



@ease Express

January-February 2011

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@ease Express

2009 Keith L. Ware Award winner
2009 Thomas Jefferson Award winner
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Official Newsletter of the
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<http://dma.wi.gov>

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2010 was another exceptional year for the Wisconsin National Guard. We successfully welcomed home more than 4,000 Soldiers and Airmen who had been deployed during 2009 and deployed more than 1,000 Soldiers and Airmen, many of whom are still serving in a combat zone. The transformation of our National Guard over the past decade is nothing short of phenomenal — never in our history has the National Guard been more ready, more relevant, or more accessible.

Thank you. Thank you to every Soldier and Airman who continues to serve selflessly. Thank you to every leader at every level for your dedication and commitment. Our organization continues to add value to our communities, state and nation. However, as good as we are and as successful as we continue to be, we have challenges to address.

Over the past several years, our military has seen an increased level of suicide that until last year was getting incrementally worse each year. In 2010, the Army's overall suicide rate dropped; however, the Army National Guard's suicide rate doubled. Unfortunately, some of these suicides were in our own formations. Suicide is not our only challenge. We continue to see incidents of bad behavior, which includes sexual assault and

From the TAG



Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar
The Adjutant General

substance abuse.

These are challenges that we are working to address. A few months ago, I held a leadership summit to discuss these issues and consider best courses of action. We have introduced resiliency training into our yearly training plans and are working with the Air Force, the Army and the National Guard Bureau on a campaign plan to implement best practices at every level. We have made reintegration a priority for returning Soldiers and Airmen. Shortly, we will be forming a new council to monitor these issues, ensure measurable metrics are in place, and to drive

a cultural shift in our thinking on resilience issues. I will personally lead this council. If you have thoughts on these issues, I'd love to hear from you. Leave your comments at <http://dma.wi.gov/dma/taglines/>

These are leadership issues that impact our readiness. I pledge to you that as commanders and enlisted leaders, we will make this an enduring focus. But, it is also an issue for every individual. If you broke a leg, you would not hesitate to see a doctor. If you need to talk with someone, you should not hesitate to make that call. There is no stigma.

As for sexual assault and substance abuse, we are Guardsmen and we know the difference between right and wrong. These actions are not consistent with our values.

These issues are real, but we must not lose perspective. Our organization is healthy. The vast majority of our Guardsmen are performing wonderfully and I am very proud of our record and our accomplishments. This is our National Guard — we are family. It is a privilege to serve with you. Thank you for all you do.

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State's new commander in chief addresses deployed Wisconsin Army National Guard troops

The first Wisconsin National Guard troops to be addressed by their new commander in chief stayed up until 2:30 a.m. Iraq time for the privilege.

Back in Wisconsin, Governor-Elect Scott Walker spoke with deployed members of the 724th Engineer Battalion — known as “Task Force Badger” in Iraq — during halftime of the Jan. 1 Rose Bowl game featuring the University of Wisconsin Badgers against the Texas Christian University Horned Frogs. The “Halftime with the Troops” event at the East Side Club in Madison included some military family members, and began with a [short video](#) of the 724th cheering on the Badgers.

“We cheer our Badgers deployed in Iraq,” Walker said during the satellite feed to a room filled with 724th Soldiers. “God bless you — we can’t thank you enough.”

Walker also led the room in two cheers for the 724th: “We love you, God bless you,” and “Go, Badgers.”

Lt. Col. David O’Donahue, commander of the 724th, thanked Walker on behalf of the 870 Soldiers — many from units outside of the Wisconsin National Guard — who make up Task Force Badger.

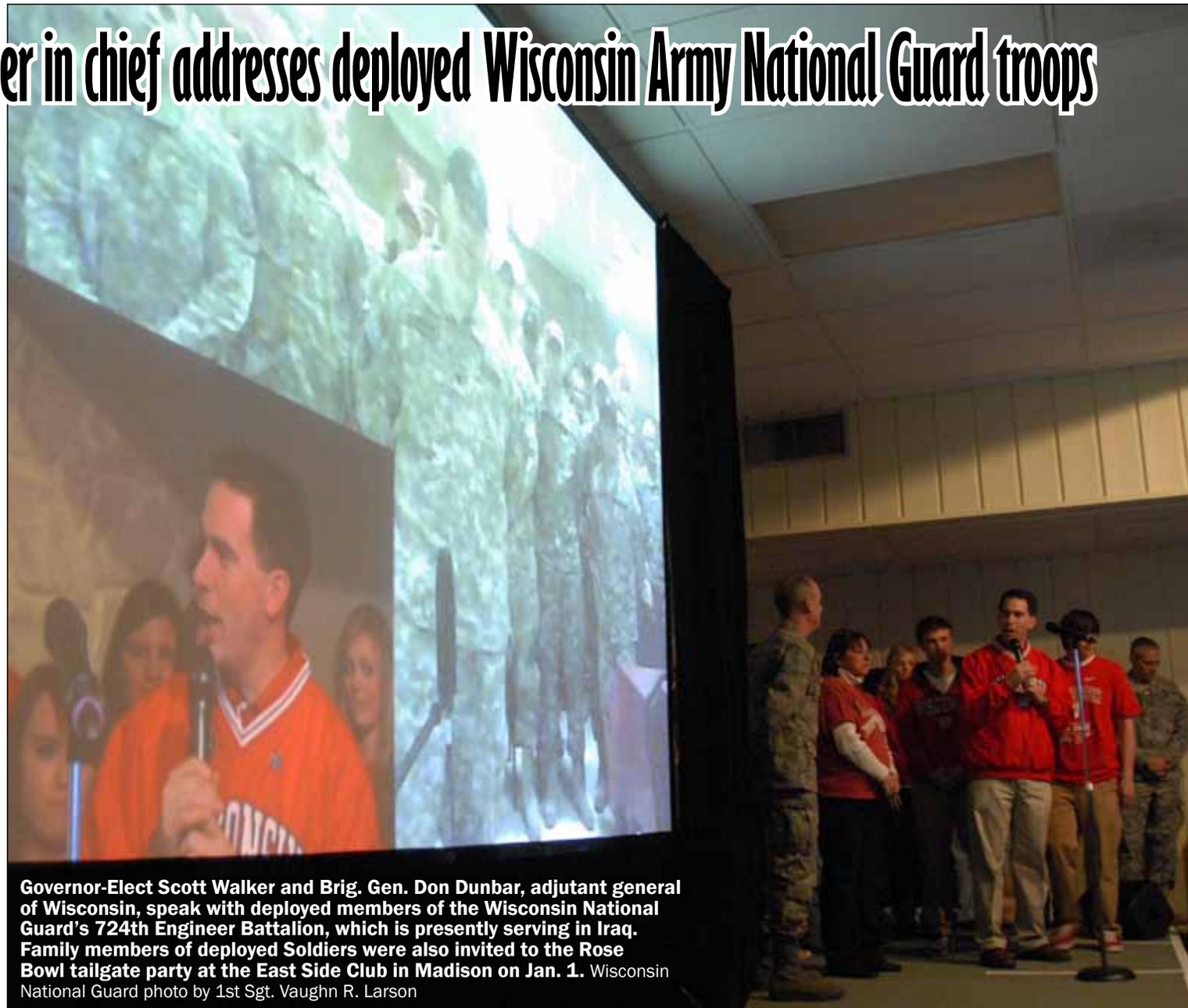
“The guys behind me put it on the line every day,” O’Donahue said. “They have probably the toughest job in Iraq — road clearance. But we’re doing it right and looking forward to coming home in a few months.”

Walker said he and his transition team decided, instead of attending the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, to hold an indoor tailgate party in Madison.

“What better way to do it than to share the day with the military and their families?” he asked.

The room was filled with red-shirted Badger fans. Three red shirts, however, were emblazoned with yellow ribbons and the words “Proud family of a U.S. Army Soldier.”

