

# Peace Express



Three Wisconsin National Guard brigadier generals were pinned during an afternoon ceremony June 19 at the State Capitol's Senate Chamber. Pictured are, left to right: Dominic Cariello, assistant adjutant general for readiness and training, Wisconsin Army National Guard; John McCoy, assistant adjutant general for Air; Gov. Jim Doyle; Margaret Bair, chief of staff for the Wisconsin Air National Guard; and Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin.

## Governor promotes three to brigadier general

Gov. Jim Doyle formally promoted three members of the Wisconsin National Guard to the rank of brigadier general — including the first female officer to attain that rank in the Wisconsin National Guard — during a June 19 ceremony at the State Capitol in Madison.

Brig. Gen. Margaret H. Bair, chief of staff for the Wisconsin Air National Guard, also serves as commander of the Headquarters Air Staff and principal advisor to the assistant adjutant general-Air, regarding the administration, operation, training, tactical deployment, maintenance and supply of all state Air National Guard units.

Brig. Gen. Cariello is the deputy adjutant general for readiness and training for the

Wisconsin Army National Guard.

Brig. Gen. John E. McCoy is Wisconsin's assistant adjutant general for Air. He commands the Wisconsin Air National Guard and is responsible to the adjutant general for all aspects of its mission performance.

The Wisconsin National Guard now has six general officers, three each in the Army and Air National Guard.

While Bair is the first woman promoted to general officer serving in Wisconsin at the state level, Brig. Gen. Sharon Vander Zyl, McFarland, became the first female general officer in the history of the U.S. Army National Guard in 1992 when she was appointed special assistant to the chief of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps. ☞





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# From the TAG

**A**s you read this issue of At Ease Express you will be preparing for, or have already celebrated, our nation's independence with fireworks, picnics and community events. I ask that you take just a minute to remember the importance of our nation's Independence Day and the role the National Guard played in it.

Our common heritage dates back to 1636 when those earliest National Guard militias were formed to defend frontier families. We called out the National Guard to fight for for our nation's independence before the founding fathers signed the declaration. And those early citizen-soldiers fought a magnificent battle that helped shape and ensure the success of our great nation. Since then the National Guard has always been there in times of conflict.

Today our role remains largely the same. We defend community, state and nation. We are an operational Guard. We are Always Ready — Always There. We are immediately accessible to respond at the local, state and federal level. I am particularly proud of the 10,000 men and women who serve in Wisconsin's National Guard. I am very grateful for the support of our families and employers in our communities.

As you'll find on these pages, and on our website <http://dma.wi.gov> – our men and women in uniform are doing great things here in Wisconsin and around the world.

The Soldiers of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team have taken over their missions in Iraq and are performing superbly, the Soldiers of the 951st Sapper Company continue to conduct the dangerous mission clearing routes in Afghanistan, the Airmen of the 128th Air Control Squadron are serving proudly in Qatar, and



**Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar**  
The Adjutant General

two units – our 732nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion headquarters and an Afghanistan Embedded Training Team are getting ready to accept their news assignments in the combat zone.

Our Joint Staff just concluded a major exercise, Red Dragon, with our fellow Soldiers in the Army Reserve, several of our members have been recognized at the state and national level for outstanding performance and service, and our families and community partners continue showing their support to our soldiers and airmen!

As we celebrate this wonderful holiday, our most patriotic holiday, with our families safe and secure here in Wisconsin, let us not forget the service and sacrifices all our men and women in uniform, and their families, make every day for our independence!

With that I wish you a wonderful, happy and safe holiday. Happy Fourth of July! Thank you.



**The 951st Sapper Company of the Wisconsin Army National Guard is tasked with clearing maneuver routes in Afghanistan's Kandahar and Zabul provinces. Conducting route patrols is part of how the unit accomplishes this mission.**

# Sappers clearing routes in Afghanistan



**A soldier from the 951st Sapper Company, Wisconsin Army National Guard, interacts with Afghan nationals as part of the unit's mission to clear convoy routes in their sectors of Kandahar and Zabul provinces. — Wisconsin Army National Guard photos**

The commander of the 951st Sapper Company, Wisconsin Army National Guard, reports that all is well after four months in Afghanistan.

Capt. Brian Barth said his unit of approximately 100 soldiers has been busy with several missions that help maintain freedom to maneuver for U.S. and coalition forces. These missions include searching for improvised explosive devices, reconnoitering key terrain features as well as bypass roads for major supply routes and alternative supply routes, but also gathering biometric data from local residents — name, date and location of birth, home of record, iris scans and fingerprints.

These missions have Barth's soldiers operating outside of the forward operating bases more often than inside, sometimes for weeks at a time.

