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The Adjutant General:
Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar

Deputy Adjutant General Army:
Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson

Deputy Adjutant General Air:
Brig. Gen. Gary Ebben

Deputy Adjutant General,
Civil Support:
Vacant

Acting Director of Public Affairs:
Capt. Joe Trovato

@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



4

Wisconsin Guard
members deploy
with 101st Airborne
as part of first
Division Multi-
Component Unit



7

128th Air
Refueling Wing
fueling the fight
against ISIS



9

457th CBRN
Company trains
on special Stryker
vehicles



11

426th RTI
launches nation's
first course for
combined fire
direction and
control MOS



13

The Air National
Guard's senior
enlisted advisor
visits Wisconsin
Air Guard bases



15

Wisconsin Air
Guard member
helps rescue pilot
during EAA crash



16

Brig. Gen.
Mathews becomes
Army National
Guard's first
Native American
general officer



18

Wisconsin Air
Guard installs new
senior enlisted
advisor



ON THE COVER: Airmen with the 128th Air Refueling Wing walk back to their warm truck after performing aircraft maintenance on a KC-135R Stratotanker in Milwaukee Jan. 10. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Tech. Sgt. Jenna Lenski

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How to Reach Us

E-mail: vaughn.r.larson.nfg@mail.mil
Phone: (608) 242-3056 Fax: (608) 242-3051
Department of Military Affairs;
Attn: Vaughn R. Larson
2400 Wright Street; Madison, WI 53704-8111

Submissions:

For photo or story submissions,
please call (608)242-3056
or e-mail vaughn.r.larson.nfg@mail.mil

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From the Adjutant General

We share a common heritage and play a critical role in the defense of our nation. The National Guard is true to our motto Always Ready - Always There, but that doesn't mean everything stays the same. It is our challenge to remain focused on our mission and readiness even as we endure constant change.

Army National Guard end strength was recently reduced from 350,200 to 342,000, and is projected to reduce further to 335,000 by the end of Fiscal Year 2017 (Sept. 30, 2017). These reductions affect all states including the Wisconsin Army National Guard. When asked about these cuts by our delegation, I have offered the opinion that these cuts seem ill advised given recent world events such as the terrorist events in Paris and Brussels. These reductions take us below the end strength that existed before 9-11-01. It is hard to look at today's world and think that it is safer than the one that existed on 9-10-11.

There are signs that Congress is rethinking these cuts. The House of Representatives recently passed legislation that would reverse recent cuts and re-establish end strength at FY 15 levels (350,200 for the Army National Guard). This is by no means a done deal, as the Senate would have to pass comparable legislation and the President would have to sign it in to law, but the testimony in the House and Senate has

been instructive. Our senior military leaders have expressed concerns about the size and readiness of the force and Congress appears to be listening.

These decisions are complicated and expensive, as Congress and the President must not only decide on the path forward but also how to pay for any increases. The good news is that today's all volunteer force is incredibly effective and a true national treasure in terms of quality and capability. The bad news is that the all-volunteer force is expensive. The expense covers a lot of issues, one of which is that active duty personnel are expensive. Make no mistake, they are worth every penny and are — in my opinion — a great investment for our nation.

The all-volunteer force also includes the National Guard, which is less expensive in terms of personnel cost but has been proven an effective partner in total force. The Air National Guard has seen ever increasing operations tempo since Desert Shield as the U.S. Air Force's force structure has dramatically reduced. The Army National Guard has performed in a manner once thought impossible as personnel and units have deployed multiple times for combat operations. Our National Guard has been both a strategic and an operational reserve, and has maintained record retention, consistently high readiness and enduring family/ employer support. Our National Guard is also a national treasure.

I hope Congress and the President can agree to halt these cuts. Regardless of that decision, our mission remains unchanged. We are the primary combat reserve of the United States Army and the United States Air Force, and we are the first military responder in the homeland. Your performance in uniform is exceptional and we will remain a critical and enduring part of the defense of our nation. We must remain steadfast in our purpose. It is a privilege to serve with you.

Donald P. Dunbar



Badgers+Eagles=DMCU

■ Wisconsin Screaming Eagles ready for critical coalition mission in Iraq

Capt. Joe Trovato
Wisconsin National Guard

Approximately 65 Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers are making history, having mobilized and deployed with the 101st Airborne Division headquarters to Iraq and Kuwait as part of the Army's first Division Multi-Component Unit (DMCU).

The 101st Airborne Division Headquarters assumed the role of Combined Joint Forces Land Component Command-Iraq, replacing the 82nd Airborne Division Headquarters. The division headquarters will provide command and control of coalition troops training, and lead the effort to train and advise the Iraqi army in its fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

"Screaming Eagles, I'm not going to sugar-coat it, the mission you've been given is extremely challenging and I think probably one of the most difficult our Army has faced since 2001," Lt. Gen. Stephen J. Townsend, the commanding general of the XVIII Airborne Corps, said during the Feb. 25 colors-casing ceremony at Fort Campbell. "The dynamics at play in Iraq and Syria are incredibly complex and ever-changing."

Maj. Gen. Gary J. Volesky, the commander of the 101st Airborne Division, said "Our partners in the region need our help in stamping out ISIL. Our nation's security and that of our allies depends on it.

"Today we once again build upon the phenomenal reputation of those great

Soldiers that went before us," he said later. "As we have since 1942, Screaming Eagle Soldiers have always answered our nation's call to duty with pride and tenacity. This tough mission is our next rendezvous with destiny, and we are ready for it."

The Wisconsin contingent departed for Fort Campbell, Kentucky Jan. 4, and senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders visited them there Feb. 25 before the unit headed overseas.

"We have two missions," Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general, told one group of Soldiers. "We're the first military responder in the homeland, and we're the primary combat reserve of the United States Army, and what you're doing right here is fulfilling that second mission."

Dunbar said the partnership with the 101st proves that the Army can trust the National Guard to seamlessly integrate into active federal service with the same professionalism and expertise of the active component.

"What they got was Soldiers every bit as fine as active duty Soldiers," Dunbar said of the 101st. "That's exactly what people expect. It doesn't surprise me. It doesn't surprise the leadership of Wisconsin. I know it doesn't surprise you, but you're breaking down walls and building that trust between the active component and the National Guard."

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, Wisconsin's deputy adjutant general for Army, spoke of how the DMCU was born out of cuts to active duty division headquarters units that resulted in the loss of personnel. The Army turned to the National Guard to fill the void,

Continued on Page 5



Gov. Scott Walker presents Col. Leland Ward, commander of Detachment 1, 101st Airborne Division Multi-Component Unit, with a Wisconsin state flag during a Jan. 4 sendoff ceremony for approximately 65 Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Madison, Wis.
@ease photo by Vaughn R. Larson

'New' Abe: Wisconsin Guard members deploy with 101st Airborne

Continued from Page 4

he said, and specifically to the Wisconsin National Guard.

