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The Adjutant General:
Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar

Deputy Adjutant General Army:
Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson

Deputy Adjutant General Air:
Brig. Gen. Gary Ebben

Deputy Adjutant General, Civil Support:
Maj. Gen. John McCoy

Director of Public Affairs:
Maj. Paul Rickert

At Ease Editor:
Vaughn R. Larson

Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team
Public Affairs
157th Maneuver Enhancement
Brigade Public Affairs
115th Fighter Wing Public Affairs
128th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs
Volk Field Combat Readiness
Training Center Public Affairs

How to Reach Us

E-mail: vaughn.r.larson.nfg@mail.mil
Phone: (608) 242-3056 Fax: (608) 242-3051
Department of Military Affairs;
Attn: Vaughn R. Larson
2400 Wright Street; Madison, WI 53704-8111

Submissions:

For photo or story submissions,
please call (608)242-3056
or e-mail vaughn.r.larson.nfg@mail.mil

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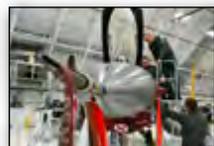
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ON THE COVER: Sgt. Parminder Singh and Spc. Lacy Taylor of the 457th Chemical Company decontaminate a vehicle leaving a poultry farm in Lake Mills, Wis., April 29. The Soldiers were called to state active duty to assist the state Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection in its avian flu response at several locations across the state. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Joe Trovato

The on-line, interactive @ease offers many features you may not be aware of. Arrow down to advance page-by-page, or arrow up to page backwards. Follow the **red caption text** to see additional photos and videos. Click on the **blue text** to open related sites. Click on the teasers above to go directly to that page in this issue.

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From the Adjutant General

I hope everyone enjoyed the 4th of July and the annual celebration of our nation's independence. We inherited our freedom from those who lit the torch in 1776 and enjoy the benefits of our republican form of government, which includes life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Although hard for us to imagine, there was a time when this type of nation did not exist and America was an experiment in democracy. Today, while only 239 years old, our nation is a beacon of hope around the world.

Our foundation of freedom is straight forward — equal opportunity and equal protection under the law. Most of us understand these freedoms or rights, but some miss the other side of the equation which is personal responsibility. This is clearly understood by the men and women of the National Guard, who are the keepers of the flame lit back in 1776. An awesome responsibility.

You volunteered to serve. Most of you understood that this likely required deployment to a combat zone. You endured the rigor of hard training and earned the right to wear the cloth of our state and nation's uniform. Service in the National Guard requires personal responsibility as we must remain prepared to deploy at a moment's notice.

This responsibility includes physical fitness, family preparedness at home,

and adjusting to new technologies like social media. The National Guard is the foundation of our nation's defense and success depends on our most valuable asset — Soldiers and Airmen — who assure that we can respond when needed. Our mission is simple. We are the primary combat reserve of the Army and Air Force, and the nation's first military responder.

It's an honor to serve with you. Thanks for your commitment to personal responsibility and to the National Guard.

Donald P. Dunbar





MISSION of MERCY

Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch, Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, and other senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders joined families and friends at a formal sendoff ceremony May 30 for approximately 30 members of the 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment. @ease photo by Vaughn R. Larson

Vaughn R. Larson
@ease staff

WEST BEND, Wis. — Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch, Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, and Wisconsin National Guard senior leaders joined families and friends in sending off approximately 30 Wisconsin Army National Guard members of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment during a May 30 ceremony.

The Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers will complete mobilization training at Fort Hood, Texas, before deploying to Kuwait where they will conduct a medevac and maintenance support mission for approximately 12 months as part of Operation Inherent

Resolve and Operation Spartan Shield. They will train and deploy alongside Guard members from other states — the battalion’s aviation units are located in Colorado and Nebraska as well as Wisconsin, as part of the National Guard’s plan to have vital aviation assets available across the nation.

Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Shields, the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s senior enlisted advisor, thanked the deploying Soldiers for their hard work and training in preparation for their upcoming mission. The platoon-sized element has already completed aircraft maintenance, refueling operations, flight medic treatment, hoist operation and flight operations training in Colorado, Connecticut and Alabama.

This will be Sgt. Micah Lillegard’s third deployment, but his first as a flight medic. Previously he deployed to Kuwait in 2005-06 with the 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry, and Iraq in 2009-10 with Troop C, 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry. He plans to apply his experience from prior deployments where practical, but said he will also rely on other experienced members of the deploying unit.

“Operationally, it’s just going to be a completely different world — going from the ground to being on an aircraft is just completely different in every respect,” Lillegard said. “It will be interesting to put into practice the things we train on. It’s a catch-22 with our mission as medevac. Everyone always wants to do their job, but if we’re doing our job, that means that

somebody else — U.S. Soldier, coalition soldier, whoever it is — is getting hurt.”

Capt. Casey Voss, the officer in charge of the deploying Wisconsin Guard Soldiers, said that medevac is a noble calling.

“The Soldiers and personnel we support could not do the things they do if they did not know we are only a few minutes away,” he said. “We are there to ensure the worst day of their lives does not become their last.”

Voss turned to Dunbar and Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, the senior officer of the Wisconsin Army National Guard and Wisconsin’s deputy adjutant general for Army, and declared that the deploying Soldiers were ready.

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Wisconsin Guard medevac Soldiers depart state en route to Kuwait

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“This is the best aviation unit Wisconsin can provide or has ever provided,” Voss said. “The moral fiber, character, teamwork and work ethic of these Soldiers before you is unrivaled. We will represent our country, our state and our families well.”

Anderson agreed with Voss.

“Wisconsin has a tradition of sending its best and brightest,” Anderson said. “I know we have our best and brightest right here.”

Dunbar noted that thousands of service members are home with their families because of the efforts of medevac crews. He expressed his confidence in Voss and the detachment’s preparation for this mission.

“I want you to know how proud I am of all you have done to get ready,” Dunbar said. “It is a substantial achievement to become a combat veteran for the United States of America, and my hat’s off to you.”

Kleefisch told the deploying Soldiers that they were already heroes.

“Your mission is so incredibly admirable,” she said. “It’s amazing what you’ve already accomplished, but more amazing still is what you will accomplish when you get there, assuring that other families have a safe return for someone they care so deeply about. That’s all on you, and we trust you so much.”

Voss thanked the families, friends and employers for their support and sacrifice, which allowed his Soldiers to focus on their mission.

“I promise you all I’ll do everything in my power to protect and take care of your loved ones,” he vowed. “We will all return home with honor.”

That promise may have meant the most to Sgt. Robert Sus, who proposed moments after the ceremony ended.

“It was kind of last-minute,” he

admitted. “I didn’t know if I’d have time to get the ring, but my jeweler pulled through for me and got it up to West Bend. I talked to my platoon sergeant and he helped me put it together — right after the ceremony I wanted to walk her right over to the bird [Black Hawk helicopter]

and see if she said yes.

“I’m still shaking.”

His fiancée Megan Tidwell said despite being surprised by the proposal, it took “like half a second” to accept.

It will take a little longer to set a wedding date, however.

“As soon as we know when we’re getting back, we’ll figure it out from there, I guess,” Sus said.

The 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment last deployed in 2010 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn. 

Fighter Wing returns from land of the rising sun



Senior Airman Andrea F. Rhode
115th Fighter Wing

MADISON, Wis. — More than 250 Airmen from the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 115th Fighter Wing returned home April 19 from their deployment to Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan.

"Welcome home and thank you for your service," Col. Jeffrey Wiegand, 115th Fighter Wing commander, told the returning Airmen in Hangar 406 on base. "It is great to have you back. As I said

when you left, it's an honor to be on this stage looking at this group of impressive Airmen, families and friends supporting our Airmen, and the community serving and supporting our Airmen."

Several key leaders on stage, including Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch, addressed the Airmen during their welcome home ceremony.

"It was humbling to be the first person to shake the hands of Airmen who have given so much, shown so much bravery, courage in the face of inexplicable

challenges and say what so many have all been wanting to say for so long — "Welcome home, 115th, welcome home," Kleefisch said.

Prior to the ceremony, Kleefisch met with several family members. She shared this experience during her address.

"We are so glad for all these stories of wander and return, these stories of fulfilling the great mission of the United States, making Wisconsin so incredibly

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A family greets its 115th Fighter Wing Airman upon arrival in Hangar 406 in Madison, Wis., April 19. The Airmen were deployed for four months to Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan, in support of the Pacific Command Theater Security Package. 115th Fighter Wing photo by Senior Airman Andrea F. Rhode

Airmen return from Kadena deployment

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proud and making your families' hearts swell as you walked down those stairs into their open arms." Kleefisch said. "Know that Wisconsin has open arms for you as well."

Wiegand said this deployment gave the 115th Fighter Wing a chance to test its abilities.

"This was a challenging deployment, but what defines an organization and its individuals is how we overcome adversity and challenges, and we will continue to overcome challenges as we focus our efforts, and focus on the future," Wiegand said.

This was the first time an Air National Guard fighter wing was tasked with a 12-ship deployment — a full aviation package — to go overseas without support from other Air National Guard fighter wings, he said.

"We've proven ourselves to be an operational force," Wiegand said. "While they were gone, we had to continue to execute our alert mission in support of homeland defense. Not only did we meet our combatant commander requirements at the deployed location, but we continued executing our numerous state and federal missions and maintained our readiness. For that, I am very proud.

"The MVP of the fighter wing is our family, our friends and our community," he continued. "We would not have our success without their support." 🙏

The 115th Fighter Wing Honor Guard posts the colors during Airman 1st Class Kelly C. Tomfohrde's memorial service May 3. Airmen of the 115th Fighter Wing, family members and friends gathered to honor Tomfohrde's service and sacrifices, and to recognize her achievements and dedication during the memorial service on base. 115th Fighter Wing photo by Tech. Sgt. Tiffany Black



115th Fighter Wing remembers Airman 1st Class Tomfohrde

Tech. Sgt. Tiffany Black
115th Fighter Wing

MADISON, Wis. — Airmen of the 115th Fighter Wing, family members and friends gathered to honor a fellow Airman's service and sacrifices, and to recognize her achievements and dedication during a memorial ceremony on base, May 3.

Airman 1st Class Kelly C. Tomfohrde, 115th Fighter Wing tactical aircraft maintenance specialist, lost her life after falling from a fifth-story window April 5 at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan. She, along with approximately 250 Airmen and 12 F-16 Fighting Falcons, deployed to Kadena Air Base in January to support the Pacific Command (PACOM) Theater Security Package to provide the PACOM region with forces capable of a variety of operations.

Tomfohrde was born Dec. 30, 1992. She enlisted in the Wisconsin National Guard in February 2013. She was enrolled as a student at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

During the memorial service Chief Master Sgt. Jarret Calhoun, Tomfohrde's supervisor, offered his condolences and spoke about her ability to shine

professionally.

"She listened to the advice given by her supervisors on the things she needed to do to be successful in her military career," Calhoun said. "She was accomplishing them faster than we have seen before, and it was fun to watch."

He spoke of Tomfohrde's numerous selections to deploy as a result of her motivation, performance and professionalism. She was selected by her supervisors to deploy to Volk Field Air National Guard Base in support of flying operations, and for a highly sought after temporary duty assignment to Eielson Air Force Base, Fairbanks, Alaska in support of combat readiness exercise Red Flag.

Calhoun also reflected on Tomfohrde's lasting impression.

"In a short time Kelly made a big impact," Calhoun said. "She contributed her all, set expectations and led by example. She was a valued member of our team and our [115th] family. She was an American Airman who will be deeply missed."

Col. Jeffrey J. Wiegand, 115th Fighter Wing

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to serve and **DISINFECT**

Capt. Joe Trovato
Wisconsin National Guard

Fourteen Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers concluded nearly a month of decontamination operations at the site of an Avian Flu outbreak in Jefferson County May 15.

The Soldiers were called to state active duty to support the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's (DATCP) effort to combat the spread of the H5N2 virus which has affected hundreds of thousands of chickens and turkeys at several sites across the state.

Elements of the Wisconsin National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, High Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package, or CERFP, were responsible for decontaminating vehicles and equipment at the affected facility in Lake Mills. Civilian vehicles and farm equipment moved in and out of the facility on a daily basis as part of the cleanup, and CERFP Soldiers from the Hartford-based 457th Chemical Company decontaminated every vehicle that came out of the designated hot zone before allowing them to travel back into the community.

The team used military-grade pressure washers to spray vehicles and equipment leaving the poultry farm with water heated to 175 degrees Fahrenheit to remove any gross contaminants and begin the process of killing the virus. They also employed a disinfecting agent – Virkon – which kills the H5N2 virus on contact.

Donned in chemical suits and using a boom to keep contaminated water from running into the surrounding farm fields, the Soldiers worked top-to-bottom and front-to-back at 45-degree angles on every vehicle and sprayed the bed of each dump truck after they delivered their loads at the farm, Sgt. Parminder Singh, a chemical specialist with the 457th, explained. Before entering the "hot zone," each vehicle had to check in, turn off fans and air circulating units and tape and seal windows and doors.

