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September-October 2010

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There is a lot of news surrounding the high level of suicide in the United State Armed Forces. Our numbers continue to rise and continue to exceed the comparative experience of the civilian community. It appears that the active duty numbers may be leveling off, which is good news, but the numbers in the National Guard have continued to increase. This includes the Wisconsin National Guard, where we have lost more Soldiers and Airmen to suicide since 2008 than we have lost in combat casualties since Sept. 11, 2001. This includes four suicides since the 4th of July.

I am convinced that our organization is strong and healthy; however, this is a significant issue for our family. We can't ignore it or pretend it doesn't exist. At the same time, we have to avoid overreacting and respond proactively and positively. We don't need another power point presentation or class discussing the suicide risk. Our focus needs to remain on healthy Soldiers and families, providing support in time of need (physical, mental or spiritual) without any associated stigma when help is needed, and training to improve our overall readiness.

One area that the U.S. Army has developed is resiliency training through the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program. The Army calls this a holistic program designed to give members of the Army community the knowledge and thinking skills to enable a stronger ability to cope with life's challenges. It is too early to fully assess the impact of this program, but I believe it is a positive, proactive step to improve overall readiness.

How? By incorporating these skills into fundamental training, the Army is equipping Soldiers with strategies to deal with life's challenges. These challenges will affect us all and include personal or family challenges (marriage, divorce, children, parents, civilian employment, etc.) and military challenges (training, drill, mobilization, promotion, etc.). These skills won't make the problems go away, but they do provide a depth of

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From the TAG



Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar
The Adjutant General

knowledge that allows a Soldier to think his/her way through the problem and increase the likelihood of success. A more successful Soldier is clearly a positive impact on readiness. Although this is an Army program, the principals apply to all services.

Resiliency, simply put, is our ability to return to "normal" following times of stress. This can mean returning to civilian life following a deployment, but it can also mean coping with the loss of a close friend or relative, or dealing with a financial setback, or maintaining balance in the midst of a family crisis.

Resiliency is not new — all of us have it, some more than others. Resiliency is learned through experience and, normally, our resilience improves over time as we experience various challenges in life. However, it can be tough to measure. When we join the military, our progress is measured against a baseline established

at training. Through programs like Comprehensive Soldier Fitness, resiliency can be improved for all just like a flu shot improves your odds of avoiding the flu.

Readiness includes fitness — physical, mental and spiritual. Mental agility — another way to think of resiliency — is as important as physical stamina in today's military. Personal resilience is not a box to check, but way to think about and approach problems.

One leader made an excellent point during our conversation. He said that if your M-4 is broken, you don't take it on a mission and hope it will be okay — you get it fixed. Similarly, if you broke your arm, you would go to a doctor or, if your car wouldn't start, you would go to a mechanic. Resilience training is similar to proper cleaning of an M-4, proper Soldier or Airman fitness levels, or changing your car's oil — none will guarantee success, but they all dramatically improve the likelihood of success.

Resilience is a readiness issue. There is concern that teaching resiliency will make our Soldiers and Airmen softer, and make our organization softer. Some counter that we used to just "suck it up" and drive on when times got tough. Let me be clear — resiliency training is not about coddling Soldiers and Airmen. We still need to suck it up when times get tough, but we need to teach our Soldiers and Airmen how to suck it up.

This is a leadership issue. It may well require increased interaction within units — first-line leaders staying in touch with their subordinates between drills, noncommissioned officers learning "Soldier helping Soldier" or "Wingman helping Wingman" skills. This responsibility lies with commanders and leaders at every level. All leaders should have that conversation in their units.



When someone asks what the award ribbon stands for, saying it is the Thomas E. Wortham IV award will be enough to explain its significance.

— Chicago Police Superintendent Jody Weis

Wisconsin National Guard, Chicago Police Department honor fallen hero

Thomas Wortham IV, a first lieutenant with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Troop A, 105th Cavalry as well as a member of the Chicago Police Department, was honored for his dedication to duty, selfless service and heroism in a halftime ceremony at Soldier Field during the Monday night game (Sept. 27) between the Chicago Bears and the Green Bay Packers.

Wortham, a Chicago native, was murdered May 19 outside his parents' Chicago home when four men attempted to steal his motorcycle.

"Like many of his peers, subordinates and leaders, we knew he was a great leader," said Capt. Matthew McDonald, Wortham's commander in Troop A. "He was always out front, pushing his Soldiers, never asking them to do what he wouldn't do."

Wortham enlisted with the Wisconsin National Guard in April 1999 and

deployed to Iraq twice — a 12-month deployment in 2004 with the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, and a 10-month deployment in 2009 with Troop A, 105th Cavalry. He also spent a year on active duty performing airport security as part of Operation Noble Eagle in 2003.

After being commissioned in 2006, Wortham attended police academy and joined the Chicago Police Department, working in the Englewood district.

McDonald said he learned after Wortham's death that the 11-year veteran brought the same warrior ethos to his police work and community. Wortham served as president of the Cole Park Advisory Council in Chatham, and worked to make the neighborhood safe for children to play in area parks.

"He didn't talk about it," McDonald said. "He embodied both the outstanding Soldier and the outstanding citizen."

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1st Lt. Thomas Wortham IV



Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers stand alongside the Chicago Police Department Honor Guard on Soldier Field Sept. 27 to honor 1st Lt. Thomas Wortham IV. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Wetley

Fallen Wisconsin National Guard Soldier inspires citizen-Soldier award

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McDonald, who attended Reserve Officer Training Course at the University of Wisconsin around the same time Wortham was in ROTC at UW-Whitewater, wanted to commemorate his friend's life and accomplishments but discovered that Wisconsin did not have an award recognizing both military and citizen service. After doing some research, he learned that the state of New York had a Citizen-Soldier award. He proposed a similar award to Wisconsin National Guard leaders, who embraced the idea enthusiastically.

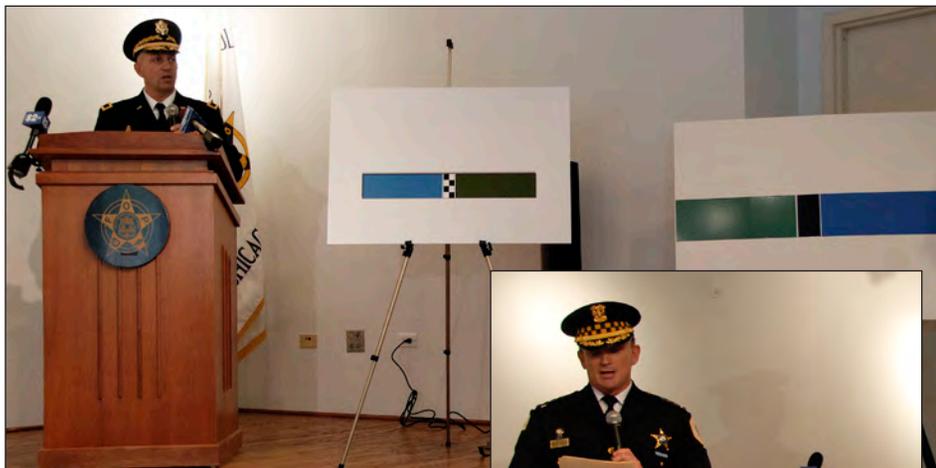
Wortham was the first recipient of the Thomas E. Wortham IV achievement award, presented to family members Sept. 27. The Chicago Police Department developed a similar award, which was also presented Monday night.

"We don't always have the opportunity while in uniform to recognize the things our Soldiers do in their civilian

lives," said Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard. "This award gives our organization an opportunity to recognize Soldiers and Airmen for their success both in and out of uniform."

The Wisconsin National Guard and the Chicago Police Department said they intend to present the award each year to members who best represent the values and commitment to community and service Wortham emulated.

"We will annually recognize an outstanding sworn member of the department who has made significant contribution to the Chicago Police Department and his or her community," said Jody Weis, Chicago Police Department superintendent. "The awardee must also have served in the Armed Forces. When someone asks what the award ribbon stands for, saying it is the Thomas E. Wortham IV award will be enough to explain its significance."



Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, above, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, and Chicago Police Superintendent Jody Weis, right, announce the creation of the Thomas Wortham IV achievement award at a ceremony in Chicago on Sept. 27. This award will be given annually to one Wisconsin National Guard member and one Chicago Police officer who best exemplify commitment to community and service. Wisconsin National Guard photos by Staff Sgt. Andy Poquette



Mission continues for Wisconsin National Guard members in Iraq

1st Lt. Peter Owen
724th Engineer Battalion

As Operation Iraqi Freedom ends and Operation New Dawn begins, Task Force Badger stands as the enduring Army engineer battalion in Iraq — part of the estimated 50,000 troops remaining in Iraq to ensure sustained stability.

Task Force Badger is led by the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 724th Engineer Battalion, and includes National Guard units from Pennsylvania and Puerto Rico in addition to active component units from Fort Riley, Kan., and Joint Base Lewis McChord, Wash., as well as Army Reserve units from Illinois and Virginia.

“As the focus of our operations turn to advise, train and assist, our Soldiers continue their dedicated efforts in route clearance, bridging and construction throughout Iraq,” said Lt. Col. David O’Donahue, Task Force Badger commander.

Today, Task Force Badger engineers are working jointly with the Iraqis in an advise, train and assist capacity to prepare the Iraqi Army for sustainable success in the future.

Simultaneously, Task Force Badger is actively engaged in reducing the U.S. logistical footprint in Iraq by withdrawing equipment from Iraq for use in the states, transfer to Afghanistan or donation to Iraqi Forces.

A few months ago, U.S. forces were solely conducting some of the most important engineer operations in Iraq, including route clearance and military bridging. Today, Task Force Badger has assigned a team of Soldiers to the Iraqi Engineer School in a role similar to that of adjutant professors. The Iraqis maintain responsibility for the instruction and administration, while U.S. Soldiers remain available as subject matter experts to assist when needed.

The operational relationship between

Iraqi and U.S. engineers has advanced to a point where some missions are now conducted bilaterally. Just months ago, joint missions were a goal in the transition. Today, Iraqi forces are involved in both the planning and execution of a wide spectrum of engineer operations.

Military bridging is a highly technical operation that requires aptitude in bridging, construction, and waterborne operations. The development of Iraqi responsibility has occurred in phases beginning with instruction, followed by building, launching and disassembling military bridges in a training environment. Recently, Iraqi and U.S. engineers began working jointly to complete both bridge

removals and emplacements throughout theater.

Task Force Badger units have become increasingly active in involving Iraqi Forces in route clearance patrols. Within months, interactions between U.S. and Iraqis have developed from sharing information at checkpoints to jointly conducting patrols and conducting maintenance. Today, in addition to their own route clearance patrols, Iraqis and U.S. Soldiers are conducting some patrols together. These joint patrols are the result of the advising and training that has taken place between U.S. and Iraqi combat engineers. These patrols are jointly planned, briefed through interpreters,



Soldiers from the 950th Clearance Company, of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Task Force Badger, conduct route sanitation along a highway in Iraq.

and conducted as a team. Following the missions, the U.S. and Iraqi commanders discuss performance measures to sustain and improve upon in the future.

Excess equipment in theater is departing Iraq at a rapid rate because of the dedicated efforts by the logistics personnel within Task Force Badger. Capt. Bryan Huebsch, the battalion's logistics officer, has worked to move more than \$35 million of government property and equipment from Joint Base Balad. Among the equipment are Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles and construction equipment now being relocated to Afghanistan or returned to the United States.

The end of combat operations in Iraq does not mean there is no danger to U.S. troops or Iraqi citizens. “Violence will not end with our combat operations,” President Barack Obama told the nation Aug. 31.

