



# aeasse

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN NATIONAL GUARD  
Volume 8 • Issue 2







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

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:  
**Open**

Director of Public Affairs:  
**Lt. Col. Gary Thompson**

@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

## Volume 8

# 16

## Issue 2



**4** Fixing flood  
damage up  
north



**8** Volk Field  
hosts Miles  
Paratus



**11** 32nd MP  
Company  
heads to JTF  
Guantanamo



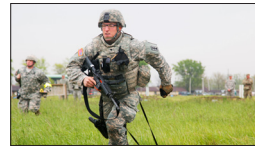
**20** Innovative  
training  
resumes



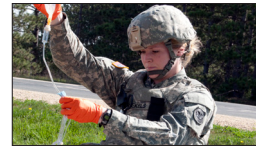
**22** Anakonda 16:  
Training in  
Poland



**24** KC-135  
shows its  
versatility



**26** Quest to be  
the Best  
Warrior



**29** Combat  
medics refine  
skills



**31** Teaching  
artillery to  
active duty



**34** Mexican  
Border call-  
up, 1916



**38** Cpl. Stephen  
Castner  
remembered



**40** New senior  
enlisted  
advisor



**42** Red Arrow  
gains new  
commander



**48** Youth Camp  
returns to  
Volk Field



**50** Challenge  
Academy  
graduation



**52** Making their  
mark in  
England

**3** From The Adjutant General

**16** What's new with the  
DMCU

**17** EOD performs roadside  
rescue

**18** F-16 competition builds  
teamwork

**19** Supporting the Air Force  
weapons school

**37** Marching in memory of  
others

**44** Red Arrow gains new  
command sergeant major

**45** Volk Field names new  
commander

**46** Fighter pilot at home in  
cockpit and Congress

**47** Green and Gold legends  
huddle with GIs

**54** 115th Fighter Wing fire  
department saves a life

**55** Meritorious Service



**ON THE COVER:** 1st Lt. Joshua Steadman supervises Spc. Michael Baldwin, both members of the 229th Engineer Company, while using an excavator to backfill a washed-out culvert along Eade Road in Ashland County, Wis., Aug. 9 as part of flood recovery operations. More than 75 Wisconsin National Guard members were called to state active duty to assist areas in northwest Wisconsin affected by major flooding and damaging winds. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Spc. Kati Stacy

The on-line, interactive **@ease** offers many features you may not be aware of. Arrow down to advance page-by-page, or arrow up to page backwards. Follow the **red caption text** to see additional photos and videos. Click on the **blue text** to open related sites. Click on the teasers above to go directly to that page in this issue.

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

### How to Reach Us

E-mail: [vaughn.r.larson.nfg@mail.mil](mailto: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](mailto:vaughn.r.larson.nfg@mail.mil)

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

# From the Adjutant General

When the first plane struck the north tower of the World Trade Center at 8:46 a.m., Sept. 11, 2001, we all wondered what had happened. When the second plane struck the south tower of the World Trade Center 17 minutes later, we knew our nation was under attack. In the minutes, hours, days and weeks that followed, our nation responded. First responders were heroic and responded tirelessly. The nation's military increased its readiness posture at home and overseas and, across America, the National Guard took to the skies and assembled at our armories.

As we mark the 15th anniversary of that fateful day, it is appropriate to both remember and contemplate the ways we have changed as a nation and as the National Guard.

We have changed, but we have also proven to be resilient as a nation and the foundational tenets of our nation endure — as they should. The National Guard has changed, too. Our missions remain the same — primary combat reserve of the Army and the Air Force, and first military responder at home — but we have been called upon more often and have responded superbly.

Today we remain an operational reserve. We are proud to mobilize as required with the Army and the Air Force, and deploy wherever and whenever needed. We are a battle-tested and experienced force.

Since that fateful day 15 years ago, virtually the entire Wisconsin National



Guard has deployed for combat operations. A cost has been paid. Across the nation, 6,876 military personnel have died in contingency operations, including 167 with Wisconsin ties, and 10 from the Wisconsin National Guard.

Today, we remain operational with several hundred personnel deployed

for contingency operations, including a small unit assigned to the 101st Airborne Division's Screaming Eagles; 128th Air Refueling Wing Airmen assigned to U.S. Air Forces Central Command, and the 32nd Military Police Company assigned to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

All of this has been done while maintaining our role as Wisconsin's first military responders. We have responded to eight federal disasters and multiple state disasters, including floods, high wind events, severe winter weather, tornadoes, severe storms, and social unrest. When called, we have responded

as part of coordinated state effort and helped bring relief to our citizens and communities.

Our missions are critical. We ask much of our service members as well as their families, their employers and their communities. It is this foundational support that assures our success. As we look to the future, we can expect more change and more challenges.

"Much of America's Army capacity is resident in the National Guard," said Army Gen. Mark Milley. "I expect demand to increase in the future, and we must rely more heavily on our National Guard to meet that demand."

That is no less true about our Air National Guard.

To meet the unpredictable needs of the future, we must adapt with the Army and Air Force in terms of tactics, techniques and procedures, and equipment, and facilities. More importantly, we must never forget our role. We are the National Guard — always ready, always there. Our success is measured one Soldier and Airman at a time, who takes responsibility for his or her physical fitness, integrity and commitment. This is bolstered by family, community and employer support.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Donald P. Dunbar".



# Answering the call

**Staff Sgt. Alex Baum**  
*Wisconsin National Guard*

After massive rains and flooding in northern Wisconsin last July, the National Guard responded. For the next two months, Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard troops provided debris removal, road clearance, road safety and damage assessments, and repairs to key infrastructure throughout the region.

National Guard troops completed operations in northwest Wisconsin Sept. 10, signaling an end to their mission of assisting with debris cleanup and road repairs resulting from the summer [storms](#).

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general, called members of the Wisconsin National Guard to northwestern Wisconsin following a [state of emergency declaration](#) by Gov. Scott Walker.

"I really appreciated the opportunity to work closely with officials from local, state, and federal agencies," said Maj. Joseph Davison, the officer in charge of Joint Task Force-Engineer, or, JTF-EN, created for this operation. "And to jointly analyze problems in order to develop options to solve them."

The task force was primarily comprised of members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 724th Engineering

**Continued on Page 5**

**Spc. Justin Meagher, a Soldier with the 724th Engineer Battalion, operates a chain saw to cut up large debris at Saxon Harbor, Wis., Aug. 9 as part of flood recovery operations.** Wisconsin National Guard photograph by Spc. Kati Stacy







**Torrential rains in northwestern Wisconsin in early July caused flooding and road damage across an eight-county region. Wisconsin National Guard engineer assessment teams were called to state active duty to assist Wisconsin Department of Transportation engineers in assessing road damage in the aftermath of the storm. Ready Wisconsin photos**

## Army, Air Guard team up for flood response effort

Continued from Page 4

Battalion and the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Civil Engineering Squadron. JTF-EN had three primary mission sets in its response: debris clearance, road repair, and township road damage assessments.

National Guard personnel served to augment town and county personnel in cleanup efforts. They worked in conjunction with township and county government, Wisconsin Emergency Management, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and the U.S. Forest Service.

The Guard's [road assessment teams](#) assisted local municipalities that lacked capacity to provide timely information to FEMA and Wisconsin Emergency Management. The teams documented description, size, and location of 180 damaged sites then built project worksheets to provide the Department of Transportation cost estimates for the repair projects.

Three debris removal teams, two Air and one Army, operated in Bayfield and Sawyer counties to remove downed trees from roadways and roadside ditches. The teams also felled 166 trees that were partially blown over and deemed unsafe. These missions took 2,550 person-hours and 277 dump-truck loads.

In Bayfield, Ashland, and Iron counties, JTF-EN carried out five missions to repair portions of washed out and rutted roads, replace culverts, and regrade the surface of roads. More than 6,000 person-hours and 11,900 cubic yards of fill material went into these missions.

Davison served previously as a staff officer in Wisconsin's Joint Operations Center during the major flooding events in

Continued on Page 6



**Engineers from the Wisconsin National Guard's 724th Engineer Battalion, headquartered in Chippewa Falls, Wis., assess road damage caused by major flooding in northwest Wisconsin July 19. Wisconsin National Guard photo**





**Left, Staff Sgt. Timothy Sadowski, with the 128th Air Refueling Wing's Civil Engineer Squadron, works to clear debris and potential hazards on fire roads in Ashland County, Wis., Aug. 9.** Wisconsin National Guard photograph by Spc. Kati Stacy

# Wisconsin Guard responds to northern storms, flooding damage

Continued from Page 5

2008. He drew heavily on that experience to lead JTF-EN — however, this situation gave him the chance to directly influence operations in the field.

“Through taking these lessons learned, I’m confident we can put in place plans and procedures that will enhance our posture and readiness for future domestic operations,” Davison said. “This operation demonstrated to me that if a problem or a request for

assistance is not clearly understood than the response will rarely be appropriate. It is critical that we continue to leverage experts from local, state, and federal agencies to gather facts and jointly recommend a plan that will best provide the most appropriate assistance to the municipality in need.”

As the first military responder in the homeland, the Wisconsin National Guard will draw upon these lessons

Continued on Page 7



**Crewmembers from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's West Bend, Wis.-based Company F, 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation assist a dialysis patient from the Bad River Reservation in northern Wisconsin out of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter July 13 after conducting a medevac mission from the reserva-**

**tion to Ashland, Wis., for treatment. Torrential rains and severe weather that struck the area July 12 cut off road access to the reservation and left five members of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa unable to get to a medical facility for dialysis. Submitted photo**





Members of the 229th Engineer Company, including Sgt. Chad Buchen (foreground), backfill a washed-out culvert along Eade Road in Ashland County, Wis., as part of flood recovery operations. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Sgt. Kimberly Miannecki

## Wisconsin Guard engineers lend a hand to local authorities in flood response efforts

Continued from Page 6


to be better prepared for similar future missions.

Between 8 to 12 inches of rain fell within a few hours July 12, resulting in

flooding and severe damage to numerous roads and highways, as well as private property. Saxon Harbor in Iron County, Wis., was also heavily damaged.

Four Soldiers of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation also completed

a [medevac mission](#) July 13, providing helicopter transport so five stranded dialysis patients could receive treatment.

More than 75 members of the Wisconsin National Guard were activated at the [height of operations](#). 



Sgt. Andrew Wirtz, with Detachment 1, 950th Engineer Company, 724th Engineer Battalion, 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, maneuvers a Backhoe Loader System across the Oronto Creek bed during debris removal operations at Saxon Harbor, Iron County, Wis., Aug. 9. Wisconsin National Guard photograph by Spc. Jared Saathof



# MILES PARATUS

■ *Exercise aids local, state, national preparedness for disaster response*

**Spc. Kati Stacy and Spc. Jared Saathoff**  
*112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

VOLK FIELD, Wis. — The Wisconsin National Guard and the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs Division of Emergency Management (WEM) coordinated and conducted the Miles Paratus Special Focus Event at both Volk Field and Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, June 5-9, aiming to fulfill part of its unique dual mission as the first military responder when disaster strikes here at home.

The five-day emergency response exercise, involving approximately 2,500 military and civilian personnel, focused on inter-agency efforts to plan, train, and respond cohesively across the state. The event brought more than 50 civilian local, state, and national emergency response agencies as well as private sector organizations together. More than 20 National Guard units from Wisconsin, West Virginia, Idaho, Minnesota, and Illinois also participated in an effort to build relationships before an actual incident occurs along with personnel from Federal Emergency Management Region V, volunteer organizations such as the American Red Cross and Salvation Army, and even private sector businesses who participated through the state's Business Emergency Operations Center.

Col. Daniel Pulvermacher, Joint Force Headquarters director of installation

**Continued on Page 9**



**Members of the Wisconsin National Guard wash a simulated casualty during a medical training exercise during the Miles Paratus Special Focus Event at Volk Field, Camp Williams, Camp Douglas, Wis., June 7. The Wisconsin National Guard and the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs Division of Emergency Management**

**coordinated and conducted the Miles Paratus Special Focus Event, a five-day emergency response exercise focused on inter-agency efforts to plan, train, and respond cohesively across the state. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Spc. Jared Saathoff**





**Amateur radio operators test their communications interoperability during the annual Statewide Interoperable Mobile Communications Exercise May 19 in Neillsville, Wis.** Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Joe Trovato

## SIMCOM helps first responders share key information

**Capt. Joe Trovato**  
Wisconsin National Guard

Two recent domestic operations exercises have left the Wisconsin National Guard better prepared to fulfill its role as Wisconsin's first military responder.

The annual Statewide Interoperable Mobile Communications exercise known as SIMCOM, was held May 18-19 in Neillsville in Clark County. More than 150 participants from 20 various agencies participated in the annual communications exercise at the Clark County Fairgrounds.

**Continued on Page 10**



**Members of the Wisconsin CERFP (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Enhanced Response Force Package), civilian participants, and firefighters from La**

**Crosse and Fitchburg prepare for the Miles Paratus training exercise at Volk Field, Wis., June 6.** 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Spc. Kati Stacy

# Building relationships between military, civilian first responders at command and execution level one of goals of Miles Paratus

**Continued from Page 8**

management, and Greg Engle, director of the Bureau of Planning and Preparedness for WEM, directed the Miles Paratus exercise and spoke about the challenges, progress, and goals of the training.

One of the most exciting aspects of Miles Paratus is building relationships between military and civilian agencies, on the command level as well as at the execution level, Pulvermacher said. The exercise has been a great opportunity to network, share lessons learned and

resources, and integrate into a fully functional team.

"These types of exercises need to happen," Pulvermacher continued, "because when the public needs you, that's not the time to train and get ready. Now's the time to do the training, to get proficient, to hone your skills, so that when the public needs you, you're prepared to do what is going to be needed of you."

Engle concurred with the importance of the training and developing the relationships between the participating agencies and organizations.

"We're really testing those connections," Engle said. "When a resource request is made at the Incident Command — at the local level — watching it go all the way up to the state level and then come all the way back down, that's something we needed to exercise for a long time, and what I think is one of the biggest accomplishments."

"From the beginning we shared a common set of goals between the military and the civilian side," he continued. "We built this exercise together, we planned it together, and created a common framework. That's what I think led to this

true integration of the operations and the exercise. It was a truly collaborative effort."

Pulvermacher elaborated, stating the goal was to develop exercises and venues that allowed National Guard units including the Civil Support Teams (CST), CERFP (Chemical Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Response Force Packages), and National Guard Reactionary Force (NGRF) to train and familiarize with integrating alongside civilian agencies for increased readiness in the event of an emergency.

**Continued on Page 10**



# Wisconsin a national leader in multiple agency communication exercise

Continued from Page 9

Over the course of the exercise, participants conducted radio checks and established reliable data, phone and Internet capabilities to ensure interoperability.

The National Guard has a unique dual-mission as the primary combat reserve of the Army and Air Force, but also as the first military responder in an emergency here at home, so Guard units must ensure that their military networks and communications systems are interoperable with civilian communications systems to fulfill that mission.