“It was really cool,” Shannon Warrell



Governor-Elect Scott Walker and Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, speak with deployed members of the Wisconsin National Guard's 724th Engineer Battalion, which is presently serving in Iraq. Family members of deployed Soldiers were also invited to the Rose Bowl tailgate party at the East Side Club in Madison on Jan. 1. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

of Gratiot, Wis., said of the satellite feed. Her husband, Spc. Cary Warrell, is deployed with the 724th. “It was a great experience. It really means a lot for the governor to invite us.”

Melissa Owen acknowledged that she regularly communicates with her husband, 1st Lt. Peter Owen of the 724th, via Skype.

“This was a little different,” she said.

“This time I got to see him with everyone else.”

Additional photos: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/wiguardpics/sets/72157625725512484/>



Col. Kenneth Koon, representing the Wisconsin Army National Guard, speaks with local news media during a ceremony at the 1157th Transportation Company's Oshkosh armory. The 1157th accepted the first production vehicle of the Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles (FMTV) from Oshkosh Defense Jan. 19. Wisconsin National Guard photos by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

Oshkosh Guard unit receives first FMTV produced by Oshkosh Defense

The first production medium-sized military truck to roll off the assembly lines at Oshkosh Defense was delivered just down the road to a Wisconsin Army National Guard transportation unit.

The 5-ton cargo truck, part of the Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles (FMTV), has been in the military fleet for several years. However, this is the first of more than 18,000 such vehicles to be manufactured at Oshkosh Defense, which also makes several other tactical vehicles for the military.

"It's a special honor to field our first FMTV truck with the men and women of

our home state and hometown National Guard," said Mike Ivy, vice president and general manager of Army Programs for Oshkosh Defense during a Jan. 19 ceremony. "The 1157th [Transportation Company] has a proud tradition of service both in the U.S. and in operational theaters, and relies heavily on the FMTV to accomplish its missions."

Col. Kenneth Koon, representing the Wisconsin Army National Guard, said the new FMTV gives the 1157th, and eventually the rest of the Wisconsin

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Sgt. Dustin Loudon and Sgt. Tiffany Gorges, both employees at Oshkosh Truck, with the first Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles (FMTV) production vehicle from Oshkosh Defense. The vehicle was fielded to the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1157th Transportation Company, based in Oshkosh, during a Jan. 19 ceremony. Loudon is a dispatcher with the 1157th, and Gorges is a squad leader in a truck platoon.

Wisconsin Guard fields first Oshkosh Defense FMTV

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National Guard, the opportunity to train as it fights.

“This will help with training for future missions and to be ready when called,” Koon said. “Trucks like these will increase their safety.”

That’s because this version of the FMTV is “armor-ready” — meaning that the metal hull is designed to hold additional armor plating. Other features, such as a fold-back gunner’s seat and rear-hinged cab doors that open to the front of the vehicle, acknowledge the vehicle’s tactical applications.

According to Col. Masaki Kuwana, chief of the Army National Guard’s Materiel Programs Division, the Army National Guard will receive the lion’s share — approximately 13,000 trucks — of the FMTVs Oshkosh Defense will produce in the coming years.

“It’s fitting that the first unit to be equipped [with the new FMTV] is the 1157th Transportation Company of Oshkosh,” Kuwana said.

George Mansfield, senior director for the Medium Tactical Vehicle program at Oshkosh Defense, agreed.

“After months of hard work, we get to put the first Oshkosh FMTV in the hands of men and women who will use it,” he said.

There are 17 FMTV models ranging from 2.5 tons to 10 tons. At least 80 percent of vehicle parts are common to all FMTV models, streamlining maintenance and providing cost efficiency.

Ivy mentioned that Oshkosh Defense employs many military veterans as well as current Guard and Reserve members — including 1157th Transportation Company members Sgt. Dustin Loudon and Sgt. Tiffany Gorges.

“There’s a level of pride,” Gorges, a vehicle painter at Oshkosh Defense and a squad leader in a truck platoon with the 1157th, said of the fielding. “I know what goes into making this truck. I remember



Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers take a closer look at the first production vehicle of the Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles (FMTV) from Oshkosh Defense following a Jan. 19 ceremony. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

painting the prototype.”

Louden, who works as a yardman at Oshkosh Defense and as a dispatcher with the 1157th, said his military background provides a different perspective.

“I know where these trucks are going,” he said of the FMTVs.

This particular truck will be assigned to the 1157th’s headquarters platoon. 📷

Additional photos: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/wiguardpics/sets/72157625742021415/>



It’s a special honor to field our first FMTV truck with the men and women of our home state and hometown National Guard.

— Mike Fry

Special delivery

■ *Badger pilots deliver new F-16 Falcons to Pakistan*

115th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Five pilots from the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 176th Fighter Squadron — part of the Madison-based 115th Fighter Wing — departed the Lockheed Martin factory in Fort Worth, Texas Oct. 26 with five brand-new F-16 Block 52 fighter jets bound for Pakistan.

Lt. Col. Doug Read led the five-ship flight, joined by Lt. Col. Charlie Merkel, Maj. Chris Hansen, Maj. Bart Van Roo and Capt. Jon Hullsiek. Merkel and Hullsiek diverted to Burlington, Vt., due

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Lt. Col. Doug Read accepts a warm welcome at Shahbaz Air Base, Pakistan, after he and fellow 176th Fighter Squadron pilots Majors Bart Van Roo and Chris

Hansen delivered three new F-16s to the Pakistani Air Force on Oct. 30, 2010. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Andy M. Kin

Wisconsin Air National Guard pilots deliver new F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan

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to a problem in Merkel's jet. The remaining three aircraft pressed on to Lajes Air Base, Azores, Portugal, then continued over the next few days to Souda Bay Naval Air Station, Crete, Greece, and arrived at Shahbaz Air Base, Pakistan on Oct. 30. The two diverted jets were eventually returned to Fort Worth for more maintenance and will be included with the next two deliveries.

A large diplomatic gathering met the pilots as they landed at Shahbaz, including Air Marshal Mohammad Hassan, Pakistani Air Force deputy chief of staff for operations, and Brig. Gen. Michael Nagata, deputy commander of the office of the defense representative to Pakistan. There was a festive atmosphere for the arrival, complete with a large tent and welcoming party that, according to Lt. Col. Read, "was a really big deal!" The new Pakistani squadron commander met the Americans and introduced them to the VIPs. A banquet ensued with the Badger pilots sitting at the head table. An official hand-over ceremony for the F-16s followed.

After the banquet, the pilots were airlifted by the Pakistani Air Force to Islamabad for their trip home.

Read said he got to know the chief of flight operation at DCMA Lockheed when Read made two deliveries to Greece in 2009. When the opportunity came up to deliver these new jets to Pakistan, Read volunteered and had no trouble finding pilots to join him. Van Roo had made one of the trips to Greece, as well.

The delivery was part of an order of 18 F-16s from the 2006 Peace Drive program. 



Above, Maj. Bart Van Roo shake hands with Air Marshal Mohammad Hassan, Pakistani Air Force deputy chief of staff for operations, on Oct. 30, 2010, after delivering one of three new F-16s to the Pakistani Air Force. Lt. Col. Doug Read (second from right) and Maj. Chris Hansen delivered two more F-16s the same day.

Left, Maj. Bart Van Roo, Lt. Col. Doug Read and Maj. Chris Hansen (back row, center), pose with officials from the Pakistani Air Force. U.S. Air Force photos by Lt. Col. Michael Shavers

A trumpet quintet from the Wisconsin National Guard's 132nd Army Band performs a fanfare to open the Jan. 3 inauguration ceremony at the state Capitol Building. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson



Wisconsin National Guard supports inauguration

Continuing a tradition dating back more than eight decades, members of the Wisconsin National Guard and the state Department of Military Affairs played an important role in preparing for and helping execute the inauguration ceremony Jan. 3 for its new commander in chief, Gov. Scott Walker.

"Thanks go out to all who are participants in our ceremony today," Walker said. "I'm particularly grateful to the members of the 132nd Army Band and all other members of the Wisconsin National Guard — not only for their services today, but for the ongoing support of our many brave men and women who are deployed even as we speak. Our prayers go out to all of you."