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Sgt. Parminder Singh of the 457th Chemical Company decontaminates a vehicle leaving a poultry farm in Lake Mills, Wis., April 29. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Joe Trovato

Wisconsin National Guard decontamination team completes Avian Flu mission in Lake Mills

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When they returned to the decontamination area, Singh, and fellow Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers like Spc. Lacy Taylor, sprayed and disinfected the vehicles before allowing them to leave.

“This right here is basically your average 74D (chemical specialist) training,” Taylor said of the unit’s mission in Lake Mills. “You wash vehicles. You have a warm zone, a hot zone, a cold zone to decontaminate. A lot of it is just working together with people and just having a system of what to do.”

Taylor said when she joined the military as a chemical specialist, she feared she would receive advanced training but then never be asked to employ her skills outside of training. Having the opportunity to conduct a real-world chemical mission was a rewarding one, she said.

Sgt. Chad Rynders, who enlisted into the 457th when the unit was initially established in 2007, agreed.

“This is the first time we’ve actually been called onto a mission to do something and actually perform,” he said. “It just shows what we’re actually capable of.”

Rynders pointed out the National Guard’s ability to scale its response to the needs of the state or domestic agencies it supports.

“It doesn’t have to be mass personnel,” he said. “It doesn’t have to be a big attack of some sort. We can even respond to the smallest incident and still be able to assist and complete the mission.”

In a chemical environment, whether it is as large as a train derailment or terrorist attack, or a smaller scale response, the Guard can tailor its force package to respond, he said.

Sgt. Cody Cantley, a Soldier with the 641st Troop Command Battalion, noted the same.

Members of the Hartford, Wis.-based 457th Chemical Company were in full protective gear as they employed their specialized training to decontaminate vehicles at a poultry farm in Lake Mills, Wis., April 29. The Soldiers were part of a 14-Soldier Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, High-explosive Enhanced Response Force Package team

“I think it says a lot about the National Guard being able to respond to this mission as soon as they called us,” Cantley said. “It helped reinforce that the CERFP is something that is needed, and they’re not wasting money on us or time. This is something that they can actually rely on – that they can call on us and we’ll be there with the right equipment and the right amount of people.”

From a unit perspective, he said, the experience of conducting a real-world mission on which public health relied, will

only help reinforce the importance of the unit’s mission.

“Now this will really help remind our Soldiers that real things could happen and we could be called up at any time,” Cantley said. “This will help re-ignite that flame that, ‘we need to do this. We need to do it right, and we need to be the best at it.’”

Knowing that their work served and protected their fellow Wisconsinites was even more rewarding, he said.

“It was an honor to partner with

from the Wisconsin National Guard that was called to state active duty to assist the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection in its response to Avian Flu outbreaks at several sites across the state. Click on the image above to see a video report by Staff Sgt. Oscar Gollaz

DATCP to fill a critical need for the State of Wisconsin as it continues to battle the spread of the H5N2 virus,” said Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, Wisconsin’s adjutant general. “Once again, the Wisconsin National Guard proved its versatility and that it was up to the task and ready to respond to our state’s needs.”

The response team arrived in Lake Mills April 20 to begin conducting decontamination operations. The Soldiers remained on-site until May 15, when their services were no longer required. 



MISSION: RETURN TO NORMAL

Sgt. Katie Eggers
157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

Three tornadoes have cut through Ozaukee County, each taking a different path. The damage is extensive. Major roadways, water supplies and communications towers have been damaged or heavily affected. At least that's the training scenario that Ozaukee County emergency management officials and members of the Wisconsin Army

National Guard's 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade faced in a multi-day exercise April 17-19.

Communities and emergency response agencies have been trained how to respond in the event of a tornado, but helping communities return as closely as possible to their normal day-to-day lives was the task at hand.

Members of the 157th MEB met with elected officials, emergency managers, Ozaukee County first responders, as well

as state emergency management personnel April 17 to devise a plan in the event of a natural disaster in which the Wisconsin Army National Guard has been called onto state active duty after a state of emergency declaration.

The exercise began 96 hours after the notional tornadoes went through Ozaukee County. Ozaukee County emergency response director Scott Ziegler and Maj. Paul Felician, operations officer for the 157th MEB, led a tabletop exercise, which

focused on returning a community's operations back to normal 96-164 hours after disaster strikes.

"This exercise was really aimed at the recovery portion," Ziegler said. "It wasn't about rescuing trapped victims or evacuating people. Our exercise started after that was done. This is more of 'how do we get life back to normal?'"

On April 18, civilian organizations

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Wisconsin National Guard partners with Ozaukee County for disaster response training

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worked alongside Soldiers from the 157th MEB to complete tasks that would be necessary in the result of a triple tornado scenario.

“We were looking at things [like] debris clearance, opening roadways, restoring utilities, getting our hospitals back into operation,” said Ziegler. “One of the elements here was the loss of water supplies. That’s a very difficult thing for a hospital to deal with.”

Soldiers from the 257th Brigade Support Battalion were on site at Aurora Hospital in Grafton conducting water purification exercises. It is just one way the Wisconsin Army National Guard can help to respond in case of an emergency.

Simultaneously Soldiers from the 724th Engineer Battalion conducted training, which corresponded closely with debris removal, and Soldiers from the 32nd Military Police Company conducted a search and rescue mission with Port Washington police officers at Pleasant Valley Nature Park in Cedarburg.

The 157th setup a tactical operations center at Fireman’s Park in Cedarburg, and Soldiers set up the unit’s communications center in the park alongside the emergency response director with the Ozaukee County Sheriff’s Department. It was crucial for military and civilian organizations to be able to communicate with one another.

“We’ve been doing a lot on the radio,” Ziegler said. “One of the big elements of our exercise was radio communications — how we would get military units to talk to civilian units and how we would get various agencies to talk that don’t normally interact on a day-to-day basis via radio system.”

Each unit also set up a static display which was open to the public at Fireman’s Park. Felician said it was important to make military equipment visible to the public.

“They get to see what they have paid

for as taxpayers,” Felician said. “This is equipment and the training they have paid for. This is also to reassure that we are

there as the National Guard to respond to their needs.”

The training exercise took more than

a year to plan, and the scenario mimicked what happened when a tornado devastated the city of Joplin, Missouri, in May 2011. 

on the lookout

Capt. Joe Trovato
Wisconsin National Guard

Railroad ties, collapsed culverts, fire hydrants and steel pipes were among the many unique features and potential hazards identified and marked by approximately 200 Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers at the site of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant near Baraboo, Wisconsin, March 28.

The Soldiers were part of the Madison, Wisconsin-based 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry Regiment. Troop A, from

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Soldiers from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry Regiment assess railroad ties on the site of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant near Baraboo, Wis., March 28. The unit spent the day conducting a site survey of the property for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, which plans to re-open the site as the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Joe Trovato

105th Cavalry scouts out potential problems at former Badger Ammunition Plant site

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Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, and Troop B, from Watertown, Wisconsin, were on-hand to assist the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources with the site survey. The DNR, the Ho-Chunk Nation and the Dairy Forage Research Center all own portions of the sprawling 7,534-acre site, and the site survey took place on the DNR's parcel.

The unit spent the day combing the property and logging unnatural features or remnants of the more than 800 buildings that once dotted the landscape near Devils Lake State Park. The 105th will ultimately compile a report of its findings and present it to the DNR, which is preparing to re-open the site to the public as the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area.

While the day's efforts represented a valuable training experience that tested some of the unit's key military skills as a cavalry unit, it also provided an opportunity to give back to the community and aid a state agency.

As a cavalry unit in combat, the 105th would be expected to conduct reconnaissance of large areas and transportation routes. Traversing the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area site allowed the unit to test its map-reading, terrain navigation and area reconnaissance in an area in which they had never previously trained.

"It's a good benefit for both of us," said Sgt. Shawn Thomas, a truck commander in Troop A. "We get the training, and they get our expertise. It's a win-win no matter which way you look at it."

The unit broke the site into smaller sectors, and teams spread out on foot and in vehicles in search of items of interest. Their search yielded collapsed tunnels, sink holes, wells, pipes, telephone poles and other evidence of what was once a sprawling complex. They marked each item or area with white engineer tape, assessed the item's condition, logged its exact grid coordinate location and

continued moving. The DNR can now use the information for any final cleanup that needs to happen before opening it to the public.

"The biggest thing is just attention to detail," said Staff Sgt. Daniel Venure, a section leader in Troop A. "Just making sure we're covering all the ground. For area reconnaissance, you're given a grid, and we're just kind of working back

and forth and just being as thorough as possible to make sure that we cover. That way the DNR gets all the information that we can possibly give them on what's actually out here."

The federal government has spent the last 10 years removing buildings, cleaning up soil contamination and reducing the remaining footprint left by the plant.

"We are confident that the nearly

decade-long clean-up of the plant has been thorough and complete," DNR Secretary's Director Mark Aquino said in a news release announcing the agency's partnership with the National Guard for the March 28 site survey. "This is above and beyond our normal routine cleanup practices and will provide an extra level of assurance that we, and the Army, haven't missed anything." 

Dress rehearsal for disaster drill

Senior Airman Andrea F. Rhode
115th Fighter Wing

Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers and Airmen joined forces for a two-day Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) exercise at Volk Field Air National Guard Base, May 1-2.

The exercise allowed service members to prepare for the first-ever CERFP one-day inspection, scheduled to be held next month.

“This is going to be the first team to be evaluated using a one-day evaluation

process, so they are kind of in the spotlight,” said Travis Dauer, National Guard Bureau Joint Collective Training Branch weapons of mass destruction-chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear analyst.

Dauer visits exercise sites across the nation to ensure Guard members and inspectors have the funding and equipment they need prior to their inspection day. The inspection itself provides the team with reassurance that they are prepared to respond quickly and efficiently, should a natural or man-made disaster occur.

Airmen and Soldiers are assigned to specific components within the CERFP. The various components include command and control, decontamination, search and extraction, medical, fatality search and recovery, and the joint incident site communication.

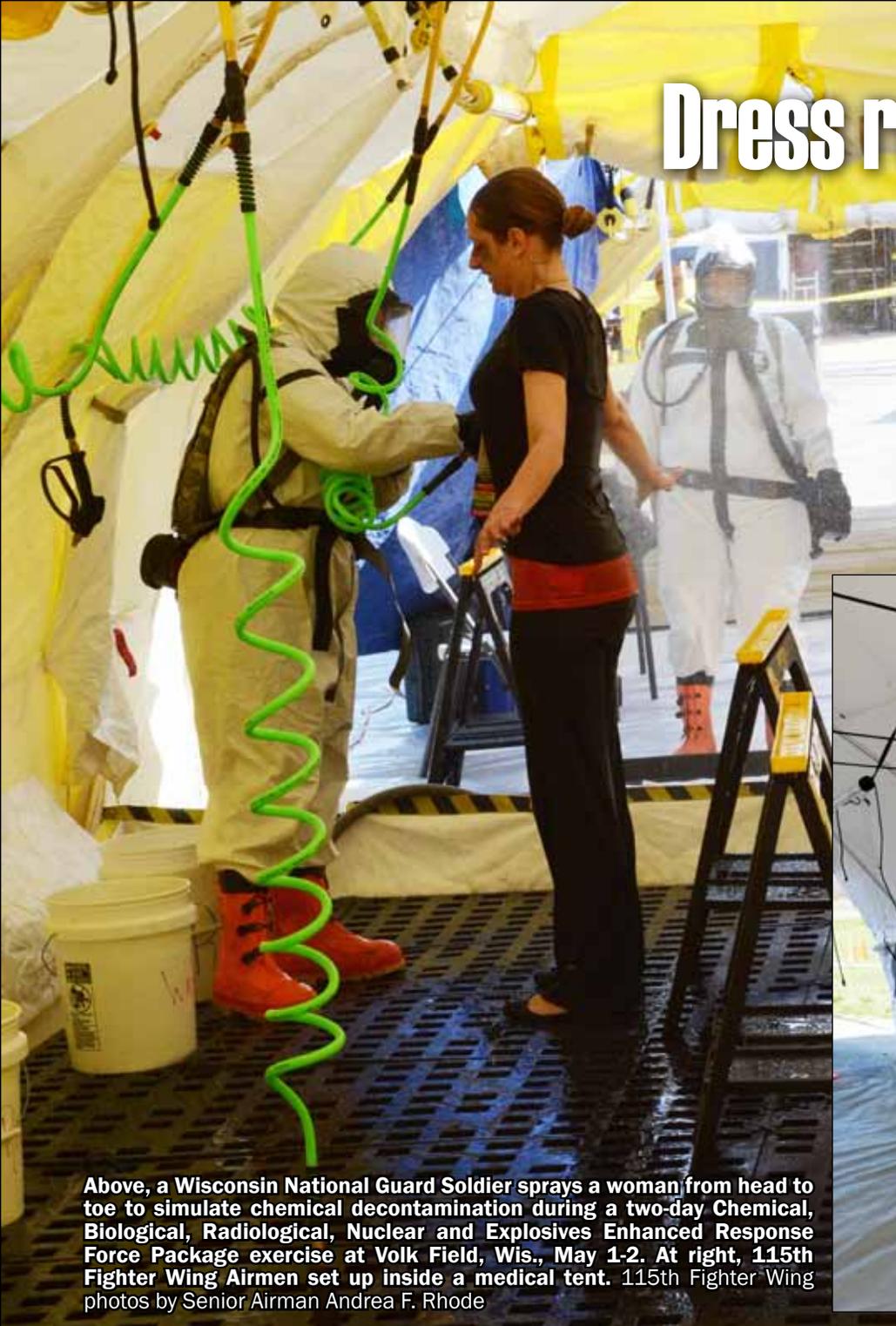
“This is a joint program — that’s the way it was designed,” Dauer said. “The interaction between the Army and the Air is a big piece of this program.”

