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**ON THE COVER:** Members of the 115th Fighter Wing's 176th Expeditionary Squadron completing a combat sortie generation exercise while deployed to Kadena Air Base in Japan. The Airmen produced combat-ready aircraft for more than 25 missions per day. U.S. Air Force photo by Lt. Brian Wyman

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



Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar  
The Adjutant General

In recent years, our nation has benefitted from the advances of technology. This has affected Government, the military, businesses, and individuals. This is especially true of the internet age, which has really exploded in the past few decades and has had a dazzling impact on our daily lives. Benefits include increased productivity, better communication with personal devices, vastly increased entertainment options, and — of course — the world of social media where we can share our lives, interests, sorrows, and successes with friends and families.

Despite these advances, there is a dark side to this technology and each member of the Wisconsin National Guard must be responsible and exercise appropriate mitigation to protect themselves and their families. Almost every aspect of our lives is reduced to “0’s” and “1’s” and stored on countless databases. This provides great value for many processes, but it can also create dangers for our families.

Recently, we have seen organizations such as anonymous conduct so-called “DOXing” attacks on law enforcement personnel and a group purporting to be associated with Islamic extremism post a list of 100 military personnel on line. DOXing is the sharing of personal information with the public and can

expose families to harassment and/or danger.

As a member of the National Guard, I encourage you to take advantage of this modern world and these modern tools; however, you must exercise prudence. In the near future, we will be providing additional information and training to all personnel to try and mitigate the risk associated with a cyber profile. Social media is a positive force in our lives, but you need to ensure your profile is set with appropriate controls to mitigate the potential dangers.

None of us would go to bed without locking the doors and windows. We ensure we have emergency kits in the event of a natural disaster. We ensure we provide vaccinations to our children and make sure that their schools are safe. In this same spirit, you must ensure that you have taken reasonable steps to protect your family in the cyber world — especially your children who are likely more cyber savvy than you are, but not nearly as concerned with security.

More to come on this subject. For now, take stock of your cyber profile and do some research on how to set your social media profiles to mitigate potential risks.

A 115th Fighter Wing F-16 Fighting Falcon touches down on the flightline at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan Jan. 15. U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Zade C. Vadnais



# On mission, from Midwest to Far East

The 115th Fighter Wing is pulling double duty.

While its homeland defense mission — aerospace control alert — continues 24/7, a dozen F-16 Fighting Falcon jets took off Jan. 12 for Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan, to support a Pacific Command Theater Security Package training mission.

“We’re not going to a combat zone again, so this is a little different,” Capt. Mike Koob, departing for his third deployment, said at the unit’s sendoff ceremony in Madison. “Leaving Wisconsin in the middle of January is pretty nice, too.”

All told, roughly 250 Airmen from the 115th Fighter Wing’s 176th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron now fall under the Air Force’s largest combat unit, the 18th Wing. For several weeks, they will assist a variety of operations — including disaster relief, combating piracy, active defense,

power projection and global situational awareness.

“The deployment gives our pilots opportunities to integrate with other U.S. Air Force assets as well as joint and international partners,” said Lt. Col. Jon Kalberer, 176th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron commander and the TSP deployment commander. “The relationships we form during this deployment enhance our warfighter integration among the different military services and our allies.”

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**Gov. Scott Walker addresses members of the 176th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, part of the 115th Fighter Wing, during a sendoff ceremony Jan. 9 at the unit’s base in Madison, Wis.**

115th Fighter Wing photo by Senior Airman Andrea F. Rhode



# 115th Fighter Wing supports overseas mission and homeland defense mission

Continued from Page 4

The moment the group arrived at Kadena Air Base, their training began.

The Airmen who remain in Madison will continue their mission execution as well, according to Lt. Col. Matthew Peltier, 115th Fighter Wing Aerospace Control Alert (ACA) commander. Homeland defense remains the nation's number one priority.

"Maintaining Aerospace Control Alert mission readiness requirements during the PACOM deployment is extremely important to the 115th Fighter Wing and is a vital part of our national security," he said.

Several planning meetings and training missions prepared the Airmen.

"Prior to deploying, we have taken steps to ensure that we can simultaneously execute both PACOM and ACA mission taskings," Peltier said. "ACA is a 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days a year mission that requires very experienced Airmen who are dedicated to the mission regardless of additional deployments or taskings. It is a no-fail mission requiring specific personnel and equipment; the proper amount is essential to our success."

Peltier said key personnel were retained to conduct the unit's primary homeland defense mission.

"We have augmented primary alert positions with 'guest help' from other ACA-tasked Air National Guard units to prevent any shortfalls in personnel. We also have additional aircraft that will remain here in Madison to provide the necessary mission coverage and ensure alert pilots maintain mission readiness."

Peltier said few will notice any changes at the 115th Fighter Wing because of the PACOM deployment.

Gov. Scott Walker and Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, attended the sendoff ceremony.

"They answered the call of our nation's commander-in-chief, while still being fully prepared to respond to needs right here in Wisconsin," Walker said during his Jan. 13 State of the State address. "This is the strength of the National Guard."

Dunbar was confident in the 115th Fighter Wing's ability to conduct two significant operations simultaneously.

"These opportunities do not come along very often," Dunbar said. "The 115th Fighter Wing is one of the first National Guard units to perform this Theater Security Package mission, and I think this speaks highly of the skills and capability of the men and women in the fighter wing as well as the Wisconsin Air National Guard." 



Above, Capt. Mike Koob answers questions from local media during a Jan. 9 sendoff ceremony for the 176th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron. 115th Fighter Wing photo by Senior Airman Andrea F. Rhode  
At left, Chief Master Sgt. Gregory Cullen and Brig. Gen. Gary Ebben, deputy adjutant general for Air, greet members of the 176th Fighter Squadron during a March 4 visit to Kadena Air Base, Japan. The visit gave Wisconsin Air National Guard leadership a first-hand opportunity to see how the deployment is going. U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Stephen G. Eigel

# 115th Fighter Wing pilot reaches 3,000 flight hour benchmark during Kadena deployment

**Airman 1st Class Zackary A. Henry**  
*18th Wing Public Affairs*

KADENA AIR BASE, Japan — A Wisconsin Air National Guard pilot currently deployed to Kadena has just completed a milestone in his career, joining an elite group of just 250.

Lt. Col. Matthew C. McCunn — of the Madison, Wisconsin-based 115th Fighter Wing — completed a flight here taking him over a career total of 3,000 flight hours.

Upon landing, McCunn was surrounded by friends and family — including his sons Senior Airman Alex McCunn and Airman 1st Class Nathan McCunn, who are also deployed to Kadena with the 115th Fighter Wing — as he became soaked in water from the traditional hosing down for his accomplishment.

“In the fighter community, we accumulate flying hours at a fairly slow rate, and a little slower in the Guard than on active duty,” McCunn explained, noting that he averages around 100 sorties per year and averages 1.3 hours per sortie. While flying careers can be cut short as a result of changing military assignments, McCunn has spent his entire career as an F-16 pilot.

“I had my first F-16 sortie in November 1992, and I have been flying ever since,” he said. “Reaching 3,000 hours has been the culmination of 23 years of flying ... I feel very lucky to have been able to sustain a flying career for this long, and I still love flying the airplane.”

McCunn, a traditional Guard member, is also a full-time first officer with American Airlines, flying the Boeing 767 internationally out of Chicago O’Hare.

He has an estimated 400 total hours conducted in combat, including several deployments to places like Turkey, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iraq and Djibouti giving him a lot of experience around the world.

“I have traveled the world, had a lot of



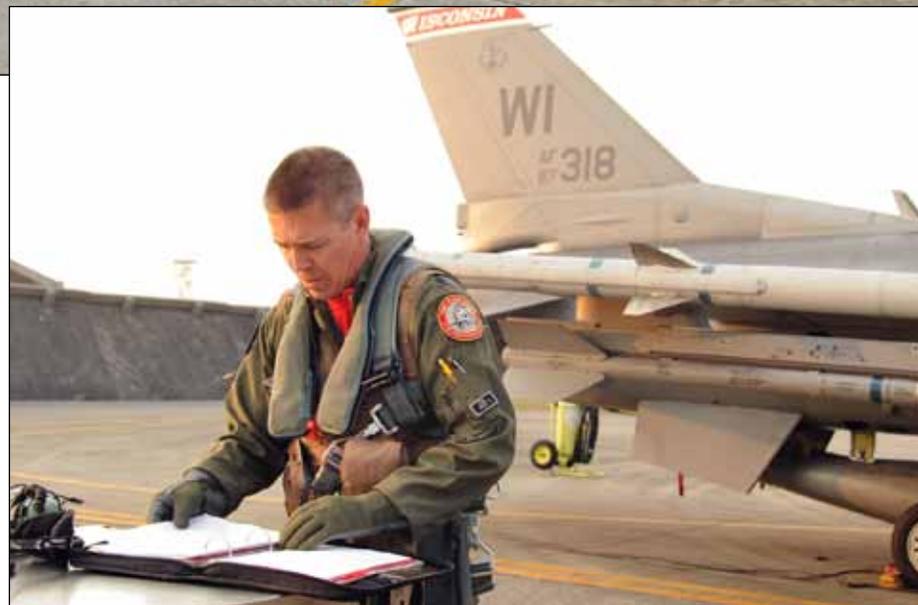
amazing experiences and made a lot of great friends,” McCunn said. “I have also had the support of an awesome family who endured moves, many missed holidays and numerous long deployments.”

McCunn said deploying with family members is a great experience, but not a unique experience in the National Guard.

“In our unit alone, I can think of dozens of second-generation Guard members or siblings that have served together,” McCunn said. “I believe it says a lot about the health and happiness of a unit when a good deal of the recruiting process comes from within the families of the unit.”

He said his sons, who have always been interested in military service, mark the third generation of service members in the McCunn family.

“This is the first major overseas deployment for both of them,” he said. “They have both worked really hard to get where they are, and it is rewarding to see them flourish in their career fields.”



**Lt. Col. Matthew C. McCunn, an F-16 pilot with the Wisconsin Air National Guard’s 115th Fighter Wing, prepares for his Feb. 13 flight at Kadena Air Base, Japan. McCunn reached a career total of 3,000 flying hours while deployed to Kadena during a joint training mission with the 18th Wing. U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Zackary A. Henry**

# ADDED SECURITY

**Spc. Jacob Chappa, 950th Engineer Company, TAAC-Air base security provides overwatch to the base's entry. Jacob is one of more than 50 members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard who provide security for Train, Advise, Assist Command - Air.** Air Force photo by Senior Master Sgt. J. LaVoie

**Senior Master Sgt J. La Voie**  
*438th Air Expeditionary Wing*

FORWARD OPERATING BASE OQAB, Afghanistan — More than 50 Soldiers of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 950th Engineer Company have taken on a new assignment — providing security for Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air, a U.S. Air Force effort to train the Afghan Air Force.

The 950th Engineer Company Soldiers conduct base security, personnel protective details and provide quick reaction response forces at two Afghan Air bases within the country — a task they perform under pressure every day where lives are at risk.