"From my viewpoint, we're forcing the enemy to change how he does things," Barth said, such as placing specific IEDs on certain routes.

The commander said his unit has been outfitted with "some of the best technology the military has to offer" to accomplish its mission. Many of his soldiers are college students or in management and have quickly adapted to the changing technology.

"We have a 'can-do' attitude," Barth noted.

He described unit morale as excellent, and said the two FOBs his unit is stationed at — Kandahar Air Field in Kandahar province and FOB Lagman in Zabul province — provide pretty good amenities such as themed dining facilities, large post exchanges and decent Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities.

"My guys have adapted well," Barth observed. "We've come together as a team."

The 951st, based out of Rhinelander and Tomahawk, mobilized Nov. 30, 2008 and trained at Camp Shelby, Miss. They arrived in Afghanistan on Feb. 2. They are among approximately 3,600 Wisconsin National Guard soldiers and airmen currently on active duty. 

# Maintainers solve F-16 fuel cell defect

**Airman 1st Class Ryan Roth**  
*115th Fighter Wing Public Affairs*

Inspections are a regular but critical part of the job for the 115th Fighter Wing fuel systems maintenance team. During an extensive inspection of an F-16 in April, shop mechanics discovered its fuel cell was leaking.

With their attention to detail during inspections and their ability to work together, the fuel cell shop was able to smoothly replace the fuel cell.

It took two full weeks to repair and concluded after a final part, the fuel quantity test set, returned from deployment in May and completion of the F-1 fuel cell removal and installation final operations check.

A fuel cell is made out of a type of thick rubber material, said Tech. Sgt. Annmarie Schneider, one of the F-16 fuel systems maintenance technicians working the leak repair. If it leaks, the shop has to replace the entire cell. It is a long process of taking all the tubing and pumps inside the cell out before the mechanics can take the damaged cell out. It is believed the fuel cell leaked due to normal wear and tear.

If the leak was not fixed it could have caused a fire on the aircraft.

“The F-1 fuel cell or bladder is a very large job,” said Senior Master Sgt. Patrick Day, F-16 Fuel Systems non-commissioned officer in charge. “The fuel systems maintenance shop managed to perform this job as well as the retorque of wing attach fittings on 11 assigned aircraft.”

The retorque was a result of faulty wing attach fitting hardware. While performing all these jobs, the fuel cell maintenance team also performed maintenance on two additional aircraft with cracked fuel shelves.

Though fuel systems shop mechanics discovered the leak during a non-routine inspection and were most involved in the repair process, there were many shops contributing to the successful F-1 fuel cell removal and installation, including the electrical and avionics shop.

Many mechanics worked together to get parts out of the way



**Staff Sgt. Deidra Braun and Tech. Sgt. Annmarie Schneider work to resolve a fuel cell problem found during routine maintenance on an F-16. The discovery prompted evaluation of every F-16 assigned to Truax Field.** — 115th Fighter Wing photo by Master Sgt. James Hale

so the fuel systems maintenance team could access the fuel cell for repairs, Schneider said. It was a complete team effort across different shops during a time of high demand for maintenance assets.

“I thought we worked well together considering we had a lot of heavy maintenance on our aircraft going on at that time so we were trying to work that and [the leak] here,” said Master Sgt. James Hale, 115th Maintenance Squadron.

The fuel systems team proved their ability once more to effectively inspect and repair the fighter jets here.

“The fuel systems maintenance shop is most definitely dedicated to excellence and we take a tremendous amount of pride in all that we do,” Day said. 🌟

# Truax adds ‘Star’ to ‘Legacy of Excellence’

**Tech Sgt. Jon LaDue**  
*115th Fighter Wing Public Affairs*

After a week-long inspection, the 115th Fighter Wing has been recommended to the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration for a Star rating in the Voluntary Protection Program.

The four-member OSHA inspection team toured Truax Field May 4 through 8 evaluating numerous plans, processes and procedures that regulate the wing’s safety, health and hazardous material programs.

The Wing is one of only 2,200 organizations in the United States, which encompasses more than 7 million employers, to participate in the Voluntary Protection Program.

“We were very impressed with a lot of what you do,” said Leslie Potack, lead inspector from OSHA’s Madison office. “As a result of the on-site evaluation, we’re going to recommend that the wing be participating in the VPP program at the Star level.”

The 115th will become only the third Air Force installation to earn the Star rating. This example of going “above and beyond” demonstrates the Fighter Wing’s devotion to maintaining a “Legacy of Excellence,” said Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Egstad, 115th Fighter Wing Safety Office.