Lt. Col. Brad Meyers, 115th Medical Group CERFP, enjoys working with the Army.

“It’s fun to have that ‘purple force,’” he said, referring to the red and blue flags that denote Army and Air Force. “I think we’re seeing that more and more across the military. The public doesn’t expect the military to be in individual silos — they want them to work together. We’re learning to work together and speak the same language because we’re here — especially in the Guard — to take care of the folks in Wisconsin.”

The one-day inspection period is not intimidating at all, Meyers said.

“In the real-world, if the CERFP gets called up, we aren’t going to have time to practice — we’re just going to go out and do it,” he said. “I think, if anything, this is a bit more realistic. The facility, the footprint, the setup is exactly how we’d do it in the real world.”



Above, a Wisconsin National Guard Soldier sprays a woman from head to toe to simulate chemical decontamination during a two-day Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package exercise at Volk Field, Wis., May 1-2. At right, 115th Fighter Wing Airmen set up inside a medical tent. 115th Fighter Wing photos by Senior Airman Andrea F. Rhode

Polish air force visits 115th Fighter Wing

Staff Sgt. Andrea F. Rhode
115th Fighter Wing

Members of the Polish air force visited the 115th Fighter Wing as a part of the State Partnership Program May 2-8.

Two pilots and three maintainers spent the week learning about the differences between their air force and the Air National Guard.

“It’s all about sharing best practices, lessons learned, and tactics, techniques and procedures that lead to enhanced capacity and interoperability, not only for the partner nation but also the partner state,” said Maj. Douglas Coop, Joint Force Headquarters-Illinois SPP director.

Poland is Illinois’ state partner, but due to requests from the Polish air force senior leadership - they have included Wisconsin in their partnership plans, mainly because of the F-16 Fighting Falcon airframe.

“Illinois partnering with Wisconsin for state partnership activity with Poland began in 2014,” Coop said. “They expressed interest in future cooperation with regard to the F-16 airframe and although the Illinois ANG no longer possessed this capability, our neighbor directly to the north did have the F-16 capability.”

The F-16 Fighting Falcon capabilities of both parties gave them an opportunity to learn from each other over the one-week time period. The 115th Fighter Wing provided work center-level maintenance exchange, discussed and demonstrated operations and maintenance business practices, and taught the Polish air force members everything from strategic direction to fighter squadron shop-level duties.

“The time here was excellent,” said Lt. Col. Pawel Marcinkowski, Polish air force 3rd Fighter Squadron commander. “We built lots of relationships and experiences we can take into the Polish air force.”

According to Marcinkowski, there are a lot of similarities between the air forces.

“Everyone has their own technologies and advancements,” he said. “We’re here to take it all in and incorporate the things we know will work back home.”

That is the intent of the program after-all. Expanding the SPP capability provides numerous opportunities for both parties.

“It’s a win-win, if you will,” Coop said. “In addition to building partnership capacity in order to meet combatant commander objectives for a particular nation, it also provides a training opportunity for the National Guardsmen who participate in the program’s events.

Partnering with Poland and conducting these mutually beneficial SPP events enhances the capability, interoperability and readiness of the National Guard and as a result we are better postured to defend our nation, protect our state and help our neighbors.” 

Students consider civilian application of military skills



Sgt. 1st Class David Rumary of Headquarters Troop, 105th Cavalry Regiment, explains the RQ-11 Raven Small Unmanned Aircraft System (SUAS) and how that type of aircraft could benefit farming to Poynette High School agriculture students during an April 14 visit to the unit in Madison, Wis. At left, Josie Dorn and Jonathan Behling examine a Raven up-close. @ease photos by Vaughn R. Larson



Vaughn R. Larson
@ease staff

“As the crow flies” is a common rural axiom for estimating distance. But agriculture students from Poynette High School roughly a half-hour north of Madison, Wisconsin, learned that information gained when a Raven flies could expand their career opportunities or shorten the time needed to complete a work project.

The students and three instructors were invited to an informal briefing on the RQ-11 Raven Small Unmanned Aircraft System (SUAS) at the Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry Regiment, a unit in the Wisconsin Army National Guard. The Raven — a remotely piloted aircraft small enough to be launched by hand — is used to collect visual information to help cavalry scouts in reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition and force protection. But the same type of technology and techniques could also help farmers evaluate soil erosion or crop damage.

“I’m always thinking outside the box,” said Staff Sgt. Rocco Sylvester, a Wisconsin Army National Guard recruiter who is also certified on the Raven system. “I wanted to show them the Raven system and how

it could benefit them in the civilian careers they might go into in the agricultural field.”

According to Sgt. 1st Class David Rumary, a Raven system master trainer with the 105th Cavalry, unmanned aircraft technology is currently being examined for agriculture, as well as maritime transportation and even parcel delivery.

“Maybe if I was in a different career path I might be delivering a box of pencils ordered online to a student’s home,” Rumary said, adding that unmanned aircraft equipped with video cameras and ground-penetrating radar could conduct soil analysis and railroad bridge structural analysis.

“The applications are endless,” Rumary said. “Pretty much any field that you might be considering will be impacted” by unmanned aircraft technology.

The Raven itself — which consists of three aircraft, two operators and sophisticated software and hardware — is not used for civilian functions. In Wisconsin, it can only be operated in designated airspace at Fort McCoy and Volk Field. Also, the Raven system is fairly expensive compared to unmanned aircraft systems available commercially.

“You don’t really take into consideration how much money it costs,” said Justin Feldbruegge, a Poynette High School agriculture student. “You see all these toys in the stores for \$30, and you don’t really think the professional version would be too much, but then you get here. It was very educational.”

Chris Murphy, a Poynette High School agriculture instructor, said he wanted the students to see what the unmanned aircraft could do and how they could be used.

“Also, we really try to emphasize career opportunities with our students, so we wanted to expose them to the Army National Guard as well as possible opportunities for employment utilizing” unmanned aircraft, Murphy said. “[The information was] very applicable, right on. We were very pleased. It’s really exciting.”

Dunbar: Safeguarding Wisconsin an ongoing process

Vaughn R. Larson
@ease staff

Practice, preparation and partnerships are key components to protecting Wisconsin from a wide spectrum of hazards and risks, according to the state's homeland security advisor.

"There are a lot of things Wisconsin faces," said Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general and Gov. Scott Walker's advisor for homeland security issues. "I can tell you with confidence we're going to have a flood again someday. I can tell you with confidence we'll have a tornado someday. They can be tragic and devastating, but they don't scare me because we've had them before and we have good procedures in place — we have a good emergency management team at the local county level and the state level, and we have good partners in FEMA."

Dunbar made those remarks at a recent press conference spotlighting the publication of Wisconsin's 2014 Homeland Security Annual Report and the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and State Preparedness Report. These represent the final report for Wisconsin's Homeland Security Committee for Walker's first term as governor. Walker has determined to continue the committee into his second term.

"As Wisconsin's Homeland Security advisor, I'm very proud of the efforts by all state agencies and our local partners to improve Wisconsin's overall readiness," Dunbar said.

Both documents — which Dunbar described as "a snapshot of what the state has accomplished and the road ahead" — outline risks to the state, and steps Wisconsin is taking to mitigate those risks. Included among the eight identified threat and hazard scenarios — an EF 5 tornado outbreak in a populated area, widespread cyber and power outages, flooding, and a terrorist event.

"There's no wall big enough," Dunbar said. "We continue to look at all these things and try and build mitigation strategies, tabletop exercises and practical exercises. What you can do, by practicing, is you learn some gaps you have, try and close those gaps, and you're much further along if something bad does happen."

As adjutant general, Dunbar commands the Wisconsin National Guard, which has several assets designed for domestic emergency response — the 54th Civil Support Team, the CERFP (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High-Energy Explosive Emergency Response Force Package), the National Guard Reaction Force, two new Ebola response teams, and the various



Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, flanked by Wisconsin Emergency Management Administrator Brian Satula, left, and David Cagigal, chief information officer for the state Department of Administration's Division of Enterprise Technology, discusses concerns and initiatives regarding homeland security for Wisconsin during a March 10 press conference in Milwaukee. Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, is Gov. Scott Walker's homeland security advisor. Wisconsin Emergency Management photo by Lori Getter

smaller force packages designated across the state to respond to natural emergencies such as winter storms or flooding. However, while the National Guard is the first military responder to domestic emergencies, it is not intended to be first at the scene of an emergency.

Local first responders — law enforcement, firefighters, paramedics — own that role. But Wisconsin is developing additional resources to help local agencies.

Among them, Dunbar reported, Wisconsin Task Force One — a regional response collapse rescue team composed of personnel from 10 fire departments across the state, as well as the staff from the Regional

Emergency All-Climate Training (REACT) Center at Volk Field, Wisconsin. Another is the Complex All-Hazard Type-2 Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT), a group of first responders from state and local agencies available upon request to assist local incident commanders during major emergencies.

Last fall, Wisconsin hosted its second Cyber Summit, an event designed to share best practices on protecting information networks and databases from cyber attacks. Safeguards built into the state information network block an estimated 6 million cyber attacks each day. However, a denial of service cyber attack disrupted city and county networks in Dane County — which are not on the state network — the day before the press conference. Dave Cagigal, chief information officer with the state Department of Administration's Division of Enterprise Technology, said that this kind of attack has occurred before.

"I believe, from Ferguson and other places, we have a recipe now," Cagigal said. "Every incident is going to follow that process, and we're trying to get better and stronger and more resilient to prevent those from happening."

Cagigal and Dunbar both mentioned aspects of cyber hygiene — knowing what sensitive personnel information is stored on a network, and knowing who has access to the network.

"We're going to face this threat forever," Dunbar said. "But we can mitigate the risk by practicing good hygiene."

Brian Satula, Wisconsin Emergency Management administrator, briefly discussed the risk posed by transporting Bakken crude oil across the state.

"Our part of it is to make sure our first responders are prepared for it," he said. That involves training and exercises as well as supplying the responding agency with firefighting foam.

Dunbar addressed the potential for terror threats to commercial shopping malls as well as weapons of mass destruction. Partnerships with federal agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI, state and local law enforcement, and local and tribal emergency responders is vital for sharing information about potential threats and effective ways to counter or respond to such threats.

"Homeland security is not a destination — it's a continual collaborative process," Dunbar said. "And we have work to do to continue to ensure that, whatever the threat, we in the state of Wisconsin are ready to respond." 

Nicaraguan civil defense leaders Lt. Col. Andres Abelino Rizo Gutierrez, Lt. Col. Moises Alexander Hodgson Harris, Maj. Sergio Arturo Corrales and Lt. Col. Marlon Moreno visited the Wisconsin National Guard April 21-25 as part of a State Partnership Program professional relationship between Wisconsin and Nicaragua. @ease photo by Vaughn R. Larson



Emergency response methods bridge Wisconsin, Nicaragua

Vaughn R. Larson
@ease staff

The Wisconsin National Guard revealed how it is trained and equipped to respond to domestic emergencies with four key leaders from the Nicaraguan military April 21-24.

The Nicaraguan officers — Lt. Col. Moises Alexander Hodgson Harris, Lt. Col. Marlon Moreno, Lt. Col. Andres Abelino Rizo Gutierrez and Maj. Sergio Arturo Corrales — are members of the Nicaraguan Army branch of civil defense, and visited Wisconsin as part of the National Guard Bureau's [State Partnership Program](#).

"From my vantage point, the participants had a very favorable visit — despite the cool weather," said Capt. Katherine Berberich, an international partnership specialist with the Wisconsin Army National Guard. "The Wisconsin National Guard welcomed the Nicaraguan delegation wherever they went, demonstrating the sort of hospitality that is truly a unique connection between enduring partners like the Wisconsin National Guard and the Nicaraguan army."

In terms of civil defense, Nicaragua is considered a multi-threat nation — volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis,

wildfires and flooding all pose hazards that could require emergency response. While in Wisconsin, the Nicaraguan officers visited the Regional Emergency All-Climate Training (REACT) center at Volk Field, Wisconsin, which features a simulated collapsed structure used to train responders how to safely extricate victims. They also spent time with the 54th Civil Support Team, learning how that unit operates and their role in supporting local authorities.

Berberich said the Nicaraguan army civil defense branch is similar to the Wisconsin National Guard's Joint Operations, Plans and Training (J3/5/7) domestic operations directorate. However, domestic operations capabilities are concentrated under Joint Operations in Wisconsin, whereas in Nicaragua those capabilities — skilled personnel and assets — are distributed among different units.