They recently responded to a shooting at one of the Afghan airbases, securing the area and helping prevent any further violence. Simultaneously, these Soldiers provided combat lifesaving care to one victim and transferred him to a hospital, saving his life.

Though they're well-trained response exhibited clear heroics on that day, it is the unit's everyday actions that allow for the TAAC-Air mission to be successful.

"We provide security for a safe training environment," said Spc. Peter Erickson, 950th Engineer Company, TAAC-Air protective service detail. "We ensure the advisors are able to do their job while focusing on advising instead of security."

The 950th Engineer Company deployed to Afghanistan to clear routes of explosive devices for coalition forces, and completed a year of training for this mission. Recently at Bagram Air Field, a 950th convoy escort team joined forces with Soldiers from the 4th Resolute Support Sustainment Brigade and civilian explosive ordnance disposal and ammunition technicians from the Joint Munitions Destruct-Afghanistan Team to safely dispose of approximately 6,000 pounds of out-of-date explosives. The 950th Soldiers established perimeter security as the munitions were unloaded and prepared for

demolition.

However, an insurgent attack this past summer on the Air Advisors' forward operating base made the need for increased security evident, and part of the 950th Engineer Company was retasked to provide base security.

"It is an interesting job to get used to," said Spc. Michael Leckel, 950th Engineer Company, TAAC-Air base security. "We were training for route clearance, but were asked to provide base security. The advisors' number one priority cannot be securing the base, running towers or the ECP. They specialize in training pilots. We are tasked with base security and we do that so they can focus on training an air force."

In addition to base security at FOB Oqab, this mission includes what is termed "Guardian Angels." In this role, these Soldiers provide personnel security for advisors while they are out training on the Afghan

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# 950th Engineer Company takes on additional security mission

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Airbase. This allows advisors to focus on growing their Afghan partner's skills and abilities in a safer environment.

"We do this so when the coalition leaves, the Afghans can sustain their own means of protection," Erickson said. "It's one of the first steps of being able to run their own country and provide people confidence in their government."

The advisors, who previously performed some base security functions themselves, appreciate the 950th Engineer Company's hard work and professionalism.

"The men and women of the Wisconsin Army National Guard are some of TAAC-Air's most valuable teammates. These Wisconsin professionals work tirelessly to ensure our safety and security 24/7," said Brig. Gen. Michael Rothstein, TAAC-Air commanding general. "I sleep soundly knowing they are at work providing a watchful eye over our compound."

"What is most remarkable is the fact that they are doing a mission they were initially not expecting to do, but they have adapted well," Rothstein continued. "Despite a year of training to conduct route clearance operations, their willingness to accept a completely different mission highlights their selfless devotion to duty and their professionalism, reflecting tremendous honor on the great state of Wisconsin and the United States Army. The Soldiers of the 950th Engineering Company will proudly say they played a vital role in building a professional, capable, and sustainable Afghan Air Force." 🇦🇫

*Sgt. 1st Class Chris Bridson of the 4th Sustainment Brigade contributed to this report.*



At left, Sgt. 1st Class Ray Heilman, with the 950th Engineer Company, pulls perimeter security for a recent demilitarizing operation near Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Jan. 10. The 950th provided security for the 4th Resolute Support Sustainment Brigade and the Joint Munitions Destruct-Afghanistan Team so that they could safely destroy approximately three tons of expired munitions at an undisclosed location nearby. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Bridson

Below, Spc. David Leggitt, 950th Engineer Company, TAAC-Air base security searches a local national before he enters the TAAC-Air base. Air Force photo by Senior Master Sgt. J. LaVoie



# MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

■ *Artillery, base defense units return to Wisconsin*

**Vaughn R. Larson**  
@ease staff

Another chapter came to a close Feb. 21 in the Wisconsin National Guard's saga in the global war on terror.

That morning, five of the six remaining Soldiers from the 32nd Base Defense Operations Center (BDOC) returned to Madison, Wisconsin following nearly a year in Kuwait — one stayed at Fort Bliss to wrap up administrative requirements. Later that afternoon, more than 30 members from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, arrived in Milwaukee, marking the end of their combat deployment in Afghanistan.

"I don't care if this is your first time coming home or your fifth, this is the best day ever," Command Sgt. Maj. Curtis Patrouille, senior enlisted advisor for the 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry Regiment, told the returning BDOC Soldiers. "So enjoy it — you've earned it."

"It makes me feel happy and proud that they're back," said Sgt. Maj. Jason Grundel, who deployed as Battery A's first sergeant and returned with half of the unit in December as part of a troop drawdown as Operation Enduring Freedom transitioned to Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

Col. David Monk, who led both the 32nd BDOC as well as the 32nd Military Engagement Team and returned with part of both units Jan. 24, was pleased to see the last BDOC Soldiers return.

"I can't say too much how thankful I am for all the effort you put in," Monk told the returning Soldiers at the Dane County Regional Airport. "Being able to run into other leaders and hearing their stories

**Soldiers from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery reunite with family and friends Feb. 21 at Milwaukee's Mitchell Field International Airport.** Wisconsin National Guard  
photo by Staff Sgt. Sean Huolihan

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# Overseas deployments wrap up for two Wisconsin Army National Guard units

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about how well you guys performed — that's not [typical].”

Sgt. Kyle Johns was responsible for ensuring people who arrived at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait had housing during their stay. This was his first deployment.

“It definitely opened my eyes to a different culture and the day-to-day customs versus how we do things in the United States,” Johns said. “I thought it was a good growing experience.”

Capt. Aaron Ammerman, Battery A commander, was glad to be back in Wisconsin — though not as pleased with the snow and cold.

“But we'll take it,” Ammerman said.

Capt. Aaron Greisen, a battle captain with the 32nd BDOC, was also not very excited about the cold.

“It was like 80 when we left [Kuwait,]” Greisen said. “I'm super excited to be back with family.”

Battery A was only the third National Guard HIMARS unit to conduct a field artillery mission in Afghanistan. Ammerman said that in itself was the best part of the nine-month deployment.

“More often than not, artillery units, especially in the Guard, that get deployed do not get to do artillery missions,” Ammerman said. “We got to do what we trained to do, take our HIMARS [launchers] over there and put rounds downrange.”

“These guys just knocked it out of the park,” Ammerman continued. “They were available 24 hours a day, seven days a week — cold, hot, rain, just like the post office. Day in and day out, they provided outstanding support to Soldiers out there conducting combat operations.”

Staff Sgt. Joshua Walsh, who served as the battery's liaison with higher echelon units, said he thought Battery A set a high standard for the National Guard in the eyes of the active duty troops they supported.

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**Capt. Aaron Ammerman, Battery A commander, listens as Wisconsin National Guard senior leaders address the returning Soldiers and their families and friends at Milwaukee's Mitchell Field International Airport Feb. 21.**



**Rita Juarez holds three-and-a-half-month-old daughter Nia while waiting for her husband, Staff Sgt. Kyle Juarez of Battery A, to arrive.**

**Staff Sgt. Kyle Juarez holds his daughter Nia for the first time. @ease photos by Vaughn R. Larson [Click on this image to see additional photos](#)**

# Wisconsin Army National Guard units complete deployments in Afghanistan, Kuwait

**Continued from Page 10**

“Our unit displayed a lot of competence and knowledge in our jobs,” Walsh said.

Grundel said the unit’s competence went beyond artillery — the National Guardsmen’s civilian experience and education made an impression on the chain of command in Afghanistan.

“They used us in numerous avenues — not only in field artillery, but other areas of the camp,” Grundel said. “We used every resource we had.”

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, deputy adjutant general for Army as well as an artillery officer, followed Battery A’s mission with keen interest.

“Each and every day I was jealous when I would get a chance to see the fantastic missions, the fantastic opportunities you had in theater,” Anderson said. “I appreciate everything you did — representing not only

yourselves in such fashion, but the Wisconsin Army National Guard.”

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, also praised Battery A.

“This is truly the finest National Guard this country’s ever had, when the Army can take Citizen Soldiers and get them ready for a mission like this, send them overseas and have them be so successful,” Dunbar said. “To each and every Soldier here, I am incredibly proud of what you do. Gov. Walker is out of the state, but he asked me to relay on his behalf and First Lady Tonette Walker how proud they are of all that you’ve done.”

“I’ve gotta tell you, 32 years in uniform, this is the best part of the job,” Dunbar continued. “Families, I know that, as good as I’m feeling to have them home, it doesn’t compare to how you feel. I know that you’ve missed them, but they’ve done a great job for our country and our state. From the bottom of my heart, great job, welcome home,

and be safe.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Shields, the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s senior enlisted advisor, told the Soldiers that their mission was not over quite yet.

“It’s very important as we move on for the next few months that you make that transition back to civilian life and being back with your families again,” Shields said. “Take the time, be understanding — people change, things have changed while you were gone, and you’ve changed as well.”

Those changes brought tears to one Soldier’s eyes. Staff Sgt. Kyle Juarez nearly missed the opportunity, via live video link, to see his daughter Nia born more than three months earlier. Feb. 21 was his first opportunity to hold his baby daughter.

“Amazing,” he said quietly. “It’s a long time coming. I’m glad [the wait] is over with.”

*Capt. Joy Staab contributed to this report*

# 112th MPAD helps tell Operation Atlantic Resolve story

**Sgt. Oscar Gollaz**

*112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Public affairs Soldiers from the Madison, Wisconsin-based [112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment](#) left a lasting impression on a major NATO operation in Europe after three weeks serving in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

The Wisconsin Army National Guard's 112th MPAD dispatched teams to Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia for three weeks, spanning from mid-February to mid-March, to provide public affairs support to U.S. Army Europe by embedding teams with the 3rd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment. The

2nd Cavalry Regiment deployed to locations across Eastern Europe in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve in January.

Atlantic Resolve is a NATO exercise led by U.S. Army Europe to test the alliance's interoperability with Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian military forces while demonstrating the U.S. military's commitment to a safe and prosperous Europe.

Nine 112th MPAD Soldiers were augmented by two additional public affairs Soldiers — one from the 32nd Infantry Brigade's public affairs team,

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**Spc. Arianna Schmitz, a broadcast journalist assigned to the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, records Soldiers from 3rd Platoon, Lightning Troop, 3rd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment during an offensive operations exercise at the Pabrade training area in Lithuania Feb. 24. Schmitz and members of the 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment supported Operation Atlantic Resolve, a cooperative military exercise in Eastern Europe. 112th Mobile Public Affairs photo by Staff Sgt. Megan Leuck**

# Wisconsin Guard public affairs unit supports NATO effort in Europe

Continued from Page 12

and another from the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. The teams produced more than 20 print stories, approximately two dozen video products, submitted more than 450 photos, escorted local media, and worked hand-in-hand with public affairs assets in each host nation.

The MPAD's products were picked up by several media outlets and marketed by embassies. Some of the unit's photos also appeared prominently on different military media platforms.

Team Poland consisted of Capt. Joe Trovato, 1st Sgt. Jim Wagner, Sgt. Oscar Gollaz, and Spc. Tianna Field. They embedded with 3rd Squadron's K Troop, and a Polish mechanized infantry unit in Drawsko Pomorskie, Poland. The team conducted media relations with local news outlets, and covered a series of joint military training exercises that included medevac, raid, mortar, and assault missions.

