



@ease Express

Volume 4, Issue 1 • February 2012

[Click here](#) to find out about the 1157th Transportation Company's sendoff ceremony.
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by
1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson



@ease Express

2011 NGB Media Contest winner
January-February 2012
 Volume 4, Issue 1

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. John McCoy

Director, Joint Staff:

Brig. Gen. Scott Legwold

Director of Public Affairs:

Lt. Col. Jackie Guthrie

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@us.army.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@us.army.mil

roll call



4

1157th Transportation
 Company to deploy to
 Southwest Asia



10

115th Fighter Wing trains
 with Marine fighter pilots
 in Florida



27

A look back at the
 Wisconsin National
 Guard in 2011

The on-line, interactive *@ease Express* 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 www.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 At Ease Express off-line.

The Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard's *At Ease Express* newsletter is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of *At Ease Express* 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

State Command Sgt. Maj. George Stopper addresses members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1157th Transportation Company during a Feb. 4 sendoff ceremony at Eagle Hangar at the EAA in Oshkosh. Gov. Scott Walker and senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders joined approximately 1,000 people for the ceremony.

- 3** FROM THE TAG
- 6** 82nd ADT MOBILIZES FOR AFGHANISTAN
- 8** A SNEAK PEEK AT 82nd ADT MISSION
- 9** 147TH FRG NAMED BEST IN ARMY GUARD
- 12** WISCONSIN'S AIRMEN OF THE YEAR
- 13** AIR GUARD COMMAND CHIEF VISITS
- 14** PGA PROS HAVE HIGH REGARD FOR GUARD
- 15** 332nd ROC TRAINS IN JAPAN
- 16** LOCAL GUARDSMAN IN 'AMAZING RACE'
- 17** STATE'S FIRST AFRC DEDICATED
- 19** UPDATE FROM KOSOVO
- 20** WEBSITE LINKS SERVICE MEMBERS TO JOBS
- 21** VIRTUAL DIVERSITY CONFERENCE CLICKS
- 22** FILMS PROMPT DIVERSITY DISCUSSION
- 23** 115TH NAMED 'OUTSTANDING UNIT'
- 24** VOLK FIELD EARNS TOP AWARD
- 25** MERITORIOUS SERVICE
- 26** VETERANS, FAMILIES, RETIREES

From the TAG

The United States military has reached a turning point after a decade of war and substantial growth in its operations and resources. Congress has directed the Department of Defense to cut \$487 billion from its budget over the next 10 years. During a Jan. 27 press conference, the Secretary of the Department of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Leon Panetta and Gen. Martin Dempsey, described the new defense budget and its impact this way: Maintaining full-spectrum capability, but with a smaller force.

So what does this mean for the Wisconsin National Guard?

We have an idea how the proposed Defense budget will affect the Wisconsin Air National Guard. The 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee could reduce its fleet of KC-135 Stratotankers by two, and the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison could retire its RC-26. It's not clear yet how the Air Force's [force structure realignment plan](#) will affect manpower at the wings — and it's unfortunate that the Air Force has not provided this information yet — but it is our intent to handle any cuts through normal attrition to lessen the impact on our members and their families.

The Army has said it will



Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar
The Adjutant General

maintain some reserve forces at higher levels of readiness, continue to modernize both active and reserve forces, and align forces to combatant commands to be better attuned to the unique challenges of the area of operation. We will have to wait and see how this applies to the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

We will continue to work with the National Guard Bureau and analyze these changes. Our focus will remain on accomplishing our

mission safely and effectively. Wisconsin has a history of performing extremely well and professionally, and we must continue to do so regardless of what the budget may contain. We are the Wisconsin National Guard — we have been answering the call since 1839, and we will continue to answer the call for centuries to come.

Part of that professionalism includes controlling rumors. Uncertainty is stressful enough

— let's not compound that with unfounded speculation.

As Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III — the Air National Guard director — said, it's important to remember that we've been here before. The Air Force announced that its active, Guard and Reserve components will get smaller. To ensure we have the best Air Force possible, we need to continue working with our active duty and Reserve counterparts. Our nation's security depends on getting this force mix correct.

Transformation and change are constants — that is one of our enduring principles. We will focus on our people, equipment and facilities, as well as our families and employers. Our core values remain: integrity, selfless service, excellence, diversity and resilience. Core values and principles are our anchors in a storm.

I am proud of this organization, and I am proud to serve with you. Let's continue, even in difficult times, to provide exceptional service to our state and nation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald P. Dunbar".



■ **Community packs sendoff ceremony for 1157th Transportation Company**

Gov. Scott Walker and senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders joined several hundred family members and friends at the Experimental Aircraft Association's Eagle Hangar in Oshkosh Feb. 4 to bid farewell to the 1157th Transportation Company.

Capt. Christian Menden, commander of the Oshkosh-based unit, said the 1157th was ready to continue its training at Camp Shelby, Miss.

"Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers have a great reputation as highly dedicated workers, and now it's time to prove that once again," Menden said. "I know the road ahead will be challenging and there may be many changes, but we will complete the mission."

Continued on Page 5

Joe Weber of Green Bay, Sharon Weber of Menasha, Andria Weber and 2-year-old Clara Weber show support for Staff Sgt. David Weber, a member of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1157th Transportation Company, before a sendoff ceremony Feb. 4 at the EAA's Eagle Hangar in Oshkosh. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

1157th prepares to hit the road for southwest Asia deployment



Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, and Gov. Scott Walker present Capt. Christian Menden, commander of the 1157th Transportation Company with a Wisconsin flag during a sendoff ceremony Feb. 4 at the EAA's Eagle Hangar in Oshkosh.

Continued from Page 4

State Command Sgt. Maj. George Stopper urged the Soldiers who had deployed before to support those who are entering their first deployment.

"You'll go forth and show the world what we already know," Stopper said, "that the best Soldiers in the inventory today are part of the Wisconsin Army National Guard."

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, expressed his pride in the 1157th.

"I am absolutely confident from the top down that you are going to do a phenomenal job," Anderson said, "because you are Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers, and I know that's the caliber of Soldiers we have in our formation."

Anderson also thanked the families for their support of the 1157th.

"They could not do what they do without the support and love you provide for your Soldier," he said.

U.S. Rep. Tom Petri quoted President Theodore Roosevelt in saying that character is the decisive factor in the lives of individuals and nations.

"We've been blessed that men and women have stepped forward again and again to make sure that our freedoms endure and that our country is strong," Petri said. "You embody the spirit of Citizen-Soldiers that makes our country great."

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, noted that the 1157th traces its origins to a rifle company that was formed April 8, 1880 — a legacy that has seen Guardsmen from Oshkosh in the Spanish-American War as well as both world wars. The commitment endures as the current unit will soon begin its fourth deployment to southwest Asia. He also commended the large turnout for the ceremony.

"This doesn't happen everywhere," Dunbar said. "It means a lot to the

Soldiers and their families."

Gov. Scott Walker also praised the 1157th.

"You need to remember that you are the best of the best," he said. "You are well trained and well equipped. You're ready for this mission."

Walker noted that the 1157th deployed in support of Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990, and supported Hurricane Katrina relief efforts in 2005, as well as deployed to Fort Bragg in 2002 — with some serving in the Central Command area of operations — and Iraq in 2006. He recalled Wisconsin's veterans from previous wars, and said the members of the 1157th would continue their fine tradition of representing the state.

Pfc. Brian Johnson may reflect that tradition. The 41-year-old from Green Bay, joined the Wisconsin Army National Guard in 2008 for the challenge and for a rewarding experience. He said that people who experience a thrill upon hearing the National Anthem played will understand why he enlisted at age 38. He also said he expects an enriching experience and strong friendships from his first deployment.

"Helping out the people in their country and also supporting our Soldiers over there," he said.

Spc. William Betzlaff of Oshkosh has been with the 1157th for 14 years, and deployed three times. He said he plans to share his experiences with younger Soldiers.

"Just how things go," he explained. "Where to be when we get over there, how to do things, how to take care of things so that after a month or so they're going it as good as I can do it."

Menden agreed, quoting Vince Lombardi about individual commitment to a group effort.

"That's what makes a team work, a company work, a society work and a civilization work," Menden said. "And it's commitment that will allow the 1157th to continue its success." ■

Approximately 130 members of the 1157th Transportation Company stand for the National Anthem during the sendoff ceremony. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photos by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson



The [82nd Agribusiness Development Team](#) — the Wisconsin National Guard’s first unit formed to help improve the agricultural techniques of Afghan farmers — was honored by Gov. Scott Walker and senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders during a Feb. 4 sendoff ceremony at Hartford Union High School.

“Since 1848 in our state, there has been no mission of this kind,” said Col. Darrel Feucht, commander of the 82nd ADT. “This day is absolutely historic. You have the privilege to assemble such talents and create a conduit to a country called Afghanistan.”

Feucht said the mission gives the 82nd ADT the opportunity to connect Afghan farmers with Wisconsin resources such as the University of Wisconsin college of agriculture and life sciences, the UW agriculture research station, the Babcock

Institute for International Studies, the Future Farmers of America and other agricultural cooperative organizations.

“This mission has far-reaching effects and is absolutely extraordinary,” Feucht said.

The 82nd ADT will also be known as Joint Task Force Badger, and Feucht asked the families and friends at the sendoff ceremony to help choose the unit’s nickname — “Dirty Badgers” handily beat out “Honey Badgers.”

Feucht said the unit’s mission statement is to guide, to grow and to guard — to guide the Afghan farmers and each other, to grow crops and grow in experience, and to guard those that need protection, the original role of the National Guard.

Continued on Page 7



Gov. Scott Walker and Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, present Col. Darrel Feucht, commander of the 82nd Agribusiness Development Team, with a state flag during a sendoff ceremony Feb. 4 at Hartford Union High School. The joint unit will train for several weeks at Camp Atterbury, Ind., before deploying to Afghanistan, where they will work with local farmers on improved farming methods. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

Unique National Guard unit one step closer to Afghanistan deployment

Continued from Page 6

Hartford Mayor Joe Dauterman expressed his confidence the 82nd ADT would live out that mission statement.

“By this mission, and through your efforts, others will learn how to capitalize the opportunity to fend for themselves,” Dautermann said. “The people of Afghanistan and the world will be reminded, by your example, that America not only knows how to meet the challenges of war, but that we also have a heart and a will and a desire to pick up the pieces and put things back together.”

Dautermann’s sentiments echoed a statement made earlier by Maj. Doug Hedman, Wisconsin National Guard state chaplain.

“Gracious God, your prophet spoke so many years ago of your vision when he said this: ‘They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks,’” Hedman said. “As we send out our agribusiness development team, let them be instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let them sow love.”