During the out-brief, the inspection team said they saw

excellence almost everywhere they visited, and enthusiasm and safety culture were evident with every member of the Truax team.

The inspection team evaluated the wing on four primary categories: Management Commitment with Employee Involvement, Safety and Health Training, Hazard Prevention and Control, and Worksite Analysis.

Military installations are governed by the same local, state and federal regulations as their civilian counterparts. Conversely, military installations engaged in VPP are subject to the same inspection criteria of civilian organizations like British Petroleum and Lockheed Martin. Even competing with large organizations like General Electric, the wing still had numerous “best practices.”

“The [Wing] has a very comprehensive training program along with rigorous implementation. It’s never optional and we didn’t see any ‘falling through the cracks,’” Potack said. “We were impressed with the training.”

Nick Antonio, an Air Force veteran and safety specialist with OSHA was also impressed with Truax’s safety program.

“Safety is more alive today than it used to be; it used to be ‘get the mission done first then worry about safety,’ that’s not the case today,” said Antonio. “Everybody I talked to was highly motivated and understood their role in safety.” 🌟

# Air Guard unit departs for deployment



Members of the 128th Air Control Squadron board a plane at Volk Field May 13 following a send-off ceremony. The Wisconsin Air National Guard unit deployed to Qatar. — Department of Military Affairs photo

The Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Control Squadron shipped out for a deployment to Qatar May 13 following an afternoon send-off ceremony at Volk Field, Camp Douglas.

For this mission the squadron, an extension of the Theater Air Control System, will be involved with command and control of the Central Command airspace.

Squadron members are proficient in satellite and ground communications, radar operations and support, command and control, computer maintenance, encryption systems, power production and telecommunications.

Besides its wartime mission, the unit supports daily military flying in local airspace, is prepared to respond to the governor's call for state emergencies, and deploys throughout the United States for various exercises and contingencies.

The 128th ACS was initially activated in 1947 at General Billy Mitchell Field, Milwaukee. The squadron moved to Volk Field in 1991. The unit's last deployment was to Afghanistan in 2007.

## Wisconsin Airmen part of new battle initiative



Capt. Seth Kaste, Tech. Sgt. Travis Skowronski and Capt. Chris Divyak of the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Control Squadron stand near a barrier painted by the unit during its last deployment to Afghanistan in 2006. The three returned to Kandahar Air Base recently for air battle management training the 128th will use on its current Qatar deployment. Wisconsin Air National Guard photo

Three Wisconsin Air National Guard members are spearheading an initiative which would bring control of Afghani airspace to facilities in Qatar.

Capt. Seth Kaste, Capt. Chris Divyak and Tech. Sgt. Travis Skowronski of the Volk Field-based 128th Air Control Squadron recently completed three weeks of air battle management training for the Operation Enduring Freedom area of responsibility at Khandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, with the intent of returning to Qatar to train an additional 50 airmen of the 71st Expeditionary Air Control Squadron, including additional members of the 128th. This training and certification will allow the 71st EAC to be the first unit in history to conduct Afghanistan's air battle management from a remote location — Qatar — when it inherits the mission from the Royal Australian Air Force Control and Reporting Center July 1.

Air battle management involves coordinating aircraft for air-to-air combat and air-to-ground support as well as standard flight control and air refueling tasks.

# Moving Forward, Giving Back

**Staff Sgt. Mary Flynn**

*112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

**A**s soldiers of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) move into place in Iraq, their families back home are doing anything but standing still.

Volunteers from the 32nd IBCT Family Readiness Group have kicked off the “Moving Forward, Giving Back” campaign, a community service initiative of the family readiness groups to give back to their local communities while their loved ones are deployed overseas.

“Our communities have been fantastic with their support,” said Janell Kellett, the lead volunteer for the 32nd Brigade’s Family Readiness Group. “We wanted to give our families something positive to focus on, and we determined that partnering with the community for service projects would be beneficial for all.”

Traditionally, the purpose of family readiness groups is to supply family members with the tools and resources they need, said Vicki Edgren, deputy director of the Wisconsin National Guard family program. “Moving Forward, Giving Back” provides families with opportunities to get involved outside of meetings.

“Meetings can be boring,” acknowledged Tim Benz, lead volunteer for the 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry FRG, and a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom himself. “But the community is always out there. You want to be able to pay them back. This is a way to get the families involved with the community and do something social at the same time.”

