

GMG



Green Mountain Guard | Fall 2013



From the Adjutant General

Major General Steven Cray



We are launching the Green Mountain Guard into the 21st Century! Our initiative to utilize an online magazine will provide more timely, up-to-date information to our force. We will soon be embedding videos with our stories and of course you can find updated information, stories, photos and videos on our Facebook pages.

There are many great things happening within our guard community. The Final Environmental Impact Statement has been released by the Air Force and I am pleased that the 158th Fighter Wing has remained the preferred alternative throughout the process. We have a long, proud and storied history. The reputation of the Green Mountain Boys remains without compare and we await a decision from the Secretary of the Air Force later in the fall.

I had the opportunity to attend the National Guard Association conference this past month and the federal budget and the impacts for the future of the National Guard was one of the main highlights. Other highlights included guest speakers Gen. (Ret.) Eric Shinseki, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and Gen. Frank J. Grass, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and Vermont’s own Chief Warrant Officer Michael E. Ahearn was honored with the Eagle Rising Award for Warrant Officers, in which there are only four given across the country.

The Army will be working diligently for the next few months on the initial plans to ensure that Soldiers, families, and employers have all the information and paperwork in order to prepare for the Joint Readiness Training Center exercise in the beginning of the summer of 2014. With this will come increased training at all levels-from the staffs at Headquarters all the way into the field where those plans are put into action-get ready and continue to train hard.

The Wing is also preparing for their inspections next year with their exercises and we, as a whole, need to make sure that we are focused and ready to show our excellence so we are prepared to be on point when it really matters in real-world situations locally or globally.

As we reset to a new fiscal year and uncertainty remains in the budgets, we remain engaged with National Guard Bureau to bring information to the force as quickly as possible.

I would like to let all of our Soldiers and Airmen know that I appreciate your staying positive and placing the mission first.

Integrity-Service-Excellence



Cover: A chalk of Cavalry Soldiers from Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 172nd Cavalry Regiment prepare to board a Blackhawk helicopter for an air assault training mission at Fort Drum, N.Y., Aug. 13, 2013. (Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Jeffrey Rivard)

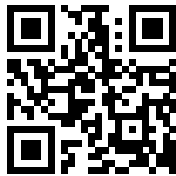
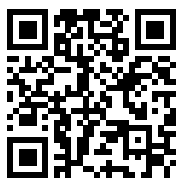
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This is our **FINAL** printed copy of the GMG. Future digital copies will be available on our official website: www.vtguard.com and on our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/VermontNationalGuard



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IN & AROUND: VTARNG



LEFT: Spc. Corine McGrath, a medic with Headquarters Company, Range Control Det. 1, prepares her equipment before the first round of the 2013 Vermont TAG Match. (U. S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Roy Mercon)

BELOW: U.S. Army Spc. Taylor Gingras and Pvt. Nicholas Amature, with Bravo Company, 186th BSB, replace a Y-pipe on a truck while training at Fort Drum, N.Y., Aug. 7, 2013. The 86th IBCT is conducting their XCTC in preparation for their rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Sarah Mattison)



ABOVE: Soldiers from Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery Regiment conduct a battery jump at Fort Drum, N.Y. Aug. 11, 2013. A battery jump is conducted when an artillery unit needs to pick-up quickly from one firing position and move to another and begin firing with minimal delay. (U. S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Jeffrey Rivard)

LEFT: Runners start the Vermont Remembers Run, an 11K run or military ruck march, at Camp Johnson, Vt., on Sept. 7, 2013. There is also a 5K course for some event goers. The event benefits the Vermont National Guard Fallen Soldier Memorial at Camp Johnson. (U. S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Nathan Rivard)



IN & AROUND: VTANG



LEFT: Members of the Vermont Air National Guard Fire Department cut out a cockpit of an old Green Mountain Boy jet in South Burlington VT., September 16, 2013. The cockpit is going to the Aviation museum at Camp Johnson. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman Jeffrey Tatro)

BELOW: Members of the Vermont Air National Guard Honor Guard participate in Retreat, Burlington International Airport, South Burlington VT., September 8, 2013. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman Jeffrey Tatro)



ABOVE: U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Megan Holt installs a FZU-48 fuze initiator into the MK82 bomb while Airman 1st Class Chad Boyle, Tech. Sgt. Donald Konkol and Senior Airman Sean Martinez observe. The Airmen are part of 158th Munitions Flight and traveled to Alpena, Mich., for annual training. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman Jeffrey Tatro)