“Leaders are remaining cognizant that a threat still exists and are continuing to take all steps to care for their Soldiers,” O’Donahue said. “Although the name of the mission has changed, our commitment to promoting peace and stability through our engineer operations remains firm.”

Goal of Ramstein Rover exercise to improve battlefield for friendlies

Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue
Wisconsin National Guard

Thirteen NATO nations teamed up with the Air National Guard and Volk Field Air National Guard Base Aug. 21 through Sept. 3 to conduct an international exercise designed to increase target acquisition accuracy among member nations serving in Afghanistan, thereby reducing errant strikes.

Exercise Ramstein Rover 2010 provided training to more than 40 joint terminal attack controllers (JTACs, also referred to as forward air controllers by NATO) who will deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The JTAC's mission is to provide air-to-ground integration and coordinate close air support for coalition ground troops. They communicate with pilots in the air and commanders on the ground.

Col. Robert Redanz, Ramstein Rover exercise director from Headquarters Allied Air Command Ramstein, said all of the JTACs will deploy to Afghanistan in the next year — some in a few weeks — and he expressed NATO's desire to minimize the negative impact of combat in Afghanistan.

"One of our overarching priorities is to minimize civilian casualties," Redanz said. "We're trying to make sure when we hit that target, it's not women and children. We go to extreme lengths to make sure that doesn't happen. This training has been phenomenal."

Although all of the exercise participants have been trained by their respective countries, Ramstein Rover utilized scenarios seen in Afghanistan to provide more realistic training.

"The NATO guys, in their countries, don't necessarily get the kind of training that we're getting here," said Capt. Wes Hoepfer, an F-16 pilot with the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 115th Fighter Wing. The realistic scenarios at Volk Field



A forward air controller from the Czech Republic observes the exercise unfold as he prepares to relay information during the Ramstein Rover 2010 exercise at Volk Field. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech Sgt. Jon LaDue

will help the NATO service members when encountering similar situations in Afghanistan, he said.

"Obviously when things are going bad, and the ground commander needs weapons on the ground, then is not the time to see it for the first time," Hoepfer said.

Controllers also gained experience in managing multiple platforms simultaneously. The Air National Guard provided F-16s from Iowa and Madison's

115th Fighter Wing and a KC-135 Stratotanker from Milwaukee's 128th Air Refueling Wing. The Air Force and Air Force Reserve provided a B-1 Lancer from Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., and A-10s from Missouri's Air Force Reserve Base, respectively. The Wisconsin Army National Guard also participated in the exercise with their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and multiple RQ-7 "Shadow" unmanned aerial vehicles.

Some of these airframes may be

unfamiliar to participants from the NATO countries which included Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, United Kingdom and the United States.

Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center, which includes nearby Hardwood Range, is one of four regional training centers in the Air National Guard. Despite consistent joint and international training

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An F-16 Fighting Falcon from the Iowa National Guard performs a “show of force” during Exercise Ramstein Rover 2010 above Hardwood Range Sept. 1. The two-week exercise combined 13 NATO nations along with the Air National Guard to train more than 40 Joint Attack Terminal Controllers before their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. Wisconsin National Guard photos by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue



Col. Gary Ebben, Volk Field Air National Guard Base commander, and Col. Robert Redanz, Exercise Ramstein Rover 2010 director, discuss the two-week exercise at Volk Field Sept. 1.

Volk Field hosts inaugural NATO exercise for forward air controllers

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at Volk, Ramstein Rover is the first NATO exercise to be held at the CRTC.

Col. Gary Ebben, Volk Field commander, said Volk Field is unique in that it controls its own airspace, maintains its own bombing range and can host thousands of service members at a time.

“We kind of look at ourselves as one-stop shopping,” Ebben said.

Redanz agreed.

“There aren’t many training ranges that allow us to do the live munitions and air control,” he said. “The support and facilities here along with the availability of the aircraft has just been ideal for us.”

4-star NATO general visits Volk Field to observe Ramstein Rover 2010 exercise

Gen. Roger A. Brady — commander of Allied Air Command Ramstein, and commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe at Ramstein Air Base, Germany — visited the Close Air Support Exercise Ramstein Rover 2010 conducted at Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center on Aug. 31 to get a first-hand look at the exercise.

Brady expressed his appreciation of Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center, noting that many of the participating air assets are based close by, proving essential to the success of the operation and for controller training.

“I am grateful for the Wisconsin Air National Guard’s exceptional hospitality as host of Ramstein Rover,” Brady said. “The combination of their facili-

ties, professional force, and proximity to both ranges and units make Volk an outstanding resource. This has been a tremendous opportunity for our forward air controller capability branch, as well as all the nations participating in the exercise.

The primary purpose of Ramstein Rover 2010, held from Aug. 21 to Sept. 3, is to ensure integration of air and land forces by providing realistic training opportunities for NATO forward air controllers and joint terminal attack controllers. Brady was able to tour the squadron operations facility and talk to a variety of forward air controller teams from Estonia, Lithuania, and Great Britain, among others.

A forward air controller is a qualified and certified service member who, from a forward position, directs

the action of a combat aircraft engaged in close air support. While forward air controller is the historical NATO term and most commonly used by Alliance members, joint terminal attack controller is the term used by the U.S. military.

“This is a perfect example of building capability,” Brady said. “Thirteen nations coming together, executing a training plan and developing one of the most critical skill sets we need in Afghanistan — that of forward air controllers and joint terminal attack controllers.

“This type of exercise must continue because air-land integration is so incredibly important to the on-going fight in Afghanistan,” Brady continued. “That’s what this is all about — making Alliance Airmen more effective for commanders in the field.”



Sappers receive Purple Heart awards from Afghanistan tour

Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell
Wisconsin National Guard

Eleven Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers from the 951st Engineer Company (Sapper) received the Purple Heart Medal during a ceremony held Aug. 6, which recognized their heroic actions during their 2009 deployment to Afghanistan.

The 951st, based in Rhinelander, Wis., was assigned to Task Force Pirate and took on a very dangerous and tough mission — clearing improvised explosive devices from roads in Afghanistan. A total

of 17 Soldiers in the unit earned the medal as a result of the deployment. President Barack Obama presented a Purple Heart medal to Spc. Matthew Berth at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center's USO Warrior Center June 5, where Berth was being treated for injuries from an attack during a route clearing mission.

All Soldiers of the 951st were also awarded the Valorous Unit award — the second highest Army unit decoration — which recognizes units that display extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy. Among awards earned by the 951st during its deployment:

100 combat action badges, four combat medic badges, 21 Bronze Stars, four Bronze Stars with Valor devices, and five Army Commendation Medals with Valor devices.

"Most medals are worn with pride for a job well done for support [a Soldier has] given to fellow Soldiers," said Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard. "There's one medal however, that no Soldier ever truly wants to earn — that's the Purple Heart. As distinctive and special as this award is, you don't pay for it by performance or by valor, you pay for it

with your blood."

Anderson recognized the unit for their "tremendous job in Afghanistan," stating that because of what they accomplished in theater, many other service members were able to return from their deployments safely.

"Your efforts were not without great sacrifice, however," Anderson added, acknowledging Sgt. Ryan Adams, a unit member killed in action Oct. 2, 2009 in Logar Province, Afghanistan. Adams' parents attended the ceremony.

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Sappers receive Purple Heart awards earned during Afghanistan tour

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Spc. T.J. Fecteau, a combat engineer from Merrill, Wis., was one of the unit members to receive his Purple Heart medal Friday night.

“I feel relieved to be home, but I still sometimes wish I was over there,” Fecteau said.

Fecteau drove a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle on route clearance missions during the deployment. The injuries he sustained when a 200-pound IED destroyed his vehicle Sept. 8, 2009 would send Fecteau stateside for medical treatment. The blast also injured his gunner, Sgt. Phil Poitra and truck commander Sgt. 1st Class Chet Millard. Photos of the crew after that attack appeared on the cover and inside the Oct. 12, 2009 issue of TIME magazine.

“All three of us were [medically evacuated],” Fecteau recalled. “I was looking around while I was on the stretcher and saw how our platoon really pulled together.”

Poitra agreed.

“I think [what we went through] has made all of us much closer,” he explained. “This is the best group of guys I could have chosen to deploy with. The camaraderie is the best part of being with the 951st — these guys are all my brothers-in-arms.”

Capt. Brian Barth, a Neilsville, Wis., resident who served as company commander during the unit’s deployment, attended the ceremony and praised the Soldiers for their strength.

“It’s an honor to see the awards that these Soldiers have earned,” Barth said. “When I took command of the company, I said to myself, if I ever had to deploy, this was the unit I wanted to do it with because of the [strength of the] non-commissioned officers, the Midwest work ethic and no nonsense ‘get things done’ attitude that every Soldier wants to be a part of. To lead these Soldiers in a deployment has been amazing.”



“We knew we were sending our very best,” Anderson said of the unit. “What

we’re doing tonight demonstrates what a truly phenomenal job these men did. It



Spc. Joshua Steffens, left, shakes hands with Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, after receiving the Purple Heart, awarded during a ceremony at the 951st Engineering Company (Sapper) armory in Rhinelander, Wis., Aug. 6. Faucher and 10 other Soldiers (above) received the medal for their actions and subsequent injuries during their deployment to Afghanistan in 2009, where they performed route clearance missions to safeguard against improvised explosive devices. Wisconsin National Guard photos by Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell

may be hard sometimes to fathom what you accomplished; you’re probably going through a lot individually and as a unit. Your accomplishments have not gone unnoticed. Thank you for your service, sacrifice and thank you for being Soldiers in the Wisconsin Army National Guard.”

Soldiers awarded the Purple Heart medal on Aug. 6 include: Spc. Joshua Copiskey, Spc. Patrick Faucher, Spc. T.J. Fecteau, Spc. David Lein, Spc. Jonathan Palutke, Spc. Anthony Pemble, Sgt. Phil Poitra, Spc. Kyle Roberts, Sgt. 1st Class Lyle Spurgeon, Spc. Joshua Steffens, and Spc. Matthew Tennesen. Purple Heart recipients not present for the ceremony include: Spc. Douglas Alderton and Cpl. Jessie Fender. 

426th RTI fields new rollover trainer at Wisconsin Military Academy

Rob Schuette

Fort McCoy Public Affairs

Military personnel who want to train on the latest techniques to escape from a vehicle rollover soon will have a new training opportunity at the Wisconsin National Guard's 426th Regional Training Institute, Fort McCoy.

Sgt. William Bacon, a weapons/simulation instructor for the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 at the 426th, said the facility recently received a mine-resistant ambush protected (MRAP) vehicle Egress Trainer.

The MRAP Egress Trainer, or MET, complements training on the Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer, also known as HEAT, Bacon said.

"Almost all of the people in the theater of operations now are traveling in an MRAP or a similar-type vehicle because it has more protection than the Humvees," Bacon said. "The MRAP is bigger than the Humvee and can seat more passengers, so the escape procedures when it rolls over are different than those in a Humvee."

Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Koch, a simulation center specialist, said the 426th is one of the few Army National Guard organizations to have the equipment.

Currently, the equipment is being tested and undergoing maintenance.

The company that supplies the equipment to the 426th is providing an instructor/maintainer/operator (IMO) for the next two years. This person will be the main IMO. An IMO class will be offered through the 426th, but the numbers will be limited and determined by the 426th staff. The first instructional course on the equipment will be offered in October.

"This course will help personnel experience what it would be like to be in a rollover," Bacon said. "It will be good training so they'll know what to do in wartime."

Bacon said the training also will be valuable at any time, as personnel may



Sgt. William Bacon checks out the new mine-resistant ambush protected vehicle Egress Trainer at the Wisconsin National Guard's 426th Regional training Institute, located in the Wisconsin Military Academy at Fort McCoy. Photo by Rob Schuette

experience rollovers during training or using their privately owned vehicles.