Kellett encourages community members looking to support the troops to contact the family readiness group at their local armory to see how they can help, or contact the Family Program Office at 1-800-292-9464. ☞



**Family members of the 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry and of the 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry wait at the start line to begin the Race for the Cure on Saturday, May 30, at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison. The Guard Families for the Cure Team had 33 participants and raised \$1,895 for the Susan G. Komen Foundation as part of the Moving Forward, Giving Back campaign. They also collected 49 packages of baby wipes and more than a thousand diapers for the local food pantry.** — Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs photo

Read the entire story at <http://dma.wi.gov/dma/news/2009news/forward1.asp>

## Building a better future in Iraq

**Spc. Tyler Lasure**

*32nd Brigade Public Affairs*

**CAMP TAJI, IRAQ** — At a desert outpost about 20 miles north of Baghdad, three units of Wisconsin National Guardsmen deployed with the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team hope something will grow in the barren environment: Iraq’s future.

The units, Company A, 32nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, Onalaska; the 108th Forward Support Company, Sussex; and Battery A, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, Racine, assumed responsibility May 12 for several operations at the theater internment facility reconciliation center at Camp Taji.

The soldiers’ 12-hour workdays include guarding detainees and making sure each one is treated with dignity and respect. “If the detainees are happy then they are compliant,” said 1st Lt. Matthew Young, Sturtevant, Wis., a shift officer in charge at Taji.

“If they are compliant everyone is safer.” Young is assigned to Battery A, 1-121 Field Artillery.

Long workdays make personal time hard to find, but the soldiers manage.

One soldier has a more unusual way to relax, digging around scrapyards close to his living area. Spc. Mick Jaynes, Cedarburg, found souvenirs to bring home — three tanker helmets abandoned in the back of a scrapped amphibious vehicle. “When I saw these I was like ‘Oh, yeah!’” said the guard with the 32nd BSTB. ☞

Read the entire story at <http://dma.wi.gov/dma/news/2009News/taji.asp>

**Spc. Mick Jaynes, Cedarburg, washes off an Iraqi tanker helmet he found at one of the many scrapyards located on Camp Taji, Iraq.**

— 32nd Brigade Public Affairs photos by Spc. Michelle Gonzalez





## Security Force honors troops wounded in Afghanistan

Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze  
128th Air Refueling Wing

A cellular phone rings in the dark.

The call is from the Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, hospital. Two wounded U.S. service members have just arrived on base.

Staff Sgt. Brian Wunder, a 128th Air Refueling Wing Security Forces Squadron team member, gets out of bed, changes back into his Airman Battle Uniform, and begins to fold two U.S. flags.

Members of the 128th ARW Security Forces Squadron volunteered to lead the Flags for Wounded Troops program while deployed to Afghanistan last year in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The Flags for Wounded Troops program delivered folded flags and certificates signed by aircrew members and SFS team members to U.S. service members wounded in action and brought to Bagram Air Base, Wunder said.

The program had been in place when the 128th SFS team arrived at Bagram Air Base, but it became a daily volunteer effort once Wunder and his teammates began to direct it, Wunder said.

"The soldiers themselves very much appreciated the program: the respect, honor and gratitude," said Master Sgt. Denise Cournoyer, a 128th SFS flight sergeant who helped to present the flags and certificates. Cournoyer said she thought the flags and certificates meant a lot to the wounded service members because the items came from the service members' peer group.

Wunder agreed, saying that some of the wounded service members valued the folded U.S. flags and accompanying certificates more than the Purple Heart medals they had received. He said this was because the Purple Heart was a foregone conclusion due to the injuries the people of the U.S. armed forces had sustained in the line of duty, while the folded flag and certificate were given by volunteers who had taken it upon themselves to show their support for the wounded U.S. service members. ☺

Read the entire story at <http://www.128arw.ang.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123153673>



Staff Sgt. Brian Wunder and members of the 128th Air Refueling Wing's Security Forces Squadron present a folded flag and accompanying certificate to Staff Sgt. Brian Peterson as part of the Flags for Wounded Troops program. The program, conducted from Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, recognizes U.S. service members wounded in the line of duty, and is a secondary recognition event which followed the presentation of the Purple Heart medal. — U.S. Air Force photo

**128th Air Refueling Wing, Wisconsin Air National Guard is set to receive a Combat Arms Training Simulator (CATS). The simulator along with a new 1.1 million dollar training facility will allow year round fire arms training for up to 30 guardsmen a class.** – Wisconsin Air National Guard photo

## New firearms training area for Milwaukee Airmen

Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze  
128th Air Refueling Wing

The 128th Air Refueling Wing is set to receive a Combat Arms Training Simulator (CATS) and Combat Arms Training Maintenance (CATM) facility at General Mitchell Air Field.

The facility is the result of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding being offered to 10 Air National Guard bases across the country, said Capt. Sasha Perronne, the engineering officer-in-charge at the 128th ARW's Civil Engineering Squadron.