The 132nd Army Band helped frame the ceremony with introductory music, trumpet fanfares and flourishes, and recessional music. They punctuated the inauguration with a performance of "On, Wisconsin" after Walker completed his oath of office.

"The professionalism is always important — the intensity is high," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brad Anderson, the 132nd Army Band's director, who has led the band in three inauguration ceremonies. "This type of ceremony isn't repeated often. There isn't room for error — you have to get it right."

Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, the adjutant general

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Sgt. Nathan Jump, honor guard member from Wisconsin's Joint Force Headquarters, rehearses prior to an inauguration ceremony at the state Capitol Building Jan 3. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue

Wisconsin Guard supports inauguration ceremony

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of Wisconsin, was part of the ceremony in leading Gov. Walker and his family, as well as outgoing Gov. Jim Doyle and Jessica Doyle, to the stage. The adjutant general has historically provided guidance and assistance to the incoming governor regarding the inauguration.

Walker expressed his gratitude to Dunbar in his opening remarks, as well as all members of the Armed Forces.

Wisconsin National Guard members also presented the colors during the ceremony. Senior Master Sgt. Jeff Statz, of the Volk Field Honor Guard, was one of four Guard members — two Air and two Army — on the team.

“It went very well,” he said after the ceremony, noting that even though this was his first inauguration, he and Master Sgt. Angela Kaverle — another Volk Field Honor Guard member — have plenty of experience with various color guard presentations.

“We’re usually pretty good at changes on the fly,” he said. “It’s never the same thing twice.”

This was the first inauguration ceremony for color guard members Sgt. Nathan Jump and Sgt. Kristine Stuhlmacher, both with Joint Force Headquarters.

“It’s a bit exciting, but a bit nerve-wracking,” Stuhlmacher said.

The Wisconsin National Guard Public Affairs Office worked closely with Walker’s transition team on various aspects of the ceremony, ranging from the programs and tickets to protocol matters and coordination with the band and color guard.

The Wisconsin National Guard’s 54th Civil Support Team supported public safety for the inauguration by assisting the Joint Hazardous Assessment Team, which included the Capitol Police, State Patrol, the Governor’s Protection Detail, Dane County Sheriff’s Department, Madison Police, UW-Madison Police and Dane County Communications. The 54th provided 21 members and six vehicles to collect air samples and conduct sweeps of the state Capitol Building and Monona Terrace. All samples taken returned negative results. 



At left, Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, salutes incoming Gov. Scott Walker at the start of an inauguration ceremony at the state Capitol Building Jan. 3. Walker, the commander in chief for Wisconsin’s Army and Air National Guard units, will work closely with Dunbar, who commands the more than 10,000 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen of Wisconsin. Wisconsin National Guard photos by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue

Challenge Academy graduates 25th class of cadets

One hundred and eight cadets from 42 counties across the state graduated from the Wisconsin National Guard's Challenge Academy during a Dec. 18 ceremony at Mauston High School. The cadets comprised the 25th Challenge Academy class since the program started at Fort McCoy in 1998.

The Challenge Academy reshapes the lives of at-risk 16- to 18-year-olds. A structured, military-style environment and state-certified teachers and counselors build cadets' academic abilities, character, self-confidence and personal discipline.

"You have shown great character, great heart and great determination," keynote speaker State Sen. Dan Kapanke of La Crosse told the cadets. "You made a conscious decision to attend Challenge Academy. You stayed the course, and you're here today. Who knows where you will be tomorrow because of what you have accomplished today?"

Cadet Tyler Sabel, the distinguished honor graduate for Class 25, reminded cadets that their time at Challenge Academy has revealed their inner strength and capabilities.

"We are no longer our old selves, nor are we any longer normal teenagers," Sabel said. "Most teenagers do not get a second chance like that provided through this program."

Larry Walls, Milwaukee, a mentor to Cadet Denzel Parker, also of Milwaukee, looked on as the military honor graduate barked commands while fellow cadets filed into formation. Walls said he has known Parker, a former tenant, for about six years and that the teen was doing well until high school. When Parker decided to attend Challenge Academy, Walls — who maintained contact over the years — was asked to be his mentor.

"It's doing wonders for him," Walls said. "He's respectful; he wants to do great things. I wish more kids would come here."

According to M. G. MacLaren, director

of the Wisconsin National Guard's Challenge Academy, cadets averaged 82 hours of community service during their 22-week training. 14 cadets read a book cover to cover for the first time in their lives, and eight cadets have enlisted or plan to enlist in the military. Over the past 12 years, 2,145 cadets have graduated from the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy.

Scott Miller of Horicon, Wis., didn't know Cadet Jonathan Contreras of Beaver Dam, Wis., until he answered an open request on Facebook to volunteer as a mentor.

"Turns out, he lives 10 miles from me," Miller said. He described Contreras as a positive person who made a couple of poor choices and lacked direction before attending Challenge Academy.

"Now he has good attitude, good focus," Miller said. "He has a vision for himself."

"They leave us today with a brighter future than they had before," MacLaren said of the cadets. Holding a challenge coin given to each graduate, he continued, "We at the Academy expect you to build on the foundation you have developed over the past five and a half months." 



Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, presents Charles Kubicek, of Black River Falls, with the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs Commendation Medal for his work mentoring Challenge Academy cadets after graduation. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

Mentor awarded at Challenge Academy graduation

A Wisconsin man was awarded the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs Commendation Medal for his dedicated service to the Wisconsin National Guard's Challenge Academy during a ceremony Dec. 18.

Charles Kubicek, of Black River Falls, was recognized for mentoring five cadets over the years by Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, during the Challenge Academy Class 25 graduation ceremony at Mauston High School.

Mentors initiate contact with their assigned cadets during the 22-week residential phase of Challenge Academy, and provide guidance, advice and assistance for 12 months after the cadet graduates to ensure continued success. The award stated that Kubicek's dedication, commitment and personal sacrifice have helped five cadets make positive life changes.

The Challenge Academy is a Wisconsin residential alternative education program located at Fort McCoy for high school dropouts and habitual truants. Cadets who attend the program do so with the intent of changing their life's course and developing new, healthy habits during the residential portion of the program. The Challenge Academy uses a structured, quasi-military style environment and state-certified teachers and counselors to build cadets' academic abilities, character, self-confidence, and personal discipline. 📷

Video earns Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy top honors

A video detailing how the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy helped cadets successfully overcome significant life challenges was named the winner in a competition among other Challenge Academies nationwide.

In the video, [“From Dreaming to Achieving Through Wisconsin Challenge.”](#) four cadets — Denzel Parker of Milwaukee, Paul Becker of Glendale, Taylor Jean Maciosek of Stevens Point, and Tyler Sabel of Fond du Lac — reveal their lives prior to Challenge Academy and how their lives have improved since.

According to Erica Kalinoski, an admissions counselor for the past two years at the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy, the same determination that cadets exhibit to graduate the 22-week residential course at Fort McCoy could be seen in the five cadets who produced the video.

“Their commitment was unwavering from the start,” Kalinoski said.

The video was produced by the Class 25 Connection Team, a group Kalinoski advises that produces web-based content such as slide shows or virtual tours to market the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy. This was the first video effort by any Connection Team, and it came with a daunting deadline. Kalinoski said that guidance for the scope of the video was received Dec. 1, and a final product was due Dec. 17 — one day before the cadets would graduate at Mauston High School.

The Connection Team consisted of Devan Farnsworth of Madison, Wis., Michael Schiffer of West Salem, Wis., Parker, Becker and Maciosek. The latter three were featured in the video along with Sabel, the distinguished honor graduate for Class 25. Parker was the



Cadet Tyler Sabel talks about his life before and after attending Challenge Academy as part of a video, “From Dreaming to Achieving Through Wisconsin Challenge,” which took first place in a National Guard Youth Foundation competition.

military honor award recipient, and Schiffer received an Air Force family scholarship.