State Command Sgt. Maj. George Stopper polled the 82nd ADT on prior deployments and years of service — some had more than 20 years in military service — and noted the unit’s wealth of experience.

“What a perfect mission for that level of experience,” Stopper said. “You get to go forth and represent the great state of Wisconsin and do things that no one has ever done before from this state. You’re the perfect match for it.”

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, said that the National Guard is uniquely suited to accomplish the [agribusiness development team](#) mission.

“That is because when we deploy, we not only take our military skill sets with us, but we take our civilian skill sets with us,” Anderson said. “In this case, with the

82nd ADT, that is exactly what many of you are doing for the primary mission of helping the Afghan people learn to grow other crops to support themselves.”

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, said that since 1839 Wisconsin has sent its finest men and women to do the nation’s bidding, even for unconventional missions such as agribusiness development teams.

“It’s what you would expect of the Wisconsin National Guard,” Dunbar said. “It’s hard to take on this kind of a mission, to learn something new and try to put something together that hasn’t been done all too often before, and go off to a foreign land and try to engage some of these ‘soft

skills’ that will hopefully help develop a friendly country over time.”

Gov. Scott Walker and Dunbar thanked the families and friends at the ceremony for their support of the Guard members.

“When I look at the flag of Wisconsin, I’m given a couple of reminders very specific to your mission,” he said to the 82nd ADT. “One of the key elements on the shield of our crest is a plow. We do agriculture better than just about anybody in the world. We know that if you’re successful in training them to grow things that are useful and productive, instead of things like opium poppy, they won’t be funding the terrorist activity and groups like the Taliban and others, and instead

they’ll be growing the freedom we hold so dear in the United States.

“On top of the flag is a badger,” he continued. “We hope that it’s a reminder that back home there are 5.6 million badgers in this state who think about you, pray about you and support you. And we’ll look forward to welcome you home soon with wide, open arms and a thank you for a mission well done.”

Feucht said his team contained the best the Wisconsin National Guard had to offer from its Army brigades and Air Guard wings.

“Now you take the best true Citizen Soldiers and what this great state has to offer — that is, its best resource — agriculture,” Feucht continued. “You add that and you add a positive attitude, and you add passion and you have the team that’s sitting before you today.”

Staff Sgt. George Nagel, a member of the Wisconsin Air National Guard’s 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee, will deploy with the 82nd ADT as a pest control specialist. This will be his second deployment; his first was to Iraq in 2008.

“I’m looking forward to this [deployment] as an opportunity to help out a country that needs our help,” Nagel said. “As opposed to going over there and trying to change their minds about things, we’re going over there to help them better what they are already establishing.”

Nagel said that serving in a unit that was mostly Soldiers has been a learning experience.

“I’ve had a lot of fun and met a lot of great people,” he said. “Boy, does the Army like [physical training].”

Sgt. Jerry Van Hull — a member of the 32nd Brigade’s Company A, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry — will serve as a member of the 82nd ADT’s security force.

“I was looking to go to Afghanistan,” Van Hull said. “It’s a different culture, different environment than Iraq. It should be interesting — it should be a challenge.”

2nd Lt. Stephen Montgomery
82nd Agribusiness Development Team

Ten members of the Wisconsin National Guard's 82nd Agribusiness Development Team — including the unit commander — returned from three weeks in Afghanistan, just in time for a formal sendoff ceremony Feb. 4.

According to Col. Darrel Feucht, 82nd ADT commander, the goal of the pre-deployment site survey was to get a sense from the Illinois National Guard's 1-14th ADT — the team the 82nd ADT will replace — about the day-to-day operations of the mission. That mission will be to conduct agricultural development planning, assess and support activities to expand legal agriculture and agribusiness, services, markets, and educate in order to reduce rural poverty, increase employment opportunities in agriculture service industries and improve agriculture education. The 82nd ADT also met key Afghan leaders during their visit.

The Wisconsin National Guard learned in [July 2010](#) that it would be tasked with forming its first agribusiness development team, a National Guard initiative. The 82nd ADT — composed of about 60 Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard members — conducted its first drill in February 2011 and has spent the last year preparing for its deployment.

In addition to their normal drill weekends, the team also had two [annual trainings](#) totaling approximately six weeks. In that time, 82nd ADT members completed their required Army Warrior Tasks, conducted theater and mission specific training, and even took part in a week-long “Ag 101” crash course put on by UW-Madison's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

The site visit brings the 82nd ADT one step closer to beginning its mission.

“We went out on four missions with [the 1-14th ADT],” Feucht said. “We were busy from sunup to sundown.”

The 82nd ADT members met with the district agricultural extension agent and attended key leader engagement meetings, and took part in a foot patrol to inspect an ADT-supported demonstration farm. The visit also offered a general idea of the area's agricultural condition.

“I was pleasantly surprised at the quality of the farms,” Feucht said.

Capt. William Benson, operations officer with the 82nd ADT, said the visit was invaluable.

“It confirmed that our training was spot-on,” he said.

“Illinois has set the bar pretty high, but they have been nothing but helpful in getting us where we need to be.”



Above, members of the 82nd Agribusiness Development Team, along with members of the Illinois National Guard's 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team, on a foot patrol to a local farm in Afghanistan on Jan. 10. At left, Maj. Paul Felician and Capt. James Schmitz of the 82nd ADT talk with a local Afghan farmer on Jan. 12. The 82nd ADT was in Afghanistan conducting a pre-deployment site survey before deploying this spring. U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. James McDonnough

The Family Readiness Group for the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment has been named the best in the Army National Guard for 2011, and was one of seven reserve component family readiness groups to receive a [Department of Defense award](#) in February in the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes.

"When I first heard about it, it blew me away," said Melanie Kleinheinz, a family readiness group volunteer. "I'm very excited because of all the work we did."

The Madison-based 147th was deployed to Iraq from September 2010 until June 2011, and was among the 50,000 U.S. troops to remain in Iraq after Operation New Dawn began in November 2010. They were responsible for all aviation operations — troop and cargo movements, medevac and attack missions — in the nine provinces of southern Iraq. While deployed, the battalion was recognized as the [2010 Army Aviation Association of America National Guard Unit of the Year](#).

Kleinheinz — whose husband, Sgt. 1st Class Troy Kleinheinz, is the readiness noncommissioned officer for Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment — said the family readiness group ramped up efforts several months before the deployment, and continued after the unit returned.

The 147th Family Readiness Group developed a three-pronged plan to build social connections and support for its families — serve, educate and reach out — and implemented that mission with such activities as making care packages for deployed Soldiers, hosting speakers on critical topics such as post-traumatic stress disorder, and hosting virtual meetings over phone bridges. Other activities included farewell and welcome home celebrations, and a July 4 family picnic. The family readiness group involved the families of approximately 100 Michigan Army National Guard Soldiers who were part of the deployment.



More than 200 family members of the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment made care packages for their Soldier during a family day Nov. 13, 2010 at the Middleton Senior Center. Packages included decorated pillow cases, Christmas trees, cards, cookies and stockings. The event was organized by the battalion's family readiness group, with assistance from the American Legion. Submitted photo

The group was also involved in numerous community building events, including blood drives, parades and community mini-marathons.

"Pretty much every month we had one event and one meeting," Kleinheinz said. She said the FRG coordinated with the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and other community organizations. Volunteer efforts such as the FRG newsletter helped keep people informed of events and services.

Lt. Col. Martin Pond, who commanded the 147th during its deployment, lauded the battalion's family readiness group as the best he has worked with.

"The foundation of the [battalion] FRG was established over the years and strengthened with the efforts of the FRG leaders during the unit's previous deployment to Kosovo," Pond said. "Our

FRG leaders evaluated what went well and what didn't in the past, and forged forward with ideas for improvement."

Pond said the 147th family readiness group adopted best practices from other units, such as "Moving Forward, Giving Back" — the community service mission statement for the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team's family readiness group during the brigade's Iraq deployment.

"They held numerous events that brought family members together in service," Pond continued. "They did all they could to take care of each other and support our Soldiers. If a Soldier knows his family is taken care of, the Soldier will take care of everything else. Our FRG did just that. I am extremely proud of our FRG and their efforts."

"As a group we are totally honored to receive the award," Kleinheinz added,

"not only for the FRG, but also the community. We received tremendous support and we had people all over Wisconsin supporting us."

The Department of Defense Reserve Family Readiness Awards were established in 2000 to recognize the top unit in each Reserve component — Army and Air National Guard, Army and Air Force Reserve, Navy and Marine Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve — that demonstrates outstanding family readiness while maintaining superior mission readiness. Each Reserve component selects its winner from among a large pool of nominees; final nominees are forwarded to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs for final approval.

Criteria to be considered for the award includes demonstrating the link between family readiness and mission readiness, such as having family points of contact and care plans; implementing programs and services that improve quality of life and support attracting and keeping Soldiers; ensuring that unit members have fair access to benefits and entitlements; and ensuring that National Guard families are seamlessly integrated with the total force, in part by collaborating with local bases or active component units and also by reducing family readiness issues that may interfere with a Soldier's deployment.

This award is the fifth presented to a Wisconsin Army National Guard Family Readiness Group in recent years. The 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Family Readiness Group won the award in 2005, followed by the 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry Family Readiness Group in 2006, the 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery Family Readiness Group in 2007 and the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Family Readiness Group in 2009. Like the 147th Family Readiness Group this year, those groups were serving deployed units during the time they won the award. 🇺🇸

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

About 150 Airmen from the Madison-based 115th Fighter Wing returned to the white snow of Wisconsin from the white sands of Key West, Fla., following a joint training exercise with the U.S. Marine Corps Jan. 7-21.

The two-week exercise, based out of Naval Air Station Key West, pits the fighter wing's F-16 Fighting Falcons against Marine F-18 Hornets in simulated combat.

Airmen in nearly every aspect of flying, aircraft operations and aircraft maintenance made the trip to take advantage of the near-optimal training conditions — including the time, airspace and weather to support increased training sorties.

"Right now we can get so much more flying and training in than we can do at home station," said Lt. Col. Gary Pelletier, deputy commander of the 115th Maintenance Group. "Everyone's been performing great."

Missing only a few sorties due to weather, 115th Maintenance and other fighter wing support personnel helped pilots log nearly 120 sorties and more than 175 flying hours.

"Key West provides a premier location for accomplishing our defensive counter air scenarios, due to its combination of superior airspace, ramp space for adversaries, briefing and debriefing capabilities and the integration it provides for our ground control interception controllers and our range training officers for real time kill removal and training through scenario management," Pelletier added.

The airspace surrounding Key West provided Madison's fighter pilots the opportunity to train and perform in conditions not available in Wisconsin. For instance, the designated airspace for this exercise is about four times larger than the training airspace in Wisconsin. Also, the elevation cap is boosted significantly from 28,000 to 50,000 feet. These conditions allow for supersonic speeds.