The Nicaraguans expressed interest in learning how to identify hazardous materials transported by ship and trucks, search and rescue training and wildfire prevention. Mark Michie, vice chief of staff for the Wisconsin National Guard's Joint Staff, encouraged continuing senior leader visits to Wisconsin, but he also wanted

younger Wisconsin National Guard members to train alongside younger Nicaraguan service members — either at the REACT center or perhaps with the Wisconsin National Guard's chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, high explosive emergency response force package (CERFP).

"That's where the real learning takes place," Michie said. "This is a two-way street — when we take our Soldiers to Nicaragua, we learn, I think, just as much as you learn from us. You have a lot of different natural disasters you have to respond to. We're able to go down and learn from you as well."

Fourteen years ago, Michie was part of the Wisconsin National Guard's humanitarian school-building mission in Nicaragua.

"It's a great partnership for us to have," he continued. "Whatever we can do to strengthen it, we're committed to doing that."

Through a translator, the Nicaraguan officers expressed their appreciation, as well as goals for a training visit next year.

"Thank you for inviting us here from Nicaragua in brotherhood and friendship." 🇺🇸

Who will be the BEST WARRIOR?



Staff Sgt. Nicholas Kenton, with the 54th Civil Support Team, and Sgt. Aubrey Audetat, with the 950th Engineer Clearance Company, climb a ladder during the

obstacle course for the 2015 Best Warrior Competition at Fort McCoy, Wis., April 11. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Pvt. Zach Tomesh

The Wisconsin Army National Guard's Soldier of the Year finished a whisper short of winning the 2015 Region IV Best Warrior Competition, held May 11-14 at Camp Atterbury, Indiana.

Spc. Derrek Ziegler — a member of Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry — finished second in a contest of the best lower enlisted Soldiers from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota and Ohio.

"I could not be prouder of the tremendous effort Spc. Ziegler put forth," said Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Shields, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's senior enlisted advisor. "[He] was a mere handful of points away from winning the competition. His efforts speak volumes for himself, his unit, and especially his sponsor, Sgt. Talon Dumke."

Shields said Ziegler was at or near the top of the seven competitors for the

duration of the event. For his part, Ziegler said the level of competition was fairly even, so he had no idea where he stood in the standings.

"It's a little bittersweet, actually," Ziegler said. "I know I could have had first place, but I got second place and that's great to say. Not many people can say that."

The Indiana Army National Guard's Spc. Garrett Rigel and Sgt. 1st Class Sam

Wagner swept the regional competition, and will advance to the National Guard Bureau's Best Warrior Competition next month in Utah. The Wisconsin Army National Guard's Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, Staff Sgt. Nicholas Kenton of the 54th Civil Support Team, was unable to attend the regional competition.

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Wisconsin Guard member runner-up in regional Best Warrior Competition

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To give himself time to prepare for the state and regional competitions, Ziegler cut his classload at UW-Milwaukee to four credits this semester, and is still maintaining a daily exercise regimen in case he is called to compete in Utah.

The regional competition challenged 13 Soldiers with a rigorous gauntlet testing their strength, skills and military bearing. Events included the Army Physical Fitness Test, weapon qualifications, land navigation, an obstacle course, drill and ceremony, a written essay, an appearance board, and a 12-mile road march with combat load — an M-4 rifle and 35-pound rucksack.

“I just sort of gave it my all,” Ziegler said.

The Best Warrior Competition begins at the company level — last October for Ziegler — and advances through battalion and brigade-level contests before reaching the state-wide competition, which featured 14 competitors at Fort McCoy in April.

1st Sgt. Eric Johansen, of the 273rd Sapper Company, 64th Troop Command, attended the state competition to support Staff Sgt. Nicholas Bures, from their Medford, Wisconsin-based unit.

“The most challenging part of this competition is the pace,” Johansen said. “There are continuous high demand events. They need to perform at a high level in a competitive atmosphere all day.”

Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Brehmer, of the 357th Signal Network Support Company, 157th Movement Enhancement Brigade, sponsored Sgt. Craig Buyeske, also of the 357th, during the state competition.

“Dedication is crucial to this competition, and all of these Soldiers have it,” Brehmer said. “All of these competitors are physically fit. They are all strong enough to be here, but there’s an entire mental game after that.”

Sgt. Talon Dumke, of the 105th Cavalry, sponsored Ziegler.

Dumke said that the competition is exceptionally challenging because its foundations lay in the whole Soldier concept.

“It’s not about one specialized task, or Military Occupational Specialty training,” Dumke said. “This competition tests the Soldiers’ knowledge on all aspects of their Army abilities, physically and mentally.”

Despite the demanding nature of the

four-day competition, many of those who attended expressed how beneficial Best Warrior competitions are to the Soldiers who participate.

“This competition is important because it gives Soldiers, who spend so much of their time training, an opportunity to use those skills,” Johansen explained. “It shows off their expertise with other competitors who are just as highly qualified, and they can enjoy putting these skills to use.”

“It builds confidence on the part of the Soldiers,” he added. “It shows they can do what they’ve been trained to do and they can be an example at their units. This competition makes leaders, improves leaders and allows them to mentor other Soldiers to become better Soldiers.”

Even the candidates who did not qualify for the regional competition in May were reminded of their

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Click on this image to see a video report of the Wisconsin Best Warrior Competition by Spc. Tianna Field, 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

State, regional Best Warrior Competition pushes Soldiers to excel

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accomplishments and the benefits of participating at the state competition.

Command Sgt. Major Curtis Patrouille, of the 105th Cavalry, believes the candidates will bring added value to the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

“I’ve had people say to me, ‘You know we spent a lot of time on 14 individuals,’ but these 14 individuals are the ones that are going to go on from here,” Patrouille said. “They are more than likely going to spend a good deal of time in the military and they’re going to be able to take what they learned here today and build up their squads, their teams, their platoons.”

Command Sgt. Major Michael Kaluzny, of the 64th

Troop Command, expressed his pride in every one of the candidates.

“One thing with competitions is they always seem to push,” Kaluzny said. “We always push each other to do better. If you don’t have any form of competition, whether it be official or unofficial, pretty soon you start scaling back on what you do. So, this is pushing everybody to be the best that they can be.”

State winners participate in the regional competition in hopes of advancing to the National Guard Bureau event. Winners there will challenge the top competitors in the Army and Army Reserve for Army-wide honors.

“This is important to the Army,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Tyson Johnston of the Indiana Army National

Guard, who helped orchestrate the regional Best Warrior competition. “It finds the best and brightest warriors ... within our ranks, from every level of the organization. Maybe they don’t win every competition, but we identify the strong, physically and mentally — the ones who want to win.”

Ziegler said he will use the knowledge he gained to help not only himself in the future, but his fellow Soldiers. He also thanked his sponsor and unit leadership for their guidance and preparation.

“They led me in the right direction,” he said. 

Sgt. Alexandria Hughes and Pfc. Kati Stacy of the 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, and Spc. Evan Myers of the 120th Public Affairs Detachment contributed to this report

Special Forces Training



Pfc. Christopher Enderle
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORT MCCOY, Wis. – Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers from Detachment 1, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry honed advanced marksmanship tactics with Special Forces Soldiers here April 10 –11.

The detachment worked with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) of the Illinois Army National Guard, to jointly conduct advanced marksmanship tactics training. The training included advanced maneuvering with M4 rifles, urban assault movements and advanced room-clearing procedures.

“We try to take pieces from other units to help build

ourselves,” said 1st Lt. Austin Peck, a scout platoon leader with Detachment 1. He went on to explain that they often work with different units in order to amass a larger range of skills that they can apply to their own training.

Many members of the Detachment expressed their

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Click on the image at right to see the related video by Staff Sgt. Oscar Gollaz.

Red Arrow, Special Forces Soldiers team up

Continued from Page 22

interest in being able to work alongside Special Forces Soldiers, since some are hoping one day to join their ranks.

"I've always wanted to become a Ranger or a Special Forces member," Pfc. Kyle Nicks said.

"Training with these guys will hopefully give me the knowledge and skills to join them one day."

This was a special training event for the Detachment, Staff Sgt. Matthew Ward explained, because even though they are infantry members themselves, they can learn a lot from the specialized training of the Special Forces Soldiers.

"It's been very helpful; these guys have taught us a lot, and we need to take what we've learned here and build upon it," Ward said. "They gave us the tools to build ourselves up, and now it's up to us to go ahead and make something from them." ■

Airman 1st Class Tomfohrde remembered

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commander, presented the Air Force Achievement Medal to Tomfohrde's parents, Timothy and Lisa.

Wiegand echoed Calhoun's comments on Tomfohrde's achievements, and emphasized how she earned a place in the hearts of 115th Fighter Wing members.

"Kelly was universally liked because of her personality and charisma," Wiegand said. "For the fighter wing Airmen she will serve as an example of how all of us can follow our desires for personal life and career progression. I am confident her spirit will continue to be followed throughout this organization."

He commended the strength of the 115th Fighter Wing organization, and expressed his confidence in its ability to move forward.

"The strength of an organization

and individuals is how we overcome adversity," Wiegand said. "I am fortunate to have an incredible team here to help overcome this tragedy.

"It's extremely tough to lose a family member, a team member, a friend, an Airman of the 115th Fighter Wing — one of my Airmen," Wiegand continued. "We will continue to be here and be strong. Every day I see our cohesiveness, our comradery and how we passionately care for each other.

"Now it is our responsibility — our tough, tough task — to move forward from this unfortunate loss, and to remember the positive and lasting memory of Kelly."

Tomfohrde's awards and decorations include the Air Force Achievement Medal, Air Force Training Ribbon, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. ■



Attendees bow their heads for an opening prayer during Airman 1st Class Kelly C. Tomfohrde's memorial service May 3. Airmen of the 115th Fighter Wing, family members and friends gathered to honor Tomfohrde's service and sacrifices, and to recognize her achievements and dedication during the memorial service on base. 115th Fighter Wing photo by Tech. Sgt. Tiffany Black



Leading the way

Staff Sgt. Sonia Buchanan, a Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldier who has already deployed with special forces in Afghanistan, is now one of the first female Soldiers in the 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry Regiment.
Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Joe Trovato

Vaughn R. Larson
@ease staff

Staff Sgt. Sonia Buchanan's military career could be considered ground breaking, or perhaps glass-ceiling breaking.

She has already served among Army Rangers and Special Forces teams in western Afghanistan as part of a [Cultural Support Team](#) — and was one of four Wisconsin Army National Guard female Soldiers to graduate from the inaugural Cultural Support Training Course at Fort Bragg, North Carolina in 2011. She has completed drill sergeant school.

And she is the first of several female Soldiers to serve with the 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry Regiment. She said her joining the headquarters section of a combat unit was the result of various factors. A change to the unit's organization structure meant that the

human resources position she will assume was now available to staff sergeants. That organizational change also opened up positions for females.

"I have always had my eyes set on this unit," Buchanan said. "Years ago I told myself, 'If the 105th Cav ever opens up to females, I am going to be one of the first over there.' Now that has become a reality."

Buchanan said her experience in Afghanistan, her drill sergeant qualification, military bearing and competence also played a role in her selection. She believes she will help other female Soldiers — recruits currently undergoing initial military training — successfully integrate into the battalion.

"I am looking forward to mentoring young females that come into the 105th in the future," she said. "I have had the most amazing female mentors in my career, and I know I would not be where I am

today were it not for their counsel and guidance."

Buchanan noted that other militaries have successfully integrated females into combat arms units.

"It has not hindered effectiveness, but only enhanced it," she said, adding that the motto of the 1st Battalion, 105th Cavalry Regiment — "Semper Porro," or Always Forward — is quite appropriate.

"How lucky are we to be in an organization that is continually moving forward," she said, "embracing and setting an example of integrating the diversity of our gender perspectives to improve and rethink our existing approaches in the possibility of building a stronger and more flexible organization."

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, deputy adjutant general for Army, said he was extremely proud of Buchanan's latest ground-breaking role.

"I've known her for a number of years," Anderson said. "Her demonstrated professionalism, commitment to excellence and operational experience will blend very nicely with the demands of serving in a combat line unit. Staff Sgt. Buchanan is a combat-tested leader and a perfect example of the phenomenal Soldiers we have serving in the Wisconsin Army National Guard — who, I am confident, will fully integrate into the combat roles recently opened to our female warriors."

Anderson said the Wisconsin Army National Guard will grow stronger and more capable as more opportunities are made available to female Soldiers.

"While this is an early demonstration of the Army's commitment to expand roles in the military to women, it will not be the last," he said. "I am proud to be a member of this organization that embraces such diversity and inclusion in our ranks." 🇺🇸



Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, and Col. Chad Milne, the Wisconsin Air National Guard state director of operations, presented an honorary plaque to Lt. Col. Steven Hunter, the 126th Air Refueling Squadron commander, commemorating the 75th anniversary of the aviation squadron at the 35th annual Civic Dinner Dance May 14. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Tech. Sgt. Jenna Lenski

Refueling Wing hosts 35th annual Civic Dinner Dance

Tech. Sgt. Jenna Lenski
128th Air Refueling Wing

The 128th Air Refueling Wing and Col. Daniel Yenchesky, the wing commander, hosted the 35th annual Civic Dinner Dance, an event of Milwaukee Armed Forces Week.