Capt. Emily Ytrri and Sgt. Katie Eggers made up Team Latvia. The two provided public affairs support and covered a variety of training and community engagement events. They reported on an ice plunge during a winter training exercise, an effort to chop firewood for an orphanage in a local Latvian community, medical training between Latvian and American Soldiers, and a live-fire exercise.

"This has been a great experience," said Eggers, a print journalist with the 157th MEB. "I feel very fortunate to be able to spread the word about all of the good things American and Latvian Soldiers are doing.

"Every Soldier has shown a higher level of respect for each other, no matter what the nationality," she added.

The two-person team of the MPAD's Staff Sgt. Megan Leuck and Spc. Arianna Schmitz, a broadcast journalist assigned to the 32nd Brigade, comprised Team Lithuania and supported 3rd Squadron's L Troop. The duo embedded with U.S. and Lithuanian infantrymen during a joint assault training exercise.

"This was the most realistic training I have ever covered," said Leuck, a veteran MPAD print journalist who deployed with the unit to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in 2008. "It definitely challenged me in getting action photos, but I had a good experience covering this exercise."

For Schmitz, the trip was her first significant experience performing her duties as a broadcast journalist.

"The high intensity and the abrupt, unexpected firing from both sides really increased the adrenaline and the feeling of being in a real enemy combat zone," she said.



**Soldiers with the 2nd Cavalry Regiment teamed up with Polish soldiers for live-fire training, including support from a Dragoon mortar team, during Operation Atlantic Resolve. [Click on the photo to see the video news report by Spc. Tianna Field](#)**

The trio of 1st Lt. Paul Nadolski, Sgt. Kimberly Mianiecki and Sgt. Marena Erickson traveled to Estonia. There they covered 3rd Squadron's I Troop and had the unique opportunity to participate in Estonia's independence day celebration.

"The event was an excellent opportunity to see NATO at work," said Erickson, the team's broadcast journalist, who noted that it was encouraging to see NATO countries standing side-by-side in solidarity.

Nadolski, the group's team leader, said the mission went well with some of their products hosted on the military's Digital and Video Information Distribution System and featured in the Washington Post.

"The most important thing, though, is that we told the story of what I Troop is doing here, and how they are supporting our NATO allies," he added.

"We are really appreciative of you being here and telling our story," L Troop's Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Kabat

said about the importance of public affairs to Operation Atlantic Resolve. "It's great that our friends and family are able to see what we do."

Col. John Meyer, commander of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, said that public affairs plays a significant role in Operation Atlantic Resolve.

"You're the ones that are helping us send the strategic message on the operational importance of the tactical operations that we are conducting here every single day," he said of the public affairs mission.

The message that the 112th MPAD and other public affairs assets are able to deliver during Operation Atlantic Resolve to the allied countries is that the U.S. is a credible partner in the alliance, Meyer said.

"I think it's also sending a message to any potential adversaries that the U.S. Army and NATO are here and we are here to stay," he added. "We could not get that message out without public affairs." 📷

# ENGLISH LESSON: Training mission provides real-world opportunity

Senior Airman Andrea F. Rhode  
115th Fighter Wing

Thirty-nine Airmen from the 115th Force Support Squadron, the 115th Logistics Readiness Squadron and Volk Field temporarily deployed for training (DFT) to Mildenhall Air Force Base, England, in support of the Air Force active-duty component Feb. 12-27.

The deployment allowed Airmen to integrate themselves and train alongside active-duty forces overseas, gaining vital experience they can implement at their home stations and on future deployments.

"This DFT gave our Airmen a chance to see how the active-duty side works," said Maj. Michael Dampf, DFT troop commander. "They change stations all the time and are always restarting their processes everywhere they go. We stay in the same place and have people executing similar jobs on the civilian side. The experiences we were able to share with each other were priceless."

Airmen were spread throughout the base. They worked at the fitness center, the dining facility, lodging, and other locations.

"Everyone has slots they fill at home, but we didn't necessarily put them there," Dampf said. "We put them in positions where they either had experience or needed experience, depending on where they were in their career."

Some of the Airmen went to Mildenhall to train, others to be trained. Airman 1st Class Molly Kallenbach, 115th Fighter Wing Logistics Readiness Squadron administrative specialist, came to be trained.

"This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Kallenbach said. "As an admin, we don't deploy as much as the maintenance Airmen or others who go with the jets do. It was really great that our commander found a way to get us on this deployment."

Senior Master Sgt. Richard Breister, 115th Fighter Wing Force Support



**Airmen from the 115th Fighter Wing and Mildenhall Air Force Base, England, work together during a personnel deployment function exercise at Mildenhall Feb. 19. The 115th Fighter Wing Airmen integrated with and trained alongside active-duty forces overseas for two weeks. They gained vital experience they can implement at home and on future deployments.** 115th Fighter Wing photo by Senior Airman Andrea F. Rhode

Squadron superintendent, started the search for a DFT location long before it became a reality.

"There's a system out there that active duty uses to say they need help during a particular block of time," Dampf said. "Rich goes on that system and sees who needs help and when. Then he communicates with them and once that's confirmed, he looks for airlift. You don't just get to call up a base and say 'hey, I want to come there.' They need to have a legitimate training need."

This particular time Mildenhall was looking to get ready for an upcoming management internal control toolset (MICT) inspection, so some of their noncommissioned officers were pulled out of the office to work on their checklists.

"We've been working on our MICT

checklists back home, so we brought a lot of valuable experience with us," Dampf said. "As I passed one of the windows our Airmen were in, I thought I was passing a meeting. Turns out it was one of our Airmen training an entire class."

According to Dampf, there was only one struggle the group came across during the entire deployment.

"Communication," he said. "We are so cell phone dependent that not having service made it a challenge to communicate with each other."

The challenge gave leadership a chance to develop new communication strategies. They used various wi-fi enabled applications and a Google document to keep track of everyone's work schedules and extracurricular activities.

The best part of the trip was spending

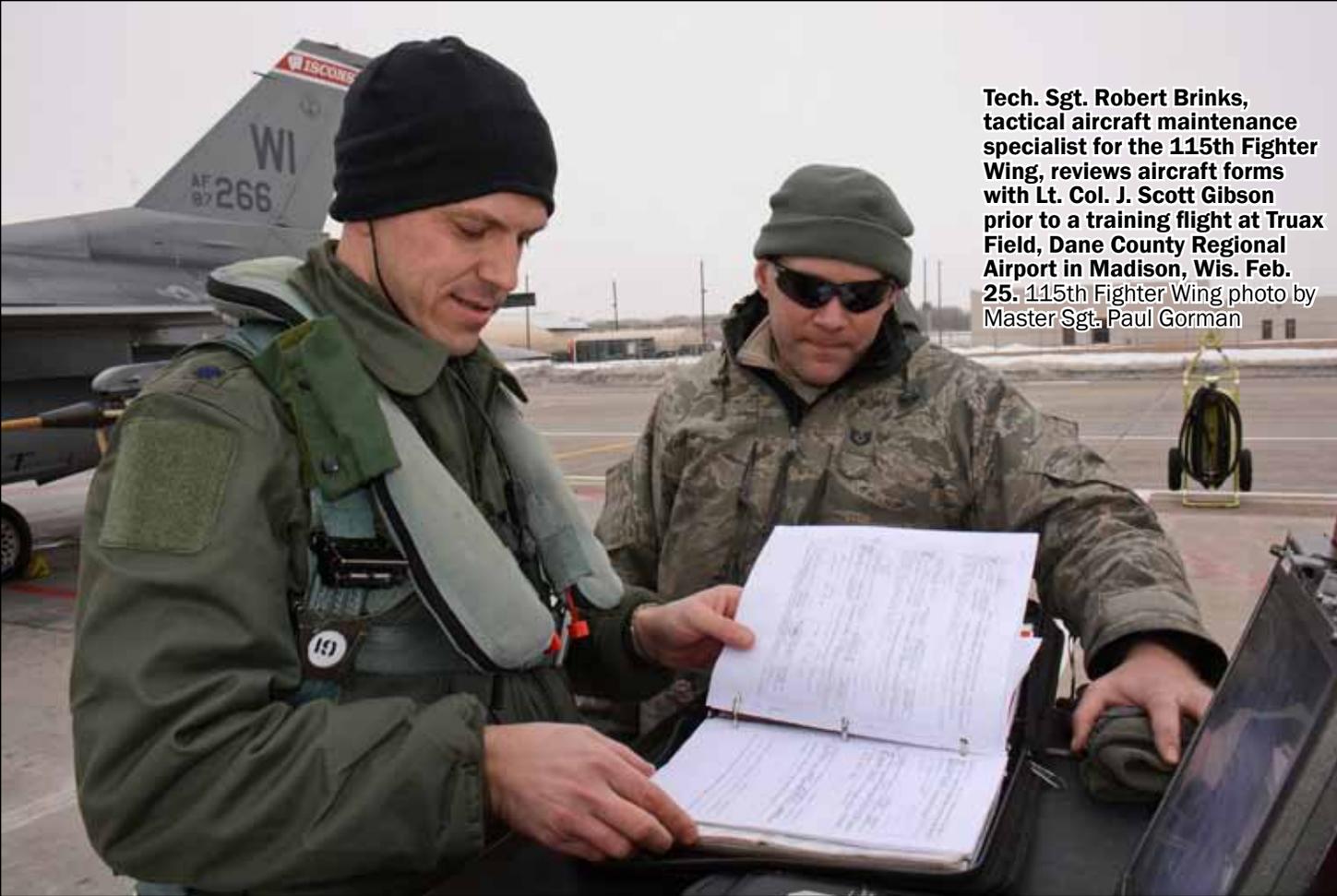
time with the Airmen, Dampf said.

"We got to know our troops better in this scenario," he said. "Two days a month isn't enough time to get to know people on a first name basis because you're busy the entire time. Here we're kind of bottled up together, and it gives us a chance to get to know everyone better."

By the time the DFT came to an end, the active-duty supervisors weren't ready to let the Airmen leave.

"The dining facility noncommissioned officer in charge said she wasn't encouraging us to count heads before we left," Dampf said. "She'd like to keep a couple of our Airmen."

This was the first DFT the Force Support Squadron has had since 2008. They are looking to get another one scheduled for next year. 📷



**Tech. Sgt. Robert Brinks, tactical aircraft maintenance specialist for the 115th Fighter Wing, reviews aircraft forms with Lt. Col. J. Scott Gibson prior to a training flight at Truax Field, Dane County Regional Airport in Madison, Wis. Feb. 25.** 115th Fighter Wing photo by Master Sgt. Paul Gorman



**Above, Lt. Col. J. Scott Gibson, commander of the 495th Fighter Group's Detachment 176, receives command from Col. James D. McCune, 495th Fighter Group commander, during a Feb. 7 assumption of command ceremony in Madison, Wis.** 115th Fighter Wing photo by Senior Airman Andrea F. Rhode

# TOTAL FORCE: Active duty Airmen call Truax Field home

**Senior Airman Andrea F. Rhode**  
115th Fighter Wing

MADISON, Wis. — Active duty Airmen officially became a part of Truax Field following a Feb. 7 assumption of command ceremony at the 115th Fighter Wing's Hangar 406.

