



cease

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN NATIONAL GUARD
VOLUME 5, ISSUE 4 • WINTER

[Click here](#) to find out how the 128th Air Refueling Wing is fueling the fight overseas. Wisconsin National Guard
photo by Staff Sgt. Jenna Hildebrand



2012 NGB Media Contest winner
2012 Keith L. Ware Awards winner
Winter 2013

Volume 5, Issue 4

Official Newsletter of the
Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard
<http://dma.wi.gov>

The Adjutant General:

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar

Deputy Adjutant General Army:

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson

Deputy Adjutant General Air:

Brig. Gen. Gary Ebben

Deputy Adjutant General, Civil Support:

Brig. Gen. John McCoy

Director of Public Affairs:

Maj. Paul Rickert

At Ease Editor:

Vaughn R. Larson

Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team
Public Affairs

157th Maneuver Enhancement
Brigade Public Affairs

115th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

128th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

Volk Field Combat Readiness
Training Center Public Affairs

How to Reach Us

E-mail: vaughn.r.larson.nfg@mail.mil

Phone: (608) 242-3056 Fax: (608) 242-3051

Department of Military Affairs;

Attn: Vaughn R. Larson

2400 Wright Street; Madison, WI 53708-8111

Submissions:

For photo or story submissions,
please call (608)242-3056

or e-mail vaughn.r.larson.nfg@mail.mil

roll call



4

Battery B 'Barracudas'
return from historic combat
mission in Afghanistan



23

Wisconsin National Guard
takes to a different field for
Milwaukee Brewers salute



32

A look back at the
Wisconsin National
Guard in 2013

The on-line, interactive @ease offers many features you may not be aware of. Follow the **red caption text** to see additional photos and videos. Click on the **blue text** to open related sites. Click on the opening headlines to view the stories as they appeared on dma.wi.gov. Click on the teasers above to go directly to that page.

The pages are designed to print out at 8.5-by-11 inches, giving you the option of reading @ease off-line.

The Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard's **At Ease** newsletter is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of **At Ease** are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, or the Department of the Army or Air Force. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the Wisconsin National Guard Public Affairs Officer.



on the cover

Members of the Milwaukee-based 128th Air Refueling Wing prepare to land a KC-135 Stratotanker after a Nov. 3 training exercise. Read a related story on Page 8. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Staff Sgt. Jenna V. Hildebrand

3 FROM TAG

6 COMBAT LIFESAVER GREET'S WOMAN WHOSE LIFE HE SAVED IN TEXAS

7 SHUTTERBUG CAPTURES HISTORY

10 104TH SFAAT RETURNS TO WISCONSIN

11 SOLDIER AWARDED PURPLE HEART

12 WATER SURVIVAL TRAINING AT 128TH AIR REFUELING WING

13 64TH TROOP COMMAND GAINS SECOND FEMALE COMMANDER

14 426TH RTI INSTALLS NEW LEADER

15 UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE FACILITY UNVEILED AT VOLK FIELD

16 AIRMAN RESCUES FAMILY FROM FIRE

17 WISCONSIN ARMY GUARD'S NEW CHIEF OF STAFF KEEPS BLAZING TRAILS

19 STATE SURGEON CALLS IT A CAREER

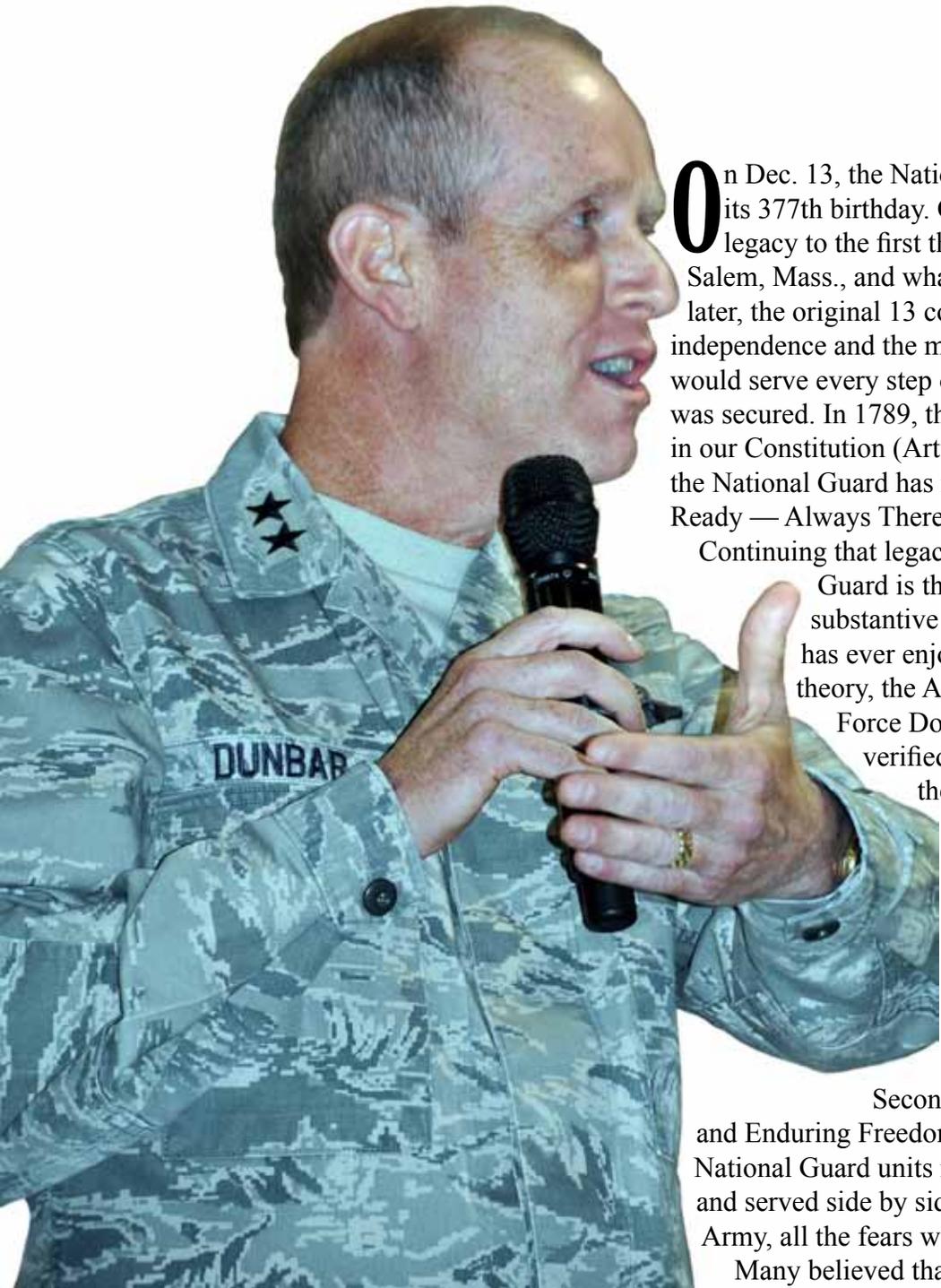
21 115 CADETS GRADUATE CHALLENGE ACADEMY RESIDENTIAL PHASE

24 BADGERS SALUTE WISCONSIN VETERANS

25 NCO OF THE YEAR TAKES ON IRONMAN COMPETITION

26 NEWS DIGEST

29 MERITORIOUS SERVICE



From TAG

On Dec. 13, the National Guard celebrated its 377th birthday. Our Guard traces its legacy to the first three units formed in Salem, Mass., and what a legacy. 140 years later, the original 13 colonies would declare independence and the militia (National Guard) would serve every step of the way as our nation was secured. In 1789, the militia was enshrined in our Constitution (Article 1, Section 8) and the National Guard has remained “Always Ready — Always There.”

Continuing that legacy, today’s National Guard is the most relevant and substantive force that our nation has ever enjoyed. No longer a theory, the Abrams Doctrine (Total Force Doctrine) has been verified and validated over the past 25 years. First, in Desert Storm where our Air National Guard units mobilized in step with the active duty U.S. Air Force for the air war leading up to the short, but very effective ground war.

Second, in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, where our Army National Guard units mobilized repeatedly and served side by side with the active duty Army, all the fears were proven false.

Many believed that once mobilized, the

National Guard would falter. Our Guardsmen, once deployed, would return home and quickly separate because “this is not what they signed up for.” Our employers would not stand for multiple deployments and we would lose the support of our families. Nothing could be further from the truth. Despite unprecedented operations tempo, our retention numbers are robust and we maintain our end strength. Our employer and family support has never been stronger and we are — in fact — an operational reserve.

What a testament to the National Guard. What a testament to our active duty Air Force and Army leadership, whose vision and trust has been validated over these past 25 years. The timing could not be better as our nation faces severe fiscal crises and we need to make difficult decisions. Thanks to your proven success, our elected leaders can consider a greater reliance on the National Guard as we transition to the post Iraq/Afghanistan phase.

Our nation has faced fiscal challenges before, but our Congress has never had a National Guard this operational or this cost effective to consider when making difficult decisions. It’s a privilege to serve with you. We are the Wisconsin National Guard and we remain “Always Ready — Always There.”

BARRACUDAS *back from* BATTLE

Battery B photo by Sgt. Sean HuoIlhan



Gov. Scott Walker and senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders joined families and friends in welcoming Battery B, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery back to Wisconsin Oct. 18 at the Experimental Aircraft Association in Oshkosh. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Vaughn R. Larson

Battery B, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery — the first Army National Guard unit to conduct a combat field artillery mission in Afghanistan — completed its historic deployment Oct. 11.

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, deputy adjutant general for Army, greeted the HIMARS (High Mobility Artillery Rocket System) unit members as they exited the plane at Fort Bliss. He said their sense of accomplishment was palpable.

“This was a true shooting mission for one of our artillery units in theater,” Anderson said. “About 40 percent of the unit members were first-time deployers, and I could sense the pride from that group in having accomplished the mission successfully and safely.”

Capt. Matthew Mangerson, battery commander, shared that pride.

“The only thing more rewarding than successfully conducting the first National Guard HIMARS combat mission is coming home with the same number of healthy Soldiers we left with last December,” Mangerson said Oct. 14.

Battery B supported more than 400 combat missions with more than 1,200 hours of around-the-clock fire support coverage for a joint special operations task force covering nearly half of Afghanistan.

Many National Guard field artillery units have been used for missions other than field artillery when they have been deployed since Sept. 11, 2001. Such was the case for Bravo Battery on its previous deployment to Iraq from 2006-07, when the unit conducted a convoy security mission. Others have been used for detainee operations, or security forces. While those missions proved vital to the success of the American war effort, the artillerymen of Bravo Battery relished the opportunity to conduct an actual field artillery mission in combat.

“It’s awesome,” said Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Kletzien, of La Crosse, who was on his third deployment. “To be a part of that, and support who we supported has been a dream come true. I mean it was several deployments doing something else to get to this point, but it’s been worth it.”

Continued on Page 5

Continued from Page 4

The significance of Bravo Battery's historic mission was also not lost on Spc. Sam Discher, of Racine, who returned just in time to celebrate his first wedding anniversary with his wife.

"It feels great," he said. "I was in a position during my schooling where my instructor asked who was National Guard. We all stood up in front of the class, and he said, 'You guys are never going to do your job.'"

But since returning from artillery school and serving in Bravo Battery, Discher said he has been privileged to do artillery training every year before deploying to Afghanistan to conduct the HIMARS mission over the course of the last year.

The credit belongs to the unit's Soldiers and leaders who underwent a challenging and exhausting process that led them to this point, said Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Shields, the senior enlisted advisor for the Wisconsin Army National Guard, and a former first sergeant for Battery B.

Shortly after the unit's previous deployment to Iraq, the Army transitioned the unit from using a self-propelled howitzer, to a multiple launch rocket system unit. They soon had the opportunity to become a HIMARS unit, and eventually became qualified.

"Not only did they become qualified, but they became the best in the United States Army at what they do," Shields told the crowd at the homecoming ceremony. "And they were selected to perform an artillery mission in a combat theater, which we hadn't done before from an artillery perspective."

For Mangerson, the deployment was an opportunity to showcase the National Guard's skills and professionalism.

"I honestly think anybody could have been the commander with this unit and been successful," he said. "They were an excellent group of guys. Their technical

knowledge was fantastic. The leadership of the noncommissioned officers was fantastic."

Mangerson is excited to begin sharing the battery's knowledge and experience gained from a combat deployment with the battalion's other HIMARS battery, and with other field artillery units across the state.

The commander presented American flags carried on missions in Afghanistan to the state's senior National Guard leadership who were on hand at the ceremony to welcome them home. They also presented spent rocket pod covers from their deployment to several senior leaders.

Waiting to greet the returning Soldiers

when they arrived were elected officials including Rep. Tom Petri, Sen. Ron Johnson, and Gov. Scott Walker. But the reunion with family served as the day's centerpiece.

"One of the best parts of my job is welcome homes," said Gov. Walker, who said there was nothing better than watching young children reunite with their Soldiers.

The governor drew parallels to the fellow Wisconsinites who served in the Civil War 150 years ago and veterans of subsequent conflicts to the service seen today from Wisconsin's uniformed service members.

"You are a part of that proud tradition here in the State of Wisconsin and across

this great country," he said. "On behalf of a grateful state and a grateful country, we say, 'thank you.'"

"Our country was built on people who assumed responsibility, who volunteered, and who served, and that's what Bravo Battery has done and with the support of your families," said Rep. Petri. "So welcome back. Thank you for what you've done, and best wishes in the future."

Sen. Johnson thanked the unit for its service and sacrifice.

"The magnitude of that sacrifice is so great, just the mere glimpse of it moistens our eyes, puts a catch in our throat, or leaves us entirely speechless," he said. 