Kalinoski said the team quickly came up with a vision for the video, and Farnsworth drafted a storyboard — a sequential visual narrative that details the types of shots and transitions to be used. The team combined on the script, and filmed many of the video sequences in the evenings.

“These kids were so busy getting their ducks in a row before graduation,” Kalinoski said. “They put everything they had into this video, and it shows. They did an amazing job.”

The feat is all the more impressive considering that the Connection Team had to learn how to use the video software package on the fly, watching tutorial programs online. Kalinoski said some of the Connection Team cadets are considering media design as a career.

Each of the cadets on the Connection Team will receive a \$2,000 scholarship as well as a Cisco

Flip Camera, and the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy was awarded \$5,000 in scholarship funds from the Youth Foundation.

But the story continues. The Youth Foundation will send a professional video production team to Fort McCoy Jan. 24-28 to recreate the winning cadet video. The professional video will debut at the Youth Foundation's annual Challenge Champions Gala March 1 in Washington D.C., and be posted on the Youth Foundation's Facebook and YouTube sites.

“That video will bring more attention to Wisconsin's Challenge Academy,” she said.

M.G. MacLaren, director of the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy, was pleased with the accomplishment.

“As you might suspect, we are very excited and proud of our kids,” he said in an e-mail.

Kalinoski said the Academy is working out the logistics to send the Connection Team to the event. 📷

64th ROC visits Kumamoto castle during Yama Sakura 59

Sgt. Jerry De Avila

124th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KUMAMOTO, Japan — Soldiers from Wisconsin National Guard's 64th Troop Command visited the local fortress Kumamoto castle Jan. 24 as part of Yama Sakura 59's cultural exchange programs. The cultural exchanges strengthen relationships between U.S. and Japan Ground Self Defense Force troops.

"I have never been outside of the U.S., and I am glad that my first trip was to Japan," said Spc. Alex Goehring, a chemical operations specialist with the 64th. "The Japanese are so formal, yet so friendly."

The castle is Japan's third largest and is more than 400 years old. Soldiers spent most of the morning learning about the castle's history from their tour guide, as well as visiting its many museums and interacting with Samurai soldiers posted throughout the castle.

"I loved visiting the castle and sharing in Japanese culture. They're very traditional people, and I found their history to be insightful," said Staff Sgt. Randolph Lockman, a fire support noncommissioned officer for the 64th.

"The visit to this castle really helped me appreciate the Japanese culture. It's so different from what I am used to, but I love it," said Pfc. Brett Cook. Cook, a radio operator with the 64th Rear Operations Center, has been outside the United States twice, including this trip to Japan.

Roughly 1,500 U.S. personnel and 4,500 Western Army Soldiers are participating in Yama Sakura 59. U.S. units include USARPAC, I Corps Forward, and U.S. Army Japan, I Corps, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., is supporting the exercise.

Yama Sakura is an annual, bilateral exercise with Japanese forces and the U. S. military. This year's exercise is a simulation-driven, joint-bilateral, command post exercise and is the 29th iteration of the Japan-based exercise series. 



At left, Spc. Alex Goehring, a chemical operations specialist with the 64th Rear Operations Center of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, poses with samurai warriors as he tours the Kumamoto Castle Jan. 24.

Above, members of the 64th Rear Operations Center share Japanese traditional customs as they purify their hands and body before entering the Kumamoto Castle Jan. 24 as a part of a cultural exchange during Yama Sakura 59, which began Jan. 22 in Kumamoto, Japan. Photos by Sgt. Jerry De Avila, 124th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Model organization: 128th Air Refueling Wing receives miniature aircraft

Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze
128th Air Refueling Wing

Eight members of the Richard I. Bong Chapter of the International Plastic Model Society visited the 128th Air Refueling Wing Jan. 8 to donate 11 replica models of aircraft flown throughout the Wing's history.

The local IPMS chapter was approached by Col. Ted Metzgar, commander of the 128th ARW, to build the models, said Allan F. Jones, a chapter member. Metzgar asked for the chapter's assistance because he received a similar model display from them when he was the commander of the maintenance squadron at the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison, Jones said.

The aircraft models were built to a 1/72nd scale—one inch equals six feet—and took between 20 hours and over one hundred hours apiece, said Paul Boyer, the local IPMS chapter president.

"The kind [of models] we make are historically accurate," Boyer said.

Regarding the construction of the model aircraft, Boyer said, "I think they're all a little bit difficult to make." Each model donated to the 128 ARW was accurate to the nose and tail art, which required research on the chapter members' behalf.

"We were able to go to the internet, find the markings, scale them and print them as custom decals," said Jeff Neal, the local IPMS chapter's graphic design specialist.

"We're amateur historians, and one of the things a historian does is pass on history," Boyer said. "We're teaching in 3D."

Donated model aircraft and their modelers are: an F-80 Shooting Star by Jeff Neal; a KC-97L Stratotanker by Thomas Foti; an F-89D Scorpion by Allan F. Jones; A B-25J Mitchell by John Frevete; a T-6G Texan by James Erfert; an F-51D Mustang by Andrew Keyes; an F-5 Lightning by John Plzak; an F-86 Sabre



Members of the Richard I. Bong chapter of the International Plastic Model Society gather near the display case in the Operations Squadron building of the 128th Air Refueling Wing, Milwaukee, Wis., on Jan. 8. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Staff Sgt. Jeremy Wilson

by Paul Boyer; a KC-135R Stratotanker by Christopher Oglesby; an O-47 by Chuck Davis; and a C-47 Skytrain by Aaron Skinner. These models were built over the last year, and the aircraft types match those used throughout the history of the 128th Air Refueling Wing.

"It's nice to know that this chapter is the one who should do the models [when asked to]," said Boyer.

Regarding the assembly and donation of the aircraft models, Jeff Neal said, "There's pride in [building the models]; pride for our state and the men and women who serve."

The local IPMS chapter has worked on several other model projects, including a showcase at the Richard I. Bong Veteran's Historical Center in Superior, Wis., model aircraft displays for the Experimental Aircraft Association in Oshkosh, Wis. and Pensacola, Fla., and model Navy aircraft to accompany a to-scale model of the U.S.S. Enterprise, also in Pensacola, said Boyer. 📷

State's new command chief warrant officer prepared to lead

A changing of the guard has taken place at the command chief warrant officer post — an important if not well-known office — in the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Craig Krenz, of Tomah, assumed the reins from Chief Warrant Officer 5 Lynn Ryan, of Manchester, Iowa, who held the office since it became a full-time position in August 2006 and retired in January. During the transition, both held the title of command chief warrant officer.

Ryan said her job is very much like that of the state command sergeant major in that she is a member of the command staff and advises the adjutant general on such issues as strength, career management and assignments for the warrant officer corps. Her job also entails advising and mentoring the warrant officers in the Wisconsin Army National Guard, and educating commanders about the role warrant officers play in their organizations.

"It's a specialized group," she said of the 172 warrant officer positions in the Wisconsin Army National Guard. "We are a small group, but we're very valuable to commanders because we stay in our specialized field our whole career. We are the go-to people."

A warrant officer is a technical expert in his or her field whose skill level literally warrants an officer position. Initially appointed as a warrant officer by the secretary of the Army, succeeding levels — beginning with chief warrant officer 2 — are commissioned by the U.S. president. Many Wisconsin National Guard warrant officers are aviators — mostly with helicopter units, but also with the Guard's C-26E airplane and unmanned aerial vehicles. Other fields include supply, human resources, artillery, maintenance, safety, planning, legal, information systems, military intelligence and food service.

Both Ryan and Krenz agreed that filling warrant officer vacancies — at present, approximately 55 positions are unfilled — is a chief concern.



Chief Warrant Officer 5 Lynn Ryan, left, concluded her term as command chief warrant officer for the Wisconsin Army National Guard. Prior to retiring in January, she worked

closely with Chief Warrant Officer 4 Craig Krenz, right, who succeeded her as command chief. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

"Our number one priority is to improve our strength," Ryan said. "That's been an ongoing issue."