"There was a recognition that we have skills comparable, or in some cases, even better than the folks in positions that had been vacated within the various division headquarters," Anderson said. "When Wisconsin was approached to be a part of that pilot program, the first in the nation, we jumped at that opportunity."

Anderson acknowledged that all Soldiers join the military for different reasons, but all swore an oath because of the call to serve.

"You wanted to serve your country, and you are now getting that opportunity at the national level and in an area that is in dire need," he said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Shields, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's senior enlisted advisor, served with the 101st while on active duty in the 1970s. At the time, there was a wide gulf between the active duty and the National Guard. Those days are gone, he said during the unit's deployment ceremony at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Madison, Wisconsin.

"I couldn't be prouder to be a part of this organization and see what I see in the Soldiers out in front of me here today," he said.

"You have set the standard," Shields continued. "This was a pilot program, and as we did during previous deployments, you have gone above and beyond demonstrating to the active component that we are as good, and in most cases, better than they are in terms of being ready and being tactically proficient."

An Army division headquarters draws from a wide array of military occupation specialties ranging from infantry and



Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers serving with Detachment 1, Headquarters, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Multi-Component Unit, listen to remarks from senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders Feb. 25 at Fort Campbell, Ky. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Joe Trovato

planners, to logistics, communications and supply specialists.

Sgt. Leroy Bicks, of Milwaukee, is a food service operations noncommissioned officer embarking on his seventh mobilization and fourth overseas.

"I'm looking forward to reliving the

experience and being deployed again," he said.

Bicks is also relishing the opportunity to mentor a fellow food service specialist on her first deployment and serving with the storied 101st.

"It's a privilege and an honor to be with

this unit," he said. "It's going to be a pretty good experience."

Spc. Barbara Thao, a signal support specialist from Wausau, Wisconsin, and a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, held a similar sentiment.

"I feel really special to actually be given

this chance to be in this unit, because not many National Guardsmen can say they were a part of the 101st," Thao, who is on her first deployment, said.

Maj. Eric Krueger, who returned from a deployment to the Middle East with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's [32nd Military Engagement Team](#) last year, is assigned to the strategic planning section of the division headquarters. He worked diligently on the campaign plan to get the unit overseas. In Iraq, he will conduct planning in a combined joint operations center with Iraqi forces.

For that, Krueger, a native of Mayville, Wisconsin, will draw upon the extensive knowledge and experience he gained working with the Jordanian military as part of the 32nd Military Engagement Team's mission.

He was excited to serve with the Screaming Eagles of the 101st and to continue the long lineage the division has in Wisconsin dating back to the Civil War. The iconic "Screaming Eagle" that adorns the division's famed unit patch is a depiction of Wisconsin's Old Abe — the mascot adopted by the 8th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment during the American Civil War. The men of the 8th Wisconsin carried Old Abe into battle alongside the national and regimental colors during the unit's campaigns.

At one point shortly after the division's formation, the 101st was headquartered in Milwaukee as part of the Organized Reserves, where Old Abe first became associated with the division.

"We're part of the 101st, and we're bringing Old Abe back on our shoulders," he said.

So far, the integration of Wisconsin

Continued on Page 6

Promotion brings Wisconsin Guard Soldier full-circle

Sgt. 1st Class Nathan Hoskins
101st Airborne Division

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. — An officer with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the division's headquarters Feb. 11, bringing the Soldier full circle in his career as a Guardsman with the Wisconsin National Guard.

Lt. Col. Cory J. Mulhern, a liaison officer for the 101st as part of the division's Multi-Component Unit, was promoted by his daughter, Sierra, and his son, Audie, during a ceremony surrounded by historical mementos, statues and relics of the Screaming Eagles — a detail not lost on the River Falls, Wisconsin, native.

Among those items is a display of Civil War Soldiers from the 8th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment wielding a shield with a bald eagle tethered to it, charging into battle. That's Old Abe leading the charge, the division's mascot whose resemblance is the centerpiece of the 101st's unit patch. This is significant to Mulhern because, as a Wisconsin Guardsman, his career began with Old Abe.

Being part of the MCU — a pilot program where Guard and active duty Soldiers train and deploy together — provides Mulhern the unique opportunity to serve with the unit that carries on the lineage of his first unit, and that matters to him.

"It matters because it's a source of identity for the first unit I ever belonged with, and it becomes — after 23 years — a source of my identity too," Mulhern said. "So to come here to the 101st, where they've now taken over that lineage, and they bear the flag, it's a great honor."



Lt. Col. Cory Mulhern, a liaison officer for the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), talks about what a unique opportunity it is to serve with the 101st as a Wisconsin National Guardsman,

Col. David L. Dellinger, the 101st chief of staff, attended the ceremony and stressed the importance of this promotion for the 101st and its relationship with the Wisconsin National Guard, as it points to the strong bonds created between the two units.

Dellinger highlighted the fact it's difficult to discern between a Guardsman and an active duty 101st Soldier because everyone works equally well — everyone is "completely and utterly aligned."

Mulhern as well takes great pride in being promoted by the 101st, but he understands

it comes with great responsibility.

"It means a lot, especially me being National Guard being promoted by the 101st," he said. "But it does put the pressure on because I'm living up to the expectations of the 101st. So it's not just my small little world, it's now a much greater scale for me personally. So I'm making sure I don't let down not only the 101st, but the Wisconsin National Guard back home."

During the ceremony, Col. Lee Ward, the detachment commander for the Wisconsin National Guard MCU Soldiers, spoke highly of Mulhern, having the chance to

and be promoted by the division after his Feb. 11 promotion ceremony. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Nathan Hoskins 101st Airborne Division Public Affairs

serve with him before.

Ward sees an even brighter future for Mulhern than what he's already accomplished. Ward believes Mulhern is on a command track, likely one day taking an infantry battalion.

After his daughter pinned his rank on his chest and his son adorned him with his newly minted patrol cap, Mulhern was joined by his wife, Jennie, in front of those in attendance where it all sank in.

"I never expected that I would be part of the 101st and still have that lineage back to a bird from the Civil War." 🦅



A Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldier embraces loved ones after a Jan. 4 sendoff ceremony for approximately 65 Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Madison, Wis. @ease photo by Vaughn R. Larson

Wisconsin Guard members deploy with 101st Airborne

Continued from Page 5

National Guard and active duty Soldiers has been almost seamless, Krueger said.

"You always have that stigma of, 'it's us versus them, active versus Guard,' but when we stepped off the bus, the 101st active duty guys couldn't tell the difference between the Wisconsin National Guard guys and the active duty, because we fit right in," he said. "We showed up mentally prepared, physically able and medically ready too." 🦅



Fueling the fight

Capt. Joe Trovato
Wisconsin National Guard

The Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing is hard at work fueling — or, in this case, refueling — the nation's war effort in the skies over the Middle East and Southwest Asia.

Airmen and KC-135 refueling tankers from the Milwaukee-based wing have spent months fulfilling their federal mission as the nation's combat reserve, serving as the backbone of the air campaign supporting Operations Inherent Resolve and Freedom's Sentinel in Southwest Asia.