“Sometimes people ask, ‘Why do this?’” said John Ross, Clark County Emergency Management Director. “We do this so that we can work through the planning, work through the preparation, have the conversation, find out where some of our challenges and variables are going to be in a controlled environment where we can stop and fix the problem rather than experiencing it when the world is falling apart around us, and we’re trying to do our other tasks in that response.”

Ross added that one of the greatest benefits of regular exercises is learning the capabilities and resources of other agencies and developing relationships with people from other agencies across all levels so that when they pull up to a major emergency response, they are not meeting for the first time.

“Wisconsin is one of the only states in the U.S. that actually does a cross-agency exercise like this,” said Capt. Allen Nielsen, a Wisconsin Air National Guardsman who works in Wisconsin’s Joint Operations Center



**Todd Nehls, of Wisconsin Emergency Management, explains the capabilities of WEM's Mobile Communications Center to a group of visitors May 19 in Neilsville, Wis. Nearly 150 personnel and more than 20 communications platforms participated in the annual Statewide Interoperable Mobile Communications Exercise.** Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Joe Trovato

and helped plan the 2016 SIMCOM exercise. “Other states try to emulate this [exercise], but they don’t have anything near the size or scope that we do.”

Lessons learned at SIMCOM were on display just weeks later as part of the [Miles Paratus exercise](#).

Interoperability and establishing reliable communications were once again a focus of the exercise.

If such a scenario had occurred in real-life, seamless communications interoperability between each agency — from National Guard aircraft and response forces, to local sheriff and police departments, EMS, fire departments, Wisconsin Emergency Management, the FBI and others — would have been critical to the overall response.

Todd Nehls, the deputy director of

emergency police services with Wisconsin Emergency Management, coordinated WEM’s mobile communications center. Nehls explained that in a hypothetical response to a terrorist incident, the local sheriff’s department, police, fire, EMS, along with various state and federal law enforcement agencies, and the National Guard all might be called to the scene.

“The challenge is they’re all on different bands, and they can’t talk to one another,” he said. “I can get the bands on their radios, go in the back [of the mobile communications center], and I can patch radio networks together so they can talk to one another.”

Testing those capabilities and networks in regular exercises like SIMCOM and Miles Paratus are vital to ensure the state’s first responders are ready when needed in a real emergency. 📷

## Exercise aims to identify, remedy gaps in military-civilian emergency response effort

Continued from Page 9

Miles Paratus scenarios focused specifically on tornadoes, cyber-attacks, acts of terrorism, and responding to threats from hazardous materials. Volk Field served as the site of a local disaster caused by severe weather and incorporated technical rescue, mass casualty incidents, search and rescue, chemical decontamination, hazardous materials releases, and fire response training. Fort McCoy simulated an emergency where military and civilian first responders faced severe weather and tornadoes with additional emphasis on law enforcement response and training.

Jody Wormet, Wisconsin Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) director of field operations, who oversees Western Wisconsin, discussed the scope of the exercise.

“I was really impressed with the agencies coming together in this environment,” Wormet said, “[and] working together, communicating, and learning from one another about their strengths, their weaknesses, and how we can improve in terms of law enforcement operations, fire operations, and emergency medical operations.”

Wormet was also impressed with the participants’ efforts to improve emergency management at the local, state and federal levels, along with the National Guard through the CST, CERFP, and NGRF.

Lt. Col. Brad Meyers, lead doctor with the 115th Medical Wing, has found that participating in these types of scenarios is valuable to the mission of the CERFP.

“We don’t have a lot of disasters

that we go respond to, but we have to be ready to respond to those disasters,” Meyers said. “Changing up the scenarios that we have, the locations that we set up, is all fundamental to doing it right.”

Jeff Schott, La Crosse Fire Department fire captain and hazmat team leader, spoke about the importance of the training after leading his team in an event that simulated a chemical leak caused by a natural disaster.

“If we get an opportunity to mitigate at a training event then it’s going to go a lot better when we get to the real thing,” Schott said. “We practice our communication, we practice the tactics that we’d actually use to mitigate an incident and often pool our resources to run a unified command so that we can better facilitate dealing with the problem.”

Engle summed up the event and why it is necessary for the Wisconsin National Guard to train regularly with civilian first responders and emergency response agencies in order to ensure seamless interoperability in communications and operations.

“There will always be challenges and things that don’t work in an exercise of this magnitude and this complexity, and in a way, that’s what you’re looking for,” he said. “You’re looking for those gaps. You’re trying to identify the processes that didn’t work or something you thought that you had enough resources, but you didn’t have enough resources. Those things are going to happen, and all of those problems and all of those challenges have been manageable and have been worked out through this exercise.” 📷



Gov. Scott Walker presents the state flag to Capt. Brian Schwalbach, commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 32nd Military Police Company during a May 16 sendoff ceremony at the 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee. @ease photo by Vaughn R. Larson

# Honor-bound to defend freedom

Vaughn R. Larson  
@ease staff

MILWAUKEE — Gov. Scott Walker and senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders joined family and friends in a May 17 sendoff ceremony for more than 120 members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 32nd Military Police Company, which deployed to U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo to support detainee operations as part of Joint Task Force Guantanamo.

The ceremony occurred as Armed Forces Week was beginning in Milwaukee, underscoring the Wisconsin National Guard's dual role as the nation's primary combat reserve and the state's first military responder.

"We're about to become participants in history," said Capt. Brian Schwalbach, company commander, noting the recent change in diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. "Our unit is no stranger to high-profile missions. We have always been relevant and ready — this mission will not be any different. The Soldiers here are tried, tested and ready for this deployment."

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general, also invoked history by speaking of "those damned black hats" from the Civil War, and the Red Arrow Division from World War I and World War II.

"They wrote great chapters of our

Continued on Page 12





**Before, during and after the May 16 sendoff ceremony for the 32nd Military Police Company.** @ ease photos by Vaughn R. Larson

# 32nd MP Company takes on detainee operations mission at JTF Guantanamo

**Continued from Page 11**

history,” Dunbar said. “And whether you know it or not, men and women of the 32nd, you are writing a new chapter in the history of the Wisconsin National Guard — your chapter. And it’s just as important to the defense of this country as our previous legacy.”

Walker presented Schwalbach with a state flag, noting it was designed in 1863 at the request of Wisconsin volunteer infantry Soldiers during the Civil War who wanted to carry state colors into battle.

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, Wisconsin’s deputy adjutant general for Army,

acknowledged the professionalism required for the 32nd Military Police Company’s upcoming mission.

“You will continue to hone your skills for this quite difficult mission,” Anderson said. “I’ll tell you that your challenges will be just as difficult [as those in a combat theater]. It will be because of your individual professionalism, your capabilities, coming together as a team, knowing what the mission is, and taking care of each other that you’re ultimately going to be as successful as I’m extremely confident you will be.”

1st Lt. David Kalisky, the unit executive officer, expects to be assigned to Camp

Echo — a facility where detainees with behavioral or psychiatric health issues meet with lawyers and doctors.

“For the past eight months we’ve been focusing on detainee operations at home station,” he said. “I’m learning a lot in this position.”

“I will tell you these Soldiers are well trained, well equipped and well led,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Sullivan, senior enlisted advisor for the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade — the Milwaukee-based brigade to which the 32nd Military Police Company belongs. “These Soldiers are going to go forward, they’re going to perform their mission professionally,

they’re going to come home with dignity and return back to you.”

Dunbar said that when a National Guard unit deploys, it takes part of the community with it.

“The National Guard is part of Wisconsin, and when this unit goes forward, you have the family and loved ones of these Soldiers going into this mission,” Dunbar said. “When the National Guard deploys to Guantanamo Bay, it takes Milwaukee and Green Bay and Oak Creek and Delavan and many other towns — this unit is going to do great because we’re sending Wisconsin.”

Walker agreed.

“Today we thank each of you for being

willing to serve your nation and your state through your service in the Wisconsin National Guard. I thank each of you, I thank your families and friends, but I also thank your employers for giving you the support and ability to come back to the same position once your deployment is over.”

Schwalbach said his company could not do what it does without the support of family and friends.

“You are the glue that holds us together,” he said. “Your dedication and sacrifice is second to none.”

The unit conducted several weeks of training at Fort Bliss, Texas before deploying to Guantanamo Bay. 🇺🇸



# Ready for Guantanamo Bay

**Capt. Joe Trovato**  
*Wisconsin National Guard*

FORT BLISS, Texas — Senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders paid a visit June 18 to the more than 120 Soldiers of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 32nd Military Police Company as they completed training at Fort Bliss in preparation for their deployment to U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general, Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, the deputy adjutant general for Army, Col. David O'Donahue, the commander of the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's senior enlisted advisor, and Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Sullivan visited the troops to wish them well before the unit leaves for Cuba to conduct a detainee operations mission there.

The unit [departed Milwaukee](#) in May enroute to Fort Bliss, and began training for its important mission.

"We're coming into the tail end of our collective training exercise and validation exercise, and the Soldiers are really starting to hit their stride," Capt. Brian Schwalbach, the 32nd Military Police Company's commander said. "Some of them have previous detainee operations experience, but a lot of them did not."

Schwalbach said there are many differences between the unit's current mission and the mission it conducted in Iraq in 2009-10 at a theater internment facility, so the U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay-

**Continued on Page 14**



**Soldiers from the 32nd Military Police Company conduct detainee operations training at Fort Bliss, Texas, June 18 during a visit from senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Joe Trovato**



# 32nd MP Company ready for detainee operations mission

Continued from Page 13

specific training the unit received at Fort Bliss has been extremely valuable.

He believes that the unit is ready for its mission, and the Soldiers show their professionalism and commitment to that mission every day.

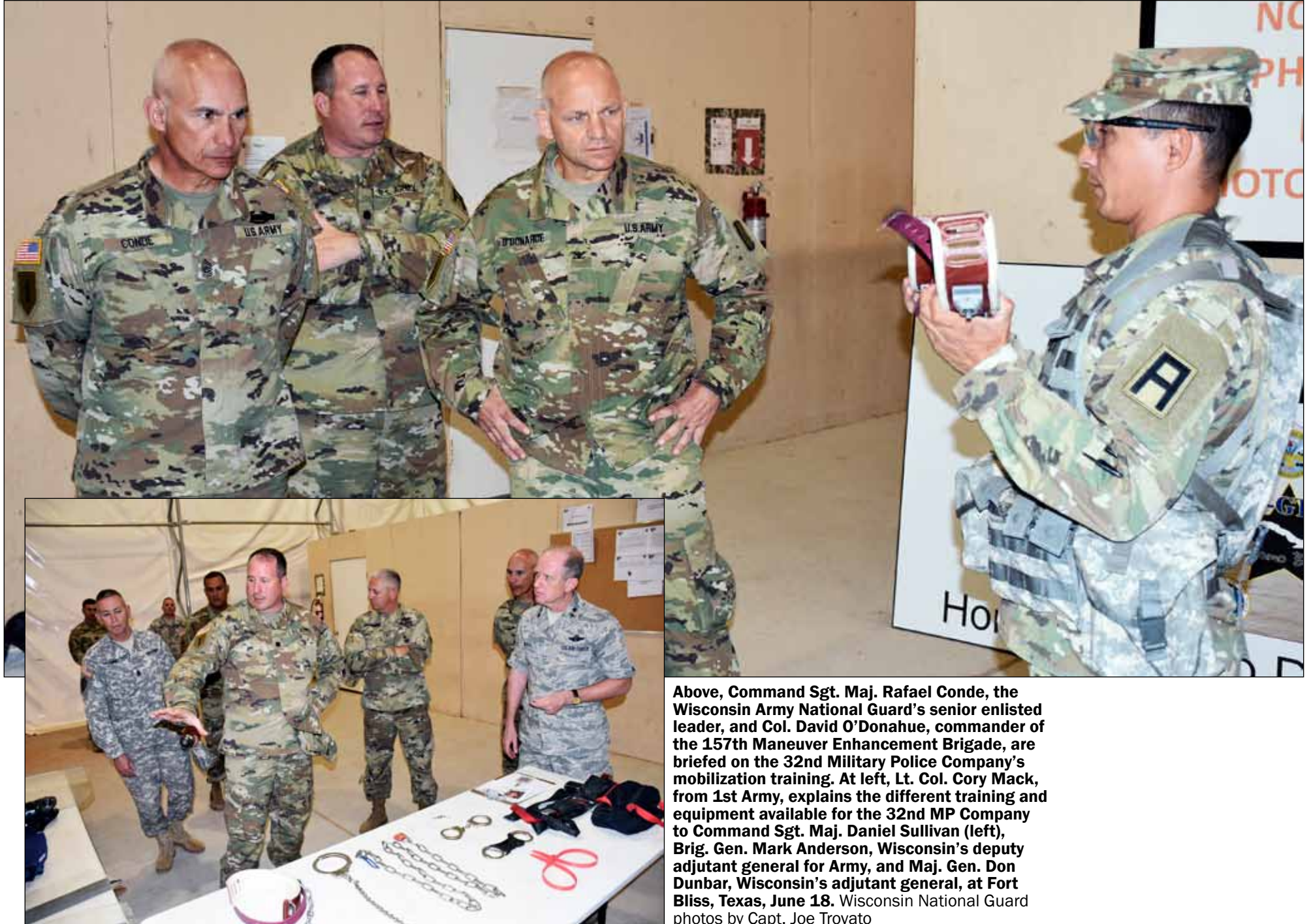
“They make my life easy, from the noncommissioned officers down to the lowest ranking,” he said. “They make it easy to be a commander. Morale is great. The operations tempo we had here, due to the hard work and long hours they put in on drill and annual training periods when we were back at home station, has really made this beyond manageable.”

The unit’s time at Fort Bliss has been invaluable in building a cohesive team, and the Soldiers are now looking forward to the next phase of their mobilization.

“This is going to be my first mobilization,” Sgt. Spencer Holms, a Germantown, Wisconsin, native said. “It’s definitely going to be a different experience than what you get at annual training or drill, but it’s been a very good experience. The training has been very effective, and I can see my team developing very professionally down here.”

Holms recently graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh with a degree in criminal justice and now works in a correctional facility as a food service manager. He thinks the unit is well-prepared and ready for its mission thanks to the hard work the unit’s noncommissioned officers and other leaders have done in preparing their platoons.

Continued on Page 15



Above, Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde, the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s senior enlisted leader, and Col. David O’Donahue, commander of the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, are briefed on the 32nd Military Police Company’s mobilization training. At left, Lt. Col. Cory Mack, from 1st Army, explains the different training and equipment available for the 32nd MP Company to Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Sullivan (left), Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, Wisconsin’s deputy adjutant general for Army, and Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin’s adjutant general, at Fort Bliss, Texas, June 18. Wisconsin National Guard photos by Capt. Joe Trovato



# Wisconsin Guard unit completes training for Gitmo deployment

Continued from Page 14

Spc. Michael Falk-Wright, of Milwaukee, agreed.