BELOW: Members of the Vermont Air National Guard meet with Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, James Cody and his wife Athena at the 158th Fighter Wing, Burlington International Airport, South Burlington VT., September 6, 2013. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Jonathon Alderman)

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Visits THE VTANG



Members of the Vermont Air National Guard gathered together for an Senior Enlisted Call with the Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Cody, at the 158th Fighter Wing, South Burlington, Vt., Sept. 5, 2013. CMSAF Cody spoke to the airmen about the importance of their roles within the organization and their futures. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Jonathon Alderman)



Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force, James Cody, addresses members of the Vermont Air National Guard during a Senior Enlisted Call at the 158th Fighter Wing, South Burlington, Vt., Sept. 5, 2013. CMSAF Cody spoke to the airmen about the importance of their roles within the organization and their futures. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Jonathon Alderman)

Written by Senior Airman Victoria Greenia, 158th FW

SOUTH BURLINGTON, Vt. - Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Cody visited with airmen of the Vermont Air National Guard Sept. 5 to 6 to say thank you for their service and listen to questions and concerns.

Discussion topics ranged from the tightening military budget, Total Force Integration and the changing Air Force approach to military professional development.

One common topic was how to maintain air superiority in a time of budget cuts. As military leaders have begun to meticulously comb through procedures and programs to remove non-priority elements and trim essential programs, money-saving initiatives have been the impetus of change. One such change is Total Force Integration,

where active-duty and National Guard airmen work together on the same installation.

“The strength of our Air Force is how all of our components come together.”

According to Cody, Air Force, Air Guard, Air Reserve, and our civilian components are all one, each with unique assets and capabilities.

“The strength of our Air Force is how all of our components come together.

Total Force Integration brings active airmen to Guard bases to learn through [Guard members’] extensive experience. This has been a force multiplier for us.”

Cody also said that leadership was carefully considering which missions are best suited to the different components, playing to each group’s strength.

Airmen also asked about new standards that require senior master sergeants and chief master sergeants to hold an associate’s degree from the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF). This has left some airmen who already hold a bachelor degree wondering why they need a second one from the Air Force.

He explained as a technical military service, the expectation is for each

Airman to become an effective leader with expertise in their field. The point of a CCAF degree, he said, was to help ensure senior enlisted airman had further education in their specific career fields.

Changes are also on the way for Enlisted Professional Military Education programs such as Airman Leadership and NCO schools. Cody referred to the initiative as “blended learning.”

Currently, active-duty airmen typically take the course in residence at schools while guardsmen have the additional option of completing the course at home. The distance-learning course saves the Air Force money but essential leadership skills are learned best face to face. The solution: A marriage where airmen complete online courses at home, then go in-residence for a shorter time period.

Cody also discussed the evolution of the Air Force culture and the impact that has on all airmen.

“There’s always going to be a level of commitment an airman is going to have to put in during and outside duty hours,” he acknowledged.

It won’t be easy, he said. But he has faith in leadership to take care of its airmen and the airmen to take care of the mission.

Right, Top to Bottom:
Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Cody, meets with fire fighters from at the 158th Fighter Wing, South Burlington, Vt., September 5, 2013. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Jonathon Alderman)

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Cody, addresses members of the Vermont Air National Guard at the 158th Fighter Wing, South Burlington, Vt., September 5, 2013. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Jonathon Alderman)

Members of the Vermont Air National Guard gathered together to meet with the Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Cody, at the 158th Fighter Wing, South Burlington, Vt., Sept. 5, 2013. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Jonathon Alderman)



New Vermont Adjutant General Moves Macedonia Partnership Forward

Story and photography by Capt. Dyana Allen, State Public Affairs

Skopje, MACEDONIA – Maj. Gen. Steven Cray, the adjutant general, Vermont National Guard, met with senior military, civilian, and government leaders this week in Macedonia.

This was his first visit as adjutant general. During this intensive visit, Cray discussed strategic initiatives of the State Partnership Program.

The Macedonian-Vermont State Partnership connection goes back more than 21 years.

More than 3,000 Macedonians and Vermonters have shared their expertise in more than 800 events as the partnership has developed.