[Additional photos](#)

Pre-combat lifesavers

Ashley M. Alameda
Fort Bliss DoMaD Public Affairs

FORT BLISS, Texas — Mrs. Linda Hartman thanked, face to face, the Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers who saved her life nine long months earlier.

Mrs. Hartman was the passenger of a single car, roll-over accident in January of this year. The black Ford Focus she was riding in veered off a highway and slammed into a guard rail causing the vehicle to flip over six times before coming to a complete stop. Hartman suffered a cracked sternum, four cracked ribs, closed fractures in her left leg and an open femur bone fracture in her right that severed her femoral artery.

That morning, Sgt. 1st Class Todd Richter of the Plymouth-based Battery B, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, picked up two of his Soldiers from ammunition guard detail at White Sands Missile Range. He was driving (recently promoted) Sgt. Michael Black and Spc. Joshua Aprill back to Dona Ana Base Camp when they came upon the mangled sedan. The Soldiers pulled over to see how they could help.

Black, who is a combat medic, grabbed his medical bag and began to treat Hartman, applying a tourniquet to her right leg. Richter assisted Black by stabilizing Hartman's neck. Aprill cleared debris from the road and directed traffic while keeping the uninjured driver of the vehicle calm.

The Soldiers were at Fort Bliss to conduct pre-deployment training. Two days after the incident, they deployed to Afghanistan. They returned from deployment [Oct. 11](#), and to Wisconsin [Oct. 18](#).

At the Directorate of Mobilization and Deployment Headquarters Oct. 17, a nervous Hartman finally met her heroes, who she now considers family. Flanked by her father, Paul Garcia, and husband, Doug, Hartman gave a tearful hug to each Soldier.

The group sat and recounted memories of that day. Despite the seriousness of the accident and Hartman's injuries, the mood remained light and comical. It was mentioned that Hartman was Black's first live patient. She looked at him and asked "How was I?" prompting laughter throughout the room.

She asked the men, "What were you thinking when you drove by?"

"We were not thinking anything — we were tired!" Black replied, noting that they had just come from 24-hour duty and had been awake all night. "When I think back to that night, it is all a blur."

Hartman has had a painful recovery since that day.



Linda Hartman greets Sgt. Michael Black during an Oct. 17 meeting at Fort Bliss, Texas. Photo by Ashley M. Alameda, DoMaD PAO



Linda Hartman wipes away tears as she sits with her father, Paul Garcia (blue shirt) and her husband, Doug (black shirt) during her meeting with (left to right) Sgt. First Class Todd Richter, Spc. Joshua Aprill and Sgt. Michael Black of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery. Photo by Ashley M. Alameda, DoMaD PAO

She has undergone several surgeries, including removal of her knee joint. She has suffered through infections and painful skin grafts. She still has surgeries planned and at least a year of recovery time. Hartman remains positive about her progress and says her situation could have been so much worse if she were not wearing a seatbelt.

"You never think it is going to happen to you until it happens to you," she said.

The Soldiers are impressed with Hartman's healing process. Black said in a local news station's television interview "It's fantastic to see how far she has come since the incident. Seeing where she started and the kind of trauma that she's suffered, it is amazing to see the spirit she has kept up through the entire ordeal."

During the reunion, DoMaD Director Col. John F. Dorney presented the heroes with coins, "From one citizen Soldier to another, thank you," Dorney told the three Soldiers.

The newly extended family broke bread at Texas Roadhouse on post, where they were recognized by the staff and given free ice cream.

Richter and Aprill were awarded Army Commendation Medals for their involvement. Black was recommended for the Soldier's Medal. The Soldier's Medal is the highest award one can receive in a non-combat related environment. Even though the award is still pending approval, plans are being made for it to be presented to Black at the National Guard of the United States convention next year. 

[Story online](#)

Snapshots of history



Officially, Sgt. Sean Huolihan's job with [Battery B, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery](#) during the unit's Afghanistan deployment was communications section chief.

On the side, he tried to capture the history of a historic deployment — the first Army National Guard combat field artillery mission in Afghanistan — one frame at a time.

Not an easy task when your missions are classified.

"The whole 'no cameras allowed' rule, you know," Huolihan explained.

Still, many of the images he did capture are breathtaking — sprawling landscapes made profound by the intensity of color, High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) launchers belching fire and rockets with remarkable clarity.

"I had never photographed anything remotely like this," the self-taught photographer admitted. "It has been challenging, from keeping my equipment clean and secure to really pushing the equipment to its limitations without using flash.

"I guess I started the process knowing I wanted to make the battery look as good as everyone said we are," he continued. "We're the best battery and chosen for a once-a-lifetime experience, and I hoped to portray that experience to the world."

1st Sgt. Steven Czekala said Huolihan's photos meant a great deal to Battery B.

"His skills as a photographer are second to none, and showed the battery in a light that no one else could,"



Sgt. Sean Huolihan

Czekala said. "Because of security issues, his work is all anybody has to remember our tour of duty.

"He did outstanding work documenting what he could to tell the unit's story," Czekala said. "As Soldiers we are excellent at what we do, but terrible at recording history."

Czekala noted that Huolihan did not focus on photography at the expense of the mission.

"It goes without saying that communication is one of the three needs in order to win on the battlefield," he said. "Our mission was not of the usual nature, and if we could not communicate, there could be serious consequences. We had no serious communication issues, and we never failed to meet a mission, due in large part to our ability to communicate. Sgt. Huolihan should receive credit for that."

Huolihan was reluctant to single out any photo or series of photos as his favorites, but Czekala recalled a time-lapse photo of a HIMARS launcher with the stars moving in a circular formation in the night sky.

"He was always willing to do what we requested, and that usually happened in the middle of what would have been his sleep cycle," Czekala said. "I am very glad he did what he did, so our work can be remembered for generations to come."

Capt. Matthew Mangerson, Battery B commander, said it was clear that Huolihan had a passion for photography.

"Obviously it is much easier to be tasked with something you enjoy," Mangerson said. "However, he took that dedication and availability to another level. He could be asked to facilitate any unit historian or photography project at a moment's notice, at any time of the day."

Mangerson noted that Huolihan's photos, in addition to being compiled [online](#), have been used to support an upcoming article in [Fires Journal](#) — a field artillery publication — as well as a unit submission packet for the Alexander Hamilton Award, which recognizes the best Army National Guard field artillery unit.

"Any organization that heavily utilizes photography and public media would be lucky to have Sgt. Huolihan," Mangerson said.

The photographer, who recently signed up for another six-year term of service, was content to let his photos speak for themselves.

"Basically, I documented things as they happened," Huolihan explained. "I just took it upon myself to take pretty pictures." 📷

[Complete story online](#)



Fueling the fight

Tech. Sgt. Joselito Aribuabo
379th Air Expeditionary Wing

SOUTHWEST ASIA — In order for U.S. military ground forces to be engaged in operations in Afghanistan, they require continuous close air support made possible by 340th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron (EARS) tankers.

“With air refueling, aircrafts can be topped off within minutes,” said Maj. Jeremy M. Keyes of Big Bend, a 340th EARS flight commander deployed from the Wisconsin Air National Guard’s 128th Air Refueling Wing. “We save time because fighters

don’t have to go back to the base where they launched from to get more fuel.”

Without this fuel, fighter jets would not be able to carry out their mission, said Keyes as he explained their important role.

This seasoned aircraft has successfully ensured aerial aircraft refueling for nearly 60 years, and helped accomplish the Air Force’s goal of global reach. The KC-135 Stratotanker provides core aerial refueling capability for the U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard. It also provides aerial

A U.S. Navy F/A-18 Hornet refuels from a KC-135 Stratotanker in Southwest Asia, Oct. 1. The stratotanker is from the Wisconsin Air National Guard’s 128th Air Refueling Wing, Milwaukee. U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Joselito Aribuabo

Continued on Page 9



Above, Maj. Jeremy Keyes and 1st Lt. Jacob Kummrow perform pre-flight checks at the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing in Southwest Asia, Oct. 1. Both are deployed from the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing. Keyes hails from Big Bend, and Kummrow from Oconomowoc.

At right, Tech. Sgt. Jordan Jungwirth IV operates the boom from a pod in the back of a KC-135 Stratotanker, refueling a U.S. Navy F/A-18 Hornet in Southwest Asia, Oct. 1. Jungwirth IV is a boom operator deployed from the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing, and hails from Oshkosh. U.S. Air Force photos by Tech. Sgt. Joselito Aribuabo



Deployed 128th ARW members fuel the fight overseas

Continued from Page 8

refueling support to Navy, Marine Corps and allied nation aircraft.

"We not only support U.S. military aircraft but also North American Treaty Organization forces," Keyes said.

The mission capability of the KC-135 to provide in-flight refueling takes away the risk of aircraft needing to land and refuel.

"Once on the ground, there is high risk that something can go wrong with the aircraft and if it's down than that is one less asset in the air," Keyes said.

The 340th EARS flies KC-135s deployed to the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing here. The Stratotanker is capable of hauling 200,000 pounds of fuel and 83,000 pounds of cargo, including 37 passengers and six pallets, making it the most versatile airframe in the Air Force.

"This capability saves a lot of time when a four-to-five-hour cover mission is shortened to an hour," Keyes said.

Typically, fighters have a range of around 1,000 nautical miles.

"Being able to get back and continue the fight is essential to every mission," said 1st Lt. Jacob Kummrow of Oconomowoc, a 340th EARS co-pilot deployed from the 128th ARW.

The KC-135 Stratotanker's fuel is pumped through the boom, its primary fuel transfer method.

"It's pretty nerve-wracking, especially night refueling, but once you do it a couple of times, it becomes second nature," said Tech. Sgt. Jordan Jungwirth of Oshkosh, 340th EARS boom operator deployed from the 128th ARW. "It's a great feeling knowing that what I do has a big impact on ground mission." 

- [Story online](#)
- [Additional photos](#)

104th SFAAT returns to Wisconsin

1st Lt. Joe Trovato
Wisconsin National Guard

Eleven members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 104th Security Force Advise and Assist Team returned to Wisconsin Sept. 28 after serving nine months in Afghanistan.

Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch joined the Wisconsin National Guard's senior leadership and families in welcoming the team of Soldiers home to Madison.

The SFAAT spent its deployment working with the 4th Afghan Border Police at a remote combat outpost on the Afghan border with Iran and Turkmenistan. Their work represented a critical component of the U.S. strategy to transition security and responsibility for the country back to Afghan hands before the expected withdrawal of U.S. forces next year.

Brig. Gen. Ken Koon, the Wisconsin National Guard's assistant adjutant general for readiness and training, touted the unit's long list of accomplishments.

Throughout the deployment, which began in January, the SFAAT conducted 24 major operations in the 4th Afghan Border Police area of responsibility, which includes more than 1,100 kilometers of international border. The team planned and conducted more than 100 combat patrols in addition to working with their Afghan counterparts to improve operations, logistics and communications.

The unit also helped start two 12-room schools and a deep water well, distributed donated school supplies to villages and delivered 175 desks to a school that previously had no furniture.

As a result, the 104th, or Team Talon as



As Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, looks on, Maj. Michael Hanson and Sgt. Maj. Glen Newkirk of the 104th Security Force Advise and Assist Team present

Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch with a unit photo taken in Afghanistan. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Vaughn R. Larson

it was known in Afghanistan, earned five Combat Infantryman Badges, two Combat Action Badges, one Combat Medical Badge and eight Bronze Star Medals.

As the unit's executive officer, Maj. Michael Hanson, said at the Sept. 28 ceremony, the 104th SFAAT was described by the commanding general in charge of all coalition forces in Afghanistan, as the best SFAAT operating in the country.

As important as the accolades heaped on the unit was the very real difference the SFAAT made in a country the U.S. has spent 12 years preparing to stand on its own.

"I told them [Afghan partners], 'the future of your organization is very bright,'" Hanson said. "You have some very good young leaders here that we were working with and mentoring."

"You will never know the effect that you've had on this part of the world," added Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general. "A very tough

part of the world. The people that you met and the people that you mentored, and the seeds that you've planted...some will take a long time to germinate.

"What you have done is substantive, and it matters to our country and the country of Afghanistan," Dunbar continued. "And if they have any chance at success after we leave, it is going to be because of efforts like you just put forth these last nine months on the ground."

But the theme of the day was family, as the Soldiers returned to the waiting arms of their families for the first time in a year.

Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch brought her two daughters along for the ceremony.

"I think it's really important that we show our children what this is and why it is so important that we admire, we respect, that we show thanks and gratitude for those who preserve their ability, our ability to do what we get a chance to do every day — love life, pursue the American dream,"

she told the troops and their families. "These are things that we wouldn't be able to do were it not for you preserving freedom around the world.

"Gentlemen, it was so important to bring my kids to show them that in today's generation, superheroes are not the stuff of movies," she continued. "They're not the stuff of comic books. They don't wear capes. They don't wear masks, and they don't only work under the cover of night. They are here. They are among us. They are tremendously brave, and they are human. Thank you for serving Wisconsin so well."

The 16-member 104th SFAAT deployed to Afghanistan in January after several months of [training](#) at Fort Polk, La., and Camp Shelby, Miss. Several Soldiers returned to the U.S. ahead of the unit's main body. 📷

- [Story online](#)
- [Additional photos](#)

Purple Heart presented nearly six years after attack

Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue
Wisconsin National Guard

The top officer in the Wisconsin Army National Guard presented one of his Soldiers with a Purple Heart for injuries sustained during a 2007 deployment to Iraq during a formal ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters Oct. 18.

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, deputy adjutant general for Army, presented the combat award to Staff Sgt. Joshua W. Koch, of Sun Prairie, who sustained a concussion following indirect fire at Camp Cedar II, Iraq.

On June 28, 2007, Koch and fellow Soldiers were clearing their weapons following a convoy mission when multiple mortar rounds impacted near them — the closest being 15-25 meters away. Following the attack, medical personnel diagnosed Koch as having suffered a concussion from the exploding mortar.