“Myself and everyone I talk to, we feel very confident,” he said. “We feel very ready for this mission.”

“In regards to this deployment, we’ve done a lot of detainee operations, even just simple low-level team type training like handcuff drills, interpersonal communications skills and constantly drilling that over and over again,” he said. “So as we go into training lanes, we’re already ready. We’ve already been there and done that multiple times. I think it’s pretty much the repetition that’s got us ready.”

Others praised the facilities and quality training available at Fort Bliss in crediting the unit’s readiness.

“It’s been wonderful,” 2nd Lt. Ryan Schnake, of Mequon, Wisconsin, said. “They have wonderful facilities, wonderful training opportunities, and we’re coming together as a unit. So everything is coming together nicely.”

He said the unit has been focused largely on individual and team skills like handcuffing, evidence handling and interacting with the detainees. “Military police have multiple aspects of their work depending on where they go,” Schnake said. “Right now we’re focusing on the detainees and treating them with dignity and respect, even though their worldviews are so far different than many of us.”

The contingent of senior leaders who visited the unit saw first-hand the kind of training the Milwaukee-based 32nd is



**Soldiers from the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s 32nd Military Police Company conduct detainee operations training at Fort Bliss, Texas, June 18 during a visit from senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders. Senior leaders visited the unit June 18**

conducting during their visit June 18, as they watched training scenarios where teams had to deal with non-compliant detainees and conduct handcuffing drills.

Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde, the senior enlisted advisor for the Wisconsin Army National Guard, expressed the pride he feels knowing that Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers will take on such a high visibility mission.

“You can’t believe how proud we are to be sending Wisconsin’s finest on this mission,” Conde told the troops. “This is a real true mission. It’s a hard mission. It’s one of those missions that has a lot of focus and a lot of eyes on it, so they pick the right unit to go down there and that’s you. And the reason they did that is because you are the best, and I truly believe that.”

Brig. Gen. Anderson was confident that the unit was prepared for its mission.

“The knife has been sharpened,” he said. “You are razor sharp, and you are ready to go.”

Anderson urged the Soldiers to go into their deployment with personal goals in mind related to education, physical fitness and personal development. He also told the Soldiers to rely on their battle buddies and work to glean everything they can from their deployment experience both as a unit and as individuals.

“You are going to grow from this experience,” he said. “Take everything you can from it. Good luck.”

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar told the Soldiers they were true Citizen Soldiers, noting that the vast majority of them put their lives on hold and left school or a civilian job to carry out this mission when called.

“There’s a lot of pride in wearing this uniform, representing Wisconsin and the



**as the company wraps up its pre-deployment training. The 32nd MP Company will conduct detainee operations in support of Joint Task Force Guantanamo at U.S. Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Wisconsin National Guard photos by Capt. Joe Trovato**

United States of America, and they’re calling you out because this mission is important, and it’s deadly serious,” Dunbar said.


Dunbar pointed out that America’s enemies around the world are put on notice when the Army can call on the National Guard as its primary combat reserve.

“The Army’s ability to pull National Guard Soldiers from their civilian lives for a few short weeks of training, and then send them on a frontline mission anywhere in the world shows America’s enemies that the United States Army has capabilities and strategic depth,” he said.

Approximately 60 percent of the unit’s Soldiers are deploying to U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay to fulfill part of the National Guard’s unique dual-role mission as the Army’s primary combat reserve. The remainder of the unit will remain in

Wisconsin and be available for domestic missions as the first military responder here at home.

The 32nd Military Police Company previously deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2009-10 and 2003-04, and to Saudi Arabia in support of Operation Desert Storm in 1991. It also deployed a detachment of military police Soldiers to Kosovo in 2011-12.

Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers and Airmen continue to play a critical role in military operations around the globe. Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers with Detachment 1, Headquarters, 101st Airborne Division Multi-Component Unit [deployed to Iraq](#) earlier this year, and the Wisconsin Air National Guard’s 128th Air Refueling Wing recently concluded a series of [air refueling operations deployments](#) over the Middle East. 



# Wisconsin Guardsman among first to receive OIR campaign medal



**Wisconsin Army National Guard Sgt. Curtis Bluel, deployed with the 101st Airborne Division as part of the Division Multi-Component Unit, shakes hands with Defense Secretary Ash Carter moments after receiving one of the first Operation Inherent Resolve campaign medals during an April 18 ceremony in Iraq.** Defense Department photo by Senior Master Sgt. Adrian Cadiz

**Capt. Joe Trovato**  
*Wisconsin National Guard*

A Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldier became one of the first to receive the Operation Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal after an April 18 ceremony in Iraq with Defense Secretary Ash Carter.

Wisconsin Army National Guard Sgt. Curtis Bluel, a liaison officer with Detachment 1, Headquarters, 101st Airborne Division Multi-Component Unit (DMCU), became just the second U.S. Army Soldier to be awarded the medal, after a fellow DMCU Soldier became the first in the same ceremony.

Carter announced the creation of the Operation Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal at a [March 30 ceremony](#).

The 101st DMCU [deployed to Iraq](#) in early 2016 in support of Operation Inherent Resolve with approximately 65 Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers and approximately 500 other Screaming Eagles. The Guardsmen are part of a first-ever Army initiative to integrate Soldiers from the National Guard and Reserve into a single multi-component unit alongside their active duty brethren.

Bluel was honored to be among the first Soldiers to receive the medal. To have the Secretary of Defense present the medal was an unforgettable experience, he said.

"I feel blessed that I was able to be a part of such a great organization and able to receive awards like this for all of the sacrifices we, as Soldiers, put forward," he said. "It's something that I will always remember."

The deployment has been a rewarding experience thus far for Bluel and the rest of Wisconsin's Screaming Eagles.

As liaison officer for Combined Joint Forces Land Component Command – Operation Inherent Resolve, Bluel manages

all passengers and cargo traffic that comes through Iraq.

"I've adjusted well here," he said. "I'm starting to get a good routine. My team here has fallen in synch with each other rather quickly, which makes life easier."

Col. Leland Ward, the commander of Wisconsin's detachment of 101st Soldiers, was extremely proud of the work his Soldiers have done to this point. Most of the Soldiers work 12-hour days in addition to their physical fitness time, and many are working longer hours to meet daily mission requirements, he said.

"The duties are as diverse as the number of Soldiers on the team, and every Soldier is relevant to mission success," he said.

"We are most proud of the character our Soldiers bring to the fight," Ward said, adding that they present "a discipline for the Army values, creed and ethics."

Ward said the Soldiers have also been praised for their ability to build collaborative relationships.

"I spoke with a colonel from New Zealand this past week," he said. "She remarked at the incredible level of maturity and cultural intelligence of the detachment Soldiers on her team. This is just one example of how our Soldiers have developed a character essential to building collaborative relationships."

The 101st DMCU has been hard at work at multiple locations in Iraq, throughout the region and at Fort Campbell planning, tracking and executing operations throughout the area of operations. Some of the Soldiers interact daily with the Iraqi army and troops from other coalition partners. The unit is responsible for the command and control of approximately 4,000 coalition troops from 18 nations.

"Working with military representatives from multiple nations is a daily occurrence

as is working in a joint environment," Ward said. "One quickly adjusts to the benefits this diversity brings to our mission efforts. This is an unprecedented opportunity for our Soldiers and an experience that will develop their future careers."


The deployment marks the first combat test of the Army's multi-component unit concept and illustrates the National Guard's versatility as a member of the Army's total force as well as its primary combat reserve.

So far, so good, according to Ward and the DMCU's leadership. Besides minor administrative differences, Ward said, no one can tell the difference between National Guard and active component Soldiers.

He said support from the home front has been critical to the unit's success. Deployed Guard Soldiers juggle commitments to the military, employers, communities and families, but the love and support from the home front has made it easy to focus on successfully completing the mission overseas.

"We appreciate the continued support of our employers who allow us the peace of mind to focus on our mission without fear for our jobs when we return," he said. "The support of our family and friends is the glue that holds us together and the topic of many discussions throughout the day."

The Wisconsin National Guard continues to play a role in military operations in the Middle East despite troop drawdowns in Iraq and Afghanistan. Besides the Soldiers of the DMCU, which [left Wisconsin](#) in early January, the Milwaukee-based 128th Air Refueling Wing [recently concluded](#) a series of air refueling operations deployments over the region.

The Wisconsin National Guard simultaneously remains ready to execute its other primary mission as the first military responder in the homeland. 



# EOD defuses dangerous roadside situation



What was supposed to be a routine visit to Hardwood Range near Volk Field, Wisconsin for two members of the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 115th Fighter Wing explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team quickly became a more urgent situation.

As Tech. Sgt. Erich Sanford, EOD team leader, and Staff Sgt. Matthew Vandermolen, EOD journeyman, had traveled about 20 minutes north from Madison, Wisconsin on I-90, they came across a smoking car in the ditch, with the engine running and someone still inside. Sanford pulled over and told Vandermolen to remain in the vehicle to secure items they were bringing to the range, then ran along the roadside back to the smoking car.

He was joined by another motorist who also stopped near the scene, and as they approached the car it appeared as if the cruise control was still engaged.

"I looked at the guy through the window and he was just rigid, like he was pushing himself back against the seat, and there was vomit on his jacket," Sanford said.

After trying to open all the doors and discovering they were locked, there was only one option — they had to break a window. Once inside, Sanford shifted the car in park and turned off the engine.

"I know there was an injury and I should have assessed whether or not it was spinal, but the car was on fire and it was more important to me to keep the guy alive," Sanford said. "I bent him forward, some vomit fell out of his mouth and I heard him gasp half a breath. I put my arm under him and dragged him back to the rear tire."

**A fire extinguisher from the 115th Fighter Wing's Explosive Ordnance Disposal team, used by an EOD Airman to put out a car fire after coming across a one-car accident on the Interstate.** 115th Fighter Wing photo by Staff Sgt. Andrea F. Rhode

The other motorist who had stopped then helped Sanford carry him further away from the smoking car.

"We got him about 25 meters away and as I looked down I saw the fire was now spreading on the grass and part of the car was on fire," he said. "That's when I called Vandermolen to tell him to bring the fire extinguishers down."

Not every Airman carries a fire extinguisher in their government vehicle, but due to the nature of their missions, the EOD Airmen do.

Vandermolen grabbed the two 40-pound fire extinguishers, as well as the items he was instructed to secure, and started running down the interstate with them. In the meantime, Sanford and another man moved the victim 25 meters further from the wreckage and placed him near a Columbia County Sheriff's Department deputy's car that had just arrived.

Sanford left the victim with the deputy and grabbed the extinguishers from Vandermolen. Smoke was pouring out from the engine compartment and the trim on the wheel wells was on fire, and Sanford applied the extinguisher until the flames were completely out.

He then went back to the spot the deputy was at and asked for another pair of latex gloves.

"The victim was right where I had left him, so I put him into a better recovery position, made sure the rest of the vomit was out of his mouth and pushed his tongue down to ensure I had his airway open so he could breath," Sanford said. "I did that for another minute or two until the paramedics got there."

After the Airmen gave their identification and any details they had to the deputies for the accident report, they got back in the truck and were on their way to their original mission. That is when they called back to base to update their supervisor on the day's events.

"He didn't tell me what had happened, he

just told me he had used a fire extinguisher," said Master Sgt. Gilbert Holcomb, 115th Fighter Wing EOD noncommissioned officer in charge. "All I wanted to know was, 'why was the truck on fire?'"

That is when Sanford explained the entire scenario.

"I wouldn't expect anything less from them," Holcomb said. "In fact, I wouldn't be very worried about any of my guys being able to go through a situation like that. My guys have the training they need, they are competent and they take pride in what they do, so for them to deal with an incident like that I don't think any of them would have problems with it."

This was not the first time these EOD Airmen have had to react quickly in a life-threatening situation.

"I've been on a combat deployment as EOD and we've been to post-blasts — plenty of them — one where a fuel truck had blown up and there were lots of burned-out cars and dead people," Sanford said. "I've been around for mortar attacks where people get hit, and been there for the tourniquets being applied and everything, but I suppose this is the first time that I've been this close to saving the wounded individual."

At least during this emergency, he was able to stay focused on the victim.

"When you're in a war-type environment, you're always worried about secondaries, tertiaries, ambushes — I wasn't concerned about anyone sneaking up on me," Sanford said. "I just assumed there was only the one hazard so I got to focus on that."

According to Sanford, it worked out that he and Vandermolen were running behind schedule that morning. It meant they were in the right place at exactly the right time.

The car accident victim went by ambulance to UW Health's University Hospital in Madison. 📷



# Competition builds teamwork

Crew chiefs listen to a pilot as he describes the jet's status following a Feb. 21 landing at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla. The Airmen deployed in support of an air-to-ground combat competition between the current Total Force Integration Active Associate units. 115th Fighter Wing photos by Staff Sgt. Andrea F. Rhode



**Staff Sgt. Andrea F. Rhode**  
*115th Fighter Wing*

The 115th Fighter Wing Airmen and active-duty Airmen from the 378th Fighter Squadron stationed at Truax Field, Madison, Wisconsin, participated in an air-to-ground combat competition held at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida, Feb. 19-26.

Five F-16 Fighting Falcons and more than 45 Airmen deployed to compete against two other Total Force Integration (TFI) Active Associate units. The Active Associate is part of the Air Force's TFI

concept, relocating active-duty pilots and maintenance personnel to Guard bases. There are currently six TFI Active Associate units in the United States.

"We're coming together as a total force to have this competition and build comradery at the same time," said Lt. Col. Jay Gibson, 378th Fighter Squadron commander. "That's the foundation of the whole TFI concept — to build partnerships and relationships. Hopefully events like this can improve the relationships between active and reserve components even more."

This was the first deployment focused on the TFI Active Associate — however,

the 378th Fighter Squadron has also deployed with the 115th Fighter Wing before. The last deployment was to Łask Air Base, Poland. Staff Sgt. Roger Michaels Blais, 378th Fighter Squadron electrical environmental systems journeyman, was on that deployment, too.

"Not a lot of people get the opportunity to work side-by-side with the Guard and Reserve components," Blais said. "It's definitely opened my eyes to what the Guard and Reserve actually are, and their role in the Air Force altogether. To be able to go to another base and teach them what I've learned here will be invaluable."



Blais admitted he wasn't sure what to expect coming to a Guard unit as an active-duty Airman.

"One thing I've learned after coming to a TFI base is that Airmen are Airmen no matter where you go," he said. "Active, Guard or Reserve — we're all here to get the job done."

The air-to-ground combat competition allowed the deployed Airmen to do just that — work together to get the job done.

"Anytime we can deploy, it not only builds comradery, but also the ability to pick up and deploy in a real-world scenario," Gibson said. "Day-to-day,

when we fly and fix airplanes, there's no difference between what the active duty does and what the guard does."