"We are making inroads," Krenz added. "But over the past couple of years, we've had a number of retirements and also gained slots. It's like running on an escalator. It will take continued effort."

"There are pieces in place," he continued. "It's showing a benefit."

One of those pieces includes a full-time warrant officer whose mission is signing up warrant officer candidates. Ryan and Krenz explained that developing warrant officer candidates is often a long process. Candidates are selected from the non-commissioned officer ranks.

Another piece is the warrant officer school at the Wisconsin National Guard's

426th Regional Training Institute located at Fort McCoy. Krenz said the school's approach in transforming seasoned non-commissioned officers into warrant officers has proven successful.

Ryan, who joined the Wisconsin Army National Guard in 1974 and became a warrant officer 12 years later, has seen many changes over the past 37 years of service, such as the level of automation today. Soldiers have changed too, she noted, as part of the increased demands on the National Guard during two major military operations.

Ryan said she learned many of the responsibilities of the command chief warrant officer position on the go, consulting with peers in other states and identifying needs in Wisconsin.

"We're still learning," she acknowledged. "What I started, Mr. Krenz will continue and probably initiate other things."

"This has been the perfect job," she continued. "I've loved every minute of it — it's very rewarding."

Krenz is closing in on 31 years of service, most of that spent in personnel and finance. He comes to the command chief warrant officer post from the Army National Guard budget officer position at Camp Williams, Wis. He said his personnel and finance experience will prove invaluable in his new job.

"I've always had this position in my sights, though I wasn't expecting the opportunity at this point in my career," he said. "I am very humbled to be the lead for warrant officers in Wisconsin." 

Senior Wisconsin Army National Guard leaders visit deployed troops in Iraq

Wisconsin Army National Guard senior leaders have found that 2010 has been a busy but productive and successful year for Wisconsin Guard units deployed in Iraq.

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, and Command Sgt. Major George Stopper, the Wisconsin Army Guard's senior non-commissioned officer, visited the 724th Engineer Battalion and the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment Dec. 7-9. They found both units engaged in a brisk operations tempo as they assumed greater areas of responsibility as a result of troop reductions in Iraq.

"The sheer number of missions has increased tremendously," Anderson said. "They're taking it in stride. Senior commanders were extremely complimentary."

The 724th heads up Task Force Badger, the sole combat engineer asset in Iraq, which in addition to Wisconsin consists of National Guard Soldiers from Pennsylvania and Puerto Rico, and active component Soldiers as well. The 724th has about two months remaining on its deployment.

The 147th supports the lone aviation brigade in Iraq, and conducts such missions as command and control, quick reaction force, troop movement and general support. The 147th is about halfway through its deployment.

Both Anderson and Stopper pointed out how the 724th and 147th significantly improved the operation and availability of theater-based equipment inherited from previous units, and the high level of morale even as the troop drawdown requires relocation from one base of operations to another. Elements of the 147th, for example, have already moved three times.

"They recognize the fluidity of the situation," Anderson said.

That fluidity may lead to challenges in the future, Stopper said.

"It's not just combat units we're downsizing," he explained. "Everything else we had gotten used to is downsizing. The supply lines are changing — before, it was just stuff coming in. Now it's also stuff going out."

"Organizations need to position themselves for when the inevitable

happens," Anderson said. "There will be a tipping point where parts are not available."

Both leaders also commented on a significant change since their last visit, one that was obscured by the relative calm in Iraq today.

"It didn't hit me until we left — the

absolute absence of armored combat vehicles," Stopper said. "No tanks, no Bradleys [or] armored personnel carriers on bases, only the route clearing vehicles. There's still security on the bases, but it's obvious it's a new day in Iraq."

Anderson said that Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers clearly understand "where they are at, with moving away from kinetic operations to host nation support. They are embracing their mission during a very turbulent time due to the retrograde operations. They have the right attitude."

Stopper agreed.

"During our visit, I did not have a single Soldier from either organization who complained," he said. "The morale is awesome." 🇺🇸

State Command Sgt. Major George Stopper, left, and Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, right, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, visit with Spc. Robert Stockton of the 724th Engineer Battalion during a recent command visit to Iraq. The 724th as well as the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment are presently deployed in support of Operation New Dawn. Wisconsin National Guard photo



Deployed Wisconsin, Michigan aviators honored for excellence in Iraq

Spc. Raymond Quintanilla

305th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BASRA, Iraq – Despite a full agenda, a senior general from United States Forces-Iraq took time to recognize deployed Wisconsin and Michigan National Guard Soldiers during a Nov. 30 visit to Basra.

Maj. Gen. Nelson J. Cannon, USF-I's deputy commanding general of detainee operations and a 32-year veteran of the Michigan National Guard, presented coins of excellence as tokens of his appreciation to Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, a National Guard unit comprised of 400 Soldiers from Wisconsin and Michigan. The battalion is deployed to Basra in support of the 1st Infantry Division and U.S. Division-South.

"It's hard to get around as you well know, to see everybody on a regular basis," Cannon said, "but I did want to make a point to get down here and let you know you have done a great job for us down here. You have done an outstanding job."

1st Sgt. Steward Wenino, from Port Huron, Mich., and the 1-147th, said Cannon's visit boosted the morale of those recognized.

"For our maintenance guys, they don't get to see the higher ranking people," Wenino said. "They're the back of the mission nobody sees. It was very beneficial for our Delta Company to be recognized by a major general, to see the support aspect and receive some recognition."

Staff Sgt. Jay Anderson, a patrol and supply specialist with the 1-147th, said he was surprised and enjoyed the special lunch scheduled just for them.

"It definitely feels nice to see the general take a little time from his busy schedule," said Anderson, a native of Waukesha. "It feels great you are being noticed, that someone is actually paying attention to the hard work everybody puts in."

With the mission still in mind, Cannon expressed the importance of the 1st Infantry Division's continuing support and the challenges the 1-147th faces with the downsizing of troops and new mission of Operation New Dawn.

"It's not a matter of how much time we have left," Cannon said, "but it is each and every day of making every engagement count, [ensuring] every effort serves the purpose we are trying to achieve."

Cannon said with downsizing expected to continue, Soldiers such as the 1st Infantry Division and 1-147th are the right troops to get the job done in Iraq.

"You are part of the right 50,000," Cannon said. "The right 'can do' attitude to go out and make things happen,



Maj. Gen. Nelson J. Cannon, the deputy commanding general for detainee operations, United States Forces-Iraq, presents a coin of excellence to Staff Sgt. Melissa Barber-Kosikowski of Fond du Lac, and the assistant flight operations non-commissioned officer with the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment. Cannon presented coins of excellence to Soldiers from the 1-147th for their selfless service and dedication to duty. 305th Mobile

Public Affairs Detachment photo by Spc. Raymond Quintanilla

get it done when everybody else thinks this is going to be too hard."

The general said he felt preparing Iraq's new democratic government for success is the most critical task, and those involved are sharing a common bond in making history.

"To have planted that seed in this part of the world is huge and that's the destiny of the United States," Cannon said. "We want to see democracy in the world and democracies aren't easy to manage, but it's the right thing to do."

"And you are all a part of that, you all help make history," he continued, "especially here as we get to the end. This is where we have to close the deal, finish strong."

The 147th reported for active duty June 17 and trained for six weeks at Fort Hood. They arrived in Iraq in September. The Soldiers are responsible for all aviation operations — including troop and cargo movements, medevac and attack missions — in United States Division-South, which covers nine provinces of Iraq, including the area south of Baghdad. 

Madison Air Guard unit ranked among best in nation

The 115th Fighter Wing has proven it is among the best in the nation at doing what it takes to be ready for whatever mission it faces.

The Madison-based Wisconsin Air National Guard unit earned a nearly perfect rating during a Unit Compliance Inspection at Truax Field Dec. 10-15. Sixty inspectors from the Air Combat Command's Inspector General team, Langley Air Force Base, Va., observed nearly 1,100 Airmen and inspected every unit on base.