"This is our number one project," Perronne said.

A total of \$1.1 million is being spent on the new CATS facility, Perronne said. The contract is being offered to small construction businesses, she said.

"Stimulus money guarantees competition," Perronne said.

The new facility was scheduled to begin within the next two years, but the stimulus money ensures construction of the facility will begin this year, Perronne said. The building is expected to take one year to complete, she said.

"By next summer, the building will be done," said Perronne.

The facility will be constructed using the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program, an energy-efficient and sustainable building design being implemented for all new military construction beginning in 2009, Perronne said.

The CATS/CATM facility will provide 128th ARW members with year-round weapons training availability, an indoor weapons cleaning area, a weapons vault and storage area, several offices, and classrooms, said Perronne.

Staff Sgt. Erin Cull, a 128 ARW Security Forces CATM instructor, elaborated on the uses of the new facility.

"Weather really is a big factor," Cull said.

The year-round capability of the firearms simulator will allow base personnel to schedule a simulated firing session and maintain their abilities, Cull said.

He said the new CATS/CATM facility will allow up to 30 personnel to be trained per class, as opposed to the current limitation of eight personnel per firearms training session.

The new facility will also provide an enhanced firearms training area for both military members and local civilian law enforcement personnel, Cull said. ☺

Read the entire story at <http://www.128arw.ang.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123148785>



**Wisconsin National Guard officials fly away from West Bend on the state's final Huey helicopter flight May 3. The legendary and beloved Huey has been replaced in the Wisconsin National Guard inventory by the UH-60 Black Hawk.** – Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs photos by Larry Sommers

# Farewell, Huey

**A**fter more than 38 years of faithful service to Wisconsin, the National Guard's well-known Huey helicopter performed its last flight May 3.

Wisconsin Army Guard aviators past and present honored the tough and versatile Bell UH-1 Iroquois helicopter — better known as “Huey” — with a noon open house followed by a 1 p.m. ceremony at Army Aviation Support Facility #1 in West Bend.

The aircraft type first saw service in the U.S. Army almost 50 years ago, in June 1959, and came to the Wisconsin National Guard in 1970.

“Huey did for helicopters what the DC-3 did for airlines — Huey absolutely changed our Army,” said retired Brig. Gen. Kerry Denson in a 2006 interview. Denson, who flew Hueys in Vietnam combat missions, will be the featured speaker at the brief ceremony.

Originally designed to fill the Army's need for a more robust medical evacuation helicopter, the Huey proved so reliable and versatile that it was adopted for many other roles in logistics and combat. Bell Aircraft Corporation eventually produced more than 16,000 of them, plus thousands more of Huey's civilian counterpart, Model 204.

The last UH-1 Huey helicopters in the Wisconsin Guard's inventory were used by West Bend's 832nd Medical Company for the aircraft's original mission — medevac. They have been phased out in favor of a newer all-purpose helicopter, the UH-60 Black Hawk. The unit's first Black Hawk went into service in May 2008 and the last three of nine aircraft are expected by July 2009; the last of its Hueys will permanently depart West Bend, carrying Wisconsin National Guard officials back to Madison, at the end of Sunday's ceremony.

U.S. Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner Jr. was among the guests who spoke at the ceremony.



**Above, retired Brig. Gen. Kerry Denson addresses aviators, veterans and the public during a farewell ceremony for the UH-1 helicopter. At left, ground crew members prepare the “Huey” for its farewell flight.**

# Meritorious service

## State Guardsman to national contest

The Wisconsin Army National Guard's top enlisted soldier of 2008 will compete for national honors in August.

Spc. John Wiernasz of Vadnais Heights, Minn., won the regional Soldier of the Year competition the week of May 11 at Camp Atterbury, Ind. Wiernasz is a member of Detachment 1, 950th Engineer Company, a Spooner-based unit that specializes in mine clearance.

Outstanding soldiers from various units took part in a three-day competition at Fort McCoy. The competition included a 12-mile road march, day and night land navigation, weapons qualification, physical training and other military field events, a written test, essay and a board appearance.

Wiernasz will take part in the National Guard Bureau's Best Warrior Competition July 30 through Aug. 4 at Fort Benning, Ga.

Sgt. Raymond B. Heilman of Spooner, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's NCO of the Year for 2008, also competed at Camp Atterbury. ☞

## Airman awarded for saving life

Many Airmen have received Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation training in the military. Few, however, have the chance to actually apply those skills

On an ordinary day, Staff Sgt. Tyson Hall, 115th Contracting Squadron, was given that chance.