According to Gibson, they plan to start a tradition to deploy and compete with the other TFI units on an annual or semi-annual basis.

"I'm really happy with how quickly the planning for this competition came together," Gibson said. "All the components worked well with one another to make it possible. I'm proud of all the Airmen involved, and look forward to the next chance we'll have to compete against one another." 🇺🇸



# Helping to train tomorrow's pilots

**Master Sgt. Paul Gorman**  
*115th Fighter Wing*

More than 100 Airmen with the Air National Guard's 115th Fighter Wing and 378th Fighter Squadron took part in a two-week aircraft deployment to Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada in early April.

While deployed, eight of the unit's F-16 Fighting Falcons served as realistic adversary aircraft for advanced training in weapons and tactics employment at the United States Air Force Weapons School.

Lt. Col. Jon Kalberer, 176th Fighter Squadron commander and deployed commander of the 115th Fighter Wing, saw it as a continued example of the seamless integration of today's Air Force components.

"The Air National Guard working with the active duty has been and will be the way of the future," Kalberer said.

The sentiment reflects the routine operations of the Madison-based unit, as Air National Guard Airmen work side-by-side with their active associate counterparts on a daily basis. A number of Airmen have also opted to support the Air Force Weapons School through individual deployments as aircraft systems specialists.

Tech. Sgt. Harold Swyers, an electrical environmental systems craftsman with the 115th Fighter Wing, spent three months as an electrical environmental swing shift supervisor at Nellis Air Force Base prior to joining his unit for April's aircraft deployment.

"I was given the opportunity to train several new Airmen while supervising repairs to numerous aircraft on a highly intense flying schedule," Swyers said. "It was hard work, but an extremely rewarding experience."




**Master Sgt. Michael Lincoln, aircrew egress systems specialist for the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison, Wis., addresses canopy closure issues with Maj. Benjamin Staats, 115th Fighter Wing pilot, on the aircraft ramp at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., April 4. The Wisconsin Air National Guard unit deployed more than 100 Airmen and eight F-16 Fighting Falcons for two weeks to support advanced training in weapons and tactics employment at the United States Air Force Weapons School. 115th Fighter Wing photo by Master Sgt. Paul Gorman**

By the end of the two-week deployment, the Wisconsin Airmen had generated 91 aircraft sorties, resulting in more than 130 hours of advanced air-to-air weapons and tactics training.

According to Kalberer, the experience was an excellent learning opportunity for his own pilots, as well as those attending

the weapons school. A prime example of how working together can benefit everyone involved.

"We cannot operate independently," Kalberer said. "In an environment of constrained resources, we must continue to rely on every component of the Air Force to make the most lethal team in the world." 

**Airman 1st Class Nathan Moll, aircraft maintenance specialist with the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison, Wis., marshals an F-16 Fighting Falcon on the aircraft ramp at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., April 4.**



# a different kind of FIELD TRAINING

**Sgt. Kimberly Mianecki**  
*32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team*

MOSINEE, Wis. – Wisconsin Army National Guard engineers returned June 8 to Mosinee, Wisconsin, for the [second straight summer](#) to continue building a major athletic complex there.

Soldiers from the 229th Engineer Company and Company B, 173rd Brigade Engineer Battalion, continued work on baseball and softball fields for the Mosinee School District at what will become the Mosinee Community Athletic Complex.

The first field Guard engineers started last year was completed once the fence was put up earlier in the week by a local contractor and was then opened to the public June 8. The engineer units combined assets and set up a camp in a field next to the baseball field so they could start work at sunrise and work until sundown. The Wisconsin National Guard dedicated five years to the project and hopes to complete their part of a second field by the end of their annual training this year.

“I have a lot of confidence in the capabilities of our soldiers, and it is demonstrated each and every day of their training,” said Brig.Gen. Mark E. Anderson, deputy adjutant general for the Wisconsin Army National Guard while visiting the construction site.

“To be able to come up here and see the quality of the work that they are doing puts a big sense of pride in my own heart,” he said.

**Continued on Page 21**

**A new baseball and softball field opened in early June in Mosinee, Wis. Soldiers of the 229th Engineer Company and Company B, 173rd Brigade Engineer Battalion returned for the second straight year to assist in building a major athletic complex.** 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team photo by Sgt. Kimberly Mianecki



# Guard engineers continue work on community sports complex

Continued from Page 20

The Guard transported all of its equipment to the job site including bulldozers, scrapers, excavators and dump trucks. They spent two weeks working on the athletic fields conducting horizontal engineering by building a parking lot for the fields while simultaneously preparing a surface for the second field. Local contractors will then come in after to complete the construction.

“For our community, we really want a place for people to gather,” said Mosinee Schools Superintendent Dr. Ann Schultz.

“We want a place where people can celebrate youth and just be together to enjoy a game,” she added. “So for our community this is an awesome, awesome complex. We are really excited to welcome back the Army National Guard.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde, senior enlisted leader of the Wisconsin National Guard, added that as Citizen Soldiers these projects allow the National Guard to reemphasize their ability and duty to be a part of and improve the communities they serve.

The National Guard has a unique dual mission as the state’s first military responder in times of emergency and as the Army’s primary combat reserve. The Guard’s commitment to both of those missions allows the organization to provide a tangible benefit to the community, while simultaneously gaining proficiency in the skills they need in combat or state emergencies. If deployed in a federal or state status, these engineers would use similar skill sets to the ones they are

employing in Mosinee.

Anderson pointed out that many of the Soldiers on the work site recently served in Afghanistan. The 229th Engineer Company deployed in 2012 and [returned in 2013](#) after building roads and forward operating bases during their mission.

“They were over there doing road construction for some of the forward operating bases,” he said. “Of course they don’t have an active enemy here. They have the opposite – community members that want to show their appreciation.”


With a population of nearly 4,000, sports are important to Mosinee in keeping children active and families connected.

“Baseball and softball is a big thing in this town,” said Staff Sgt. Kyle Addison, of the 229th Engineer Company. “They really pack them in out there on Little League nights, and it’s just great the community loves it.”

The fields are constructed with turf that will allow for an enduring and safe field for future generations.

“We wanted to go maintenance-free,” Schultz said. “We wanted to be able to have something that was long-standing. By just investing a little bit into this, I think the children of Mosinee just reap the benefit.”

Once complete, these facilities will allow local families to take part in a great American past time for years to come.

The Guard began the Mosinee project and another project to construct a shooting range complex for the Eau Claire County Sheriff [last year](#) as part of a program that provides real-world hands-on training for the National Guard and makes a positive impact on their local communities. 



**Above, Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers operate heavy equipment to begin construction for a parking lot to be used for baseball and softball field parking June 8 in Mosinee, Wis.**

**At left, Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers continue work on new baseball and softball fields June 8 in Mosinee. Soldiers of the 229th Engineer Company and Company B, 173rd Brigade Engineer Battalion returned for the second straight year to assist in building a major athletic complex in Mosinee. 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team photos by Sgt. Kimberly Miannecki**



# Anakonda 16

Vaughn R. Larson  
@ease staff

More than 80 Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers deployed to Poland in May and June with the 732nd Combat Support Sustainment Battalion's (CSSB) headquarters company to support Exercise Anakonda 16, a large-scale training event to integrate Polish national forces into an allied, joint multinational environment.

The 732nd distributed food, water and rations, managed the ammunition supply and supervised maintenance operations for Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area (DPTA) and Torun in western Poland. The 732nd also served as a relay between an active-duty brigade headquarters and subordinate support companies, and tracked equipment moving between training sites.

"I think there'd be a lot more confusion if we weren't here," said Spc. Samantha Barnum, a human resources specialist. "We're kind of the middle man communicating between the units beneath us and headquarters. If we weren't here, I think the units below us would struggle a little bit communicating with headquarters."

One of the key outcomes for Anakonda 16 was not just for Polish forces to learn how to work with more than 31,000 service members from 24 participating nations, but for the active component of the U.S. Army to work with National Guard and Reserve units as part of the Total Force concept. The Wisconsin National Guard is the state's first military responder, but it is also the nation's primary combat reserve, and exercises such as Anakonda 16 allow the Wisconsin National Guard and other reserve component units to collaborate effectively with active duty peers.

"It was the total Army in Europe leading an effort, establishing a baseline for how to do future operations in Europe," said Brig. Gen. Arlan DeBlieck, deputy commanding general of the 21st Theater Sustainment Command and commanding general of the Army Reserve's 7th Mission Support Command. "All the components were heavily involved and were doing a superb job."

"You couldn't tell one component from another," DeBlieck added.

Continued on Page 23

Above, Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Van Auken and Staff Sgt. James Boutott gather information from a subordinate unit for the Daily Update Battle Briefing June 6 during Anakonda 16 in Poland. At right, elements of the 732nd Combat Support Sustainment Battalion. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photos by Spc. Amber Peck





Staff Sgt. James Boutott, Sgt. Andrew Lamendola and Sgt. Jerod Meyer use a MGRS (Military Grid Reference System) to find a certain location in order to plot a point on a map June 8 during Anakonda 16 in Poland. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Spc. Amber Peck



Roving medics from 30th Medical Brigade — including Sgt. Kyle Fellingner (left), a combat medic with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Medical Detachment — watch the incoming pass of paratroopers and scan their sectors for any potential injuries during the airborne jump for Swift Response 16 in Torun, Poland. U.S. Army photo by Capt. Jeku Arce, 30th Medical Brigade

# Wisconsin National Guard supports major European exercise

Continued from Page 22

Lt. Col. Jelora Coman, 732nd CSSB commander, said one of the most useful lessons from Anakonda 16 was how to deploy a unit.

"During recent deployments, there has been considerable infrastructure to fall in on in theater," she explained. "Therefore, many units did not take their rolling stock — enough supplies to self-support and whatever equipment was needed for the mission. For Anakonda 16, the 732nd took everything we needed from the vehicles we used and tents to MREs.

"The Soldiers learned about the unit movement process and procedures, such as how to prepare equipment for customs inspections and transport on ships," Coman continued. "These are skills many units have not exercised in the past 10 years because of the developed infrastructure in theater."

Sgt. Anthony Disterhaft, a food service specialist, was enjoying his first overseas trip

and seeing how the active Army does its job.

"Learning new ideas how to prepare meals, how they run their rations compared to how we do ours," Disterhaft said. "Overall this has been a great experience — I'll be able to go back to my unit and pass this knowledge along to my younger troops, and my senior peers as well. This helps us perform as a complete team rather than three separate branches of the Army."

Sgt. Kyle Fellingner, a combat medic with the Wisconsin Medical Detachment who supported the 732nd for this mission, was able to work directly with active duty counterparts in Poland during Anakonda 16. He was one of the medics working the drop zone June 7 for approximately 2,000 paratroopers from the United States, United Kingdom and Poland.

"It was a pretty long day, but it was cool to see," Fellingner said. He received an Army Commendation Medal during his time supporting Anakonda 16.

"It's been one of those experiences I'll

never forget," he continued. "It's been a great learning experience, during sick call and seeing some of the things I don't normally see in the National Guard to the extent these guys deal with. It's been pretty enlightening. I really got spread thin, and I got to experience a whole different side — not only physical health, but mental health."

DeBlieck said the ability to do their jobs well was key for reserve component units working alongside allies, partners and other components.

"Everybody was doing an excellent job of working together," DeBlieck said.

Sgt. Eric Frank of the 732nd was selected to work the Class 1 yard — food, water and rations — but spent much of his time manning the entry control point due to his prior military police experience. He said this exercise was a learning experience for active component units as well.

"A lot of active-duty components I know haven't worked with the National Guard or Reserves," Frank said. "They think the

National Guard can't work with them, and when we get here we show them how proficient we are and how we can work side-by-side with them as soon as we hit the ground. Hopefully we gave them a whole new perspective of what the National Guard really is."

Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Van Auken has deployed multiple times in his military career, but said his experience in Poland was different than almost any other time spent overseas.

"Poland is an exercise that draws in so many countries and has so many pieces added to it in such a short time frame, every day is a little different," Van Auken explained. "You get to meet people from Bulgaria, Romania, and then the next day Poles and British. It's quite an experience."

Sgt. Jerod Meyer served as battalion intelligence noncommissioned officer in charge for the 732nd, performing real-world analysis of identified threats and recommending force protection changes.

"I was the sole relay between our higher headquarters and our subordinate companies for all subjects that involve enemy, weather, terrain or civil disturbance," Meyer said. "On top of that, I spent a lot of time leading junior soldiers, conducting warrior tasks, and I also got a lot of window time — I drove well over 500 miles on Polish roadways. That was an experience I will never forget."

Spc. Elise Geske, a supply specialist, enjoyed her first annual training.

"It's helped our unit work better together as well as with other units," Geske said. "It's a great experience."

Van Auken noted that Anakonda 16 presented its fair share of challenges, but challenges are common to field operations.

"You have to make the most of any opportunity you are given," Van Auken said. "Not every unit in the Wisconsin National Guard has been able to attend such a large-scale NATO exercise." 🇺🇸

*Lt. Col. Jefferson Wolfe and Spc. Amber Peck contributed to this report.*



# 6-day mission demonstrates KC-135 more than flying gas station

**Tech. Sgt. Meghan Skrepenski  
and Tech. Sgt. Jenna Lenski**  
*128th Refueling Wing*

The whirlwind of planning and traveling across the world and back in just six days isn't a task that everyone is willing to undertake. But long days and crossing continents, oceans and international datelines are all in the job description for the Airmen whose mission it is to fly, maintain and provide aerial refueling with the KC-135 Stratotanker.

On a brisk spring morning in Milwaukee, aircrew members and aircraft maintainers with the 128th Air Refueling Wing prepared their jet for a mission ready airlift to bring Air National Guard members with the 175th Civil Engineer Squadron training at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, back to their home base near Baltimore. The KC-135 crew consisting of two pilots, two boom operators and three crew chiefs set off for the April 20 mission — their first of five different flights.

First stop: Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam, Hawaii.

The 8-hour flight from Milwaukee to Pearl Harbor was open to retired military members, military dependents and current military members to fly through a program called Space-Available Travel. The boom operators briefed the Space-A passengers on safety and flight information before loading their baggage into the cargo bins on the aircraft. In this capacity, boom operators perform duties similar to those of flight attendants, while briefing their passengers, and duties similar to those of loadmasters, while they process cargo.

"The benefits this job offers are great because you have opportunities to train

**Continued on Page 25**

**Master Sgt. Amanda S. Look, a boom operator with the 128th Air Refueling Wing, flies the boom during a training mission with an E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System aircraft. 128th Air Refueling Wing photo by Tech. Sgt. Jenna Lenski**



# 128th ARW mission shows versatility of KC-135 refueler

Continued from Page 24

while completing a mission,” said Staff Sgt. William T. Pelkofer, a 128th Air Refueling Wing boom operator. “I feel this is one of the best jobs because you get a chance to see some great views while refueling. There really are a lot of opportunities to travel and see the world while serving your country.”