Continued on Page 11



115th Fighter Wing hones skills under Florida sun

Continued from Page 10

“[Key West] provides an excellent opportunity for flying against the F-16 Fighting Falcon in some of the best air space the country has to offer,” said Marine Capt. Michael Huck, F-18 pilot with the Marine Fighter Attack (VFMA) 314 based out of Miramar, Calif.

“The F-16 is a very capable aircraft ... very capable weapons system,” Huck said. “So we look to use our tactics and find gaps in those strengths so we can get out there and have a good engagement.”

Peterson said he appreciates the value of the exercise and training with the Marines as well.

“The VMFA 314, as an extremely professional organization, provided outstanding adversary support,” Peterson said. “It went very, very smooth overall.”

For the maintainers specifically, the pace of the exercise provided some very valuable experience across the spectrum of Airmen — from the youngest to the more veteran force. The flying schedule was “6-turn-6,” meaning the Airmen launched six of the seven F-16s on station and had only a couple hours to recover, reconfigure and fix any issues before the next six took off.

“Many of our traditional Guard members have not had an opportunity to work day-after-day ... experiencing what actual flying and maintenance operations are really like over more than just one drill weekend,” said Capt. Christy Kasten, deputy commander of the 115th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

“The training our traditional Airmen receive on deployments like Key West is highly valuable to them, increasing the knowledge of their job specifically as well as the other areas that support maintenance,” she said.

The exercise also enhanced the maintainers’ relationship with the pilots

Move your cursor over this photo to see another image

and operations personnel — a value that will be extremely beneficial to the fighter wing in the future.

“They were extremely flexible in meeting our flying windows and our aircraft configuration requirements,” Peterson said. “They provided the operations group with a solid basis going into the months ahead in preparation for our Operational Readiness Inspection.”

Roughly 50 aircrew and support Airmen from the Milwaukee-based 128th

Air Refueling Wing, along with three KC-135 Stratotankers, also gained valuable training and supported the exercise by providing in-flight refueling to both the F-16’s and F-18’s throughout the two-week training.

“They can stay up here, do two flights instead of one, train with multiple units and also practice their in-flight refueling skills as well,” said Master Sgt. Will Mattert, in-flight refueler for the 128th ARW.

Deploying and sustaining flying

operations, involving nearly 150 Airmen and seven fighter jets, to any location is no easy task. In addition to pilots and maintainers, medics, security forces, force support personnel, life support and many other support personnel were on hand to achieve training and contribute to the overall exercise.

“Each and every Airman on this deployment can be proud to know they directly contributed to the success of this exercise,” Kasten said. 



**Airman 1st Class
Patrick Soderlund**



**Tech. Sgt.
Michelle Marrero**



**Master Sgt.
Jason Kasten**



**Senior Master Sgt.
Martha Irizarry**



**Senior Master Sgt.
Craig Nienas**

2nd Lt. Nathan Wallin
Wisconsin National Guard

Excited, honored, humbled, proud and surprised.

Those were the reactions of the five Wisconsin Air National Guard members — three from Madison’s 115th Fighter Wing and two from Milwaukee’s 128th Air Refueling Wing — who just learned that they made the grade as the Wisconsin Air National Guard’s Airmen of the Year.

This year’s winners — Airman 1st Class Patrick Soderlund of West De Pere, Wis., 115th FW; Tech. Sgt. Michelle Marrero of Streator, Ill., 128th ARW; Master Sgt. Jason Kasten of DeForest, Wis., 115th FW; Senior Master Sgt. Martha Irizarry of Lake in the Hills, Ill., 115th FW; and Senior Master Sgt. Craig Nienas of Elkhorn, Wis., 128th ARW — first were selected as Airman of the Quarter at their respective units before they could compete for the state’s Airman of the Year award.

The designation “Airman of the Year” is significant to the recipients.

“It means that the time and hard work I have put into my duties and tasks has

shown my supervisors and peers that I am motivated and dedicated,” said Soderlund, a crew chief at the 115th.

Irizarry, the Airman of the Year winner in the First Sergeant category, sees the award as validation that she’s doing her job and doing it well.

“It means others think highly of my accomplishments and abilities,” she said.

The winners represent a broad range of experience and skill. One has served in the Air Force for more than 30 years while another has only been a member of the Wisconsin Air National Guard for a mere 17 months.

Kasten, the Airman of the Year winner in the Senior Noncommissioned Officer category, said the quality of his competitors made the designation special. “It is an honor when you consider how many great senior NCOs are in the Wisconsin Air National Guard and all of the great things they do,” he said.

The candidates competed in one of five categories: Airman (E1 to E4), NCO (E5 to E6), Senior NCO (E7 to E9), First Sergeant and Honor Guard Member of the Year. Chief Master Sgt. Greg Cullen, Wisconsin Air National Guard senior

enlisted leader, along with the four other Wisconsin Air Guard command chief master sergeants, sat on the judging panel and made the final selection. Cullen said choosing one candidate over another was not an easy task.

“In some cases, the margin between the winner and the runner up was razor thin,” he said.

The selection process begins at the nominee’s home unit when an Airman’s supervisor submits an award nomination with bullet statements listing the nominee’s skills, qualifications and accomplishments.

The nominees are graded in three categories: leadership/primary job abilities; self improvement; and base/community involvement. Cullen noted that there isn’t one specific category that could tip the scales, favorably or otherwise, in a candidate’s favor.

“The whole nomination document is looked at,” he explained.

Each unit conducts a board of the nominated Airmen — a formal process somewhat similar to a job interview — to assess their knowledge, professionalism and composure.

Cullen said this competition serves as a motivational tool while also recognizing excellent Airmen.

For Marrero, the Airman of the Year winner in the NCO category, the award was icing on the cake.

“It is a great feeling to be awarded for the work that you love doing,” she said.

Cullen also offered words of encouragement to the runners up.

“Keep doing what you’re doing,” he said. “You didn’t do anything wrong — it’s just that the person that beat you out this time was just a couple points ahead.”

Wisconsin’s Air National Guard Airmen of the Year winners will next compete against Airmen of the Year winners from other states. The selection board for the national awards will be held Feb. 27, with winners announced shortly thereafter.

And while the winners are grateful for the recognition, they see no reason to ease up on the throttle and coast.

“My work does not stop here,” Nienas said. “My goal is to set an example for our entire 128th Honor Guard team so another worthy member can receive this award next year.”

Senior Airman Ryan Kuntze
128th Air Refueling Wing

Command Chief Master Sgt. Christopher E. Muncy, the Air National Guard's top enlisted member, visited the Milwaukee-based 128th Air Refueling Wing, Madison-based 115th Fighter Wing, the 128th Air Control Squadron and Volk Field Combat Training Readiness Center Jan. 6-8.

Muncy regularly visits Air National Guard units across the country as his schedule allows, according to Chief Master Sgt. Gregory Cullen, the Wisconsin Air National Guard's top enlisted Airman.

Muncy spoke with several Airmen at the 128th, and dined with 15 Airmen during lunch at Sijan Hall. Muncy — who oversees the Air National Guard's enlisted force — said that changes are coming to the Air National Guard.

"There won't be a base or Wing exempt," he said, noting that some changes will be severe. "The 128th has done a great job, but you can't rest on your laurels . . . we have to keep leaning forward."

Muncy explained that the strength of the Wing — the dedication of the Airmen of the 128th Air Refueling Wing — will yield long-term benefits regarding the Wing's longevity in the Milwaukee community and the Air National Guard.

"Chief Muncy is our direct conduit to Lt. Gen. Wyatt, the Air National Guard director," Cullen said. "If there are any issues that affect our state Airmen, there is a good chance that they may affect Airmen across the Air National Guard."

While in Wisconsin, Muncy attended the retirement ceremony for Chief Master Sgt. James Chisholm, Cullen's predecessor. Muncy also witnessed the enlistment ceremony for a new Airman, and attended a promotion ceremony for a new chief master sergeant.

A key talking point during the recent



Command Chief Master Sgt. Christopher E. Muncy, command chief of the Air National Guard, prepares to answer questions posed by members of the 128th Air Refueling Wing's enlisted Airmen while having lunch at Sijan Hall in Milwaukee Jan. 8. Muncy was at the 128th ARW as part of a tour of all Wisconsin Air National Guard bases. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Staff Sgt. Jeremy Wilson

Air Force Association conference was the 128th Air Refueling Wing's contributions to the operations in Western Europe, Muncy said.

"The speed of the response was impressive," he said. "Within six hours of the president asking for assets, the Air Guard was ready. That was a highlight for the Air National Guard and the 128th.

"Thanks for what you do," Muncy continued to the Airmen of the 128th.

"Thank your families [and] your employers."

While the National Guard has a growing role in military affairs — the chief of the National Guard Bureau was recently appointed to the Joint Chiefs of Staff — Muncy said the Airmen are the driving force of the citizen-Airmen military component. He said most people aren't aware of the Air National Guard.

"I need Airmen to tell their story —

who you are and what you do," he said. "Tell our Air Guard story."

Cullen said the visit allowed Airmen to express their concerns and also gave Muncy a chance to see the quality of the Wisconsin Air National Guard's enlisted force, as well as the missions they accomplish.

"He was very impressed with what Wisconsin brings to the fight," Cullen said. ■

Capt. John P. Capra
128th Air Refueling Wing

PGA golfers [Jerry Kelly](#) and [Steve Stricker](#) joined the Wisconsin Air National Guard's [128th Air Refueling Wing](#) on an orientation flight in Milwaukee Jan. 25.

The Madison-based professional golfers took part in a program that allows civic leaders to observe the mission and better understand the role of the Air National Guard.

"This is one of those experiences where we get to see, you know, the true heroes," Kelly said.

The golfers' experiences on base began with a unit mission briefing, which explained the role of the Wisconsin National Guard and the Guard's dual mission serving both state and nation.

The two-and-a-half-hour sortie departed Mitchell Field early Wednesday morning and flew to a military operating area in northwestern Iowa where the KC-135R Stratotanker hooked up with two F-16C Falcons and engaged in aerial refueling.

"We'll offload about two thousand pounds of fuel in just a few minutes," said Master Sgt. Peter Gauerke, a KC-135R boom operator.

The flight provided valuable training for both Stratotanker and Falcon crewmembers in conducting safe aerial refueling missions.

"It's a force multiplier," Gauerke said. "It allows the fighters to double, even triple, the amount of time they can stay in the air and train, making for a very valuable training experience."

After landing, Kelly and Stricker spent time with the Airmen, who discussed their careers and deployments. Airmen carried cameras to capture the golfers' visit with the 128th.

"It was great to meet the Airmen today," Stricker said. "We thank everybody here and across the country for what they do for us, like I say, to live freely on a daily basis. It doesn't come free, and we know that." 