426th staff meticulously ensure military personnel receive proper training in each of the academy's training courses. For the MET course, the training will be similar to that of the HEAT course, Koch said.

"This course will be a good complement to the other simulation training we offer," Koch said. "It will benefit a large number of Soldiers."

The training will include an explanation of all the physics and factors involved in a MET rollover, Bacon

added. Videos of the equipment in use from around-the-world also will be used to ensure the most thorough training possible.

Military units seeking MET training at the 426th RTI can call 608-388-9908 to schedule a session. 

Wisconsin National Guard Youth Camp builds lasting foundations

Sgt. Andy Poquette
Wisconsin National Guard

“Discovery, Friendship and Teamwork” was the motto of the 18th annual Wisconsin National Guard Youth Camp, which drew more than 210 youths and 250 volunteers from July 30 to Aug. 1.

The youths were divided into three age groups: 8-10, 11-13 and 14-17. From there, campers were further broken down into color teams. Volunteer counselors, drill sergeants, security personnel and medics were then assigned to each of the color teams.

Youth Camp is made possible with the donations from volunteers, corporations and the military. While the United Services Organization (USO) underwrites about two-thirds of the operating costs for youth camp, others contribute as well. Volunteer Barb Lloyd has been a part of Youth Camp for the past 14 years.

“We started when my son was just eight years old,” Lloyd said. “He is now a sergeant in the United States Marine Corps. Over the years I’ve been here, I’ve seen kids gain friendships and meet new people with something in common — the military.”

That military background is a bond that all of the youths that come to camp share, and while that bond may

be what brings them to camp for the first time, it’s the activities and friendships they create during camp that keeps them coming back.

“My mom signed me up for youth camp when I was 8,” said Amanda Simonson, 18, who served with security for the overnight watch, performing checks to ensure the safety of each camper. “Every summer it became a family vacation of sorts.”

Simonson has been attending youth camp for the last 10 years and carries the memories and positive experiences with her, remembering what it was like to be there as a child. Now, as an adult, she’s motivated to come back and lend a hand.

Swimming is just one of the many activities that the campers participate in during the three-day camp. Other events include rappelling, rock climbing, military drill and ceremony, tug of war, humvee rides, obstacle courses, dancing, marching and leadership activities.

For 16-year-old Karmen Ruplinger, rappelling down the air assault tower was the highlight of her first-ever experience with Youth Camp

At the end of the camp, each age group demonstrated their marching skills and were presented with certificates of completion by Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard. 



Karmen Ruplinger of Oakfield begins to rappel down an air assault tower at Fort McCoy July 31 during this year’s Wisconsin National Guard Youth Camp.
Wisconsin National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jim Wagner

Northern exposure: Alaskan exercise prepares Madison-based 115th Fighter Wing for future deployments

Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue
Wisconsin National Guard

More than 130 Wisconsin Air National Guard members — pilots, maintainers and support personnel from the Madison-based 115th Fighter Wing, along with 10 of the unit's F-16 Fighting Falcons — took part in a two-week Red Flag exercise at Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska for a unique training opportunity they wouldn't normally get in Wisconsin.

Pilots from the 115th flew against two active duty F-16 flying squadrons, from Misawa Air Base, Japan, and Osan Air Base, Korea. This was the first time in nearly eight years the fighter wing has participated in an Alaskan Red Flag exercise.

Maj. Bart Van Roo, an F-16 pilot with the 176th Fighter Squadron said he really enjoyed the Red Flag exercise and feels training in an unfamiliar environment against other pilots is invaluable.

Maj. Willa Panzer, officer in charge of the 176th Aircraft Maintenance Flight, said the Airmen who deployed to Red Flag really performed admirably, despite working at an unfamiliar location with outside units and new leadership.

"I think this was an excellent deployment," Panzer said. "These folks have a can-do attitude and all share the common goal of getting the job done."

Master Sgt. Robert Pelletier, 115th Maintenance Squadron avionics integrated shop technician, said the exercise allows the younger Airmen to realize the importance of their roles in a deployed environment because "pilots can't do their job, if [Airmen] don't do theirs."

"It is very similar to an [Air Expeditionary Force] deployment — they get to see how important it is to work together to get the job done and how their job impacts each sortie," Pelletier said. "Everyone worked well together and did a great job."

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Fighter Wing hones its skills at Red Flag exercise

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The purpose of exercises like Red Flag is to streamline processes, garner more “deployment like” experience and work out any kinks in the entire process.

Senior Airman Brandon Barger, an ammunitions troop with the 115th Fighter Wing, said despite some changes in the mission when he arrived to Red Flag, the exercise was very productive.

“It’s always nice going to another base and learning how to deal with many different types of people and how they do things,” Barger said. “I can say some of our newer people learned a lot and have taken some things away from this trip.”

Left, Airman 1st Class Jake Rasmussen, crew chief for the 115th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, assists a pilot into the cockpit of the F-16 Fighting Falcon during a Red Flag exercise, Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska Aug. 18. Rasmussen deployed to Eielson in support of the Madison-based 115th Fighter Wing. Wisconsin Air National Guard photos by Tech Sgt. Ashley Bell



Bottom left, Tech Sgt. Joseph Johnson, Crew Chief for the 115th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, waits for a flight control check during a launch at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, Aug. 18. The 115th deployed 10 aircraft and more than 130 Airmen in support of the Red Flag exercise. [Click on photo to see video](#)

Bottom right, Airman 1st Class Caitlin Taylor, 115th Force Support Squadron, prepares a cheeseburger for a waiting patron at the dining facility at Eielson AFB, Alaska Aug. 18.



Volk Field open house a success

Staff Sgt. Stephen Montgomery
115th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Low clouds and uncertain weather didn't keep approximately 3,000 visitors away as Volk Field opened its doors for its biennial open house and air show Aug. 21, giving the public a chance to see what the Air National Guard is all about.

"It's a great way to foster the relationship with the community and to help them better understand what we do here," said Lt. Col. Steve Dunai, Volk Field operations director.

There was a Madison-based F-16



Above, a World War II B-25 Mitchell bomber from the Minnesota Wing of the Commemorative Air Force at the Volk Field Open House, Aug. 21. Photos courtesy Joe Oliva

At left, a Viper East F-16 Demo Pilot pulling vapor on his dedication pass at the Volk Field Open House.

Falcon and a Milwaukee-based KC-135 Stratotanker as well as a static display by the 128th Air Control Squadron.

Building and growing the relationship with the local community was one of the key goals of the open house.

"We are proud to be located where we are and this is one way to give back to our neighbors," said Chief Master Sgt.

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Mike Love starts up his Russian Yak-52 prior to his Airshow performance at the Volk Field Open House on Aug. 21. Photo courtesy Joe Oliva [Click on photo to see video](#)

Nearly 3,000 visitors flock to Volk Field open house and air show

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Gregory Cullen, Volk airfield manager. “It’s an affordable way to have fun and enjoy the day.”

Another aspect of the open house was a fly-in for general aviation pilots and an aviation safety seminar hosted by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. There were 145 pre-registered aircraft for the fly-in, some coming from as far as Milwaukee and Green Bay, but due to weather only 20 aircraft were able to make it in.

Some of the pilots flying in were there for the seminar, while others came for “the experience of landing on a military base,” Cullen said — something that few civilian pilots ever get to experience.

The air show featured both military and civilian performers and static displays such as a B-25 Mitchell Bomber, F-86 Sabre Jet and T-6A Texan II, as well as displays by the Juneau County Dive Team and the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. 

An Air Force KC-135 Stratotanker air refueler dwarfs the RQ-7 Shadow 200 unmanned aerial vehicle before the UAV's initial flight at Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center Aug. 11.



An RQ-7 Shadow 200 is launched on its initial flight at Volk Field Aug. 11. Members of Company B, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 32nd Brigade, conducted the flight to test frequency compatibility between the Army National Guard unit and the Air National Guard control tower. Wisconsin National Guard photos by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

Shadow UAV makes itself at home at Volk Field

The Wisconsin National Guard tested the RQ-7 Shadow 200 unmanned aerial vehicle at Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center for the first time Aug. 11.

Many aircraft, ranging from fighter jets to air refuelers and even large civilian airliners, have taken off and landed at Volk Field, but the small unmanned aerial vehicle that lands solely on instruments was something new to the Air National Guard base.

According to Sgt. Lucas Gordon, an operations noncommissioned officer with Company B, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, the Shadow 200 and its real-time imagery capability is being placed with ground troops to support missions such as convoy operations, field artillery and troops in contact with enemy forces.

Wednesday's flight had two purposes, Gordon said. The first was to verify that the radio frequency used by the UAV is compatible with equipment used by the Wisconsin Air National Guard, which operates Volk Field. The second was to prepare for the upcoming NATO Ramstein Rover forward air controller exercise, then less than a week away.

"I plan to fly eight to nine hours, two to three flights per day," Gordon said, noting that air restrictions at Volk Field limit his unit to flying only one of their four UAVs at one time. For the Ramstein Rover exercise, Gordon said the unit would have one UAV ready on its launcher so that when one Shadow lands another can take off.

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First Volk Field flight of Shadow 200 unmanned aerial vehicle successful

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The RQ-7 Shadow 200 UAV catapulted from its launching mechanism at approximately 10:30 a.m. and circled around Volk Field for 10 minutes or so before approaching the paved runway and catching the arrest cables to conclude its short flight.

“It looks like a big eagle,” observed one of the Volk Field civilian employees standing along the flight line as the Shadow soared overhead.

The Shadow 200 can reach heights of 15,000 feet but generally does not exceed 10,000 feet, and has a maximum range of

125 kilometers. While often referred to as a drone, a generic term for all UAVs, the Shadow should not be confused with a Predator — a larger aircraft with weapons.

The Shadow 200’s payload is a camera, which the military uses for target acquisition, aerial reconnaissance and surveillance. The Shadow can also serve as a deterrent to hostile forces by its presence overhead — serving notice that they are being watched. But it also has domestic applications, such as assessing the situation on the ground following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Despite the airspace restrictions, Spc. Robert Michalak — who served as crew chief for Wednesday’s mission — said Volk Field’s paved runways are more advantageous than the hard-packed dirt and gravel airstrips at Fort McCoy, which can damage the Shadow’s propeller. Gordon said Volk Field was also more

conducive for flights during inclement weather.

Gordon said the Wisconsin Air National Guard was instrumental in helping his unit accomplish the Volk Field flight by working with the FAA to approve a certificate of authorization for the Shadow 200.

“That can take up to six months for the FAA to approve,” Gordon explained. “The Air Guard was extremely proactive in submitting the paperwork.”

Designs for a proposed \$8 million, 10,298-square-foot building — which will provide training, maintenance, operations and storage space for the UAV platoon at Volk Field — are expected by October, with construction projected to begin in December of 2011 and conclude by December 2012. The state Building Commission approved the project last month. 



Military and civilian employees at Volk Field Combat Training Readiness Center watch as an RQ-7 Shadow 200 UAV, or unmanned aerial vehicle, prepares to land following its first launch at Volk Field Aug. 11.



It was a short but strange journey for one C-130 aircraft — departing Fort McCoy and arriving at Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center on Aug. 3.

The retired aircraft literally travelled under the radar, with much of the fuselage disassembled and loaded on lowboy trucks — the cargo plane now the cargo — for road transport between the two military installations.

The movement was as detailed as the disassembly effort. Even disassembled, the C-130 stood nearly 20 feet tall and 18.5 feet wide, well over the legal hauling limits. The aircraft weighed in at 131,500 pounds — 51,000 pounds over the limit. The 104-foot aircraft hung over the rear of its transport by 23 feet.