Lt. Col. J. Scott Gibson, commander of the 495th Fighter Group's Detachment 176, stationed at Dane County Regional Airport-Truax Field, was sworn in by Col. James D. McCune, 495th Fighter Group commander.

"It is truly an honor and a privilege to stand up here and be a part of both the

495th Fighter Group and the 115th Fighter Wing," Gibson said. "It's not us, the active duty, and you, the Guard. It's just we, the Airmen of this wing."

The 495th Fighter Group, originally a training organization based in England for 18 months during World War II, was reactivated nearly two years ago at Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina with the intent of actively associating with Air National Guard and Air Reserve units to streamline training, spending and resource use.

Gibson will ultimately be responsible for 40 active duty personnel and four pilots as part of the Air Force's total force

integration.

"We're going to get young aviators, young maintainers, young support personnel, and they are going to work right alongside those of you in the Guard who have been doing this for a lot longer than they have," Gibson said.

This will be the first time active duty and Guardsmen were both stationed at Truax Field in more than 40 years. Gibson shared his excitement about combining both components, organizing the mix, and giving back to the Combat Air Force (CAF).

"We're going to give back to the CAF," he said. "We're going to give them more experience, better aviators, better

maintainers and better support personnel."

McCune wrapped up his speech by directing advice to the new commander.

"You were picked specifically for the talents you have, so don't ever change who you are," McCune said. "I charge you to lead with empathy — to look into and understand each one of these Airmen. Everyone brings something to the table and it's your job to figure out how they fit into that team and how to get the most out of them so this team can operate at high levels. All of these wonderful Airmen here are a great privilege and responsibility. It is your job to serve them, not the other way around." 🇺🇸

# Saluting Soldiers for service



**Staff Sgt. Matthew Ard**  
*Wisconsin National Guard*

Gov. Scott Walker and senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders were on hand for a Freedom Salute ceremony Feb. 7 in Middleton, Wisconsin. The ceremony honored the service and sacrifices made by Soldiers of three Wisconsin Army National Guard units that returned home in December.

Soldiers from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, a high-mobility artillery rocket system (HIMARS) unit based in Sussex, Wisconsin, **returned home** in December with 41 Soldiers. Approximately half of the unit remained deployed in Afghanistan. They returned home in late February.

Nearly 160 Soldiers from the Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin-based **829th Engineer Company** were mobilized and deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom to conduct retrograde operations as part of the larger drawdown of U.S. forces in the region.

**Continued on Page 17**

**Gov. Scott Walker addresses Soldiers from three Wisconsin Army National Guard units that recently returned from Afghanistan at a Freedom Salute event Feb. 7 in Middleton, Wisconsin.** Wisconsin National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Ard

# Ceremony salutes recently returned units for Afghanistan service

Continued from Page 16

Six pilots and one operations noncommissioned officer from Detachment 52 Operational Support Airlift Command, a C26 aircraft unit based in Madison, Wisconsin, also **returned in December** and joined the other two Wisconsin Army National Guard units for the Freedom Salute event.

The Freedom Salute Campaign publically honors returning Citizen-Soldiers and their families for their service to their country.

As part of the ceremony, each Soldier receives a folded American flag in an engraved wooden case. A portion of the engraving on the display case reads "Your service will never be forgotten."

Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley J. Shields, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's senior enlisted advisor, spoke at the ceremony.

"You're at a different place in your life now," he said. "You're much more skilled and your leadership has developed tremendously. Be understanding as you go through this transitional period.

"This night is for you. It is to recognize you on your tremendous accomplishments," Shields added.

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, the state's assistant adjutant general for the Wisconsin Army National Guard, praised the newly minted veterans for their service and their accomplishments.

"Each and every one of you had a very unique mission, and each and every one of you accomplished that mission," he said.

Battery A provided 24-hour HIMARS fire support to a joint special operations task force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. They supported more than 200 combat missions and provided coverage for nearly half of Afghanistan. They were among the first National Guard artillery units to conduct a fire support mission in Afghanistan.



Of those Battery A Soldiers who returned in December, 14 were awarded the Combat Action Badge which provides recognition to Soldiers who personally engage or are engaged by the enemy during combat operations.

Meanwhile, the 829th Engineer Company completed more than 132,000 troop labor hours and reduced more structures than any other engineer company during their deployment. The unit executed its mission while spread out between four different locations and two regional commands in Afghanistan.

They successfully closed three forward operating bases while deployed.

"Our mission was to reduce the footprint of NATO forces overseas," said 1st Lt. Michelle Lachat, company executive officer of the 829th. She talked about how the unit worked closely with other NATO forces from the countries of Germany and Poland throughout the deployment.

Lachat spoke about what she had learned during her experiences in

Afghanistan. She said that the importance of being part of the journey and being part of the moment are some of the things that she will take home with her.

Pfc. Brian Cutberth, a Soldier in the 829th, said that he had an overall positive experience and that the deployment really put things into perspective. He said it made him thankful and grateful for the things that he has here at home.

The Soldiers of Detachment 52 provided day and night, all-weather airlift missions transporting critical personnel throughout the Afghanistan theatre of operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The pilots logged a combined 950 flight hours transporting NATO dignitaries and more than 260 distinguished visitor operations missions inside Afghanistan and to surrounding countries. They earned six Air Medals and one Army Commendation Medal.

"When your country called you to deploy into harm's way in a difficult part

of the world to do difficult missions you didn't bat an eye," said Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, the adjutant general of Wisconsin.

"This weekend is about you as Soldiers and your country saying we care," Dunbar said.

The Soldiers spent time learning about the many benefits they had now earned as veterans.

"For all of you, we're proud to have you back here in the state of Wisconsin," said Gov. Scott Walker.

"This weekend is important because it is to reaffirm not just the support that you gave for each other while deployed, but now that you have the tools, the talent and the abilities to support your family and to support each other," Walker said.

"I can see the enthusiasm and I can feel the buzz in the room," the governor said. "It's exciting."

He made a point to thank the returning Soldiers for their service, support and their courage throughout their deployments. 🇺🇸

**Medals and certificates await Soldiers from three Wisconsin Army National Guard units that recently returned from Afghanistan at a Freedom Salute event Feb. 7 in Middleton, Wisconsin. Soldiers from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, the 829th Engineer Company and Detachment 52 of the Operational Support Airlift Command were all present at the ceremony.** Wisconsin National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Ard

# Fanfare and colors



Members of the Wisconsin National Guard's 132nd Army Band perform a processional trumpet fanfare to open the 2015 inauguration ceremony for Gov. Scott Walker Jan. 5 at the state capitol. @ease photo by Vaughn R. Larson

**Vaughn R. Larson**  
@ease staff

MADISON, Wis. — The Wisconsin National Guard continued a tradition dating back to the 19th century by supporting the governor's Jan. 5 inauguration ceremony.

In the closing days of 1881, Edwin Bryant, Wisconsin's adjutant general, ordered four companies — the Oshkosh Rifles, Fond du Lac Guard, South Side Turner Rifles, and the Burchard Guard — to rendezvous at Madison on Jan. 2, 1882 “for the purpose of being present at the inauguration of the governor and state officers elect.”

While Gov. Jeremiah Rusk enjoyed a robust military display for his inauguration more than 130 years ago, this year's ceremony for Gov. Scott Walker was much more low-key, with a color guard and the 132nd Army Band performing select works.

“I am particularly grateful to the members of the 132nd Army Band and all of the other members of the Wisconsin National Guard,” Walker said during his second inaugural address, “not only for your services today, but for the ongoing support of our many brave men and women who are deployed even as we speak. Our prayers go out to each and every one of you.”

**Continued on Page 19**



**Wisconsin National Guard members Sgt. Oscar Gollaz, Master Sgt. Paul Gorman, Staff Sgt. Matthew Ard and Staff Sgt. Bradley Shinnick present the colors during the 2015 inauguration ceremony for Gov. Scott Walker Jan. 5 at the state capitol. @ease photo by Vaughn R. Larson [Click on this photo to see additional photos](#)**

# Wisconsin National Guard supports governor's inauguration ceremony

**Continued from Page 18**

Warrant Officer 3 Brad Anderson, 132nd Army Band director, said the concert ensemble spent three drill weekends preparing for the inauguration.

“[The music selection] depends a lot on what the governor’s staff is requesting,” Anderson explained after the ceremony. “For instance, last time there was the ‘Badger Boys March’ because the governor went to Badger Boys camp. If it’s left to us, we try to get a toe-tapper — something patriotic, something that references Wisconsin. Today we did ‘Wisconsin Forward Forever,’

of course, ‘On Wisconsin,’ and we were going to do the ‘32nd Division March’ but we didn’t have time for that one.”

In addition to the band and color guard, key Wisconsin National Guard members assisted with pre-ceremony arrangements and escorted VIPs to their places prior to the ceremony. These services are provided not just out of tradition — the office of Wisconsin adjutant general is a state office, and the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs consists of state civilians as well as Wisconsin National Guard members. The 132nd Army Band and color guard appearances are coordinated through the

Wisconsin National Guard Public Affairs Office’s community relations officer.

Anderson has directed the 132nd Army Band for three inaugural ceremonies, and noted that it is a little more difficult to arrange for traditional Guard members who drill on weekends to be available for a weekday performance.

“But they know the importance of the event,” Anderson said. “I’m pretty sure I can speak to their excitement when you get to play in a setting like that. We have the most beautiful capitol, and it’s a treat to play in there.” 📷

# Remembering a fallen Arrow

Vaughn R. Larson  
@ease staff

CAMP WILLIAMS, Wis. — In an auditorium inside the headquarters of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Soldiers, family members and friends gathered Jan. 10 to remember a fallen comrade, husband, father and community leader.

Staff Sgt. Todd Olson was a squad leader with Company C, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment when he was wounded by an improvised explosive device during a foot patrol near Samarra, Iraq Dec. 26, 2004. He died of his injuries the following day at an Army hospital in Tikrit, Iraq — the first Red Arrow Soldier and second Wisconsin National Guard Soldier to die in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

At 36, Olson was one of the older Soldiers in his company — some of the Soldiers he served with were only a few months removed from high school.

But he was also a school board member, a youth football coach, an agricultural loan officer and bank vice president, a husband and a father of four. He was fond of dispensing quotes from the movie “Blazing Saddles.”

“Todd was a great leader — he always led from the front,” said Peter Ashbeck, Olson’s company commander for the deployment. Indeed, Olson was in the “point,” or lead position, on the foot patrol at the time of the attack. “A lot of the guys in this room can attest to how he really took the younger guys under his wing — he was looked at as a father figure.”

Olson’s influence was felt long before he joined the National Guard.

“When you think of Todd, you think of a lot of words — very smart, very wise beyond his years, even as a kid,” said Michael Olson, Olson’s cousin. “He was like a big brother, not just a cousin. It’s amazing how much I learned from the guy.”