Move your cursor over this photo to see another image.

The Wisconsin Army National Guard's [332nd Rear Operations Center](#) (ROC) tested its limits during the multi-national exercise [Yama Sakura 61](#) in Osaka, Japan, which concluded yesterday (Feb. 6).

"This is the biggest exercise in the Pacific," said Lt. Col. John Morgen, 332nd ROC commander. "It gives us a chance to stretch our staff members in a number of ways — the military decision-making process, information flow, planning, coordinating and executing. This sets up perfectly for our [mission essential task list] tasks."

Yama Sakura is an annual bilateral exercise involving U.S. forces and the Japan Ground Self Defense Force and is designed to strengthen military operations and build working relationships. The scenario depicts a massive military assault against Japan and the military response from Japanese and U.S. forces. This year's exercise was the largest since the Great Tohoku Earthquake in March 2011.

Morgen said the 332nd ROC is a small, versatile unit that plans and coordinates terrain management, area damage control, security, safety and unity of command within a designated rear area — in short, the unit keeps the rear area running smoothly to best support the forward battlefield units. This requires developing effective solutions to challenging problems and circumstances.

"We do command post operations," Morgen explained. "This [exercise] is exactly that. The 332nd has an impressive history of being the organization with the best answers."

The skills honed during this exercise, which began Jan. 23, can also be applied to domestic operations such as disaster response, Morgen said.

Yama Sakura also provides cultural exchange opportunities, with U.S. service members visiting local cultural sites and homes, and taking part in activities such as a Japanese drum performance, tea ceremony, calligraphy, ceramics and cooking. Morgen said some unit members visited a local orphanage.

"It's a unique training experience," he said. "Not only do our Soldiers get a chance to get better at their jobs, but they work with their Japanese counterparts and they experience Japanese culture."

Morgen said he was proud of how his unit performed during Yama Sakura 61.

"I've had an opportunity to be in two other exercises in Japan like this," he said. "I've never seen this level of coordination with the Japanese. In terms of collective training, we're doing very, very well."



Capt. Jeremy Lyon, an infantry officer with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 332nd Rear Operations Center, discusses troop movements with his Japanese counterparts at Camp Itami, Japan, Feb. 4. Lyon is participating in Yama Sakura 61, which is

being held just north of Osaka. Yama Sakura is an annual Japan-based, simulation-driven, joint-bilateral command post exercise held with the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force and the U.S. military. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Bell

Morgen said the 332nd ROC conducted command post operations and cultural briefings for the past three months to prepare for this exercise.

"Having an opportunity to travel halfway around the world to get great training, in an environment that culturally enlightens, is a great opportunity," he said.

"It makes for a better Soldier and develops a better individual perspective."

The 332nd ROC is one of two rear operations centers in the Wisconsin Army National Guard, and one of only 10 nationwide. Next year the Monroe-based 64th ROC will take part in Yama Sakura. ■

Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue
Wisconsin National Guard

For some fans of CBS's "[The Amazing Race](#)," deciding which couple to cheer for may have been a little easier when the 20th season of the hit series premiered Feb. 19 — especially for Wisconsin citizens and patriotic viewers across the country.

Madison native Maj. Dave Brown, Jr., an officer in the Wisconsin Army National Guard, and his wife, Rachel, will be one of 11 couples competing against each other in a trek around the world for the ultimate prize of supreme bragging rights and one million dollars.

"Both Rachel and I have been avid fans of the show for quite some time," Dave said.

The reality show, which has garnered eight Emmy Awards, will pit the teams against many physical and mental challenges over the course of about 25 days.

Although viewers will have to "stay tuned" to see how the couple fairs in the show, Dave does credit his 16 years of service in the Wisconsin Army National Guard — including a recent year-long deployment to Iraq — for his preparation and execution throughout the challenge.

"I truly feel my involvement in the military best prepared me for a competition such as 'The Amazing Race,'" he said, "whether it be attention to detail, leadership style and abilities, or who I am as a person."

When asked how the Race equates to military training, Dave associated the two in three ways.

"It's as physically demanding as air assault school, as mentally draining and as academically involved as flight school, and as sleep depriving as SERE (Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape) school," he said.

The major enlisted into the Arizona National Guard in 1996 as an artillery forward observer while attending Arizona State University. He graduated in three years with a bachelors in political science. He then transferred to the Wisconsin Guard's 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team in 2000 and earned an officer commission in 2002. Dave has also served as a military intelligence officer, a Black Hawk pilot with the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, and an executive officer for Recruiting and Retention Command. He is currently assigned to the ROTC detachment at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as an assistant professor of military science.

During his allotted two-week rest and relaxation leave from his deployment to Iraq, Dave visited with his wife in Sydney, Australia. Rachel took that opportunity to pitch the idea of applying for the show. They agreed, filled out the applications and she mailed them in as soon as she returned to their home in Madison.

"Within a matter of a week or two, casting contacted her and requested a video," Dave said.

A fellow Soldier took a one-minute video at the end of one of Dave's flying mission in Iraq. It wasn't the fanciest audition video, but it got the job done. Rachel compiled the video with one of her own and sent it in. Dave returned from deployment in June 2011. He and Rachel had interviews with CBS and the show began filming in the fall.

The rest of the story is yet to be seen.

Growing up, Dave was an avid wrestler and participated in basketball, football, baseball and track where he gained an appreciation for competing, something he shares today — along with his wife.

"I not only strive for victory, but I expect it for myself," Dave said. "I am competitive in all aspects of my life, whether it be personally or professionally. That's one aspect that interested both Rachel and I, both being competitive and people who are in constant pursuit of a challenge."

There wasn't much time to train for the competition. Dave added some weight, in the form of a ruck sack, to his normal physical training. As a couple, Dave and Rachel watched and discussed episodes and specific challenges like they'd done periodically on Sundays since they met.

"While viewing previous seasons we talked through specific challenges in more detail in consideration of our individual strengths and weaknesses," he said.

Whether [Dave and Rachel](#) are the first couple to arrive at the final checkpoint or not, it's sure to have been the adventure of a lifetime. And according to Dave, it also seems as if there was no lack of effort or motivation for them to compete.

"I truly felt that I was not only representing myself, my spouse and my son, but I was also cognizant of being a representative of the Wisconsin National Guard and the Army as a whole," Dave said. "The overwhelming pride of representing the men and women of the military in the best light possible ... that was definitely in the forefront of our minds."



Maj. Dave Brown, Jr., and his wife, Rachel.



Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch, with Wisconsin military leadership, cuts the ribbon at the Armed Forces Reserve Center's opening ceremony in Madison Jan. 7. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Spc. Eric Liesse

Sgt. Tyler Lasure
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch and senior military officials cut the ribbon Jan. 7 for a new \$24 million building on Madison's east side, replacing old armories, saving money and allowing for joint training with Wisconsin National Guard, Army, Navy and Marine Corps Reserves.

The Armed Forces Reserve Center,

the first in Wisconsin, is home to 16 units with approximately 800 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines from the reserve components of the armed forces.

"The best part of this facility is that all the military units are together, it is truly a joint organization and you learn from each other," said Navy Capt. Gary Haben, commander of the Navy Reserve Component Command-Midwest. "When we are forward, we are together, so it's

great to train together too."

The AFRC not only allows for communication between service branches, but also for unique training opportunities.

"We have the electronic warfare simulation system, there is a medical unit over here and they have all the unique equipment that medical units have, and the other units can see the equipment we have in ordnance and logistics," said Army Col. Ronald Jones, commander

of the Army Reserve's 646th Regional Support Group. "Whereas, before we were all in different locations and didn't have that stuff, over here we can see the whole spectrum."

The engagement skills trainer — a virtual firing range — is one example of a training opportunity that the Marine Corps Reserve can share with other units in the

Continued on Page 18

The Wisconsin Armed Forces Reserve Center, as it neared completion in the summer of 2011. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson



Wisconsin's first Armed Forces Reserve Center dedicated

Continued from Page 17

building. Also, the 646th can share their medical training with other units in the building. The ability to train with other units and branches of service is important as service members continue to deploy.

“This Armed Forces Reserve Center also recognizes the truth that you have proven around the globe, that you are professional and capable to serve alongside your active duty counterparts,” Kleefisch said. “But to maintain that capability and that readiness requires a facility to really meet those needs, and I think you can agree that this beautiful building and the ones around it afford the opportunity to train and unite in a 21st-century capability.”

Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, also praised the service members.

“Everybody in this room in uniform is a citizen Soldier, citizen Marine, or citizen Sailor, but first and foremost they are citizens of the state of Wisconsin,” Dunbar said. “On the weekends and in the summers and when the nation calls on them — as they have called many times since Sept. 11, 2001 — they suit up and they go overseas to defend this country and they come back, put the uniform back in the closet, and go back to their careers.

“There is something uniquely

American and special about that relationship,” Dunbar continued. “I tell you ladies and gentlemen, as long as we have facilities like this and men and women like this in uniform, we are never going to lose touch with what America is all about.”

The new facility also allows an economic advantage as well as training opportunities. The AFRC meets or exceeds LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver criteria, meaning the building meets up to 60 percent of potential efficiencies in sustainability, energy and water conservation, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality.

“We spend a lot of money on utilities in older buildings,” Haben said. “These newer ones are more efficient and cheaper to operate, so everybody wins there — the taxpayer especially.”

It is estimated that the facility saved \$12.7 million in renovation costs.

“It is a great idea to combine all the services in one building,” said Lt. Cmdr. Roger Walker, commander of the Navy Operational Support Center, one of the tenant units in the AFRC. “It saves money, lets us get to know one another, and I’m sure it is going to spread and before you know it, it will be only joint centers everywhere else.”



Soldiers from the Army Reserves' 911th Forward Surgical Team explain a field surgery table display to visitors at the open house following the Armed Forces Reserve Center's opening ceremony Jan. 7.



Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, speaks with Marine Corps reservists after the ribbon cutting of the Armed Forces Reserve Center's opening ceremony Jan. 7. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photos by Spc. Eric Liesse

157th MEB resumes convoys to northern Kosovo

Sgt. 1st Class Jim Wagner
157th MEB Public Affairs



Above, Sgt. Jeremy Moldrem backs a Palletized Load System vehicle in order to tow a truck out of the mud at an outpost in northern Kosovo on Dec. 13, 2011. At right, Staff Sgt. Charles Austin, right, consults a map while Spc. Michelle Weissinger drives as part of a security detail for the supply convoy. 157th MEB photos by Sgt. 1st Class Jim Wagner



The first U.S. ground convoy able to travel into northern Kosovo in more than four months supplied Multinational Battle Group East (MNBG E) Soldiers working in northern Kosovo with a much-needed infusion of food, fuel, water and equipment on Dec. 10, 2011.