He was treated and returned to duty.

Due to an administrative error, followed by two unit changes, Koch was the only Soldier from his group yet to be recognized for injuries sustained in the attack. He credits his fellow Soldiers of the 147th Aviation Regiment for helping him and his family close that chapter of his life.

“A lot of people pushed to get this done and get it done right ... it means more than I can say in words,” Koch said to an auditorium full of friends, family and fellow service members. “So thank you very much.”

Roseann Younger watched proudly as her son was pinned with the purple and gold, heart-shaped medal.

“As a mother I have mixed emotions because we don’t wish for our children to be hurt,” she said following the ceremony. “My son is a Soldier and I couldn’t be more proud of him. He’s a good Soldier, a good person, a good dad, a good son — I love him to death.”

Anderson acknowledged the award, established in 1782 by Gen. George Washington, can be bittersweet.



Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, deputy adjutant general for Army, gives encouraging words to Staff Sgt. Joshua Koch following a Purple Heart presentation at Joint Force Headquarters Oct. 18. Koch was awarded the Purple Heart for injuries he received from indirect fire while deployed to Iraq in 2007. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue

“The military has a number of awards that we use to recognize the service of our service members. There’s one of these awards that no Soldier truly ever aspires to receive and that’s the Purple Heart,” Anderson said. “In Sergeant Koch’s circumstances, he was definitely in harm’s way and thankfully came back in one piece.”

Koch was serving with Battery C, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery during the 2007 deployment. He currently serves as the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear noncommissioned office- in-charge in the Madison-based 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment. 

[Story online](#)



Water survival training offers Airmen chance to splash and learn

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Jenna Hildebrand
128th Air Refueling Wing

Aircrew members with the 128th Air Refueling Wing, Wisconsin Air National Guard, participated in combat and water survival training refresher training conducted by the Aircrew Flight Equipment section at Lakeshore State Park near downtown Milwaukee Aug. 8.

The Aircrew Flight Equipment section of the 128th ARW conducted combat and water survival training for aircrew members with help from the Milwaukee Police Department and Milwaukee Fire Department.

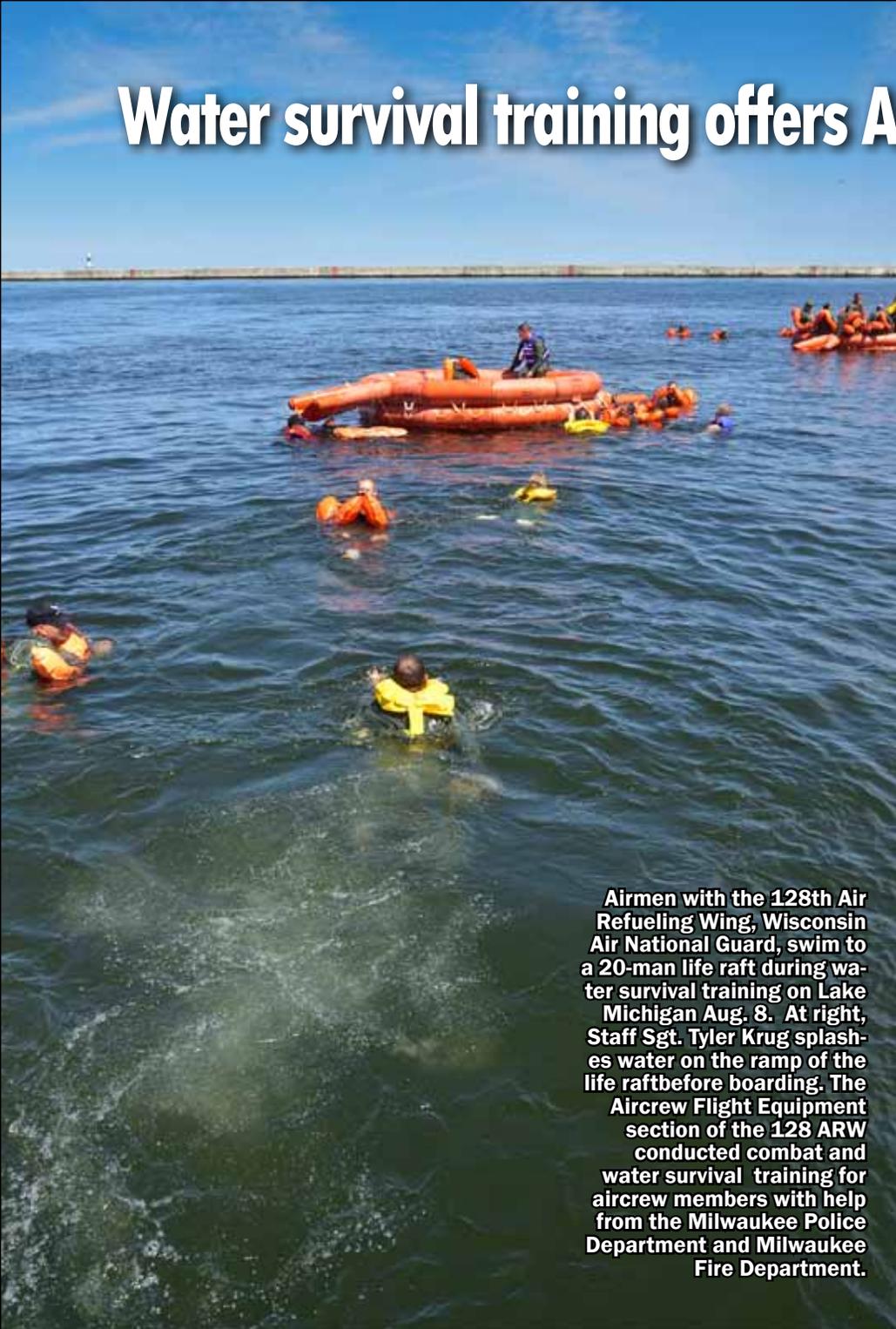
Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape (SERE) courses provide the opportunity to learn and practice the needed skills to survive in hostile and non-hostile environments in emergency situations. AFE survival instructors go through the same SERE courses as the aircrew so that

they build the same foundation in survival knowledge.

Aircrew members refreshed their training in signaling devices/methods, procuring sustenance, building shelters, personal protection, and navigation. The Milwaukee Fire Department and Milwaukee Police Department provided boats to transport the aircrew members and AFE instructors to Lake Michigan where they actuated life rafts and continued with water survival training.

The aircrew members practiced using floatation equipment provided to them on the aircraft. They inflated their life preservers and learned how to prepare and use the 20-man life raft.

Combat and water survival refresher training is conducted annually by AFE survival instructors during the summer. 



Airmen with the 128th Air Refueling Wing, Wisconsin Air National Guard, swim to a 20-man life raft during water survival training on Lake Michigan Aug. 8. At right, Staff Sgt. Tyler Krug splashes water on the ramp of the life raft before boarding. The Aircrew Flight Equipment section of the 128 ARW conducted combat and water survival training for aircrew members with help from the Milwaukee Police Department and Milwaukee Fire Department.



Second female tabbed to lead state's most diverse brigade

Staff Sgt. Megan Burnham
112th Mobile Public Affairs
Detachment

The Wisconsin Army National Guard's 64th Troop Command welcomed a familiar face as its new brigade commander during a Nov. 3 change of command ceremony at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Madison.

Col. Joane Mathews, who became the Wisconsin Army National Guard's first female brigade commander when she took command in 2012, formally passed her duties to recently appointed Col. Julie Gerety, of Green Bay, who has a long history of service within the 64th.

During the ceremony, Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, deputy adjutant general for Army, awarded Mathews the Legion of Merit for her superior service and dedication to duty.

Anderson said that Mathews' poise, strategic prowess and patience led her team through the challenges of operating in a joint environment with professionalism and a focus on mission success.

"Your leadership has continued the brigade down the path of continued excellence and built a solid foundation of Soldier readiness," Anderson said to Mathews. "Job well done."

Mathews relinquished command of the brigade after accepting a promotion to the Wisconsin Army National Guard chief of staff post.

Anderson also praised Gerety's operational and institutional experiences, noting it will serve her well in leading Troop Command to higher states of readiness and continued excellence in operational support.

"I am absolutely confident in her capabilities and leadership," Anderson said.

In her final address to the Soldiers of her old brigade, Mathews highlighted

the great successes the Soldiers of the 64th Troop Command accomplished during the past 12 months and how proud she was of them.

"The Soldiers of this brigade have been extremely busy providing innovative, challenging and exciting training with phenomenal results," Mathews said. "I have been absolutely amazed by your capability, as well as by your strong sense of duty, tremendous discipline and exceptional courage you have demonstrated routinely."

To conclude, Mathews provided Gerety with words of encouragement and advice.

"I know you will take this challenge head-on and lead this brigade to heightened readiness and Soldier and family caring," Mathews said. "I wish you the best of luck, but most of all have fun, enjoy the ride — because it will go quick."

The 64th Troop Command is the state's most diverse brigade. Gerety has already commanded two companies and one battalion in Troop Command. Her wealth of experience in the brigade will aid in her understanding its complete and comprehensive mission.

"The units and service members of the Troop Command deserve my very best," Gerety said. "And to Troop Command, I do pledge my very best."

Gerety worked with most prior brigade commanders and considers it a great honor to be included in that group of commanders of the 64th Troop Command.

"All prior commanders and everyone that I've worked with have helped me prepare for that next level," she said.

When the 64th Troop Command is needed, Gerety said her response will always be, "Any mission, anytime, anywhere, Troop Command is ready." 🇺🇸

- [Story online](#)
- [Additional photos](#)



Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, the Wisconsin National Guard's deputy adjutant general for Army, passes the 64th Troop Command Brigade colors to Col. Julie Gerety, above, during a Nov. 3 change of command ceremony at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Madison. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Staff Sgt. Tiffany Black

Left, Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson presents Col. Joane Mathews with the Legion of Merit. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Staff Sgt. Megan Burnham

New commander plans to build on strength, success of 426th Regional Training Institute

1st Lt. Joe Trovato
Wisconsin National Guard

A new commander took charge of the Wisconsin National Guard's 426th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) in a Sept. 8 ceremony at the Wisconsin Military Academy at Fort McCoy.

Col. Gregory Hirsch formally succeeded Col. Richard Borkowski at the ceremony and hopes to continue building on the 426th's already strong legacy.

The 426th Regiment, which operates the Wisconsin Military Academy at Fort McCoy, is the Wisconsin National Guard's educational institution, offering field artillery, medical and transportation courses as well as noncommissioned officer education system, officer and warrant officer candidate schools

Hirsch, who comes from a field artillery background and watched as the 426th grew from humble beginnings 20 years ago, sees great opportunities ahead for the training institute.

"There was no surplus funding," he recalled of the RTI's early days. "There was no dedicated school equipment, instructors, simulators or training aids."

Now, he said, the 426th is the leading artillery school outside of Fort Sill, Okla., the home of the Army's field artillery branch.

The incoming commander credited the RTI's previous leadership, including Borkowski, for building such a strong reputation as well as helping him in his own development as an artillery officer.

"Those individuals' vision and efforts ensured that later, as I became a brigade staff officer and battalion commander, there was a high quality training program in the state that provided training to my units' Soldiers," Hirsch said of the RTI's previous leaders. "That training ensured our unit's readiness during the last decade of deployments."

Now, Hirsch said, as the Army looks to restructure in the face of shrinking budgets, the focus will be for the Wisconsin Military Academy to innovate and continue building on the sustained success of the past. Specifically, the new commander said the Wisconsin Military Academy can offer a valuable training alternative for Wisconsin's Guardsmen as it becomes more difficult to send them to training at the Army's active duty schools.

Hirsch, a resident of Libertyville, Ill., replaces Borkowski, who is in the process of transitioning to retirement from the National Guard. 

[Story online](#)



Col. Gregory Hirsch, above, receives the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 426th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) colors from Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, deputy adjutant general for Army, during a Sept. 8 ceremony at the Wisconsin Military Academy, Fort McCoy. At left, Col. Richard Borkowski, outgoing commander of the 426th Regiment, passes the regimental colors to Brig. Gen. Anderson. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Megan Hartley

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, and Col. Tim Lawson, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team commander, cut the ribbon to a \$4.5 million Tactical Unmanned Aerial System facility Dec. 6 at Volk Field. Also taking part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony are, left to right: Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, deputy adjutant general for Army; Lt. Col. John Reiter, commander, 32nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion; and Lt. Col. Steve Watkins, acting state Army aviation officer.



Col. Joane Mathews, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's chief of staff, is briefed on a training station at the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Tactical Unmanned Aerial System facility, located at Volk Field. Wisconsin National Guard photos by Vaughn R. Larson

\$4.5M unmanned aircraft facility unveiled

Vaughn R. Larson
Wisconsin National Guard

VOLK FIELD — Leaders from the Wisconsin Army National Guard and Wisconsin Air National Guard, along with political representatives and community leaders, were on hand Dec. 6 for the official ribbon-cutting ceremony for a Tactical Unmanned Aerial System (TUAS) facility.

The \$4.5 million, 10,298-square-foot building houses a 27-person platoon — part of Company B, 32nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion — and four [RQ-7B Shadow](#) unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). According to Lt. Col. John Reiter, 32nd BTSB commander, the Shadow provides real-time information to battlefield commanders without risking manned aircraft. He saw this capability in use while deployed to Iraq in 2009, when UAVs observed the areas and main supply routes around Camp Bucca.

“The same tools that help keep service members alive on the battlefield can be used to protect property here in the United States,” Reiter said. “For example, unmanned aircraft like those we train on here were used to find survivors in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

“The bottom line here, ladies and gentlemen, is this — the technology you see before you today saves the lives of our service men and women.”

The RQ-7B Shadow carries no armament, and is equipped with a camera.