“You think of leadership, intelligence, how



Staff Sgt.  
Todd Olson

responsible he really was, and when you hear stories from when he was in Charlie Company it really all makes sense,” Michael continued. “There was something special about him — he had an impact on a lot of people. I think it’s a good day that we’re all together and able to remember a hero like that.”

Allen Taylor, Olson’s brother-in-law and a former 82nd Airborne Soldier, recalled telling Olson during a sendoff party that the family was already proud of him and he did not need to do anything heroic during the deployment.

“That’s not my intent,” he told me. “But I’ve got a lot of young Soldiers I’ve got to take care of,” Taylor said. “That’s my intent.”

One of those young Soldiers was Chris Zifko. He said that despite the age difference, he could talk with Olson about anything — though his lack of experience sometimes annoyed the elder noncommissioned officer.

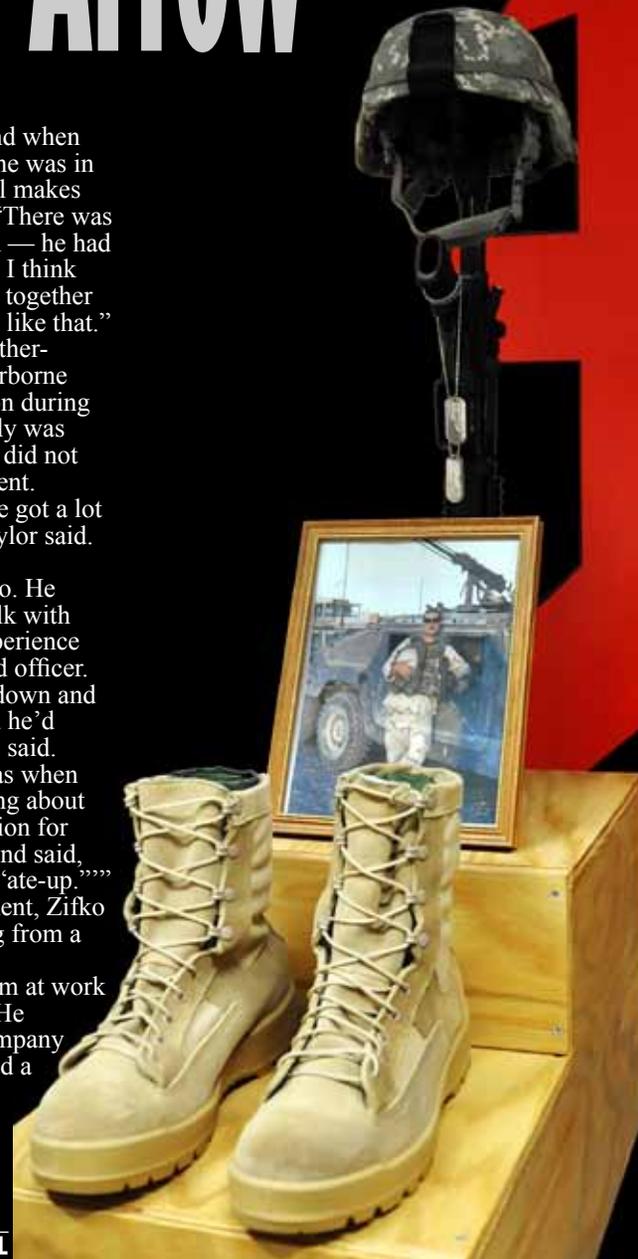
“I was green as green can get, and we’d sit down and talk and joke, and I’d say something stupid and he’d say, ‘What are you talking about, man?’” Zifko said. “The very last conversation I had with Todd was when I was walking past him and someone was talking about someone being ‘ate-up,’” — a military expression for being mistake-prone — “and he looked at me and said, ‘Zifko, you’d know a thing or two about being ‘ate-up.’”

While some might take offense at the comment, Zifko indicated it was tough but good-natured ribbing from a respected leader — and still potent, years later.

“That sticks with me,” Zifko said. “When I’m at work and feeling lazy, that comes back to my mind. He embodies leading. He was the voice for our company — he was always looking out for us, always had a positive attitude, even if it didn’t always come across that way.”

Olson was described as a straight talker, particularly if blunt language helped his squad, platoon or company.

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“

You see Todd in them every day, in the things they do and say. The way my sons take care of their children and get involved in their communities and support others is definitely part of who Todd was also.

— Nancy Olson



[Click on this photo to see additional photos](#)

# Ceremony recalls first Red Arrow Soldier killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom

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“Part of being a good leader is being a good follower,” Ashbeck said, “and part of being a good follower was occasionally having the candor to say, ‘Sir, that’s a stupid idea.’ He did that whenever he felt he needed to, in his own diplomatic kind of way.”

Olson also stepped up when needed. Michael Dosland, who commanded the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment during that deployment, recalled seeing Olson take charge of his platoon during a mobilization training exercise at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

“Todd was a little nervous — I don’t know if it was because I was there or if it was because he was being put in the platoon leader role,” Dosland said. “Based on what Pete said, Todd probably wasn’t nervous about being in the platoon leadership role — he was accustomed to stepping up and taking that. One thing I took away from that day was I knew we

had a capable NCO in Todd because the other NCOs followed him and the Soldiers readily followed him. He had the trust of those Soldiers.”

That observation ultimately led Dosland to select Company C to operate out of a patrol base near Samarra, Iraq, about 30 minutes north of Forward Operating Base O’Ryan where the battalion headquarters and Company A were located.

“We had a variety of criteria, and both [Alpha and Charlie] companies stacked up equal except for one thing — the NCO corps,” Dosland explained. “We knew that Samarra was going to be a significant mission for Charlie Company, and probably the most dangerous mission the battalion had. We knew it was going to be a small-unit fight — it was going to be squad-level, platoon-level operations for the entire duration. When you get to squad-level and platoon-level, you’ve got

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**Peter Ashbeck, former commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s Company C, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment, recalls Staff Sgt. Todd Olson during a command remembrance ceremony Jan. 10 at Camp Williams, Wis. @ease photos by Vaughn R. Larson**

# Red Arrow Soldier remembered one decade later

Continued from Page 21

to have good NCOs. We felt the NCO corps for Charlie Company was just a little more experienced.

“I don’t want to take anything away from the leadership of Charlie or the leadership of Alpha, but it came down to the NCO corps, and Todd was an important member of that NCO corps,” Dosland continued. “So we chose Charlie Company to go to Samarra.”

The day Olson was wounded was the same day the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment officially took over its mission at FOB O’Ryan.

“That night I get a call — we’ve got our first casualty,” Dosland recalled. “That is not supposed to happen on your first day.”

A few days after his death, the patrol base near Samarra was renamed **Patrol Base Olson**.

“His loss had a galvanizing effect on the unit,” Ashbeck recalled. “The building that we lived in bore his name — it was kind of like he was watching over us. We became more focused, our missions took on more meaning.”

“His death sent a shock through our battalion,” Dosland added. “It brought everyone together — it brought everybody’s game up a little.”

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, deputy adjutant general for Army, was the 32nd Brigade deputy commander 10 years ago, and related the difficulty of going to the Olson family twice to inform them that Staff Sgt. Olson had been seriously wounded, and then that he had died.

“Everything that has been spoken about Todd tells me what a phenomenal man he was, what a phenomenal son, father, husband,” Anderson said. “We talk



**Trevor Olson and his 2-year-old son Todd in front of a memorial display for Trevor’s father, Staff Sgt. Todd Olson, following a command remembrance ceremony Jan. 10 at Camp Williams, Wis. Staff Sgt. Olson, a squad leader with the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s Company C, 1st**

**Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment, died Dec. 27, 2004 from injuries sustained from an improvised explosive device the previous day while on foot patrol in Samarra, Iraq. He was the first Red Arrow Soldier to die in combat since World War II. @ease photo by Vaughn R. Larson**

about having a legacy. I think, to a person, we all hope we leave an impression on the world. I can tell you, Todd’s legacy lives on in the men and women standing in uniform.

“You are always family members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard,” Anderson said to the Olson family. “You are always a part of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Todd’s legacy is before us, but really, Todd’s legacy lives on in the men and women wearing the

Red Arrow on their shoulder.”

Nancy Olson, Staff Sgt. Olson’s widow, said she could see her husband’s legacy in her children.

“You see Todd in them every day, in the things they do and say,” she said. “The way my sons take care of their children and get involved in their communities and support others is definitely part of who Todd was also. We definitely feel the loss. Todd was the foundation of our family.”

Trevor Olson, Todd and Nancy’s oldest

son, shared the last conversation he had with his father — and in doing so summed up his father’s character.

“The last talk I had with my father, we were talking about love,” Trevor said. “He said, ‘Trevor, you know when you’re really in love?’ I was baffled by that question. I was 16 years old — I didn’t know what to say. [He said] ‘Anything in this world that you love, you will put before yourself, whether it is your wife, your country, your family and friends.’”

# Wisconsin Guardsman receives long-awaited Purple Heart

**Sgt. Katie Eggers**

*157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade*

Wisconsin Army National Guard Spc. Alexander Zerbst received the Purple Heart Medal during a ceremony Sunday, Feb. 8 at the Richards Street Armory in Milwaukee.

The medal was awarded to Zerbst for wounds received when his vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device while he was deployed to Iraq in 2007. At the time of the attack, Zerbst was serving with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Troop E, 105th Cavalry.

"Everything kicked in," said Zerbst of the incident. "Instinct and training kicked in. We just kind of kept going and didn't think too much of it. The vehicle was still running and drivable, so we just kept going to where we needed to get to."

Both Zerbst and the other Soldier in his vehicle were monitored for 24 hours after the incident. After that initial period, they were able to return to working and completing missions.

"That definitely felt good, because out of a unit of almost 200 soldiers we only had five of us that were qualified on the equipment to run the wreckers," Zerbst said. "Losing one would put a lot more strain on the other guys."

Zerbst sustained a traumatic brain injury and some permanent hearing loss on one side as a result of the IED. His unit submitted him for the Purple Heart Medal after his return from Iraq in 2008.

"When this particular injury was happening, the Purple Heart was designed for combat wounds, and the Army didn't recognize the type that he sustained," said Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general.

The Army has since recognized the types of injuries Zerbst sustained, Dunbar said, but it was a long process to document and prove that the Soldier deserved the medal.



**Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, the adjutant general of Wisconsin, presents the Purple Heart Medal to Spc. Alexander Zerbst, a Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldier from Oconomowoc, Wis., at Richards Street Armory in Milwaukee Feb. 8. Zerbst received the medal after being injured in an improvised explosive device attack in Iraq in 2007.** Wisconsin National Guard photo by Sgt. Katie Eggers

"We supported him 100 percent of the way, and he's doing a great job for us," Dunbar said. "We're really proud of him."

"So while this award is delayed, we never stopped pressing to make sure that we honored this Soldier for his courage."

Dunbar awarded Zerbst the Purple Heart alongside Lt. Col. Michael Murphy, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 426th Regiment, and Zerbst's battalion commander during his deployment. Zerbst was also congratulated by Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, assistant adjutant general for the Wisconsin Army National Guard, Col. John Schroeder, commander of the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, Lt. Col. Matthew Beilfuss, Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Shields, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's senior noncommissioned

officer, and Command Sgt. Maj. Ralph Rosemore.