While in Middleton and speaking to a relative on the phone, Hall learned a man collapsed at a high school just across the street from where he was. He ran to the school and noticed the patient looked blueish-purple and unresponsive. The patient's daughter-in-law had been administering breaths. Noticing the breaths were unsuccessful, Hall began giving chest compressions to the patient.

After the incident, the medics told Hall he saved the man's life.

At an annual recognition ceremony for heroic law enforcement officers and civilians, the Middleton Police Department recognized Sergeant Hall for his life-saving act. He also received thank-you letters from the patients' wife and daughter-in-law. ☞

## Guardsman given hero's welcome

**Pfc. Alyson Berzinski**

*112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Middleton native Staff Sgt. Troy Kleinheinz, Wisconsin National Guard, was named Wisconsin's "hometown hero" by the Panther Racing Team at the Milwaukee Mile Indy Car Race May 31.

Kleinheinz, a flight operations section manager for the 147th Aviation Battalion, was nominated by his supervisor, 1st Sgt. Jay Hanson.

Kleinheinz signed autographs alongside Panther Racing driver tDan Wheldon and was recognized onstage before the start of the race. Kleinheinz and guests also took to the track in a special two-seater race car.

"It's an honor to represent the 147th and the Guard," Kleinheinz said.

The National Guard is a sponsor of the Panther Racing Team, which launched its Hometown Hero program honoring select National Guard members at the 2008 Indianapolis 500.

After Sept. 11, 2001, at 25 years old, Kleinheinz enlisted in the Wisconsin Army National Guard. Since then he has deployed three times.

Kleinheinz was accompanied by his wife Melanie. The couple have two children. ☞



## POTUS pinning

**President Barack Obama presents a Purple Heart medal to Spc. Matthew Berth, a soldier with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 951st Sapper Company, at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center's USO Warrior Center June 5. Five other wounded service members also received medals during the ceremony. Berth's unit is deployed to Afghanistan on a route clearing mission.**

White House photo

## Inaugural honor awarded

Two female Wisconsin National Guard officers were among the first to be honored as Military Women of Distinction by the Wisconsin Women in Government.

Army Lt. Col. Joane Mathews, deputy director of personnel for the Wisconsin National Guard, and Air Force Lt. Col. Michelle Seavers, chief nurse executive with the Milwaukee-based 128th Air Refueling Wing's medical squadron, were recognized during a May 22 banquet at Madison's Alliant Energy Center.

Recipients were nominated in part by their individual accomplishments as well as precedent-setting achievements.

Mathews, of Sun Prairie, was the first female soldier in Wisconsin Army National Guard history to command the 147th Aviation Battalion, and is presently the highest-ranking Native American woman in all of the Army National Guard.

Seavers, of West Allis, was honored for her leadership as a clinical specialist in the military as well as civilian fields. ☞

## Wisconsin Guard earns ACOE honor

The Wisconsin Army National Guard is among the Army's best, judging by the Army Chief of Staff Communities of Excellence Awards.

Wisconsin received a Gold Third Place rating during a May 5 Pentagon ceremony, under a category dedicated to the National Guard. The Ohio Army National Guard was the overall winner in that category this year, followed by Georgia (Gold First Place), Texas (Gold Second Place), and Wisconsin. ☞

# Truax Airman takes concerns to Capitol Hill

**Staff Sgt. Weston Chadwick**  
115th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

In April I was sent to Washington D.C. for a House Armed Services Committee hearing on Air Sovereignty Alert operations. The hearing was prompted by a January 2009 General Accountability Office report on Homeland Defense. I met with Lt. Gen. Harry Wyatt, Director of the Air National Guard in his office at the Pentagon. The Pentagon was not what I expected it to be. The attitude was much more relaxed than what you see in the movies. In preparation for the hearing, we talked about some of the issues that ASA units are faced with. These issues include personnel, funding, dual tasking ASA and Air Expeditionary Force, and aircraft life expectancy.

My purpose at the hearing was to put a face with the story of issues encountered by ASA units. There is a significant difference between stating you have personnel issues and telling stories of exactly how personnel are affected by these issues. As many people know, the F-16s currently in use by the Air National Guard are slated for retirement within eight years. This dilemma will hinder not only the ASA mission but also the AEF cycles due to the dual tasking of ASA units. Currently a formal plan to mitigate personnel and equipment shortages experienced by ASA units during their AEF rotations does not exist.

Wing Commanders are more or less left to work with one another to cover the gaps. Funding is also an issue because the ASA mission is not funded as a steady state mission. Instead funding is issued in two year increments through appropriations or otherwise. Due to the instability in funding, turnover of personnel is considerably high. Some commanders say they lose their most experienced technicians because of instability.

Neither Gen. Wyatt nor I knew what to expect at the hearing.