The KC-135 has provided this core aerial refueling capability for the U.S. Air Force over the past five decades, and the 128th Air Refueling Wing rotated five KC-135s in and out of theater over the course of the operation. In addition to this critical aircraft, more than 140 Airmen from the 128th deployed during the course of the wing's rotations into the region. The first rotation left Milwaukee in late September 2015. The deployment length varies per individual based on responsibilities, but rotations are expected to continue at least through June.

During the deployment, the unit played a key role in the combined effort that off-loaded 39 million pounds of fuel per month to coalition aircraft over the first part of the unit's rotation.

The 128th Air Refueling Wing alone

A KC-135 from the 128th Air Refueling Wing prepares to refuel a coalition aircraft over Southwest Asia Nov. 24, 2015. The Milwaukee-based 128th Air Refueling Wing has been supporting Operations Inherent Resolve and Freedom's Sentinel since deploying in late September 2015. Submitted photo

Continued on Page 8



128th ARW supports Operation Inherent Resolve

Continued from Page 7

flew four to five sorties per day. As of late December 2015, 128th aircrews had flown more than 440 sorties and offloaded nearly 20 million pounds of fuel, or 3 million gallons, to approximately 1,500 receiving aircraft since deploying to the region in early October. In that time, they amassed more than 3,100 flight hours and re-fueled aircraft such as the F-15, F-16, A-10, C-130, B-1, C-17, joint, and coalition aircraft.

Col. Daniel Yenchesky, the commander of the 128th Air Refueling Wing, is extremely proud of the critical role his Airmen have played since deployed.

“To put that amount of jet fuel into perspective, an Olympic swimming pool 25 meters wide, 50 meters long and two meters deep holds 660,000 gallons,” he said. “Our Wisconsin Airmen delivered over four-and-a-half Olympic pools worth of jet fuel, in the air, during combat operations. It is just an extraordinary achievement.”

Yenchesky also pointed out the efforts of the wing’s maintenance team, who work tirelessly to ensure the unit’s jets are ready for combat when they arrive in theater.

“This takes a significant maintenance scheduling and preparation effort for months in advance of the deployment,” he said. “When a Milwaukee jet shows up in the desert, they put it to work.”

“It is a testament to the skill, dedication, and readiness of our Airmen and the quality of our aircraft that they can maintain that brisk operations tempo and do it safely,” he added.

“The Wisconsin Air National Guard’s contribution to Inherent Resolve and Freedom’s Sentinel is something we can all be proud of.”

Generally the rotations for Airmen from the 128th range anywhere from 30 to 120 days, depending on their individual mission set.

Their efforts, and those of the aircraft they refueled, are supporting the U.S. campaigns in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf and Yemen and keeping American and Allied aircraft in the skies.

Staff Sgt. Elvis Alvarado, a 128th boom operator, was proud to play such a critical role in the round-the-clock campaign to keep America’s combat and support aircraft flying nonstop. As a boom operator, Alvarado guides the KC-135’s fuel boom as it connects to the refueling aircraft.

“I feel a sense of pride and excitement every time we go out to fly,” he said. “I am proud to be part of the mission in such a big way. My job is never mundane, and it requires patience and precision. A job like that is fulfilling to the core.”

Master Sgt. Eric Dorn, the lead technician on an aerospace propulsion crew said his recent 60-day tour to the region was a success. Dorn and his team worked 12-hour shifts each day, and they were one of the four aerospace propulsion crews at his location. Despite the fact that they all came from different service components, he said, the crews built cohesion and worked together effectively.

“My unit was made up of Guard, Reserve and Active Duty,” he said. “But we created a good continuity. We worked really well together.”

Members of the 128th Air Refueling Wing offloaded nearly 20 million pounds of fuel to approximately 1,500 aircraft in the first four months of their deployment in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. Submitted photo

Game-changer

Capt. Joe Trovato
Wisconsin National Guard

The Wisconsin Army National Guard has a new tool in its arsenal to combat nuclear, biological and chemical threats that pose a hazard to the American people here at home as well as friendly forces on the battlefield around the globe.

The Hartford, Wisconsin-based 457th Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Company fielded four new M1135 Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Reconnaissance Vehicles (NBCRVs) in late 2015. In January, approximately 20 Soldiers from the unit began training at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, learning how the highly specialized piece of equipment works.

They completed their training in mid-March, becoming fully qualified on the vehicle and began integrating it into the 457th's mission. That mission strikes at the very heart of the National Guard's unique role as the military's first responder in the homeland and the Army's primary combat

reserve. In the event of a nuclear, biological or chemical incident, the NBCRVs and the 457th CBRN Company would be in high demand.

Checking in at more than \$4.5 million each and roughly 28 tons, the NBCRV is a fully sealed laboratory on wheels designed to enter NBC environments, detect threats and collect information on potential NBC contaminants.

Their arrival to Wisconsin is a game-changer for the 457th, which until this point operated primarily as a basic decontamination and reconnaissance unit. Now the unit will be able to leverage the advanced capabilities of the NBCRV's analysis equipment without ever leaving the safety of the sealed vehicle.

The unit's leadership sees many uses for the vehicles ranging from supporting the Wisconsin National Guard's CBRN Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) in a domestic environment where

Continued on Page 10

An M1135 Nuclear, Biological, Radiological Reconnaissance Vehicle assigned to the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 457th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Company traverses through a weapons familiarization exercise Feb. 16 at Fort McCoy, Wis. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Joe Trovato





At left, Staff Sgt. Jon Immendorf peers around the M2 .50-caliber machine gun mounted atop one of the new M1135 Reconnaissance Vehicles assigned to the 457th CBRN Company Feb. 16 at Fort McCoy, Wis. At right, a Soldier distributes .50-caliber ammunition. Wisconsin National Guard photos by Capt. Joe Trovato



457th CBRN Company fields new Stryker reconnaissance vehicles

Continued from Page 9

the unit can use the new technology to detect chemical agents like anthrax, or other synthetic agents, radiation from nuclear or dirty bomb threats, or biological hazards like a smallpox attack. The unit could fill a similar role in a deployed environment on the battlefield if the nation's enemies were to employ chemical or biological agents against civilians or military personnel. That versatility is representative of the National Guard's unique dual-mission to serve the people of the state and nation here at home, while simultaneously possessing the ability to bring those capabilities to bear in a deployed combat environment.

Each vehicle is equipped with systems that can collect ground and air samples for testing and analysis — all in a fully sealed, climate-controlled environment. It has an on-board weather monitoring system and is equipped with ground penetrating probes and even a gloved hand that a surveyor inside the vehicle can use to operate equipment mounted on the outside of the vehicle, the NBC-RV is equipped to deal with a worst-case scenario NBC event. The vehicle's seal and an air purification system protects the four-Soldier crew from NBC contamination and onboard storage systems allow the unit to take samples with them from the battlefield

for further analysis.