In addition, Wisconsin National Guard officials coordinated with the state Department of Transportation, State Patrol, Monroe County and Juneau County highway departments, Monroe County and Juneau County sheriff's departments, and the Tomah Police Department for waivers and assistance. In addition, Oakdale Electric moved as many as 104 power lines out of the way as the massive payload lumbered on its way to its new home.

The C-130 will be used for training at Volk Field. 🇺🇸

Wisconsin Soldier among finalists in Guard's Best Warrior contest



Maj. Gen. Raymond Carpenter, acting director of the Army National Guard, looks on as Pfc. Randy Fendryk of Waukesha accepts a certificate and handshake from Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Burch, the command sergeant major of the Army National Guard, during the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States Conference in St. Louis. Missouri Army National Guard photo

Pfc. Randy Fendryk of Waukesha may not have won the National Guard's Best Warrior competition, but he described the past several months leading up to the national contest as a winning experience.

"I'm a little disappointed that I didn't win," Fendryk admitted. "Still, looking back on the experience, it was a great time. I learned a lot, got to do a lot. Overall, the competition was great."

The winners were announced during a banquet Aug. 11 at the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS) in St. Louis, Mo. Sgt. Larry Isbell of Oklahoma and Staff Sgt. Adam Little of Michigan will represent the National Guard at the Department of the Army Best Warrior competition in October. Little and Fendryk both advanced to the National Guard competition from the Region 4 Soldier of the Year event held at Fort McCoy in May.

Command Sgt. Maj. George Stopper, the senior enlisted advisor for the Wisconsin Army National Guard, said he and Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, were both extremely proud of Fendryk.

"No matter the outcome, he was an absolute winner in our eyes," Stopper said.

Fendryk, a member of Battery C, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery in Sussex, competed against six other Soldiers at the National Guard's Best Warrior competition held in late July at Fort Benning's Warrior Training Center. He described the experience as "tough."

"Fort Benning [Georgia] in the summertime, no matter what you are doing, will be very tough," he acknowledged. "It was very thorough — the competition tested a lot of Army knowledge. At this level, everyone knows their Army knowledge."

The 14 competitors — seven lower enlisted and seven non-commissioned officers — each won as many as five Best Warrior or Soldier of the Year competitions en route to Fort Benning. At the Warrior Training Center, competitors were tested on physical fitness, mental toughness, land navigation, combatives, weapons accuracy and maintenance, and military knowledge and courtesies. Fendryk said the appearance board — Soldiers in formal

uniforms answering questions from three sergeants major — had the potential to put a competitor in first place or knock him out of it.

"I found out I know more than I thought," he said.

Fendryk described the competition as the experience of a lifetime. But beyond the thrill of competing against the best Soldiers in the National Guard, he said, was the opportunity to grow as a Soldier and an individual.

"You learn how to be a leader," he explained. "You see how the NCOs conduct their business, and that can help you with the next step of your career."

Fendryk had praise for one particular NCO — his sponsor, Staff Sgt. Troy Kind.

"I didn't realize it at the [beginning], but this is really a two-man competition," Fendryk said. "I know Staff Sgt. Kind is a big part of why I'm here — there's a lot of behind-the-scenes work. A good sponsor is a big asset, and I found I had one of the best sponsors at the state and regional level. He definitely put me ahead of the competition."

This marks the second straight year that Wisconsin has sent a lower enlisted to the National Guard Best Warrior competition — Spc. John Wiernasz of the Spooner-based 950th Engineer Company represented Wisconsin last year.

"I've always known we have exceptionally strong Soldiers in the Wisconsin Army National Guard, and in the upper Midwest in general," Stopper said. "It takes a lot to compete at that level. For us to have representation at the national level two years in a row says a lot for our organization."

Fendryk acknowledged the hard work required to advance to the national competition, but urged fellow Soldiers not to shy away from the effort.

"Yeah, it's a lot of work but it pays off," he said. "When you get to this level there are opportunities you just won't get anywhere else."

Stopper agreed.

"[Fendryk is] exceptionally young," he noted. "Accomplishing this at this stage of his career opens doors to what we can expect from him in coming years. He has the potential to be a great NCO, or an officer if he chooses that path."

Bosslift gives National Guard employers a glimpse of military life

Capt. Joy Staab

Wisconsin National Guard

In a continuing effort to strengthen relationships between Wisconsin National Guard members and their employers, nearly 60 Wisconsin business leaders traveled to North Carolina for the opportunity to experience military life Aug. 28-29.

The Wisconsin National Guard Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) sponsored the bi-annual event known as Bosslift.

The event kicked off with a flight onboard a KC-135 Stratotanker flown by members of the Wisconsin National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee. Employers were given tours of the 136-foot-long refueling aircraft by flight crews during the flights and had the rare opportunity to witness two F-16 Fighting Falcon jets — flown by pilots from the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison — refuel in mid-air.

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience some of the things that our employees involved with the National Guard experience," said Dr. James Lee Rasch of Western Technical College in La Crosse. "And it's a good opportunity to interact with other employers in the area."

Once they arrived in North Carolina, the employers and ESGR representatives toured Fort Pope Air Force Base and Fort Bragg Army Base. The guided tour included a stop on the tarmac to explore a C-130 military transport aircraft, dinner at the military dining facility and a visit to the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) shopping center.

Day two of the Bosslift provided employers with a look at how technology is helping service members train for deployments.

The first event of the day was a Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer (HEAT) demonstration. The HEAT is a computer-operated body of an actual M1114 up-armored Humvee lined with foam rubber and mounted on an axle that allows it to rotate a full 360 degrees, designed to train service members how to react during a Humvee rollover.

The group then tried the Engagement Skills Trainer (EST) — a simulator which provides realistic marksmanship and combat scenario training for small arms and crew-served weapons. The training allows them to shoot at realistic moving targets instead of stationary targets and helps build muscle memory.

"The training is outstanding, very realistic, very hands-on," said Kurt Heuer of the Wisconsin Rapids Police Department. "It makes sense to train our service members in a controlled environment before they go out on the range."

Mike Dougherty of D&S Manufacturing in Black River Falls fired an M-16 automatic rifle during one training scenario and was impressed with how realistic the training felt.

"It's interesting and wonderful that they can simulate this before people have to do it live," Dougherty said. "I'm most impressed with the sophistication of the simulation and the amount of time spent simulating real

situations before you get put into it."

Prior to heading home to Wisconsin, employers were asked to sign a statement of support which reaffirmed they will continue to follow the provisions of The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

"We have some employers that are really awe struck at what our military is doing these days," said Mike Hallquist, the Wisconsin ESGR program support manager. "They got a really good taste of what's going on at Pope Air Force Base as well as Fort Bragg. Now we just hope they share their experiences with people back in Wisconsin."

American Legion National Security Commission tours Wisconsin Air Guard base

Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze
128th Air Refueling Wing

Forty-eight members of the American Legion's National Security Commission toured the 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee on Aug. 27 as part of their annual convention.

The American Legion members, guided by several Airmen, Soldiers and senior military leaders from throughout Wisconsin, received a tour of a KC-135R Stratotanker, F-16C Falcon, UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter and an Army mobile communications array.

Col. Ted Metzger, commander of the 128th Air Refueling Wing, began the tour by explaining the wing's refueling mission and contributions to global military efforts. He further explained that the wing's Stratotankers have recently contributed to ongoing military missions in Afghanistan by performing aeromedical evacuation operations.

Metzger also described the specific challenges concerning deployments within the Air National Guard and National Guard.

"Deployments are a concern due to part-time personnel and their civilian jobs," he said. "Longer deployments can affect that member's [civilian] job status."

Elaine Schachelmayer, the 128th Air Refueling Wing Airman and Family Readiness Program manager, detailed her role in the wing's mission.

"We learned from [the Vietnam War] that no service member should have to go it alone," she said. "The Airman and Family Readiness Program is a vital component [of the wing], supported by every component and the commander of the 128th."

Brig. Gen. John E. McCoy, commander of the Wisconsin Air National Guard, addressed the Legion commission next.

"On behalf of the 10,000 military members of Wisconsin, welcome to Wisconsin and Milwaukee," he said. "We're very proud of this Wing . . . and



At left, Brig. Gen. John E. McCoy, commander of the Wisconsin Air National Guard, stands beside Soldiers from the 357th Network Support Company, 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, Two Rivers, at the 128th Air Refueling Wing on Aug. 27. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Staff Sgt. Jeremy Wilson

it's a great opportunity to have you here."

Airmen from the 128th Air Refueling Wing led small groups of American Legion members onto the flightline, where several aircraft and their crews stood by to explain the nuances of the current military aerial assets on display.

During the guided tour, Patty Waltz, the American Legion human resources director, said the American Legion typically receives a tour of a military installation in the annual convention's host city.

Mike Duggan, the American Legion past deputy director for national security and a retired Army colonel, said of his time in uniform, "I wouldn't do it all again, but I'd do most of it again. And that's a credit to the service."

Following the guided tour, the American Legion members were given a locally-catered luncheon at Sijan Hall, the on-base dining facility. During this time, service members were able to talk with American Legion members and answer any questions regarding the guided tour, military service or casual issues.

The day ended with an hour-long question-and-answer session, where a panel of seven Airmen and Soldiers fielded questions from the American Legion. These questions specifically concerned any perceived difficulties of military service and personal experiences from deployments overseas.

The National Security Commission of the American Legion requested the pre-convention tour to reconnect with military members and units, said Sam Gilmore, the deputy director of the American Legion National Security and Foreign Relations Committee.

Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, was the honorary grand marshal for the Aug. 29 parade in downtown Milwaukee, and — along with Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki — delivered the opening remarks for the convention on Aug. 31. 

Wisconsin Airman emulates whole-person concept

■ Air National Guard's top Senior NCO looks to set example, inspire others

Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue
Wisconsin National Guard

As the top senior non-commissioned officer in the Air National Guard, Senior Master Sgt. Jessica Maple, of Mosinee, Wis., has emulated the whole-person concept by demonstrating steadfast leadership, continuous self-improvement and significant contributions outside the uniform.

Her award package describes achievements and numbers you'd expect to find in a package template somewhere. As an air surveillance technician for the 128th Air Control Squadron, her award package details her and her team's direct and indirect achievements with words like "supported 600 ground battles," "12 Taliban destroyed," and "protected \$15 billion in assets" that will make you look at her 5'4" inch frame and tilt your head in wonderment.

What you won't find in her award package, however, is how she serves on her son's school board, or how she volunteers her time to work concessions at the local baseball fields or even how she pulls over on the side of the road to pick up random pieces of litter. It's not just her performance one weekend a month that makes Jessica Maple stand out - it's the mindset she applies to every minute of her often over-booked day.

For those qualities and achievements, Jessica flew to Washington D.C. June 14 to formally accept her award and to enjoy a barbeque with some of the Air Force and

ANG's top leaders; including Gen. Craig McKinley, chief of National Guard Bureau, Lt. Gen. Harry Wyatt III, ANG director, Chief Masters Sgts. James Roy and Christopher Muncy, top Air Force and ANG chiefs respectively.

Chief Master Sgt. James Chisholm, state command chief for the Wisconsin ANG, accompanied Jessica to the award ceremony and said he witnessed a "humble and grateful Airman consistently giving credit for her award to others."

"She spoke to everyone with humility and professionalism no matter the audience," Chisholm said.

When she graduated high school in 1994, she began going to school at North Central Technical College for graphic arts. But soon thereafter her whole focus shifted. She joined the military in 1996 and has never looked back. Although some of her family members were surprised to hear she had joined the military, none of them are surprised she's been so successful.

"When she joined the military, I think she found challenges there," said Jessica's great-aunt Dorothy Bennett. "It's just another adventure in her life that she takes on and is happy with."