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general,

described the new facility — located at the end of the runway at the Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center — as cutting edge.

“This is a magnificent facility, and a great day for the Wisconsin National Guard and the men and women of the 32nd BTSB,” Dunbar said.

The TUAS facility followed Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) guidelines, employing geothermal wells to support heating and cooling the building. The facility includes private offices, a simulator training room, conference rooms, a break room and exercise room.

Dunbar thanked Brig. Gen. John McCoy, currently the Wisconsin National Guard Joint Staff director and previously the deputy adjutant general for Air, and Brig. Gen. Scott Legwold, the former Joint Staff director, for their efforts in siting the UAV mission at Volk field and for shepherding the package through the U.S. Air Force process.

“It was the right thing to do, and now we have that capability right here along the runway,” Dunbar said.

Six members of the TUAS platoon [deployed](#) to Afghanistan in 2011 to support three separate Marine unmanned aerial vehicle squadrons, logging more than 1,800 hours of flight time. In Wisconsin, the platoon has logged more than 650 hours of flight time at Volk Field and Fort McCoy since 2009. 📷

- [Story online](#)
- [Additional photos](#)

Wisconsin Air Guard officer rousts family from garage fire

Vaughn R. Larson

Wisconsin National Guard Public Affairs

An air battle manager stationed at the Wisconsin Air National Guard's Volk Field potentially saved the lives of a New Lisbon family Aug. 30 when he noticed smoke in the distance while driving to work.

"It didn't look like normal smoke from a fire pit, so I decided to drive up and check it out," said Capt. John McKenna, also a New Lisbon resident. "As I drove up to the house I saw smoke billowing out of the front and back of the garage."

McKenna immediately ran to the front door, ringing the doorbell and banging on the door to alert the people inside. He wasn't certain that anyone was inside the home, but he suspected that three cars in the driveway at approximately 6:40 a.m. meant the family was still asleep.

McKenna went back to his truck to call 911 when a county worker arrived on the scene. The two banged on doors and windows around the house in an attempt to wake the residents. When Maider Thao opened the front door they told her the attached garage was on fire.

As they entered the house, McKenna informed her husband Vang Thao, who had just woken up, of the situation. Vang went upstairs to get the couple's three children.

"At this time we had to start ducking down due to the smoke," McKenna said.

Police arrived on the scene with two New Lisbon Fire Department firemen shortly after everyone had exited the house. At this point, the garage was engulfed in flames and smoke filled the house.

New Lisbon Fire Chief Lynn Willard said the garage was a total loss, but firefighters kept the fire from spreading to the house. He also said no injuries were reported.

"If we had not been dispatched when we were, we may not have been able to save the structure," Willard said. "The fire was spreading very quickly."

Once fire and police officials were on the scene and he was satisfied the family was safe, McKenna went to work at Volk Field. He estimated he had been at the scene about 15 minutes.

"Anybody who drove by would have done the same thing," he said. "If I didn't happen to drive by at that particular time and call 911, there could have been a different outcome." 

[Story online](#)



Above, New Lisbon Fire Department personnel at the scene of a garage fire just outside of New Lisbon on Aug. 30. Wisconsin Air National Guard Capt. John McKenna was first on the scene, called 911 and alerted the sleeping family. Submitted photo

At left, the intensity of the Thao family garage fire can be seen through the trees in the back yard. Photo courtesy Capt. John McKenna

New chief of staff continues to blaze new trails



1st Lt. Joe Trovato
Wisconsin National Guard

The Wisconsin Army National Guard's new chief of staff is accustomed to taking the lead.

In her previous assignments, she was Wisconsin's first female brigade commander. She was the first female commander of Wisconsin's 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, and the state's first non-medical female colonel. Now she is the state's first female chief of staff. But not only has Col. Joane Mathews succeeded in a military structure once dominated by men, she overcame humble beginnings on a Wisconsin Indian reservation en route to prominence in the National Guard.

Her Indian name, Gi we di no kwe, literally translates to "bucking the wind" — something Mathews has done throughout her military career, both literally as a helicopter pilot, and figuratively as a leader.

But Mathews — who now lives in Sun Prairie — faced challenges every step of the way on her ascent from childhood to her perch as the chief of staff. Her father, a full-blooded Native American, was born and raised in a village where they spoke nothing but the native language.

Mathews grew up in a deep Native American tradition on the Ojibwe Indian Reservation in Lac Du Flambeau, where she and her cousins and siblings spent their weekends singing and dancing around a drum in the middle of her family's living room. But her mother, though half Native American herself, was also half white. As a result, Mathews

Col. Joane Mathews, among the first generation of women to become helicopter pilots, became the first female chief of staff in Wisconsin National Guard history when she assumed the duties in November.

Photo credit: Shanna Wolf for Brava Magazine

ended up with a lighter complexion and blonde curly hair.

"When I was growing up, I didn't look native," Mathews recalled. "Our public school was majority Indian kids, and they all knew I was native, but I had friends who were not native.

"And so then I was either ... kids can be very mean at that age," she said after a pause. "If I didn't look native, they would tease me or want to fight me. So I was kind of in between."

Because of her appearance, Mathews struggled to find her place among the Native children with whom she shared a common heritage, but she struggled in the same way among whites. Not only did she have to learn to take care of herself, but she also learned the value of treating others as equals, regardless of their appearance.

"I learned a lot going through that," she said.

"In the military you're working with all kinds of people from all different backgrounds, so I've learned just to treat everyone as equals," Mathews said. "And I do that with rank as well. Even if you have a private or a major or a colonel, everybody is a human being, and they all should be treated fairly and with respect."

Despite the challenges she faced as a child, Mathews had dreams of flying. She wanted to be a commercial airline pilot or a flight attendant — any job where she could be in flight.

After graduating from high school, she left the Ojibwe Reservation and enrolled in school at the University of North Dakota, where she got a bachelors degree in aviation administration and ratings in both fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft. During her sophomore year, she took an ROTC course, and since she was barely scraping by on grants and loans, she enrolled permanently in the officer commissioning program. The Army paid her way through the rest of college, and she embarked on her military career.

Continued on Page 18

Accomplishments, not gender, matter in today's military, says Wisconsin Army Guard chief of staff

Continued from Page 17

When she graduated, she earned her commission as an aviation officer and began flight school at Fort Rucker, Ala. Once again, even though she was already an experienced pilot, Mathews faced challenges — this time as a woman, not a Native American.

"I remember when I was going to flight school I was one of very few females in flight school, and I felt proud to be selected to be a part of something that was new," she said. "I think it challenged me more, because when you're the only female or two females out of 20, that challenges me, because you're already, I felt back then, at a disadvantage, because they're already looking at me as not as good as them. So I worked harder to be better."

Mathews, also a mother to two daughters, said the environment has improved considerably in the past 20 years. Gender matters less today compared to when she first arrived at flight school in the 1980s.

"Now we don't look at each other as male or female," she said, noting that Soldiers are now judged more by their accomplishments than anything else.

"That's how they look at you — your career or experience, not whether you're a male or female, or black, or white, or whatever your nationality is. We've come a long way, and it's good to see."

The chief of staff's experience as a young female officer in a largely male occupation, at the time, was a motivator, she said.

"I think that's what motivated me back then to be a better person, a better officer, a better pilot, or whatever my job was at the time, because I was at a disadvantage," she said. "And today it motivates me, not because I'm a female or because I'm any less of a person than anyone else. I think it's now, because I'm at the chief of staff level at a senior position in the Guard. I'm

motivated to be a better person because of my position, because there are people looking up to me."

She knows that not only are other Soldiers looking up to her, but so are other women and members of her tribe still living on the Ojibwe Reservation, where she still regularly returns.

Though Mathews has blazed the trail for other women in the National Guard, she has achieved many firsts for women in the Wisconsin Guard because of her credentials, not her gender.

"Col. Mathews is taking command of the 64th Troop Command because she is the best qualified officer poised to take this command at this critical time," Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, the deputy adjutant general for Army, said during a ceremony when Mathews was selected as a brigade commander in October 2012.

"It's true that Col. Mathews has been the first in many areas of throughout her career," said Brig. Gen. Kenneth Koon, the state's assistant adjutant general for readiness and training — and Mathews' predecessor as chief of staff. "But it really hasn't been about her gender or ethnicity, but rather the best person available for the assignment at the time of selection."

As the chief of staff, Mathews will help shepherd the Guard through a challenging and uncertain time of potential budget cuts, asymmetrical warfare, and demanding domestic and overseas missions. Rather than dwelling on her past achievements, Mathews said she is focused on the future. Her top priorities as chief of staff will be combating sexual harassment and assault within the Guard's ranks, suicide prevention and maintaining the personnel readiness of the Wisconsin National Guard.

And, perhaps, continue a 27-year tradition of blazing new trails in the National Guard. 

[Story online](#)



Col. Joane Mathews speaks during a Nov. 18 meeting at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Madison. Mathews became the first female chief of staff in Wisconsin National Guard history. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue

'I feel like I'm leaving something here'



Col. Kenneth Lee received the Legion of Merit during his Dec. 5 retirement ceremony. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Vaughn R. Larson

Vaughn R. Larson
Wisconsin National Guard

Col. Kenneth Lee bid farewell to a 27-year military career, mostly with the Wisconsin Army National Guard, during a Dec. 5 ceremony in Madison.

His time as a company commander during a deployment to Iraq and his tenure as the Wisconsin Army National Guard's state surgeon count among the highlights of his career.

Equally significant, but far less enviable: the Purple Heart, the mild traumatic brain injury, the post traumatic stress.

Yet, even with a damaged knee, legs and arms, nerve injuries in his lower extremities, splitting headaches, memory lapses and shrapnel that continues to work its way out of his flesh, the soft-spoken South Korean immigrant speaks with gratitude about his time in the National Guard.

"I got a lot more from the Guard than I put into it," Lee said. "Really, there was no reason to quit after the initial six or eight years. It was worth it for me."

In the past, Lee spoke of the comfort of the military regimen and how its rigid certainties, even in the midst of imminent danger, were often preferable to the unpredictable nature of civilian life. But in time it became clear to Lee that it was time to move on.

"Everything hurts," he said with a laugh. "Doing annual training in the field, it's taking longer to recover at home. It used to be a simple recovery, but now if it's a two-week annual training it takes two weeks to recover."

Lee noted that his retirement allows others the chance to advance.

"It's not too good to have an ingrained person in for many years — you lose sight of the program, of purpose, so it's always good to change," Lee said. "This gives an opportunity for another fine citizen Soldier to come up and see how he can improve the program."

Having said that, Lee is proud of his accomplishments in the Wisconsin Army National Guard's medical community. Recalling his frustration as a young medical officer, he was determined to bring a collaborative style of leadership to the job.

"I really started working with the middle managers here, getting input from the Soldiers, making a lot of programmatic changes," Lee said. "We've come to the point where the Wisconsin AMEDD (Army Medical Department) community stands out in the National Guard system. I believe we are the spearhead of a lot of the medical programs that are going on right now in all the Guard."

"I feel like I'm leaving something here for the Guard," he continued. "I feel I've done something for them."

Lee described his role as a figurehead, giving credit to the full-time staff in the Wisconsin National Guard's Health Systems Services department.

"Nothing can be done without your people," he explained. "All the way from your Soldiers working in the trenches to the middle managers who pretty much manage everything for you — the singularity point doesn't work. This mass herd mentality, as long as the herd mentality is good, it seems to move heaven and earth. We thought it was impossible to do some of these things, and yet it happened."

Lee will not embark on a retirement schedule of puttering around the house quite yet. He remains employed at the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center, where he works with spinal cord injury patients — a job he has held since graduating medical college.

"VA had by far the most opportunities, with its 24 spinal cord injury centers across the nation," Lee explained. "By far it's the largest system of care for that population. I went in there as a physician,

Continued on Page 20

Former state surgeon says Army National Guard gave him more than he can ever give back

Continued from Page 19

and two years later I was selected to be lead one of the SCI centers, in Milwaukee. It's been great. When I first joined the VA, my colleagues all laughed at me for going to the VA when I could have gone another route. But the tables turned — the VA is one of the leading health care programs in the world. Now a lot of my colleagues are trying to get into the VA."

Lee can relate to many of his patients at the VA. A combat veteran himself, Lee bears the physical and emotional scars left by a car bomb which charged his three-vehicle convoy Sept. 12, 2004 on Route Irish, one of the deadliest stretches of pavement in Iraq.

"As a veteran, serving the veteran, there's nothing like it," Lee said. "That doesn't mean you have to be a veteran to work with veterans, but being a veteran helps establish good connections."

Lee deployed in 2004 to Baghdad as commander of what is today the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 135th Medical Company, overseeing military medical treatment clinics at Camp Cropper, Fallujah, Logistics Support Area Seitz and Abu Ghraib. Running those clinics included revamping the detainee care system at Abu Ghraib after the scandal broke, treating infamous "Deck of Cards" leaders such as Tariq Aziz, Ali Hassan al-Majid — better known as "Chemical Ali" — and Saddam Hussein, and working feverishly over several days to save badly wounded Marines during the 2004 Fallujah offensive.

"That was one week of sleepless nights," Lee recalled. "That was bad."

The Sept. 12, 2004 car-bomb attack prematurely ended Lee's deployment. He was treated at two Army hospitals in Iraq, transferred to Germany and then to Walter Reed where he spent four months. He underwent four surgeries and extensive physical rehabilitation, and lobbied unsuccessfully to return to his unit in Baghdad.

Lee said he suffered for two years after



Above, Col. Kenneth Lee treats a Nicaraguan woman at her residence during a 2007 humanitarian and training exercise. U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Kevin P. Milliken



At left, Lee guides Wisconsin Army National Guard Health System Services staff on a tour of the Milwaukee VA Medical Center's spinal cord injury center. Photo courtesy Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center

returning from Iraq. He thought that, as a physician, he should be immune to post traumatic stress. His brain injury heightened frustrations that strained his relationship with his wife and children.