The unit's four NBCRVs are the only such vehicles in Wisconsin and they are among the few in the National Guard. Their arrival resulted in the 457th reorganizing the unit into a different configuration.

The unit's newly christened mounted reconnaissance platoon will use the NBCRVs, while the remainder of the unit will be organized into dismounted reconnaissance teams, which can also collect samples and insert them into the vehicle for transport and analysis.

The vehicle and its weapons system are designed for defensive purposes only, but it packs a punch. The vehicle uses a remote weapons system that allows the vehicle's crew to remain completely inside the armored vehicle while using a screen and a joystick to engage targets. The remote weapons system even allows them to run simulated training scenarios via a computer program. The Soldiers spent Feb. 16 on the range conducting weapons familiarization with the M2 .50-caliber machine gun mounted atop the vehicle for the first time.

"I was the first one in the chute, and I've got to say, it was pretty awesome," 1st Lt. Jeremy Philipps, the 457th's mounted reconnaissance platoon leader said after firing the weapons system for the first time.

Having the vehicles will change the entire unit's training focus, he said.

"I think as a whole, our whole unit was always looked at as (decontamination), so when this stuff came about it was a complete mind change for us," he said. "This is going to be something completely different in training and maybe some new people that want to come on board. Overall, I think everyone is excited about it, and we're just waiting to see where it goes and where it takes us."

Philipps said the vehicles' addition makes the unit more ready, relevant and ultimately deployable.

"I think specifically for our unit, this means deployability," he said. "The fact is, I don't think the Army is going to give us this kind of equipment that costs this much money, if they didn't have plans for us and plans to do something with it."

Lt. Col. Scott Southworth, the commander of the 641st Troop Command Battalion — the 457th's higher headquarters, agreed.

"It's a defining moment not only for the 457th, but for the entire Wisconsin Guard," Southworth said "Because it allows us to meet the challenges of a high optempo environment with the right equipment, the best training and the best people. If there is a need for a high-speed chemical company to engage in a real-world

fight, the 457th is the unit that should go."

Sgt. Kayleen Reetz, a surveyor in one of the new vehicles, is responsible for monitoring what the vehicle detects. She said the NBCRV's arrival to the 457th has had a significant impact on the unit's recruiting and retention. She recently re-enlisted for another six-year term herself in order to work with the vehicles.

Reetz and the rest of the platoon engaged targets in a variety of scenarios using the vehicle's weapons system during the familiarization training. They zeroed their weapons on stationary targets, engaged targets from a stationary position and eventually were engaging multiple moving targets while their own vehicle was moving.

"It's not easy when that target is moving and you're moving," she said. "Because if you have the pedal speed to low or too high or you're not moving fast enough or too slow...you have to find that sweet spot."

The training and instruction during the 10-week qualification course was superb, Reetz said. It began with learning how to drive the vehicle, then learning about the onboard systems and detection equipment. The training ultimately culminated in a multi-day field training exercise that required the Soldiers to test all of the skills they acquired in scenario-based environments.



Wisconsin hosts first-ever course for new artillery MOS

Capt. Joe Trovato
Wisconsin National Guard

FORT MCCOY, Wis. — The Wisconsin Army National Guard's 426th Regional Training Institute at Fort McCoy continues to lead the way in the Army's field artillery community.

The RTI hosted the Army's first-ever course for the new 13J military occupation specialty Jan. 3-23, which merged the fire direction and control occupations of both cannons (13D) and rocket systems (13P) into one integrated MOS.

The 13J course taught students how to process missions for both cannons and rockets, which requires students to receive information from forward observers and process that information into data that the cannons or rockets can use to fire. Ultimately 11 students from around the country, including three from the Wisconsin Army National Guard, will graduate as the first nationwide to have completed the course.

Staff Sgt. Nicole Mayberry, currently a supply specialist in the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1158th Transportation Company in Black River Falls, Wisconsin, will become the first female Soldier to complete the 13J course. The Army's field artillery branch and other combat arms branches had long been closed to women until recent Department of Defense changes lifted restrictions on women serving in roles such as combat engineer and in the artillery. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter subsequently declared all military jobs and units open to women without exception in December 2015.

Mayberry hopes to move to a field artillery unit sometime in the next few years and completing the 13J school will

Continued on Page 12



Staff Sgt. Nicole Mayberry completes a practical exercise at a new field artillery military occupation specialty course hosted by the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 426th Regional Training Institute at Fort McCoy, Wis., Jan. 21. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Joe Trovato

426th Regional Training Institute launches first course for combined cannon/rocket fire direction control MOS

Continued from Page 11

make that transition easier someday. Getting qualified in a field artillery MOS has long been one of her goals. When she first enlisted in 2005, she was assigned to the 426th as a supply specialist. In 2008, the artillery school at the 426th needed some additional help for a live-fire mission and asked her if she'd like to participate. After assisting some of the 13Ds with some fire mission processing, Mayberry was hooked and took advantage of every opportunity to do live-fire missions with the unit.

"I tried to take advantage of being surrounded by all of these instructors and so much knowledge and information and just soak up as much as I could," she said.

She eventually moved over to the 1158th, but with the support of her command to receive the 13J training, she aims to work her way into a field artillery unit soon. She hopes that someday she will be one of the non-commissioned officers leading and mentoring other young female field artillery Soldiers.

"That's one of the reasons why it is so important to me," she said. "I think that if they're going to enlist high school students into combat arms units that there should be some females somewhere in their chain of command and some NCO mentorship in there."

She will have a wealth of knowledge from which to draw, if the initial feedback from students about the first 13J course are any indication. Mayberry and others heaped praise on the RTI's course instruction and subject-matter expertise.

"It's excellent," Mayberry said of the course. "I had prior knowledge of a lot of the stuff that we're doing based on the live-fires I had gone on, but I've gone to a lot of schools and to a variety of schools, and this is the most difficult course I've been to as far as the content and the exams. It's really challenging and really excellent instruction."

Others in the course, which had National Guard and Army Reserve students from the Wisconsin Army National Guard, Michigan, Texas, Indiana, Arkansas, Florida, Texas and Georgia shared a similar sentiment.

Staff Sgt. Jacob Koutnik, also originally a supply specialist with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Milwaukee-based 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, said the course was the most difficult military course



Staff Sgt. Adam Schwartzkopf, an instructor at a new field artillery military occupation specialty course hosted by the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 426th Regional Training Institute at Fort McCoy, Wis., listens to a question posed by a student Jan. 21. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Joe Trovato

he's experienced.

"This has been the most informative course I've ever taken," he said. "It's been that challenging for me."

He said the sheer volume of information made the course difficult, but the 426th's instructors were very skilled in presenting it and having all aspects of the course in the same building at the Wisconsin Military Academy at Fort McCoy allowed him to focus on what he needed to accomplish.

"For me it's been hands down awesome," he said. "The benefit to being here is I'm staying at the same

place, eating at the same place, going to school at the same place."