Jessica looks young to be a senior master sergeant, and perhaps she is.

"I'm sitting here watching her through her military career and she's getting promoted just as fast as the pay scale goes up," said her husband, L.J. Maple. "It's pretty much amazing."

But perhaps no one can speak to Jessica's success better than Chief Master Sgt. James Stefanski, her supervisor for nearly 10 years.

"She has been outstanding in all the duties that have ever been asked of her," said Stefanski, who has seen



Senior Master Sgt. Jessica Maple, 128th Air Control Squadron, stands with Brig. Gen. John McCoy, Wisconsin Air National Guard commander, and Chief Master Sgt. James Chisholm, Wisconsin Air National Guard command chief, following an award ceremony at Joint Air Base Andrews, Md. Maple was recognized as the top senior non-commissioned officer in the Air National Guard. Photo courtesy Jessica Maple

Jessica promoted to four different ranks. "She's always looking to the future. Every transition has been pretty much seamless."

"You have to be able to empower your people," she said. "Even if it is some sort of failure, because to me, having the opportunity is what everybody needs ... because you have to live and learn in order to be successful."

When she's not serving people in a combat uniform, she is probably working at one of her three jobs as a surgical technician. Whether that field of work chose her or she chose it, she approaches it with every bit of determination she brings toward the military.

"I believe in every aspect of my life that I need to help other people," Jessica said. "This world is becoming such an awful place, you have to live off of optimism and things like that let you know that at least you know you're doing something to try and make a difference."

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I believe in every aspect of my life that I need to help other people.

— Senior Master Sgt. Jessica Maple

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She serves on the Mosinee youth basketball and baseball committees, she was elected to the Mosinee School Board, she served as the adjutant for VFW Post 8280, the main point of contact on numerous veteran dedication projects and a volunteer at the local school.

“She is just a pleasure to work with,” said Mike Bolanda who serves on the baseball and basketball committees with Jessica. “She never stops trying to get more for the kids and the community. She is an amazing woman to be able to keep all that going.”

When Staff Sgt. Andy Hitt, a Wisconsin National Guard Soldier from Mosinee, was killed during a vehicle accident, his parents came to Jessica for help. Jessica then coordinated a memorial in Mosinee, dedicated to Hitt and other veterans. But Jessica doesn't boast about how

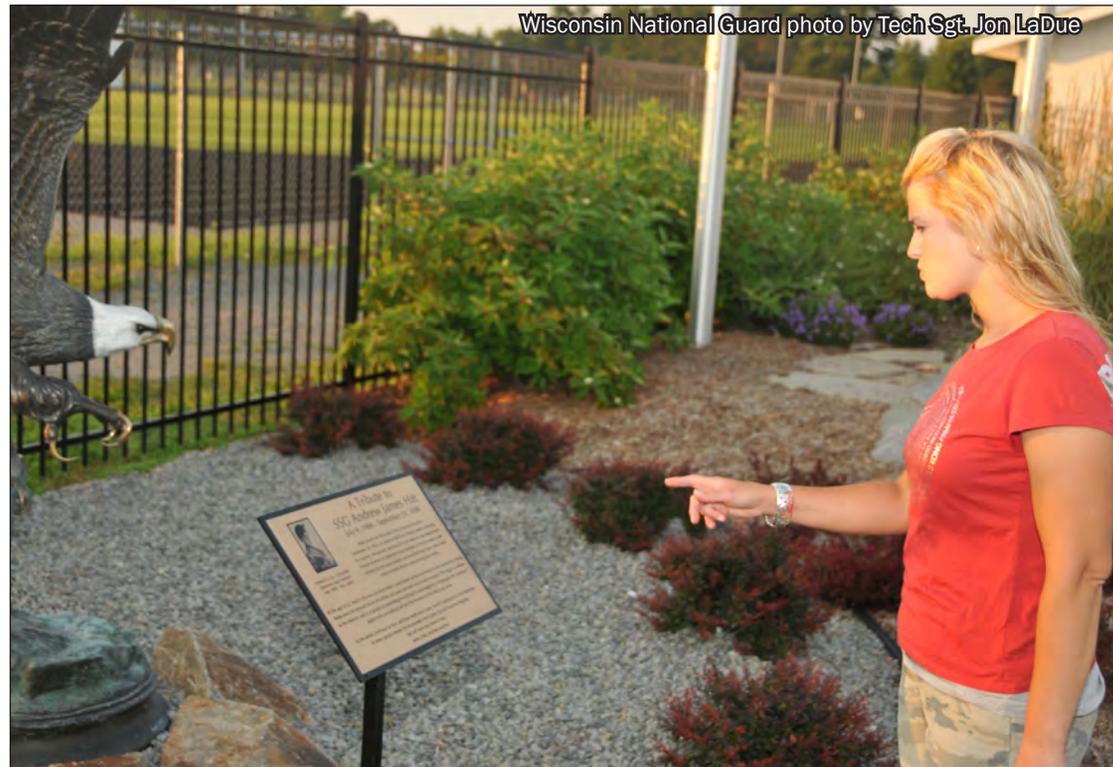
beautiful it looks or how grateful Hitt's parents are – she talks about the plans she has in the future to make it even better.

Jessica stands resolute in her pursuit to pay respects to the men and woman who have served their country. Her dedication to serve and continuing serving may be best summed up by one of her favorite quotes by Adlai Stevenson: “Patriotism is not short, frenzied outbursts of emotion, but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime.”

Jessica is dedicated to setting a positive example for her sons and others to follow for her lifetime.

“To me, my decision lies upon ‘How can I make the biggest amount of impact on the greatest amount of people in a positive fashion?’” she said. 🍁

For the complete story and additional photos, visit <http://dma.wi.gov/dma/news/2010news/10160.asp>



Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech Sgt. Jon LaDue

Above, Senior Master Sgt. Jessica Maple details the effort that went into a Veterans Park in Mosinee, Wis., which was dedicated to Staff Sgt. Andy Hitt. Bottom left, the Maples at Volk Field for the Wisconsin National Guard's Youth Camp. Bottom center, Maple and her two boys Blaze and Cade. Bottom right, Maple prepares for another patient at her civilian workplace where she works as a surgical technician.



Photo courtesy Jessica Maple



Photo courtesy Jessica Maple



Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech Sgt. Jon LaDue

Wisconsin National Guard News Digest

To see the complete version of these stories and for archived news stories about the Wisconsin National Guard, see <http://dma.wi.gov>

54th CST helps keep PGA tournament safe

Before Tiger Woods teed off his first practice round at Whistling Straits golf course in Haven, Wis., site of the 2010 PGA Championship tournament, the Wisconsin National Guard's 54th Civil Support Team was there to provide a discreet but important level of protection for this national sporting event by monitoring for signs of chemical, biological or radiological weapons.

"The [Sheboygan County] sheriff is supporting a major event in his community — he's expected to be seen," said Lt. Col. Timothy Covington, 54th CST commander. "We're operating low-profile so we don't interfere with the PGA's priorities."

To maintain that low profile, 12 members of the CST assigned to support the PGA Championship, over a seven-day period, were dressed in khaki slacks and dark blue golf shirts with the unit emblem embroidered on the left breast. Part of monitoring the event involves mingling with the public on roving "patrols" using commercial equipment small enough to be concealed but sensitive enough to detect someone receiving radiation treatment. Covington acknowledged that conducting such sweeps in military uniforms using conventional military equipment would disrupt the crowds at the tournament.

The survey team also emplaced remote monitors in strategic points on the golf course — out of sight but positioned to monitor both heavy pedestrian traffic areas as well as competitors.

"We appreciate their help and their ability to learn on the fly," said Capt. Cory Roeseler of the Sheboygan County Sheriff's Department. "It was a great learning experience for all of us to learn these resources are available." 📷

Read the entire story at: <http://dma.wi.gov/dma/news/2010news/10162.asp>



Staff Sgt. Sheilah Anderson of Clayton, Wis., a member of Headquarters Company, 724th Engineer Battalion currently deployed to Iraq, has a Green Bay Packers towel autographed by Antonio Freeman as Soldiers from the 724th patiently wait. Task Force Badger photos by 1st Lt. Peter Owen

Packers legend visits Wisconsin Guard in Iraq

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq — Soldiers from Task Force Badger, 724th Engineer Battalion, had the opportunity to meet and spend time with one of their favorite Green Bay Packer legends.

Antonio Freeman, a former all-pro wide receiver and Super Bowl champion with the Green Bay Packers, joined former Chicago Bear quarterback Jim Miller and NBA referee Bob Delaney as part of the "Sports By-Line" tour organized by sports radio host Ron Barr.

About 200 Soldiers from Task Force Badger were able to take time away from their work to get an autograph and show one of their favorite Packers what they are doing in Iraq. 📷

Read the entire story at: <http://dma.wi.gov/dma/news/2010news/10169.asp>

Wisconsin service members support Air Venture

The Wisconsin National Guard was on display before an international audience of nearly half a million spectators and aviation enthusiasts at the 2010 EAA AirVenture air show in Oshkosh July 26 through Aug. 1.

Many spectators fixed their eyes on an unfamiliar airframe as Soldiers from Wisconsin's Army National Guard showcased their latest piece of equipment — a tactical unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) dubbed the RQ-7 "Shadow." The Shadow is equipped with a camera used for target acquisition, aerial reconnaissance and surveillance.

As in years past, Wisconsin Air Guard members from Madison and Milwaukee displayed an F-16 Fighting Falcon and KC-135 Stratotanker and were on hand to answer questions about the airframes.

There was a steady flow of spectators who toured the KC-135 which is used for the unique mission of in-flight refueling — a capability that allows the Air Force and Air National Guard the capability of

"global reach."

Soldiers and Airmen from Wisconsin's Drug Control Program were also at AirVenture to promote positive decision making among children. Tech. Sgt. Eric Dunford and Senior Airman Ryan Scott set up a basketball game where kids tried to shoot baskets wearing goggles that give the impression of what someone sees when they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

In addition to the Wisconsin National Guard's involvement, this year's AirVenture was dedicated to members of the military and included many events to honor past and present veterans.

A veteran's memorial was unveiled on the war bird grounds and representatives from each service marched down the runway during a formal parade. A cooperative effort from EAA and the Oshkosh Corporation allowed staff to hand out nearly 10,000 hats to veterans. 📷

Read the entire story at: <http://dma.wi.gov/dma/news/2010news/10153.asp>

Madison Air Guard unit honors Hometown Heroes

More than 350 Wisconsin Air National Guard members from the 115th Fighter Wing and their families were honored at the unit's Truax Field base in Madison on Sept. 19.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, according to the Defense Department, more than 80,000 Air National Guard Airmen have deployed in support of military operations. As part of the Air National Guard Hometown Heroes Salute recognition program, the 115th Fighter Wing hosted its first ceremony to celebrate and honor the wing's Airmen, families and those special supporters who have significantly contributed to supporting our Airmen and their mission.

The program, managed by the National Guard Bureau, cooperates with the

Guard in all 50 states and recognizes Airmen who deployed for more than 30 consecutive days for Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom and all other contingency operations.

Each Airman honored received a cherry wood-encased letter of appreciation signed by Gen. Craig R. McKinley, National Guard Bureau chief, and the Air Guard's command chief, Chief Master Sgt. Richard Smith, enclosed with a commemorative coin.

Each family member, whether they attended the ceremony or not, were also presented with tokens of support for their Airman. 📷

Read the entire story at: <http://dma.wi.gov/dma/news/2010news/10185.asp>



Three Soldiers originally from Monroe, Wash. took different paths to a reunion of sorts in Joint Base Balad in Iraq: Pfc. Kevin Wehmeyer, left, of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 950th Clearance Company; Spc. Christopher Rhodes, of the active Army's 36th Engineer Brigade; and Pfc. Adam Chhour of the Army Reserve's 739th Multi-Role Bridge Company. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Peter Owen

Mission crosses paths of three Soldiers from same small Washington town

1st Lt. Peter Owen
Task Force Badger

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq — A Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldier had to travel halfway around the world to meet other Soldiers from his hometown in northwestern Washington state.

