestic terrorist attack involving a nerve agent at the Door County Fairgrounds race track, and also a dirty bomb laboratory in the municipal area.

According to Karl Nagel, a member of the Army controller-observer team heading the exercise, the 54th CST was judged on how well it responded to various training events. Some events from the race track venue were designed to recur in the dirty bomb laboratory venue if observer-controllers determined that the 54th CST required additional training.

Lt. Col. David May, deputy director of domestic operations, plans and training with the Wisconsin National Guard’s Joint Staff, explained that the 54th CST is required to complete a training proficiency exercise approximately every 18 months. Their last [certification exercise](#) was in March 2010.

“The scenarios are built to ensure the team is tested in all the required areas, but also are intended to be realistic,” May said.

The 54th CST assists local first responders in determining the nature of an attack, provides medical and technical advice, and — as the first military responder to the scene — serves as an advance party if additional state or federal military resources are required. They do not take over the scene, but coordinate with the local incident commander and determine how to best assist local response efforts.

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, said that while the Civil Support Team is not a brand-new



At left, Senior Master Sgt. Michael Lackey of the Wisconsin National Guard’s 54th Civil Support Team directs Staff Sgt. Tammy Rueth and Sgt. 1st Class Eric Johnson where to stage their vehicle and equipment during the beginning of a multiple-day exercise responding to weapons of mass destruction in Sturgeon Bay, Wis., Sept. 13. Below, Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, speaks with a member of the medical section. Wisconsin National Guard photos by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

[Click here for additional images.](#)

concept — it was conceived during the second term of the Clinton administration — it nonetheless reflects the changing role the National Guard plays in protecting the homeland.

“The 54th CST represents the high end of our core mission,” Dunbar said. “Floods, fires and storm responses may not require the same specialized skill sets that the Civil Support Team possesses, but deep down it’s the same mission — provide capabilities to local authorities to safeguard our communities. But whether natural or man-made, if the threat changes, the National Guard adapts.”

May noted that local support in Door County for this exercise was outstanding.

“The county parks department and staff, the county emergency manager, Sturgeon Bay Police Department, local businesses and local citizens have accommodated everything that we have needed,” he said. 📷



Brig. Gen. McCoy visits deployed Wisconsin Air Guard Airmen



WESTERN EUROPE — Brig. Gen. John McCoy, commander of the Wisconsin Air National Guard, visited Airmen serving with the 313th Air Expeditionary Wing July 30 to thank them for their service and support of Operation Unified Protector, and to meet with unit commanders.

Col. Ted Metzgar, 313th Air Expeditionary Wing commander, and other senior staff members greeted McCoy upon his arrival.

During his visit, the general spoke with Airmen during lunch and later received a mission briefing on unit operations and Airmen morale and welfare from 313th AEW senior staff members. McCoy also toured the aircraft maintenance hangar and flightline.

Photos and text by
Capt. John Capra





Chief Warrant Officer 3 Dirk Brandt, maintenance test pilot, spends time with his daughter, Sydney, at the Aviation Flight Facility in West Bend, Wis., during a Sept. 24 sendoff ceremony. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech Sgt. Jon LaDue

There was no shortage of support for approximately 30 deploying Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers during an official sendoff ceremony in West Bend Sept. 24.

Gov. Scott Walker joined other state officials, family, friends and Wisconsin National Guard leadership in honoring the Soldiers before a 12-month mobilization — which includes approximately two months of pre-deployment training at Camp Atterbury, Ind., followed by roughly 10 months in Kosovo in support of the NATO-led peacekeeping mission Kosovo Force, or KFOR.

Walker thanked the deploying Guard members on behalf of a “grateful state and nation” for the service they’ve already given and the sacrifice they’ll give over the course of the next year.

The bulk of the Soldiers come from Company F, 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment and will support the medevac mission as part of KFOR’s Aviation Task Force. Twelve Soldiers, assigned to 248th Aviation Support Battalion, will join units from North Dakota, New Jersey and Wyoming to support the ATF’s headquarters, lift and maintenance units, respectively.

“The Soldiers’ experience is going to be perfect for this mission because the terrain and flying we do here is similar to what we’ll be doing in Kosovo,”

said Capt. Joseph Bradley, commander of Detachment 1, Company B, 248th Aviation Battalion. “We’ll do our peace sustainment mission and we’ll do it well.”

State Command Sgt. Maj. George Stopper spoke to the families in attendance and, by show of hands, polled the deploying Soldiers on deployment experience. He urged the Soldiers with prior deployment experience to guide newer Soldiers through the process.

Pfc. Alex Mumm, 238th flight operations specialist, is anxious to begin his first deployment.

“It’ll be interesting to get over there and find out what a deployment is all about,” Mumm said. “I’m definitely ready to be over there.”

Kosovo Force — a cooperation between 30 countries, including 22 NATO nations — has worked to provide peace and stability in the area since 1999. Roughly 150 Soldiers of the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade are currently training at Camp Atterbury and will report to Kosovo in late November.

Kristi Dilley, Mumm’s girlfriend, said she plans to use every means of communication available to stay in touch.

“Duty has called, but he’ll always be in my heart,” Dilley said. “He’s worth the wait.”



Gov. Scott Walker addresses Soldiers of the 238th Aviation Regiment and 248th Aviation Support Battalion as they stand in formation during a sendoff ceremony in West Bend, Wis., Sept. 24. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech Sgt. Jon LaDue

Soldiers of the 236th Engineer Company, Texas National Guard, receive a ceremonious departure from Volk Field to honor the final outbound flight of the Aerial Port of Embarkation mission Oct. 1. The joint mission between Volk Field Air National Guard Base and neighboring Fort McCoy began in 2002 and has seen more than 140,000 service members depart and return to Fort McCoy, which at one point was the Army Reserve's busiest mobilization and demobilization station. Photo by Joe Oliva



Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue
Wisconsin National Guard

For close to 10 years, Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center served as the gateway to neighboring Fort McCoy or field bases overseas for more than 170,000 Soldiers and 60 million pounds of cargo, ferried by more than 430 flights.

That joint partnership reached a milestone when the last troop mobilization flight, carrying more than 150 Soldiers of the Texas Army National Guard's 236th Engineer Company, left the Wisconsin Air National Guard base for Afghanistan earlier this month. Their departure marked the end of what is officially referred to as the Aerial Port of Embarkation (APOE) mission. Fort McCoy also ended its mobilization mission in September.

Soldiers departing and arriving at

Volk Field had become commonplace in the years following the 9/11 attacks — it wasn't uncommon for six or seven planes to be on the ground at one time. At one point, Fort McCoy was the largest mobilization and demobilization station for the Army Reserve entity, according to Chief Master Sgt. Greg Cullen, Volk's airfield manager since 2004.

"The Volk Field-Fort McCoy partnership is a tremendous success story and a great source of pride for all involved," said Col. Gary Ebben, Volk Field commander. "For nearly a decade, we have maintained our focus on the deploying or returning service member." The sentiment from Fort McCoy is much the same.

D.J. Eckland, supervisor of Fort McCoy's movement branch, once deployed from and returned to Volk Field as a Soldier in the Wisconsin National

Guard.

"Volk Field has been very accommodating and supportive of Fort McCoy and the service members deployed as a result of our mobilization mission," Eckland said. "Regardless of mission requirements, they were there every step of the way, always providing exceptional support and never complaining. The partnership has been and will continue to be excellent between us."

Although the APOE mission directly or indirectly affected almost every Airman on base, and accumulated an extra 2,000 hours of work for Volk Airmen, complaints were few and far between, Cullen said.

"Although we — airfield management, weather, air traffic control, fire department, security, fuels, etc. — had to work weekends, late hours, holidays and all times of the night, seldom did you

ever hear a complaint because we were supporting a valid mission," he said. "The mission has been very rewarding over the years.

"When you look out on the flight line and see families waving flags, holding signs, waiting for their loved ones on the flightline ... I don't think there's any of us that haven't gotten choked up at some point," he continued.

Although the APOE mission has concluded, Fort McCoy will continue to operate other flights to Volk to keep the working relationship going. After all, Volk Field Airmen have gotten good at it.

"As an airfield manager, I'm really proud of our staff for supporting a global effort in the safe and efficient movement of our troops," Cullen said. "We didn't always like to see them leaving, but we liked seeing them come home." 🇺🇸



112th MPAD sharpens its skills near the DMZ

Sgt. Carlynn Knaak

112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment is sometimes referred to as “those guys with the cameras,” but there’s more to an MPAD than taking photos and writing stories.

The 112th MPAD got a chance to stretch its muscles, so to speak, during annual training Aug. 16-26 in South Korea, where the unit supported Ulchi Freedom Guardian 2011. The routine exercise enhances the ability of the alliance between the Republic of Korea and U.S. forces to defend South Korea, protect the region and maintain stability on the Korean peninsula.

The 112th ran a combined press information center during the exercise, and was responsible for conducting press conferences, working with media and acting as media role-players.

“Although I worked with a combined press information center while deployed to Iraq in 2009, I didn’t have the opportunity to conduct the day-to-day operations of the CPIC,” said Staff Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez, a print journalist. “This training, along with working with our Korean counterparts, allowed our Soldiers



to add to their skill set and provided our unit a different perspective to the public affairs domain as well as the opportunity to refine our skills.”

Working side-by-side with the Republic of Korea military reinforced to 112th MPAD members the need for careful translation to ensure the overall message is understood clearly and concisely.