More than 400 people attended, including military members from throughout Wisconsin, elected state and local officials, and Milwaukee-area citizens.

The event honored the 75th anniversary of the first National Guard aviation unit in Wisconsin, the 126th Observation Squadron. Today it is known as the 126th Air Refueling Squadron and is still located at the 128th Air Refueling Wing at General Mitchell Field.

The squadron was originally established in Milwaukee by the Army Air Corps on July 30, 1940. After several re-designations of names, aircraft and missions, the squadron received KC-135A

Stratotankers. The 126th Air Refueling Squadron and the 128th Air Refueling Wing have operated a variant of this aircraft ever since.

Col. Chad Milne, the Wisconsin Air National Guard state director of operations, presented an honorary plaque to Lt. Col. Steven Hunter, the 126th Air Refueling Squadron commander, commemorating the 75th year anniversary of the aviation squadron.

During the Civic Dinner Dance, which was coordinated by the 128th Civic Dinner Dance Committee, Joseph Kotarak, Jr. was recognized as the Honored Citizen of the Year. A Milwaukee native, Kotarak is a veteran, family man, entrepreneur and an active member of his community. The award is presented every year during this event.

The 128th Air Refueling Wing and the Milwaukee Armed Forces Committee are scheduled to host next year's Civic Dinner Dance May 19, 2016.



Training on display

The 115th Fighter Wing Crash, Damaged or Disabled Aircraft Recovery team participated in a two-day field training exercise at Volk Field, Wis. The exercise provided a training opportunity related to Aircraft De-Bog (reverse tow), Composite Materials Recovery, and an aircraft recovery using a crane. The aircraft crane lift also provided the opportunity to position an A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft on top a pedestal display at Volk Field.

115th Fighter Wing photo

Volk Field hosts Air National Guard's annual safety summit

Capt. Joe Trovato
Wisconsin National Guard

More than 270 senior leaders from the Air National Guard converged at the Wisconsin Air National Guard's Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center in Camp Douglas, Wisconsin, for the annual Executive Safety Summit May 5-6.

Adjutants general, wing commanders and senior enlisted leaders from around the country came together to discuss key safety topics and share best practices during the two-day summit.

Attendees heard from Jeff Skiles, a Wisconsin native and co-pilot on U.S. Airways Flight 1549, which Skiles and pilot Chesley Sullenberger navigated to a safe crash landing on the Hudson River in January 2009 after bird strikes caused engine failure.

Skiles noted the importance of individual team and crew members executing their roles in ensuring safety. During the "Miracle on the Hudson," as it came to be known, Skiles, Sullenberger and Flight 1549's flight attendants all did their jobs and had faith in the process.

"The real team is the entire group," Skiles said. "The group of pilots, the management, the people who create these systems that we work under so successfully. We followed our training. We utilized the tools that we were given, and we were able to accomplish our part of the greater goal. The immense power of that team is the true 'Miracle of the Hudson.'"

All 155 passengers and crew survived that day, as a result.

Lt. Gen. Stanley Clarke III, the director of the Air National Guard, Tech. Sgt. Douglas Matthews, a Silver Star recipient from the Oregon National Guard and U.S. Navy Captain and NASA astronaut Barry Wilmore all delivered keynote remarks during the summit as well.

The summit served as an opportunity to drive home the importance of incorporating safety into every facet of the



Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, the adjutant general of Wisconsin (foreground), and Lt. Gen. Stanley Clarke III, the director of the Air National Guard, listen during the 2015 Air National Guard Executive Safety Summit at Volk Field Combat

Readiness Training Center May 5. Adjutants general, wing commanders and senior enlisted Airmen from around the country converged on Volk Field for the two-day summit. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. John Hillier

Air National Guard.

The Air National Guard has countless missions here at home and around the globe on a daily basis where safety must be paramount, Clarke said.

"The only way this continues is if we do it in a safe manner, because once we break the model for safety, everything else starts to stumble."

Ensuring that safety was at the forefront of every daily task, training exercise and combat operation pays off

when it matters, many of the speakers stressed during their comments.

"In the military, you train like you fight," Wilmore said. "We do the same thing at NASA. Everything we do is with that mindset, and that does make a difference, I think. You can't be lackadaisical in your training, because it turns out that you're lackadaisical in your operations."

During breakout sessions, leaders discussed how to implement that culture

of safety into the fabric of day-to-day operations at National Guard air wings around the country.

"I think we've seen that here," Clarke said. "Whether it's surviving an attack by the Taliban, landing a disabled airliner on a river, or flying into outer space, that training makes you as good as you can be."

Volk Field hosted the executive safety summit for the second straight year. 📷

Staff Sgt. John Hillier contributed to this report.



Covering all the bases for weather safety

Alisha Hamilton, Katilyn Sonnenberg, Coda McMullen and Logan Meinholz (L-R), from Emmanuel Lutheran in Brookfield, Wis., answer a question with the Brewers Sausages and WTMJ meteorologist John Malan during Weather Day, April 23. Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM), part of the state Department of

Military Affairs, interacted with hundreds of children April 23 for Weather Day, a program designed to educate youth about weather hazards and how to be prepared in the event of a weather emergency. Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs photo by Kelly Bradley

Kelly Bradley
@ease emeritus staff

It wasn't quite the movie *Wizard of Oz*, but there was still a small dog, talk of tornadoes and a puff of smoke last Friday at Miller Park, as 11,000 students and teachers from southeastern Wisconsin attended Weather Day.

Weather Day provides students an opportunity to learn about seasons, precipitation, climates and storms in a fun environment. Participants are divided into two teams, and questions were asked on the jumbo screen, along with videos and demonstrations on the field. The event was sponsored by the Milwaukee Brewers and WTMJ-TV,

whose meteorologists were the hosts.

"It's really nice," said student Alisha Hamilton from Emmanuel Lutheran in Brookfield, Wisconsin. "And a good impression for new people."

Wisconsin Emergency Management teamed up with WTMJ-TV and Hank the Brewers Ball Park Pup to talk about pet preparedness this year.

"Thanks to Hank, the Brewers Ball Park Pup, we were able to emphasize pet preparedness," said Tod Pritchard with Wisconsin Emergency Management and ReadyWisconsin. "The students love to talk about their pets, and that gave us a great starting point to discuss being ready for emergencies for not only dogs, cats, and

other critters, but for their families."

After the Weather Day presentation was over, students and teachers were able to attend the Brewers' Science Fair, which had exhibits from Discovery World, the Milwaukee Public Museum and the Mitchell Park Domes. Wisconsin Emergency Management set up a booth with games, giveaways and information about preparedness kits.

"These students are the future. As they learn about emergency preparedness, they will pass that knowledge along to their friends, their family, and their community," said Wisconsin Emergency Management Administrator Brian Satula. "That's how our society will change the way we look at being ready and make it a priority." 🐾

Time to transition

Capt. Brian Faltinson
Wisconsin National Guard

Troops in combat zones routinely receive briefings about threats and courses of action before going on mission. On the home front, those briefings — such as a May 2 Badger Yellow Ribbon Program workshop in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin for approximately 80 Soldiers, Airmen and family members — focus on successfully reintegrating into a non-combat setting.

The program is designed to provide Wisconsin National Guard members, other military services and their family members with support services, information, education and proactive outreach opportunities in continued support of their health and well-being before, during and after deployment. There are two reintegration workshops available for those returning from deployment, with the one in Oconomowoc focusing on wellness and employment.

“This phase of reintegration is career and wellness enhancement,” said Staff Sgt. Ted Schumacher of the Wisconsin National Guard’s Service Member Support Division, the organization that sponsors the Badger Yellow Ribbon Program. “The point is that service members understand all of the resources that are available to them and to start noticing what may be potential issues on their reintegration back into society.”

Most of the attendees were from the Sussex, Wisconsin-based Battery A, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery that had recently returned from a deployment to Afghanistan. An Airman from the 128th Air Refueling Wing, recently returned from a deployment to Kuwait, as well as spouses and significant others, were also at the workshop.

“Being able to bring in the families so they can have a clear understanding of the resources available and that reintegration

is simply not just the Soldier coming home and putting the deployment in the past,” said Lt. Col. Matt Beilfuss, commander of 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery. “It’s clearly showing people that there are resources for them available. The first impacted by those Soldiers who may have post-deployment issues will be the families. We in the unit like to stay in touch but the fact is that they are with their families a lot more than they are with us.”

Having his Soldiers better able to transition successfully to their civilian lives after a difficult deployment is a top concern for Capt. Aaron Ammerman, Battery A’s commander.

“The purpose of this workshop is to get the Soldiers and families together to go through the next step in the reintegration process to make sure that that transition back to civilian life and home life goes smoothly,” Ammermann said. “Things are obviously different when you are downrange and focused on the mission and you have the stressors there. You make sure when you come back that when with your family and friends you can kind of separate the deployment stresses from your civilian life and make a good transition.”

The wellness portion was presented by civilian wellness professionals and focused on stress management and coping mechanisms.

“Personal wellness is explored through sessions on stress management, drug and alcohol interdiction and anger management,” Schumacher said. “The sessions are for both the service member and their families because sometimes it is the family member that notices things and speaks up on the issue before the service member is aware.”

This was the first deployment for about half of Battery A’s Soldiers, and

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Above, Gov. Scott Walker and Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, speak at a reintegration workshop held May 2 in Oconomowoc, Wis. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Brian Faltinson

Reintegration takes time, patience, officials say

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the second or third for many of the unit's noncommissioned officers.

"We have a healthy mix of younger and experienced Soldiers that have been on previous deployments," Ammerman said. "Those with more experience are able to help guide the younger Soldiers on what to expect when coming back, how to do things and things to watch out for."

This deployment was Spc. Andrew Linemann's first. He attended the conference with his girlfriend Krystine Verhagen, and they both found the session on stress management useful.

"Stress is going to happen and it's okay to feel it and you might feel it when you are not busy," Linemann said. "Being back home when I didn't have a schedule is when I felt that stress and tension. Knowing that this happens with other people and knowing that there are resources out there is beneficial."

The workshop also outlined the employment assistance resources available to all Wisconsin military Service members and families regardless of their branch of the military.

"We find that some Service members can no longer do the job they had before the deployment for a variety of reasons," Schumacher said. "Sometimes they just need a person in their corner to let them know what is out there and what is available. We assist with career transition,

preparing resumes and interview skills, as well as network with potential employers to match Service member skills with their needs."

Gov. Scott Walker and Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, spoke with the group.

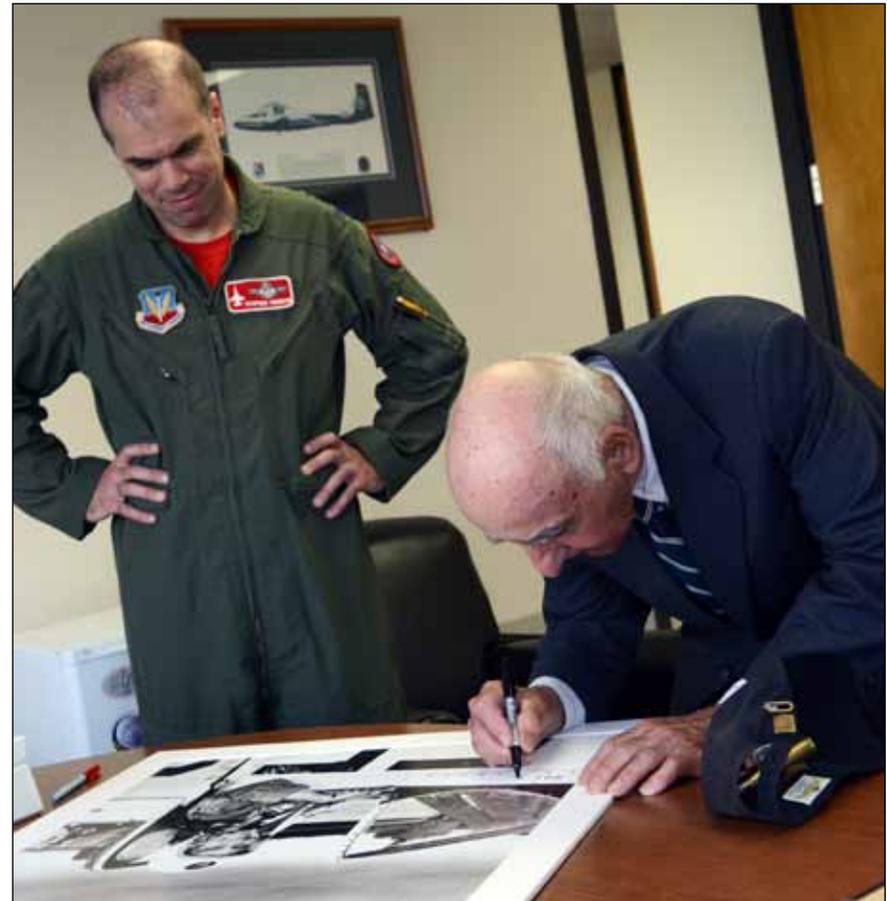
"I hope you have had time to reflect on your service since the time you have returned from overseas and how special you are and how precious you are to our nation," Dunbar said. "Very few people serve in the military and even fewer still are called upon to serve in combat overseas."