At the Joint Base Balad material yard maintained by the 36th Engineer Brigade and Task Force Badger (724th Engineer Battalion, Wisconsin Army National Guard), three Soldiers — Spc. Christopher Rhodes, Pfc. Adam Chhour and Pfc. Kevin Wehmeyer, each from different units — began working with each other to disperse construction materials throughout theater and facilitate the responsible drawdown of forces.

“One of the first questions I ask Soldiers I work with is ‘where are you from?’” said Rhodes, 24, of Monroe, Wash., currently assigned to the 36th Engineer Brigade of Fort Hood, Tex.

Much to his surprise, both Chhour and Wehmeyer replied “Monroe, a town near Seattle, Wash.”

“After running into only one other person from Monroe during the last four years I’ve been on active duty, I was totally surprised to find three people from Monroe,” Rhodes said, “especially on the

other side of the world.”

“As I look at how we met, it really amazes me considering that my name was drawn from a hat to come down here and support this mission,” said Wehmeyer, 20, who now resides in Superior, Wis., and is assigned to the 950th Clearance Company.

“What amazes me most about that we all took different routes from the same city to get here,” Chhour added. “Spc. Rhodes is active duty, Pfc. Wehmeyer is National Guard while I am an Army Reservist. It blows my mind when I think that we meet each other here when we came from all three components of the Army.” Chhour, 22, from Monroe, Wash., is assigned to the 739th Multi-Role Bridge Company.

Although the Soldiers had never met before coming to Iraq, they shared an instant bond when they began working together. After they return from this deployment they plan on continuing their friendship.

“These are some great guys to work with,” said Master Sgt. Gregory Wendt of Amery, Wis. “When they started working together, I would have thought they’d known each other for years. They found ways to be productive while still joking around like old friends.” Wendt is responsible for supervising operations at the materials yard. 🎨

Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

Master Sgt. Patricia Demers, an equipment manager with the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 115th Fighter Wing, spoke about perceptions placed on Hispanics and Latinos as well as their culture and heritage during a Hispanic Heritage Month program Sept. 15 at Joint Force Headquarters in Madison.

The great-granddaughter of Mexican immigrants, Demers has strong Latino features and occasionally seasons her conversation with accented Spanish — a trait stemming from a childhood speaking “Spanglish” at home. However, she is not bilingual, which sometimes results in amusing situations.

“I find it amazing how it’s expected that I speak Spanish,” she said. “Someone asked me if my baby spoke Spanish. I thought that was funny — ‘Yeah, they come out speaking Spanish,’ right?”

But this assumption is cross-cultural, Demers explained. Hispanics and non-Hispanics alike are taken aback when she informs them she does not speak Spanish.

Demers briefly outlined the cultural legacy of Hispanics and Latinos, and — after acknowledging that she was uncertain of the difference when she was younger — provided simple definitions for terms that are often used interchangeably. Hispanic, she explained, refers to the Spanish-speaking people of any race

in the U.S., while Latino indicates a descendant of Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America or South America. Latinos and Hispanics speak a variety of dialects, and differ on their preference to be referred to as Americans or by their cultural heritage. Latinos and Hispanics accounted for more than 35 million people in the 2000 census.

Demers, the seventh of nine children, said she was the first in her family to earn a college degree and spoke of the high value her parents — her father worked fields and in factories, and her mother was a domestic laborer — placed on education.

“When it came to college, there was no money for it,” she said. “So I joined the military. The military has been good to me.”

Demers has served for 29 years, and her family has a proud military heritage. Three uncles served in World War II, and she has siblings in the Air Force and the Navy.

Demers said she hoped that the information she shared would encourage understanding, acceptance and respect of a significant portion of American society.

“Every group has something to offer,” she said.

Entertainment by Ricardo Montes and the Flamenco Company followed Demers’ presentation. 🎨



Flamenco musician Ricardo Montes and dancers, above, lead a short performance at the Joint Force Headquarters in Madison as part of a Hispanic Heritage Month program Sept. 15. Wisconsin National Guard photos by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

New commander takes charge of evolving brigade

Sgt. 1st Class Jim Wagner
157th Brigade Public Affairs

A lifelong engineer is going back to his roots after assuming command of the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (MEB) in a change of command ceremony Sept. 12 in Milwaukee.

Col. Jeff Liethen of Dane, Wis., most recently the Wisconsin National Guard's director of installations management, replaces Col. Mark Michie of Harshaw, Wis., who has commanded the fledgling brigade since shortly after its inception in 2007, when the brigade transitioned from the 57th Field Artillery Brigade and 264th Engineer Group.

The brigade has come a long way in the ensuing three years, jumping from a concept on paper to a full-functioning brigade that has won the respect of Army trainers. Earlier this year, the 157th MEB conducted warfighter training for the first time at Fort Leonard Wood's Maneuver Support Center in Kansas.

"I wanted us to be the best M-E-B," Michie said during remarks at the ceremony, held on a sunny day with the flags of numerous guidons from engineer and field artillery units under the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. "We went to the warfighter and I was told we were the best M-E-B through so far."

The MEB is a relatively new concept. Part of the Army's plan to transform units to best accommodate missions necessary in the 21st century, the multi-function brigade is designed to command and control an area of operations, wherever that might occur, providing a flexible combat force to support brigade combat teams and other combat units.

The 157th MEB is made up of more than 2,100 Soldiers specializing in chemical detection and decontamination, forward support, military police, network



support, field artillery and engineering.

The effort required to develop a multi-function brigade with a brand-new mission objective from elements of a field artillery brigade and engineering units is massive. It requires Soldiers — from the lower enlisted ranks to officers — to retrain in different career fields to meet new requirements.

"What a daunting mission," said Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander

of the Wisconsin Army National Guard. "It's absolutely astounding, the amount accomplished in such a short time."

Anderson said he is confident the new commander will take the brigade to new heights in the coming months, as training shifts from individual to section-level training, which will culminate in a corps-level warfighter exercise next year.

Liethen has spent most of his career with engineer units: as commander of

Col. Mark Michie, left, passes the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade's colors to Command Sgt. Major Brad Shields, right, as part of a ceremonial transfer of authority to Col. Jeffrey Liethen, center, on Sept. 12 at the brigade's Milwaukee headquarters at Richards Street Armory. 157th Brigade Public Affairs photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jim Wagner

the 229th Engineer Company; 724th Engineer Battalion commander; 264th Engineer Group deputy commander; and operations officer and executive officer with the 173rd Engineer Battalion (Mechanized).

While deployed, he served as director for the engineering directorate's Joint Reconstruction Operations Center, U.S.

Forces-Iraq, and deputy director of Multi-National Corps-Iraq Facilities, Basing and Environmental engineering directorate.

Most recently, Liethen was responsible for the planning, programming and execution of the state's construction, operations, maintenance, repair and environmental protection programs. As director, he was the principal advisor to the adjutant general on all real estate matters and capital investment projects. 

Leadership changes for Wisconsin Guard's most diverse brigade

Spc. Alyson Berzinski
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

"It is a privilege to wear this uniform, an honor to wear the patch, and it is a gift to command the 64th Troop Command," Col. Darrell Feucht, the outgoing commander of the 64th Troop Command, said in an emotional speech during a change of command ceremony Sept. 12 in Madison.

Feucht, a Columbus resident, formally transferred control of the 64th Troop Command to Col. Paul Russell of Sun Prairie.

Feucht assumed command of the 64th in August 2007 and immediately began instilling his philosophy to "provide fully capable Soldiers and units ready to deploy for any mission, anywhere, at any time, to support community, state and federal missions."

"The Soldiers and Noncommissioned Officers of the 64th Troop Command are some of the most professional people I've had the privilege of working with," Feucht added.

Under his three years of leadership, the 64th TC has deployed the majority of its Soldiers and units in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and two state activations for flood relief. The 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment is presently deployed to Iraq.

The 64th Troop Command consists of nearly 1,700 Soldiers belonging to three battalions and 18 units, to include aviation, sustainment and support, personnel, Army band, transportation, maintenance, public affairs, rear area operations command and medical units. Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, described the 64th Troop Command as "the most diverse brigade" in the state.

Feucht has completed more than 26 years of military service and will continue his career as Wisconsin's Joint Staff

logistics commander. In July Feucht was identified as the team leader for the Wisconsin National Guard's 2012 Agribusiness Development Team mission to Afghanistan. He also plans to continue his civilian career as the manager of facilities and contingency planning at Great Lakes Education Loan Services, and spend more time with his high school-aged twin sons, Andrew and Mitchell.

"People will forget what you said and what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel," Feucht stated in his remarks to the incoming commander.

Russell, the incoming commander, enlisted into the Wisconsin Army National Guard in 1982 and was a M60 tank driver and mechanic with Company A, 1st Battalion, 632nd Armor. Russell received his commission in 1985 through the Reserve Officer Training Course at Ripon College and transferred to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry where he served as weapons platoon leader, executive officer and company commander.

"I cannot think of a more sacred privilege than leading American Soldiers," Russell said during the ceremony. "I am nothing short of impressed by the quality of leadership and professionalism I have seen with the Soldiers in this command. I will work harder than anyone to ensure we accomplish our mission, communicate effectively, and provide the leadership you and your families deserve."

Russell deployed to Afghanistan in 2007 where he served with the Combined Joint 7 Division as chief of training for the Afghanistan National Police. Upon his return he resumed his position as the Counterdrug Program Manager and also served on the Joint Staff before assuming command of the 64th Troop Command.

Russell expressed his goals of expanding the 64th Troop Command's relationship with other services, such as the Navy and Marine Corps, when they



Col. Darrell Feucht, outgoing commander of the 64th Troop Command, addresses Soldiers and guests with some final remarks during a change of command ceremony Sept. 12 at the 64th Headquarters in Madison. After 37 months of commanding the 64th, Feucht, of Columbus, relinquished command to Col. Paul Russell of Sun Prairie. Feucht's future plans include leading the Agribusiness Development Team to Afghanistan in a 2012 deployment.
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

make the move to the new armed forces reserve center next summer. He also included other goals, such as the readiness of the Soldiers, their families, and their employers.

"I am looking forward to the challenge of standing up the 64th into the primary domestic operations task force to provide even better support to the citizens of Wisconsin and our nation," Russell said.

"Col. Russell, the guidon is yours to

lead, and you're a great choice for the job," Feucht said to Russell in his closing remarks.

Russell is a graduate of Merrill High School, Merrill, and holds a bachelor of science in Education from UW-Oshkosh, an MBA from Tourou University International and a Master of Science in National Security Strategy and Policy from the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. 

Leadership changes, vision remains same for award-winning training institute

Brig. Gen. Mark E. Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, presents Col. Kenneth A. Koon and Col. Richard Borkowski — outgoing and incoming commanders, respectively — to the Soldiers of the 426th Regional Training Institute during a change of command ceremony at the Wisconsin Military Academy Sept. 11. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Andy Poquette

Staff Sgt. Andy Poquette
Wisconsin National Guard

The Wisconsin Army National Guard's highly regarded 426th Regiment Regional Training Institute, based at the Wisconsin Military Academy at Fort McCoy, has an old hand for its new commander.

Col. Kenneth A. Koon of Waunakee, who commanded the 426th Regiment for 30 months, passed the colors to Col. Richard Borkowski, Lake Geneva, during a change of command ceremony held Sept. 11.