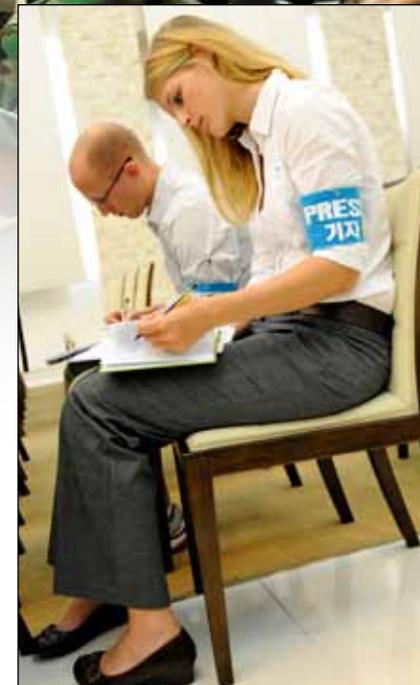
“This exercise definitely got us out of our comfort zone,” said Maj. Jeremy Holmes, unit commander. “This annual training provided different demands than what most of our Soldiers did on prior

deployments.

“A specialized unit like ours does not necessarily do the same mission when we operate at war or back here in Wisconsin,” he continued. “The public affairs needs of each situation will dictate what we do to support the commander. This opportunity has made our Soldiers more confident in their skills and has prepared us to accomplish any public affairs mission we are assigned.”

Holmes said experiencing South Korean culture was an added benefit.

“Who knows?” he mused. “We may do this again.”



Members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment and the Republic of Korea’s military took part in press conferences on a training base in South Korea during the ULCHI Freedom Guardian exercise 2011. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photos by Sgt. Carlynn Knaak



Spc. Adeline Barnes, a water treatment specialist from the Whitewater-based Company A, 257th Brigade Support Battalion, inspects the operation of a water pump as part of a few days at Lake Ferrell testing the water, skills and equipment. Minnesota National Guard photos by Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Ewer

Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Ewer
Minnesota National Guard Public Affairs

CAMP RIPLEY, Minn. — Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers from the 257th Brigade Support Battalion performed their two-week annual training at [Camp Ripley, Minn.](#) in August. Water Treatment Specialists from the Whitewater-based Company A spent a few days at Lake Ferrell testing the water, their skills and their equipment.

There is a lot of preliminary work to do before the pumps are turned on, according to Spc. Daniel Clark. “We recon water sites,” he said. “We test the water for chlorine, Ph level, dissolved and non-dissolved solids.” A water source containing chlorine would destroy the expensive filters, he warned.

“Then we prime the pump, start it,” said Spc. Adeline Barnes. “Making sure we could pump water and return it to the water source.”

A [Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit](#) completely filters the lake water, resulting in pure drinkable H2O.

“At the end of the process,” Clark said, “you’ll have water that will actually be fresher than bottled water.”

Barnes and Clark earned their [92W specialty](#) at Fort Lee, Va. “I chose the water treatment specialty because it seemed to fit well with my career goals in ecological management,” Barnes said.

“There is a lot to know about the treatment process,” Clark added. “It’s actually more of a science when you get down to it.”

While at Camp Ripley the Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers were able to complete many other training requirements, including marksmanship qualification.

“I love the ranges here. They are well taken care of,” Clark said. “The pop-up targets were easy to see. This was the first time I qualified expert.”

“Our time here was fantastic,” Barnes agreed. “I enjoyed it a lot.”

Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers Spc. Daniel Clark and Spc. Adeline Barnes, water treatment specialists from the Whitewater-based Company A, 257th Brigade Support Battalion, prime a water pump before starting it up as part of a few days at Lake Ferrell testing the water, their skills and equipment.



Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue
Wisconsin National Guard

The Wisconsin National Guard has now provided 150,000 Wisconsin children with tools for success.

The Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) program celebrated the major milestone Sept. 28 as approximately 75 Columbus High School freshman students became the latest graduates of the Leadership Education Adventure Program (LEAP) at Volk Field.

“This is a significant milestone, not only for you as you complete the third and final phase of the LEAP, but also because 150,000 students have participated in the Drug Demand Reduction program since its inception,” said Col. Mark Greenwood, director of the Wisconsin Guard’s Counterdrug Program.

The entire program aims to give students better confidence and communication skills that can help navigate them safely through tough choices. One of those choices is drug use.

“Illegal drug use has become a deeply ingrained part of American life,” said Brig. Gen. Scott Legwold, director of the Wisconsin National Guard joint staff. “We can change those attitudes, but it will take much effort — and many parts of society must get involved.”

1st Sgt. Tom Krueck, LEAP facilitator, has worked for the DDR for more than nine years and believes in the progress made through the three-stage program.

“You see them working with people they’ve never worked with and the communication while they’re here gets better,” Krueck said. “The long-term effects are confirmed by the teachers — better teamwork, communication and respect for others.”

Although Columbus is just one of 24 communities across the state to participate in the program, Columbus High School LEAP coordinator Jeff Schweitzer believes reaching children at



Above, ninth-grade students from Columbus High School navigate an obstacle as part of the Wisconsin National Guard’s Leadership Education Adventure Program (LEAP) Sept. 28 at Volk Field. Left, Col. Mark Greenwood, director of the Wisconsin National Guard’s Counterdrug Program, speaks during a ceremony celebrating LEAP’s 150,000th graduate. The program targets youth in 5th, 7th and 9th grades as part of a three-phase program to increase confidence, communication and positive decision making among the students. Wisconsin National Guard photos by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue and 2nd Lt. Nathan Wallin

the influential stages in their development has been very beneficial.

“This program has really made Columbus High students part of a better program,” Schweitzer said. “Many new friendships that students will make today ... are friendships that could last a lifetime.”

In LEAP’s inception in the early 1990s, teams of Soldiers and Airmen would travel around the state in a truck and trailer and set up a mobile challenge course — reaching about 20,000 students per year.

The program was then streamlined, narrowing the focus to about 3,000 children per year — at the vulnerable time periods of 5th, 7th, and 9th grades, when children are most vulnerable to experimenting with drugs and alcohol — as well as building a challenge course, located at Volk Field Air National Guard Base.

Krueck recommends the program for all children, even those who may be intimidated that members of the military run it.

“It’s not like boot camp where we go out and yell at them,” Krueck said. “If they don’t want to do it, we don’t push them. We just strongly suggest they do it.”

During the ceremony commemorating the 150,000 graduates, guest speaker Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Bruce Shrimpf commended the children for their participation and spoke of tough decision making.

“I thank you for the effort you’ve put forward,” Shrimpf said. “Talk to your friends about the consequences of good and bad choices.”

While thrilled with the program’s current milestone, Krueck admitted that he wishes additional funding was available so the program could be expanded.

“I think to be able to reach out to more kids, help more kids ... it would be huge,” Krueck said. “I hope I’m around for the 300,000th celebration.”

MUSTER *at* MILWAUKEE

Wisconsin hosts National Guard Association's annual conference





FREEDOM RIDE

Gary Wetzel, left, a Medal of Honor recipient, and Gov. Scott Walker take off at the start of the Freedom Ride from the Harley-Davidson Museum in downtown Milwaukee on Aug. 26.

More than 3,000 Army and Air National Guard officers and enlisted members from across the United States began arriving in Milwaukee Aug. 25 for the 133rd National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) General Conference and Exhibition, held at the Frontier Airlines Center and hosted by the Wisconsin National Guard.

Approximately 100 National Guard officers rode personal and rented motorcycles in the Freedom Ride from the museum to Holy Hill and back.

Gen. Craig McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, and other senior leaders of the National Guard celebrate with a ribbon cutting the start of the 133rd National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) conference in downtown Milwaukee on Aug. 27. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey A. Rohloff



Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze
128th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

The 133rd general conference of the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) officially opened its exhibition floor at 10 a.m. Aug. 27 at the Frontier Airlines Center in downtown Milwaukee when Gen. Craig R. McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, Maj. Gen. Donald P. Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, and Maj. Gen. Frank Vavala, NGAUS chairman, cut the ceremonial ribbon. Vavala explained that the ribbon

cutting is the “first great event” at the NGAUS conference. Three hundred and sixty-six vendors are attending the conference — a driving force of the NGAUS mission to promote the procurement of better equipment, standardizing training, and building a more combat-ready force by petitioning the U.S. Congress for resources. McKinley ended the brief ceremony with his remarks on the conference. “I call [the NGAUS conference] a family reunion,” he said. “We are here to remember the past, embrace the present, and look to the future.”





At left, Gen. Craig McKinley speaks during the opening day of the general conference Aug. 27. Above, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett encourages conference guests attending the invitation-only Adjutant General Reception Aug. 26 at Discovery World in downtown Milwaukee to enjoy their stay.



Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker gives a warm welcome to members of the 133rd National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) conference at the opening ceremonies Aug. 27. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey A. Rohloff

The global war on terror is in its 10th year with two fronts far from home. Anticipated defense budget reductions will challenge how the U.S. military continues to meet its obligations. Hurricane Irene is scouring the eastern seaboard.

In this crucial time, the National Guard is needed more than ever, according to Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin.

“Our nation is facing a fiscal crisis, and tough choices need to be made,” Dunbar said Aug. 27 during the opening session of the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) 133rd General Conference and Exhibition at the Frontier Airlines Center in downtown Milwaukee. “The National Guard — you and I, our Soldiers, Airmen, families and employers — are part of the solution. In fact, we are a big part of the solution.

“We provide proven combat readiness across the full spectrum of military capability at a fraction of the cost,” he continued. “If Congress formed a think-tank of the world’s greatest thinkers, started with a clean slate and tasked them to reduce military spending while not

taking risk with national security, they would design the National Guard.”

Dunbar was not the only official to hit on the conference theme, *The National Guard: Right for America*. Gen. Craig McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, reminded attendees Aug. 26 that the Guard’s state mission continues regardless of the demands of national defense.

“A large number of our folks are back in Washington, D.C., working the [Hurricane] Irene relief operations,” McKinley said. “We’ve got an awful lot of adjutants general who aren’t here tonight, who are staying home protecting their citizens.”

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker spoke of plans to have the National Guard assist in relief efforts in northern Wisconsin, where strong storms have toppled enough timber to create safety hazards along roadways.