“Vermont has a special bond with Macedonians. Your soldiers are recognized and trusted as professionals who provide continuity throughout their careers,” U.S. Ambassador Paul Wholers stated of the relationship.

Prior to flying to Macedonia, Cray, Command Sgt. Maj. Forest Glodgett, and Lt. Col. Dan Pipes, State Partnership director, met with senior leaders at EUCOM in Stuttgart, Germany. As the combatant command for the region, EUCOM recognizes the value of state partnership engagements.

“We coordinate our lines of effort with EUCOM, the country team, the major commands in Vermont and our Macedonian partners,” says Pipes. “This ensures that we are working together with meaningful results.”

Once in Macedonia, discussions revolved around several recurring themes: regional interoperability, domestic response preparedness, and working with all facets of government were threads woven through most conversations. Cray has a vision of incorporating these mutual interests in engagements with Senegal, Vermont’s other partner nation.

“A tri-lateral event to determine how Senegal and Macedonia will work together has many intriguing possibilities,” noted Cray.

In a day that illustrates the aggressive schedule of the week, Cray and Wohlers met with Talat Khaferi, the minister of defense, Lt. Gen. Gorancho Koteski, the chief of defense, and finally with Gjorgje Ivanov, the president of Macedonia. All leaders noted their excitement regarding the possibility of engaging with peers in West Africa.

Later that same day, Cray and Glodgett joined Koteski, at Illenden Barracks in Skopje to award two medals to each of



STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

the 79 Macedonian soldiers who co-deployed with Vermont’s 86th IBC to Afghanistan in 2010.

Glodgett planned and participated in this ceremony with his Macedonian counterparts, noting that, “These soldiers earned the Meritorious Unit Citation and Vermont Commendation medals. I am proud to have served with them in Afghanistan.”

During the ceremony, Cray commented that, “We share a deep bond of mutual respect that has grown from our experience in combat, but we also know each other’s families. The personal nature of our relationship is only built over time.”

The day concluded with a gathering of senior military, embassy, and political personnel at the ambassador’s residence.

Cray’s commitment to continued professional and personal exchanges in the State Partnership Program was clearly demonstrated each day of this trip through strategic engagement blended with an affirmation of Macedonian soldiers’ abilities.

Vermont’s senior leaders are committed to strategic cooperation and international engagement that will take the partnership to new levels in the future.

From Top, Left to Right:

U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Steven Cray, the adjutant general of the Vermont National Guard, pins a medal on one of 79 soldiers from the army of the Republic of Macedonia at Illenden Barracks, Skopje, Macedonia, Sept. 12, 2013.

U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Forest Glodgett congratulates Soldiers from the army of the Republic of Macedonia at Illenden Barracks, Skopje, Macedonia, Sept. 12, 2013.

U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Steven Cray, the adjutant general of the Vermont National Guard and U.S. Ambassador Paul Wholers meet with the Macedonian Minister of Defense, Talat Dzeferi, Skopje, Macedonia, Sept. 12, 2013.

U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Steven Cray, the adjutant general of the Vermont National Guard and U.S. Ambassador Paul Wholers meet with the Macedonian Chief of Defense, Major General Gorancho Koteski, Skopje, Macedonia, Sept. 12, 2013.

U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Steven Cray, the adjutant general of the Vermont National Guard and U.S. Ambassador Paul Wholers meet with the President of Macedonia, Gjorgje Ivanov, Skopje, Macedonia, Sept. 12, 2013.



U.S. Army National Guard 1st Sgt. Kevin Mulcahey, and Sgt. Nicholas Tarr, a troop medic, both with Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 172nd Cavalry Regiment (RSTA) (Mountain), prepare to move during an air assault exercise at Fort Drum, N.Y., August 13, 2013. The 86th IBCT is participating in an Exportable Combat Training Center rotation in preparation for Joint Readiness Training Center rotation in 2014. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Sarah Mattison)



U.S. Army National Guard Spc. William Cahill, with B Battery, 1st Battalion, 101st Artillery, gives the command of "Fire," to members of his squadron preparing to fire a Howitzer during the Annual Training Period with the 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Mountain) at Fort Drum, N.Y., August 8, 2013. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Sarah Mattison)

Written by 1st Lt. Jeffrey Rivard, 172nd PAD

The 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) (Mountain) took part in a Command Post Exercise starting July 21 and a rotation of the Exportable Combat Training Capability ending Aug. 17 at Fort Drum, N.Y. Once it was in full gear, the Soldiers involved in the Command Post Exercise or CPX, performed 24 hour operations for three days after spending nearly a week preparing, planning and war gaming.