After the Space-A passengers disembarked in warm, sunny Hawaii, the crewmembers cleaned up, maintained and readied their jet for the next leg of the mission before finally getting a hot meal and some rest. Another 8-hour flight over the Pacific Ocean awaited them in the morning.

“Our crewmembers flying this mission to Guam are trained and ready to perform any part of the three-fold mission of the KC-135,” said 2nd Lt. Jay R. Lamb, a 128th Air Refueling Wing pilot. “Our missions can involve anything from deployment to bases in the Middle East with a focus on aerial refueling and aeromedical evacuations to a quick turn-around MRA to tropical islands for troop or equipment movement.

“This is my first time completing a Pacific Command trip as a pilot,” Lamb continued. “But as an aircraft maintainer for 10 years I flew on more than 20 western Pacific trips, so I was prepared for the challenges that may arise with this type of mission.”

Upon arriving in Guam, the weather was humid and the members of the 175th Civil Engineer Squadron, Maryland Air National Guard, were ready to go home. They had just spent two weeks of annual training working on a structural project at Andersen Air Force Base.

Transporting military members proved much different than transporting civilian passengers. They helped load their own cargo before settling into their seats for the



**2nd Lt. Jay R. Lamb, a 128th Air Refueling Wing pilot, consults a map with pilot trainer Maj. Chad Hembrook during a flight from Milwaukee to Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam, Hawaii. The 6-day mission ready airlift brought Maryland Air National Guard members from training in Guam to Baltimore April 20-25. 128th Air Refueling Wing photos by Tech. Sgt. Meghan Skrepenski**

flight back to Hawaii. After they reached altitude, the CES Airmen sprawled out on the cold aircraft floor and across the seats and got some well-deserved rest. Meanwhile the crewmembers flew the third flight of their mission and Lamb and the aircraft commander got some quality training time.

PACOM missions provide a unique training opportunity to use the Controller Pilot Data Link Communications to talk with air traffic controllers much like text messaging, which simplifies the amount of air chatter and speeds up the time needed for clearance to make small adjustments in altitude and airspeed while flying, Lamb said. This is not normally used during typical missions flying over the continental U.S.


“As an instructor pilot I am now able to give back to the unit by helping others develop and grow,” said Maj. Chad Hembrook, instructor pilot and aircraft commander for the 128th Air Refueling Wing airlift. “It’s so rewarding to do operational training such as this because it’s great to work with Airmen who are motivated to do their job well and

do whatever is needed to complete the mission.”

After an overnight stay in Hawaii, the CES Airmen loaded back onto the KC-135 for their final flight to Joint Base Andrews. The crewmembers still had one final flight and one final mission — aerial refueling training with an E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System aircraft. The JSTARS crew practiced making the connection several times before they flew off to continue their own mission.

Mission ready airlifts like this one provide training opportunities for everyone on the crew. They also provide the chance to work through processes and determine what may need to be refined or improved, said Master Sgt. Kelly S. Lawrence, a 128th Air Refueling Wing crew chief.

After six long days on this short trip, the crewmembers arrived back in Milwaukee having accomplished an airlift mission, on-the-job training and aerial refueling training.

“Each Airman has their job to do and when they are trained properly and take pride in their work, it results in everything working just as it should,” Lawrence said. 

**Airmen with the 175th Engineer Squadron, Maryland Air National Guard, board a KC-135R Stratotanker assigned to the 128th Air Refueling Wing, Wisconsin Air National Guard.**





# QUEST to be the BEST WARRIOR

**Spc. Alexander Hahn from the Wisconsin Army National Guard competes in the stress shoot event in the Region IV Best Warrior Competition May 17 at Camp Perry Joint Training Center, Port Clinton, Ohio. Ohio National Guard photo by Spc. Brett Anderson**

CAMP PERRY, Ohio — The Wisconsin Army National Guard's Soldier of the Year and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year each struggled to place the end of the Regional Best Warrior Competition into perspective.

"It feels good to have gone through such a competition with the best competitors from six other states," said Staff Sgt. James Brown, a member of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery Regiment. "But at the same time, not placing hits a little close to home."

Spc. Alexander Hahn, a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment, confessed to having mixed emotions.

"I'm really happy I made it to this point, but disappointed that I'm not going any further," Hahn said. "It was a great event, great experience — I'm a little sore, but I'll bounce back."

Both Brown and Hahn represented Wisconsin in mid-May, competing against the top Soldiers from Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio in a grueling three-day marathon event that

**Continued on Page 27**





**Above, Spc. Zachary Tomesh, a public affairs specialist with the 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, 641st Troop Command Battalion, 64th Troop Command, hurdles a fence during the obstacle course as part of the 2016 State Best**

**Warrior Competition at Fort McCoy, Wis., April 9. At left, Competitors plot points during the night land navigation event. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photos by Staff Sgt. Alexander Henninger**

## Wisconsin National Guard's best warriors pursue regional title

**Continued from Page 26**

tested their endurance, military bearing and skills.

"We did very well in the tactical events," said Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Shields, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's senior enlisted advisor. Brown and Hahn took first place in weapons qualification, and were strong in the Army Physical Fitness Test, road march and land navigation events.

"I enjoy shooting," Brown said. "I do that quite a bit in my free time."

Hahn said the 12-mile road march with a loaded rucksack was his favorite event.

"That's one of my strongest events, so I normally enjoy it," he said.

To get to Camp Perry, Hahn and Brown each had to emerge from a similar gauntlet at Fort McCoy back in April.

Several sponsors of the participants at this year's state Best Warrior were competitors themselves in past Best Warrior events. Brown's sponsor Staff Sgt. Angel Powell, also of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery, described his experiences with these events.

"My most unique experience in the National Guard is probably being part of this competition as a competitor and a sponsor," said Powell. "Most of the time you're used to doing one weekend a month and then you come down and do a three-day challenge and it basically takes everything out of you and puts every effort you have into this competition."

Soldiers who participate in the Best Warrior competition take away many different perspectives and experiences from

**Continued on Page 28**



# Best Warrior quest ends at Camp Perry

Continued from Page 27

this grueling three-day event.

Spc. Kolt Knutson, a utilities equipment repairer with Company E, 132nd Brigade Support Battalion, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, found value in the connections made through the competition.

"It's not only the experiences that very few Soldiers get to do, and competing to make yourself better," Knutson said. "It's also the relationships and bonds that you get. Going through this competition with the other Soldiers, you make bonds that will last a lifetime."

Spc. Darrin Riggs, an all-wheeled vehicle mechanic with the 107th Support Maintenance Company, 732nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 64th Troop Command, feels this is an event in which every Soldier should partake.

"I've gained a lot of insight into myself," said Riggs. "The amount of commitment it takes to compete at this level, you're training every day physically and mentally. You don't know how tough you are until you do it. Everybody should try it at least once."

Even the candidates who did not qualify for the regional competition in May were proud of their accomplishments and the benefits of participating at the state competition.

Staff Sgt. Logan Gehlhausen of the Indiana Army National Guard and Spc Dakota VanBroeklin of the Iowa Army National Guard placed first at the regional competition and will advance to the National Guard-level Best Warrior Competition for a chance to compete at the Army-level contest.

"I saw a pretty good balance of well-rounded Soldiers from a tactical perspective, and a very high level of expertise in the other parts of the

competition — the appearance board, the essay," Shields said. "What we've seen is Soldiers really begin to broaden their field of expertise to include those other categories. As we look forward, those are some areas where we need to improve."

Brown planned to make the most of his Best Warrior experience.

"The knowledge and experience gained, now I have the ability to take that back to my Soldiers and my unit and help them prepare for competitions, and make our Soldiers and the organization as a whole better," Brown said.

Hahn wants to return to the Best Warrior gauntlet as a noncommissioned officer.

"The skills that I've acquired over the past eight months training for all the different phases has definitely helped me realize my potential — where I'm at, what I need to work on," Hahn said. "It's given me an idea of where I can potentially go in the military."

The regional competition marked the end of the road, of sorts, for Shields as well. He retired from the military May 31, after more than 40 years in uniform.

"It's a sad day for me," he acknowledged. "This is the highlight of my year where we bring the best of the best. I'm just so proud to have spent time with these Soldiers — I'm very proud and privileged to have been part of the process. It reinvigorates us to be around that top one-hundredth of a percent of Soldiers in terms of commitment and expertise."

"I look forward to [Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde] taking it to the next level, improve on what we do and get back in the winner's circle," Shields continued. "Overall, we did a great job."

*Spc. Kati Stacy of the 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment and Vaughn R. Larson of the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs contributed to this report*



**Above, competitors pull themselves across ropes during the obstacle course as part of the 2016 State Best Warrior Competition at Fort McCoy, Wis., April 9. At left, Spc. Kolt Knutson, a utilities equipment repairer with Company E, 132nd Brigade Support Battalion, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, sprints to the finish line April 10 during the 12 mile ruck march. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photos by Staff Sgt. Alexander Henninger**





# BUDDY AID

## ■ *Guard, civilian medical first responders collaborate for annual training event*

**Staff Sgt. Alexandria Hughes**  
*112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

FORT MCCOY, Wis. — The Wisconsin Army National Guard's Medical Detachment hosted its 2016 U. S. Army Medical Department (AMEDD)-focused training weekend in conjunction with civilian first responders for Wisconsin Army National Guard medics across the state, May 7-8.

The Guard partnered with the University of Wisconsin through Operation Badger Medic — a collaborative partnership between the University of Wisconsin's athletic training program and the Wisconsin National Guard — the Tomah Fire Department, Sparta Emergency Services,

**Spc. Chase Isenberger, with Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, prepares to administer an IV during the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 2016 Best Medic Competition at Fort McCoy's Wisconsin Military Academy, May 8.** 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Staff Sgt. Alexandria Hughes

and the Fort McCoy Fire Department for the training.

The AMEDD-focused training included demonstrations by some of the University of Wisconsin staff on musculoskeletal injuries and prevention, domestic operations training, as well as the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 2016 Best Medic Competition. Pfc. Jared Ziehm, assigned to Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, took home top honors as the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Medic of the Year.

Master Sgt. Richard Wilson, the Wisconsin Medical Detachment's first sergeant, talked about the benefits of the AMEDD-focused training not only for the leadership, but for the Soldiers and the entire state.

"It gives the state surgeon and the AMEDD leadership the opportunity to get policy and procedure out across the state, to representatives from each unit so they can take it back to their units, so the whole state's on board," Wilson said.

"And it's an opportunity for all the Soldiers," he continued. "There's a lot of transferring between units these days, and it gives the Soldiers the opportunity to network. They can say, 'What do you do on weekend training? This is what we do; maybe we can work together and come up with some training together?' That's happened. It's a result of past AMEDD training. The medical assets in units have actually trained together more than they

were before."

Staff Sgt. Timothy Ehlers, the training noncommissioned officer with the Wisconsin Medical Detachment, shared Wilson's sentiments and talked about the opportunities provided by the AMEDD-focused training.

"It gives us an opportunity to get all of our medics together in one spot and all get on the same page," Ehlers said. "We had the opportunity to build a program called Operation Badger Medic and this weekend was an opportunity to display some of the assets that we've obtained through that partnership with the university."

"The focus of the leadership was to further our training on domestic operations, and to explore the opportunity to work with the Fort McCoy Fire Department, Tomah and Sparta as well," Ehlers continued. "It also gives all of these medics an opportunity to see civilian careers that they can pursue back in their communities."

Todd Swansby, the station chief for the Fort McCoy Fire Department, elaborated on the benefits of training with multiple agencies.

"Doing stuff like this makes it easier, because if there is a large-scale incident or natural disaster, these entities are all working together, and it makes everybody on both sides know how each agency works, and it makes it a little more comfortable," Swansby said.

**Continued on Page 30**





# Collaboration between Guard, civilian first responders boosts Guard medical professional training weekend

Continued from Page 29

“I’ve learned in 22 years of being in the fire service, there’s never not a learning day,” he said. “You learn everything, every day. We get just as much training out of this as the next person does.”

Training with civilian agencies is critical to ensuring the Wisconsin National Guard is ready to fulfill its mission as the state’s first military responder and serve the state in the event of an emergency. The experiences and training is also applicable to the National Guard when it deploys overseas as the

Army’s primary combat reserve.

Wilson also spoke about the specific skills taught during the training weekend and their benefits for the entire state.

“For this weekend specifically, they’ve all seen the benefit of working with the University of Wisconsin and they’ve all seen those musculoskeletal techniques and learned skills about prevention,” Wilson said. “That’s our goal, to prevent further injury on training days, during annual training, and getting Soldiers back in the fight for training.”

Ehlers concluded by talking about how

keeping Soldiers well-trained affects their civilian jobs as well.

“The chance to learn over this AMEDD-focused training will give medics some tools to get and keep their Soldiers healthy through the training weekend and prevent some of the lingering injuries that we have,” Ehlers said. “Overall, this training helps us send our Soldiers back healthier to their civilian jobs after the training weekend.”

Col. Rebecca Giese, commander of the Wisconsin Medical Detachment, said that planning for the AMEDD training next year is already underway.



Above, personnel from Sparta Emergency Services, the Tomah Fire Department, and the Fort McCoy Fire Department pose with Wisconsin Army National Guard medics during Wisconsin’s 2016 U. S. Army Medical Department-focused training weekend at Fort McCoy’s Wisconsin Military Academy, May 8.

**Sgt. Kimberly Shekels with the 135th Medical Company, 641st Troop Command Battalion, 64th Troop Command, prepares to administer an IV during the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s 2016 Best Medic Competition at Fort McCoy’s Wisconsin Military Academy, May 8.**  
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Staff Sgt. Alexandria Hughes





# An Army of One

## ■ 426th RTI teaches its first active-duty artillery course

**Capt. Joe Trovato**  
Wisconsin National Guard

The Wisconsin Army National Guard's 426th Regional Training Institute (RTI) is now home to a course designed specifically for Soldiers from the Army's active duty component.

Fourteen active duty Soldiers and two National Guard Soldiers graduated July 30 from their Advanced Leader Course (ALC) for cannon crewmembers, or 13Bs. ALC is part of the Army's noncommissioned officer education system for Soldiers seeking the skills and qualifications necessary for promotion to the rank of staff sergeant.

Fort Sill, Oklahoma, has traditionally hosted ALC for active duty field artillery Soldiers, but Wisconsin's 426th RTI is at the forefront of a recent shift toward the idea of a One Army School System where Soldiers from each component of the Army — active duty, National Guard, and Reserve — can train at school's nationwide, no matter the component.