"The kids were just deathly afraid of me — my wife couldn't handle it," Lee said. "I'm known as a goofy kind of guy in my friends circle, but it was all gone, lost. It

wasn't until that little eight-year-old girl said, 'Dad, you don't smile anymore,' — oh my goodness, that hit me so hard. That set me on the road to recovery, accepting PTSD and moving on.

"It took another two or three years to get a handle on this thing," he continued. "I never want to go back to being that way — that's why the funny guy comes out."

Laughter plays a significant role in his leadership at the VA.

"A lot of quirky little comments to put people at ease, get people smiling even when they're tired — otherwise, day to day is a grind," Lee said. "Even though it may sound unprofessional, I want them to think of me as a clown, as somebody who made them laugh."

While he was recovering at Walter Reed, Lee discovered that his bid to host the 27th Annual National Veterans Wheelchair Games at the Zablocki V.A. Medical Center — submitted before he deployed — was approved. Today he is the national director for the wheelchair games.

"I have a lot of programs I'd like to initiate for veterans," Lee said. "I love doing adaptive sports with them. There are so many things I want to do — with the freed-up time from the Guard, I'll be able to do a lot of those, from the weekend standpoint. My wife doesn't feel she's gaining anything."

Lee credits his father with encouraging him to join the military. When he signed up, he was a sophomore at the Medical College of Wisconsin, paying for school with government grants.

"All of a sudden, he asked, 'What are you doing to pay back the government?'" Lee recalled. "He told me if the government was giving me money, I had to work for it. So the next day I went to the recruiting office and said, 'I'm joining the Guard.'"

Lee enlisted in the Illinois Army National Guard, where he spent two years as an infantry company medic. He transferred to the Wisconsin Army National Guard in 1988 and received a direct commission after graduating from the Wisconsin Medical College.

Lee said he would miss the Soldiers and contractors he worked with in the Wisconsin Army National Guard, a group he considers a second family.

"I won't miss having too many generals," he admitted. "I only need to have one general now — my wife."

[Story online](#)



115 cadets turn the corner on road back to opportunities

Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue
Wisconsin National Guard

Despite the cold, drizzly, snowy weather in Stevens Point Dec. 21, the future looked bright for 115 young adults writing a sunny new chapter in their lives.

The Wisconsin youth — who hail from across the state — converged upon Stevens Point Area High School to be recognized in front of friends, family, Wisconsin National Guard leaders and other supporters Dec. 21 as the 31st graduating class of the Wisconsin Challenge Academy.

“All of you started out on a journey that

you chose for personal reasons,” said Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, deputy adjutant general for Army. “In front of you today is the rest of your life.”

The cadets — who range from age 16-18 — completed 22 weeks of vigorous mental, physical and academic challenges on their way to tying the largest graduating class to date. Hope Lambie spoke to her fellow cadets as the class’s distinguished honor graduate.

“The academy has put us through many situations that tested our mental and physical strength ... we have learned that painful processes pave the way for a smoother path,” Lambie said.

The Challenge Academy is a National Guard program and some of the state’s top enlisted and commissioned officers from the Wisconsin Army and Air Guard were present to celebrate with the graduates. Anderson was the key-note speaker.

“When you see boundaries as opportunities, not limitations, the world becomes a limitless place and your life becomes a journey of change that always finds its way,” Anderson said.

The general spoke to the young adults in very adult terms — recognizing their successes but likening their potential to the Army’s core values.

“Much like a grade point average,

integrity is easy to lose but it is very difficult to get back,” he said. “Never compromise your integrity, never compromise your honor.”

Many of the cadets arrived to the Challenge Academy after struggling, for various reasons, in society and in school. What they’ve learned after 22 weeks in the program is to never look back.

“The academy has taught us that we’re going to face hard situations in our everyday lives,” Lambie said. “Just remember that no matter how big the storm, the dust always settles.”

Continued on Page 22



Troubled teens take second chance to succeed

Continued from Page 21

Some of the graduates are returning to the very storms they struggled with before the academy.

"I'm going back into the area that I used to have a lot of problems with ... but hitting the ground running this time" said William Deragon. "Fresh out of the academy, I'd like to get a job as soon as possible just to keep busy and keep my mind ready to go on a daily basis."

That would not have been an easy feat for Deragon six months ago.

"I was really bad into drugs and alcohol — I was just an awful person," he recalled. "I was stealing from family members ... anything I could do to get my high. I lacked discipline, integrity — and as I stand in front of you now, I'm not the same at all."

Today, the 18-year old Deragon stands a proud graduate after achieving the highest rank the Challenge Academy offers, being awarded a ribbon for his leadership skills while commanding a platoon and, perhaps more importantly, earning his High School Equivalency Diploma along with 92 percent of his fellow graduates.

"School was not a priority of mine at all," Deragon said. "It makes me feel very accomplished. I feel like without the academy I would not have gotten it."

Amanda LaPointe, of Tomahawk, also graduated but arrived at the academy for different reasons.

"She didn't have a lot of confidence before she went there and she was sort of lackadaisical ... I think it gave her some confidence and she grew up quite a bit," said Amanda's grandmother, Ruth Warner. "I think it really, really did some

Amanda LaPointe gets a hug from her mother following a formal graduation ceremony at Stevens Point Area High School Dec. 21. The graduates now enter a 12-month post-residential phase. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue

wonderful things."

Part of the program's success lies in the mentorship program. Each cadet is assigned a mentor who receives training from the academy and keeps in regular contact with their mentee. Seth Meinel is an assistant principal with the Portage School District and a first-time mentor.

"I've just been thoroughly impressed with all of the individuals that work in this program — how caring and concerned they are for the students," he said. "I would do this again in a heartbeat because the mentor-mentee relationship is one where you can really see a lot of positive growth and change."

Meinel said the program calls for him to maintain contact with his mentee at least monthly over the course of the 12-month post-residential phase, but said he plans to check in several times a month, sit down with him and just continue to be there for him as he pursues a career or higher education.

"It provides us with another educational opportunity for students to receive the structure ... and the discipline and guidance they need on a continual basis," Meinel said.

Challenge Academy is a development model that continues to work, according to Mike Murphy, Challenge Academy director. Class 31 brings the total number of Wisconsin Challenge Academy graduates to nearly 2,800 teenagers.

In addition to academics, Saturday's graduates averaged more than 80 hours of community service for a class total of more than 9,200 hours of service. Physical fitness is also a big factor of the program and 30 cadets earned the Presidential Youth Fitness Award.

Having achieved so much, the only thing left to do for Class 31 is to look for the brighter days ahead.

"Go out and do great things, achieve your goals and remember to choose the harder right over the easier wrong," Murphy said. "Congratulations and best of luck to each of you."

[Story online](#)



Major-league salute

Vaughn R. Larson

Wisconsin National Guard Public Affairs

This past season, the Milwaukee Brewers major-league baseball team demonstrated that patriotism is also part of the national pastime.

Before seven home games at Miller Park in Milwaukee, the Brewers recognized Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers from the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, 64th Troop Command and the 426th Regiment, as well as the state Soldier of the Year, Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and the Recruiting and Retention Noncommissioned

Officer of the Year.

According to 1st Lt. Brian Schwalbach, resource manager with the Wisconsin Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion, the joint effort focused on recognizing Soldiers who recently extended, deployed or had an outstanding achievement.

“The effort was received by the [brigades] with open arms,” Schwalbach said. “It was a great opportunity to recognize our troops in front of up to 40,000 fans.”

“We are committed to supporting those who serve in our armed forces, and the recognition program is a way for us to do so on a local level,” said Tyler Barnes, Milwaukee Brewers vice president of communications.

“Our armed forces personnel make innumerable sacrifices in order to protect and serve our country. The Guard introductions allowed the Brewers and fans to show appreciation for those efforts.”

Barnes said he noticed something remarkable after each recognition event.

“Without fail, as each of the participants left the field, fans stood in the aisles to once again salute and thank the personnel for their service,” Barnes said. “It was very moving to see the genuine appreciation shown by fans but also incredible to see how much it meant to the personnel.”

- [Story online](#)
- [Additional photos](#)

Badgers salute veterans at season finale

Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue
Wisconsin National Guard

The University of Wisconsin Badgers football team honored more than 320 Soldiers and Airmen, and their families, on the same day it bid farewell to 26 members of its senior class.

The Badgers provided more than 1,200 tickets to military families for the Nov. 29 season finale at Camp Randall Stadium versus the Penn State Nittany Lions.

"I'm really grateful for the opportunity to go to the game," said Tech. Sgt. Jason Lacher, an aircraft electronic and environmental systems technician with the 128th Air Refueling Wing.

"Especially for my first game ... the seats were amazing."

The University of Wisconsin also recognized members of the military, including two Wisconsin National Guard members, during the first quarter of Saturday's action.

Master Sgt. Trisha Smith, a quality assurance manager with the 115th Fighter Wing's Comptroller Flight, attended her first game at Camp Randall as a representative of the Wisconsin Air National Guard.

"I'm very proud of the Air Force, the

Air National Guard and the 115th Fighter Wing," Smith said shortly before being displayed on Camp Randall's 50-foot tall scoreboard. "I'm very honored to represent them today."

Conversely, Sgt. Ed Decot, a paralegal with the 732nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, represented the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

"It's an amazing feeling ... it means the world," Decot said. "Just to be out on the field at Camp Randall is amazing in itself but to actually represent the Guard while doing it ... even better."

The UW reached out to the Wisconsin National Guard a little more than a week prior to the game. Word spread rapidly amongst the ranks - garnering interest from Soldiers and Airmen across the state, everywhere from Madison and Milwaukee to Tomah and Rice Lake.

Although the Badgers dropped a close game to the unranked Nittany Lions, the experience at Camp Randall Stadium, especially for many of Wisconsin's veterans, was definitely worth the price of admission.

"It's pretty exhilarating ... there are quite a few people here and there's a lot of excitement," Smith said. 

[Story online](#)



Sgt. Ed Decot, a paralegal with the 732nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, and Master Sgt. Trisha Smith, quality assurance manager with the 115th Fighter Wing's Comptroller Flight, are recognized on the field at Camp Randall Stadium during the first quarter of the Wisconsin Badgers regular season finale. The Badgers hosted more than 1,200 veterans of the Wisconsin National Guard, and their families, for their regular season finale. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue

IRON MAN: NCO of the Year tests his mettle in triathlon

Vaughn R. Larson

Wisconsin National Guard Public Affairs

Military deployments are apparently not challenging enough for Sgt. Edward Schmitt, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

It was during his deployment to Baghdad with Troop A, 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry that Schmitt — a Lake Mills resident and current member of the 54th Civil Support

Team — entertained the idea of competing in the Ironman Triathlon, a grueling endurance course consisting of a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride and a 26.2-mile marathon with no breaks between events.

Sgt. Edward Schmitt, a member of the 54th Civil Support Team, catches his breath after finishing first out of 173 participants in the 25-29 age group in the Sept. 13 Ironman event in Madison.
Valerie Schmitt photo

He did well enough at the Ironman Wisconsin event Sept. 13 in Madison to take first place out of 173 competitors in his 25-29 age category with a total time of nine hours, 57 minutes and eight seconds.

"I didn't know I had taken first," Schmitt said. "When I finished the bike I was in seventh place. I thought I'd end up being third."

That first-place finish — 31st overall in the Ironman Wisconsin — earned Schmitt an invitation to the 2014 Ironman World Championship in Hawaii. He said he will compete in another Ironman triathlon next June to prepare for the October event.

Schmitt started training for Ironman Wisconsin shortly after returning from his deployment in 2010 — "Biking and swimming are really not an option while deployed," he remarked — and ramped up his regimen in the three months prior to the Sept. 13 competition. He averaged 18 hours per week, with some weeks peaking at 24 hours, varying his routine substantially each day.

And in the middle of that training program, Schmitt took part in the National Guard Bureau's [Best Warrior Competition](#) at Camp Robinson, Ark., in late July. He was a top-three finisher in the noncommissioned officer category.

"The Best Warrior Competition took away from my Iron Man training," he acknowledged. "Part of the reason I did so well in Best Warrior is because of my triathlon training."

The key to preparing for an Ironman triathlon, Schmitt said, is to build endurance by starting with smaller distances and develop consistency.

"Ironman is really what you've done the past few years rather than the past few months," he said.

Despite his own recent hectic schedule, Schmitt credited his wife Valerie with helping him succeed. Boasting her own formidable multi-tasking skills, Valerie watched their two young sons Landen

and Joey while continuing work on her bachelor's degree so he could train.

In part, Schmitt said his children were responsible for his Ironman itinerary.

"I want my kids to see their dad being active," he said. 🏃‍♂️

[Story online](#)

News Digest

Inaugural Cyber Security Summit outlines threats, future focus

Kelly Bradley

Wisconsin National Guard Public Affairs

MILWAUKEE — So, what does “cyber” mean, anyway?

In a descriptive letter written from the Defense Intelligence Agency to U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn 17 years ago, cyber may have come from the Greek word *kybisteter*, from which the word *cybister* is derived, meaning “a genus of large diving beetles.”

While we have all heard of “computer bugs,” there is still a lot to be learned and understood about cyber security in 2013.

To that end, more than 250 members of law enforcement, IT managers, government officials and business leaders came together at Wisconsin’s inaugural Cyber Security Summit Oct. 11 at Marquette University to hear cyber security experts on the latest concerns and controls.

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general and also the state’s Homeland Security advisor, organized the summit.

“We’re not here to solve cyber security today,” Dunbar said, “but to establish where we go from here as a state. Wisconsin is not responsible for all of cyber security, but we do have an important and unique role to play.”

Gov. Scott Walker opened the summit by acknowledging cyber security is a continual threat to Wisconsin and the nation.