"It's an honor," said Zerbst. "It's surprising to see everyone that came out. I'm very grateful that they did, especially my family."

Zerbst was accompanied by his wife, Sarah, their two sons, Owen, 5, and Carter, 1, and his parents, Debra and Dean. Both Zerbst and his wife felt like this was a long time coming.

"I was in shock, just like he was," Sarah said about hearing news of the award. "It's humbling to know that he is going to be one of those very few people that are recognized for what he sustained overseas."

Zerbst is still dealing with his injuries from that day in October 2007. He said he works every day to adapt to or work with

the changes in his life. He is humble about the whole experience.

"It is a great honor," he said. "It's kind of overwhelming to really think about the fact that others that have gotten the similar award are in a lot worse situations."

Zerbst has shared his story with other Soldiers in the hopes that they will learn from his experiences. He hoped to encourage other Soldiers to overcome obstacles.

"Don't get too settled in the way of what you think is going to happen," Zerbst said. "No matter how different stuff might go, or how wrong it may seem like it's going, or how bad it might seem, everything does end up working out in the end for you. But you've got to be ready for it." 🇺🇸

# Training for real

**Staff Sgt. Matthew Ard**  
*Wisconsin National Guard*

Soldiers from the 273rd Engineer Company and Airmen from the 115th Fighter Wing teamed up for a weekend of training at the Regional Emergency All-Climate Training Center (REACT), at Volk Field, Wisconsin, March 7.

The REACT Center is a training complex that encompasses a wide variety of training options for units that specialize in technical rescue operations.

Both units make up the Wisconsin National Guard's CERFP — or CBRNE (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high explosive) Enhanced Response Force Package. CERFPs are able to locate and extract victims from a contaminated environment and are ready to deploy within six hours of notification.

"Being able to have access to facilities such as the REACT and the ability to work and integrate with the Air Force allows us to develop scalable, tailored, adaptable and ready Soldiers so that they can be available to do their mission anywhere, anytime," said 1st Sgt. Eric Johansen, the 273rd's senior enlisted leader.

"You can sit in a classroom and you can talk about injuries and you can talk about pulling people out but we're able to come here and they actually set up scenarios," said Master Sgt. Thomas Wastart, a leader of the search and rescue team for the 115th.

Wastart has been in the Air National Guard for 12 years with parallel experience on the civilian side as a firefighter and

**Soldiers and Airmen with the CERFP are lowered into a confined space to perform search and extraction training at the REACT Center at Volk Field, Wis., March 7.** Wisconsin National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Ard

emergency medical service provider.

"It's a whole different ballgame as far as training goes," he said. "We can kind of put all our medical training together."

The two units worked in teams consisting of both Soldiers and Airmen to conduct operations such as confined space rescue, shoring and search and extraction.

Confined space rescue training at the REACT Center is set up to mimic a collapsed building with extremely tight spaces where trainees can get a feel for what a real-life scenario would be like. Shoring of collapsed buildings can require an enormous amount of tedious, grueling and sometimes pain-staking effort on the part of rescuers, and the REACT Center offers the capability to train military members and others for events where these skills are necessary.

"We're there as a first responder," said Staff Sgt. Josh Steffens of the 273rd. Steffens explained how the CERFP maintains its readiness by training on a regular basis in order to provide search and rescue support to victims during catastrophic events.

"If anything happens, we're the guys to call," Steffens said. He highlighted the fact that there are a number of people within the unit that work as firefighters as civilians which gives them an added advantage.

The units spent the day simulating different ways that victims could become trapped inside collapsed structures where the integrity of the building is compromised and unstable. They built makeshift support structures to shore up walls and used special techniques to move enormous blocks of concrete by hand. They used jack hammers to break up reinforced concrete and did a variety of classes on rigging and knot-tying, all while

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# CERFP Soldiers, Airmen hone skills for domestic disaster response

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keeping in mind the safety of the people whom they may need to rescue.

“The end goal is to get to that patient,” Wastart said.

Once reached, the patient is immediately treated for any life-threatening injuries and prepared for extraction. The 115th medics are specially trained to deal with injuries that are common to disaster-type scenarios and can provide medical support on-the-fly in just about any situation.

“If there was an event, something catastrophic, the unit would respond along with other elements of the CERFP as a whole,” said Sgt. Sean Schemenauer, a team leader with the 273rd.

The CERFP trains at the REACT Center at least twice per year and sometimes as many as five times per year, said Capt. Jared Siverling, 273rd commander.

“I would be hard-pressed to find another unit in the state in a traditional drilling status that does more training than we do,” Siverling said.

Scott Hall, a senior instructor with the REACT Center since 2007, oversees units like the 273rd and 115th who come here to train. Hall is a seasoned expert who has about 20 years of experience in the field of urban search and rescue.

“They’re remembering and retaining what they’re learning,” Hall said of the CERFP.

Rigging and knot tying, as well as medical treatment techniques, are considered perishable skills and require regular practice to maintain proficiency.

Siverling spoke to the CERFP’s joint status, with the Army and Air National Guard working hand-in-hand.

“We have the same mission — we’re just going to fall in together and execute,” Siverling said. The two units train together on a regular basis which enhances their readiness and breaks down barriers in communication which can lead to life-threatening consequences when carrying out a mission.

“It just makes our team much more diverse, much more robust,” Siverling said. The 273rd is equipped to deploy rapidly and Soldiers have become very proficient at their jobs due to the training provided at the REACT Center.

“That’s why I feel so proud to be a part of this company,” Steffens said. 📷



**Above, Soldiers from the 273rd Engineer Company remove a simulated injured patient from a collapsed structure as part of a joint training exercise at the REACT Center at Volk Field, Wis., March 7.**

**At right, Soldiers and Airmen work as a team to extract a patient using a special rig.** Wisconsin National Guard photos by Staff Sgt. Matthew Ard





# Iron Brigade's new leaders forge on

**Col. David O'Donahue accepts the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade colors from Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, Wisconsin's assistant adjutant general for Army, during a change of command ceremony Feb. 8 at Richards Street Armory in Milwaukee.** Wisconsin National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Ard

**Capt. Joe Trovato**  
*Wisconsin National Guard*

One of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's largest troop formations has a new command team at the helm after a formal ceremony in Milwaukee Feb. 8.

The nearly 1,700-Soldier 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, known as the "Iron Brigade," bid farewell to outgoing commander Col. John Schroeder and Command Sgt. Maj. Ralph Rosemore after nearly two years leading the brigade. Col. David O'Donahue and Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Sullivan replaced them.

For their efforts in shaping the Iron Brigade, Schroeder and Rosemore were each awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. Schroeder will become the Wisconsin Army National Guard's next chief of staff, while Rosemore will take over as the operations sergeant major in the 64th Troop Command.

In his final remarks to the 157th, Schroeder thanked his family, the Soldiers and the unit's family readiness group leaders for their efforts.

"I will tell you there is no greater honor that can be bestowed on an officer than to command troops in the Wisconsin Army National Guard or the National Guard," he said. "I've always said that your worst day as a commander will beat the best day as a staff officer any day of the week. Commanding troops is what every officer should aspire to in the Wisconsin Army National Guard."

He went on to praise the brigade's battalion leadership teams and the service of his brigade command sergeant major.

"Command Sgt. Maj. Rosemore, I could not have asked for a better battle buddy for the past couple of years," Schroeder said.

In his last official act as commander, Schroeder passed the brigade colors to Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, Wisconsin's assistant adjutant general for Army, who then presented them to Col. O'Donahue, formally completing the change of command.

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# Iron Brigade welcomes new command team

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“To Col. O’Donahue, I think you’re getting a great unit,” Schroeder said. “I think you’re absolutely the perfect person to take it to the next level.

“The quality of Soldier we have today in the National Guard is phenomenal,” he continued, “and I’m just very encouraged that the future of the National Guard is in good shape with the quality of Soldiers we have today.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Rosemore was grateful for the opportunity to serve as the senior enlisted leader of the brigade for two years.

“Through that, I grew tremendously as a leader, and it was only because of the formation that stands before me right now,” Rosemore said. “Because every time you put on your boots and you stepped around and you start working with each other, you learn stuff from each other. You have made me a lot better leader with everything that I have learned from you throughout these last 24 months.”

He thanked the Soldiers and leaders for their hard work and dedication to making the unit better in all facets.

“I charge you with the same responsibility,” the outgoing command sergeant major said. “Make this formation stronger and better and learn from each other every day.”

During their time as a command team, Schroeder and Rosemore deployed multiple units and hundreds of Soldiers from the 157th to Afghanistan including both **Battery A** and **Battery B** from the 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, the **829th Engineer Company** and the **950th Engineer Company**.

They also oversaw major domestic emergency operations.

“This unit is doing extraordinary things for the defense of our country, and it takes great Soldiers, and it takes great leadership,” said Maj. Gen. Donald



**Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, Wisconsin’s adjutant general, awards the Meritorious Service Medal to Col. John Schroeder, the outgoing commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade,**

**during a change of command ceremony at Richards Street Armory in Milwaukee Feb. 8. Schroeder was succeeded by Col. David O’Donahue.** Wisconsin National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Ard

Dunbar, Wisconsin’s adjutant general. “Col. Schroeder and Command Sgt. Maj. Rosemore, you guys have done a phenomenal job. I’m very proud of you.”

After praising Schroeder and Rosemore for their work, Dunbar made note of Col. O’Donahue’s strong leadership pedigree. He formerly commanded the 724th Engineer Battalion in combat with elements from the Pennsylvania and Puerto Rican National Guard. He also served as the deputy commander of the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

“To Maj. Gen. Dunbar and Brig.

Gen. Anderson, thank you so much for the trust and the opportunity given to me,” O’Donahue said. “I will not let you down.”

“And finally to the men and women of the Iron Brigade, I can’t tell you what a really distinct honor it is to command this unit,” he said. “It’s hard for me sometimes to put it into words what that means to me. I look so forward to the next few years.”

After receiving the brigade colors from Brig. Gen. Anderson, O’Donahue entrusted them to his new brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Sullivan, who

recently returned to the United States after a **deployment** with the 32nd Infantry Brigade to the Middle East.

“I look forward to working with each one of you and getting to know each one of you and carrying on the fine traditions of the Iron Brigade,” Sullivan said standing before the Soldiers for the first time.

“I’d like to say, ‘Good luck and God speed,’ to Command Sgt. Maj. Rosemore and Col. Schroeder,” he added.

With that, a new chapter in the storied history of the Iron Brigade began. 🇺🇸

# Training IN THE sticks

**Senior Airman Andrea F. Rhode**  
*115th Fighter Wing*

Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Airmen from the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 115th Fighter Wing applied their expertise to solve a real-world problem during a March 7 training exercise in Finley, Wisconsin.

The Airmen supported the Juneau County Forestry Department by clearing a beaver dam, allowing water to drain properly and preventing further forest destruction and flooding throughout the local area.

"Last year our department was informed, by an adjacent private landowner, of significant flooding occurring in a remote area of the Juneau County Forest," said Brian Loyd, Juneau County Forestry Department administrator. "The flooding was impacting the county forest as well as backing up on the neighbor's land."