There was representation from every battalion in the 86th IBCT, who all worked together to successfully plan and execute a mock mission. There weren't any actual boots on the ground for the mission but it gave each and every Soldier involved, the opportunity to see the importance of the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) and how it plays into the success of a mission.

As the CPX came to a close, hundreds more brigade Soldiers arrived at Fort Drum to take part in the Exportable Combat Training Capability or XCTC; facilitated by the First Army. At the height of the two week exercise, there were a little over 2,900 Soldiers on the ground.



Left to Right, Top to Bottom: An Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) sits in the hanger, ready to be launched (photo by Staff Sgt. Sarah Mattison); Members of Charlie Med execute a mass casualty exercise (photo by 1st Lt. Jeffrey Rivard); Spc. Marc Truedson, and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Dan Mcenerney, both with the Brigade Aviation Element, HHC, 86th IBCT (MTN.), work together to build a visual aid for the Combined Arms Rehearsal (photo by Sgt. Ashley Hayes); Soldiers from Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 172nd Cavalry Regiment (RSTA) (Mountain), prepare to assault during an air assault exercise (photo by 1st Lt. Jeffrey Rivard).

The XCTC gave Soldiers the comprehension and validation needed to perform successfully at a platoon level. Platoon STX lanes afforded brigade units the opportunity to conduct area and route recons; company hasty attacks; battery firing missions; and mass casualty exercises.

Both the CPX and XCTC were meant to prepare 86th IBCT Soldiers for their Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation at Fort Polk, La. in June 2014.

Most Soldiers not part of the 86th IBCT don't realize the number of states that make up the brigade, with almost every New England state basing at least a company of the brigade.

There are units from as far away as Colorado; where a small platoon of Unmanned Aerial System (UAS)

Soldiers, from Bravo Company, 86th Brigade Special Troops Battalion traveled from to take part in XCTC.

The UAS platoon provided valuable aerial reconnaissance assets to the Cavalry Troops and Infantry companies on the ground; adding another dynamic to the training missions they conducted.

"We were supporting the Brigade in STX training, doing the exact same thing we would be doing if we were deployed," said SSG Devon Sager, a UAS pilot with B Co. 86th BSTB.

A White Cell, run by the Garrison Support Command provided a Troop Medical Center, personnel tracking, transportation and some logistical support for the 86th IBCT.

Located at the Organization Readiness Training Complex; The White Cell were the first group to occupy the newly constructed area.

They contributed Soldiers to the large task of cleaning the new dining facility in order for it to pass inspection and be used to feed hundreds of Soldiers who supported XCTC.

With many of the lessons learned from the CPX and XCTC; the 86th IBCT will be better prepared for success during JRTC.

"I think all the training that we've done to date shows that we are well on the right track to operate at that [brigade] level during the next deployment, whenever that may be," said CPT Gene Enriquez, HHC, 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment.

Disaster Preparedness

Military Engagement Team Makes Strides in Senegal



Story and photography by Capt. Christopher Gookin, State Public Affairs

Leaders of Vermont's Military Engagement Team and the State Partnership Program travelled to U.S. Africa Command and then Senegal to engage with key leaders. Facing significant funding challenges in the coming year, Lt. Col. John Guyette, the MET commander, and Lt. Col. Dan Pipes, the SPP Director, travelled to reaffirm Vermont's commitment to security cooperation and international engagement.

African Command (AFRICOM), headquartered in Stuttgart-Moehringen, Germany, is one of six of the geographic combatant commands and is responsible for military relations and initiatives between African nations, the African Union, and African regional security organizations.

"The MET team has made significant strides in disaster preparedness planning with the Senegalese," said Lt. Col. Guyette.

With budgetary concerns potentially affecting future MET sponsored engagements, Guyette and Pipes decided to travel in conjunction with a previously approved engagement to synchronize lines of effort and discuss expectations with AFRICOM and the Senegalese.

Meetings with AFRICOM leaders in Stuttgart validated the MET focus of including the whole of government in disaster preparedness. Military response to an emergency is critical, but should be part of a coordinated effort across agencies.