“This Cyber Summit brings together industry and government officials to discuss potential threats and how we can work to improve cyber security at all levels,” Walker said. “We need to be vigilant so our security is maintained.”

Six million cyber attacks are blocked per day from Wisconsin state websites, according to the [Wisconsin Homeland Security Council](#).

“We need to make a choice every day to be prepared and respond to incidents,”



David Cagigal, chief information officer for the state of Wisconsin, spoke about the threat of cyber attacks on state government websites at Wisconsin’s inaugural Cyber Security Summit Oct. 11 at Marquette University. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Kelly Bradley

said David Cagigal, chief information officer for the state of Wisconsin.

In conjunction with the Wisconsin Homeland Security Council, four cyber working groups have been established to continually assess threats to the state and to focus on future cyber security strategies. The cyber working groups will address threats to state websites and provide an update next spring to the governor. 

[Story online](#)

Online certificate program could help Guard officers

1st Lt. Joe Trovato
Wisconsin National Guard

A new graduate certificate program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison could benefit state Guard members seeking to advance in their military education programs.

The university’s strategic studies certificate program counts toward Naval and Air War College electives courses, and

the university is working to gain credit with the Army War College as well.

UW developed the curriculum and course offerings for the five-course, 13-credit program with military personnel and international business students in mind. The all-online nature of the program allows Guardsmen the flexibility to take the courses from anywhere, and the subject-matter is geared toward international issues that affect military personnel.

A large percentage of the students in the classes offered during the program’s three-year pilot phase were military personnel. According to Jon Pebelhouse, a UW professor and the strategic studies program director, each of his classes have included between six and 12 military service members.

Now, the university is elevating the program to a graduate certificate, which means Guard members can apply their federal tuition assistance benefits in addition to their GI bill benefits.

“It was always tough for the military folks [before], either active duty or reservists, because you weren’t working towards a degree, so you couldn’t use any of the benefits,” Pebelhouse said.

Capt. Dustin Cebula, the Wisconsin National Guard’s education services officer, said most of the military interest in the certificate program has come from the senior captain and field grade officer levels.

The coursework centers on international strategy and security, international economics, international law and organization, and American foreign policy.

Pebelhouse said the coursework during the pilot phase received strong positive feedback from National Guardsmen and other military personnel who were trying to hone their skills in taking broader organizational problems that involve

international affairs and security and applying them to some of the operational issues they deal with in the field.

The professor’s goal for his students is to make them think critically about an international problem from all perspectives. He cited a discussion example from one of the courses where students assessed U.S.-Mexican border operations. While some strategists might suggest locking down the border, Pebelhouse’s course asked students to consider all possible effects of such an action — including the hundreds of millions of dollars in commerce moving across the border each day.

“That’s one thing we try to do in the course, is look and see how these problems are multi-faceted when you think about solutions or how you’re going to gain things or look at policy solutions,” he said. “You have to look at all

the variables that are coming in, and we provide that background.”

Cebula said strategic studies coursework complements officer military education programs like the major-level Intermediate Level Education [ILE] and War College. It could also help officers looking to gain broadening experiences and assignments, he said.

According to Pebelhouse, the faculty at the university identified an unmet need for flexible civilian military education at the officer level. Thus the online platform and a graduate certificate level program emerged.

Program coordinator Toni Landis said the university is flexible with military students who face unplanned call-ups, deployments and training requirements, and the online setup facilitates that flexibility.

“It’s a small, short program,” she said. “It’s something you can do anywhere, wherever you are.” 



New laws focus on National Guard emergency response

MADISON — Two bills Gov. Scott Walker signed into law Dec. 13 will further define the Wisconsin National Guard's role in responding to domestic emergencies at home and elsewhere.

The first bill authorizes Wisconsin to participate in a mutual aid compact between Canada and as many as 10 other states, in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. This bill follows a U.S. Senate [joint resolution](#), sponsored by former U.S. Sen. Herb Kohl and approved by the 112th Congress, allowing states to enter such compacts with Canada.

The law opens the door for Wisconsin emergency responders to render assistance in Canadian provinces, if requested, and vice versa. It also allows for joint training events for disaster scenarios. The Wisconsin National Guard has taken part in training [competitions](#) with Canadian forces in the past as well as battlefield scenario training in [Wisconsin](#) and [Canada](#).

[In 2012](#), National Guard leaders from eight Great Lakes states and the National Guard Bureau, Canadian military representatives, 9th U.S. Coast Guard District officials, Wisconsin Emergency Management and Federal Emergency Management Agency representatives convened in Milwaukee to discuss preparedness and readiness for the region. At that event, Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, called for a series of joint training events culminating in a large-scale Vigilant Guard exercise, to be reached by 2015.

The law is expected to have minimal impact on state administrative procedures due to an existing framework for cross-jurisdiction domestic response. Because this framework also details reimbursement for mutual aid, the financial impact is also expected to be minimal.

The second bill expands the number of deputy adjutant generals on the governor's staff from two — one each for the Army National Guard and Air National Guard — to three. The new deputy adjutant general's



Gov. Scott Walker shakes hands with Brig. Gen. John McCoy (right), the first deputy adjutant general for Civil Support, after Walker signed into law bills that add a third deputy adjutant general to his staff, and adds Wisconsin to a multi-state emergency compact with Canada (above). Wisconsin National Guard photos by Vaughn R. Larson

primary responsibility is to provide military support to civil authorities, a role previously performed by the director of the Wisconsin National Guard's Joint Staff.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, the Wisconsin National Guard has seen its role increase in both overseas operations and homeland security. The 54th Civil Support Team and the CERFP (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package) are among the specialized assets that can be deployed to support local authorities, but the Wisconsin National Guard also maintains other force packages around the state to respond to natural or man-made disasters. Typically, Wisconsin Emergency Management determines if a local emergency warrants National Guard assistance, and the Joint Staff ensures that the appropriate troops and equipment are



available.

Additionally, the deputy adjutant general for Civil Support is a dual-authority position in that, in a large-scale emergency, he or she can be authorized to command active duty forces as well as National Guard, much as active duty

assets were part of the Hurricane Katrina response.

Despite its place on the governor's staff, the additional deputy adjutant general position is federally funded, resulting in no fiscal impact on the state.

Brig. Gen. John McCoy, of Stoughton, who had previously served as the deputy adjutant general for Air before accepting the Joint Staff director position, is now the state's first deputy adjutant general for Civil Support.  

[Story online](#)

Education, sporting bills for veterans become law

MADISON — Gov. Scott Walker signed Assembly Bill 201 and Senate Bill 178 into law Nov. 8 following the Veterans Day ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda.

Assembly Bill 201 — Gives veterans and active military priority when registering for classes within the University of Wisconsin System and at Wisconsin Technical Colleges. The bill was authored by State Rep. Dianne Hesselbein (D-Middleton) and State Sen. Tim Carpenter (D-Milwaukee).

“A great way to show support for our service members and veterans is to ensure they have the necessary resources available to succeed when they return home and are looking for a job,” Walker said. “This legislation means they have access to a quality education which can help propel their futures.”

Senate Bill 178 — Offers in-state rates for hunting, fishing and trapping permits to recipients of the Purple Heart medal, regardless of their state of residence. This legislation thanks veterans for their service and sacrifice by offering them a reduced rate for permits and conservation licenses. The bill was authored by State Sen. Jerry Petrowski (R-Marathon) and State Rep. Warren Petryk (R-Eleva).

“The Department of Natural Resources already offers reduced rates on permits and licenses for in-state veterans and active military,” Walker said. “I'm proud to extend this benefit to all troops injured while serving this great country.”  

Driver's license can include veteran identifier

As of Dec. 2, 2013, veterans may voluntarily request through the state Department of Transportation a veteran identifier on their Wisconsin driver's license or state issued identification card.

Veterans who choose to get the identifier must first verify they are eligible before they apply for a new card. The word "VETERAN," marked in red, will appear on the front of a driver's license or identification card at a veteran's request in order to give veterans access to certain programs and services for which certain veterans are eligible.

"Many organizations and businesses offer benefits or discounts to veterans to thank them for their service to our country," Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary John Scocos said. "This new identifier is a way for veterans to quickly identify themselves to these organizations and businesses without having to carry confidential personal information."

"The WisDOT is pleased to be able to provide this benefit to veterans in order to make their lives a little bit easier," WisDOT Secretary Mark Gottlieb said. "However, we would like to remind veterans that in order to ensure a smooth process at the DMV, they must first verify their eligibility with the WDVA before they apply for a new driver's license or ID card."

Effective immediately, veterans may start the process of verifying their eligibility for the identifier. The eligibility process must be completed before veterans go to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to apply for a new identification or driver's license.

Approximately 30,000 of the state's nearly 400,000 veterans will be automatically eligible for the identifier because they have already applied for certain state or federal benefits and have met the criteria for the definition of Wisconsin veteran. All others must complete a certification process through the WDVA. Veterans are encouraged to

start the certification process as soon as possible so they do not experience any delays at the DMV.

To verify eligibility, veterans should call 1-800-WIS-VETS (947-8387).

Those who have already met the criteria for the definition of Wisconsin veteran will be told they may proceed to the DMV and apply for a new driver's license or identification card.

Veterans who have not yet been identified by the WDVA as a Wisconsin veteran may apply for certification using an expedited online form at www.WisVets.com or they may download a form and mail it to the WDVA. Once the WDVA has verified that the individual is eligible, the veteran will receive notice they may then proceed to the DMV and apply for a new driver's license or identification card.

Veterans are reminded that the time to complete the process for certification will vary depending on a veteran's specific circumstance. An expected processing time will be posted on the certification site so veterans can estimate when they will receive their verification. Veterans should plan accordingly and begin the verification process at their earliest convenience.

Effective immediately, veterans may start the process of verifying their eligibility for the identifier.

The usual driver's license and identification card renewal and/or duplicate fees apply. 

Changes ahead for AKO

Army Knowledge Online (AKO), established in the late 1990s, is improving its security standards, which will change how users access the system.

Impact on Retirees and Family Members

As part of the security upgrade, AKO, and many other official Army sites, will be accessible only through the government-issued Common Access Card, better known as a CAC. Retirees and family members are not eligible for CACs, and therefore will no longer have access to AKO. However, retirees and family members will still be able to get critical personal information and various IT



services through other DoD, Army and commercial sites.

AKO accounts that are inactive were scheduled to be terminated Dec. 31, 2013. An account is considered inactive if it has not been accessed within the previous 90 days.

Active accounts will lose functionality in two stages. Access to AKO email was to end first on Dec. 31, 2013, although AKO email will remain "live" for auto-forwarding until Dec. 31, 2014. The AKO account itself will be terminated March 31, 2014.

AKO Email

Access to AKO email accounts was scheduled to end Dec. 31, 2013. Retirees and family members will no longer be able to log into their inboxes or reach any information/messages archived in AKO email folders. All material that users want to retain must be moved to another service or copied to a CD, hard drive, etc. by Dec. 31, 2013.

AKO email accounts will continue to accept incoming mail until Dec. 31, 2014. To ensure that this email is received, users must establish an email account with another service and set up AKO's new auto-forwarding feature. Retirees and family members should activate this function in their AKO account profiles as soon as possible so that no emails are missed.

Other AKO Services

Retirees and family members will be able to access personnel and benefits information held by both the Defense Department and Veterans Affairs via DoD Self-Service Logon (DSLogon). More information about DSLogon is located below.

For file storage, chat and instant messaging, and discussion forums, retirees and family members will need to tap commercial services, such as Google, Yahoo!, iCloud, Facebook and others. Many of these services are free and nearly all offer greater capability and more up-to-date features than AKO.

DSLogon

DSLogon, which is operated by DoD, allows access to multiple DoD and VA websites using a single username and password. You sign in once, and then can get to any of the connected sites and your accounts on them. DSLogon complies with federal security guidelines and provides a secure user experience. *You must be enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) to obtain a DSLogon account.*

Who is eligible for a DSLogon account?

Soldiers (active duty, National Guard, U.S. Army Reserve), spouses, veterans and family members are eligible for a DSLogon account. Before registering for a DSLogon account, you must be enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).

How do I register for a DSLogon account?

Retirees can register using their DFAS MyPay account or by contacting the VA. **visit** <https://myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/identitymanagement/help.do?execution=e4s2#retiree>

Family members' options include: your military sponsor can request an account for you; you may ask for a DSLogon account when getting your military ID card; or you may go through a TRICARE Service Center.

How do I access DoD websites not connected to DSLogon?

For sites not currently using DSLogon, such as MyPay, you will have to establish an individual username and password.

How do I stay connected with the Army?

It is critical that the Army remain connected to retirees and family members. The Army home page, www.army.mil, is the source of official Army news and information. It is accessible from any location and on any device. Army.mil also provides links to other Army social media (Army Facebook, Army Twitter, Army YouTube, etc.), Army organizations (Installation Management Command, specific installation/garrison websites etc.) and Army programs, such as "Ready and Resilient." 

Meritorious Service



Thomas Wortham III, Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, and Spc. Travis Laprise, of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery Regiment, pose for a photo at center court at the BMO Harris Bradley Center in Milwaukee before the Nov. 9 game. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Joe Trovato

Wortham Award recipient honored at Bucks game

1st Lt. Joe Trovato
Wisconsin National Guard

The Wisconsin Army National Guard honored its 2013 Thomas E. Wortham IV Achievement Award recipient in front of thousands of fans at the Milwaukee Bucks game Nov. 9.

Spc. Travis Laprise, of Stevens Point, joined his family, fellow Soldiers from the Wisconsin Rapids-based Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery, and the family of the late 1st Lt. Thomas Wortham IV, for the game where he was awarded the prestigious medal.

Thousands of service members and veterans were on hand for the award

ceremony and the game between the Bucks and Dallas Mavericks at the BMO Harris Bradley Center in Milwaukee as the Bucks honored Veterans Day.