Walker noted the long tradition of service by Wisconsin National Guardsmen.

"I want to personally thank each of you and your families," Walker said. "The Wisconsin National Guard has had a proud tradition of service since the Civil War, and it continues to this day because of people like you."

The goal of these workshops is to ensure that the Wisconsin National Guard's Soldiers and Airmen can continue to answer their nation's call.

"The top thing to get across to Soldiers is that reintegration takes time and don't rush into it," Ammerman said. "It is a very different environment and it takes a little while for a Soldier to turn off the experiences from theater and to ease back into being with the family. It gets there — it just takes time and patience." 📷



Stomping grounds return

Retired Maj. Gen. Raymond Matera visited the 115th Fighter Wing May 28. Prior to serving two terms as Wisconsin adjutant general — 1979 to 1989 — Matera was an enlisted Marine serving in the South Pacific during World War II. After the war he re-enlisted as an aviation cadet in the Air Force, and was commissioned in 1949. After serving in Korea, where he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Matera was assigned as a flight commander at Truax Field in Madison, Wisconsin, which at the time was an active duty base. He was released from active duty in 1954, and began his career in the Wisconsin Air National Guard. He retired in 1990, after overseeing an armory improvement program, training improvement program, the 32nd Brigade's 1986 REFORGER participation and total force opportunities for the 128th Air Refueling Wing and 128th Tactical Fighting Wing — the forerunner of the 115th Fighter Wing. Here he signs a print of himself during his early days in the Wisconsin Air National Guard.

115th Fighter Wing photo by Staff Sgt. Andrea F. Rhode



CHOW CHAMPS

■ *Wisconsin again has the best food service section in all the Army National Guard*

Vaughn R. Larson
@ease staff

The secret behind the success of the food service section for the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Headquarters Company, 132nd Brigade Support Battalion, is simple — it's made from scratch.

A year ago, the food service section combined some new members with some old hands, folded in some lessons on brigade support battalion field operations learned at Camp Dodge, Iowa, and worked the mixture thoroughly throughout the year. The recipe yielded the title of best food service section in the National Guard, announced May 4. The section won the [regional competition](#) last year.

This is the second consecutive year the Wisconsin Army National Guard has fielded the best food service section in the Army National Guard. [Last year](#), the 257th Brigade Support Battalion Headquarters Company took the top honors.

"I've seen this section grow by leaps and bounds from last year," said Headquarters Company 1st Sgt. Randy Lieffring. "It's a huge task for them, but they pull together, they bring out the best in each other, and they provide us with

outstanding meals. They're exceeding the standard."

Staff Sgt. Aleksandr Simonov, the food operations manager and first-line cook, said the section works well together, makes dishes from scratch and uses fresh ingredients.

"We stick to the Army recipes," Simonov said, "but we try to think outside the box of what we can do to improve it — make it look better, taste better and to make a better product."

The extra effort, he said, means something to the battalion's Soldiers after a long day in the field. A poor meal does nothing to improve a tough day.

"But when they get a good meal, get to be in a friendly environment, it picks everybody up and morale is just a little bit higher," he said.

Simonov — who has 12 years experience as a professional chef — credited his company leadership with giving him and Sgt. 1st Class Jassen Hinchley, the senior food operations sergeant, the opportunity to build and train the food service section.

"Getting the opportunity to do the things I wanted to do and letting me work with my Soldiers the way I saw fit has made a huge difference in training and the environment, what they actually get to focus on," Simonov said.

As the section gathered before noon to prepare the evening meal, Simonov briefed his Soldiers on the menu, ingredient choices and procedures with the level of detail found in a combat patrol briefing. The meal consisted of spaghetti with meatballs, parmesan bread, vegetable soup, broccoli parmesan, garden salad, fruit salad and chocolate chip cookie bars. The pasta and Italian bread were not made on site, but everything else — the spaghetti sauce, meatballs, parmesan

Staff Sgt. Aleksandr Simonov of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Headquarters Company, 132nd Brigade Support Battalion, cuts onions into a decorative shape as part of a March 21 meal at Fort McCoy, Wis.
@ease photo by Vaughn R. Larson

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Wisconsin Army Guard food service section's field cuisine reigns supreme in Connelly Competition

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bread, fruit salad, broccoli parmesan and cookie bars — was made from scratch in a crowded and bustling containerized kitchen.

Sgt. Kyle Edwards, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's state food program manager, said he was impressed with the food service section's "professionalism, the amount of going the extra mile in using fresh herbs, spices, for more of a home-cooked, more professional Army meal." He noted that the section selected the site to set up their field complex of tents and mobile kitchen, and was largely self-sufficient.

"What it demonstrates is that they're very resilient," Lieffring said. "They have the ability to bounce back from anything put in front of them, especially in a field environment like this. They can set up, cook the most immaculate meal like they were cooking in cantonment. They're a great bunch, they have great teamwork, they have great awareness of what's going on around them, they're able to work together, have that self-regulation when things get a little tough, work through stresses and be very successful."

This was demonstrated late in the afternoon when it was time to cook the pasta and, in spite of the careful

planning, there was no available pot to boil the water. Rather than melt down, the crew moved some items into the oven and made a pot available in time.

"We kept it together pretty well," said Sgt. Haley Lamasney, a food operations noncommissioned officer with the food service section, after the food had been served. "We rocked it, but we're pretty tired now."

"You guys did excellent today," agreed Chief Warrant Officer 5 Pamela Null, a Department of the Army evaluator for the Phillip A. Connelly Awards Program. "It was a great meal, and you worked great as a team. When you got down to that one-hour crunch time, 30-minute crunch time, I didn't see anyone yelling, I didn't see anything flying."

Null had positive comments for the unit leadership, food service section, field sanitation team and the "KPs" — the Soldiers tasked with helping the food service section for a day. She offered particular praise to Sgt. Amanda Niles, who was with the section when they won the regional last year, transferred to the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, but came back to help her old section for the national competition.

"Sgt. Niles, you did the cookies, right? That's probably one of the best cookie bars I've ever had," Null said. "It had that perfect crunch, and then it was warm

and gooey inside."

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, deputy adjutant general for Army, also praised the section.

"This is a huge achievement," Anderson said. "It really says a lot about you, not only as individual Soldiers and your skills, but coming together and functioning as a team. I have a lot of confidence that you guys are going to be heading down to Chicago to take the overall Army National Guard award."

That confidence was shared in the unit.

"I feel really good — our team has worked really hard on this," Simonov said. "At this point, I just want my guys to have a good time with it and make the best of it, do what we do best. If we win, it's a bigger bonus. If not, it's another day with great success."

"I honestly believe they could win it all," Lieffring added. "They're very positive and they're very motivated to be the best, to show that Wisconsin has something to add to the culinary art world."

Edwards noted that last year marked the first time in a long time the Wisconsin Army National Guard ventured into the culinary competition.

"The fact that we're here two years in a row speaks volumes to where we are with food service training in the state," Edwards said. 

Meritorious Service



Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, left, and Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar flank Joann and Jim Gruennert, the niece and nephew of Sgt. Kenneth Gruennert, a World War II Medal of Honor recipient from the 127th Infantry Regiment, 32nd Division, during a Wisconsin Army National Guard Hall of Honor induction ceremony May 3 at DeForest High School. Wisconsin National Guard photos by Maj. Paul Rickert



Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde and Col. Mike Rand, senior leaders of the 32nd Brigade, accept the Wisconsin Army National Guard Hall of Honor plaque and proclamation on behalf of Staff Sgt. Gerald Endl, a World War II Medal of Honor recipient from the 128th Infantry Regiment, during a formal induction ceremony May 3 at DeForest High School. Also pictured are Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson and Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar.

Wisconsin Army Guard inducts outstanding Soldiers, Medal of Honor recipients into Hall of Honor

For the first time in its 15-year history, the Wisconsin Army National Guard Hall of Honor inducted three Medal of Honor recipients alongside retired Soldiers during a formal ceremony May 3 at DeForest High School.

Medal of Honor recipients Sgt. Kenneth Gruennert, Staff Sgt. Gerald Endl and 1st Sgt. Elmer Burr —along with retired Chief Warrant Officer 5 Michael Kreisler and Chief Warrant Officer 5 Lynn Ryan — joined the ranks of 52 Hall of Honor inductees.

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, deputy adjutant general for Army and the Wisconsin Army National Guard's top officer, said the Hall of Honor began to recognize Wisconsin Army National

Guard members who had received significant federal awards for valor last year with 1st Sgt. Gregory Fulton's induction.

"We talk about legacy, we talk about service," Anderson said, "but it's the legacy behind what they accomplished while in service."

Capt. Brian Faltinson, who emceed the ceremony, said the Hall of Honor program "recognizes Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers, and others, who have distinguished themselves through exceptional achievement and devotion to duty. They have exemplified the core values of military service in the Army. Moreover, their exceptional service over many years brought great credit to the

state of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Army National Guard. Their legacies to the Wisconsin National Guard are enduring."

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general and commander of the Wisconsin National Guard, also spoke about legacy.

"Our legacy is one of the citizen — the citizen at the core — raising his or her right hand and saying they will defend our community, our state and our nation from all enemies foreign or domestic," Dunbar said. "At the same time, we'll be there if there's a problem here at home, if the governor should call us out for a fire or a flood or a terrorist attack. It's the legacy we all share as members of the National

Guard. It's a phenomenal legacy, and every man or woman who's ever worn the uniform shares this legacy with us.

"But not every man or woman who's ever worn the uniform will be so honored as the five members we honor today," he continued.

Dunbar compared the National Guard's legacy to a well-written, well-bound book detailing the tradition, contribution, sacrifice and setbacks of the National Guard — with gold leaf in the center to denote the most important, compelling stories.

"When you flip to that gold section, you find those who were the best the

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Meritorious Service

For first time, Wisconsin Army Guard inducts Medal of Honor recipients into Hall of Honor

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National Guard had,” Dunbar said. “That’s what today is all about — the Wisconsin Army National Guard choosing, through a rigorous process, men and women to put into our Hall of Honor.”

[Sgt. Kenneth Gruennert](#), a member of Company L, 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment, for his actions on Dec. 24, 1942 near Buna, New Guinea. Gruennert was second in command of a platoon tasked with breaching the enemy line and reaching the beach to split the enemy position. When the platoon encountered two hostile enemy fighting positions, Gruennert advanced alone on one position and put it out of action with hand grenades and rifle fire. Sustaining a serious shoulder injury, Gruennert bandaged his wound and, under extremely heavy fire, advanced on the second enemy fighting position. He forced the enemy from the position with hand grenades, but was killed by enemy sniper fire. His inspiring actions cleared the way for his platoon to attain the beach.

Gruennert’s niece and nephew, Joann and Jim Gruennert, attended the ceremony.

“We’d like to thank you for honoring our uncle,” Jim said. “Company L that he was part of came from Jefferson, Wisconsin — a small town. My wife’s father was with Kenny that day. It’s a small group of men that went from Jefferson. As family members, we got to know Kenny’s heroics through the stories of those men when they came back and raised families. We grew up with their kids.

“I think of something my grandfather wrote about Kenny,” Jim continued, his voice growing thick with emotion. “He said he had a chance to carry the ball, and he did so to the utmost of his ability, strength, fearlessness and courage.”

[Staff Sgt. Gerald Endl](#), of the 32nd



Lynn Ryan



Michael Kreisler

Infantry Division’s 128th Infantry Regiment, for his actions on July 11, 1944 near Anamo, New Guinea. Endl was in the lead platoon of a company advancing along a jungle trail when the unit encountered an enemy force supported by heavy rifle, machine gun fire and grenade fire. When the platoon leader was wounded by enemy fire, Endl took charge of the platoon and pressed the attack. In doing so, he detected more enemy troops moving to surround the unit. With wounded Soldiers at risk of being annihilated by the enemy, and with another advancing platoon at risk of being ambushed by enemy troops, Endl went forward alone and for approximately 10 minutes engaged the enemy in a furious close-range firefight. This allowed his men to crawl forward and rescue three of the wounded. Endl himself brought back the remaining wounded one at a time. As he brought the last wounded man back, he was killed by enemy machine gun fire. His actions saved all but one wounded Soldier and allowed two platoons to withdraw with their wounded and reorganize with the rest of the company.

[1st Sgt. Elmer Burr](#), a member of Company I, 127th Infantry, for his actions on Dec. 24, 1942 near Buna, New Guinea. During an attack, Burr saw an enemy grenade strike near his company commander. Burr threw himself on the grenade, smothering the blast

with his body and saving the life of his commander.

Col. Mike Rand and Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde, commander and senior enlisted advisor for the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team — the successor to the famed 32nd “Red Arrow” Division — accepted the plaques and proclamations on half of Endl and Burr. Conde noted that someone asked if they would do those things if they were in the situations the Medal of Honor recipients found themselves in.

“That’s hard to say,” Conde admitted. “We train hard, we think we’re ready, but when something happens and we need to save our Soldiers and the life of our friends, we don’t know how we’re going to react. I am humbled to be up here to accept these awards on behalf of these individuals.”