"The whole of government refers to using all governmental agencies as well as the military in approach to national issues or emergencies such as Pandemic response or Humanitarian Aid and Disaster relief efforts. It also brings in the Non Governmental Aid agencies, which the civilian branch of the Government often deals with," said Guyette.

"Identifying the many relief options and agencies available to the Senegalese and understanding how Vermont's experience with disaster management can provide guidance will continue to provide value to our partnership," said LT. Col. Pipes, "We are here to make sure that future SPP events absorb MET missions without resetting our relationships."

Future opportunities were discussed including assisting with joint international disaster relief training and continued work with USAFRICOM's Disaster Preparedness Program and the Center for Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance

Medicine (CDHAM) on the Senegal National Pandemic response plans currently being constructed, and Humanitarian Demining Training Opportunities or HMA were also discussed.

"The intent is to train Senegalese forces to conduct HMA and other unexploded ordnance disposal, security, and logistics procedures through the 'train the trainer' method, this initiative will continue to ensure that our partner nation will develop and maintain a self sustainable mine action program that could become an exportable skill set to other regional nations," said 1st Sgt. Tom Comes, NCOIC of Camp Ethan Allen Training Site.

Dakar provided opportunities to engage with Senegalese general staff officers who are responsible for disaster planning. Non-governmental organizations like the World Bank are also involved with disaster relief planning in Senegal.

The Office of Defense Cooperation as part of the embassy team in Dakar is responsible for blending the many agencies into a coherent package. Other agencies represented were the U.S. Agency for International Development and its partner agency Food for Peace.

The Vermont National Guard's recent experience with Hurricane Irene set the stage for mentoring its Senegalese counterparts on flood response, having experienced the most significant flood in over a century just two years ago.

Additional opportunities include using AFRICOM programs to bring Senegalese non-military disaster preparedness leaders to Vermont to observe preparation for Vigilant Guard. Vigilant Guard is an exercise that brings all first responders together for a significant joint military and civilian disaster response; Vermont will be hosting the exercise in 2016.

"The primary lesson we will model for the Senegalese is that the military is not always the lead agency, and that to be in a supporting role is acceptable," said Guyette.

Left to Right: Soldiers from the Vermont Army National Guard meet with Senegalese Soldiers to view issues with the water table and discuss disaster preparedness; Senegalese children climb on top of and sit on pieces of wood to get out of the rising water; Members of the Vermont National Guard and Senegalese Soldiers meet with members of the Army Corp. of Engineers and a civilian engineering company to discuss the future range improvements for Senegal; Senegalese families attempt to avoid the rising water from flooding.

U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Chad Boyle inserts a electrical fuze into a fuze well, while Airman 1st Class Mckeever Barrow routes the fuze cable to the initiator and Airman 1st Class Jeffrey Jones prepares to install the FZU-48 initiator. The Airmen are part of 158th Munitions Flight and traveled to Alpena, Mich., for annual training. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman Jeffrey Tatro)



vermont REMEMBERS RUN

CAMP JOHNSON | 2013

Story and photography by Sgt. Nathan Rivard, 172nd PAD

COLCHESTER, Vt. - Runners, walkers and ruck marchers started filing into their starting positions well before the 8:30 morning start time. They were waiting for the beginning of the 11K Vermont Remembers Run.

The VRR is presented by the National Guard Association of Vermont and Century 21 Jack Associates. The event benefits the Vermont National Guard Fallen Soldier Memorial at Camp Johnson through the VTNG Charitable Foundation.

The good cause of benefiting the Fallen Soldier Memorial is not the only reason people come out for the event. For some it's almost a tradition.

"This is something we do every year," said 1st Lt. Geoffrey Lee, Delta Company, 186th BSB. "We've been doing this for four or five years as a unit, back when Capt. Gookin, was commander of the unit."

Military members aren't the only ones that participate in the run, family join in the event as well.

"It's part of something we do every year as part of our family day, said Lee. "It's relaxed and it's good to represent the fallen soldiers at the memorial here." Lee wasn't the only person who had remembrance on his mind during his 11K ruck march. Others were doing it for sentimental reasons as well.

"Just for fallen brothers and sisters - I'm on the fire rescue and this stuff means a lot to me," said Spc. Cassandra Cobb, Delta Company, 186th BSB. "On the fire department, I've lost four people, but while I was in the Marines, one of our guys overseas... got hit by an IED."