The team observed and graded more than 600 tasks during their five-day evaluation in Madison. The final grade was a 99.5 percent compliance rating — the highest in 115th Fighter Wing history.

"I knew the outstanding Airmen of the 115th would rise to the top, as they always do. I couldn't be more proud of each and every one of them," said Brig. Gen. Joseph Brandemuehl, 115th Fighter Wing commander. "We welcome external inspection teams to our base. It gives us the opportunity to highlight that our Airmen and our processes are among the best in the country."

The Inspector General team travels to Air Force installations across the country to evaluate how a unit complies with laws, executive orders and applicable policies, regulations and instructions while performing their day-to-day mission.

In 2005, the unit earned a 99.4 percent compliance rating — the highest score at the time in Air Force history.

Excellence was documented across the base as eight subordinate units were recognized as "superior teams" and 58 Airmen were recognized as "superior performers."

Results like these are welcome news but not surprising to many of the 115th Fighter Wing members whose motto is "Dedicated to Excellence." Recently, the 115th became the second Air National Guard base in the country to earn the "Star" rating in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Voluntary Protection Program — adding to a list of accomplishments that, Wing leaders say, sets the unit among the best in the nation. 📷

Artillery battalion receives first Blue Force Tracker units in Wisconsin Army National Guard

Rob Schuette
Fort McCoy Public Affairs Staff

Several hundred Soldiers from Wisconsin Army National Guard units will receive the latest Blue Force Tracker (BFT) equipment, which will update their communications capability for future missions. The equipment is being installed in their vehicles at the Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site (MATES) at Fort McCoy.

Ken Traynham of Engineer Solutions and Products (ESP) of Fort Hood, Texas, said the organization received the request to install the BFT equipment for the Wisconsin Army National Guard. The first unit to receive it is the 121st Field Artillery of the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. ESP trainers can go to units all over the world to give the training needed to help the operator cut through the fog of war.

BFT is a technology that has a satellite navigation system and allows units to track locations and movements of troops and equipment, and to formulate battle plans, Traynham said.

"Blue Force Tracker is a combat multiplier," he said. "The days of not knowing exactly where your team is are gone. The system replaces what privates did to determine and provide this information."

Traynham said the BFT system uses satellite technology and e-mail to relay this information. The BFT system is much better than the old method of using voice contact on the battlefield.

Operation orders can be prepared on computers and sent out via text. This helps ensure everyone gets the same information and interprets it the same way, he said.

"Nothing gets lost in translation," he said. "The system is very user friendly and does all the tasks that were so painstaking. If the main-system operator is lost, a private can take over and ensure the mission is successful."

During the installation period, Soldiers from the 121st also received training at the Wisconsin National Guard's 426th Regional Training Institute about how to operate and maintain the equipment.

"This equipment is absolutely essential," Traynham said. "This is the first thing they turn on in-theater after they ensure their weapons work. The equipment always is being



Brian Payne (left) and Robert Perry of Engineer Solutions and Products of Fort Hood, Texas, build Blue Force Tracker racks to install the equipment into vehicles of the 121st Field Artillery Battalion of the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. Fort McCoy Public Affairs photo by Rob Schuette

updated so the system keeps getting better and better."

ESP instructors at Fort McCoy were Darrel Vines, Damen Berry, Mel Chavez and Ray Herrell.

Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Olson of MATES said the organization served as the hosting organization for the installation of the BFT equipment.

In addition to providing support to the contractors to install the equipment, the MATES staff coordinated with the 426th to provide classrooms to support training on the equipment, which was conducted by ESP staff.

"We will store some of the Blue Force Tracker equipment at Fort McCoy as well," Olson said. "That way, other units that come to Fort McCoy and need basic training or to train with the equipment during an exercise don't have to bring the equipment from their home stations."

That can be a good selling point if a unit from a distant location is considering coming to Fort McCoy to participate in an exercise, he said.

If the equipment is here, it may increase the possibility a unit, such as from Texas or Oklahoma, comes here to train.

"MATES personnel also will learn to operate the equipment and to repair and maintain it on site," he said.

The 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team is scheduled to get the equipment in June, Olson said. 📷

Meritorious service

Wisconsin one of top two Army Guard organizations

The Wisconsin Army National Guard is in the running to be named the overall winner in the Army National Guard category of the Army Communities of Excellence Awards competition.

Wisconsin and West Virginia are the two Army National Guard organizations vying for the top honor this year. The runner-up will receive the Gold First Place award.

The Department of the Army is expected to announce the Army National Guard winner sometime in March.

The ACOE Awards follow a 12-month evaluation in which Army, National Guard

and Reserve installations are judged against Army priorities and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program criteria. Participants are not judged against each other. The assessment considers the overall quality of military environment, facilities and services.

In 2010 Wisconsin received a Silver Second Place finish — sixth in the Army National Guard. The state earned a Gold Third Place award in 2009 (fourth overall), and a Silver 1st Place award (fifth overall) in 2008. 📷

Read the entire story at: <http://dma.wi.gov/dma/news/2011News/11007.asp>

Three to enter Wisconsin Army Guard Hall of Honor

Three outstanding former Guard Soldiers will be recognized during the Wisconsin Army National Guard Hall of Honor induction ceremony at 1 p.m. May 15 in Witmer Hall at Joint Force Headquarters, 2400 Wright St., Madison.

The 11th annual induction ceremony will honor retired Brig. Gen. James Daley of Janesville, Wis., retired Maj. Lynn Rasmussen of Madison, Wis., and retired Command Chief Warrant Officer William Richardson of Middleton, Wis.

Daley enlisted in the Marines in 1966, earning a Bronze Star and Purple Heart during a 1967-68 tour in Vietnam. He attended Officer Candidate School in the Wisconsin National Guard in 1977 and subsequently held a number of deputy and director positions, including director of personnel and administration for the state area command. He commanded the 32nd Infantry Brigade from 1998-2001 and again from 2002-03, serving as assistant adjutant general for readiness and training from 2001-02. Following a six-month active duty assignment as a senior transformation analyst in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Daley finished his military career as assistant adjutant general for the Joint Staff and commander of the state Joint Task Force.

Rasmussen enlisted in the Wisconsin National Guard in 1975 and was assigned to the 132nd Support Battalion. She attended Officer Candidate School in 1979, and served in various company and battalion roles such as platoon leader, company commander, personnel, logistics and maintenance management. She completed her Active Guard and Reserve tour in 1990 and retired as a Major from the Wisconsin National Guard in 1995. Rasmussen has received numerous civilian awards regarding her work with the Department of Military Affairs.

Richardson enlisted as a Marine in 1966 and served four years in the U.S. Marine Corps Band — the President's Own. Subsequently joining the Wisconsin National Guard's 132nd Army Band, Richardson was appointed as bandmaster in 1977 at the rank of warrant officer 1. He led the band through numerous governor's inaugurations and other official celebrations, improving the band's performance and reputation as well as bringing credit and recognition to the Wisconsin National Guard. He culminated his career as the state Command Chief Warrant Officer from 2002-03.

Family, friends and guests are invited to attend the ceremony and an informal reception. 📷



Col. (ret.) Dennis Malone receives his induction plaque from Brig. Gen. John McCoy, commander of the Wisconsin Air National Guard, during a Nov. 24 ceremony at Klemmer's Banquet Hall in Milwaukee. Malone's career spanned 36 years, serving the last 12 years as the Mission Support Group Commander of the 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee.

128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Senior Master Sgt. Jeff Rohloff

Malone named to Wisconsin Air Guard Hall of Fame

Capt. John Capra
128th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

Sixty-five family members, close friends and former coworkers gathered for lunch in the Governor's room at Klemmer's Banquet Hall in Milwaukee to celebrate retired Col. Dennis Malone's induction into the Wisconsin Air National Guard's Hall of Fame.