Koutnik serves alongside fellow classmate Sgt. Steven Eckels in Battery A, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, and they deployed to Afghanistan together in 2014-15 as one of the first National Guard field artillery batteries to conduct a fire mission in Afghanistan. Their 121st brethren became the first on a 2013 deployment.

"Even though the coursework is harder than normal, having the instructors that we do...they're top notch," he said.

"If it's harder here, it won't be out there," he added.

Both Soldiers are looking forward to bringing the skills they learned at Fort McCoy back to their unit where they will work with other fire direction specialists who have worked with only rockets for their entire career. Now, they will be expected to work across multiple systems.

First Sgt. Michael Seefeld, one of the National Guard's subject-matter experts in field artillery, said it was an honor for the Army's field artillery branch, headquartered at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, to select the institution out of seven others nationwide to spearhead the training. The 426th has built a strong reputation as an institution of excellence in the field artillery community.

The Army will implement the new MOS into field artillery units over the course of the next few years. Staff Sgt. Adam Schwartzkopf and Staff Sgt. Ricardo Perez served as instructors for the course. The two Wisconsin Army National Guardsmen were humbled and honored to be the first to teach the 13J class.

They received the course content from Fort Sill, but since they were the first to teach the class, they took diligent notes and annotated critiques and lessons-learned that they will provide as feedback to Fort Sill for implementation and dissemination to 13J classes at other field artillery schools and training institutions around the country.

"It just goes to show all the hard work that goes on here, the quality of the instruction, the professionalism that comes in and out of this building not only from the staff, but what students expect when they come here," Perez said of the 426th. "That says a lot."

Schwartzkopf said the RTI's professionalism is responsible for the good reputation the organization has built for quality instruction.

"Here at Fort McCoy we hold ourselves to very high standards," he said. "Our chief holds us to high standards, we hold ourselves to high standards, and in doing that Fort Sill will actually send us a lot of the new material first, because we go through it, we'll figure out what's wrong, and we'll send it back. So they actually use us as kind of like their testing ground now."

As the standard bearer for the field artillery in the reserve component, it's no wonder the 426th RTI's field artillery school is known as the "Fort Sill of the North."

Chat with the chief



Chief Master Sgt. James W. Hotaling, Air National Guard command chief, speaks to Airmen of the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison, Wis., Dec. 6, 2015.
115th Fighter Wing photo by Senior Airman Kyle P. Russell

Chief Master Sgt. James Hotaling, the Air National Guard's top enlisted leader, visited Airmen at the 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee Dec. 5 and the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison, Wisconsin and Volk Field Dec. 6.

At the Fighter Wing, Hotaling met with squadron commanders, Airmen of the Rising 6 and the senior enlisted members of the Top 3.

"The Guard you joined no longer exists," Hotaling said. "We are doing more with less. We are currently the smallest Air Force in history, but we are occupying more countries and territories than we previously have in any other time period."

According to Hotaling, the old Guard will never return. Instead, focus needs to be on preparing for the future.

In an effort to prepare for the future, he went over his aim points — rules and regulations, Airman comprehensive assessment, enlisted performance reports, ways to stay healthy, and reinforced use of the Wingman concept.

At the Refueling Wing, Hotaling met with the Strength Management Team, Religious Support Team and Director of Psychosocial Health, and conducted a question-and-answer session with enlisted Airmen. He focused on commitment to service, the health of the Airmen and recognizing accomplishments.

In the junior enlisted Airmen meeting, Hotaling spoke about the pride felt by an Airman newly graduated from basic military training and challenged the Airmen in attendance to always strive for excellence and to focus on each Airmen's role in the military.

"You have dreamers and you have doers," Hotaling said. "Be the doer — be the absolute best person that you can today. Don't only look toward the future, but focus on the here and now."

In the senior enlisted Airmen meeting, Hotaling emphasized leadership, mentorship and supervision of Airmen.

Continued on Page 14

Chief Master Sgt. James W. Hotaling, command chief master sergeant of the Air National Guard, visited the 128th Air Refueling Wing at General Mitchell International Airport Dec. 5, 2015. During the visit, Hotaling attended meetings across the base including focus discussions with the Strength Management Team, the Religious Support Team and Director of Psychosocial Health, senior enlisted and junior enlisted. He also recognized Staff Sgt. Keith Turner, an Airman with the 128th Communications Flight, for outstanding service with the Rising Six Enlisted Council. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Tech. Sgt. Meghan Skrepenski



Air National Guard command chief visits Wisconsin

Continued from Page 13

“As part of the senior enlisted, we need to ensure we focus on the lower enlisted and recognize them as necessary to promote growth and further development and to help raise morale,” Hotaling said.

Restoring the health of the force includes mental, physical, social, and spiritual resilience. Hotaling said each of these areas must collectively be in balance — therefore, supervisors need to ensure open communication and Airmen should not hesitate to seek help if needed.

Several outstanding Airmen, nominated by their supervisors, received a coin from Hotaling for their accomplishments and demonstration of Air Force core values.

“If we focus on the human aspect, as leaders, we will ensure that we successfully meet the needs of the mission,” Hotaling said. “By putting the needs of our Airmen first and letting them know that we hear them and their concerns, we will find success together.”

“I think it is very important for our Air National Guard Command Chief to speak face-to-face with our Airmen about his aim points, especially the profession of arms and important role that all Airmen have in accomplishing our mission,” said Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Safer, 115th Fighter Wing command chief. “He explained to our Airmen the realities of the budget, Airman Comprehensive Assessments, Enlisted Performance Reports, and training shortfalls.

“In my opinion, Chief Hotaling is the quintessential servant leader,” Safer continued. “He works extremely hard to ensure the enlisted ranks are motivated, educated and reach their full potential.”

Story by Senior Airman Kyle P. Russell, 115th Fighter Wing, and Tech. Sgt. Meghan Skrepenski, 128th Air Refueling Wing

Aircraft incident at annual EAA event cues Airman instinct

Senior Airman Andrea F. Rhode
115th Fighter Wing

He heard commotion from the crowd. Something was about to go terribly wrong. He popped his head outside the bunker he was in and as he made his way around the corner, the earth shook and smoke poured into the sky.

It was a pilots' worst nightmare.

Instinct kicked in as he watched his buddy's feet take off into a fast sprint. Rather than running himself, he fumbled for his keys, jumped in his truck while his cousin, Don, jumped in the other side, and off they went at lightning speed — toward the flame.

"We skidded to a stop and were the first two to get there," said Lt. Col. Ben West, 115th Fighter Wing pilot. "The right wing broke free. The left wing didn't break off. The left wing stayed attached and it stayed on fire."

As fuel was draining out of the attached left wing, and the fire continued charring the side of the plane, there was only one thing on West's mind, and that was to get those people out of there. When Maj. Michael Bracki, a pilot with the Illinois Air National Guard's 126th Air Refueling Wing, arrived on foot, he also sprang into action.

"By the time I got to the wreckage, they had already started pulling people out," Bracki said. "I assisted Ben and Don by getting the survivors away from the fire and administering triage, stabilizing the passengers, and passing the injury assessments I had made to the paramedics once they arrived on scene."