“That prospect of helping out with exceptional skills, we see examples of that every day — not only in Wisconsin, but all across this nation,” Walker said Saturday. “Men and women who are the best

and brightest we have in this country, many times with multiple deployments to keep our freedoms and objectives secure across the globe.”

Walker and Dunbar, along with approximately 100 conference attendees on Friday, led a Freedom Ride from the Harley-Davidson Museum in downtown Milwaukee to the majestic Holy Hill basilica in the scenic Kettle Moraine, and back.

“There’s nothing better than being on a Harley-Davidson and experiencing the freedom, the excellence and the tradition,” Walker said. “Really, when you think of it, that summarizes the National Guard — it’s that tradition, that sense of freedom.”

Dunbar said the United States has never had a more experienced, ready, accessible or combat-hardened National Guard than it does today, describing the Guard as a national treasure.

“We are the leaders of this organization, and we must tell our story,” he said. “So, once again, welcome to Wisconsin. We are glad you are here. Have fun, but remember — we’ve got work to do.”

Gov. Scott Walker center, and Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, left, adjutant general of Wisconsin, greet members of the National Guard Association attending the governor's reception being held at the Harley-Davidson Museum, in downtown Milwaukee Aug. 27. Below, the Rocky Lynne band performed. Wisconsin National Guard photos by Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey A. Rohloff



Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze
128th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

The Harley-Davidson Museum in downtown Milwaukee was a perfect location to greet hundreds of National Guard officers, Gov. Scott Walker said.

“When you think of Harley-Davidson, you see tradition, freedom and excellence,” Walker said during the Governor’s Reception Aug. 27, part of the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) 133rd General Conference and Exhibition. “Those are the same qualities the National Guard values.”

The reception followed the opening day of the three-day conference, and provided an opportunity for NGAUS members to unwind and for Walker

to express his support for the Guard and the association. Attendees enjoyed an assortment of German, Italian and Southwestern foods, local beverages and music from the [Rockie Lynne](#) band. Walker and Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, presented Lynne with a Concord Minuteman statue for his support of the reception as well as his support of the troops overseas. Lynne just returned from an overseas tour of deployed bases, and his Country songs feature military themes.

As the reception came to a close, Walker praised the Guard members in attendance.

“For what you do in your states, territories, or units, we can’t thank you enough,” he said. 📷



The resource spigot is going to dry up.

– Gen. Craig McKinley, chief, National Guard Bureau

1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson
Wisconsin National Guard Public Affairs

As the federal government grapples with budget and deficit concerns, the Department of Defense is bracing for the unknown concerning future funding.

“We’re looking through a glass darkly,” said Adm. Sandy Winnefeld, newly appointed vice-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, during a morning address Aug. 28 at the National Guard Association of the United States conference in downtown Milwaukee. “We simply don’t know what the future holds for our nation’s defense budget.”

That uncertainty has each branch and component of the military engaged in a type of fiscal triage concerning programs, equipment and missions. The National Guard, which has made tremendous gains in equipment, funding, training and experience over the past decade, seeks to avoid relegation to its pre-Sept. 11 status. Gen. Craig McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, used the phrase “barbarians at the gate” to describe the Guard’s current situation.

“New active component leaders come in and they don’t understand the National Guard,” McKinley said. “They don’t understand the history, the legacy, the lineage, the competency, the professionalism, the roots that are buried deep into our community.”

“It will be a challenge, because the resource spigot is going to dry up,” he continued, “and we’re the first target that the Air Force and the Army always look to in a time of fiscal constraint.”

Underscoring the theme of this year’s conference, *The National Guard: Right for America*, McKinley said the National Guard would have to reach out to Congress in the coming months and years to maintain its improved standing as an operational force in the Department of Defense.

In a taped message following McKinley’s speech, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz urged the National Guard to be a team player as it looks to the future.

“I call for applying our energies and our passion less toward pure self-interest — although I appreciate there will always be some degree of that — and more toward shaping the future as a truly cohesive team of America’s service members,” Schwartz said. “Regardless of whether active, Guard or Reserve, let’s pick up the pace together, let’s work together and let’s achieve together.”

Schwartz said that the Total Force must distinguish between required and desired capabilities in the unfolding austere fiscal environment, and that those capabilities must be properly balanced between active and reserve components.

“It’s manifestly clear that it is no longer feasible to assure that all of today’s Air National Guard will be able to retain a traditional flying mission in perpetuity,” he warned. “However, approaching this from a total force perspective, we can see — as indeed we have seen — this situation much more as an opportunity than as a crisis.”

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National Guard braces for challenging future

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Schwartz said Air Force reserve component units may gain remotely piloted aircraft missions or ground control station operations for remotely piloted systems.

"I call upon you to continue to expand the definition of the Guard's mission set," he said. "This will help us increase our strategic option for finding ways for every Guard unit in every state, the District of Columbia and the three territories to contribute to the total force mission within the constraints imposed upon us by stark fiscal reality."

Brig. Gen. John Walsh, NGAUS vice-chairman, urged his fellow association members to take Schwartz's message to heart.

"We need to listen to what he said," Walsh said. "We need to stay focused as an organization. We need to stay focused as NGAUS. We need to stay focused on what is right for the National Guard. We need to stay focused on what is right for the citizens of the United States. And we need to stay focused on what is right for America. The National Guard is part of what is right for America."

"Reach out to the citizens in your community," Walsh continued. "Reach out to the leaders in your community. Make them aware of what's going on in the National Guard. We need to turn these challenges Gen. Schwartz mentioned into our favor. How can we make what he said today help us make a better National Guard?"

Winnefeld developed a strong working relationship with the National Guard during his previous role as commander of the U.S. Northern Command, and referred to McKinley as a dear friend. He said that simply returning the reserve component to a strictly strategic reserve role is "a non-starter."

"I can tell you the Secretary of Defense recognizes the need for an operational reserve, and is asking a lot of good

questions on how to maintain its balance within our active force," Winnefeld said.

Winnefeld pledged to maintain contact with the reserve components in his new role, and also urged teamwork in an uncertain future.

"I would urge you to think creatively," he said, "and that we all work together towards the collective good for our entire military — active, Guard and Reserve."

"You are the lynchpin of maintaining the American people's connection with the military," he continued. "You live and work alongside our fellow Americans in communities from Milwaukee to Montgomery. You as Guardsmen are uniquely postured in your communities to take the lead in maintaining and strengthening this dialog. So just as we need to hear from you on the strategic issues you face, they need to hear from you about who we are, and what we do proudly each day and every day as members of our nation's military."

"We need you to help lead that conversation." 



Wisconsin National Guard general officers listen as Gen. Norton Schwartz, Air Force chief of staff, addresses the conference.



Adm. Sandy Winnefeld, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, received a Concord Minuteman statue following his speech Aug. 28 at the National Guard Association of the United States General Conference. Winnefeld spoke about how the Guard has become an integral part of national defense. Wisconsin National Guard photos by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

Additional NGAUS coverage:

<http://www.ng.mil/news/archives/2011/09/091311-Schwartz.aspx>

<http://www.ng.mil/news/archives/2011/09/091211-Winnefeld.aspx>

<http://www.ng.mil/news/archives/2011/09/091411-Jacoby.aspx>



Spc. Tong Her and Pfc. Brent Sliva, both of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 32nd Military Police Company, walk a patrol around the Frontier Airlines Center in downtown Milwaukee Aug. 29. The Wisconsin National Guard hosted the 133rd

National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) General Conference and Exhibition Aug. 27-29. Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard members took part in the security detail. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

BEHIND THE SCENES: Wisconsin Guardsmen part of collaborative security for NGAUS conference

In a room at the end of a side hallway at the Frontier Airlines Convention Center in downtown Milwaukee, Wisconsin National Guard personnel collaborated with Milwaukee Police as well as representatives from other regional law enforcement agencies to ensure the 133rd NGAUS general conference went smoothly.

According to Maj. Joseph Adamson, former provost marshal for the Wisconsin Army National Guard and one of four members of the NGAUS security committee, the collaboration was a success.

"The Milwaukee Police Department [made] significant contributions in terms of personnel and resources to ensure the safety of this event," he said.

Approximately 60 Wisconsin National Guardsmen — members of the 32nd Military Police Company, 115th Security Force Squadron and 128th Security Force Squadron — were part of static and roving presence patrols around the Frontier Center.

"It was quite unique that we had three distinct units come together and work seamlessly for the NGAUS event,"

Adamson noted.

That teamwork extended beyond beat patrols. Adamson was responsible for off-site interagency coordination, while Lt. Col. Timothy Covington, commander of the Wisconsin National Guard's 54th Civil Support Team, was responsible for off-site coordination with local explosive ordnance disposal teams. Maj. John Wheeler, commander of the 115th SFS, served as day shift commander at the Frontier Center, and Capt. Angela Hoiston, current provost marshal, served

as night shift commander.

Adamson noted that the Wisconsin State Patrol brought in motorcycle officers from other districts to support Gov. Scott Walker's Freedom Ride, and that the Milwaukee Police Department's harbor patrol was a great help with lakeside events at the Milwaukee Art Museum, Discovery World and Harley-Davidson Museum.

"Together we were able to make this an uneventful and enjoyable time for everyone," he said. 📷

SCENES *from* NGAUS



For additional photos from the NGAUS conference: <http://www.ittybittyurl.com/13q>

Sgt. Alyson Swanke
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

“As a nation, we watched in shock 10 years ago,” Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch said during the opening minutes of a [ceremony of remembrance](#) at the state capitol. “We all watched. We all flew flags. We all renewed our love of America. In a morning they hoped would lead us to despair, we found unity. In the instant they wanted us to feel defeat, we found hope.”

More than 50 family members of fallen service members joined government and military officials and hundreds of citizens around the south entrance to the Capitol building for the hour-long ceremony.