Laprise, currently enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point studying to be an English teacher, earned the award for his extensive community service. In addition to being a full-time student and a Soldier in the Wisconsin Army National Guard, Laprise volunteers with the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, where he mentors a local child. He also volunteers his time in the child's English classroom at Ben Franklin Junior High School in Stevens Point.

"It's just to let the kids know that there is always someone they can talk to in case there is something happening at home that they can't talk about," he said. "It's been pretty awesome just being able to be there for the kids in the community."

The new Wortham Award recipient actively supports the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the March of Dimes, and volunteers at the Wisconsin Lions Camp in Rosholt, where he works with adults and children with special needs.

"It's just an awesome place where these populations get to come and have fun without anyone staring at them or talking behind their backs," Laprise said of the Lions Camp. "It just gives them a better sense of themselves, I'd say. As a counselor, or volunteer that worked there, you come to a new appreciation for people with special needs, and you just come to appreciate what you have more just by being there."

Asked why serving his community was so important to him, Laprise — who moved around the country as the son of a career Soldier — said, "Being an Army brat, I moved around everywhere, so I just kind of set up home wherever I could as fast as I could, because I didn't know how long I was going to be there. So when I came to Wisconsin, I knew that I really wanted to make it my own."

When he enrolled in college in Stevens Point, Laprise found a bounty of volunteer

opportunities offered by the university, and he was soon off to work.

Laprise's community-driven spirit embodied the legacy left behind by the late 1st Lt. Thomas E. Wortham IV, who served as a Chicago police officer and Soldier in the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Troop A, 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry. Wortham, who deployed twice to Iraq and earned the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Bronze Star Medal, was active in his Southside Chicago neighborhood. He vigorously promoted community policing, youth involvement, and crime prevention initiatives.

Wortham was murdered outside his parents' home May 19, 2010, during an armed robbery in Chicago. The Wisconsin National Guard created the award in his honor and has presented it annually to a Soldier or Airman that exemplifies his legacy of community service.

"I am very honored that they do give the award every year, and I'm honored that there are such good community-aware Soldiers who do what they do," said Thomas Wortham III, the father of the award's namesake. "I'm just amazed every year when I meet a new awardee. All the community involvement that they have with being a Soldier and doing all the things that they do. It just amazes me. I'm just so proud to meet these young men."

Wortham and his wife Carolyn, as well as their daughter, Sandra, and 1st Lt. Wortham's fiancé, Caitlin Waldhart and her family, joined the Laprise family for the game and the award presentation ceremony.

"I know he would be pleased to meet each one of these young men," Wortham III said of the award's recipients. "He would tell them how much he appreciates what they are doing. If this continues on, [his legacy] will live forever. It will never die.

"That's what the world needs," he added. "The world needs more people like that." 📷

- [Story online](#)
- [Additional photos](#)



Lt. Col. Daniel Schlegel, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery with Capt. Matthew Mangerson, commander of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, following the presentation of the 2013 Brig. Gen. William C. Bilo Award Saturday in Stevens Point. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Sgt. Sean Huolihan

Wisconsin Guardsman recognized for leadership

Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue
Wisconsin National Guard

A Wisconsin Soldier who commanded his unit into the history books has received a national award for outstanding leadership.

Capt. Matthew Mangerson, of Milwaukee, was presented with the Brig. Gen. William C. Bilo Award Dec. 7 in Stevens Point. The award is presented each year to the Army's best enlisted and commissioned officer in the country

Continued on Page 30

HIMARS battery commander receives top artillery award

Continued from Page 29

amongst the field artillery community.

“It was a bit of a surprise to me — I didn’t anticipate being nominated let alone receiving an award like that,” Mangerson said. “I was really set up for success by getting a unique mission and having a great group of Soldiers to accomplish that mission with.”

Mangerson commands Battery B, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery out of Plymouth, Wis. He led his unit of more than 75 Soldiers — and the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) — to become the first HIMARS battery in the history of the National Guard to deploy to Afghanistan to conduct an artillery mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Although Mangerson is quick to credit the unit’s success to his Soldiers, the unit first sergeant said it has to start from the top.

“His ability to work with all service members is unparalleled,” said 1st Sgt. Steven Czekala. “He approaches everyone with the same professionalism and respect they deserve.”

Mangerson, who has also deployed to Iraq twice, believes in taking care of his fellow service members and carries some advice he once received with him every day: “If you can go home at the end of the day and look at yourself in the mirror and honestly feel like you’ve done everything you can to take care of your Soldiers ... then you’ve done your job,” he recalled.

He describes his leadership style as patient and simply striving to do what’s right.

“To be able to feel like you’re making a significant impact in people’s lives, I think it’s the most rewarding experience out there even it takes some time to see the results,” Mangerson said.

Mangerson had only been in command of Bravo Battery for two months when news of the deployment hit — but that didn’t stop his excitement level when he lobbied for his unit’s chance to get the nod.

“I knew the historic nature of this mission and the battalion was actually determining which battery would be the

one to deploy ... I put everything I could into selling our unit,” Mangerson said. “When I found out we’d be the one to go I was very excited and I welcomed the challenge.”

The Battery B Soldiers not only accepted the challenge and were successful at it — they set the standard for National Guard field artillery units going forward. Before the Bravo Battery Soldiers supported more than 400 missions and stood ready for fire support coverage, they had to write their own script on the mobilization process. Now, the third National Guard unit to deploy under the same mission is still using the script written by Wisconsin’s field artillery Soldiers, Mangerson said.

“Any recognition that I’m getting as an individual ... is really a credit to the Soldiers that were in my unit, Mangerson stressed. “I just tried to do the right thing and do my job well. I wouldn’t have been able to be successful if I didn’t have the good group of Soldiers that I did.”

Mangerson commissioned in 2004 through the ROTC program at Ripon College where he graduated with a bachelor’s in mathematics education. He’s been a traditional “M-Day” Soldier, serving one weekend each month, his entire career until recently being hired as the full-time battalion training officer for the 121st Field Artillery — a fitting assignment for someone who enjoys developing his troops.

“At the end of the day you know that you are responsible for whatever happens. You also know the work you’ve put in but realize that the average Soldier may not see it,” he said. “Whether those Soldiers ever see it or not, it comes to fruition with the success of the mission.”

Mangerson credited Czekala as being a great mentor and contributor to the mission. The feeling is mutual.

“On a personal level, I have found Capt. Mangerson excellent to work with,” Czekala said. “He is very caring, selfless and the loyalty we have toward each other cannot be found anywhere else in the Army.”

[Story online](#)



The Wisconsin Air National Guard’s Senior Master Sgt. Mike Schmalig, third from left, was among six of the National Guard’s eight 2013 Outstanding Soldiers and Airmen of the Year to kick off the National Guard’s 377th birthday celebrations by cutting a cake on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C., Dec. 11. National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jim Greenhill

Schmalig among those honored by Guard Bureau leaders

Sgt. 1st Class Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON — National Guard senior officers and enlisted leaders gathered here Dec. 11 to listen to the National Guard’s Outstanding Soldiers and Airmen of the Year discuss issues ranging from how to lead through a drawdown to tackling suicide.

The Wisconsin Air National Guard’s Senior Master Sgt. Mike Schmalig, First Sergeant of the Year, joined Army Sgt. Anthony Calvi, the Army National Guard’s Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, and Army Spc. Piero Lopez, its Soldier of the Year, Air Force Tech. Sgt. Melissa Knight, the Air National Guard’s Noncommissioned Officer of the Year; Air Force Master Sgt. Andre Davis, Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year; and Air Force Master Sgt. Olympia Williamson, Air National Guard Honor Guard Member of the Year, onstage before

a four-star audience.

Senior leaders who included Army Gen. Frank Grass, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, and Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Mitch Brush, his senior enlisted advisor, as well as the directors of both the Army and the Air National Guard, their senior enlisted leaders and state adjutants general and state enlisted leaders, listened intently as the outstanding Guard members discussed their concerns about the future of the force, leadership, sexual harassment and other issues.

[Schmalig](#), assigned to the headquarters of the Milwaukee-based 128th Air Refueling wing, said that, with only about three in 10 high school students able to meet military recruiting standards, he is concerned about the quality of the recruiting pool — and about ongoing budget constraints.

Continued on Page 31

NGB leaders poll Outstanding Soldiers, Airmen on key topics

Continued from Page 30

“The strongest motivation is competition,” Calvi said, explaining how he plans to keep his soldiers fully engaged in tight fiscal times. It is up to leaders at all levels to innovate and motivate, regardless of budget constraints, he said.

Davis said he keeps airmen motivated by finding out what personal reasons they had for enlisting and reminding them of the goals they have set for themselves. “When you find that motivator, it makes them strive for more,” he said.

Air Force Lt. Gen. Joseph Lengyel, the vice chief of the National Guard Bureau, said Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel asks senior leaders at weekly meetings to address the issue, “How can we eradicate sexual harassment and assault from our ranks?”

Lengyel asked the soldiers and airmen what he should tell the secretary.

“It’s been refreshing to see the change in awareness,” Williamson said, noting that she has seen a constant push to raise awareness at her Wing, from bathroom stall campaign posters to ongoing training.

Sexual assault and harassment is a societal problem not confined to the military, said Knight, who has served as a victim advocate in her civilian career. Addressing the challenge includes leadership setting an example to younger service members and decisive enforcement.

Calvi said it comes down to personal accountability, keeping peers in line and not being afraid to speak up.

Both Calvi and Lopez noted that they are infantry soldiers who have not faced significant harassment or assault issues but are actively preparing for the increased role of women in more military occupational specialties, including combat-related roles.

“Right now is the time” to educate the force, Calvi said.

“We are preparing,” Lopez said. “What I do see is awareness.”

The bottom line is soldiers taking care of soldiers, Lopez said: “They are our

battle buddies.”

Army Brig. Gen. Les Simpson asked the Guard members what more needs to be done to build ready and resilient units and stem suicides.

Continued education, using the wingman concept and a willingness to intervene are critical, Knight said. “It’s really hard for individuals to reach out and say that they need help,” she said. Instead, it’s up to each service member to watch out for those around them.

Davis said it comes down to getting to know your troops, recalling an experience where a senior leader asked how well he knew his airmen, then proceeded to demonstrate through dialog that he could get to know them better in less than a minute of careful listening even though he had never met them before.

Williamson said she has made a point in a first sergeant role of setting aside two to three hours to talk with drilling Guard members — and that leaders can inspire subordinates to look out for those around them. “What I notice is that my [subordinates] now are doing what I’m doing.”

“To notice a change in behavior,” Calvi observed, “you have to know the soldiers more than just one weekend a month.”

When the soldiers and airmen were asked what sets them apart, Schmalzing said he sought out opportunities.

“I played the hand that I was dealt,” the New London resident said. “There was a little bit of skill, little bit of luck, but I was able to respond to those opportunities.”

Williamson said the mentoring, encouragement and recognition of supervisors helped her achieve.

For Calvi, it was dedication, hard work and the Warrior Ethos. When he was running second to last in state competitions, he refused to quit, inspired by a sponsor. “I will never quit,” he said. “Now I’m sitting up here.”

“We’re not special,” Knight said. “I’ve met so many people from throughout the Guard, and I’ve been so impressed.”

[Story online](#)



Upward mobility

Spc. Curtis Bluel with the 1158th Transportation Company climbs through the confidence course during the brigade-level Best Warrior competition at Fort McCoy, Nov. 2. Three Soldiers and eight noncommissioned officers from the 64th Troop Command and the Recruiting and Retention Battalion competed to advance to the state competition in April. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photograph by Pfc. Christopher Enderle

These militias became the forefathers of today's National Guard, and 377 years later, our Guard remains true to its roots as a guardian of the American way of life.

Today's National Guard is made up of highly trained Citizen Soldiers and Airmen that provide protection during civil emergencies and deploy to faraway countries to protect American interests abroad.

Wisconsin's National Guard, which traces its own origins to the earliest days of Wisconsin statehood and the Wisconsin Territory in the 18th century, remains ready and valiant of the state's future.

and not only after the Civil War, but also during World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War.

Just this past year, Wisconsin National Guardsmen have been deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Middle East.

The National Guard has a long history of service to the state and the nation. It has fought in every major conflict since the American Revolution.

Wisconsin's National Guard has a proud tradition of service to the state and the nation. It has fought in every major conflict since the American Revolution.

Just this past year, Wisconsin National Guardsmen have been deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Middle East.

The National Guard has a long history of service to the state and the nation. It has fought in every major conflict since the American Revolution.

Wisconsin's National Guard has a proud tradition of service to the state and the nation. It has fought in every major conflict since the American Revolution.

Just this past year, Wisconsin National Guardsmen have been deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Middle East.

The National Guard has a long history of service to the state and the nation. It has fought in every major conflict since the American Revolution.

Wisconsin's National Guard has a proud tradition of service to the state and the nation. It has fought in every major conflict since the American Revolution.

Just this past year, Wisconsin National Guardsmen have been deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Middle East.

The National Guard has a long history of service to the state and the nation. It has fought in every major conflict since the American Revolution.



The Wisconsin National Guard in words and pictures



"It is exceptional. I think it's quintessentially what the National Guard is all about — citizen Soldiers, citizen Airmen answering the call and not only doing the stuff that you would expect, but taking on the difficult missions that they're going to find themselves in." — **Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar at the 97th Agribusiness Development Team's Jan. 3, 2013 sendoff ceremony**



"If you have to be replaced, this is the guy to be replaced by — Gary Ebben." — **Brig Gen John McCoy, during a Jan. 4 change of authority ceremony**



"There are only so many HIMARS units in the country, but I'll bet there's even a smaller percentage of them that can say they've fired rockets in 70-mph crosswinds." — **Capt. Matthew Mangerson, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery commander, Jan. 6 at Fort Bliss, Texas**

“The main theme of our deployment has been flexibility.”