Since last July, temporary outposts in northern Kosovo near Jarinje and Leposavic have struggled to maintain adequate supplies of food, fuel, water and construction material for basic necessities like showers and latrines.

Kosovo Serbs had set up and manned roadblocks at major thoroughfares throughout northern Kosovo to protest Kosovan and EULEX efforts at the northern administrative boundary line to enforce customs policies on goods shipped between Kosovo and Serbia. Some roadblocks were removed in early December after Serbia and Kosovo agreed to an Integrated Border Management plan to jointly manage the boundary crossings.

With the subsequent reopening of the roadways, a logistics convoy of Palletized Load Systems (PLS) vehicles loaded with fuel, water and refrigeration systems went north almost immediately from Camp Bondsteel to resupply the MNBG E northern outposts.

Pallets full of MREs and bottled water replenished a supply that had been sorely lacking in recent months, as well as fuel to keep the generators and equipment running. Aerial resupply missions, called “sling loads,” provided minimal resources to keep Soldiers fed and operational on a day-to-day basis, but not enough to stockpile supplies for emergencies. Weather also factored into aerial resupply efforts. Helicopter operations are significantly impacted by fog, rain, wind and snow, but ground convoys can travel in less favorable weather conditions.

“Supply by ground is very important when it comes to fuel and non-potable water,” said Maj. Jeremy O’Leary, MNBG E operations chief. “When you fly it, there are very minimal gains. A sling load carries approximately less than a half-day [of fuel or water].”

One ground convoy, on the other hand, can deliver approximately 14 days worth of fuel and non-potable water.

But maintaining convoy integrity while moving along narrow Kosovo roads — through cities and around mountainous hairpin turns — created its own challenges for MNBG E Soldiers. Military police escorts were constantly on the move to ensure local traffic did not interfere with convoy vehicles, requiring constant diligence and effective communications between escorts and convoy.

“Communication is a big issue in a multinational mission,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Roland Serrano, the officer in charge for the first two convoys. “Language barriers can result in delays and missed messages between the convoys and the escorts.”

National Guard and reserve members looking for work can tap into a new resource designed to address high unemployment in the reserve components.

[Hero 2 Hired](#) (H2H), a [Yellow Ribbon](#)-funded project, is an online site that helps reserve component service members find jobs by type and location, determine which civilian jobs align with their military skills, and assess their job skills. Employers can post job openings at no cost, and can set match criteria in the job postings to identify the best candidates. Social media strategies help service members develop professional networking opportunities, and mobile device apps keep job hunters abreast of new openings.

Civilian employment is seen as a readiness factor for reserve component service members, and a critical part to remaining in service. The reserve component Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is mandated by Congress to provide employment services.

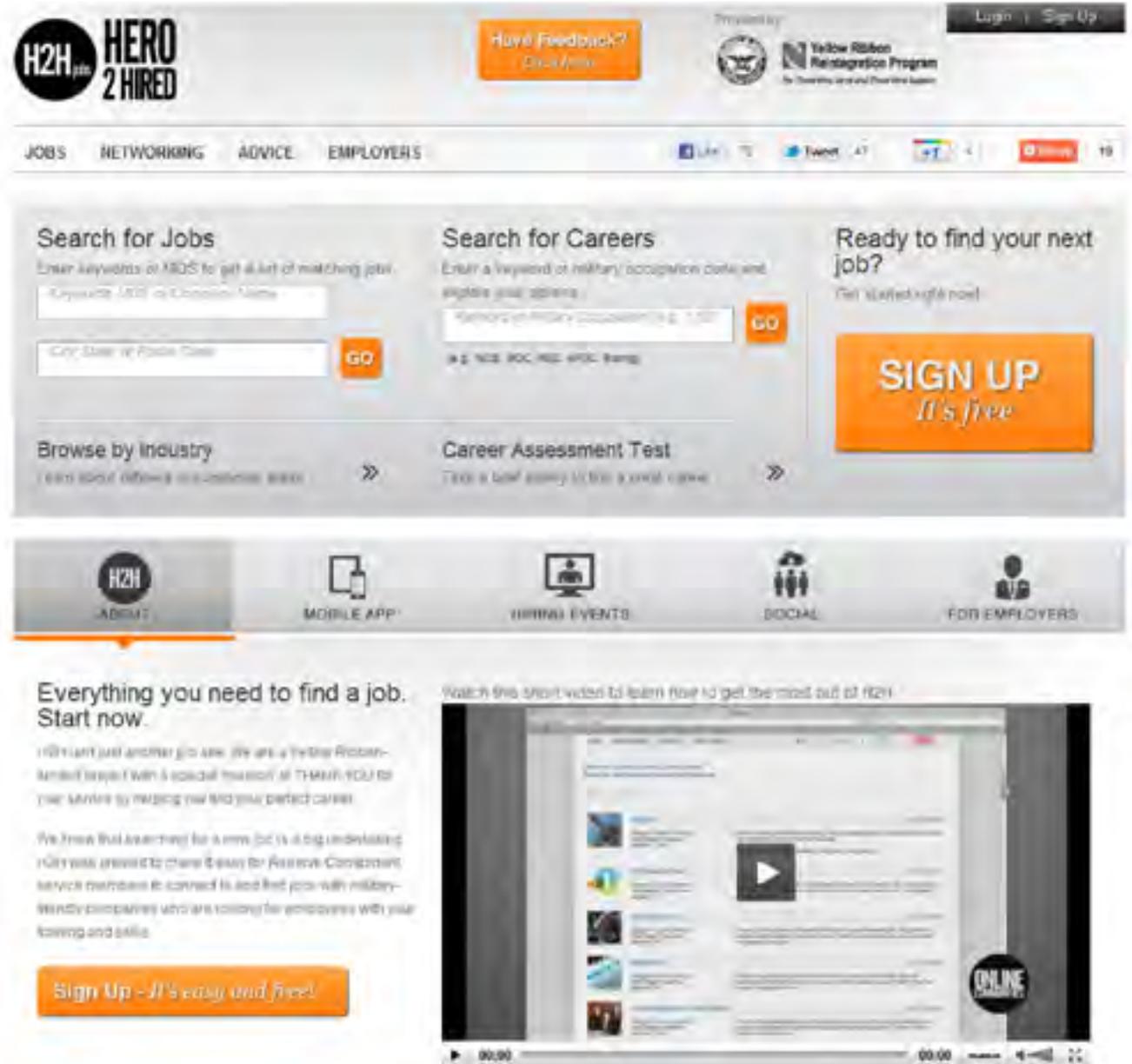
A recent survey of approximately 121,000 Guard and Reserve members indicates an overall unemployment rate of 13 percent — six percent higher than the overall veteran population. That rate climbs to 23 percent for reservists holding a rank below noncommissioned officer. Since 2003, the number of employed reservists dropped from 79 percent to 65 percent. Unemployment claims increased six percent since June 2008, and in the last two years, 34 percent of deactivated reservists experience unemployment. Unemployment claims cost the Department of Defense more than \$1 billion each year.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve ([ESGR](#)) Executive Director Ron Young and National Chairman Jim Rehbolz announced in mid-December that Hero 2 Hired will replace the [Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces](#) (EPAF)

— a joint venture of the Army Reserve and Army National Guard — as the Yellow Ribbon's national employment search engine. More than 2,400 registered employers and service members' profiles will merge from EPAF to H2H in the coming months.

While the Department of Labor's VETS program and the Veterans Administration also offer employment services, H2H provides a reserve component focus. Tim Flatley, executive director for the Wisconsin ESGR, said that H2H provides

a tracking mechanism to gauge how effective the program is. "You need to have metrics," he said. "EPAF didn't have that." Flatley said that ESGR volunteers will train on how to use H2H as the promotional campaign ramps up.



Wisconsin National Guard takes part in virtual conference on

Expanding the scope of diversity beyond race and gender can unlock untapped potential in the Wisconsin National Guard.

This is the message senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders are emphasizing to their troops following the first National Guard Bureau Virtual Diversity Conference — held completely online Jan. 18.

“Diversity is a core value of the Wisconsin National Guard and it directly affects readiness. It extends far beyond race and gender — it is about faith in the future and breaking free of stereotypical thinking,” said Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin. “This diversity conference sent a powerful message — our national leadership shares our core values and, by conducting it virtually, we saved significant resources by not having to travel. An excellent event.”

1st Lt. Ron Adams, the Wisconsin National Guard diversity officer, said that the “melting pot” concept can suppress diversity and stifle ideas in favor of assimilation.

“Valuing diversity is creating a workplace that respects differences, recognizes unique contributions and maximizes potential,” Adams said. “Diversity for the Wisconsin National Guard includes a long-term vision of a workforce that generally reflects the population demographics of the state.”

Helping develop that vision is the Wisconsin National Guard’s Joint Diversity Council, made up of senior and junior officers and enlisted members reflecting every unit of the Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard.

“In today’s environment, leaders at all levels are expected to get the best out of their team,” said Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard and co-chair of the Joint Diversity Council. “Understanding the value that each team

member brings to the fight is imperative to continued success for our organization.

“How leadership views diversity, so goes the organization,” Anderson continued, noting that there is value in different backgrounds, experiences and thought processes. “These collective backgrounds give you more variety of input when addressing an issue.”

Brig. Gen. John McCoy, commander of the Wisconsin Air National Guard and co-chair of the Joint Diversity Council, said that diversity cannot be a separate program.

“It is simply who we are,” McCoy said. “We are much more effective when we value all of our members. Different perspectives and experiences, when embraced, can drive outstanding results.”

Gen. Craig McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, said the goal of the virtual conference was to present to all Citizen-Soldiers, -Airmen and civilians the vision and strategy of Guard leadership in the area of diversity management — and the use of a virtual conference allowed that message to reach a larger audience.

“As your chief of the National Guard Bureau, it is my role to work with your adjutants general to ensure that the National Guard remains a mission-ready force,” he said. “Effective diversity management is essential to military readiness and mission accomplishment.”

McKinley said steps to improve diversity management throughout the Guard have been taken, one of them being the establishment of the National Guard Bureau Joint Diversity Executive Council.

“The goal of this council,” he said, “is to identify and adopt the best practices for recruiting, retaining and developing a very diverse workforce — and sustaining a climate of equality in the National Guard.”

“The council adapts these practices from various resources to recommendations that are appropriate to the

National Guard’s military and civilian structure,” said Phyllis Brantley, chief of National Guard diversity and special-emphasis programs.

Some of the accomplishments of the council thus far include a comprehensive diversity policy, a leaders’ guide on diversity, resources for state-level Joint Diversity Councils and training and mentoring for state-level JSDCs from NGB staff.

“We as an organization have made significant progress, but much more is needed — especially in our military leadership diversity,” McKinley said. “It’s a problem with cyclical effects. Through the work of our adjutants general and other National Guard leaders, I am confident that we can move toward a future workforce that more clearly reflects the population of our great nation.”