“On a day when we reflect on what happened that day, what is so powerful is not what happened and what was torn down, but rather what was lifted up, and what became of us,” said Gov. Scott Walker, commander in chief of the

Wisconsin National Guard.

The public was invited to join Walker, Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, and state and federal officials to pay tribute to those who perished on Sept. 11, 2001. Remembered were those from Wisconsin that died at the twin towers and Pentagon, as well as first responders, firefighters, police, and all other who lost their lives in the attacks on America and in the global war on terror.

“Let us renew our commitment to never forget the victims of 9/11, and remain mindful of the privilege it is to be an American,” Kleefisch said.

The ceremony included music by the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s 132nd Army Band, an F-16 flyover by the Wisconsin Air National Guard’s [115th Fighter Wing](#), 21-gun salute, a

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wreath laying and the national moment of silence at 7:46 a.m. Members of the Madison Police Department and Capitol Police posted the nation's colors, and a joint service color guard retrieved them. Dunbar shared his recollections of being on duty in Washington D.C. on Sept. 11, 2001.

"I believe the terrorists miscalculated grossly — they proved they could sucker punch us, but we've responded," Dunbar said. "The miscalculation is that they do not understand what America is, and who we are."

On Sept. 11, 2001, Dunbar was working in the National Guard Bureau a half mile away from the Pentagon, where he felt the impact of the hijacked airliner as it struck the building. If not for renovations being done at the Pentagon, Dunbar and the National Guard Bureau itself would have been in the building at the time of the attack.

"We made a few decisions that night, right then and there," Dunbar said. "We decided we would continue to live our life with confidence in our nation."

"As Americans, we had to decide what we would do on a personal level," he continued. "The next day the answer came as our country returned to work. We made a decision as a nation that we would not live in fear."

The Wisconsin National Guard has deployed more than 14,000 Soldiers and Airmen in support of the global war on terror since Sept. 11, 2001. Many Wisconsin National Guard members have deployed more than once. Every unit in the Wisconsin National Guard has supported to some extent the global war on terror. Among the 153 Wisconsin service members who gave their lives, 10 were Wisconsin National Guard members.

"This is the next great generation of

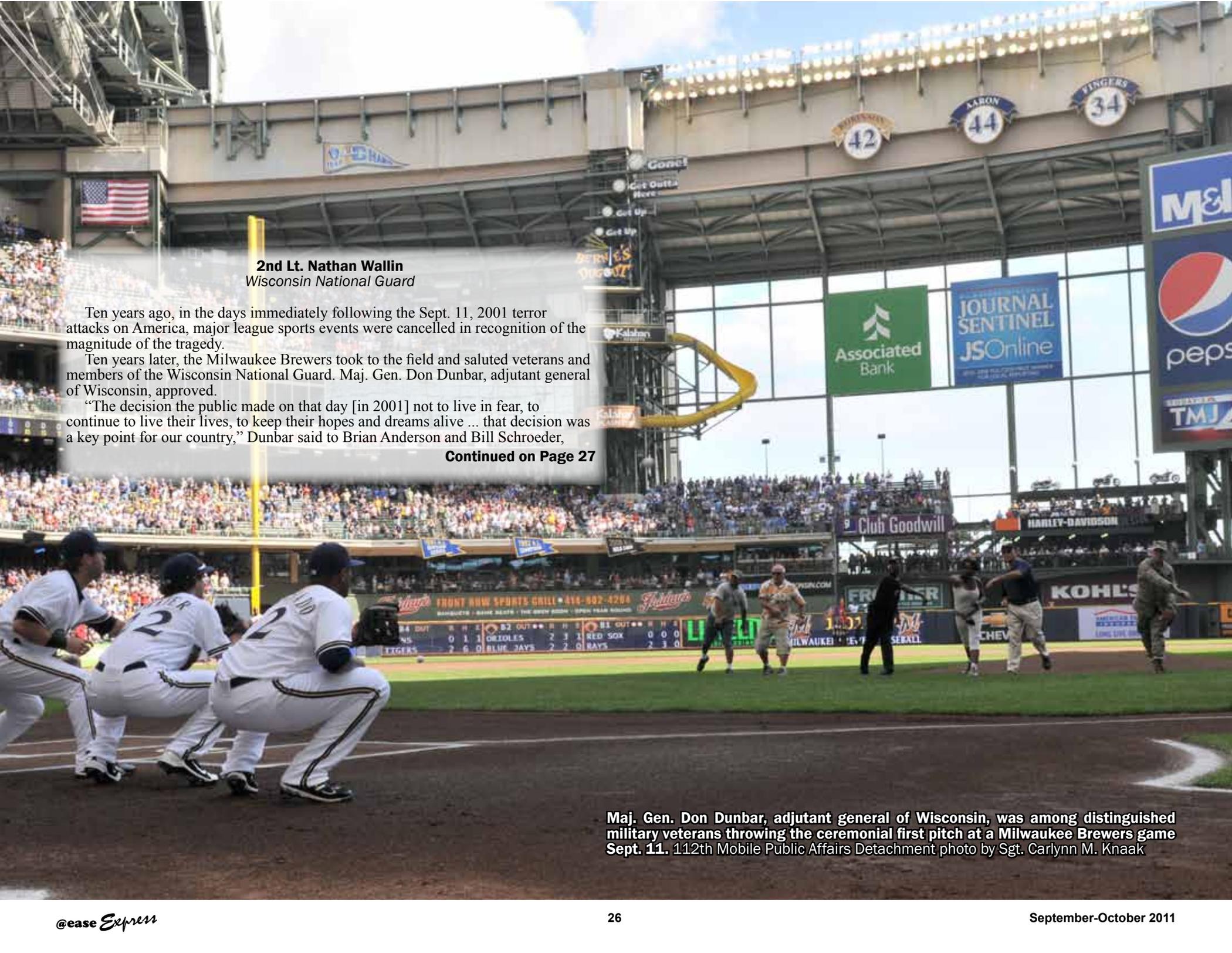
Click above to see how the Wisconsin National Guard has supported the global war on terror during the past 10 years.

men and women," Walker said. "Not only the ones that have paid the ultimate sacrifice, but their comrades who are still serving today, who show that out of something as tragic and horrific as what happened a decade ago, that instead of fear and horror, we see honor, and devotion, and commitment, and pride. That's what America is about."

"They thought they could defeat us by knocking down a few buildings and burning our Pentagon," Dunbar said. "They did not understand that our strength is in our freedom, our Constitution and in our people. We are a resilient nation, and despite being countered at again and again throughout history, our nation always rises to the occasion."

"Ten years ago America walked through the valley of the shadow death, but these United States are one nation, under God, indivisible," said Kleefish. "We will fear no evil."

A Freedom Walk, sponsored by Operation Homefront, took place at the Capitol Square immediately following the ceremony.  



2nd Lt. Nathan Wallin
Wisconsin National Guard

Ten years ago, in the days immediately following the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks on America, major league sports events were cancelled in recognition of the magnitude of the tragedy.

Ten years later, the Milwaukee Brewers took to the field and saluted veterans and members of the Wisconsin National Guard. Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, approved.

“The decision the public made on that day [in 2001] not to live in fear, to continue to live their lives, to keep their hopes and dreams alive ... that decision was a key point for our country,” Dunbar said to Brian Anderson and Bill Schroeder,

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Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, was among distinguished military veterans throwing the ceremonial first pitch at a Milwaukee Brewers game Sept. 11. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Sgt. Carlynn M. Knaak

Brewers salute Guardsmen, veterans

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Milwaukee Brewers television analysts for Fox Sports Wisconsin, during an [in-game interview](#). “I can tell you, baseball is America’s national pastime. This is something you get together as families and go out, and this is part of that living life, not living in fear.”

Fox Sports Network, through its “Operation Home Base” program, made 500 tickets and commemorative T-shirts to the Sept. 11 game against the Philadelphia Phillies available to Wisconsin National Guard members. Guard members appreciated the gesture.

“I recently got back from a volunteer deployment to Afghanistan, and I would just like to say thank you for the tickets,” said Sgt. James Lauck of Company C, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry of the Wisconsin Army National Guard. “The game was excellent and the crew topped it off with a win.”

Dunbar joined five other veterans prior to the game in throwing the ceremonial first pitch.

“A little low,” Dunbar quipped in the broadcast booth.

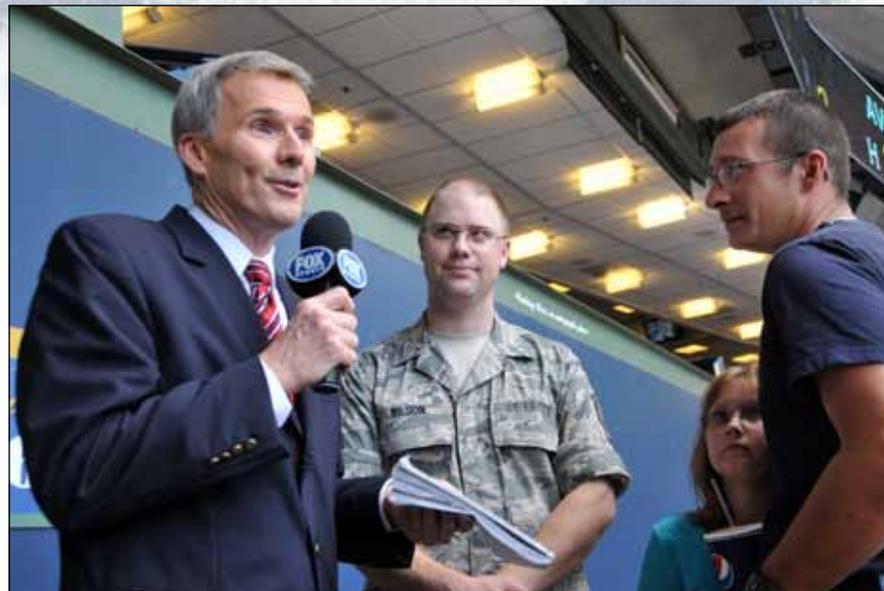
Fox Sports sideline reporters interviewed troops and their families during the game. One Wisconsin National Guard family was invited down to the field after the Brewers’ 3-2 victory. Darla Statz and her children Hannah, 13, Thomas, 7, and Allison, 7 were selected because Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey Statz, a member of the Volk Field Combat Readiness training Center, is presently deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Ed Gleason, a Coast Guard veteran who took part in the ceremonial first pitch with Dunbar, expressed his appreciation for the special event.