Michael Kreisler enlisted in the Army in 1971 and joined the Wisconsin Army National Guard in 1974, serving seven months. He rejoined the Wisconsin Army National Guard in 1978, achieving the rank of sergeant first class before being commissioned as a warrant officer in 1987. His contributions as a personnel warrant officer were significant and critical to the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s success in transitioning from a peacetime footing to the global war on terror. Learning from mobilizing 1,000 Soldiers in 1991 for Desert Storm, Kreisler oversaw the mobilization of more than 8,000 Soldiers after Sept. 11, 2001. He continually improved the Soldier Readiness Process, resulting in less than three percent of mobilized Soldiers unable to deploy — a national benchmark for mobilizing National Guard Soldiers. He expertly handled nine Wisconsin Army National Guard combat deaths, including the first female National Guard Soldier combat death since World War II, allowing the family to deal with the high-

profile death with dignity and honor. He retired from the Wisconsin Army National Guard in 2010 after more than 34 years of military service.

Kreisler thanked the service members he encountered during his time meeting with bereaved military families.

“They provided me with so much support, so much guidance, so much knowledge that I don’t deserve this award — they deserve it. I’d have never been where I’m at today, no matter how hard I try, without them being there,” he said. “I accept this award on their behalf.”

Lynn Ryan enlisted in the Wisconsin Army National Guard in 1974 as a unit clerk, achieving the rank of master sergeant before being commissioned as a chief warrant officer 2 in 1986. As a warrant officer, Ryan served in positions of increasing responsibility, including property book officer, military personnel technician, personnel services branch chief, equal employment opportunity officer, and deployed to Kuwait as a military personnel technician with the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team in 2005. She was promoted to chief warrant officer 5 in 2006, and served as the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s command chief warrant officer, a position she held until her retirement in 2011. In this role she was instrumental in establishing a reserve component warrant officer candidate school in Wisconsin, and implemented a proactive communications and recruiting plan to retain and grow the warrant officer corps in the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

“It is important to remember that we are part of an organization that is steeped in deep, deep tradition,” Ryan said. “It’s also our job to ensure that legacy is maintained. I think our Hall of Honor does a wonderful job of ensuring that tradition remains alive. Thank you so much for this incredible honor — it’s overwhelming.”

Meritorious Service



Senior Master Sgt. William J. Rebholz shares the stage with the Richard I. Bong Award and Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, at the ESGR Breakfast with the Boss event at the Milwaukee County War Memorial May 11. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Tech. Sgt. Jenna Lenski

Rebholz receives Maj. Richard I. Bong award

Tech. Sgt. Jenna Lenski
128th Refueling Wing

Senior Master Sgt. William J. Rebholz, the chief quality assurance inspector assigned to the maintenance group of the 128th Air Refueling Wing received the Richard I. Bong Award at the Breakfast with the Boss event hosted by Wisconsin Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve May 11.

Maj. Richard I. Bong, a Wisconsin native, is the top American air ace of all wars having destroyed 40 enemy aircraft in aerial combat during World War II. He was a fighter pilot in the U.S. Army Air Forces and a Medal of Honor recipient.

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Wisconsin Army Guard officer receives national leadership award

Vaughn R. Larson
@ease staff

One of the seven National Guard recipients of the Gen. Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award — which recognizes company-grade officers who embody the ideals of duty, honor and country — spent most of his military career in the enlisted ranks.

Capt. Ron Adams of Milwaukee, who commands the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, said his two decades as an enlisted Soldier has proven invaluable.

"I have a unique perspective as an officer," Adams explained. "I have served in just about every rank and leadership position as anyone in my unit, and understand their needs and challenges."

Adams has served in the military for more than 26 years, the last 22 in the Wisconsin Army National Guard. He is a Desert Storm veteran, and has worked as a readiness noncommissioned officer for a field artillery battery in Milwaukee, a leader in the early days of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's recruit sustainment program, and the state equal opportunity and diversity officer. Having practical experience as both an enlisted and commissioned Soldier has helped him prioritize Soldier care and family support, while still requiring excellence in accomplishing the mission.

"I believe I was selected for this award because it considers the whole person," he said. "No matter my role — to follow or to manage the work of others — I believe I must always think and act as a leader."

Adams also credits his father, Willie James Adams, for instilling the characteristics at a young age that have shaped his military career. Capt. Adams



Capt. Ron Adams, center, with Gen. Ray Odierno, Army chief of staff, and retired Col. William Davis, from the Gen. Douglas MacArthur Foundation, at the Gen. Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award ceremony May 29 in Washington, D.C. Adams was one of only seven National Guard officers to receive the award. National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Darron Salzer

was 10 when his father died, so these lessons were learned by observation rather than lecture or preaching.

"Watching him as a young boy, I learned that leadership requires self-discipline, righteous action, pure motives and extraordinary selflessness," he said. "I work hard to hold myself accountable to the same high standards my father held himself to."

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, deputy adjutant general for Army, expressed his pride in Adams' selection for the award.

"Of course, while I am personally very happy for him, I am not surprised," Anderson said. "He is a tremendously gifted and capable officer and young leader, professional in every manner. While this award recognizes his demonstrated leadership, I personally

believe it is more a reflection of the bright future Capt. Adams has in serving with the Wisconsin Army National Guard and the U.S. Army."

Adams was thankful for support from past and present military leaders, from Soldiers and community leaders, and from his wife and children.

"I'm blessed that I get to share this with my entire family," he said, "especially my wife Angela, who serves as a family readiness group leader, and my children, two of whom serve on our state's youth advisory board. Their willingness to share in, and contribute to, this journey of service and leadership is why I dedicate this award to my family."

Adams received the award during a formal ceremony May 29 in Washington D.C. 📷

Meritorious Service

115th Fighter Wing senior noncommissioned officer receives Air National Guard's top safety recognition

Tech. Sgt. Tiffany Black
115th Fighter Wing

A senior master sergeant from the 115th Fighter Wing received the highest Air National Guard safety award May 6 at the annual Air National Guard Executive Safety Summit held at Volk Field Air National Guard Base.

Senior Master Sgt. Thomas W. Egstad, occupational safety and health manager, was presented with the Air National Guard Director of Safety Outstanding Achievement Award.

This recognition is given on an annual basis to an individual who has demonstrated outstanding achievement in the safety field, and is making significant contributions to advancing safety in the Air National Guard.

"Tom proudly represents the 115th Fighter Wing and Wisconsin Air National Guard, and continues to demonstrate personal and professional improvement," said Col. Jeffrey J. Wiegand, 115th Fighter Wing commander. "Not only is he doing an outstanding job with the 115th Fighter Wing Safety Program, but he is extremely engaged and instrumental at the national level assisting the Air National Guard."

Egstad draws on his more than 15 years



of experience in the safety profession to promote a culture focused on safe practices at the 115th Fighter Wing. He is a strong believer in continuing education, both personally and professionally, and the positive impact it can have on an organization.

Egstad works with the Department of Defense in regard to the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP), an Occupational Safety and Health Administration cooperative program, and serves on the Safety Management

Advisory Resource Team where he represents 25 fighter units in the Air National Guard. The team meets quarterly to discuss pending safety issues. He is also a member of the American Society of Safety Engineers, which allows him to network with professionals advancing safe and healthy workplaces.

His most recent accomplishment was earning his Certified Safety Professionals (CSP) Certification. This certification is only held by an elite group of 285 individuals in the entire state of

Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke III, Air National Guard director, presents Senior Master Sgt. Thomas W. Egstad, 115th Fighter Wing occupational safety and health manager, with the Air National Guard Director of Safety Outstanding Achievement Award May 6 at Volk Field Air National Guard Base. Submitted photo

Wisconsin.

Egstad described the hard work he put into reaching this challenging, professional goal.

"It was a monumental task," Egstad said. "I know people who have taken [the exam] four and five times. I studied for two to three hours a day for 18 months straight. It was a personal and professional goal that I've always wanted to accomplish."

Egstad attributes receiving the award to the safety offices outstanding efforts in participating in the VPP, and his CSP certification. He also noted the strong competition he was up against.

"It's a humbling experience," Egstad said. "I know every unit puts their best and brightest individuals forward to represent their safety and health programs, so it was a very humbling experience to be recognized at this level."

He received the award in front of more than 270 senior leaders from the Air National Guard.

He went on to credit his strong team and their dedication to incorporating safety day-in and day-out. He commended the unit safety representatives for taking care of essential safety tasks so their office was able to focus on the big picture. 📷

128th Air Refueling Wing noncommissioned officer receives prestigious Maj. Richard I. Bong award

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The award in his honor is given by the Milwaukee Armed Services Committee to Wisconsin service members who have displayed outstanding skill, dedication, and professionalism on and off duty.

Rebholz distinguished himself in outstanding service with the 128th Air Refueling Wing as he oversaw and managed the evaluation and validation of maintenance action on the KC-135 weapon system and its associated support equipment.

"Maj. Richard I. Bong is the best of the best, and the fact that Senior Master Sgt. Rebholz was recognized is a testament to him being the best of the best," said Col.

Daniel Yenchesky, 128th Air Refueling Wing commander.

"The maintenance community relies on quality assurance," Yenchesky continued. "It's kind of a backbone of discipline. It's a discipline that when times get tough, the mission keeps going. And he is an advocate for that kind of discipline and he ensures that it's engrained in all that we do."

The award presentation took place during the ESGR Breakfast with the Boss, an event that recognizes the civilian employers of guardsmen and reservists for the support and flexibility they give to service members.

"The family, the Airmen and the employers work together to make a very, very strong team," Yenchesky said. "Each of them provides a piece of that team work

puzzle. At different times, we rely more heavily on one or the other but, the employer support of the Guard and Reserve is essential to make it work. The only way the Air National Guard works at the operations tempo that we're at right now and the operations tempo that we're going to maintain over the next six to 10 years is with support of the families and the employers. We're asking a lot from them and it's important that they're recognized and that they know the work they're doing to support their Airmen pays off and is an essential piece of that puzzle."

The ESGR Breakfast with the Boss kicked off Milwaukee Armed Forces Week, which is the nation's largest military recognition week. 📷

Meritorious Service

Wisconsin Army National Guard among best in Army Communities of Excellence program

Vaughn R. Larson
@ease staff

Wisconsin is once again counted among the top Army National Guard organizations with its Gold Division First Place finish in the 2015 Army Communities of Excellence (ACOE) program.

Wisconsin finished runner-up to the Ohio Army National Guard, which was named the overall winner in the 2015 judging. This year, 41 Army National Guard states and five U.S. Army Reserve commands participated in the ACOE program.

“This recognition is a reflection of the tremendous effort on the part of many Soldiers in the Wisconsin Army National Guard who continue building readiness and improving our processes across all the functions necessary to make us one of the best Army National Guard’s in the nation,” said Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, deputy adjutant general for Army and the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s top officer. “Our participation has been a conscious effort on our part to continue to promote efficiencies, improve our readiness and take better care of our Soldiers and accomplish our mission.”

Awards were presented April 29 at the Army National Guard Readiness Center in Arlington, Virginia. Other top finishers included the Indiana Army National Guard and the Texas Army National Guard.

ACOE Awards program participants are not judged against each other. The 12-month evaluation — July 2013 through July 2014 for this award — measures Army, National Guard and Army Reserve installations against Army priorities and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program criteria. The assessment considers the overall quality of military environment, facilities and services.

“It’s about learning, improving and sharing,” Brig. Gen. James Wong, special assistant to the director of the Army



The Army National Guard recognizes Communities of Excellence at an award ceremony held at the Army National Guard Readiness Center in Arlington, Va., April 29, 2015. The annual ceremony recognizes states and installations that have improved efficiency and service across the organization. National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez

National Guard, told ACOE awardees at the ceremony. “It’s about striving to be better leaders, better stewards of resources, and more responsive to our Soldiers and our customers. Your collective efforts have a strategic impact, both within the Army and across the Department of Defense.”

The ACOE program — a holistic integrated business management approach to measure organizational performance — is based on the idea that communities have the greatest success supporting people when excellent services are combined with excellent facilities in a quality environment. ACOE guidelines state that Soldiers who are convinced their leaders care about them and their families perform

their mission with greater confidence.

“Although the ACOE and the Baldrige criteria are primarily business approaches, we are a business in a way,” said Col. Brian Wolhaupter, the Wisconsin National Guard’s strategic planner. “We have to be able to take those same tools and apply them to ourselves, because in the end, in an era of changing environments and constricting funds and constricting resources, the same limitations apply to us that apply to the corporate world and everywhere else.”

Wolhaupter led the effort to create Wisconsin’s 55-page ACOE submission packet, which demonstrated how the Wisconsin Army National Guard lived by

the criteria set forth in the competition.

“Just to have been considered for a site visit in the top four and then to have finished in the top two across the 54 states and territories is fantastic,” he said. “The whole ACOE journey and process isn’t about a contest — it’s about the organization and how well we understand what we’re supposed to do and how we can be better, and continuously review who our customers are, how we serve them and how we are true to ourselves. I’m incredibly proud of the team and the organization for their demonstrated excellence.”