While Bracki was working on people outside of the plane, West went inside to get the last passenger, knowing very well that the rest of the plane could explode at any moment. When he got inside, he realized

the guy in the front of the plane was pinned in.

"I reached over the seatback and got under his arms and tried to pull," West said. "He just wasn't going anywhere. When I realized he was unconscious I started slapping him and trying to wake him up. I couldn't get any response out of him and I

wasn't making any headway."

As thoughts were racing through his head, West knew he had to make a judgement call.

"I thought, if I can't get him out, then I need to get out and start putting the fire out," West said. "So, I left the airplane."

Once outside, West saw one of the

do their job. After the fire was out, they were able to cut the last passenger out of the aircraft, leaving only his pinned-in shoe behind.

When all was said and done, the three men, who volunteered their time to put on pyrotechnics during the 2015 Experimental Aircraft Association's AirVenture Oshkosh fly-in convention, got a bit more than they bargained for on July 22.


Although neither Bracki nor West would credit their Air National Guard backgrounds to their actions that day, both agreed their training did not hurt the situation.

"I don't know if the Air Force training is what I would point to as far as getting me going initially, but I certainly used my Air Force triage training once I got there," Bracki said. "I didn't stand in one place and watch the airplane burn, wondering if there was anything I could do. I knew there was something I could do because of my training."

Bracki is glad his instincts jumped into play when they did.

"The memory of this accident has been a pretty rough one to have," he said. "To see something that I love so much cause pain and injury is hard, but to know that there was something that I could have done and didn't do, would be 10,000 times worse."

The lesson Bracki wanted to share was this: if the opportunity to help fellow man arises, then do whatever is possible to help.

"After talking to Ben about this, he said that seeing me run like Forrest Gump toward the wreckage is what spurred he and Don into moving," Bracki said. "You will never know the effect your actions will have unless you take them. If my taking off running got Ben and Don moving, and all three of us got to the plane and started pulling people out and helping together as a team, then I'm glad I started running." 

Oshkosh plane marshal vehicles pull up. He knew there was a fire extinguisher on the vehicle.

"I grabbed the fire extinguisher, pulled the pin and was getting ready to spray the wing, and that's when the fire trucks pulled up," he said.

West backed away and let the firemen



Gov. Scott Walker administers the oath of office to newly promoted Brig. Gen. Joane Mathews as her husband Ric holds her Bible during a formal ceremony April 4 in the Senate Chamber of the state capitol building. Mathews — the first Native American female to become a general officer in the entire Army National Guard — will serve as the assistant adjutant general for readiness and training. @ease photo by Vaughn R. Larson

A first, of many

■ *State's newest general officer has built her career shattering glass ceilings*

Vaughn R. Larson
@ease staff

Brig. Gen. Joane Mathews made history April 4 when she became the Army National Guard's first female Native American general officer.

"I am so lucky and so blessed to be here, and it is all because of my family," Mathews explained during a formal ceremony in the Senate Chamber of the state capitol building. "My biological family, and my military family."

Gov. Scott Walker promoted Mathews and administered the oath of office, with her family nearby and military colleagues in attendance. Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general, explained that the U.S. Constitution authorizes the governor to appoint National Guard officers.

Continued on Page 17



State capitol hosts historic Army National Guard promotion ceremony

Continued from Page 16

“Today, we have a great Soldier being promoted,” Dunbar said. “That resume is not an average resume.”

Dunbar detailed Mathews’ service in active duty — including her time supporting the no-fly zone in northern Iraq in the 1990s — and her roles in the Wisconsin Army National Guard as a battalion commander, brigade commander, director of Army National Guard personnel and administration, and chief of staff.

“That is not the stuff of average performance,” Dunbar said. “That is the stuff of exceptional performance. She brings all of that, and her culture as a member of the tribe of Lac du Flambeau. She is a mom, she is a spouse, she is a

sister, a daughter — and for our purposes today, a great Soldier.”

Mathews’ new role is the assistant adjutant general for readiness and training — a responsibility she promised to give “110 percent.”

Walker said it was an honor to take part in the promotion ceremony.

“Today the people of Wisconsin are honored to celebrate one of our great Soldiers, one of our great leaders,” Walker said. “On behalf of the 5.7 million in the state, I say congratulations to you and to your family — we know you don’t do this alone.”

Mathews agreed that many played a role in her military career. She thanked her mother, sisters and brother. She spoke of her late father, who served in the 82nd Airborne Division and who attended most

of her military promotions. She thanked her husband Ric for his untiring support over the years.

“We have been through a lot,” she said. “You have been by my side every step of the way. You have helped me so much — words can’t describe. I am so thankful. I appreciate what you have done for me and for our family.”

Mathews acknowledged that she never envisioned becoming a general officer, and credited “a great organization” with great individuals.

“I think one of the best decisions I’ve made in my military career was to join the Wisconsin Army National Guard,” she said. “I think, bar none, we have the best Soldiers in the entire nation — active duty and National Guard.”



Above left, Brig. Gen. Joane Mathews’ daughters Shannon and Lindsey attach her new shoulderboards reflecting her new rank during a formal promotion ceremony April 4 in the Senate Chamber of the state capitol building. Above, a member of the Ho Chunk Nation’s Thundercloud Singers presents Mathews with a blanket before an honor song is performed. @ease photos by Vaughn R. Larson

Staff Sgt. Matthew Ard
Wisconsin National Guard

Airmen, Soldiers and families packed the drill floor of Joint Force Headquarters for a Wisconsin Air National Guard state command chief change of authority ceremony, Feb. 6 in Madison, Wisconsin.

Chief Master Sgt. Gregory A. Cullen, the command chief master sergeant for the Wisconsin Air National Guard, turned over his authority to Chief Master Sgt. Thomas J. Safer. The state command chief is the Wisconsin Air National Guard's senior Airman and advises the adjutant general on matters concerning the state's more than 2,200 enlisted Airmen. Additionally, he maintains a rapport with the deputy adjutant general for Air and the commanders for the 115th Fighter Wing, 128th Air Refueling Wing and Volk Field.

As command chief master sergeant, Cullen oversaw four separate geographic areas within the state of Wisconsin where Airmen from the 115th Fighter Wing, 128th Air Refueling Wing, Joint Force Headquarters and Volk Field Air National Guard Base are stationed.

Maj. Gen. Donald P. Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general, said, "It has been my absolute privilege to have had him advising me for these four years and making what was already a wonderful Air National Guard even better.

"You've exceeded every expectation that I had," Dunbar continued, "and it has been my deep honor to serve with you."

Cullen served as the command chief for four years, and Dunbar lauded his commitment to his work and accomplishments during his tenure.

"These are the finest Airmen that our Air Force has to offer," Dunbar said, "so Chief Cullen, mission accomplished."

"It has been an incredible ride," said Cullen, who recalled some of the highlights

of his time as command chief. He spoke highly of his cohorts and relished the satisfaction that came with the job. "I am privileged to work with such approachable, down-to-earth and caring general officers," he said.