“It was a memorable day,” he said. 



Inset: Bill Schroeder, the Milwaukee Brewers in-game color analyst with Fox Sports Wisconsin, interviews Hannah Statz, 13, as her siblings Thomas, 10, and Alison, 7, and Jerry Augustine, a Brewers Live analyst with Fox Sports Wisconsin, look on. Hannah’s father, Wisconsin Air National Guard Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey Statz, is presently deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Nathan Wallin



Above, Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, center, adjutant general of Wisconsin, Russ Spahn, retired Greenfield fire chief, and five other veterans — Hector Sepulveda, Army; James Brooks, Marines; Ed Gleason, Coast Guard; Lee Phipps, Navy; and Phylena Fowler, Air Force — applaud as members of the Milwaukee Brewers are announced before the Sept. 11 baseball game at Miller Park. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Sgt. Tyler Lasure

Left, Mark Concannon, a reporter with Fox Sports Wisconsin, interviews Staff Sgt. Jeremy Wilson of the Wisconsin Air National Guard’s 128th Air Refueling Wing’s public affairs team, along with David and Samantha Harrison. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Nathan Wallin



2nd Lt. Matthew Wunderlin
115th Fighter Wing

“Eat bananas for breakfast. I hear they taste the same going up as coming down,” is the last piece of advice I get during egress-hanging-harness training. I discover the next day this is not true.

Ever since I was 7 years old and received a toy F-16 as a gift, I dreamed of flying in the jet. Life had gotten in the way of my becoming a pilot; however, in 2007 I received national recognition that added my name to the list of those privileged enough to receive an incentive flight.

Because the F-16 is a single-seat aircraft, few get the opportunity to experience the exhilaration of flying in one. The 115th Fighter Wing is one of a handful of units that has a two-seat version of the aircraft used for training, familiarization and incentive flights.

Since flying in the F-16 is uncommon, I want to share my experience. It is the experience of a 7-year-old boy attempting to escape from the body of a nearly 36-year-old man in a way that only breakfast bananas can.

There are four steps prior to the flight. The first step is notification of the flight date.

“Yippee skippy,” my 7-year-old self exclaims as youthful antics fill my body.

My older self wonders whether we will even fly that day. I know from experience that there are numerous

factors that could prevent the flight. “It is best not to get too excited,” my mature side reasons.

The second step is a medical evaluation. There is a screening questionnaire, blood pressure check, measurements to ensure I will fit into the cockpit, and advice as to how to handle multiple g’s during the flight. It is also the first time I hear about bananas as an optimal breakfast choice. Finally, I am informed many people get sick so I should be ready to use air-sickness bags, or if necessary, to pull open my shirt and do my business in a way that will not damage the expensive electronics.

“Don’t worry, I’ll be good,” my younger self chimes while fidgeting with a pen.

The part of me that had recently argued the merits of owning a minivan begins to make a checklist of extra clothes to pack for the following day’s flight. “Pick up some bananas tonight,” I also note.

The third step is an extended visit to the aircrew flight equipment shop. The folks there do a great job of entertaining while explaining about 600 procedures and pieces of equipment designed to ensure that when I go up, I will come back down. After drinking from that fire hose, I am suspended from a device to practice parachuting procedures in a worst-case scenario.

“What’s this do? What’s that do? This is fun,” I exclaim. The less decrepit version of me clearly has ADD.

The component of me that normally chooses that which is easier over that which is more fun tries to absorb the many details. “To undo the straps in order to get out of the aircraft in a ground emergency remember ‘two, one, two, one’ and everything else will disconnect on its own,” I practice - repeatedly.

That night I have a difficult time going to sleep because my 7-year-old self will not stop talking and bouncing around.

The morning of the flight, the portion of me that has learned to enjoy fiber heaves out of bed and downs a few bananas - annoyed at having to skip coffee.

Two hours before liftoff brings the fourth step in the preflight process, a briefing with the pilot. He reviews the weather, procedures and where we will be going. Then he asks what I hope to do during the flight. He offers several aerobic suggestions.

“Yes! I want to do that. And that! And that! And that,” my younger self staccatos. “This is going to be awesome!”

The edition of me that wakes up most nights to use the bathroom apparently missed this meeting because there was no counterargument.

Shortly after the briefing my family arrives to watch the flight.

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After years of waiting, Airman finally experiences childhood dream of flying in an F-16

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“Hey, look at me. Look at me! Look at my helmet. It has a mask and a visor and everything! Isn’t my suit amazing,” rattles my younger, less reserved and more ambitious self.

“I’d better put the barf bags in a spot for easy access,” my accustomed-to-checking-for-elongated-nose-and-ear-hair personality concludes.

We walk out to the jet. While the pilot makes small talk about the book I recently published, my child self wants to skip and my adult self wants to go wait in the minivan. The flight line smells of exhaust and heated asphalt.

I climb the ladder into the cockpit and get strapped in. It is a tight fit, but somewhat comfortable given the small space, though I cannot imagine enduring a cramped transoceanic flight. There is a fan between my knees that I adjust to blow cool air on my neck. My green flight gloves make this more difficult than anticipated. In my helmet I hear the radio, the not-so-distant noise of other aircraft on the runway, and my own breathing, slightly more labored than usual in the rubber mask.

I feel the vibration of the engine through my body. The canopy closes with a “humpf.” The noise of other aircraft around me disappears. The fan accelerates and the air on my neck is colder. I adjust my seat height so my helmet is a fist away from the clear canopy. My tongue is dry. I look around as the pilot finishes his checks. I have a hard time observing what is outside the jet because my gear partially blocks my view and the tight straps restrict my movement. I have “precompetition jitters.”

Then we start to move. As we taxi, I have the impression I must be someone else. I fumble to pull down my visor to keep the sun out of my eyes. I hear that we have been approved for an unrestricted takeoff to 15,000 feet. I watch



2nd Lt. Matthew Wunderlin receives an incentive flight Sept. 11, at Truax Field, Madison. Wunderlin was selected for an incentive flight back in 2007 after being recognized as the Air National Guard Command Post Controller of the year. He is tied for the unofficial record of most canceled incentive flights. 115th Fighter Wing photo by Paul Gorman

a commercial airliner land. I wonder if the passengers inside see us. I look towards the airport and wonder if there is a 7-year-old boy inside looking out the window in hopes he can see a fighter jet.

In an instant we are moving. At first, it does not feel much different than a commercial airliner although I notice we are off the ground a lot sooner. I hear the pilot talking to me and mentioning we are at 100 feet. I turn to look for my family as I hear our engine roar.

Immediately my head is glued sideways to my seat, and my body experiences the power of a jet accelerating as it travels vertically to 15,000 feet in a couple of seconds. I feel the g-suit compress around my legs and stomach,

but mostly I just notice my eyelids seem to be stuck half shut.

We level off and an overwhelming rush of adrenaline fills my body. I shake with excitement as I am offered control of the aircraft to fly to the Military Operating Area. The stick hardly moves, but it senses pressure. I am surprised, as someone not a pilot, at how quickly the controls seem to become an extension of my body.

We get to the MOA and the real fun begins. First, we do some g-force testing. Then we do some aerobatics. My favorite is a loop. Massive g-forces strain my body while the jet surges straight up, and then as the jet crests past vertical it feels like floating. It is a strange sense of

calmness before rushing back towards the ground. Soon I get control of the aircraft for some aerobatics while the pilot talks me through them. Next, we explore the MOA. It is beautiful. A canopy provides much better view than a postage-stamp-sized commercial airline window, and the maneuverability of the jet more than makes up for the restricted bodies inside.

Halfway into the flight we do an aerobatic maneuver that makes me a little nauseous. However, as quickly as the nausea comes, it goes. A few minutes later as we do more sightseeing, it happens. I barely have time to get my air-sickness bag open. In my head I apologize to the pilot because I do not have time to shut my radio off.

Bananas do not taste the same going up as coming down.

Immediately after, I am back to feeling normal. We do a little more exploration. Then the pilot gives me control of the aircraft and tells me I can do whatever I want. Like most human beings, I have no idea what to do with complete freedom, so I fly straight and level for awhile. Eventually I do more sharp turns and another loop.

The pilot takes control again and “yadda, yadda, yadda” I put more banana into another bag.

Oddly enough, at this point aerobatics feel better than flying straight.

I hear the pilot say we have to return home. It feels like only a couple of minutes have passed, but in reality we are nearly an hour into the flight. I try to soak up the remainder of the experience with all my senses. Finally, all too soon, we fly over the base, turn hard left and land.

I barely remember taxiing, exiting the jet and returning my gear. I cannot believe it is over. I cannot believe I just got to do that.

All too quickly, I am back to my routine. However, as I drive my minivan home that night I take the time to think about how “a 7-year-old boy’s dream came true today.” 🍌

Staff Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

More than 200 Soldiers, Airmen and family volunteers met with senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders Sept. 17 in Oconomowoc to discuss the resiliency of service members, families and volunteers at the 2011 Wisconsin National Guard Family Program Conference.

“Standing Strong: Ready, Responsible and Resilient,” the theme of this year’s conference, was designed to familiarize attendees with the State Family Program, improve personal and family preparedness and to enhance the readiness of the Wisconsin National Guard.