Cobb was carrying more than the required 35 pounds in the Ruck March Division. Her ruck could also talk at people and things going by.

"Look at the motorcycle, mommy," said Cobb's daughter.

"Fifty-one pounds, 30 pounds with my daughter and the rest is my hydration and a change of clothes," said Cassandra Cobb. "It's family day, so I definitely wanted to include her in the event."

There would also be no complaints from her daughter on the ruck march either.

"She's gone on hikes with me before, so she's enjoyed it," said Cobb.



Runners start the Vermont Remembers Run at Camp Johnson, Vt., Sept. 7, 2013.



U.S. Army Sgt. Kyle Small and Spc. Cassandra Cobb with Delta Company, 182nd Brigade Support Battalion, ruck marches with Cobb's daughter during the Vermont Remembers Run Sept. 7, 2013, at Camp Johnson, Vt. The 11K event benefits the Vermont National Guard Fallen Soldier Memorial at Camp Johnson.

VTANG MEASURES UP

to DoD Vulnerability Assessment

Written by Airman 1st Class Dana Alyce-Schwarz, 158th FW

In August, the 158th Fighter Wing underwent a week-long vulnerability Assessment of their Antiterrorism Program. The assessment is part of an annual requirement mandated by the Department of Defense, usually conducted by installation personnel, every three years it is performed by Higher Headquarters Air Force or DoD staff. This year it was conducted by the Joint Integrated Service Vulnerability Assessment (JSIVA) Team. The JSIVA team is managed by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), based out of Fort Belvoir, VA.

Programs and procedures throughout the installation were assessed to verify compliance with both DoDI and AFI requirements. Physical Security, Emergency Management, Infrastructure Protection, Communications, Antiterrorism, Risk Management and Security Operations were all under review.

The goal going forward is to ensure that everyone on base works together to meet all Antiterrorism Program requirements, said Capt. Christopher Bean, Wing Antiterrorism Program Manager.

The assessment was to gauge the strengths of the installation and identify areas that may need updates, improvements and or additional protections.

"We're going to refocus on the requirements," said Capt. Bean, "and make sure that our programs and program reviews are capturing everything that we need them to."

Capt. Bean said that to implement these goals personnel will work together as an installation to improve our Antiterrorism Program, better utilize resources, improve communication and established methods to better meet Air Force and DoD expectations.

VTANG Civil Engineers Return from Afghanistan



Photo courtesy of the 158th Civil Engineers Squadron

Written by Airman 1st Class Dana Alyce-Schwarz, 158th FW

Members of the 158th Fighter Wing Civil Engineering Squadron recently returned from a six-month deployment to Afghanistan where they worked with the Army in a joint service environment to maintain Bagram Airfield.

While deployed from November through July, the Vermont Air National Guard's (VTANG) civil engineers worked on projects ranging from electrical and building maintenance to upgrading the power grid and removing snow from the flight line.

The primary focus of the deployment was to ensure the base operated at maximum efficiency, said Chief Master Sgt. John Talcott, the chief enlisted manager for the VTANG civil engineering squadron who participated in the mission.

When the airstrip was damaged by incoming fire the engineers would have to fill craters with gravel or

concrete, replace the guide lights, and repair any electrical damage. Skill and training was essential for the crew to fix the runway quickly to avoid delaying priority flights.

Another project was to upgrade and improve the electrical grid and balance the power requirements as some areas of the base did not have adequate power to meet their needs.

"Security force members were using Humvees to power some of their gear," said Talcott. "We were able to go and hook them up with a generator or use commercial power that was out there. Our plan in Afghanistan was to make a lasting difference on the base, and we were able to accomplish that."

Ensuring that security forces could defend the base was essential as Afghanistan is still a hostile area.

Every day airmen remained alert to

the possibility of an attack and at night listened for the alarm of incoming fire.

"We got attacked quite a few times," said Senior Airman Luke Wamsley, a military high-voltage lineman. "You'd hear the sound of the bombs being dropped and the shots as we returned fire."

As their deployment ended, the engineers were looking forward to coming back to Vermont. Returning home requires adjustment as the service members work to settle back into their home routines and drill schedules.

Taking an extended tour is a good experience for members of the Guard, Talcott said.