In the case of the 426th RTI's 13B ALC course, active duty Soldiers used Guard facilities, Guard instructors and Guard equipment for their training. The 426th

**Continued on Page 32**

**Sgt. 1st Class Jason Seubert, of the 426th Regional Training Institute, receives a coin from Col. Stephen Maranian, the commandant of the Army's Field Artillery School July 13 at Fort McCoy, Wis. The 426th RTI conducted a four-day joint fires observer course for Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team.** Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Joe Trovato





**A student attending advanced leader course for cannon crewmembers at the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 426th Regional Training Institute explains the uses of different pieces of equipment to senior leaders July 13 at Fort McCoy, Wis.**

# National Guard schoolhouse teaches artillery course for active duty Soldiers

**Continued from Page 31**

has hosted active component Soldiers in its courses before, but only a handful of Soldiers at a time that were mixed into National Guard courses. This iteration was the RTI's first meant specifically for active duty Soldiers, and senior leaders hope this idea becomes commonplace in the years ahead.

During a July 13 visit to Fort McCoy to observe the 13B ALC course, Col. Stephen Maranian, the commandant of the Army's Field Artillery School, told the students and instructors that he hoped the initiative

would continue to grow and that RTIs like the 426th would begin to train more and more Soldiers from all components of the Army.

"There is no difference," he said of the instruction at the 426th versus the active duty course. "We're all wearing the same thing over our left pocket, which is 'U.S. Army.' It doesn't say 'Army National Guard' or 'Active Army.'"

"I appreciate the teamwork and the cooperation," he added.

Command Sgt. Maj. Berk Parsons, the command sergeant major for the field artillery, agreed while acknowledging

that some in the active component were initially skeptical that the National Guard could offer the same quality and level of instruction as active duty courses.

"That's one of the things that I always get across the active component, 'Well, coming in I wasn't sure,'" Parsons said. "Now they understand that the POI (program of instruction) and the quality of instruction is exactly the same, because it all comes from the same source."

An added benefit of the Guard's program is that it offers a condensed timeline. The course at the 426th RTI runs seven days a week from July 7-30, versus the active duty

course, which stretches over five weeks due to off days on the weekends.

"Everyone that I talked to here today was just blown away by the training so far," he said. "They think it's an awesome program. The challenge that I gave them is to go back to their units and talk it up, because we need to break down those pre-conceived notions and get a higher throughput, which makes us all better."

The course, which tests Soldiers on cannon crewmember skills on the three weapons systems the 426th owns — the

**Spc. Christopher Biddulth, a 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldier attending a joint fires observer familiarization and re-certification course at the 426th Regional Training Institute assesses a target area July 13.**

Wisconsin National Guard photos by Capt. Joe Trovato

**Continued on Page 33**



# Active duty students praise 426th RTI artillery course

Continued from Page 32

M777 155-mm Howitzer, the M119 105-mm Howitzer, and the M109A6 Paladin self-propelled 155-mm Howitzer — received positive reviews from the Soldiers as well.

“It’s great,” said Sgt. Keegan Dahlhauser, of the 101st Airborne Division’s Battery A, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. “When I first saw it, I didn’t think that these instructors were going to be as knowledgeable as they are.

“It’s no different,” he added. “We’re getting the same amount of instruction in a more condensed time period. I like it. I’d rather work my weekends and get back home faster.”

Sgt. Kyle Mendiola, of Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division at Fort Carson, Colorado, also had positive things to say about the course at Fort McCoy.

“I like it here, because they implement the Army standard, and they’re training to the standard, not for time,” he said. “So as much as it’s fast-paced, the fact of the matter is that as E-5s in this class, we’re training to a standard the Army puts out.”

Mendiola admits to being skeptical when he first heard he was coming to a National Guard-led course, but with the quality of the Wisconsin National Guard instructors, the class has exceeded all expectations.

“These guys are the best of the best, and there’s a reason why they’re teaching us this class,” he said.

Col. Maranian and Command Sgt. Maj. Parsons visited the 426th June 13 along with Brig. Gen. Keith Klemmer, the Deputy Commanding General (Army National



**Student attending a four-day joint fires observer familiarization and re-certification course at the 426th Regional Training**

Guard) for Field Artillery, as well as senior Wisconsin Army National Guard leaders to learn more about the ALC course as well as the 426th’s other training capabilities.

Lt. Col. Eric Beuerman, the commander of the RTI’s field artillery training battalion, called the visit a great opportunity to prove that the One Army School System works.

“It’s bigger than just us being able to do it in the field artillery,” he said. “They

want to be able to show that active or any component Soldiers are able to come to the National Guard and get the same training. That’s why it’s kind of a big deal, because we’re proving that the One Army School System does work.”

By 2019, Beuerman said, the number of quotas for active duty Soldiers to train at the 426th is expected to grow exponentially.

Outside of Fort Sill, Wisconsin’s RTI

**Institute assesses a target area July 13 at Fort McCoy, Wis.**  
Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Joe Trovato

joins Pennsylvania’s as the only schools nationwide offering the course.

“We have the credibility,” Beuerman said. “We’re a very strong program. We always have great end-of-course critiques, and our reputation has something to do with it. But objectively, we have the facilities, the capacity, and the equipment to do it.”

The RTI was simultaneously conducting a joint fires observer (JFO) familiarization

and re-certification course where 10 Soldiers from the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, called in close air support from F-16s with the Wisconsin Air National Guard’s 115th Fighter Wing.

The visitors got a first-hand look at the vast training resources, capabilities and subject-matter expertise the 426th offers, as Red Arrow Soldiers guided the F-16s in toward a mock enemy convoy for bomb and strafing runs at Fort McCoy.

The four-day JFO course aims to re-certify Soldiers who are already qualified in the skill but also familiarize other Soldiers preparing to go to the Army’s full JFO qualification course. JFOs are trained to call in fire support from each branch of the military.


“The idea with this program is that we’re going to keep JFOs re-certified, which they have to do every six months,” Staff Sgt. James Spude, a JFO instructor with the 426th said. “But we’re also going to prep students that are going to go to those schools in the Wisconsin National Guard.”

Once again, the 426th’s instructors received high praise from their students.

“They’re really cool,” said Spc. Christopher Biddulth, a JFO assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. “They really put the time in and get up next to us and help us if we need it.”

Beuerman could not be more proud of the work the 426th RTI continues to do.

“They are proud of what they do, and they take it very seriously,” he said. “They understand that they are role models and subject-matter experts, and they’re influencing these students as they come through and as they go on. They know that their credibility is on the line as well, and they’re not going to let that go.”

In the future, Beuerman hopes to see students from other states in the region coming to Fort McCoy for JFO re-certification and familiarization. 



# Before they were Red Arrows: Mexican Border Service, 1916-17



**Men from the Wisconsin 2nd Infantry Regiment stand in formation while serving on Mexican Border service near San Antonio, Texas in 1916. The Wisconsin**

Photo courtesy Wisconsin Veterans Museum

*Editor's Note: In 1917, the Wisconsin National Guard transformed into the 32nd Division and made history in the trenches of Europe during World War I. A year earlier, the Wisconsin National Guard gained invaluable experience serving along the Mexican border — the first federal activation since the Spanish-American War — at a time when tensions were high between the two nations. Next year, the Wisconsin National Guard will launch a historical series chronicling the 32nd Division's formation, training and deployment to Europe.*

**Vaughn R. Larson**  
@ease staff

National Guard units from states across the nation — including Wisconsin — were called to defend the southern border as an international incident threatened to erupt 100 years ago. And in doing so, the National Guard not only validated its new role as the operational reserve of the U.S. Army, but it honed valuable skills for a greater conflict in Europe.

The concerns in 1916 were not the same as those facing the

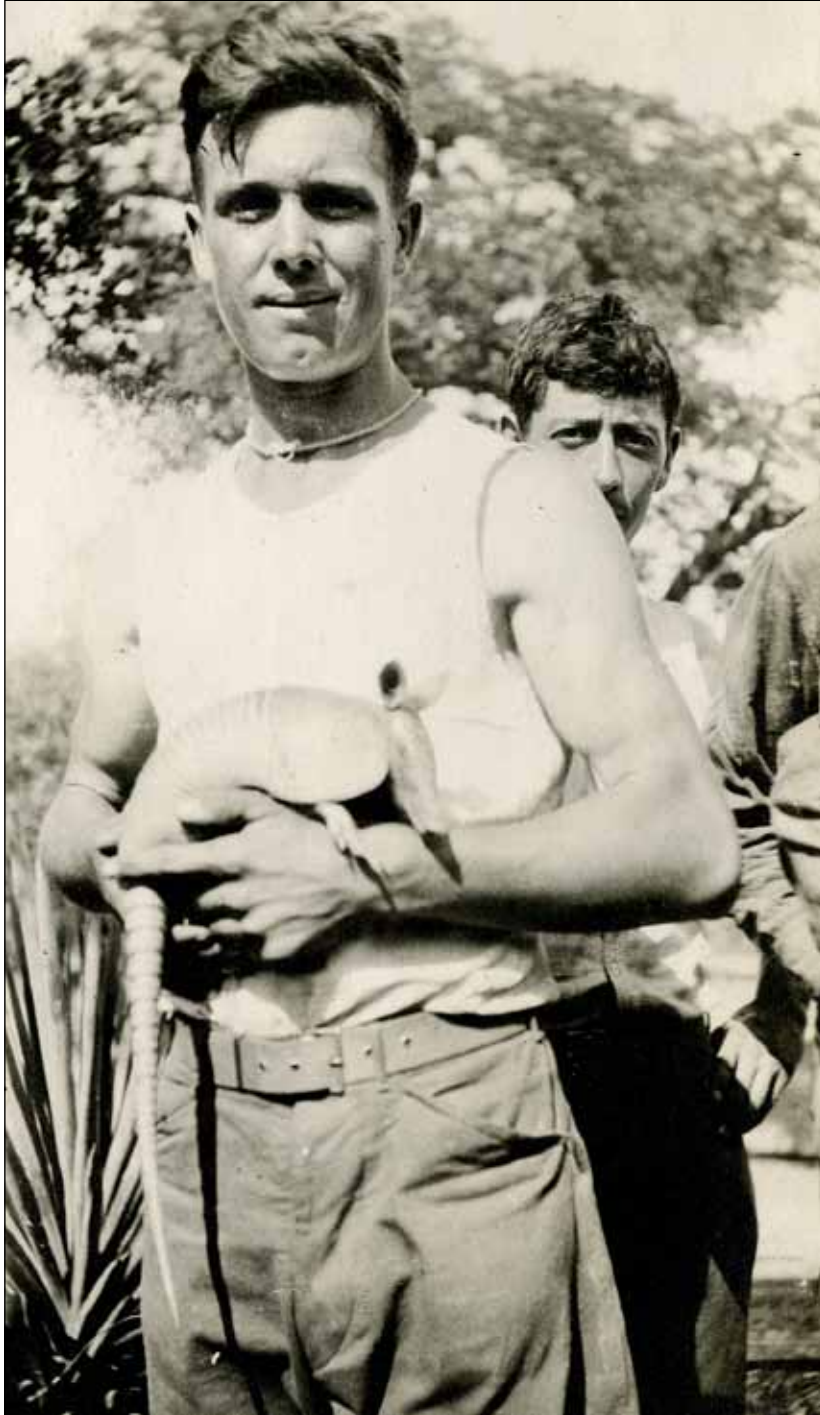
U.S.-Mexican border today. Rather, insurrectionist violence threatened the nation's southern border — a region already victimized by cross-border bandit raids. These border threats were loosely aligned with post-revolution Mexico's various splintered political factions.

While Francisco "Pancho" Villa's deadly raid of Columbus, New Mexico on March 8-9, 1916 sparked a punitive military expedition by the active Army and ultimately required the National Guard to

**Continued on Page 35**



A Soldier from the Wisconsin 2nd Infantry Regiment appears to have adopted an armadillo during Mexican Border service near San Antonio, Texas in 1916. Photos courtesy Wisconsin Veterans Museum



## Border service toughened Wisconsin National Guard for upcoming European deployment

Continued from Page 34

patrol the Mexican border, political unrest between Mexico and the United States had simmered for years. U.S. concerns for its southern neighbor escalated in the fall of 1910 when a popular uprising ended the 30-year rule of President Porfirio Diaz. His successor was assassinated in 1913 and replaced by Victoriano Huerta, a general who had served under Diaz. Huerta's authority was challenged by Venustiano Carranza, Emiliano Zapata, and Villa.

Meanwhile, the National Guard was facing its own battle for legitimacy. The Militia Acts of 1903 and 1908 and the National Defense Act of 1916 transformed the state militias into a federally trained and funded National Guard. However, simultaneous national calls for universal military service and a proposal for a "continental army" of full-time Soldiers who would assume the National Guard's traditional homeland response role threatened the continued existence of the National Guard. The pressing need to protect border states from continued Mexican hostilities required an existing military force, and the National Guard made the most of its opportunity to demonstrate its value to the nation.

As the Mexican civil war continued, the U.S. lifted its arms embargo against Huerta's antagonists, and did not recognize Huerta's government as legitimate. In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson threw his support behind Carranza, but that relationship was strained when the U.S. occupied the port, and then the city, of Veracruz in response to a report of German weapons delivered to Huerta. Carranza and Zapata denounced the occupation as a violation of Mexican sovereignty. Villa, alone, backed the U.S. action.

After Huerta was defeated and forced into exile, U.S. forces withdrew from



**Francisco "Pancho" Villa (far left), a general in the Mexican resistance army, from a 1914 photo. In two years, Villa would attack Columbus, N.M. in response to U.S. recognition of his rival as the legitimate leader of Mexico.**

Veracruz in November 1914. However, Zapata and Villa turned on Carranza in a fight for control of Mexico, and the fighting often spilled across the border. Active Army troops were unable to secure the 900-mile border. In early 1915, Texas law enforcement uncovered "The Plan of San Diego" — documents calling for Mexicans and Mexican-Americans to reclaim territory lost after the Mexican-American War, and for other ethnic groups to join in the insurrection and kill white American men age 16 and older. Some outlaws who adhered to this plan raided southern Texas towns. As 1915 drew to a close, the U.S. and six Latin American countries officially recognized Carranza as the legitimate leader of Mexico.

This diplomatic action diminished Villa's

claim to power, and the revolutionary leader looked to change the political dynamics by retaliating against U.S. interests, thereby challenging Carranza's legitimacy. These actions would culminate in Villa's 1916 attack on Columbus, New Mexico that killed 18 Americans.

Some citizens demanded the U.S. take action to punish Villa, while others wanted to avoid another war with Mexico. Meanwhile, Europe was ablaze as World War I continued into its third year, and President Wilson knew that it was only a matter of time before the United States was drawn into the conflict.

In the years after the Mexican-American War, Mexican and Native American bandits frequently raided U.S. communities across the border, which was difficult to defend. Pursuing the raiders back into Mexico typically had proven more effective than guarding the expansive, open border, but pursuit also strained relations with the Mexican government and its people. Regardless, Wilson decided on a punitive expedition, led by Brig. Gen. John "Black Jack" Pershing, into Mexico to hunt down Villa. Wilson believed such an effort could be accomplished relatively quickly.

However, the expedition's supply and communication lines into Mexico proved a vulnerability, and also drew resources away from border security. Hostility from Mexican locals and Carranza supporters threatened to divert the expedition from its original mission to hunt down Pancho Villa. Wilson called up 4,500 National Guard troops from Texas, Arizona and New Mexico, and Carranza prepared for war, telling his military commanders in northern Mexico to engage any U.S. troops crossing the border.