— **Master Sgt. Kenton Bauer, 82nd Agribusiness Development Team, January 2013**



“It’s a bittersweet day, but there’s a lot of celebration going on here today. There’s a great heritage, a great history to the unit.” — **Sgt. Maj. Curt Patrouille, 64th Rear Operations Center, Jan. 26, on the unit’s final drill**



“No mission was too hard. No mission was too dangerous. The 1157th’s dedication to mission accomplishment earned them 40 combat action badges and five purple hearts.” — **Capt. Roger Miller, 1157th Transportation Company platoon leader, Jan. 18**



“The aircraft doesn’t know what gender you are. It’s one of those moments worth noting. Yay for me and yay for women, but really, we’re just going to fly an aircraft. It’s no big deal.” — **Capt. Luella Dooley-Menet, Feb. 1, on her final flight, with the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s first all-female Black Hawk crew**



Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, left, deputy adjutant general for Army, presents Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Shields with a saber Feb. 9 during a formal transfer of responsibility ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters in Madison. Shields was installed as the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s top senior enlisted advisor, replacing Command Sgt. Maj. George Stopper, who retired.



“I’ve always had the perception that we make our own limitations.

I didn’t ever feel that there was a ceiling or a limitation other than some of the ‘female’ limitations — you’re maybe not accepted in a certain area because you’re a female. I joined in 1979, 1980 and things were definitely different then. But I’ve worked in the civilian sector and it’s there, too — it’s not just a military thing.” —

Master Sgt. Deborah Severson, March 21, 2013 Women’s History Month discussion

“Today we’re adding to the ranks someone who has already been an accomplished leader and now, in a moment, will be a brigadier general, taking that next leadership step forward. He’s adding to his title — he’s been a Hodag, a Pointer, a builder and a Soldier, and today he affirms yet again his leadership as a Citizen Soldier and as a leader for our state and for our country.” — **Gov. Scott Walker at Brig. Gen. Mark Michie’s Feb. 28, 2013 promotion**



“We met 100 percent of our taskings and executed our mission flawlessly.”

— **Lt. Col. Brian Parker, the deployed 115th Fighter Wing detachment commander, March 11, 2013**



“This is an important piece of the overall national strategy of turning over security responsibility to the Afghan forces with the drawdown and withdrawal of coalition forces from Afghanistan by 2014.” — **Lt. Col. David Larson, 104th SFAAT commander, March 2013**



Soldiers from the California Army National Guard's Battery B, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery conducted live fire training at the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 426th Regional Training Institute Feb. 12, 2013 at Fort McCoy. The California unit requested to train with the 426th RTI, which last year was certified as an



Soldiers from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 135th Medical Company, 641st Troop Command, conducted an air evacuation exercise at Battle Creek Air Field in Oconomowoc March 2, 2013. Operation Aerial Badger was an exercise organized by the Wisconsin Army National Guard's West Bend Aviation units involving civilian emergency response organizations, local hospitals, and the Civil Air Patrol, with several disaster scenarios throughout southeastern

"It's very humbling. It was definitely not expected. I think it's a reflection of my family, my friends and the people I'm surrounded with that support me, and that I work with. It shows that Wisconsin is a contender, a quiet competitor."

— Senior Master Sgt. Mike Schmaling on being named Air National Guard First Sergeant of the Year, April





"I've been telling everybody that it's bittersweet. Finishing seventh is nothing to be ashamed of, but we wanted to do better — especially when you consider that we were in first place the whole first day." — **1st Lt. Nicholas Plocar** after the **Best Ranger Competition, April 16**

"I found it surprising that even though we're competing, everyone still looks out for each other. For example, I didn't have a lamp for one event, but then another Soldier gave me an extra one they had, which just shows that even though we're competing, we're still all in this together." — **Sgt. Edward Schmitt, Wisconsin Army National Guard NCO of the Year, April 21**



"I think it is important for the military to also have the same opportunities as the private sector with Take Your Child to Work Day mostly because military children face unique situations, and it's helpful for the kids to see what their parents go through, to see the daily life that they live, and just be integrated into that aspect." — **Shawna Wyman, child and youth program coordinator for the Wisconsin National Guard, April 25**

"I see it not only placing a value on academics, which they are, but just changing the kids' view and feel about their lives. If you can change a youth's values and how they see themselves and how they see their lives, you can have a huge impact." — **State Rep. LaTonya Johnson, during an April 22 Challenge Academy visit**



One of two Wisconsin Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters from the Madison-based Army Aviation Support Facility 2 drops water on hot spots in the Douglas County wildfire May 15, 2013. The two helicopters spent several hours supporting local firefighting efforts.



"As the missions start progressing more and more toward retrograde, it's really nice to see us actually handing things over and kind of working ourselves out of a job." — **1st Lt. Tomm Hickey, 229th Engineer Company platoon leader, April 4 after completing a new route in the Panjwa'i district of Afghanistan**



"I think what I feel most about the award ... I'm far more proud of my unit and the courage and the bravery that they displayed on a daily basis." — **1st Sgt. Gregory Fulton on receiving the Silver Star Medal May 31 at Volk Field**



"We weren't able to fly it on a flagpole, per se, but we were able to fly it." — **Lt. Col. Gerard Iverson referring to a Wisconsin flag that had been aboard nine different types of aircraft flying in the airspace the 128th Air Control Squadron helped control. The flag was presented to Gov. Scott Walker at the unit's May 24 homecoming**

"I've got to keep pinching myself to realize that yeah, I've got a baby on the way, because I'm not there to see the day-to-day changes and see her every day." — **128th Air Control Squadron's Master Sgt. Shane Deloughary, of Fond du Lac, Wis., in late April when describing the changes he has seen in his wife via photos**



“Frankly speaking, the U.S. Air Force, as far as I’m concerned, is the best air force in the world. If we have the opportunity to fly and train, we want to do that with the best.” — **Polish air force Col. Krystian Zięc, the 32nd Tactical Air Base commander, on training with the 115th Fighter Wing in Poland in May, 2013**

“Now, everyone driving on State Highway 128 will remember the sacrifices of the 128th Infantry.” — **Gov. Scott Walker after signing the legislation during the 69th annual Wisconsin State AMVETS Convention June 21, 2013**



“As a female in security forces, I think there are definitely challenges, but it’s nothing a female couldn’t overcome. You definitely have to work harder and you definitely have to prove yourself a lot more than, say, a male coming into security forces, but it’s not impossible.” — **Airman 1st Class Courtney Metzger, June 12, 2013**



“You have to be sure that when somebody opens that door that you’re ready to step through, to have the wherewithal to take that chance, to try and do a little better than you did yesterday, and continue to take our Guard to a place we’ve never experienced.” — **Brig. Gen. Ken Koon at his June 28, 2013 promotion ceremony**



Pfc. David Monroe of Wisconsin Army National Guard’s 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment watches as he fires the first Javelin missile in over 10 years in a training exercise at Fort McCoy July 10, 2013. This was the first time TOW and Javelin Missile fire training, which was part of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team’s three-week annual training here, had been conducted in more than 10 years.



A Black Hawk helicopter from the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment completes the airlift for one of two 105-mm howitzers as part of a combined arms training exercise July 23, 2013 at Fort McCoy. The 147th joined forces with the 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment and 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery for the first such joint training event in memory for the Wisconsin Army National Guard.



Two Mississippi Air National Guardsmen, and an Army Reserve firefighter from Wisconsin, battle a fire at Volk Field July 18, 2013. Numerous states joined together for Patriot Exercise 2013, a National Guard domestic response exercise that included both National Guard and Reserve units.



“It was fun, but I’m glad it’s over. I’m sore and could use some sleep.” — Spc. Brandon Byrne, the day after the 2013 National Guard Bureau Best Warrior Competition



"It's gratifying. It says that what I do is recognized and appreciated." — **Warrant Officer 4 Mike Knuppel** on winning the **88th Regional Support Command Warrant Officer Mentor of the Year** award **Aug. 10, 2013**

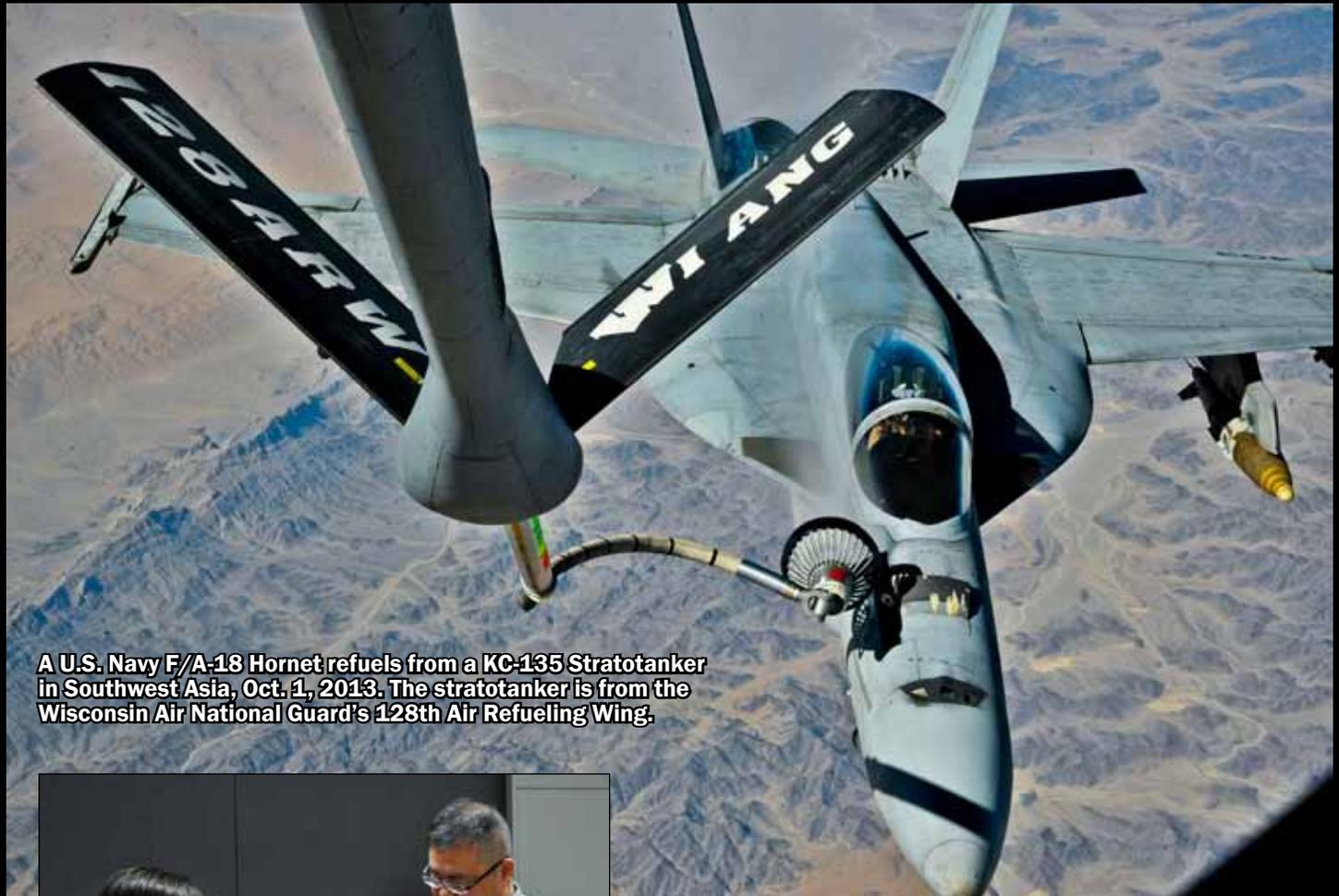


Members of the Wisconsin National Guard's 54th Civil Support Team and the Mount Horeb Fire Department search for the cause of respiratory and eye irritation as part of a scenario for confined space entry training underground at the Cave of the Mounds National Natural Landmark in Blue Mounds, Wis., Sept. 5, 2013.



"What you have done is substantive, and it matters to our country and the country of Afghanistan. And if they have any chance at success after we leave, it is going to be because of efforts like you just put forth these last nine months on the ground." — **Maj. Gen. Donald P. Dunbar** to the members of the **104th Security Force Advise and Assist Team** at their **Sept. 28, 2013** welcome home ceremony

“This is an unfortunate decision, and it certainly is not our preferred course of action, but it is the only option left to us. The training that is conducted during National Guard drills is critical to maintaining our proficiency and readiness, but without authorized funding we cannot conduct training.” — **Maj. Gen. Donald P. Dunbar, Wisconsin adjutant general, on postponing drill Oct. 5-6, 2013. The Wisconsin National Guard also postponed drill training the following weekend and furloughed federal technicians until funding issues related to the federal government shutdown were resolved**



A U.S. Navy F/A-18 Hornet refuels from a KC-135 Stratotanker in Southwest Asia, Oct. 1, 2013. The stratotanker is from the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing.



“I feel like I’m leaving something here for the Guard. I feel I’ve done something for them.” — **Col. Kenneth Lee, Wisconsin National Guard state surgeon, on ending a 27-year career in December 2013**

“In the military you’re working with all kinds of people from all different backgrounds, so I’ve learned just to treat everyone as equals. And I do that with rank as well. Even if you have a private or a major or a colonel, everybody is a human being, and they all should be treated fairly and with respect.”

— **Col. Joane Mathews, Wisconsin Army National Guard’s new chief of staff, in November 2013**



Parting shot

The 128th Air Refueling Wing Airmen and other volunteers dressed as Santa's elves worked on the festively decorated KC-135 aircraft for the "Flight to the North Pole." The aircraft transported children with life-threatening illnesses around the airfield and to the pretend North Pole, located on the base in Sijan Hall. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Staff Sgt. Jeremy Wilson