It serves as a change of pace from the traditional drill weekend and allows Guardsmen a chance to apply their military career skills in the field.



POW/MIA CEREMONY

CAMP JOHNSON | 2013

On Friday, September 20, 2013, members of the Vermont National Guard, members of the Vermont State Guard and members of the Surviving POWs of Vermont Chapter Number 1, participated in a POW/MIA Ceremony at the Green Mountain Armory. This ceremony was to salute those men and women, who served our nation as prisoners of war, as well as the 80,000 that remain unaccounted for.

Guest speakers included Lieutenant Governor Phil Scott and Mr. Richard Hamilton, the Commander of the Surviving POWs of Vermont Chapter Number 1 and WWII Veteran.

The ceremony featured the 40th Army Band playing the National Anthem, a wreath laying by Brig. Gen. Mark Lovejoy and Lieutenant Governor Phil Scott and a remembrance service given by Vermont State Guard Chaplains Wayne Whitelock, Judy Kennedy, Melvin Bridge and Col. Pat Boyden.



U.S. Army National Guard Private Matthew Barber, a scout with Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 172nd Cavalry Regiment (RSTA) (Mountain), crosses through a helicopter bone-yard during an air assault exercise at Fort Drum, N.Y., Aug. 13, 2013. The 86th IBCT is participating in an Exportable Combat Training Center rotation in preparation for Joint Readiness Training Center rotation in 2014. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Sarah Mattison)



U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Jonathan Alderman plays AirSoft during annual training in Alpena Michigan July 2013. Over 700 members of the Vermont Air National Guard traveled to the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center to participate in a variety of training. (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Airman Jeffrey Tatro)



TRAINING REKINDLES TEAMWORK in the VTANG

Written by Airman 1st Class Dana Alyce-Schwarz, 158th FW

SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT - Over 700 members of the Vermont Air National Guard (VTANG) travelled to Alpena Air Base, Mich., for a week-long training in August.

The primary goal of the temporary duty assignment (TDY) was to refocus on fostering strong relationships within the VTANG, said Wing Command Chief Master Sgt. Brian Marchessault. Deployments are one of the main ways military members build camaraderie with each other and gain solidarity within their service. The VTANG rarely deploys in its entirety, but rather as individual sections to support established forces.

“The consensus on base was that we had lost the connection between Guardsmen,” said Marchessault. “We wanted to focus on the culture of the Guard and the relationship between Airmen.”

For many Airmen this was their first TDY, and some were unsure of what to expect for assignments.

Airman Sara Harding, a materiel handler with the Logistic Readiness Squadron (LRS), talked about some of the hands-on training she did, such as practicing preparing maintenance kits for deployments. But what she enjoyed more was the team building work she did with the LRS staff through courses such as the 4 Lenses Personality Assessment class.

“I can already see a difference with how I work with people in my shop,” Harding said. “My Captain’s approach has definitely changed with me after the class because he now sees how to communicate to my specific personality type. In the class they talked about how to interact with people in the different personality groups, and I feel like others understand me a little more now.”

After the duty day Airmen were encouraged to socialize both on and off base with all of the sections from the VTANG.

“The Guard has always been a close-knit family,” Marchessault said. “But lately people have been concerned that we’re losing that connection. We want to focus on regaining that bond, we need to know and trust our fellow Airmen.”

Harding, who has been in the Guard for only two years, said that during the Alpena trip she was able to meet people from other shops and make friends she wouldn’t have been able to otherwise.

“During our one weekend per month drill, everyone has appointments and assignments,” said Harding. “Time is very limited, so it was great to work alongside everyone for the entire week.”



FROM TOP: Members of the Vermont Air National Guard pose for a group photo on the flightline of the Combat Readiness Training Center in Alpena, Mich., July 17, 2013. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Jonathon Alderman)

U.S. Air Force Airman Sara Harding poses for a photo in the 158th Fighter Wing Logistics Readiness Squadron warehouse, September 3, 2013. (Air National Guard photo by Airman Jeffrey Tatro)



Soldiers from Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery Regiment conduct a battery jump at Fort Drum, N.Y. Aug. 11, 2013. A battery jump is conducted when an artillery unit needs to pick-up quickly from one firing position and move to another and begin firing with minimal delay. (U.S. Army National Guard Photo by 1st Lt. Jeffrey Rivard)