This isn't the first time that Borkowski has followed in Koon's footsteps — five years earlier, to the day, Koon relinquished command of the 1st Field Artillery Battalion, 426th Regiment to Borkowski in a similar ceremony. Saturday's ceremony, like five years ago, was bittersweet for both the outgoing and incoming commander. Speaking to the Soldiers of the 426th, Koon said he will truly miss the camaraderie he has shared with his Soldiers.

"You have much to be proud of — I know you will continue to serve well supporting Col. Borkowski as you did for me and honor the heritage and lineage from which the regiment came," Koon said. "Thank you for the best years of my military career."

Under Koon's leadership, the regiment earned many accolades and logged thousands of hours of training: The 1st Field Artillery Battalion of the 426th Regiment became the country's first National Guard field artillery battalion to earn the title of Institute of Excellence; 2nd Modular Battalion put together a team of certified instructors and traveled to Kosovo to establish a satellite school on foreign soil and trained more than 100 soldiers in the Infantry career field, a first time event; and Training Site Command completed 357,929 training man-days accomplished including 250 by Marines, 1050 by Sailors, 4200 by Airmen, 3350 by active component soldiers including ROTC, 79,232 by the USAR, and 16,895 by civilian users.

Borkowski plans to complete an initiative begun under Koon's watch — launching a third training battalion at the 426th, dedicated to state priority training missions. This will allow the second battalion greater opportunity to focus on military occupational specialty courses.

Borkowski said he intends to continue the regiment's success. As a history teacher in his civilian career, Borkowski brings unique qualifications to the command of the training institute.

"I don't think instructors realize the impact they have on Soldiers," Borkowski said. "Education is the key component of maintaining our operational tempo in this era of uncertainty. The benefit these instructors can provide is immeasurable. Soldiers will remember the lessons they learn here for the rest of their careers." 



Former Guard member receives Bronze Star with valor device

More than five years after a fierce firefight on his first solo mission in Iraq, a former Wisconsin National Guard Soldier was awarded a Bronze Star medal with “V” device for valor.

Michael Olivas of Sun Prairie — a staff sergeant with the 1158th Transportation Company when he completed his term of service earlier this year — accepted the award during a quiet ceremony Sept. 14 at Stricker Pond Park in Middleton, a completely different setting from the night his heroism was called upon.

“To receive a bronze star medal is a significant event,” Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, said during the ceremony. “The “V” device, they don’t just give those away — that’s not candy.”

The 1158th Transportation Company was conducting its first convoy security missions on Jan. 30, 2005 without the benefit of riders from the outgoing unit that trained them. The convoy Olivas was traveling in experienced a series of tire problems with various vehicles, due in part to road spikes placed just north of Safwan, a city on Iraq’s border with Kuwait. During a stoppage on a main convoy route, the convoy was attacked with rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire. Olivas’ crew members, Spc. (now Staff Sgt.) Mike Bennett and Spc. Aaron Ingham, were outside their gun truck assisting disabled vehicles when the ambush began.

“It was dark,” Bennett recalled. “There was no moon out.”

“He just kept engaging muzzle flashes,” Ingham added.

Olivas overcame malfunctions in the rotating turret and with his M-2 50-caliber machine gun to engage the enemy, which was estimated to be as close as 50 meters from the convoy.

“He definitely did lay down a lot of cover fire,” Bennett said. “Once he got it going, he saved a lot of people.”

Another convoy south of Olivas’ convoy also engaged the enemy in that



Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, congratulates Michael A. Olivas who was awarded a Bronze Star medal with “V” device for valor during a ceremony Sept. 14 at Stricker Pond Park in Middleton. The award recognizes Olivas’ heroism during an insurgent ambush on a Wisconsin Army National Guard convoy security mission in southern Iraq on Jan. 30, 2005. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

firefight. Eight members of that convoy were wounded, but Olivas’ convoy sustained no injuries as they regrouped and moved out of harm’s way.

Olivas, who recently returned from a deployment with the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team and now works in accounting with the Veterans Administration in Madison, said his actions were “pretty automatic.”

“The ground started flying, [insurgents] were moving in and we had to fight them

off,” he explained. “It’s what we were trained for — not a whole lot of thinking required. I was just doing what we were supposed to do.”

Olivas said the award means a lot and was excited to receive it, but wished his fellow crew members Bennett and Ingham could have also received Bronze Stars for their actions that night.

“We had a good unit — everyone worked hard,” he said. “Everyone came back alive.”



Combat patch question resolved

Soldiers who recently deployed to Iraq with the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team have asked what “combat patches” they are authorized to wear.

Based on current Army policy, Soldiers will wear the unit patch of the unit they deployed with as their shoulder sleeve insignia to indicate former war time service (SSI/FWTS), or combat patch.

Soldiers who deployed as members of the 32nd IBCT will wear the Red Arrow as their combat patch.

Soldiers who deployed as members of the following units will wear the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade patch as their combat patch: Headquarters Company, Company A, Company B and the 108th Forward Support Company (257th Brigade Support Battalion); Battery A (1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery); 829th Engineer Company.

Soldiers who deployed as members of the following units will wear the 64th Troop Command (Badger) patch as their combat patch: 1158th Transportation Company and 32nd Military Police Company.

Individual Soldiers who were cross-leveled, assigned, attached to or augmented deploying units will wear the shoulder patch of the unit they served with.

No Soldier from this particular deployment is authorized to wear a combat patch from any organization higher than the 32nd IBCT, regardless of what larger organization the 32nd supported in theater. No Soldier is obligated to wear a combat patch; if authorized to wear more than one combat patch, the individual Soldier may choose which patch to wear.



Above, Prisoners on the march from Bataan to the prison camp, May 1942.

National Archives photo

Inset: Albert DuBois, before the Bataan Death March.

Submitted photo



Brig. Gen. Mark E. Anderson and Brig. Gen. Scott D. Legwold stand with Albert DuBois, the last surviving member of Company A, 192nd Tank Battalion at the 2010 April Senior Leadership Conference. DuBois and his family were presented with a model M3 Stuart tank during a recognition ceremony at the conference. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Joy Staab

Wisconsin Guard honors Death March survivor

Staff Sgt. Andy Poquette
Wisconsin National Guard

The bombing of Clark Field, a 65-mile forced road march, three years and five months as a prisoner of war, and weeks aboard a Japanese “hell ship” were just some of the things that Staff Sgt. Albert J. DuBois, the last surviving member of Company A, 192nd Tank Battalion, had to endure in his four years of service in the United States Army.

DuBois, who currently resides in Webster, Wis., was drafted into the Army on April 9, 1941. He was sent to Fort Knox and assigned to Company A, 192nd Tank Battalion. Company A was originally a Wisconsin National Guard unit and was supplemented with other men from the unit’s home state. Almost exactly one year after he was drafted into the Army, DuBois and his unit were instructed to surrender their position and destroy their equipment.

DuBois, along with nearly 75,000 other American and Filipino prisoners, was captured by the Japanese and forced to march nearly 65 miles north to the rail head at San Fernando. In San Fernando,

the prisoners were loaded into rail cars for the journey to the prisoner camp, Camp O’Donnell. Beatings, rape, murder, and a lack of food and water were common along the route to San Fernando. Only 54,000 of the original 75,000 prisoners reached their destination.

From Camp O’Donnell, DuBois was sent to several other prisoner camps before boarding the “Clyde Maru,” one of the “hell ships.” With hundreds of prisoners crammed together in the hold of the ship, and food and water as scarce as it had been on the march to San Fernando, hundreds more prisoners died from starvation and dehydration. The Japanese had also refused to mark the ships with Red Cross markings, resulting in unintended friendly casualties from bombings by American planes.

DuBois returned to the United States on Thanksgiving Day, 1945, exactly four years after he arrived in the Phillipines. In April of this year, Brig. Gen. Donald P. Dunbar, the adjutant general of Wisconsin, presented a plaque to DuBois to honor his service and sacrifice as a Wisconsin native. His wife and son were present at the ceremony in Wausau. 

Eldon Kenworthy, 92, a former corporal in the 32nd Infantry Division, spoke to Wisconsin National Guard senior leaders Sept. 17 about his experiences in the Buna campaign during World War II. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson



Guard WWII vet remembers Buna campaign

Nearly seven decades after first advancing on Japanese beachheads in the South Pacific, 92-year-old Eldon Kenworthy recounted the path which led the 32nd Infantry Division veteran from Wisconsin to Buna.

Kenworthy, who served with the 120th Field Artillery, said a teacher encouraged him and some friends to join the 32nd Division for the pay — \$21 a month. He enlisted on Oct. 15, 1940 and took part in the Louisiana Maneuvers prior to moving with the division to Australia in May 1942. Logistic shortfalls in Australia hindered effective jungle training for the Red Arrow troops. Gen. Douglas MacArthur had determined that the best way to defend Australia was to bring the fight to New Guinea, and deployed the 32nd Division to take Buna — a coastal village on the southeastern part of New Guinea — from the Japanese. This was the first ground offensive MacArthur launched against the Japanese, and it proved to be the first Allied victory in the South Pacific, though not nearly as swift a victory as MacArthur demanded.

The tropical conditions exacted a significant toll on the 32nd Division, with illness and malnutrition as great a threat as the Japanese forces. Malaria, dysentery, jungle rot and dengue fever were common, and Soldiers commonly manned their posts with high fevers.

“Malaria was the bad one,” Kenworthy said. “It stayed with you for days. We had boys trying to fight and do their duty with 103-degree fevers.”

In January 1944, roughly a year after taking Buna, the 32nd Division took part in the landing at Saidor, at least two hundred miles north of Buna. Kenworthy said landing ship tanks, or LSTs, were used in the amphibious assault.

“It’s quite a thing to make a landing,” he said. “The Navy shelled the shore for about an hour. It’s a fireworks you’ve never seen before and you never want to see again — it tears up the trees and everything.”

Kenworthy ended his tour of duty stateside guarding German and Japanese war prisoners at Camp McCoy and military facilities in Illinois and Michigan.

Capturing images can also give away sensitive data

Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze
128th Air Refueling Wing

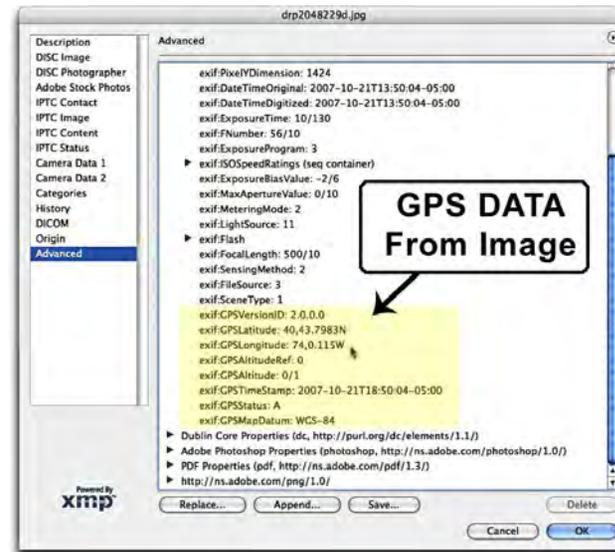
That spur-of-the-moment photo you took with your cell phone and sent to friends or posted on a social media network contains more than memories — it also contains GPS coordinates that can pinpoint where the photo was taken. Not a big deal at a family reunion, but on a deployment this seemingly harmless action can jeopardize the safety of you and those around you.

Yanmei Xie’s article ‘She is as dangerous as she looks,’ found at <http://liveshots.blogs.foxnews.com/2010/07/24/she-is-as-dangerous-as-she-looks/>, gives insight into a particular leak of potentially harmful information: geo-tagged photographs taken by an iPhone. These seemingly innocuous photographs contain information that can lead the enemy directly to the photographer, namely by including GPS coordinates in the photograph’s metadata. Using this information, enemies can discover exactly where a service member is or was, thereby exposing troop positions to potential attacks or surveillance.