Meanwhile, Plan of San Diego raiders attacked Glen Springs and Boquillas,

Continued on Page 36



# Wisconsin Guard answered nation's call 100 years ago

Continued from Page 35

Texas, on May 6, 1916. Some in Carranza's military were suspected of supporting these raids.

Wilson called up the National Guard in response to this volatile environment.

"The mobilization was the outcome of a national emergency demanding extra military service beyond that which could be furnished by the regular Army," Brig. Gen. William A. Mann, the Militia Bureau chief, wrote in a 1916 report on the mobilization effort. "The regular Army on the Mexican border could be [reinforced] no other way."

Gov. Emanuel Philip received a War Department telegram June 18, 1916 citing "the possibility of further aggression upon the territory of the United States from Mexico and the necessity for the proper protection of that frontier" in announcing the activation of three infantry regiments, one cavalry troop, one field artillery battery and one field hospital. The approximately 4,000 Wisconsin National Guard troops mustered at Camp Williams June 22, and took an oath of federal service June 30. The majority of Wisconsin troops departed for Camp Wilson, near San Antonio, Texas, the following day — the field hospital followed a few days later.

By the end of June, 60,000 National Guard troops were serving along the border, and by the end of July that number rose to about 112,000. They found themselves charged with guarding the border from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico.

But the Guard mobilized with the expectation of hostilities, underscored by their subsequent training along the border.



**Above, the Wisconsin 2nd Infantry Regiment camp illustrates typical living conditions for Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers during Mexican Border service near San Antonio, Texas in 1916. At right, extended road marches were routine during Mexican**

Upon arrival, National Guard troops spent nearly a month marching in full gear in the summer heat, often to and from firing ranges, where they would encamp for days. The First Illinois Regiment suffered extensive heat casualties during a 25-mile march in late July, which appeared to motivate other units to persevere.

"Longer and faster hikes were taken by all three Wisconsin regiments today," the Milwaukee Journal reported. "The poor showing of the Illinois troops in their first day's hike Monday, July 24th, has aroused the Wisconsin officers and enlisted men to greater effort." The marches continued and grew in length, and one Wisconsin officer declared his men "hard as rocks" after three months on border duty. By the end of September, Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers joined fellow Guardsmen from Illinois, Missouri, Kansas and Texas on a 15-day, 166-mile march from San Antonio to New Braunfels, Texas — a journey that saw the weather change from extreme heat to hurricane conditions.

"The march also demonstrates how

skillfully these civilians were transposed into an army of fighting men after a preparation of only two and a half months," Col. Moses Thisted of the Third Wisconsin wrote. "Another outstanding feature of this great march was the splendid manner in which the supply trains have been kept moving day and night."

The National Guard built camps along the border, guarded towns and infrastructure, improved fortifications and manned listening posts along the Rio Grande. They also engaged in mock battles to hone tactics. One such engagement had 14,000 troops march against New Braunfels with 4,000 troops in defense. When the exercise was over, troops had expended more than 80,000 rounds of blank ammunition in what the Milwaukee Journal described as a "magnificent spectacle."

The National Guard's presence and activity brought further Mexican raids to a stop, and appeared to influence Carranza as well.

"The National Guard was Wilson's last resort for averting war with Mexico," Maj.



**Border service. The long marches and field life hardened the Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers for their upcoming service in World War I. Photos courtesy Wisconsin Veterans Museum**

Brent Orr, of the North Carolina National Guard, wrote in a 2011 monograph for the Army War College. "Within days, Carranza changed his position and used his influence to impact cessation of the Plan of San Diego raids."

Carranza allowed the punitive expedition to continue, with some limitations, and his military began an aggressive campaign against Villa — finally defeating Villa's forces in January 1917 at Jimenez. The U.S. punitive expedition left Mexico by Feb. 5.

National Guard units had begun returning to their home states in the fall of 1916 — Wisconsin's Battery A, 1st Field Artillery and Troop A, 1st Cavalry returned to the state in October. The 3rd Infantry Regiment followed on Dec. 14. The Wisconsin National Guard's field hospital and 1st Infantry returned in January, the 2nd Infantry in February, and Troop B, 1st Cavalry — which replaced Troop A in October — returned to Wisconsin in early March.

The War Department recognized the National Guard's service in a Dec. 20, 1916

letter to the Wisconsin National Guard.

"When the National Guard was called into the service of the federal government, the lives of men, women and children along the frontier were in grave danger, owing to the formidable bandit raid from the Mexican side of the boundary," Secretary of War Newton Baker wrote. "It is not too much to say that had these raids continued, there was danger of international war. From the time of the arrival of the units of the National Guard on the border, the raids ceased and the tension between the two countries began to relax."

Months of border service not only provided vital training and mobilization experience to National Guard troops, it identified and addressed shortcomings in the federal supply system.

The lessons learned at the border would soon go into use. In January 1917 Germany sought an alliance with Mexico against the United States, and the discovery of the "Zimmerman telegraph" led to the United States declaring war on Germany on April 6, 1917. 🇺🇸





# Security Forces Squadron marches to remember fallen

**Senior Airman Morgan R. Lipinski**  
128th Refueling Wing

“Forward harch!” ordered 1st Lt. Patrick Rielly and, on that cue, the marching unit began to step. The Security Forces Squadron Airmen with the 128th Air Refueling Wing left at dawn June 5 for a trek that tested their physical and mental strength.

The squadron took part in an eight-mile ruck march that trailed the perimeter of General Mitchel International Airport in Milwaukee. Approximately 40 SFS Airmen participated in the march — including Col. Dan Yenchesky, the 128th Air Refueling

Wing wing commander, and Command Chief Master Sgt. Connie Bacik, the wing’s command chief. According to Maj. Aaron M. Gulczynski, the squadron commander, the Airmen were encouraged to carry a pack that weighed approximately 20 percent of their body weight and wear the minimum equipment of a ruck sack, a plate carrier vest and an unloaded M4 rifle. Gulczynski’s pack weighed approximately 60 pounds, yet he claims others exceeded that and carried more.

“This march was dedicated to the remembrance of Staff Sgt. Louis M. Bonacasa and Tech. Sgt. Joseph G. Lemm,”

Gulczynski said. “They were two of six Airmen who lost their lives in Afghanistan when a suicide bomber on a motorcycle attacked their patrol.”

Both Lemm and Bonacasa were Airmen with the 105th Airlift Wing, New York Air National Guard, deployed in support of Operation Freedom’s Sentinel. The 128th Airmen had previously worked with the 105th Airlift Airmen for training and other missions, so this loss had hit close to home and their hearts.

“We marched in honor of them,” Gulczynski said.

The ruck march also served as a test for

the resiliency of the Airmen, allowing them to evaluate their readiness for any upcoming obstacles they may face whether physical or mental, at home or overseas. How ready were they? According to Gulczynski, the unit marched at an approximate 4 mph pace, completing the march in 2 hours and 20 minutes.

“I am extremely proud of the Airmen,” Gulczynski said. “This was not only a physical challenge, but a mental strain. Nobody fell out and everybody finished together. Although we were hurting and it wasn’t easy, we pulled through and overcame this obstacle.”

**The Security Forces Squadron Airmen with the 128th Air Refueling Wing participate in a ruck march June 5 at General Mitchel International Airport.** 128th Air Refueling Wing photos by Senior Airman Morgan R. Lipinski



# Drill hall named in honor of fallen Guard member

Vaughn R. Larson  
@ease staff

SUSSEX, Wis. — A decade later, the pain of loss still stings. It was 10 years ago that the brutal reality of their wartime mission became clear for the 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery. That was when Cpl. Stephen Castner was killed by a roadside bomb near Tallil, Iraq on his very first convoy escort mission.

Sunday afternoon, Aug. 14, 2016, new Soldiers in that unit who did not experience that harsh lesson joined others who did for a ceremony commemorating the 10-year anniversary of Castner's death by naming their Sussex armory drill hall in Castner's honor.

"It's been a long 10 years — a lot of emotions," said Lt. Col. Matthew Beilfuss, who was Castner's company commander for the mobilization at Camp Shelby, Mississippi and subsequent deployment to Camp Navistar, Kuwait.

Now the commander of the very battalion he deployed with a decade ago, Beilfuss was one of the Soldiers to speak at a command remembrance ceremony for Castner, held Aug. 14 at Battery A's armory in Sussex, Wisconsin.

Underscoring the close bond the National Guard has with its community, Castner's mother Kay taught Beilfuss geometry growing up in Cedarburg, Wisconsin. But Castner touched lives far beyond the northern Milwaukee suburb.

"We've become fairly close with a large number of people that we never would have known," Kay said after the remembrance ceremony.

"That includes the other three Soldiers who were in the truck," added his father Steve. "We know them all, we maintain contact with them — two of them have been



At the conclusion of a July 28, 2006 memorial ceremony at Camp Navistar, Kuwait, members of the 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery render respect to Cpl. Stephen Castner's memory during the playing of 'Taps.' File photo by Capt. Mike Wallace, 377th Theater Sustainment Command public affairs officer

to our home. In July we met the parents of one of those Soldiers. Everybody stays in touch, and I think it helps everybody."

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general, said that the National Guard's close association with their communities helped ensure public support for when those Citizen Soldiers were called to serve their nation in a combat theater.

"Our nation has been built on men, like Cpl. Castner, willing to volunteer — earn the right to wear the uniform and, when called, deploy into harm's way," Dunbar said.

Jeff Stockinger, a former member of Beilfuss's company and a member of the same platoon as Castner, shared humorous memories of his fallen comrade from

mobilization training at Camp Shelby.

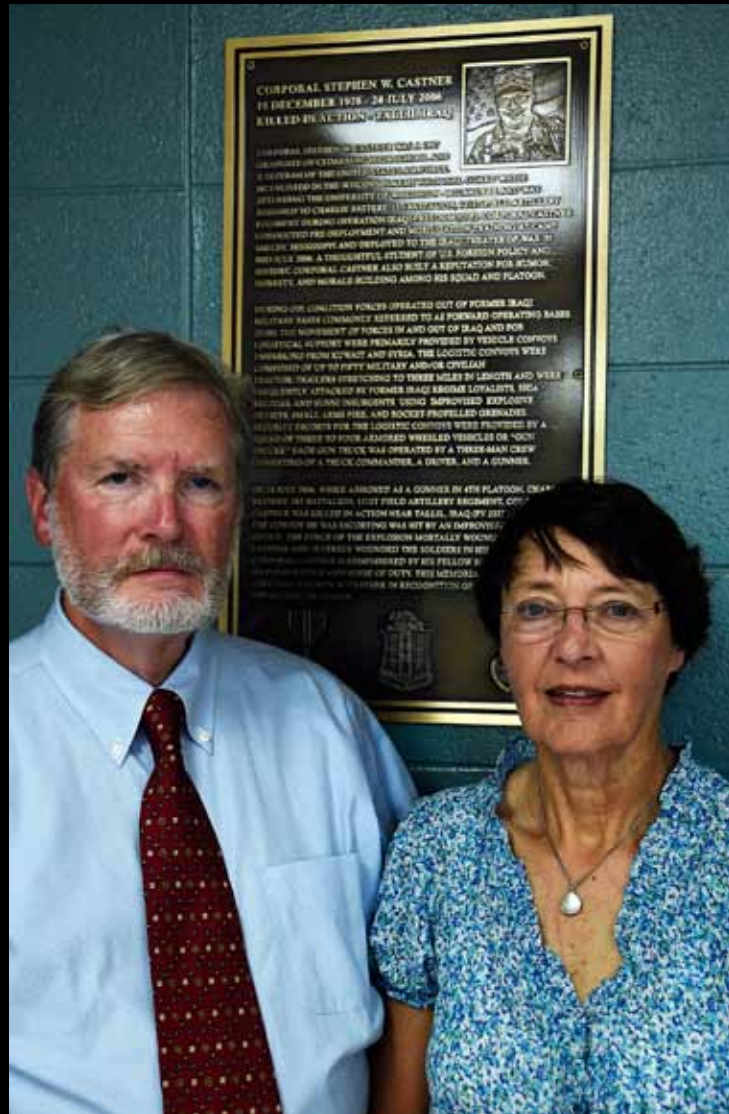
"We always called him our geek, our buddy, our comrade," Stockinger said. When he learned of Castner's death, he borrowed a practice from his time as a volunteer firefighter to pay tribute to his friend.

"I pulled off our [brigade shoulder] patch, I took a black marker and made a band across the patch," he said. "Command took to that and let us honor that for 60 days in country."

"That was a rough night — a very rough night," Stockinger continued. "It was a quick reality check."

Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde,

**Continued on Page 39**



Steve and Kay Castner, parents of the late Cpl. Stephen Castner, with the plaque commemorating their son at the Battery A, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery armory in Sussex, Wis. Castner was killed in action during a mission in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom July 24, 2006 in Iraq. A command remembrance ceremony was held Sunday, Aug. 14 at the Sussex armory. @ease photo by Vaughn R. Larson



# Family, friends remember fallen comrade at command remembrance ceremony

Continued from Page 38

the Wisconsin Army National Guard's senior enlisted advisor, was the command sergeant major for the 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment, which would turn over the convoy escort mission to the 121st Battalion in July and August of 2006. After Castner's death, Conde met with the senior noncommissioned officers of the 121st Battalion.

"We were coming to the end of our deployment, and we also suffered casualties at the beginning of our deployment," Conde said, referring to Sgt. Andrew Wallace and Spc. Michael Wendling who were also killed by a roadside bomb nearly 10 months earlier in Shaibah, Iraq. "I wanted to impress on the senior NCOs that the one thing we always have to remember is we had a mission to do, and the mission comes first. We were the convoy escorts for the entire theater — nothing came in or out of Iraq unless we were escorting it."

Conde recalled his battalion being excited to learn they would be replaced by another Wisconsin Army National Guard battalion.

"We knew exactly what kind of Soldiers Wisconsin has, and the professionalism," he said.

Sgt. Maj. Jason Grundel was a noncommissioned officer in the same company but a different platoon as Castner in 2006, and remembered Castner as "a great Soldier."

"This was really important for the whole organization," Grundel said. "It's great to have something in his name, in his family's name, here for the long haul."

During the ceremony, Beilfuss said the annual gravesite remembrances for Castner

helped him learn more about his fallen Soldier.

"First, Stephen was a great son and friend that made an impact on those around him," Beilfuss said. "Second, Stephen was a reader, with great interest in the world around him. Third, Stephen was proud of his service and wanted to serve overseas as a Soldier. Stephen was a volunteer and truly a Citizen Soldier."

Kay and Steve shared less formal characterizations of their son.

"Crazy guy," Kay said. "He was just a lot of fun, a student of history, a reader who read so much it interfered with eating and sleeping. Enjoyed life — had a good time."