After investigating the flooded areas, a series of beaver dams were located in a drainage ditch used to drain a significant area in northern Juneau. The remote location and high water table prevented heavy duty machinery from entering the area to clear the way. Another solution was needed.

Following conversations at Hardwood Range about the dam, Loyd was put in contact with Senior Master Sgt. Ed Smith, 115th Fighter Wing EOD superintendent. In coordination with Wisconsin Air National Guard leadership, Wisconsin Emergency Management and the adjutant general, Smith gained approval to fulfill this request for assistance as a real-world training opportunity for his young Airmen.

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# Wisconsin Air Guard training exercise yields explosive results

Continued from Page 28

The Juneau County Forest Department and the 115th Fighter Wing EOD team worked together to ensure safety precautions were followed and a plan was well distinguished ahead of time.

“Demolition training of this nature would typically be accomplished on Hardwood Range, and would not show

the working potential of the explosives like this did,” said Master Sgt. Gilbert Holcomb, 115th Fighter Wing EOD flight resources non-commissioned officer in-charge. “Everything went as planned.”

The team started by using two shape charges on the top of the dam.

“This provided two cylindrical holes in which we could place our main charges of dynamite and C-4,” Holcomb said. “The

main charges removed the dam and allowed the free flow of the retained water.”

The team was able to use the opportunity to train its Airmen and help the local community at the same time.

“EOD did an excellent job and accomplished the dam removal,” Loyd said. “Water was already beginning to drain rapidly through the channel. The Juneau County Forestry Department

greatly appreciates the effort and skill used.”

The dam removal was part of a 10-day training exercise EOD Airmen participated in at Volk Field Air National Guard Base, Wisconsin. They were able to see a 40-pound shape charge, a 15-pound shape charge, 20-pounds of C-4, 20-pounds of dynamite, and 120 feet of detonation cord in action, vital training for the team. 🇺🇸

Tech. Sgt. Eric Dorn, an aerospace propulsion craftsman with the 128th Air Refueling Wing, trains Richard Ortiz and Michael Rodriguez, students from Milwaukee Area Technical College's aviation program, on removal, inspection and installation of line replaceable units on an F108 turbofan engine in the propulsion shop Feb. 25. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Tech. Sgt. Jenna Lenski

# GIVING BACK

**Tech Sgt. Jenna Lenski**  
*128th Refueling Wing*

MILWAUKEE — Students with the aviation technician program at Milwaukee Area Technical College trained with Airmen and assets assigned to the propulsion shop at the 128th Air Refueling Wing in order to complete course work needed for their airframe and power plant license Feb. 9-27.

MATC works with the 128th Air Refueling Wing to send their students to the base to receive hands-on training

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# Cooperative program provides MATC students hands-on learning opportunities with 128th ARW

Continued from Page 30

with the CFM-56 turbofan aircraft engine where they will encounter engine changes, working with line replaceable units, fan blade inspections and practicing engine starts in the aircraft simulator.

For the past 18 years, MATC has sent at least three classes per year through the 128th Air Refueling Wing propulsion shop to get further training and hands-on experience. Each class cycles four to five students through the propulsion shop in one week. These students are near the end of their two-year aviation technician program and are scheduled to graduate in May. After graduation, the students will be prepared to pursue jobs with commercial airlines or smaller aviation companies.

Senior Master Sgt. Michael Nuoffer, the propulsion shop supervisor at the 128th Air Refueling Wing, and Scott Garland, the instructor of aeronautics at MATC, helped start the partnership between their organizations in 1997.

“This training is of value to us because it helps my Airmen become better instructors by bringing in students who will ask several in-depth questions,” Nuoffer said. “It helps MATC students because the equipment we have is top of the line and state of the art.”

The propulsion shop at the 128th Air Refueling Wing is fortunate to have a condemned CFM-56 turbofan engine dedicated as a training asset. This specific training turbofan engine is special to the 128th Air Refueling Wing as it was salvaged from a tragic accident that occurred on the flight line at the 128th Air Refueling Wing in 1993.

“The CFM-56 is the most widely produced jet engine in the world,” Nuoffer said. “An aircraft powered by CFM-56 engine takes off or lands every four seconds, 24 hours a day. So if these students were to go over to the commercial side of the house, there is about a 99 percent chance that this is what they’ll be working on.”

“I’ve never seen the turbofan engine,” said Michael Rodriguez, an aviation technician student with MATC. “It’s cool to see how big it is, all the systems on it and to take it down like we would be taking it down off of an actual aircraft.”

Rodriguez is nearing the completion of his aviation technician program and will finally achieve his airframe and power plant license, commonly referred to as A&P. After graduation he hopes to find a job with commercial airlines.

“Working here for this portion of the program opens up the door to the many possibilities that are out there for A&Ps,” Rodriguez said. It keeps you interested in the program. This is something that not a lot of people get to see, even if you are A&P, if you don’t have the partnership that MATC has with the 128th.”

Tech. Sgt. Eric Dorn, an aerospace propulsion craftsman with more than 15 years of experience, has worked with MATC students as a trainer for the turbofan engine portion of their education for the past four years.

“We see stuff differently than they do in the commercial world,” Dorn said. “They are flying a lot more in the commercial world than we do in the Guard. But it’s nice to share stories and experiences to get a better understanding of how these engines work.”

In addition to training MATC students during the average three weeks of classes, the 128th Air Refueling Wing propulsion shop encourages their newer Airmen to attend the training. It is an opportunity for the Airmen to work on upgrade training to achieve their next skill level.

“Everyone wants to learn and get hands-on training,” Dorn said. “That’s something that everyone shares in this class.”

During their training, the students and Airmen will experience learning about different kinds of engine failures and emergencies by working with another valued asset of the 128th Air Refueling Wing — the aircraft simulator. The benefit of using the aircraft simulator is teaching the students and Airmen how to react to and correct engine emergencies in a controlled environment.

“The last thing you want to do is practice on an aircraft,” Dorn said. “Working with the simulator is good practice for us. You don’t want to see an emergency, but you want to prepare for them as best as possible.”

The partnership between the 128th Air Refueling Wing and MATC is maintained by a certificate of agreement that is reviewed every two years by lawyers from both organizations. Originally, Nuoffer and Garland forwarded their request for the educational program, which was approved by the state of Wisconsin, the Air Force, and the FAA.

“A lot of my students who come out of this program ultimately end up to be leaders wherever they go to work,” Garland said. “And I’m thinking that this is one of the elements that makes them realize whether or not they can be a leader, are a leader or want to be a leader. By working here they are stepping back and looking at what kind of person they want to be in the aviation career field.”

Nuoffer and Garland intend to continue the partnership between their organizations and continue to educate their Airmen and students for years to come.

“I thank the Air National Guard and the 128th for giving us this opportunity every year and showing us the professionalism that they have,” Garland said. “I always consider this as the gem of the program that we have for aviation.”

# Meritorious Service



**Senior Airman  
Michael Derhammer,  
128th Air Control Squadron**



**Staff Sgt.  
Christopher Johnson,  
115th Fighter Wing**



**Senior Master Sgt.  
Craig Mortvedt,  
115th Fighter Wing**



**Master Sgt.  
Michael Krausz,  
128th Air Refueling Wing**



**Senior Master Sgt.  
Gerald Depotsie,  
128th Air Refueling Wing**

## Wisconsin Air National Guard names state's top Airmen

Five Airmen, representing the Wisconsin Air National Guard's three bases, have been recognized as Wisconsin's Outstanding Airmen of the Year for 2015.

The five Airmen, who will compete against their peers across the country for the chance to be named the 2015 Air National Guard Outstanding Airman of the Year, include: Senior Airman Michael Derhammer of the 128th Air Control Squadron, Airman of the Year; **Staff Sgt. Christopher Johnson** of the 115th Fighter Wing, Noncommissioned Officer of the Year; **Senior Master Sgt. Craig Mortvedt** of the 115th Fighter Wing, Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year; **Master Sgt. Michael Krausz** of the 128th Air Refueling Wing, First Sergeant of the Year; and **Senior Master Sgt. Gerald Depotsie** of the 128th Air Refueling Wing, Honor Guard Member.

A panel of five chief master sergeants reviewed dozens of Outstanding Airman

nomination packets and selected the winners based on their 2014 achievements — primary job accomplishments, self-improvement, community service and physical fitness — as well as a records review and a written essay on being a professional in the Wisconsin Air National Guard.

Derhammer, from Tomah, Wisconsin, works weekdays as an information technology specialist at Volk Field, and as a cyber transport journeyman in the 128th Air Control Squadron on drill weekends. He said he is proud to represent his unit, community and state at the national level.

"Although I am young in my career, I have placed my efforts towards being the best Airman and professional I can be," Derhammer said. "I place my heart into my work and community, and it is nice to be recognized for those contributions. If anything, it will make me strive to become an even better person, leader and Airman in the future."

Derhammer enlisted in the Wisconsin Air National Guard in April 2012.

Johnson, of Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, analyzes and validates manual and automated documentation for a variety of computerized accounting systems as an accounting liaison. A Wisconsin Air National Guard member for nearly three years, he credits dedication to excellence and a supportive unit for his selection.

"I continually strive to be the best member of the Guard that I can," Johnson said. "I'm blessed to have the opportunity to work in such a positive organization and state — without this backbone I would not be nearly as successful in my position."

Mortvedt, from Stratford, Wisconsin, supervises 12 employees as the manpower and personnel superintendent for the 115th Force Support Squadron. Closing out his 12th year in the Wisconsin Air National Guard, he said strong values have helped him succeed.

"I was taught to work hard, do the best you can, leave it better than when you got there, and help other people," Mortvedt said. "My wife and I are teaching my two sons these same values, and I think it showed in my nomination package."

"If you set goals, work hard, have an awesome team of professionals around you and excellent mentors, you can pretty much do anything," Mortvedt continued. "I wouldn't be where I am without my family, friends, teammates, leaders and mentors."

Krausz assists the Airmen of the 128th Maintenance Squadron in Milwaukee, and serves as the link between Airmen and the commander. He said he believes he was selected for his dedication to his troops.

"Being selected as the First Sergeant of the Year for Wisconsin means my supervision believes in my abilities, and they have seen the potential I bring to the

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# Meritorious Service

## Wisconsin National Guard's 132nd Army Band sweeps Army music competition

The Wisconsin National Guard's 132nd Army Band owns the reserve component of the 2014 Army Music Noncommissioned Officers and Soldiers of the Year competition.

Staff Sgt. Tyler Terrell took first place in the senior NCO category, Sgt. Brian Lydeen took first in the NCO category, and Spc. Micah Lancaster took first in the Soldier category.

"When the announcement was made, I couldn't believe it," said 1st Sgt. Deb Dahlman, the top enlisted member of the 132nd Army Band who selected Terrell, Lydeen and Lancaster for the competition. "I was so happy, I cried."

There are 73 Army bands in the Army National Guard and Army Reserve.

Dahlman selected band members who recently graduated military leadership or occupational skill classes, who excelled at music proficiency, and who performed more than one musical instrument. Physical fitness, Army warrior skill proficiency, prior evaluation reports and professional appearance also factored into the competition. A board of Army band command sergeants major and officers reviewed the nominees and selected the winners.