Many in attendance were retired members of the Wisconsin Air National Guard who took the opportunity to witness a highly respected Airman receive the honor.

Brig Gen John E. McCoy, commander of the Wisconsin Air National Guard, presented Malone with the award, along with praise for going over and above the high standards set in the Air National Guard.

The Hall of Fame was established June 15, 1982 to honor the special contributions

of Guard members to the overall success of the Air National Guard mission.

For induction into the Hall of Fame an individual must be separated from service for more than three years, have exemplified the highest caliber of dedication to the very best ideals of the military and must have brought great credit to the United States, the state of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Air National Guard.

Sustained exceptional performance of duties, institution of unique, innovative programs, improvement of the combat effectiveness of the Wisconsin Air Guard and enhancement of public support of the guard are all types of service to be considered.

Malone's career spanned 36 years, serving the last 12 years as the Mission Support Group Commander of the 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee. 📷

Veterans, Families, Retirees

Revised GI Bill offers more for National Guard

Under changes signed into law Jan. 4, the time National Guard members served on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001 — qualifying Title 32 orders as well as full-time Guard members in the Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) program — will count towards the [Post-9/11 GI Bill](#).

Service members who accrued between 90 and 180 days of active duty since Sept. 11, 2001 are eligible for 40 percent of the total benefits from the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Those who served at least 36 months are eligible for 100 percent of benefits.

This change takes effect Oct. 1 but is retroactive to Aug. 1, 2009 when the Post-9/11 GI Bill went into effect.

“Since the first GI Bill in 1944, this unique educational program has adapted to the needs of America’s veterans,” said Eric K. Shinseki, Veterans Affairs secretary.

Other changes to the Post-9/11 GI Bill, which take effect Aug. 1:

- The Post-9/11 GI Bill will pay all public school in-state tuition and fees, including graduate training;
- An annual national cap will be set at \$17,500 for tuition and fees in a private or foreign school, not including contributions by educational institutions under the “Yellow Ribbon” program;
- College fund payments will be paid on a monthly basis, rather than lump

sum. Students with a class load considered half-time or less will also be eligible for college fund payments;

- Reimbursement will be available for multiple licensing and certificate tests as well as fees for national examinations used for college admission (SAT, LSAT, ACT, GMAT);

- Vocational rehabilitation participants who are otherwise eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill may elect the higher housing allowance offered;

- Housing allowance will not be paid when students are not in class, such as the break between fall and spring semesters.

Changes effective Oct. 1:

- Housing allowance will be prorated to match credit hours taken per term. A class load considered three-quarter time, for example, will yield 75 percent of the housing allowance;

- Students enrolled in distance learning will receive 50 percent of the national average housing allowance;

- On-the-job training, some flight training, apprenticeship training and correspondence courses will be covered;

- The book stipend will be payable to active duty members.

Information about the new provisions is available on the Internet at www.gibill.va.gov.

TRICARE improves online access, communication

Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

Additions to the TRICARE military health plan’s website are giving beneficiaries easier access to their personal health data, more convenient appointment scheduling and better communication with their health care providers, the top TRICARE official reported.

TRICARE Online, the military health system’s patient portal, already enables users who get care at a military treatment facility to schedule appointments, track their medications, order prescription refills and view and even download their personal health records, Navy Rear Adm. (Dr.) Christine S. Hunter told American Forces Press Service.

Later this year, patients also will be able to get their laboratory and X-ray results through the portal, along with secure messaging from their health care providers, Hunter said.

“You will be able to go there and it will say you have two messages from your doctor,” she explained. “You will click on it, and it may be the nurse telling you that you are overdue for something, and maybe a lab result and an explanation of the findings.”

The next goal will be to expand these capabilities so beneficiaries can track what

immunizations they received and when, and get a “heads up” from their health care provider when they’re due for their next one, she said.

Meanwhile, TRICARE plans to increase the number of clinics that offer online appointment scheduling and tailor the process to offer the broadest selection of openings so beneficiaries can select what’s most convenient for them.

In addition, health care providers will begin using the portal to get patients to fill out forms and questionnaires at their convenience before they arrive for their appointments.

TRICARE Online offers the best of both worlds, Hunter said. It helps to build a closer relationship between beneficiaries and their health care providers while taking advantage of technology and health care tools to make that relationship more convenient and accessible 24/7.

Beneficiaries increasingly are taking advantage of the new capability. Almost 311,500 active users have logged into the system over the past year, officials reported, with an average of 2,800 new user registrations each week.

Since January 2010, beneficiaries have scheduled almost 200,000 medical appointments and requested more than 61,500 prescription refills through the system.

TRICARE officials also report increased use of the “blue button” feature that enables beneficiaries to access their personal health data and, if they choose, save it to a file on their computer. Since Sept. 25, 2010, officials reported more than 4,000 downloads in .pdf format and more than 1,700 downloads in .txt format. Last week’s figures show 486 .pdf downloads and 187 .txt downloads.

Hunter said this feature is particularly helpful because it enables beneficiaries to download their records when they need to seek medical care away from their regular health care facility, and empowers them to better partner with providers about the treatment they receive.

Services, hours for Retiree Activities Offices

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

Retirees may provide an e-mail address, to include first name, middle initial, last name, retired military grade and branch of service to widma.retiree@wisconsin.gov to be added to the RAO’s e-mail data base. The RAO also has a website that provides a lot of information for retirees and can be found at <http://dma.wi.gov/retirees>.

The Madison RAO is located at Joint Force Headquarters,

2400 Wright Street, Room 160, Madison, Wis. 53704. The RAO is open Tuesdays and Thursdays 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. except on holidays. Their phone number is 608-242-3115, 1-800-335-4157, ext. 3115, DSN 724-3115. Contact the RAO with questions or for assistance.

The Milwaukee RAO is co-located with the 128th Air Refueling Wing, General Mitchell Air National Guard Base, 1835 E. Grange Ave, Bldg 512, Milwaukee, Wis., 53207. Their phone number is 414-944-8212. Their e-mail address is rao.128arw@ang.af.mil. The Milwaukee RAO is manned by volunteers on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.



W I P EAR N 2 0 1 0 REVIEW

For the Wisconsin National Guard, 2010 was filled with many accomplishments and achievements worth remembering. The following pages offer a brief recap of the year's events. Click on the photos and the story capsules on the side to read "the rest of the story."

JANUARY

Janet Gatlin embraces her husband, Cpt. Anthony Gatlin, upon his arrival at Volk Field Jan. 13, 2010 following a year-long mobilization and deployment to Iraq. Also pictured is their daughter Elizabeth, age 1. Gatlin is commander of the 32nd Military Police Company. The 3,200 Soldiers who deployed with the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team returned to Wisconsin in stages from Jan. 5 to 23. Wisconsin Army National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

JAN. 5: Troop A, 105th Cavalry leads return of 32nd Brigade to Wisconsin

JAN. 12: Adjutant General named to FEMA Advisory Council

JAN. 13: Waiting for returning Guardsman a labor of love

JAN. 14: Team Wisconsin comes together to serve state's newest veterans

JAN. 26: Two Wisconsin Air National Guard units among best in nation

JAN. 27: Wisconsin Guard family readiness group leader is First Lady's guest at State of Union

FEBRUARY

9

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael Knuppel observes the right engine of a C-26E airplane as Chief Warrant Officer 5 David Hinkens continues pre-flight checks prior to their departure Feb. 9, 2010 from Truax Field in Madison to Homestead Joint Air Reserve Base in suburban Miami. Along with Chief Warrant Officer 4 Art Hebblewhite, the Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers – members of Detachment 52, Joint Force Headquarters – assumed an operational airlift support mission for Haiti humanitarian relief for approximately one month. The small aircraft and crew shuttled personnel and supplies between Florida and Haiti beginning Feb. 11. Wisconsin Army National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

FEB. 5: For Wisconsin Guard members, resiliency is key to returning to life after deployment