“We are here to honor our volunteers,” said Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin. “We are here to say thank you for all that you do supporting our Soldiers and our Airmen.”

Dunbar said that Soldiers and Airmen could not focus on defending the country without support from home.

Keynote speakers addressed topics such as volunteer resiliency, the transition home from deployment, breathing and relaxation techniques for stress management, and spiritual resiliency after crisis.

“Everybody has something they’re dealing with,” said Holly Bednarek, senior family readiness advisor for First Army. “We can all help each other in some way.”

“As family programs, what we’re really trying to help people do when they come back home are deal with those different forces of change,” said Chip Lutz, a retired Naval officer and Yellow Ribbon cadre speaker for the Center for Excellence. “The key thing is to reiterate that getting back to life is just like riding a bicycle. It takes a little bit of practice and a little bit of time.”

Other workshops offered at the



Holly Bednarek, senior family readiness advisor for First Army, speaks to family volunteers on the challenges faced during deployments at the 2011 National Guard Family Program Conference held in Oconomowoc Sept. 17.

conference focused on dealing with differences in communication, challenges service members and families face with multiple deployments, personal financial counseling, learning how to respond constructively, forming family bonds and reframing trains of thought.

The goal of these workshops was to introduce volunteers and families to the Army and Air dimensions of strength and how to build resiliency and enhance performance in the physical, social, emotional, spiritual and family dimensions.

“The conference overall gave families and volunteers a chance to rejuvenate, learn something new and to focus on topics outside of the day-to-day duties of an FRG [family readiness group] volunteer,” said Lisa Kluetz, family program director for the [Service Member Support Division](#).

Volunteers and family members also



Retired Naval officer Chip Lutz, Yellow Ribbon cadre speaker for the Center for Excellence, addresses the challenges faced when service members return from deployment. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photos by Staff Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez

participated in a panel discussion with the highest ranking members of the Wisconsin National Guard leadership. Issues discussed at the panel included how the national budget will impact the National Guard and its services; the impact to families of in-state mobilizations, disaster relief and troop rotations; differences between National Guard and active duty deployment training; crisis response for

volunteers; and how to communicate with families lacking access to social media sites like Facebook.

“Every year the conference is about including families and volunteers and introducing the services and programs available through the Service Member Support Division in a way that is meaningful to everybody attending,” Kluetz said. 📷

Red Arrow honed for potential Cold War conflict 50 years ago

1st Lt. Brian Faltinson

Wisconsin Army National Guard

Five decades ago the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 32nd Division — the famed “Red Arrow” division from World War I and II — was called upon again as the world appeared headed for another European conflict.

In June 1961, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev challenged newly elected U.S. President John F. Kennedy by declaring that the Soviet Union would sign a separate peace treaty with East Germany. This treaty would end guaranteed access to the divided city of Berlin by American, English and French occupational forces.

At the end of World War II, the four major allied powers divided Germany into four sections, with the Soviet-held portion becoming East Germany. Berlin, the capital of Nazi Germany, was located in East Germany but was also divided into zones of occupation by the four allied powers. The Soviet zone became East Berlin, while the other three zones were known as West Berlin. The divided city served as a point of tension between the Americans and Soviets as the Cold War emerged in the late 1940s. In June 1948, the world was brought to the brink of war when the Soviets blockaded land access to West Berlin in order to gain complete control of the city. For nearly a year, the air forces of six nations supplied West Berlin until the Soviets relented.

Tensions between the Soviets and the Western powers regarding Berlin simmered throughout the 1950s. However, during the decade, millions of East Germans escaped the Iron Curtain by traveling to West Berlin. By 1961, 20 percent of the East German population had fled the country. While the number of people leaving was significant, the most alarming aspect to East German and Soviet authorities was that most of these people were engineers, physicians,



technicians, teachers and other professionals. The loss of these people significantly impacted the economic vitality of East Germany, undermined the nation's political structure and was a negative Cold War propaganda point for the Soviet Union.

Khrushchev and President Dwight Eisenhower negotiated various issues in the late 1950s, including the division of Berlin. A major summit regarding Berlin was scheduled in Paris in May 1960, but was canceled after Gary Power's U-2 spy plane was shot down by the Soviets. In April 1961, after only a few months in office, Kennedy ordered the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. A complete failure, the invasion in the eyes of the Soviets

signaled the young president's potential weakness. As a result, Khrushchev calculated that it was time to address his Berlin problem.

On June 4, 1961 in Vienna, Khrushchev issued an ultimatum to Kennedy that, by year's end, the Soviet Union would sign a treaty with East Germany ending guaranteed Western power access to East Berlin. In an address to the nation on July 25, 1961, Kennedy responded by stating his willingness to talk with the Soviets over the issue of Berlin. He announced that the United States “will seek peace, but will not surrender,” and part of his address included a request to Congress for an additional \$3.25 billion in defense funds and the ability to raise six new



At left, Red Arrow troops embark by train to Fort Lewis, Wash., for several months of training in the event the Cold War turned hot. Above, LIFE magazine captured an image very familiar today, but in 1961 not seen in a generation — Wisconsin National Guard troops being called to federal active duty.

divisions for the Army and two for the Marine Corps.

Kennedy requested an increase in the active Army from 875,000 men to one million, along with large increases to the Air Force and Navy. He also requested the ability to call up National Guard and Reserve forces as part of this force increase. Khrushchev viewed this as a threat of war. On Aug. 13, 1961, the East Germans initiated the long-planned closure of West Berlin by constructing the Berlin Wall around the city. The wall was designed to stop the flow of East Germans to the west. During the wall's

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32nd Division called up in response to Berlin Crisis

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construction, the Soviet Union maintained a significant force around West Berlin. By October, American and Soviet tanks stared at each other from their respective sides of the city.

During this time the National Guard maintained a force of 27 divisions, of which seven were considered as “high-priority” units. These priority units were 30th and 49th Armored Divisions of Tennessee and Texas, and the following infantry divisions: 13th (North Carolina), 26th (Massachusetts), 28th (Pennsylvania), 32nd (Wisconsin) and the 38th (Indiana). Under the pentomic configuration of five battle groups (formerly battalions within a regiment), an infantry division on paper numbered 13,748 troops while an armored division totaled 14,617 Soldiers. However, these seven priority units were authorized only around 71 percent of their combat strength while the other 20 divisions maintained an authorized strength between 55 and 65 percent. Guard divisions also only possessed about two-thirds of its heavy equipment and no units fielded the new M-14 rifle or M-60 tank. Some units, however, were issued the Honest John field artillery rocket and 8-inch howitzer, both of which had nuclear capabilities.

On Sept. 6, 1961, the Pentagon ordered 148,000 Guardsmen, Reservists and Ready Reservists to undertake “combat readiness” training consisting of a second weekend drill per month. 52,000 of these Soldiers were from the Ready Reserve (today’s Inactive Ready Reserve) and their mission was to bring units closer to operational strength. Shortly before, Congress had granted Kennedy authorization to call up 250,000 Guard and Reserve Soldiers without an emergency declaration. Within this number were the 26th, 28th 32nd and 49th Divisions of the National Guard along



Above, 32nd Division Soldiers conduct rapid assault training with helicopter transport. Below, Soldiers from Company E, 127th Infantry at the rifle grenade range.

with 146 smaller elements. Although not a formal alert, the order essentially was a warning of a possible call to active duty. Such call-ups would allow the Pentagon to deploy up to six active duty stateside divisions to Europe with the mobilized Guard and Reserve units backfilling their positions in the United States. Eventually, the 32nd Division and the 49th Armored Division were activated and its troops told to report to their armories on Oct. 15 for up to one year of stateside training.

Wisconsin’s 32nd Division was one of the Guard’s “high-priority” units. In the summer of 1961, the division was within 100 men of its authorized strength of 10,200. During its summer annual training period, the division earned 13 staff-level and 24 company-level superior unit awards with many other elements rated as excellent. The division headquarters was located in Milwaukee’s

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Garrison life proved first challenge for Red Arrow

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sprawling Richards Street Armory with its five infantry battle groups clustered in communities around their headquarters in Eau Claire, Elkhorn, Milwaukee, Appleton and Oshkosh.

The division possessed a significant number of experienced Soldiers throughout its ranks, starting with its commander — Maj. Gen. Herbert Smith. Enlisting in 1919 as an Army private, Smith joined the Wisconsin National Guard in 1921 and was activated with the rest of the 32nd Division in 1940. During most of World War II, then Lt. Col. Smith commanded the 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment, which served with distinction in the Pacific Theater. In addition to Smith, the division's ranks included more than 80 other Soldiers who had been activated with the division in 1940 — many of whom were now senior commissioned and non-commissioned officers.

After about a week at home station, the division's advance party flew to Fort Lewis, Wash., to prepare for the division's arrival. They cleaned barracks mothballed since World War II and cut the cantonment area's knee-high grass — in between half-mile hikes to the nearest mess hall. The rest of the division received a final weekend furlough to spend with families; many celebrating Thanksgiving a few weeks early. In scenes reminiscent of those 21 years earlier, thousands tearfully watched their community's Soldiers board one of 17 troop trains that would carry them away into service for the nation. Two thousand more trekked via automobile across the Rocky Mountains in an era before interstate highways, and 1,500 experienced their first airplane ride on a chartered commercial carrier. All arrived safely despite the fact that one car with two Soldiers fell nearly 4,000 feet in the mountains, and a troop train hit a gravel



Above, combined arms training in Yakima, Wash. Photo courtesy Carl Birk **At right, learning to rappel in the thick Washington wilderness.**

truck in Montana, killing six civilians.