"I think the stars all aligned for me this year, and I was able to make an impression on the board," Terrell said, noting he was an honor graduate from the armed forces school of music, and has favorable military evaluations. "I didn't know I was even nominated, so it was a great honor to win."

Terrell has been in the 132nd Army Band for 17 years, and the four years prior to that he was with the 77th Army Band at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He would like to be promoted to first sergeant before he retires.

Lydeen is not just a military musician — he earned a doctorate in music performance from the University of Wisconsin, and is the director of bands and Jazz studies at Marian College in



**Spc. Micah Lancaster, Staff Sgt. Tyler Terrell and Sgt. Brian Lydeen of the Wisconsin National Guard's 132nd Army Band swept the 2014 Army Music Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier of the Year competition.** Submitted photo

Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Additionally, he directs the Lighthouse Big Band in Fond du Lac, and performs in such groups as the Wisconsin Symphonic Winds, Searl Picket Saxophone Quartet and the Mohawk Avenue Jazz Band.

"This is a source of tremendous pride for me," Lydeen said. "I was honored to be selected from all of the Guard and Reserve units in the country. It is pretty unbelievable that they selected me."

Lydeen is approaching his fourth year in the Wisconsin National Guard, and plans to complete a 20-year enlistment. He said the competition revealed the quality of the 132nd Army Band and its Soldiers.

"There are some extremely talented musicians and dedicated members in our unit," Lydeen said. "It could have been any number of others selected besides just us."

Lancaster not only has chops as a musician, but he represented the 64th Troop Command in the 2014

Wisconsin National Guard **Best Warrior Competition**.

"I think [it] was a factor," Lancaster said of his participation in Best Warrior. "I actually had no idea I was being considered for Army Music Soldier of the Year. It was definitely a surprise when I found out I had won. It motivates me to continue to maintain and improve my Soldier skills and musicianship."

Lancaster said the 132nd Army Band maintains the highest standards of professionalism and excellence. He has been in the Wisconsin Army National Guard for three years, but plans to stay in the 132nd Army Band "as long as they let me."

"We swept the competition because we put the best packages together with the right people, in the right place, at the right time," Dahlman added. "I was honored to be able to recognize some fine Army musicians." 🎵

## Outstanding Airmen of the Year named

Continued from Page 31

unit," Krausz said.

Depotsie, who resides in Cudahy, Wisconsin, has been in the Wisconsin Air National Guard for 32 years. He presently works as the fabrication supervisor in aircraft maintenance for the 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee. He also has performed more than 1,000 events since 1995 as a member of the base Honor Guard.

"I believe in the value that the Honor Guard provides to the community, families and installation," Depotsie said. "I am very grateful to the Wing and state for believing in me and selecting me to represent the Wisconsin Air National Guard. But I must say this is not why I spend countless hours doing what I do.

"It is for the families," Depotsie continued. "When I present a flag to the family or loved one, I can see in their eyes how grateful they are and appreciative that you are there for them. It is truly an honor to participate in events, honoring the service of those that have gone before us."

Two Wisconsin Air National Guard members took top honors in the **2014 Air National Guard Outstanding Airmen of the Year**. Master Sgt. Linda Schwartzlow of the 128th Air Control Squadron was named Air National Guard First Sergeant of the Year, and Master Sgt. David Coker of the 128th Air Refueling Wing was named Honor Guard Program Manager of the Year. 🎖️



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# Wisconsin National Guard promotes its second two-star general

Maj. Gen. John McCoy enlarged the Wisconsin National Guard officer constellation a bit when he formally pinned his second star during a March 13 ceremony in the Senate Chamber of the state capitol.

While the Wisconsin National Guard is authorized six general officer positions at one time, typically only the Wisconsin adjutant general is eligible to hold the rank of major general. McCoy will remain in the Wisconsin Air National Guard, but owes his new rank to a duty position outside of Wisconsin — in May he will begin his job as the Air National Guard assistant to the Air Education and Training Command (AETC) commander at Joint Base San Antonio-Rudolph. In that position, he will advise and assist the AETC commander and staff on the impact policies and programs will have on the more than 106,000 Air National Guard members who make up 88 Flying Wings.

McCoy is not the first Wisconsin Air National Guard general officer to receive a second star outside of Wisconsin. Maj. Gen. Steven Foster, a former commander at the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison, Wisconsin, went on to positions with Northern Command (NorthCom) and Central Command (CentCom). And Maj. Gen. Fred Sloan, a former deputy adjutant general for Air in Wisconsin, went on to serve as Air National Guard assistant to the commander of Air Combat Command.

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, pointed out that the significance to McCoy's general officer career is not limited to a second star.

"In this organization — the blue suit organization — it used to be that if you were going to wear a star, you were wearing a set of wings," Dunbar explained. "It was a rite of passage — if you were good enough to fly an airplane, you might be good enough to be a general officer. It was very rare to see somebody without a set of wings be a general officer. In Maj. Gen. McCoy's case, he was the best officer to be the deputy



**Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefish joins Maj. Gen. John McCoy's wife Shelley and daughter Megan with adding a second star to his epaulets during a formal pinning ceremony March 13.** @ease photo by Vaughn R. Larson

adjutant general for Air, and I view that as a positive for our organization. It's a testament to our organization that we take the best man or woman for the job, and wow, was he the best guy for the job."

McCoy began his 36-year Wisconsin National Guard career as a Wisconsin Army National Guard enlistee, serving as a fuel specialist before transferring to the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing. He was the administration and personnel officer for the 128th when Dunbar became the refueling wing commander in 2005. When Dunbar was selected to become adjutant general two years later, he tabbed McCoy to serve as the next deputy adjutant general for Air.

McCoy served in that role for five years during a challenging period of deployments and inspections. In 2013 he became the Wisconsin Air National Guard chief of staff, and later that year became the Joint Staff director and deputy adjutant general for civil support.

During that time, McCoy also gained

an additional assignment as the Air National Guard assistant to the 24th Air Force commander. The 24th Air Force is the cyber command for the Air Force.

"And all of that would be a great career," Dunbar said during the pinning ceremony. "Retiring at some point as a brigadier general in the United States Air Force and the Wisconsin Air National Guard would be an unbelievable career. It is very hard to get an opportunity to serve at the two-star level. There's just a handful of position across the country that you can be selected to be an Air National Guard assistant to a major command of the United States Air Force, and this is the role Maj. Gen. McCoy is about to fulfill — hand-picked by Lt. Gen. Sid Clarke, director of the Air National Guard.

"He could have picked any one-star in the system — he chose John McCoy," Dunbar continued. "That's how good this officer is."

Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefish, who attended the ceremony on behalf of Gov. Scott Walker and helped pin a star on

McCoy's uniform, described the general as "the epitome" of what comes to mind when thinking of the Air National Guard.

McCoy said that his success was not solely by his own efforts — he had support and encouragement throughout his military career.

"If you are here, you know we share a special story," he told the group of family, friends and military colleagues at the ceremony.

Though the pinning ceremony was held in mid-March, McCoy's promotion was official Dec. 10, 2014. That date is significant to him and to members of the 128th Air Refueling Wing — on that day in 1993, six Airmen were killed instantly when one of the Wing's stratotankers exploded during a routine service. McCoy had himself been on that very aircraft the day before as part of a flight to Washington, D.C. and back.

"We all said we'd never forget," McCoy said, fighting back emotion. "For me, my date of rank will ensure I never forget."

McCoy thanked Dunbar, as well as the Wisconsin National Guard and Wisconsin Emergency Management. He also thanked his wife of 16 years, Shelley, and their nearly-12-year-old daughter Megan, for their support and understanding as his career required frequent absences from family events.

McCoy also took the opportunity to formally thank BJ Pfeiffer of Enterprise Solutions Technology Group, Inc., a local information technology firm that has employed his wife about as long as they have been married. Mike Williams, chairman of the Wisconsin Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve — and also McCoy's first military commander 36 years ago — presented Pfeiffer with a Statement of Support and a Patriot Award.

"It truly is a family," McCoy said. "It's obvious that no one can do these jobs alone. I truly appreciate all the support and encouragement I've received over the years. Any success I've achieved has been because of all of you." 🇺🇸

## Troop Movements

### 426th Regiment

**Lt. Col. Beurman** has been named the next commander for the 1st Battalion, 426th Field Artillery at the Wisconsin Military Academy. He follows **Lt. Col. John Passet**, who will be promoted to colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve.

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### Joint Force Headquarters Chief Warrant Officer 3 Steve

**Wightman** has been selected as the next senior human resources technician for the Wisconsin Army National Guard. He follows **Chief Warrant Officer 5 Brenda Essie**, who is retiring.

**Lt. Col. Brian Wolhaupter** has been selected as the next deputy chief of staff for personnel, Wisconsin Army National Guard. He follows **Col. Russell Sweet**, who is retiring.

...

### Joint Staff

**Col. Leah Moore** has been selected to be the new chief of staff for the Joint Staff. She will follow **Col. Dave O'Donohue**, who has assumed command of the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

**Lt. Col. Dave May** has been named the new director of manpower and personnel for the Joint Staff. May follows **Col. John Schroeder**, who has been named the next Wisconsin Army National Guard chief of staff.

**Lt. Col. Dan Pulvermacher** has been named the new Joint Staff plans officer. He follows **Col. Ken Uting**, who is retiring.

**Lt. Col. Jeff Alston** has been named the new director of information management (J6). He follows **Col. Steve Lewis**, who is retiring.

**Lt. Col. Jerry Eastman** has been named the deputy operations, plans and training officer for the Joint Staff. He follows **Maj. Eric Leckel**, who has assumed command of the 54th Civil Support Team.

**Maj. Paul Denton** has been selected to be the next deputy operations officer for the Joint Staff.

**Maj. Josephine Daniels** has been selected as the next human resources officer and full-time manning chief within the Joint Staff's Manpower and Personnel Directorate. She follows **Lt. Col. Tammy Gross**, who is retiring.

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### 64th Troop Command

**Lt. Col. Max Brosig** has been selected to be the new commander of the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment. He will follow **Lt. Col. Matt Strub**, who was selected to attend the U.S. Army War College in residence.

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### 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

**Maj. Daniel Hanson** has been selected to be the operations officer for the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

**Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Fulton** has been assigned as the command sergeant major for the 724th Engineer Battalion. He follows **Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Kaluzny**, who has been assigned as the command sergeant major for the 64th Troop Command.

## 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](#).

See the Wisconsin National  
Guard in action on  
**flickr**



## Demolition class

**U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Greg Loose, an Airman with the 128th Air Refueling Wing Civil Engineering Squadron, operates a mini excavator to demolish a quonset hut on base March 6. The demolition was used to train Airmen on machine operations and safety during the March Unit Training Assembly. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Master Sgt. Thomas J. Sobczyk**



# Parting shot



Families reunite at a welcome home ceremony for the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 32nd Base Defense Operations Center (BDOC) at Dane County Regional Airport in Madison, Wis., Jan. 24. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Sgt. Oscar Gollaz