Being connected with friends and family members is crucial to a deployed service member’s well being, but caution must be exercised. Sharing information, whether it’s a Facebook status update or a photograph of friends hard at work, must be screened for any potential security breaches. Staying connected is important, but the safety of service members and on-going missions must come first.

Such awareness extends to service members at their home station, too. The work we do is equally important and prone to become the subject of friendly discussion. It’s our responsibility to ensure we do not reveal critical details to people who lack a need to know.

Service members who wish to share personal military photos on public sites are urged to contact their local public affairs office. Photos that reveal compromising information can be identified before they have the potential to cause harm. Also, anyone who finds a comment, blog post or status update that is questionable is urged to bring such information to the attention of their local Public Affairs office.



The metadata from a photo taken by an iPhone gives the exact latitude and longitude of the photo’s origin. Such data could be used to the benefit of hostile forces when such photos are taken at deployed locations. Airmen are cautioned to be aware of this breach in security and are advised to avoid placing such photos in public forums.

'Stop-loss' pay application deadline extended

Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

President Barack Obama signed legislation Sept. 30 extending the Retroactive Stop-Loss Special Pay deadline through Dec. 3.

Officials estimate about 80,000 eligible service members, veterans and beneficiaries have yet to apply for the special stop-loss pay.

"It's important that all those eligible for this benefit take the opportunity to apply for what they've earned," said Lernes Hebert, the Defense Department's acting director of officer and enlisted personnel management.

The program was due to run out Oct. 21. The extension is part of the continuing resolution that funds federal government operations.

The program affects military members whose service was involuntarily extended under stop-loss between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009. Eligible members or their beneficiaries are required to submit a claim to their respective military service in order to receive the benefit of \$500 for each full or partial month served in a stop-loss status.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Brenda Essie, a military personnel supervisor with the Wisconsin National Guard, said the application process is not difficult, especially if the eligible party has computer access.

"If they contact us, we can get them the forms required," she said, noting that the service member must submit the application with supporting documents. Most documents are available through iPERMS, the individual permanent record management system.

Essie urged members and veterans who qualify, or think they are eligible for the special pay, to call Staff Sgt. Jay Sass at 608-242-3432. Additional information can be found at www.defense.gov/stoploss



Theodore Roosevelt Leadership award

Capt. Christian Menden was presented the 2009 Theodore Roosevelt Leadership Award during the Sept. 17 Senior Leadership conference at Volk Field. The Theodore Roosevelt Leadership award was established to annually recognize the achievements and dedicated service of Army and Air National Guard junior officers who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and professionalism in their services to country and community. Also pictured are, left to right: Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, Wisconsin Army National Guard commander; Moriah Menden, wife; and Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin.

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

Dress right dress: Phaseout dates for Air Force uniforms drawing near

As of the following dates, wear of the listed uniform items will be phased out:

Oct. 1, 2010: 100 percent wool pullover sweater, replaced with the looser fitting, smooth fabric pullover sweater; 2EXXX, 3AXXX and 3CXXX legacy badges; green fleece used as outer garment without name, service designator and rank; black fleece.

Dec. 31, 2010: Gray and dark blue

scarves, gloves, mittens and earmuffs.

Oct. 1, 2011: 3S legacy badges.

Nov. 1, 2011: Battle Dress Uniform; Desert Camouflage Uniform; tan boots (excluding Airmen deployed to the area of responsibility).

Wear of the Airman Battle Uniform and ABU items will be mandatory as of Nov. 1, 2011.

As of Oct. 1, 2010, the optional green

fleece without nametapes and rank may only be worn as a liner to the All-Purpose Environmental Clothing System. If worn as an outer garment, the green fleece must have the Airman's name, Air Force tape and rank attached.

For more information on uniform items, visit the Air Force uniform website at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dress/index.asp>

Meritorious service



Former Guard members honored

The Wisconsin Retiree Council awarded President's Citations for Distinguished Service to five retired Wisconsin National Guard veterans during a July 20 ceremony at the 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee. Chief Warrant Officer 4 Robert DeGroot (upper left), Sgt. Major Wayne Sedgwick (center), Lt. Col. Donald Shuh (lower left) and Command Sgt. Major Lowell Koehler (above) were recognized for their service as officers or committee heads for the Retiree Council over the past several years. Retired Col. Frederick McCormick presented the awards.

Retired master Sgt. Robert Furey (below) was awarded a certificate of appreciation during the ceremony. 



115th Fighter Wing sets safety standards

115th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The Madison-based 115th Fighter Wing of the Wisconsin Air National Guard continues to earn honors for excellence in safety practices.

During a Sept. 19 ceremony at the unit's Truax Field base, the 115th Fighter Wing earned the Air National Guard's John J. Pesch Flight Safety Award, the wing's safety office won the Safety Office of the Year Award, and that office's noncommissioned officer in charge, Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Egstad, was named Air National Guard Safety Professional of the Year.

All three awards were based on performance during the 2009 calendar year.

The Pesch Award recognizes more than 60,000 accident-free flying hours over the past 14 years, nearly 500 combat sorties in 2009 flown without mishap by the fighter wing's F-16 and RC-26 aircraft, and a nearly flawless performance in a NORAD Alert Forces Evaluation. The award also noted that the 115th Fighter Wing was the only Air National Guard unit to simultaneously support deployed combat operations and homeland air sovereignty missions while undergoing numerous inspections and evaluations.

The wing safety office earned its recognition in large part by leading the effort to make the 115th Fighter Wing only the second Air National Guard unit to earn OSHA's coveted "Star" rating for its Voluntary Protection Program in 2009.

"This process really made us focus on the finest details — far above and beyond the regulatory requirements," Egstad said. "The people who really made this happen were our unit safety representatives. We in this office set the goals and provided guidance, but the USRs in the field really did the leg work. The integrity, accountability and professionalism of everyone on base paid off huge."

Lt. Col. Chad Milne, 115th Fighter Wing safety chief, said the Pesch trophy is about more than just safe flying — it includes safe maintenance practices and awareness by all those involved in any part of aircraft operations.

"Our excellent showing in the Alert Forces Evaluation was in large part due to the ground operations, not just the flying portion," Milne said.

The 115th Fighter Wing last won the Pesch trophy in 2005, when it was also awarded the William W. Spruance Safety Award. 

Veterans, Families, Retirees

Tricare Retired Reserve health coverage launches

For the first time, members of the Retired Reserve who are not yet age 60, the so-called “gray area” retirees, can purchase Tricare health coverage for themselves and their eligible family members with the Sept. 1 launch of Tricare Retired Reserve.

“This new program offers a health coverage opportunity for “gray area”

guardsmen

and reservists who served America honorably, setting a proud example for today’s forces,” said Rear Adm. Christine Hunter, deputy director of the Tricare Management Activity. “Tricare Retired Reserve will provide an outstanding health benefit.”

Retired reservists may qualify to purchase TRR coverage if they are under the age of 60 and are not eligible for, or enrolled in, the Federal Employees Health Benefits program. They also must be members of the Retired Reserve of a Reserve component and qualified for non-regular retirement. For instructions on how to qualify for and purchase TRR go to www.tricare.mil/tr.

For calendar year 2010, the TRR member-only monthly premium is \$388.31, or \$4,659.72 yearly, and the member and family monthly premium is \$976.41, or \$11,716.92 yearly. Premiums will be adjusted annually.

The comprehensive health care coverage provided by the premium-based TRR is similar to Tricare Standard. After purchasing TRR, members will receive the Tricare Retired Reserve Handbook, which includes details about covered services, how to get care and who to contact for assistance. For more information, visit www.tricare.mil/tr. 

Statewide Woman Veterans conference planned

The fourth annual Wisconsin Women Veterans Conference will take place Oct. 22–24. The statewide conference, hosted by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA), will take place at the Wisconsin Military Academy at Fort McCoy. Women veterans from all branches of service are encouraged to attend.

“Our goal is to provide programs and services that meet the needs of veterans today and into the future,” said Secretary Kenneth B. Black. “Women veterans are an important part of that picture.”

Of the over 23 million United States veterans, approximately 1.8 million are women. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), women make up approximately eight percent of today’s overall veterans population, up from six percent in 2000. The population of women veterans is projected to grow to ten percent of the overall veterans population by 2020. Wisconsin is estimated by the USDVA to have 28,000 women veterans.

“I think women make time to attend the conference because it’s a place where they can get together with other women veterans who have shared experiences,” said Gundel Metz, WDVA’s Women Veterans Coordinator. The 2009 Women Veterans Conference drew more than 100 attendees from throughout Wisconsin and surrounding states.

The keynote speaker will be retired 1st Sgt. Pam Luce, U.S. Army. Luce broke several barriers as a female Soldier. She was the first woman ever selected Installation Drill Sergeant of the Year for Fort McClellan, Alabama. She was the first female first sergeant of an Airborne Military Police Company in the U.S. Army. Luce was also the first female paratrooper in her brigade to attain the prestigious title of Centurion Jumper.

In addition to the keynote address, lectures will be given on PTSD, suicide prevention and changes to women’s health care through the USDVA. The convention will also feature women-only workshops on combat-related trauma and military sexual trauma. Other wellness activities will include biofeedback training, on-site massages and an opportunity to explore the therapeutic value of diving.

Women veterans are also invited to become a part of the Women Veterans of Wisconsin Facebook community online. For more information about the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and its programs and services, please visit www.WisVets.com, or call WDVA toll-free at 1-800-WIS-VETS (947-8387). 

Nominations open for Hall of Honor

Nominations for the 2011 Wisconsin Army National Guard Hall of Honor are being accepted until Friday, Dec. 10. This prestigious award represents the highest honor Wisconsin’s Adjutant General can bestow upon former Wisconsin Army Guard members for their service.

The 2011 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 Warrant Officer 1 Kari Wagner, by e-mail at kari.i.wagner@us.army.mil or phone at (608) 242-3032 or 1-800-335-5147 ext.3032; Staff Sgt. Jason Walters, by email at jason.r.walters@us.army.mil or phone at (608) 242-3011 or 1-800-335-5147 ext.3011 after Sept. 1. 

A word from the Retired Activities Office

Some time ago an e-mail was sent to those individuals for whom we had e-mail address and advised them of a new free e-mail subscription service from the state of Wisconsin. This service will automatically provide you with the information that you subscribe to, i.e., RAO newsletters, Tricare, survivor and other benefits, press releases and other information.

At this time, only a small number of retirees have subscribed. Signing up is free, easy, and risk-free for military retirees. The link to subscribe is on the RAO website, <http://dma.wi.gov/retirees>, home page on the right hand side of the page, which reads “Sign up to receive Retiree News & Information,” click on it and it will take you to all of the information that you can subscribe to, and then enter your e-mail address. Enter information and then press on the “save” button. The subscriber can change subscription details or cancel the service at any time. 

Financial guidance

Financial situations can show up even in the best of times. Your Family Assistance Center (FAC) team has resources on hand to help you tame that beast. Often, a good look at your spending habits and budget, coupled with a renewed sense of determination to get things in hand are all it takes. If a little more help is needed, call a FAC specialist for some resources and/or referrals to organizations that can help. For more information, see <http://wisconsinmilitary.org/support-center/family-assistance/> 

Parting shot

Members of the 115th Fighter Wing prepare their aircraft for departure Aug. 20 after taking part in a Red Flag exercise at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska. The 115th deployed 10 aircraft and more than 100 Airmen in support of the Red Flag exercise. 115th Fighter Wing photo by Tech. Sgt. Ashley Bell