Wolhaupter said the next step is to proactively create the desired results rather than react to undesired results.

“We know how to measure and we know how to fix problems,” he said. “We now need to place more work and efforts towards not having the problems, because we’ve anticipated them and we’ve designed a way forward that accomplishes what we want to accomplish versus fixing stumbles.”

This year’s placement is the latest in a string of recent top ACOE finishes for the Wisconsin Army National Guard. In 2012 Wisconsin was named the [overall winner](#). In 2011 Wisconsin received the Gold First Place award, or second overall. Wisconsin received a Silver Second Place finish (sixth overall) in 2010, a Gold Third Place award (fourth overall) in 2009, and a Silver First Place award (fifth overall) in 2008. Wolhaupter said maintaining this level of excellence requires dedication, commitment and buy-in from leadership.

“We have all of those things,” Wolhaupter said, “and so I am confident that not only have we done well for many years, but we’ll continue to be at the very lead of the Baldrige criteria and ACOE community in the upcoming future.”

Staff Sgt. Michelle Gonzales of the National Guard Bureau contributed to this report.

Meritorious Service

Wisconsin National Guard promotes new general officer

Vaughn R. Larson
@ease staff



Gov. Scott Walker administers the oath of office to Brig. Gen. Murray Hansen, the new Wisconsin Air National Guard chief of staff, as his wife Sharon looks on during a formal promotion ceremony May 20 in the Senate Chamber of the Wisconsin state capitol building. @ease photo by Vaughn R. Larson

MADISON, Wis. — Gov. Scott Walker promoted Brig. Gen. Murray Hansen, the Wisconsin Air National Guard chief of staff, to his present rank during a formal ceremony May 20 in the Senate Chamber of the state capitol.

During the ceremony, Walker acknowledged that he carries uniform patches from the Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard as a reminder of the service Guard members provide at the state and federal level.

“It’s not just a job — it’s an incredibly important responsibility,” Walker said, “in many cases a responsibility that others in active duty weren’t able to fulfill the way our men and women in the Wisconsin National Guard can. We understand the importance — we know that’s why it’s so important to have great leadership.”

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, praised Hansen, who comes to the Wisconsin National Guard from Robbins Air Force Base in Georgia, where he served as the Air National Guard advisor to the commander of the Air Force Reserve. Hansen also has more than 27 years of total service, and served in Operations Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

“I feel like we’re cheating a little bit,” Dunbar said. “We’ve got the finest Air National Guard in the country, and now we’ve added a man of tremendous quality to our fold. It’s like the Yankees winning all those World Series and then adding Joe DiMaggio.”

Hansen downplayed the praise, recalling his days as a first lieutenant weapons system officer for a B-52 bomber during Desert Storm.

“I’d bet money I was considered the most unlikely to reach this level in the military,” Hansen said, “not only from our crew, but I’ll double down and say the

rest of the squadron. I’ll even triple down and say that about the rest of the wing.

“I respectfully come before you with incredible humility, shock and awe.”

Hansen thanked Walker for his support of the National Guard, and Dunbar for his confidence in him.

“Sir, your standing in the National Guard across this nation is second to none,” Hansen said. “When a good friend of mine, who works with all 50 states and four territories, heard I was selected for this position in Wisconsin, he said, ‘Murray, you’ve landed in the very best place. The Wisconsin National Guard is a high-quality place with high-quality people,’ and I can’t agree more with that assessment.”

Hansen thanked family, friends, leaders, peers and subordinates for their support, and also gave thanks to God.

“To Team Wisconsin, and my new Guard family and fellow cheeseheads, you should know that I subscribe to Albert Einstein’s motto of not trying to become a man of success, but rather a man of value,” Hansen said. “That’s my goal — to add as much value to the team as possible during the time I’m allowed to serve.

“To Brig. Gen. Gary Ebben, I’m looking forward to working with and for you as your chief of staff,” he continued. “You have a fantastic team already assembled, and I’m honored to become a small part of what will surely be a great future.”

As the Wisconsin Air National Guard’s chief of staff, Hansen will command the Joint Force Headquarters Air Staff and also serve as principal advisor to Brig. Gen. Ebben, Wisconsin’s deputy adjutant general for Air, concerning the administration, operation, training, tactical employment, maintenance and supply of all Air National Guard units in the state. 🇺🇸

Meritorious Service

Wisconsin Army Guard's top officer now a top diversity advocate

Vaughn R. Larson
@ease staff

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, Wisconsin's deputy adjutant general for Army and the senior officer of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, began an additional assignment in May as the special assistant for diversity to Gen. Frank Grass, the chief of the National Guard Bureau.

In this three-year assignment — known as a dual-hat assignment — Anderson will advise Grass and other senior National Guard Bureau leaders on policies or programs that will impact diversity in the National Guard. He will also recommend new policies or programs — or changes to existing programs — that increase diversity and fosters an inclusive environment. This responsibility, Anderson explained, aims to develop a stronger organization which reflects the communities the National Guard serves.

"Personally, I view it as a fantastic opportunity," Anderson said, adding that he views the diversity initiative as one of the most significant cultural changes being implemented in the National Guard. A long-time diversity advocate — he has already served for more than four years on the National Guard Bureau Chief's Joint Diversity Executive Council, including time as the north-central region chairman, and co-chaired the Wisconsin National Guard's State Joint Diversity Council — Anderson said he recognizes the tangible and intangible value that understanding and embracing diversity and inclusion brings to an organization.

"Diversity is so much more than what we see on the outside," he said, noting that the National Guard views diversity as creating an environment where every service member has the same opportunities to reach their full potential. While gender, race and ethnicity



Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson began an additional assignment in May as the special assistant for diversity to Gen. Frank Grass, the chief of the National Guard Bureau. Wisconsin National Guard file photo

are important factors to pay attention to, Anderson said intangible elements such as societal, economic, education, religion, sexual orientation and personal values are attributes which truly define diversity.

"Diversity of thought is just as important," Anderson said. "Organizations [that bring] a multitude of differing opinions and ideas when tackling an issue will generally achieve a more positive outcome. Strategically, organizations that embrace differences of opinion, background, gender and race are going to be more proactive and agile in adapting to change."

Anderson said embracing this understanding of diversity throughout the National Guard should lead to a better

command climate, troop retention and, ultimately, mission readiness. He sees a direct correlation with the Army value of respect.

"I think most people can understand how diversity is central to living the value of respect," Anderson said. "Respecting others' opinions, values, ideals and backgrounds not only leads to better harmony within a unit but better training, and a more inclusive environment for Soldiers or Airmen to develop and achieve the goals for which they joined the military in the first place."

Diversity training is an area where Anderson said the Army, and the National Guard, can improve.

"Within the National Guard community there is an effort currently underway to provide tools to states and territories to aid in promoting diversity and inclusion, as well as articulate why diversity is important to each and every service member as well as the unit and our organization as a whole," Anderson said.

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, said Anderson brings a wealth of experience to this new role.

"Brig. Gen. Anderson is an exceptional officer and I'm proud of him," Dunbar said. "His leadership of the Wisconsin Army National Guard has been stellar, and he is a perfect fit for this new assignment on the national stage."

This is Anderson's second dual-hat assignment since becoming deputy adjutant general for Army seven years ago. In 2009 he served for three years as the deputy commanding general for the Army National Guard at the Field Artillery Center in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. In this role he was the advisor and personal representative of the U.S. Army Fires Center of Excellence commanding general in matters of doctrine, training, leader development, force structure, resource management and operational execution. 



**Tech. Sgt. Gautambhai S. Patel
Air National Guard chaplain's
assistant of the year**

**Airman 1st Class Morgan Lipinski
128th Refueling Wing**

Promoting resiliency and providing support is his job, but sincere interest in his fellow airmen's well-being is his passion. Tech. Sgt. Gautambhai S. Patel is a chaplain's assistant for the Religious Support Team here at the 128th Air Refueling Wing. He has devoted countless hours to enhancing the lives of 128th Air Refueling Wing airmen to ensure they have the support they need to be efficient in their daily lives.

In recognition for his efforts, Patel was awarded the 2014 Air National Guard Chaplain's Assistant of the Year Award.

Patel has served in the U.S. military for 19 years, with three of those years at the 128th Air Refueling Wing. In his civilian life, Patel is a police officer for the

Continued on Page 39

Air National Guard chaplain's assistant of the year

Continued from Page 38

Chicago Police Department.

Patel explained that his job as a chaplain's assistant can be challenging, but rewarding.

"My job is to be there for Airmen and give them the tools they need to balance their military and civilian lives," Patel said. "When that balance is there, there is happiness."

A chaplain's assistant is responsible for coordinating and performing self-improvement and relationship seminars, assisting in religious services, standing for religious rights, providing confidential counseling, and offering options to airmen in need.

Patel said that it takes a distinct type of person to be a chaplain's assistant. Patience, schedule flexibility and sincere care for other Airmen are a few traits he described as necessary for a chaplain's assistant to have.

Patel also explained that a chaplain's assistant must be able to adapt to a variety of work environments. Recalling his deployment to Al Udiad Air Base, Qatar, Patel said that he actively tried to get involved in the Airmen's lives by visiting

them in their work places and learning about their personal lives.

"The key is to get to know the people in your unit," Patel said. "Simply asking how someone is doing can make their day."

Chaplain's assistants follow their Airmen on deployments in order to continue their duties outside the home front.

"People leave their families behind when they deploy and that can be tough," Patel said. "Being in a new place with new people is stressful. Helping the Airmen deal with that is what we are for. We are here for support."

Outside of his duties as chaplain's assistant, Patel also found time to volunteer his services during annual military training at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, to help coordinate, transport, and execute humanitarian relief.

Patel said he was shocked upon hearing of his national recognition and felt humbled.

"I'm honored to have been selected for this award," he said. "My hard work paid off, but I couldn't have done it without the help of my fellow Airmen." 

Child and Youth Program seeks feedback

As part of the contract under which the National Guard Child and Youth Program operates, we have been asked to survey Families who have utilized Child and Youth Program resources and services from the period of June 1, 2014 to present.

We are also asking for state leadership input on the program. The purpose of this survey is to gather valuable information related to current strengths of the program as well as areas where continued development could be targeted for improvement. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure the state Child and Youth Program is adequately meeting the needs of our military-connected population.

We invite you to take a few minutes to complete the Family Member Satisfaction Survey online. You may

do this by clicking on the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2015CYSSFamilysurvey> Information gathered from this survey is completely anonymous and will only be used to improve services provided by the Child and Youth Program at the state/territory and national levels. If you are unable to complete the survey online, a PDF version is available here: <http://wisconsinmilitary.org/youth-program/youth-news/>

Please mail or email the PDF version of the survey to ATTN: Ms. Erin Berry, Eastern Region Assistant Program Manager, 434 Chase Road, Columbus, OH 43214 or erin.berry@cog-ps.com.

Survey completion and submission deadline is Aug. 10.

Troop Movements

Joint Force Headquarters

Maj. Aaron Filter has been selected as the next deputy personnel and administration officer for the Wisconsin Army National Guard. He follows **Col. Eric Killen**, who has deployed to AFRICOM.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Shannon Bohman has been named the safety and occupational health manager for the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

Joint Staff

Maj. Timothy Guy has been selected as the new deputy director for J6. He will begin these duties after completing a National Guard Bureau assignment at Andrews Air Force Base as well as the Advanced Study of Air Mobility School at McGuire Air Force Base. **Maj. Nathan Karras** will fulfill the deputy J6 director position until July 2016.

U.S. Purchase and Finance Office (USPFO)

Lt. Col. Ryan Brown has been selected as the next financial manager for the Wisconsin Army National Guard. He follows **Lt. Col. Jelora Coman**, who will assume responsibility for the Supply and Services Division from **Maj. Kevin Quist**, who is retiring.

32nd Brigade

Maj. Michael Hanson has been

selected to command the 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry Regiment. He follows **Lt. Col. Jeffrey Alston**, who was selected to be J6 director.

64th Troop Command

Maj. Nicholas Braun has been selected to be the new brigade training officer for the 64th Troop Command. He will follow **Maj. Josephine Daniels**, who has begun duties as the Human Resources Officer and Full-Time Manning Chief in the Joint Staff's Manpower and Personnel Directorate.

128th Air Refueling Wing

Lt. Col. Mike Guch has been selected to command the 128th Operations Group. He follows **Col. Jeff Cashman**, who has accepted a staff assignment with the director of the Air National Guard at the Pentagon. A change of command ceremony is scheduled for Aug. 9.

Retiree Council

The Wisconsin National Guard Retiree Council will again host a Retiree Appreciation Day Sept. 25-26 at the Wisconsin Military Academy, Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. Attendees will receive helpful information about eligibility for military retiree benefits, and more.

An announcement with reservation information will be mailed in early August. Information will also be available at the Retiree Council [website](#).



Keep up with what's happening in the Wisconsin National Guard on social media!

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Parting shot

Members of the 950th Engineer Company's Route Clearance Patrol following a promotion and awards ceremony at Bagram Airfield in May. In addition to route security, the 950th Engineer Company also provides security for a U.S. Air Force program training the Afghan air force. Task Force Solid photo