**Staff Sgt. Weston Chadwick, 115th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, stands behind Lt. Gen. Harry Wyatt, the Director of the Air National Guard, at an Armed Services House Committee that addressed the Air Sovereignty Alert Mission.** — Courtesy photo

I was really nervous at first because I wasn't sure what types of questions were going to be asked of me. Because I didn't sit at the witness table I wasn't directly asked any questions.

The hearing went well, and all involved agencies seem to be on the same page. The experience was an eye opener because I was able to see the problems we deal with here at Truax being addressed at the national level. ☺

**Read the entire story at <http://www.115fw.ang.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123153128>**

## Air Guard commanders discuss tough support issues

**Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue**  
115th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Air National Guard security forces and civil engineer squadrons will be mobilizing at an increased rate over the next few years. With a large population of those critical support functions deployed, there will most definitely be an impact on day-to-day missions at home stations across the United States. This is just one of the many important issues concerning the ANG today.

The 115th Fighter Wing hosted more than 120 ANG mission support group commanders and deputy commanders at an annual conference held June 22-26 at the Marriott West Hotel, Madison to talk about these key issues involving mission support.

The annual week-long conference consisted of briefings, guest speakers, networking opportunities, a forum for idea sharing and problem solving, a question and answer panel, and training for new MSG commanders.

Briefers from across the country and from each component of mission support, to include security forces, civil engineering, force support, communications, logistics and

contracting, spoke to the commanders and deputies about the latest trends, current MSG issues and what to expect in the future. There were also briefings by National Guard Bureau officers on the future of the Air Expeditionary Force and banding systems, the fitness program and fiscal year 2010 and 2011 funding considerations.

Although the topics were very informative, the opportunity to network with one another is perhaps the biggest advantage to attending the conference, said Col. LeRoy Dunkelberger, 157th Air Refueling Wing MSG commander and chairman of the MSG Council.

"When you start learning and meeting people on a more personal level, you are liable to get a lot more support and there tends to be a greater understanding of issues when meeting in person," Dunkelberger said. "Having that face-to-face interaction can be invaluable."

Brig. Gen. Roy Uptegraff III, 171st Air Refueling Wing commander, spoke to the attendees June 23 and said the conference is an opportunity for all MSG commanders to come together to learn about policy changes and organizational shifts, share experiences and "lessons learned," and develop a community of

fellowship that "promotes confidence and support" for making future leadership decisions.

Brig. Gen. John McCoy, Wisconsin Air National Guard commander, was also a guest speaker at the conference. McCoy served as a MSG commander while assigned to Milwaukee's 128th Air Refueling Wing before transferring to Wisconsin's Joint Force Headquarters. Once on the receiving end of guest speakers at the conference, the general discussed the number of challenges being faced in the MSG community today. Some of these challenges include an ever-changing operations tempo, aircraft recapitalization, budget reductions and personnel issues, McCoy said.

"We need to ensure we take great care of our members, their families and their employers, to ensure we continue to provide the best support to the mission," he continued. "The MSG commanders provide the critical support our states and nation require. Support isn't just part of the name, it's what they do and I am very optimistic about the future." ☺

**Read the entire story at <http://www.115fw.ang.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123156211>**

# Veterans, Families, Retirees

## Women Veterans conference set

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs will host "Women Veterans – Facing the Challenges," the third Annual Wisconsin Women Veterans Conference, Friday, Sept. 18 through Sunday, Sept. 20 at the Wisconsin Military Academy, 90 South 10th Ave., Fort McCoy, Wis.

The conference will feature presentations, workshops, and static displays, and will provide information for and about women veterans, including federal and state benefits, programs, and services for veterans and topics of interest including employment, education, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and reintegration.

Registration sign-in will take place at the Wisconsin Military Academy from 4 to 6 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 18 and from 7 to 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 19. Registration forms are available online (or can be mailed to those calling to register) and must be returned to WDVA by Aug. 31.

For more information, visit the WDVA Women Veterans webpage to access the conference agenda and register online at [www.WisVets.com/womenvets](http://www.WisVets.com/womenvets), or contact WDVA's Women Veterans Coordinator Gundel Metz at 608-266-1312. For information on WDVA programs and services visit our home page at [www.WisVets.com](http://www.WisVets.com) or call toll-free 1-800-WIS-VETS (1-800-947-8387). ☎

## Space 'A' Travel updates

Recent changes in the military space available (Space-A) travel regulations have increased the number of dependents traveling without their sponsor. As a result, there is greater competition for Space-A seats, especially to and from Europe, Hawaii and the Far East during the summer months. The Space-A discussion board, found at [www.pepperd.com](http://www.pepperd.com) can help you keep track of the last category moved at most of the major chokepoints in the Space-A system. If you are not up to speed on travel categories check out the breakdown at Frequently Asked Questions page: [www.spacea.net/faq.html#categories](http://www.spacea.net/faq.html#categories) [Source: NAUS Weekly Update, May 22, 2009] ☎

## Retiree Activities Office

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

Retirees may provide an e-mail address, name, retired military grade and branch of service to [widma.retiree@wisconsin.gov](mailto:widma.retiree@wisconsin.gov) to be added to the RAO's e-mail distribution list.