FEB. 6: Wisconsin Guard unit gets bang-up training in Florida

FEB. 20: Wisconsin Guard helps families of deployed Soldiers prepare for their return

FEB. 22: Wisconsin Guard pilots play major role in Haiti relief

Sgt. Cody Brueggen, left, of the Sparta-based 107th Maintenance Company, identifies five hazards to deliver a report at the “mystery task” station on March 5, 2010 as part of the State Soldier/NCO of the Year competition. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

Maj. Chris Hansen, a pilot with the 176th Fighter Squadron of the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison, returned to Naval Air Station Key West, Fla., after a dog-fight in the skies south of Key West March 24, 2010 against an F-18 Super Hornet. Close to 145 Airmen of the 115th Fighter Wing spent approximately two weeks at NAS gaining valuable training as their F-16s sparred against Navy F-18s and F-5 Tigers here. 115th Fighter Wing Public Affairs photo by Airman 1st Class Ryan Roth

MARCH 11: Wisconsin shows support for wounded warriors

MARCH 15: Wisconsin Guard places among the best in the National Guard and U.S. Army media contests

MARCH 26: Adjutant General of Wisconsin visits 724th Engineer Battalion at Fort McCoy

MARCH 31: Green Bay Packer Mark Tauscher visits Wisconsin Guard armory

APRIL

Silhouetted against an overcast sky, two Soldiers with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 724th Engineer Battalion mount a Browning M2 machine gun to an uparmored Humvee prior to a training mission March 7, 2010. The 724th was at Fort McCoy preparing for a deployment to Iraq.
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Jopek

APRIL 7: Wisconsin Guard leader named to federal Homeland Security task force

APRIL 8: Wisconsin Airman serves entire installation in Southwest Asia

APRIL 26: Battalion sergeant major sees major differences from first deployment

MAY

Col. Steven Bensed of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team waits with more than 300 Wisconsin National Guard members to march onto Lambeau Field during the May 22, 2010 LZ Lambeau tribute ceremony that honored and officially welcomed home all veterans of the Vietnam War. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue

MAY 4: Wisconsin Army National Guard Hall of Honor gains two new members

MAY 4: Wisconsin Guard unit shows community what it's made of

MAY 11: Wisconsin Guard top finisher in Army Communities of Excellence

MAY 12: Youth counterdrug campaign reaches first milestone in state

MAY 14: At Ease earns top honors in Department of Defense competition

MAY 26: Task Force Badger assumes control of Iraq mission

MAY 27: Challenge Academy cadet wins trip to Indy 500

JUNE

More than 3,200 National Guard Soldiers and their families gathered in Steven's Point, June 19, 2010 for the "Back from the Sand" celebration which honored the Wisconsin National Guard's 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, or "Red Arrow" Brigade, and their families after a deployment to Iraq in support Operation Iraqi Freedom. The celebration featured live entertainment, a parade and ceremony to formally welcome the Soldiers home.

Wisconsin Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Joseph Streeter

JUNE 5: Madison-based Airmen thanked for service since Sept. 11, 2001

JUNE 12: Wisconsin Challenge Academy honors 106 graduates, scholarship recipients

JUNE 14: Wisconsin Airman named best senior NCO in all Air National Guard

JUNE 17: Nearly 290 Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers report for active duty

JUNE 21: National Guard Bureau aims high with Milwaukee launch of high-tech recruiting effort

JUNE 24: Wisconsin Challenge Academy named best in nation

JULY

Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers wait during the fireworks show to fire four 105-mm howitzers in time with Tchaikowski's "1812 Overture," the finale to the 2010 Rhythm and Booms celebration held July 3, 2010 at Madison's Warner Park. The Wisconsin National Guard also supported this event with an F-16 flyover during the National Anthem and a display of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez

JULY 10: Changing of the guard for the Red Arrow Brigade

JULY 12: Wisconsin National Guard tasked with aiding Afghan farmers

JULY 12: Wisconsin's homeland defense role to expand

JULY 13: Air Force's top enlisted leader visits Wisconsin Air Guard members

JULY 13: Wisconsin Air Guard supports gulf oil spill response efforts

JULY 14: Some Guard Soldiers return early from Iraq deployment

JULY 26: Wisconsin service members support AirVenture, honored during annual air show

JULY 30: Youth build friendships, gain military understanding at Youth Camp

AUGUST

The Rhinelander Wis.-based 951st Engineering Company (Sapper) held an award ceremony Aug. 6, 2010, to recognize 11 members of the unit who received Purple Heart medals for their actions and subsequent injuries sustained during their deployment in Afghanistan in 2008-09. The 951st also received the Valorous Unit Award, recognizing the overall mission, routine route clearance of improvised explosive devices — considered the most dangerous in Afghanistan. The unit also earned a Combat Action streamer. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell

AUGUST 8: Wisconsin Guard members honored at national enlisted conference

AUGUST 12: Wisconsin Guard unit works behind scenes to keep PGA tournament safe

AUGUST 13: Wisconsin Air Guard deploys security Airmen overseas

AUGUST 21: Volk Field hosts NATO exercise

AUGUST 25: Packers legend visits Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers in Iraq

AUGUST 27: American Legion National Security Commission tours Wisconsin Air Guard base

SEPTEMBER



President Barack Obama arrived at the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 115th Fighter Wing base at Truax Field in Madison Sept. 28 en route to an appearance at the University of Wisconsin. Brig. Gen. Joseph Brandemuehl, left, commander of the 115th Fighter Wing, greets the president. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

SEPTEMBER 11: Leadership changes, vision remains same for award-winning training institute

SEPTEMBER 12: New commander takes charge of evolving brigade

SEPTEMBER 12: Leadership changes for Wisconsin Guard's most diverse brigade

SEPTEMBER 19: Wisconsin Air Guard unit sets safety standards

SEPTEMBER 19: Madison-based Air Guard unit honors its Hometown Heroes

SEPTEMBER 27: Fallen Wisconsin Guard hero honored at Soldier Field

OCTOBER

Lt. Col. Doug Read of the Wisconsin Air National Guard accepts a warm welcome at Shahbaz Air Base, Pakistan, after he and fellow 176th Fighter Squadron pilots Maj. Bart Van Roo and Maj. Chris Hansen delivered three new F-16s to the Pakistani Air Force on Oct. 30, 2010.

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Andy M. Kin

OCTOBER 18: Milwaukee Airman part of All-Air Force soccer team

OCTOBER 25: Wisconsin adjutant general contributes to congressional preparedness report

OCTOBER 27: Wisconsin Guard going for silver in green movement

NOVEMBER

Wisconsin Army National Guard Capt. Brian Barth and more than 100 Soldiers of the 951st "Sapper" Engineer Company, stand at attention during a halftime ceremony at Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Nov. 7, 2010. The Green Bay Packers hosted the 951st as part of a Veterans Day celebration which included more than 75,000 fans, several wounded warriors, and some of Wisconsin's most recent combat veterans. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue

NOVEMBER 11: Deployed aviators participate in Green Bay Packers' tribute to veterans

NOVEMBER 11: Job search tool for service members launched on Veterans Day

NOVEMBER 15: Wisconsin Army National Guard names new chief of staff

NOVEMBER 30: Deployed Wisconsin, Michigan aviators honored for excellence in Iraq

DECEMBER

Members of the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy's Class 25th drill team perform outside Mauston High School Dec. 18, 2010 prior to their graduation ceremony.
Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

DECEMBER 9: Senior Wisconsin Guard leaders visit deployed troops

DECEMBER 10: State's new command chief warrant officer preparing to lead

DECEMBER 15: Madison Air National Guard unit ranked among best in nation

Parting shot



Pfc. Brett Cook, a radio operations specialist with the 64th Rear Operations Center, Wisconsin Army National Guard, challenges a samurai warrior as he tours the Kumamoto Castle Jan. 24 as part of Yama Sakura 59, which began Jan. 22. Yama Sakura is the U.S. Army Pacific's premier bilateral exercise with Japan. 124th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Sgt. Jerry DeAvila