McKinley said accessing and adopting some programs from the civilian sector is one way that the Guard could use to achieve its diversity goals.

“Another step to reaching our goals on diversity and inclusion in the Guard is for each state, territory and the District of Columbia to establish state joint diversity councils and assign a liaison to work with the NGB Joint Diversity Executive Council,” he said.

Chief Master Sgt. Denise Jelinski-Hall, the National Guard’s senior enlisted leader, said in order for the organization to remain relevant, “we must understand diversity and how to strategically capitalize on the strength of our Soldiers, Airmen and civilians.”

“Diversity must be recognized as an enhancement of the character of our organization,” McKinley said. “Change is never easy, but I remain confident in the Soldiers, Airmen and civilians of the National Guard to get this work done.”

Sgt. Darron Salzer of the National Guard Bureau contributed to this report.

Lights, camera ... discussion. While the movie "Red Tails" soars across cinema screens nationwide, an earlier dramatization of the 332nd Fighter Group — the famed [Tuskegee Airmen](#) — and its battles in the skies over Europe as well as against discrimination by fellow Americans was viewed by Wisconsin National Guard members and civilian Department of Military Affairs employees Feb. 7. The 1995 movie was part of a professional development session on diversity, led by Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin.

"It's interesting to see the parallels from back then and today," said Col. Julie Gerety, manpower and personnel director for the Wisconsin National Guard's Joint Staff. "'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' — same kind of concept. And females in combat, same thing — let's address it after the war."

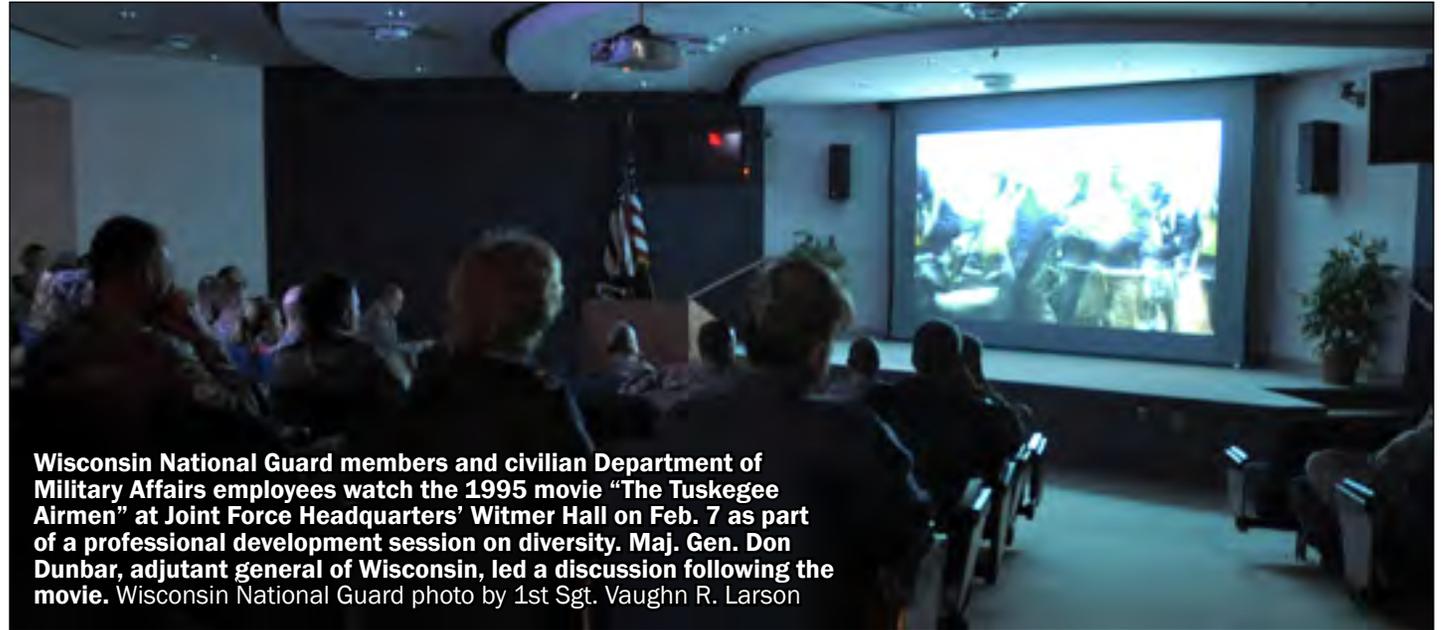
Col. Julio Barron, a senior member of the Wisconsin National Guard's staff judge advocate office, agreed.

"What will define our time when history looks back at us?" he said, noting the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s. "I think it's going to be sexual orientation."

Dunbar said the movie stressed the importance of seeing someone from an individual's particular community in a leadership role.

"It wasn't too long ago that we had very few women in the military," Dunbar said. "Now we have [women as] senior leaders in the military, so young women joining the military today can look at an organization and see a senior leader and say, 'Okay, that could be me.'"

Dunbar related a scene from the movie in which Lt. Hannibal Lee informs the cadet pilots that he has numerous combat missions under his belt, and how the cadets suddenly see him not as a black officer and novice instructor, but a combat



Wisconsin National Guard members and civilian Department of Military Affairs employees watch the 1995 movie "The Tuskegee Airmen" at Joint Force Headquarters' Witmer Hall on Feb. 7 as part of a professional development session on diversity. Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, led a discussion following the movie. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

leader and someone to look up to.

"So when we talk about having someone from a diverse population join our ranks, and we grow from within, the importance of future generations being able to look into the Wisconsin National Guard and not only see the things we stand for, but that piece of you that comes from your community," Dunbar said, "I think that's important."

Barron, now an Air National Guard officer, recalled joining the military as an Army second lieutenant and immediately encountering bigotry with his unit commander.

"He used racial slurs toward me ... because I'm Hispanic," Barron said.

"Frankly, it angered me so much that I said, 'After my four-year tour, I'm going to get out of the Army and I really don't want anything more to do with it.' But I didn't get out, and I made a commitment to try and change perceptions from within the organization."

Barron said that today he sees members of underrepresented groups in senior leadership positions.

"I am personally proud that we have made such strides in the armed forces," he said.

Dunbar noted that new people groups in the United States historically met with prejudice and discrimination at first. President Harry Truman overcame his own prejudices to integrate the armed forces, he added.

"[Truman] said, 'There's no way we can treat these Americans that way after they've served our country,'" Dunbar said.

1st Lt. Ron Adams, the Wisconsin National Guard's diversity officer, pointed out that diversity is bigger than race and gender.

"If you noticed throughout the movie, when they started meeting each other, they were all different," Adams said. "That one guy was from the city, and the other guy was from a rural area. You had the two pilots who were on a bomber, from Texas and California. We're all different in some kind of way. We need to be mindful of that."

Gerety said that everyone has some level of prejudice.

"This movie just reinforces that sometime you've got to open your mind and listen to what people have to say," she said. "No matter who it is and what prejudice you have, everybody does bring something to the table."

The first of the Wisconsin National Guard Diversity Council's four tenets is mission readiness. Dunbar asked how diversity applies.

"You have to draw from every age in your ranks, their background — whether they're rural or from the city — and capitalize on their life experiences, the deployments they might have," replied Maj. Max Brosig, executive officer with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation.

"The second [tenet] is change management," Dunbar said. "Our country's changing, there's no doubt about that. Cultural awareness is the third tenet. And then there's respect — everyone has something to offer."

"Things will continue to change and evolve in our country, and that's a good thing," Dunbar continued. "But I believe the foundation remains the same. So no matter who they are or where they come from, if we're not doing our job right, you'll see the breakdown in the National Guard — not because they're not capable, but because we don't lead them well. If we do our job as leaders, we'll always have a great National Guard." ■



Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue
Wisconsin National Guard

The 115th Fighter Wing is known in Wisconsin for their patriotic flyovers, but they continue to be known across the nation for sheer excellence.

For the third time in six years, the 115th has been recognized with the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (AFOUA) — solidifying the fighter wing as one of the best Air National Guard units in the country.

“This highlights that we are one of the premier units in the nation,” said Brig. Gen. Joseph Brandemuehl, 115th Fighter Wing commander. “It speaks to the professionalism and dedication of each and every Airman in this organization.”

This includes personnel like Airman 1st Class Patrick Soderlund, of De Pere, who was recently recognized as the top Airman in the state. He’s been with the unit for three years and credits his success to the culture that resonates everywhere within the fighter wing.

“I’ve been mentored through a culture of ‘lead by example’ — working with very driven Airmen, peers and supervisors, who go out of their way to help with tasks and understanding information,” Soderlund said. “It’s an honor and a privilege to be part of a unit that performs and operates at the level we do.”

Brandemuehl emphasized the AFOUA is a collective effort of the more than 1,000 Airmen that come together, train together and execute together to keep the fighter wing running as safely and efficiently as ever before.

“These Airmen will never cease to amaze you with their performance, and they are the best in the nation,” he said. “The commitment and professionalism of these individuals are really what this award is highlighting.”

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin, said he was extremely pleased but not surprised with the award.

“This award continues to validate

the professionalism and dedication our Airmen of the 115th Fighter Wing display each and every day,” Dunbar said. “It is gratifying that the Air Force recognizes what I see on a regular basis — the continuation of a 60-year legacy of excellence at the 115th.”

The fighter wing’s motto is “Dedicated to Excellence.” Those words hold true to the legacy that continues to be written as this is the 115th’s seventh AFOUA in unit history. Previous awards have come in 1980, 1989, 1991, 1998, 2005 and 2009.

This award — which recognizes the Wing’s achievements from Nov 1, 2009 through Oct. 31, 2011 — speaks to the overall, and well-rounded, success of the Wing and its members. The Wing has made a significant impact on the state, nation and even across the globe during this timeframe.

Some of those accomplishment include executing 4,740 sorties equating to more than 7,000 flight hours, deploying more than 200 Airmen to 18 different countries around the globe in support of numerous

U.S. led and supported contingency operations, deploying medics to Nicaragua to treat more than 6,200 patients as part of a humanitarian mission and lessening the carbon footprint in Wisconsin by embracing innovating design and technology in the realm of environmental stewardship.

There are countless other accomplishments the Airmen of the 115th have previously and continue to achieve across the spectrum of all operations on base — from logistics and personnel to mission support and operations.

Inspiring Airmen to continue performing at such a high tempo and culture of excellence could be considered difficult. Brandemuehl sees it a different way.