Before the ceremony Cullen said what he loved most about his job was getting to know his enlisted Airmen.

"Hearing their stories gives me the most job satisfaction," he said. "Helping them along the way in any way that I could is something I will cherish."

Cullen advised Safer to be approachable. "The Airmen have to know that you care and that you'll be there for them and represent them," he said.

As a testament to the dedication he has shown, an emotional Cullen was bid farewell with a long round of applause from the large crowd of Airmen and Soldiers.

During the ceremony, Safer accepted the saber, which symbolizes responsibility returning from the outgoing command chief to the adjutant general, and then bestowed on the incoming command chief.

After the passing of the saber, Safer praised his fellow Airmen from the podium.


"First and foremost I have to say that I am extremely proud of the more than 2,200 men and women of the Wisconsin Air National Guard," Safer said, "and I feel very fortunate to be associated with such an outstanding group of Airmen."

With 33 years of experience and multiple deployments, Safer is well prepared to take on the job and address issues with Airmen readiness, training, utilization, morale, professional development and quality of life.

"I have been an Airman for nearly 34 years and I have served in the regular Air Force, the Air Force Reserves and the Air National Guard," Safer observed. "So I understand and I am empathetic to the sacrifices you and your families make and the challenges you face on a day-to-day

basis to ensure the security of our nation."

Just like the saber, the post of command chief shall continue to maintain its edge in the Wisconsin Air National Guard.

"My philosophy has always been mission first, Airmen always," Safer said. 

Meritorious Service

Wisconsin Air Guard announces state's top Airmen

Six Airmen, representing the Wisconsin Air National Guard's three bases, have been recognized as Wisconsin's Outstanding Airmen of the Year for 2016.

The six Airmen, who will compete against their peers across the country for the chance to be named the 2015 Air National Guard Outstanding Airman of the Year, include: Senior Airman Arteaga Ward of the 128th Air Refueling Wing, Airman of the Year; Tech. Sgt. Kitrina Vargas of the 128th Air Refueling Wing, Noncommissioned Officer of the Year; Senior Master Sgt. Brian Carroll of the 115th Fighter Wing, Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year; Master Sgt. Michelle Marrero of the 128th Air Refueling Wing, First Sergeant of the Year; Master Sgt. Kevin Lukas of Volk Field, Honor Guard Manager; and Staff Sgt. Jared Hildebrand of the 128th Air Refueling Wing, Honor Guard Member.

A panel of five chief master sergeants reviewed dozens of Outstanding Airman nomination packets and selected the winners based on their 2015 achievements — primary job accomplishments, self-improvement, community service and physical fitness — as well as a records review and a written essay on being a professional in the Wisconsin Air National Guard.

Ward is an air transportation journeyman assigned to the small air terminal at the 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee. Last January he completed a five-month deployment to Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan where he served as a ramp dispatcher. Upon his return to Wisconsin he took the place of a deployed full-time master sergeant and applied critical subject matter expertise to the cargo deployment function during the nuclear operation



**Senior Airman
Arteaga Ward**

readiness inspection. He instructed five vehicle courses for members of the 128th Refueling Wing as well as the 115th Fighter Wing, and in August served as team chief in training during an annual tour of Osan Air Base in South Korea, ensuring 11 Airmen accomplished 245 training tasks. He spent the final two months of the year filling a logistics readiness master sergeant position.

Vargas, an air transportation craftsman, was the 128th Air Refueling Wing's Airman of the Year in 2009. She completed a six-month deployment to Bagram Air Base in March 2015, where she served as assistant duty officer, information controller and ramp coordinator. During this challenging deployment she helped move 176,000 passengers and 129,000 short tons of cargo on 19,500 missions. She began a full-time logistics readiness position at the 128th Air Refueling Wing in November.

"I feel so privileged to be chosen to represent all of [the Wisconsin National Guard Airmen]," Vargas said. "Professionally, this is humbling, encouraging and challenging to me."

Carroll is the 115th Fighter Wing's Logistic Readiness Squadron Fuels Flight



**Tech. Sgt.
Kitrina Vargas**

superintendent, directing 15 fuel sections to ensure uninterrupted fuel support to the Wing's F-16s in support of their missions. He also secures and supplies fuel to the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, located near the 115th Fighter Wing at Truax Field in Madison, Wisconsin. His flight was named the Air National Guard's best fuels flight in 2014.

Carroll also said he was humbled by the announcement.

"[I] have to totally thank my team," he said. "It lets me know that I am doing some things correct as a supervisor, but gives me drive to improve daily and not let the Airmen below me down."

Marrero is the Mission Support Group first sergeant with the 128th Air Refueling Wing. In addition to being named the 128th Air Refueling Wing's First Sergeant of the Year for 2016, she earned that title in 2014, and was the Wisconsin Air National Guard's Noncommissioned Officer of the Year in 2011. She serves as the financial improvement audit readiness coordinator with the Wing's Financial Management Office, and mentors three other first



**Senior Master Sgt.
Brian Carroll**



**Master Sgt.
Michelle Marrero**

sergeants in the Mission Support Group.

Lukas is the deputy airfield manager for the Combat Readiness Training Center at Volk Field Air National Guard Base, where he coordinates and directs all activities related to airfield operations and airspace scheduling to ensure a safe flying environment on and around the airfield. He has been the Honor Guard manager at Volk Field since 2014.

"Personally, being an honor guard member is very rewarding on that all events are different, and you walk away with a sense of pride and accomplishment after each event," Lukas said. "Being an honor guard member and manager has been more rewarding than anything else in my career — in being a part of this unique group, and working with the people around me to see their dedication toward this program."

Hildebrand is an aerospace ground equipment journeyman with the 128th Air Refueling Wing. He volunteered to become an active member of the wing Honor Guard in 2011 and has participated in more than 100 honor guard events since then. He deployed to Anderson Air Force Base, Guam, in January 2015, where he



**Master Sgt.
Kevin Lukas**

supported the mission to decisively employ air and space forces in the Asia-Pacific region. He completed his Airman leadership correspondence course in July 2015.


Vargas said she believes the Outstanding Airman of the Year competition highlights Airmen who are dedicated to the mission as well as caring for each other.

"They are looking for Airmen who seek to constantly improve themselves, Airmen eager and ambitious to lead," she said.

Carroll said dedication factors into who advances in the Outstanding Airman of the Year.

"The main thing is to just give it 100 percent daily, keep you people happy and provide a safe and relaxed work atmosphere," he said. "It's all about creating a functional team that achieves the goals of the fighter wing. Being a team player, not a dictator."

Lukas agreed.

"The amount of time put in to make sure the program remains running and is successful," he said. "You have to be dedicated in making sure this program continues, and I look at the honor guard as a program that must remain intact." 