Once at Fort Lewis, the men of the 32nd engaged in the time-honored troop ritual of complaining. Conditions were cramped as 4,000 reservists trickled in to fill out the division's strength to near 14,000. With classrooms pressed into barracks, training shifted outdoors during the area's notorious rainy season. Most of these buildings had not been used since the war and possessed few amenities — hot water and furnaces were notably missing. Supplies and equipment were slow to arrive, and there was much idle time as the division was brought up to strength and adjusted to active duty. These

conditions nurtured questions among many Soldiers as to their purpose at Fort Lewis.

Some Soldiers made their thoughts known to the state's Congressional delegation. U.S. Rep. Alvin O'Konski received 16 petitions and, after a three-day tour of the base, called for an investigation by the House Armed Services Committee. U.S. Sen. William Proxmire conducted a surprise visit to Fort Lewis and spent considerable time interviewing enlisted Soldiers about living conditions, training and general thoughts on the deployment.



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Above, after several months of intensive training, the 32nd Division returned to Wisconsin. At right, mortar training in the field. Photos courtesy Carl Birk



32nd Division proves its value during Berlin Crisis

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Ultimately, Proxmire explained that many of the division's supply problems stemmed from the different supply systems of the Guard and the regular Army, but the Army's individual filler policy to bring the unit up to full strength also concerned him.

After some bad press, the men of the 32nd did not want to give the impression that they were whining. Pvt. Laurence Matzat clarified to the *Milwaukee Journal* about the deployment: "It's a soldier's prerogative to gripe, but there is a difference between griping and crying."

Other issues sorted themselves out as training tempo increased and Soldiers were allowed to live off post if their families followed them from Wisconsin. Kennedy addressed the need for the activation when he said, "We called them in to prevent a war, not to fight a war."

The deployment placed a significant strain on Soldiers' families and their communities. The small northern Wisconsin town of Rib Lake petitioned the governor for a physician after its sole doctor deployed with the division. Privates who earned little more than \$100 a month wondered how they could pay their mortgages and support their families. Soldiers with small businesses pondered what condition their businesses would be in after they returned home. The deployment even affected the Green Bay Packers, who had three players in the Army Reserve. Shortly after star halfback Paul Hornung deployed with an engineer unit to Fort Riley, Kan., linebacker Ray Nitscke and flanker Boyd Dowler received word that they were going to Fort Lewis with the 32nd Division. The Packers and the Army eventually agreed to furlough Nitscke and Dowler on weekends so they could play — however, the Packers had to provide a game film for the Wisconsin troops' entertainment.

Training began in earnest after a Christmas furlough. Soldiers spent hours on ranges honing their skills with individual and crew-served weapons. Once complete, the division moved onto more advanced training with a large-unit focus. The 32nd had not maneuvered as a division since World War II. Drills and annual training had focused only on creating proficient squads, platoons and companies. The complexity of exercises increased with a combined arms focus, as well as in joint maneuvers with the regular Army's 4th Division, which was also stationed at Fort Lewis.

The division participated in several large-scale exercises and special training events in the winter and spring of 1962. The 1st Battle Group, 128th Infantry was the first unit in the Army to undergo counter-guerilla training, culminating with an exercise in the rainforests of Olympic National Park against Special Forces units.

In March, several elements trekked to California's Fort Irwin for desert training where they participated in vast artillery, armor and helicopter exercises. In May, the training culminated in a massive exercise at the Yakima Firing Center. Dubbed "Operation Mesa Drive," it featured the entire 32nd Division, regular Army elements and Air Forces assets. It was the Army's largest military exercise since World War II and it simulated a combined conventional and nuclear battlefield.

The 32nd Division's hard training paid off when it was made part of the Strategic Army Corps (STRAC), which meant that the division could deploy anywhere in the world ready for war within a few hours. The division maintained this status until two new regular Army divisions were ready for duty. With STRAC status achieved, the division's training schedule lightened considerably. Many received passes to visit Seattle or the majestic beauty of the Pacific Northwest. In August, the men of the 32nd Division returned to Wisconsin to resume their civilian lives with the full knowledge that their division was ready to defend and serve the United States. 🇺🇸

Gov. Scott Walker formally promoted the adjutant general of Wisconsin to the rank of major general during an Oct. 3 ceremony at the State Capitol in Madison.

Walker officially promoted Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar in August. However, it is a tradition for the governor to promote Wisconsin National Guard general officers with a formal ceremony at the capitol.

"I am honored to continue this tradition here today," Walker said, "and to officially bestow the rank of major general to an outstanding senior officer of the Wisconsin National Guard."

Several people took part in Dunbar's pinning ceremony. Walker and Dunbar's wife, Colleen, pinned the major general rank on Dunbar's jacket, while Dunbar's father Phil and mother-in-law Ida Donegan put the new two-star shoulder boards on his epaulets. His sister Margie Wildason pinned the rank on his hat.

Dunbar thanked family and friends for attending and for participating, noting that it made the event more meaningful. He also mentioned two special people who could not attend — his mother, Peggy, and his father-in-law, Buzz Donegan (USMC) — both of whom passed away in 2009.

He concluded his brief remarks by praising the Wisconsin National Guard and the work they do for our state and nation. "It is a privilege to be the adjutant general and serve the men and women of the Wisconsin National Guard," he explained. "I pledge that I will do my very best not to let them down." 📷

Gov. Scott Walker and Colleen Dunbar pin major general rank to the uniform of Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, during a formal promotion ceremony Oct. 3 at the State Capitol. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Nathan Wallin



Warrant Officer 4 Craig T. Krenz, the command chief warrant officer for the Wisconsin Army National Guard, was promoted Sept. 19 to the rank of chief warrant officer 5. His father, Bruce Krenz, and wife Jeanine, help pin on the new rank. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez



Chief Warrant Officer 4 Craig T. Krenz of Tomah, Wis., command chief warrant officer for the Wisconsin Army National Guard, was promoted to the rank of chief warrant officer 5 in a Sept. 19 ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters, Madison.

The rank of chief warrant officer 5 is the highest attainable as a warrant officer.

"I'm humbled and I'm honored," Krenz said. "I've had the fortune of having a great career."

During the ceremony, Krenz imparted lessons learned throughout his career. "The best thing I can pass on to anybody is know your commander's intent."

Krenz enlisted in 1980 with the Headquarters Company, 724th Engineer Battalion located in Superior. He served as a vehicle driver, unit clerk, personnel staff non-commissioned officer and

reconnaissance sergeant until 1990, when he transferred to the Headquarters State Area Command in Madison.

Krenz was appointed as a warrant officer in 1992 after completing the Warrant Officer Candidate Course at Fort McCoy, and served as a military personnel technician in both the Headquarters State Area Command and 232nd Personnel Services Company.

In February 2009, he mobilized for active duty with the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team and served in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Upon his return, he rejoined Joint Force Headquarters and was selected as the command chief warrant officer for the Wisconsin Army National Guard where he serves as the principal advisor to the adjutant general on warrant officer policy, career management and assignments. 📷

Meritorious service

Two Wisconsin residents — a National Guard officer and a civilian — received awards Aug. 29 at the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) annual convention in Milwaukee.

Capt. Jason Crabb, of Verona, chief of future operations with the Wisconsin National Guard Joint Staff, is one of six national recipients of the Theodore Roosevelt Leadership Award for Company Grade Officers. A Wisconsin Air National Guard member for 14 years with three years in the active component Air Force, he spent many years as the officer in charge of the Wisconsin National Guard's Joint Operations Center. His performance in that role prompted his nomination.

"It's an honor and a privilege to receive this award," he said. "I'm glad to have the opportunity to represent Wisconsin on our home turf."

Lt. Col. David May, with the Wisconsin National Guard's operations directorate for military support, has supervised Crabb for nearly three years in the Joint Operations Center.

"When I saw the award, Jason was the first one I thought of," May said. "He's an outstanding leader. He understands operations, he's a strategic thinker, he's mature beyond his years and has the experience to back him up."

According to the award citation, "His ardent and steadfast efforts, combined with shrewd resource management and development of assigned personnel, has enabled the Wisconsin Joint Operations Center to grow into a robust and mature asset critical to the Wisconsin National Guard's response capability."

Crabb said the award is not an individual achievement, noting that outstanding officers and noncommissioned officers are responsible for a successful Joint Operations Center.

Jennifer Van Kirk, of Brookfield, a partner in the Milwaukee law firm Peckerman, Klein and Van Kirk since 2009, is one of five national recipients of the Patrick Henry Award. A Wisconsin National Guard Family Program volunteer since 2004, Van Kirk has served in several volunteer positions and on the Family



Wisconsin Air National Guard Capt. Jason Crabb, chief of future operations with the Wisconsin National Guard Joint Staff, received the Theodore Roosevelt Leadership Award for company-grade officers Aug. 29. With Crabb are Brig. Gen. William Burks, left, NGAUS vice chairman for Air, and Col. Murray Hansen, chairman of the awards committee.



Jennifer Van Kirk received the Patrick Henry Award for exceptional service to the National Guard by local officials or civic leaders Aug. 29. With Van Kirk are Brig. Gen. John Walsh, left, NGAUS vice chairman for Army; Burks, and Hansen. Wisconsin National Guard photos by Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey A. Rohloff

Program's state advisory council. In 2010 she was named to the Pro Bono Honor Roll for providing pro bono legal services to service members, veterans and families of service members in Wisconsin.

"Those who know me well know that I am rarely speechless," she said. "However, I am at a loss for words because of the magnitude of this recognition. The National Guard family, both service members and volunteers, is filled with kind and hardworking people, full of integrity and courage. To be chosen by that same National Guard family, and nominated by people for whom I have great respect, is an unparalleled honor for me."

Van Kirk said she volunteers because she enjoys helping families and service members, and has enjoyed opportunities to learn, observe deployment training, and hear Gen. William Casey, Jr., former Army Chief of Staff.

"I have also had the distinct pleasure of meeting amazing service members, family members and volunteers who will be my lifelong friends," she said.