“I don’t think it’s one thing we do to motivate — I think it’s the organization itself that motivates the individuals to maintain that legacy of excellence,” Brandemuehl said. “These Airmen just expect that they have to live up to that high standard.” ■



Active duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve units teamed up in May 2009 for a week-long operational readiness exercise at Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center. The exercise was in preparation for a March 2010 operational readiness inspection. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Wesley Farnsworth

Air Force officials recently announced the [Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center](#) as one of eight units nationwide to earn the [Air Force Organizational Excellence Award](#) (AFOEA).

This is the second consecutive AFOEA for the CRTC.

“Having the Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center announced as a recipient of the Air Force Organizational Excellence Award is a worthy tribute to the dedicated Airmen and civilians that are giving their very best effort each and every day,” said Col. Gary Ebben, Volk Field commander.

“I couldn’t be prouder of the men and women of Volk Field,” said Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, adjutant general of Wisconsin. “Their contributions to the ‘Total Force’ and ‘Joint Training’ concepts serves as a force multiplier. The CRTC at Volk Field has an enduring legacy of excellence — this is the latest chapter.”

This AFOEA recognizes the CRTC for meritorious service from October 2009 through September 2011.

And deservedly so — the CRTC hosted training for 475 units, encompassing Army and Air National Guard, Air Force and Air Force reserve, and non-Department of Defense units. The training missions are in addition to sustaining active runway and transient operations which supported the transfer of more than 40,000 passengers and nearly 16 million pounds of cargo.

Volk Field hosts one of the only Air National Guard bases to maintain its own control tower. This allowed the CRTC to schedule and monitor more than 4,500 sorties in over 12,000 square miles of special use airspace over central Wisconsin.

In a memorandum announcing the awardees, [Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III](#), director of the Air National Guard, spoke to the meritorious service of each of the eight units.

“The dedication and commitment of the members of these organizations enable the Air National Guard to fulfill its commitment to the missions of peacekeeping, humanitarian relief, domestic improvement, and most important of all — Defense of America,” Wyatt said

The AFOEA is awarded to units who are unique, unnumbered organizations that operate or perform missions like a numbered unit would. Volk Field won the [Air Force Outstanding Unit Award](#) in 2007, but the National Guard Bureau determined the CRTC was more appropriately placed in the AFOEA category.

“The track record of accomplishments doesn’t just happen ... it is built with hard work,” Ebben said. “These professionals are as fine a group as I have ever had the pleasure to work with in my career.”

@rchives

10 Years Ago

The 128th Air Control Squadron concluded 113 days of monitoring the skies over southern Wisconsin and Northern Illinois as part of Operation Noble Eagle. The 128th performed this mission at Volk Field and also deployed its long-range TPS-75 radar van, operations module, satellite can and generators to a soybean field in Marengo Ridge northwest of Chicago. Real-time information of all aircraft near Chicago was sent to the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD).

Meanwhile, Command Sgt. Maj. A. Frank Lever, senior enlisted advisor for the Army National Guard, visited Wisconsin National Guard troops providing airport security in Milwaukee, Appleton and Green Bay in mid-January. One month later, First Army Command

Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Mellinger visited airport security troops in Milwaukee, Appleton, Green Bay and La Crosse. National Guard troops performed this security mission as part of Operation Noble Eagle from September 2001 to May 21, 2002.

By the end of March 2002, nearly 900 Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard members were on active duty for Operation Noble Eagle and Operation Enduring Freedom. The 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment was on active duty in Kuwait as part of Operation Desert Spring, members of the 32nd Military Police Company were ordered to active duty as part of the Bosnia stabilization force in Hungary, and more than a dozen Army Guard units supported a humanitarian assistance task force in Nicaragua.

20 Years Ago

The 426th Engineer Battalion returned Jan. 25 following three weeks in Panama for the humanitarian assistance mission Fiertes Caminos 1992. The Department of the Army assigned the Wisconsin National Guard to organize the six-month work project, which involved Guard and Reserve units building or improving roads, schools and clinics.

The 32nd Infantry Brigade, the headquarters of the 426th Engineer

Battalion, the 108th Maintenance Company, the 232nd Personnel Service Company and the 132nd Military History Detachment faced deactivation in National Guard troop cuts proposed by the Department of Defense. Maj. Gen. Jerald Slack, adjutant general of Wisconsin, and Gov. Tommy Thompson promised an all-out, no-holds-barred effort to save the Red Arrow Brigade, the Wisconsin National Guard's largest single unit.

30 Years Ago

The Wisconsin Army National Guard prepared to switch from olive-drab fatigues to the Battle Dress Uniform (BDU). Units with the highest mobilization priority were first to receive the woodland camouflage uniforms.

Key personnel from Army

engineer units in the United States and Europe met in Eau Claire to develop Capstone relationships. The Capstone program linked Guard and Reserve units with the active-duty headquarters they were slated to join in the event of a wartime mobilization.

Fort McCoy access limited to Main Gate, Gate 20

Rob Schuette
The Real McCoy

Beginning March 1, access to the cantonment area at Fort McCoy will be limited to the Main Gate and Gate 20.

Fort McCoy Chief of Police Rob Stapel said the action reflects the current traffic situation with the elimination of the mobilization and demobilization mission, as well as the fiscal reality of reduced budgets.

The Main Gate will be open 24/7 for all incoming and outgoing traffic. Stapel said Gate 20 will be open from 5 a.m.-5 p.m. daily for incoming motorists with common access cards or authorized business credentials. Motorists can leave the post from either gate. Motorists and

adult passengers entering the gates still must show photo identification, generally a common access card or a state driver's license.

"We did an assessment of traffic coming through the gates and determined this was our best option to meet our mission requirements and Department of the Army requirements," Stapel said. "We don't expect the new gate hours and closings will have an impact on traffic flow and cause significant delays. Right now, there was just no justification to keep Gates 5 and 15 open and commit the staffing that it would require."

For more information about the gate openings/closings, call the DES Police Department at 608-388-2000. ■

Charter officer of Wisconsin Air National Guard dies

The Wisconsin Air National Guard lost a long-time friend in December.

Robert B. Skuldt passed away Dec. 19, 2011, at age 93.

As a boy, Skuldt skipped school to see aviation great Charles Lindbergh visit Madison. This encounter would only fuel his love for aviation and lead to a long and fruitful career in the field.

Skuldt earned his private pilot license shortly after graduating from Madison's Central High School and later went on to earn his flight instructor rating in 1942. He taught glider students for the U.S. Army in Janesville and basic flight training to U.S. Navy pilots in Middleton during the onset of World War II. He was then given a direct commission to 2nd Lieutenant with the U.S. Army Air Corps on Nov. 18, 1943. His stint in the U.S. Army Air Corps included time transporting aircraft to the European Theater and missions in the



China-Burma-India Theater.

After returning to Madison, Skuldt became one of the original officers of the post-World War II Wisconsin Air National Guard. Around the same time he was also hired as manager of the Madison airport, where he worked for 34 years, retiring in 1981. He became a founding member of the Wisconsin Airport Management Association and the Great Lakes Chapter of the American Association

of Airport Executives.

During Skuldt's career in aviation, he logged more than 7,300 hours — 5,600 in military status — flying 50 different types of aircraft. He received an Air Medal and five battle stars, plus numerous other military citations. He ended his military career as a colonel in 1971, after serving as a commanding officer for the Utility Flight of the 176th Fighter Squadron and inspector general for the 128th Air Defense Wing. ■

Veterans, Families, Retirees

Disability ratings may be reviewed

If you know of any veterans who were medically separated from military service between Sept. 11, 2001 and Dec. 31, 2009, let them know they have some recourse if they feel they unfairly received a too-low disability rating from the military.

The Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR) will reassess the accuracy and fairness of the combined disability ratings assigned to service members who were discharged as unfit for continued military service by the military departments with a combined disability rating of 20 percent or less.

Once a review is complete, the PDBR forwards their recommendation to the respective Service Secretary where it is up to the individual service branch to make the final determination on whether to change the original disability determination.

The board outcomes of those who have applied have been very favorable. Nearly half of the applicants have received upgrades to 30 percent or more, which would make them eligible for a military medical retirement, retiree pay, access to military healthcare and other benefits.

Since the PDBR began reviewing its first cases in June 2009, only 3,000 veterans have applied of the roughly 75,000 eligible veterans.

To encourage greater applications, later this month the VA and the Pentagon plan to begin sending letters to thousands of Post-9/11 eligible veterans.

Help spread the word — most of these wounded warriors won't otherwise know about this important option to correct a possible wrong during their medical evaluation process.

If you know someone who was medically separated from service since 9-11, they can find out more information on how to apply at: <http://www.health.mil/pdbr>.

Free online tax filing service available

[Military OneSource](#) launched the [H&R Block at Home](#) free online tax filing service Jan. 14. The National Guard is among the military components eligible to use the service.

Neither H&R Block nor Military OneSource will prepare individual tax returns through this service, but Military OneSource will provide [free tax consultations](#). If you have questions about preparing your own tax returns, call 1-800-342-9647 and ask to speak with a Military OneSource tax consultant. Trained tax consultants are available seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., EST.

Understanding Medicare and TRICARE

A beneficiary age 64 should be aware of the necessity of signing up for Medicare Parts A and B before his/her 65th birthday to avoid interruption of TRICARE benefits. Eligibility for all TRICARE STANDARD, EXTRA and PRIME benefits (including pharmacy) ends when one becomes eligible for Medicare Part A, regardless of age.

TRICARE FOR LIFE (including pharmacy) is available to provide supplemental coverage when Medicare Part B is purchased. (An exception exists for those currently enrolled in the Uniformed Services Family Health Plan (USFHP). A beneficiary should contact Medicare three months before the 65th birthday and request enrollment in both Part A and B.

Some confusion results from differing requirements on the purchase of Part B between Medicare and TRICARE.

Medicare allows one who is employed and has health insurance from that employer to defer Part B without a penalty until no longer employed. However, TRICARE STANDARD, EXTRA and PRIME benefits will terminate when eligible for Part A regardless of any other health insurance.

Beneficiaries turning age 65 receive a letter from the Defense Manpower and Data Center (DMDC) reminding them about the requirement to sign up for Part B in order to retain TRICARE benefits.

If one is drawing Social Security at age 62 the Social Security Administration (SSA) will automatically enroll you in Part A & B. If one is still working at age 65 one must contact the SSA and enroll in Part A & B. For information on signing up for Medicare call, (800) 633-4227 or go to www.medicare.gov.

Medicare is the primary insurance and determines what is covered, amount approved and amount paid with TRICARE FOR LIFE becoming secondary insurance and pays the Medicare deductible and co-pays. Most services are covered by both Medicare and TRICARE but there are a few which may be covered by one and not the other such as certain chiropractic services.

Medicare does not cover care outside the continental United States. In this case, and in others where a service is covered by TRICARE but not Medicare, TRICARE then becomes first payer and the beneficiary is responsible for the TRICARE deductible and 25 percent cost share.