The RAO is located at Joint Force Headquarters, 2400 Wright Street, Room 160, Madison, Wis. 53704. The RAO is open Tuesdays and Thursdays 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. except on holidays. Contact the RAO with questions or for assistance at 608-242-3115 or toll-free at 1-800-335-5147. ☎

## Lifetime award nominees sought

The Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs is seeking nominations for its Veteran Lifetime Achievement Award to be presented at its Aug. 21 meeting in Neillsville.

The Veteran Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes Wisconsin veterans who have compiled a record of exemplary service as a military service member, a veteran, and as a citizen during the veteran's lifetime. The August 2009 award recipient will be selected from among nominations received for veterans residing in counties located on the northwest region of Wisconsin (Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Buffalo, Burnett, Chippewa, Clark, Douglas, Dunn, Eau Claire, Iron, Jackson, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, Price, Rusk, St. Croix, Sawyer, Taylor, Trempealeau and Washburn counties). Nominations for the Board's August 2009 meeting must be postmarked no later than July 15, 2009.

There will be up to six annual awards, four regional and two statewide ones. Nominations may be submitted at any time during the year, but no later than the 15th of the month prior to each proposed award. Completed nominations should be mailed to: Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs Lifetime Achievement Award, Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, 30 W. Mifflin St., P.O. Box 7843, Madison, Wis. 53707-7843, or faxed to 608-264-7616.

For more information on the Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs Veterans Lifetime Achievement Award, to include past recipients and nomination forms, visit online at [www.WisVets.com/BoardAward](http://www.WisVets.com/BoardAward), or call WDVA at 608-266-1315. ☎

## Veteran nominations sought

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is seeking nominations for the second annual Wisconsin Woman Veteran of the Year Award, to be presented during the September 2009 Women Veterans Conference at Fort McCoy from Sept. 18-20.

The Wisconsin Woman Veteran of the Year Award recognizes women veterans who have compiled a record of exemplary service as a military service member, a veteran, and outstanding member of the community.

There will be one annual award for the Wisconsin Woman Veteran of the Year. The recipient will be selected by the Women Veterans Coordination Committee. Selection criteria focuses on the nominee's achievements in the military, in veterans' affairs, her commitment to women veteran issues, and as a citizen in service to her community, state and nation.

Nominations will be accepted from any Wisconsin resident, veteran, County Veterans Service Officer or veterans service organization or group. Nominations may be submitted at any time during the year for the annual award. Completed nomination forms must be received by the end of the month that precedes the Women Veterans Conference. The deadline for the 2009 award is Aug. 31.

To see more information about the award to include the previous recipient, visit [www.WisVets.com/WomenVets](http://www.WisVets.com/WomenVets). ☎

## 'Ready Family' workshops offered statewide this summer

The Wisconsin National Guard's Service Member Support Branch will host "Ready Family Connections" and "Ready Family Maintenance" events throughout the state to promote readiness, health and wellbeing for service members and their families.

"Connections" workshops last four hours, while "Maintenance" workshops last eight hours. Both workshops offer a variety of presentations and information.

Topics can include but are not limited to: Stress manage-

ment during deployment, helping children deal with deployment, financial readiness during deployment, Military OneSource, family wellbeing, anger management during deployment, the upside of deployment, understanding combat stress, coping skills, time management, consumer awareness, taking care of yourself, creative problem solving, life in balance, getting ready for the return, and reunion

For information about a workshop near you, visit [http://www.wingfam.org/readyfamily/Ready\\_Family.asp](http://www.wingfam.org/readyfamily/Ready_Family.asp) ☎

# Parting shot

Wisconsin Army National Guard field artillery soldiers fire cannon salutes during the finale of Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" Sunday, June 28 during the 2009 Rhythm and Booms celebration at Madison's Warner Park. Wisconsin National Guard support included a static display of a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter, a Blackhawk sling-load of a 105-mm towed howitzer cannon and a Humvee, flyovers by four Blackhawks as well as F-16 fighter jets, and multiple salutes from four 105-mm howitzers. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Vaughn R. Larson