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, said both recipients deserved their awards.

"The Wisconsin National Guard is blessed to have individuals such as Capt. Crabb and Ms. Van Kirk who embody the dedication and devotion of our organization," Dunbar said. "The bedrock of the National Guard rests upon professionalism, volunteerism and family. Without those vital components, we could not succeed in our mission to safeguard community and country."

The Theodore Roosevelt Leadership Award, first presented in 2006, recognizes the achievements and dedicated service of Army and Air junior officers who demonstrate outstanding leadership and professionalism in their service to country and community.

The Patrick Henry Award, created in 1989, recognizes local officials and civic leaders who distinguish themselves by exceptional service to the U.S. Armed Forces, the National Guard or NGAUS. 

Meritorious service

Commissioning ceremony breaks another glass ceiling

1st Lt. Kevin Steele
732nd Combat Support Sustainment Battalion

Sgt. 1st Class Christina Pagenkopf, of Durand, Wis., became the first female Wisconsin National Guard Soldier to commission into a basic branch in Wisconsin Army National Guard history during a Sept. 26 commissioning ceremony at Camp Williams.

Until 2004, female Soldiers could not receive a direct commission into one of the basic branches such as military police, quartermaster, and signal corps.

Pagenkopf encountered resistance when she started pursuing the idea of becoming an officer in late 2009, as many people told her a female could not receive a direct commission into a basic branch.

“I didn’t believe them,” she said, and checked into Army regulations. She learned that the regulations had changed — since 2004 there have been no rules preventing her from at least attempting to become an officer.

The process of earning a direct commission takes many months, and exceeds what is required for a Soldier to attend Officer Candidate School (OCS). According to Army regulations, not only must the candidate be “exceptionally qualified” they must also be a non-commissioned officer, be at least 22 years old, hold a bachelor’s degree or higher, pass the Army Physical Fitness Test with a minimum of 70 points in each event, and meet the rigorous medical screening requirements.

“I didn’t want to be stuck — I wanted to grow and not miss any opportunities,” she said. Pagenkopf also said she wanted to influence others, and becoming an officer would provide that opportunity.



Col. John Van de Loop leads Sgt. 1st Class Christina Pagenkopf in a direct commissioning ceremony Sept. 26 at Camp Williams. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

“I just wanted to further my career,” she said, shrugging off the “first female” label.

In a recommendation letter, Lt. Col. Emond — commander of the 732nd Combat Support Sustainment Battalion — said of Pagenkopf: “She is an exceptionally talented and gifted NCO who consistently produces superb results. Her appointment will greatly enhance the Officer Corps of the Wisconsin Army National Guard and the United States Army.”

In addition to getting her battalion commander’s approval, Pagenkopf also had to meet with — and gain the

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

At the commissioning ceremony, Capt. David Best — who pinned the officer’s rank on her uniform — said he knew her potential when she served as his platoon sergeant on deployment.

“She was one of the best platoon sergeants out there,” he said. “Her new platoon sergeant will have to use minimum time training her because of her exceptional skills and work ethic. She epitomizes the first line of the NCO creed, which states ‘No one is more professional than I.’”

Veterans, Families, Retirees

National Guard, Reserve families eligible for tutoring service

[Tutor.com](https://www.tutor.com) services are now available to families of all members of the National Guard and Reserve Components, regardless of their duty status.

Prior to this expansion, Guard and Reserve families could only access free Tutor.com services while on Title 10 (Active Duty).

This is a collaborative effort between the Department of Defense Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Library Program and the DoD Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. As members of the Reserve Components continue to operate at a high tempo, it is critical that families are provided resources to focus on the health, well-being and education of students and children.

National Guard and Reserve families can now receive online tutoring and homework assistance from Tutor.com at no charge. This program allows K-12 and adult students to connect to a live tutor online at anytime for help with homework, studying, exam preparation, college coursework and more.

Guard and Reserve families accessing services at Tutor.com are matched with one of more than 2,500 carefully screened experts who include certified teachers, college professors, graduate students, select undergraduates from accredited universities and other professionals. Tutor.com tutors are primarily based in the U.S. and Canada with some bilingual specialists located internationally. This service is offered at no cost to families of the Guard and Reserve members.

These enhanced services took effect Oct. 3.

Veterans, Families, Retirees

Services, hours for Retiree Activities Offices

The Retiree Activities Office (RAO) provides guidance and information to retirees and spouses of retirees, of all ranks and services. The RAO provides information on military status, TRICARE, military ID cards, survivor benefits, death reporting and much more.

Retirees may provide an e-mail address, to include first name, middle initial, last name, retired military grade and branch of service to widma.retiree@wisconsin.gov to be added to the RAO's e-mail data base. The RAO also has a website that provides a lot of information for retirees and can be found at <http://dma.wi.gov/retirees>.

The Madison RAO is located at Joint Force Headquarters, 2400 Wright Street, Room 160, Madison, Wis. 53704. The RAO is open Tuesdays and Thursdays 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. except on holidays. Their phone number is 608-242-3115, 1-800-335-4157, ext. 3115, DSN 724-3115. Contact the RAO with questions or for assistance.

The Milwaukee RAO is co-located with the 128th Air Refueling Wing, General Mitchell Air National Guard Base, 1835 E. Grange Ave, Bldg 512, Milwaukee, Wis., 53207. Their phone number is 414-944-8212. Their e-mail address is rao.128arw@ang.af.mil. The Milwaukee RAO is manned by volunteers on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. 

Nominations open for Hall of Honor

Nominations are being accepted for the 2012 Wisconsin Army National Guard Hall of Honor until Friday, Dec. 30, 2011. This prestigious award represents the highest honor Wisconsin's Adjutant General can bestow upon former Wisconsin Army Guard members for their

service.

The 2012 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 Retiree Activities Office or 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 or phone at (608) 242-3011 or 1-800-335-5147 ext.3011. 

State-Sponsored Life Insurance program

The State-Sponsored Life Insurance (SSLI) program was established for Wisconsin National Guardsmen in 1971. This group term life insurance program was originally established because Guard members at that time were not eligible for Servicemen's Group Life Insurance (SGLI).

Congress passed legislation authorizing each State Department of Military Affairs (DMA) to establish a group term life insurance program whereby Guardsmen could deduct premiums from their monthly Guard pay. This law also permitted the DMA to assign management of the insurance program to their respective State National Guard Association (WINGA). Brig. Gen. (Ret) Patrick Roach was the first State Insurance Administrator for SSLI. Maj. Gen. James

Lison, Jr., adjutant general of Wisconsin in 1974, executed a Memorandum of Agreement authorizing WINGA, Inc. to administer the SSLI program.

SGLI is offered by the federal government and is only available to active Guardsmen. Once you separate or retire from the Guard, the SGLI insurance program terminates. You have the option to convert SGLI to Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI), but VGLI will be a more expensive option. Also, you cannot insure your family under VGLI.

SSLI is available to all active Guardsmen (Army and Air), separated guardsmen, retirees, spouses and dependent children. Active Guardsmen receive a 70 percent bonus in addition to their base coverage at no additional cost after your first year in the program. Separated and retired guardsmen receive a 10 percent bonus. Guardsmen and their spouse can continue this insurance program until age 70. You can retain the insurance if you move to another state. Dependent children are covered until age 21 or age 23 if they are full-time students. Unlike SGLI, when you separate or retire from the Guard your SSLI premium *does not increase*.

The SSLI is underwritten by the New York Life Insurance Company. Additional information on SSLI can be found at the WINGA, Inc. web site www.winga.org, by calling our office at 608-242-3100 or you can stop in our office at Joint Force Headquarters, Room 205. 

Editor's Note: *At Ease does not endorse SGLI or SSLI. This information is provided for the reader's benefit.*

Educational resources on Military OneSource

Whether you are considering going back to school yourself, supporting your spouse's decision to return to school, or helping your child adjust to that next step, Military OneSource has the resources

for you. Visit the link [Education](#) on the Service Provider Monthly Communication Calendar to access a flyer that includes the following:

- **Webinars** on evaluating online schools and Tutor.com and a **Moderated Chat** on discovering your career passion
- **Orderable Materials** including a booklet and CD titled *How to Help Your Child Succeed in School* and the booklets *Learning Never Stops* and *Ten Everyday Math Activities for Parents and Kids*
- **Articles** including topics such as dealing with bullying, special needs education, money and your college student, off duty education programs, keeping in touch with your child's teacher during deployment, and organizing your child's school life at home
- **Tools and Services** such as Podcasts on Countrywide Home Loans Settlement and Employment Scams, the Applying to College Toolkit, Tutor.com, Peterson's Online Academic Skills Course, the Spouse Career Center and Special Needs pages on Military OneSource, and The Spouse Education and Career Newsletter

For more information on our calendar as well as past and future themes, please visit the Service Provider Home Page — <http://www.militaryonesource.com/MOS/ServiceProvidersGateway.aspx> 

WNGEA seeks executive director

The Wisconsin National Guard Enlisted Association is seeking to fill a future vacancy for the position of Executive Director. This is a paid, part-time position. A detailed job description is posted on our website: www.wngea.org <<http://www.wngea.org>> or can be obtained by request to: WNGEA, 2400 Wright Street, Madison, WI 53704. Interested applicants should submit a resume' and cover letter to the above address by Oct. 30. Selection is expected to be made by Nov. 15. 

Parting shot



Gov. Scott Walker, commander-in-chief of the Wisconsin National Guard, received a tour the 115th Fighter Wing facilities Aug. 16, culminating in a familiarization flight in an F-16 fighter aircraft. The 115th Fighter Wing is one of three Air National Guard units in the state of Wisconsin, and performs numerous state roles, including airport crash and rescue, explosives ordnance disposal and homeland security, in addition to its federal mission of supporting military contingencies worldwide. 115th Fighter Wing photo by Master Sgt. Paul Gorman