Any questions on TRICARE coverage under TRICARE For Life can be answered by Wisconsin Physician Services at (866) 773-0404.

Youth Camp scheduled

The Wisconsin National Guard Youth Camp will be held Aug. 3-5 at Volk Field. Volunteer and camper applications will be available after April 15 at the Youth Camp [website](#), or call 800-335-5147, ext. 3466.

Services, hours for Retiree Activities Offices

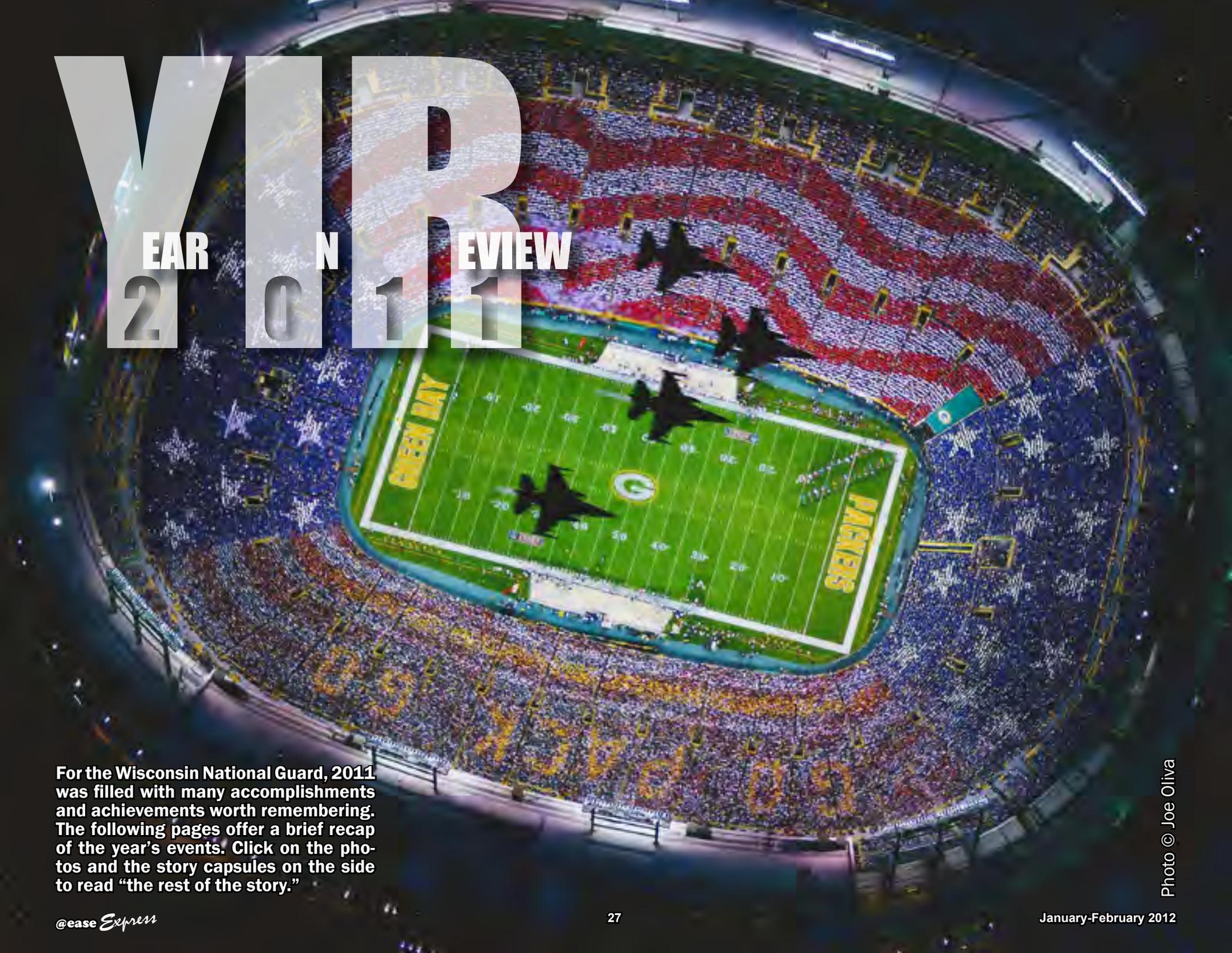
The Retiree Activities Office (RAO) provides guidance and information to retirees and spouses of retirees, of all ranks and services. The RAO provides information on military status, TRICARE, military ID cards, survivor benefits, death reporting and much more.

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.





YEAR IN REVIEW 2011

For the Wisconsin National Guard, 2011 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

A trumpet quintet performs a fanfare to open the Jan. 3 inauguration ceremony at the state capitol building. The Wisconsin National Guard supported Gov. Scott Walker's inauguration ceremony with the 132nd Army Band performing before and during the ceremony; an honor guard consisting of Army Guard and Air Guard personnel presented the colors; and the Wisconsin National Guard Public Affairs Office coordinated closely with the transition team regarding the planning and execution of the ceremony. Wisconsin Army National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson



FEBRUARY

Four-year-old Annika reacquaints herself with her father, Maj. Billy Kesselring of the 724th Engineer battalion's headquarters company. Approximately 300 Soldiers from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 724th Engineer Battalion returned to Wisconsin Feb. 18, officially marking the end of their duty in Iraq in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn. They were met by Gov. Scott Walker, senior National Guard officials, a military band and family members.

Wisconsin Army National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

MARCH

Aaron Wallander explains a 50-caliber simulator to Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard and deputy commanding general of the U.S. Army Field Artillery Center at Fort Sill, Okla.; Maj. Gen. David Halverson, commanding general of the U.S. Fires Center of Excellence at Fort Sill, Okla., and Brig. Gen. Thomas Vandal, commandant of the U.S. Army Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, during a visit to the Wisconsin Military Academy, home to the Wisconsin National Guard's 426th Regional Training Institute, on March 13. The visit followed a two-day National Guard Fires Conference held in Green Bay and hosted by the 426th RTI. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

APRIL

Staff Sgt. Benjamin Van Aucken of Headquarters Detachment, 1st Battalion, 426th Field Artillery Regiment at Fort McCoy maneuvers over a wall during the obstacle course portion of the 2011 Soldier and NCO competition. Five Soldiers and 10 NCOs from the Wisconsin Army National Guard competed at Fort McCoy through the weekend to decide the most outstanding NCO and Soldier to represent Wisconsin at the Region 4 Army National Guard Competition in May.
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Sgt. Tyler Lasure



Members of the 434th Chemical Company, Minnesota National Guard CBRNE (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Explosives) Emergency Response Force Package, provide aid to a role-player posing as an injured victim during a Vigilant Guard event at Volk Field May 16. Vigilant Guard is a state wide exercise that demonstrates how local, state, and federal agencies would collaborate in response to real-life emergencies. CERFP teams provide immediate response capabilities to large contaminations. 112th Mobile Public Affairs photo by Spc. Alyson Swanke



12

1158th Transportation Company conducts AT in Morocco



26

Green Bay Packers President Mark Murphy receives a Minuteman trophy from the Wisconsin National Guard

JUNE

Brig. Gen. Roy E. Uptegraff, commander of the 313th Air Expeditionary Wing (left) and Col. Ted Metzgar, commander of the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing, discuss operation dynamics at the 313th Air Expeditionary Wing prior to Metzgar assuming command of the wing on June 14 in Western Europe. The 313th supported Operation Unified Protector in Libya. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Capt. John P. Capra

JULY

Two members of the Regional Emergency All-Climate Training center set up a smoke generator during an emergency response scenario. The Wisconsin Air National Guard's Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center hosted the 2011 Patriot Exercise July 11-23. National Guard units from across the nation, as well as military units from Canada and Holland took part in the exercise. For more than five years Patriot 2011 has been the preeminent National Guard Bureau sponsored emergency response training exercise, integrating Air National Guard, Army National Guard and coalition forces in a joint training environment. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Tech Sgt. Jon LaDue



Brig. Gen. John McCoy visits Wisconsin Guard Airmen supporting Unified Protector

AUGUST

Gary Wetzel, left, a Medal of Honor recipient, and Gov. Scott Walker take off at the start of the Freedom Ride from the Harley-Davidson Museum in downtown Milwaukee Aug. 26. More than 3,000 Army and Air National Guard officers and enlisted members from across the United States began arriving in Milwaukee Aug. 25 for the 133rd National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) General Conference and Exhibition, held at the Frontier Airlines Center and hosted by the Wisconsin National Guard. Approximately 100 National Guard officers rode personal and rented motorcycles in the Freedom Ride from the museum to Holy Hill and back. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

AUGUST 5: 157th MEB trains at Fort McCoy for upcoming Kosovo deployment



128th Air Refueling Wing supports Thunderbird's Milwaukee visit



257th BSB conducts annual training at Camp Ripley, Minn.

SEPTEMBER

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, center, adjutant general of Wisconsin, Russ Spahn, retired Greenfield fire chief, and five other veterans applaud as members of the Milwaukee Brewers are announced before a Sept. 11 baseball game at Miller Park. Representing the five branches of the armed forces are, left to right: Hector Sepulveda, Army; James Brooks, Marines; Ed Gleason, Coast Guard; Lee Phipps, Navy; and Phylena Fowler, Air Force. The Brewers saluted the Wisconsin National Guard and veterans on the 10th anniversary of 9/11.
11.2th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Sgt. Tyler Lasure

OCTOBER

Members of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team respond in riot gear to confront a group of anti-nuclear “protestors” during a certification exercise for the National Guard Reaction Force Oct. 14 at Fort McCoy. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 1st Sgt. Vaughn R. Larson

NOVEMBER

Wisconsin Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Kristine Rupp of the Milwaukee-based 128th Air Refueling Wing holds up an enormous American flag during pre-game ceremonies at Lambeau Field in Green Bay. The Green Bay Packers and other organizations paid homage to America's service members and veterans during a night of events in recognition of Veterans Day. Rupp, the 128th Airman of the Year, was selected by her supervisors to participate in the military recognition events during the Monday Night Football game Nov. 14. Wisconsin National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Nathan Wallin



DECEMBER

Col. Jeffrey Liethen, left, and Command Sgt. Maj. Brad Shields unfurl the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade's colors during a Dec. 10 transfer of authority ceremony at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. The 157th MEB assumed command of Multinational Battle Group East, replacing the New Mexico Army National Guard's 111th MEB. 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jim Wagner

DECEMBER 21: Gov. Walker receives Wisconsin Homeland Security Council report



Parting shot



157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade Soldiers were among 112 participants from 15 nations to take part in the 2012 Kosovo Forces (KFOR) Ski Competition at Brezovica Ski Resort, Brezovica, Kosovo, Jan. 31-Feb. 1. The competition is a morale and team-building activity for the NATO peace-keeping mission. 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jim Wagner