**Staff Sgt.
Jared Hildebrand**

Wisconsin Air Guard names 2016 company grade officer

Capt. Matthew Wunderlin
Wisconsin National Guard

The Wisconsin Air National Guard named a 128th Air Control Squadron officer its 2016 Company Grade Officer of the Year.

A board of senior officers selected Capt. Eric R. Dunford of Tomah, Wisconsin, an intelligence officer with the 128th at Volk Field, Wisconsin, for the honor.



Capt. Eric Dunford

This highly competitive award recognizes the top company grade officer, lieutenants through captain, throughout the three Wisconsin Air National Guard bases by examining leadership and job performance, significant self-improvement, and base and community involvement.


"I am incredibly honored," Dunford said. "Over the course of my career, I've had the privilege of serving with so many talented and hardworking officers from all three bases. To be singled out for this award is very humbling."

One of the accomplishments that singled out Dunford was a six-month deployment beginning August 2015 to the U.S. Central Command Joint Personnel Recovery Center where he served as the intelligence officer in charge. While deployed he and his team identified high-risk-of-isolation areas for Operation Inherent Resolve and directed intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets for multiple personnel recovery missions.

"Working in the joint personnel recovery center was an incredible experience," Dunford said. "I learned so much from daily interactions with other active duty Airmen. Seeing firsthand the level of competence and professionalism of the U.S. military in all four branches made me extremely proud to be a member of the Wisconsin Air National Guard."

Dunford demonstrated his competence and professionalism in other areas of his life as well. He has maintained a 3.89 GPA in his master's degree program, earned a perfect 100 on his most recent physical fitness test, and has volunteered extensively with the elderly and disabled in his community.

"The best advice I could offer to other CGOs [company grade officers] and Airmen is to work hard in serving others," Dunford said. "My parents instilled into me at an early age to treat others the way I would like to be treated. I am convinced that one of the primary reasons why I have been successful is because of some of the great co-workers God has placed in my life. I recall Brig. Gen. Ebben once briefing us that the most important job we will ever do is the one we're currently working. This really changed my perspective in going to work each day."

In a memo announcing Dunford's selection, Brig. Gen. Gary Ebben, deputy adjutant general-air, said, "It is inspiring to see the extraordinary quality of our CGOs. I am convinced that the future of the Wisconsin Air National Guard is in great hands as our tremendous CGOs continue to develop and advance with increased responsibilities. Please join me in congratulating Capt. Dunford for this well-deserved recognition." 



Brig. Gen. Michie retires

Brig. Gen. Mark Michie, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Land Component Commander, was honored for more than 35 years of military service during a formal retirement ceremony March 5 in Madison, Wis. Michie retired effective Jan. 31, but continues to serve in a civilian capacity as the vice chief of staff for the Wisconsin National Guard Joint Staff. Above, Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general, presents Michie with a certificate of commendation from Gov. Scott Walker. @ease photos by Vaughn R. Larson



Follow the Wisconsin National Guard online

STARBASE director receives state meritorious service medal

The Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs has honored the first director of STARBASE Wisconsin with a state meritorious service medal.

Dr. Charisse Sekyi (pronounced SAYchee) received the award for her role from September 2011 to December 2014 as the first director of STARBASE Wisconsin, a Defense Department-funded educational initiative administered by the Wisconsin Air National Guard located in Milwaukee. STARBASE — an acronym for Science and Technology Academies Reinforcing Basic Aviation and Space Exploration — uses an inquiry-based curriculum to help 5th-grade students develop interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

“A lot of elementary science education is not hands-on — it’s paper-pencil-book,” Sekyi said at the June 18, 2012 ribbon-cutting ceremony. “To be able to bring this level of activity down to the elementary level is really phenomenal.”

STARBASE academies serve students historically underrepresented in STEM fields. The target group includes students in inner-city or rural locations, those who are socio-economically disadvantaged, low in academic performance or have a disability. STARBASE encourages students to set goals and achieve them.

Students study Newton’s laws and Bernoulli’s principle, explore robotics, nanotechnology, navigation and mapping. They use computers to design all-terrain vehicles, space stations, and submersibles. Math knowledge is emphasized as students use metric measurement, estimation, calculation geometry and data analysis to solve questions. Teamwork is fostered as part of the program.

Science, technology, engineering and math education is critical to the nation’s global competitiveness, and cultivating interest early in a student’s life can influence them to pursue those fields as careers. In her role as STARBASE director,



John Puttre, STARBASE Wisconsin director and a retired Wisconsin Air National Guard colonel, and Maj. Gen. John McCoy, the Air National Guard assistant to the Air Education and Training Center commander, present Dr. Charisse Sekyi with the Wisconsin Meritorious Service Medal for her instrumental role as the first director of STARBASE Wisconsin. Submitted photo

Dr. Sekyi has directly influenced thousands of Milwaukee Public School 5th-grade students and their instructors, stimulating STEM interest through aviation and space exploration.

“The activities are so engaging,” Sekyi said in 2012. “It’s such a rich curriculum, but it’s very rigorous so there’s some work that we have to do to meet the kids where they are and bring them up to where the curriculum is.”

Troop movements

32nd Brigade

Col. Michael George has been selected as the next commander of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. He follows Col. Michael Rand, who will retire from the Wisconsin Army National Guard after 30 years of honorable service.

Command Sgt. Maj. Joel Rothbauer has been selected as the next command sergeant major of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. He follows Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde, who is being assigned as the next command sergeant major for the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

Maj. Brion Aderman has been selected as the next commander of the 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment. He follows Lt. Col. Vic Parziale, who has been selected as the next 120th Infantry Brigade Executive Officer in Fort Hood, Texas.

Lt. Col. Josephine Daniels has been selected as the next commander of the 173rd Brigade Engineering Battalion. She follows Lt. Col. John Reiter, who will join the Wisconsin National Guard Joint Staff.

Maj. Michael Laube has been selected as the next executive officer/administrative officer for the 132nd Brigade Support Battalion. He follows **Maj. Shannon Hellenbrand**, who will serve as the chief of the officer personnel management branch in the G1 Directorate.

...

157th Brigade

Lt. Col. Carl Meredith has been selected as the next commander of the 257th Brigade Support Battalion. He follows Lt. **Col. Tim Skelton**, who will join the G3 Directorate as the mobilization readiness officer

...

USPFO

Col. Daniel Pulvermacher has been selected as the next deputy U.S. Property and Finance Officer. He will assume this position following the retirement of **Col. Dan Sailer**.



First female squadron commander

Lt. Col. Adria Zuccaro assumes the position as the Operations Support Squadron commander here at the 128th Air Refueling Wing, Wisconsin Air National Guard, March 6. Zuccaro is the first female commander of the 128th Air Refueling Wing Operations Support Squadron as well as the first female to be in command of a flying squadron in the Wisconsin Air National Guard. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Senior Airman Morgan Lipinski

Parting shot

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general, prepares to fire a 60-mm mortar during a live fire exercise with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry out of Fond du Lac, Wis. Dunbar visited various Wisconsin National Guard units during the April drill weekend. Wisconsin National Guard photo