"He did what he wanted to do," Steve added.

"His slogan was, 'I do what I want,'" Kay continued.

Dunbar said renaming the drill hall at the Sussex armory would ensure that future generations of Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers would know Castner's story, and perpetuate his memory.

"While we remember Cpl. Castner and the tragic event 10 years ago, we are reminded that he lives on with his battle buddies and those who served with him," Dunbar said. "Dedicating this hall and this bronze plaque will ensure that future generations of Citizen-Soldiers remember his service and his sacrifice."

Kay said she and her husband were grateful for the remembrance.

"We know a lot of Gold Star people," she said. "When we talk to each other, there's always this concern that the Soldier who has been lost will be forgotten. This is just one thing that helps assure me he is not forgotten — and that's really important to me." 📷

**CORPORAL STEPHEN W. CASTNER**  
**15 DECEMBER 1978 - 24 JULY 2006**  
**KILLED IN ACTION - TALLIL IRAQ**



CORPORAL STEPHEN W. CASTNER WAS A 1997 GRADUATE OF CEDARBURG HIGH SCHOOL AND A VETERAN OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE. HE ENLISTED IN THE WISCONSIN ARMY NATIONAL GUARD WHILE ATTENDING THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - MILWAUKEE AND WAS ASSIGNED TO CHARLIE BATTERY, 1ST BATTALION, 121ST FIELD ARTILLERY REGIMENT DURING OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). CORPORAL CASTNER CONDUCTED PRE-DEPLOYMENT AND MOBILIZATION TRAINING AT CAMP



**Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general, speaks during an Aug. 14 command remembrance ceremony commemorating the 10th anniversary of Cpl. Stephen Castner's death in Iraq. The ceremony was held at Battery A, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery's armory in Sussex, Wis. Submitted photo**





# Changing of the Guard

**Vaughn R. Larson**  
@ease staff

When he was five, Rafael Conde's family left communist Cuba for the United States. When he was in high school, a coach told him he would never amount to much in life.

"Opportunity sometimes comes in our direction disguised as challenges or problems," Conde said. "With hard work, I stand in front of you as the eighth state command sergeant major for the great state of Wisconsin."

Conde spoke during a formal change of responsibility ceremony June 1 at the Department of Military Affairs in Madison, Wisconsin. He assumed the mantle of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's senior enlisted advisor to Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general, and Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, Wisconsin's deputy adjutant general for Army, from Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Shields, who concluded a 43-year military career.

Dunbar noted that the two command sergeants major represented a combined 76 years of military experience between them,

a pool of knowledge ideally suited for the job.

"At the end of the day, the command sergeant major's job is to make sure our Soldiers are ready," Dunbar said. "To do what? Two core missions of the National Guard — we're the primary combat reserve of the United States Army, and we're the first military responders at home. So we must be ready to meet our responsibility."

The change of responsibility ceremony involved transferring a military sword from the outgoing command sergeant major to the incoming. Dunbar spoke of King Solomon's use of a sword to demonstrate not just strength and courage, but wisdom.

"A command sergeant major has to be tough enough to drive the Soldiers and lead them to do the things we must do for our state and for our nation to meet our responsibilities," Dunbar said. "And at the same time must have enough of a heart to understand that these men and women that we are entrusted with, that build our Army and our Army National Guard, have to be protected and know when too much is too

**Continued on Page 41**



# Cuban native becomes Wisconsin Army Guard's top enlisted leader

Continued from Page 40

much and get them ready to fight on another day. It is a tough line that the command sergeant major has to walk.”

Conde spoke of a sergeant first class who encouraged three young enlisted Soldiers to transfer to another company in order to take advantage of advancement opportunities — to “take their military careers seriously.” Conde was one of those three young Soldiers, and another would replace him as the top enlisted Soldier for the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team — Command Sgt. Maj. Joel Rothbauer.

“I challenge all of us to give opportunities to our Soldiers,” Conde said. “They are our future commanders and command sergeants major in our ranks. It is our responsibility to make them better than they are today.”

Conde said the component of the Warrior Ethos that compels Soldiers to never leave a fallen comrade applies to leaders with Soldiers struggling to meet standards.

“Do not give up on them,” Conde said. “These Soldiers at some point in their military career raised their right hand and took an oath to protect and defend our constitution. This is why I ask you to give them an opportunity to understand their shortcomings and make a plan to fix those issues. We must not give up on our Soldiers — we must not leave them behind. This is part of our Warrior Ethos and who we are as leaders.”

Shields joined the active Army at age 19 — “People like me come from the pre-8-Track era,” he quipped — and served for a time in the Korean Demilitarized Zone. He spoke with the breadth of scope that more than four decades in uniform allows.

“Throughout the last three years and a couple months, I’ve traveled throughout the nation representing Wisconsin, and

I will tell you that the quality of Soldier and Airmen that we have in this state is absolutely the best that we have in this nation,” Shields said. “That really has nothing to do with what Command Sgt. Maj. Conde or I do — it has to do with the spirit and professionalism of our organization. That is a tribute to the next level of NCOS we have in our organization — the brigade command sergeants major, the battalions, the first sergeants — they’re the ones who make things happen.

“Wisconsin is well-respected throughout the nation,” Shields continued. “Wisconsin has a history of great leadership, and it

has been an honor to work with so many professional leaders working toward a common goal.”

Shields said he has seen the perception of the National Guard swing from the unflattering “weekend warrior” optic to that of a fully trained and competent fighting force equal to, if not superior, to active duty Soldiers performing the same missions.

“That’s a tribute to the traditional Soldier who has a civilian job, a civilian skill set who on the other hand has the military occupational specialty,” Shields said. “They live in a different world, they become flexible or they’re not successful. That’s

probably the biggest thing that I’ve seen.”

Both Shields and Conde spoke about the sacrifice family members make for their Soldier’s service, and the commitment traditional Guard members make as they assume greater leadership responsibilities.

“The traditional Soldier makes a tremendous commitment as a leader in our organization — balancing family, civilian employment, the National Guard and friends,” Shields said. “Our operational tempo continues to challenge our Soldiers to meet the organizational goals.”

Conde said time is precious and limited, and work-life balances are difficult.

“How do you achieve that balance in your life? Make time for your families, make time for your significant others, and make time for your kids,” Conde said, “because before you know it, your youngest son will be graduating from high school. Take the time to spend with your family, because it matters.”

Conde thanked his children for their love and support over the years.

“You are the reason that I serve this great country,” he said, his voice thick with emotion. “I hope that I have given you the same opportunity to succeed as my parents gave me.”


Shields, at age 63, struggled to identify what he planned to do next.

“I want to work for a few more years, and I’m open to any opportunity,” he said after the ceremony. “It’s about doing something different now. I’ll still be part of the National Guard in my own way, and contribute when and how I can.

“It’s kind of a bittersweet day, to be honest,” Shields said. “To be part of something that long and the camaraderie you build in an organization like this, it’s hard to step away. But it’s time to let some of our younger Soldiers move up, and that’s what it’s all about, is opportunity. Part of my responsibility is to make sure we have Soldiers developed, ready and experienced to take those positions — that’s part of being a senior leader.

“I am very confident that Command Sgt. Maj. Conde will do a fantastic job,” he continued, “and quite honestly there’s another six or seven right behind him that are just chomping at the bit for the opportunity.”

Conde echoed that sentiment.

“Don’t be afraid to take a few challenges, don’t shy away from a problem,” Conde said. “Those may be the opportunities you have been waiting for.” 





Col. Michael George accepts the 32nd "Red Arrow" Infantry Brigade Combat Team colors during a formal change of command ceremony June 17 at Fort McCoy, Wis. The brigade bid farewell to Col. G. Michael Rand as the outgoing commander and welcomed George as the new commander. 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team photo by Cadet Arianna Schmitz



# Red Arrow gains new commander

**Sgt. Kimberly Mianeki**  
32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team

The 32nd "Red Arrow" Infantry Brigade Combat Team welcomed a new commander during a formal change of command ceremony June 17 on the parade field at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin.

Col. Michael George, who previously served as the deputy commander of the 32nd Brigade, assumed command of the more than 3,400 Soldiers and units based in 36 Wisconsin communities. George replaced Col. G. Michael Rand, who commanded the Red Arrow for the past two years.

George, who enlisted in 1978 and now has more than 32 years of military service

to his credit, was grateful to begin this new journey as the commander of the 32nd.

"To every Red Arrow Soldier, I am proud to count you as a fellow Soldier, and deeply honoured to serve with you as your commander," George said as he addressed the brigade during the ceremony.

This year marks 99 years since the Red Arrow's formation when Wisconsin and Michigan National Guard units first joined together to form the 32nd Infantry Division for service in World War I. George said he feels grateful to lead the brigade into the Red Arrow's 100th year and continue the legacy of teamwork and excellence.

**Above, the 32nd "Red Arrow" Infantry Brigade Combat Team stands in formation on the parade field June 17 at Fort McCoy, Wis. 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team photo by Sgt. Kimberly Mianeki**

**Continued on Page 43**



# New leadership takes reins of Red Arrow

Continued from Page 42

“I am very grateful to have this unique command opportunity,” George said. “I am proud of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team with its incredible history and am inspired by what I see in fellow Soldiers across the brigade.”

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin’s adjutant general, presided over the ceremony as the commander of the Wisconsin National Guard. He also invoked the organizations history and heritage and pointed out the brigade colors and the many battle streamers adorning them, noting the history and heritage they represent.

“The Red Arrow has a proud and noble legacy of service to our state and nation as evidenced by campaign streamers from the Red Arrow’s service in places like New Guinea, France, the Philippines and Iraq,” Dunbar said. “Every Soldier that wears the Red Arrow should be proud of those colors because they signify a storied lineage of Wisconsin National Guardsmen fulfilling our unique dual mission as the Army’s primary combat reserve, and Wisconsin’s first military responder.”

Dunbar also highlighted that both the incoming and outgoing commanders’ careers paralleled one another, as both served as infantry officers and George followed in Rand’s footsteps in various assignments.

“Congratulations on a job well done, Col. Rand,” Dunbar said. “I fully expect that Col. George will take the Red Arrow to even greater heights in the years ahead, as he continues to build on the strong foundation already established.”

George thanked Rand for his service and mentorship both while he was his deputy commander, and when the served together



**The 32nd “Red Arrow” Infantry Brigade Combat Team stands in formation on the parade field June 17 at Fort McCoy, Wis., during a formal change of command ceremony. 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team photos by Cadet Arianna Schmitz**



**Col. G. Michael Rand passes the 32nd “Red Arrow” Infantry Brigade Combat Team colors to Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson during the change of command ceremony.**

on deployment in 2005-06.

“Col. Rand, it’s been my honor, twice now, to serve as your second-in-command,” George said. “You are truly a great friend,

a caring leader and mentor. Not just to me, but to scores of others, as well.”

Rand reflected on his years of service with George.

“When I deployed, Col. George was my sounding board,” Rand said. “I tend to lead more from my heart than my head, and Col. George is extremely smart and a great leader. I have known him for more than 15 years, and he is without a doubt one of the nicest and most professional men that I have ever met in my life.”

In his final remarks to the Red Arrow as its commander, Rand reflected on his time as the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team’s commander and on his 33 years in uniform. Before and after the ceremony, many Soldiers thanked Rand for his leadership throughout his time in the National Guard, both as a commander and as a friend.

“Thirty-three years of doing something is a long time,” he said. “I never dreamed in a million years that I would be the commander of the 32nd brigade. My greatest accomplishment is really hard to say because I have had a lot. I’d have to say, it is the comments I got from people today thanking me for being their leader and being a nice guy.

“I do care about these soldiers, I really do,” he continued “I treat them all like they are my children and I am very protective of them. I think that approach helped me to be a good leader and having a sense of humor

has also helped.”

In his first remarks as the new commander, George wanted his Soldiers and their families to know how important everyone one of them are in the success of the brigade and their mission.

“Every Soldier counts and every family counts,” said George. “We will not be successful as a team unless we are willing to trust one another and hold each other accountable. Then we must make a daily, weekly, and monthly commitment to do everything with excellence as individuals and as a team.”

George assumes command of the brigade after serving in many leadership positions throughout the Red Arrow, including time as the deputy brigade commander, the brigade’s administrative and executive officer, and the commander of the 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry among other assignments.

During Rand’s tenure as commander, 65 Soldiers from the 32nd Brigade’s military engagement team and base defense operations center completed a [deployment to Kuwait and Jordan](#). He retired in late August with more than 33 years of military service and looked forward to spending more time with his wife and children. He will continue to serve until then with the 32nd Brigade. 🇺🇸





**Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde** receives the non-commissioned officer sword of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team from **Sgt. Maj. Thomas Jakubovsky**, starting the formal transfer of responsibilities for the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team during a May 15 change of responsibility ceremony at the Wisconsin Military Academy at Fort McCoy, Wis. 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team photo by Sgt. Kimberly Miannecki

# New senior enlisted leader for Red Arrows

**Sgt. Kimberly Miannecki**  
32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team

The 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team held a change of responsibility ceremony May 15 at the Wisconsin Military Academy at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, formally welcoming new Command Sgt. Maj. Joel Rothbauer.

With more than six years as the 32nd Infantry Brigade's senior non-commissioned officer, Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde relinquished responsibility to Rothbauer. Conde officially began his duties as the next command sergeant major of the Wisconsin Army National Guard in June.

"It's truly an honor today to take over from a great friend of mine," Rothbauer said.

Conde and Rothbauer became friends while drilling in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, together in 1985 shortly after Rothbauer enlisted in the Wisconsin National Guard.

"I would like to thank Command Sgt. Maj. Conde for being a mentor throughout my career," he said. "Who would've known that a couple E4s out of Eau Claire would make it this far?"

Conde said the most rewarding part of being the command sergeant major for the 32nd is when Soldiers say to him, "You were a guiding force for me and that is how I got to where I am today."

In his remarks, Conde said he believes that all Soldiers should strive

to be the best Soldiers they can be. "No matter what your job is in the Army, you have to do it to the best of your ability," he said.

The change of authority comes shortly before the 32nd Infantry Brigade begins its annual training period in June at Fort McCoy, where Rothbauer is looking forward to getting his first chance to exercise his leadership style as the brigade's senior enlisted Soldier.

"It's a great responsibility to take care of the welfare of the Soldiers, leading by example and doing what is right," he said. "I hope I can stand up to that and be the great leader that they deserve."

"The Red Arrow Brigade has a strong lineage and a proud history," he added. "I am humbled and honored to be part of its future as command sergeant major."

Conde took over as brigade command sergeant major in 2010, just months after nearly 3,500 Soldiers from the 32nd returned from a historic deployment to Iraq in 2009-10. During his tenure, the 32nd Infantry Brigade deployed more than 65 Soldiers with the [32nd Military Engagement Team and 32nd Base Defense Operations Center](#), demonstrating its aptitude in fulfilling the National Guard's role as the Army's primary combat reserve.

The brigade also completed a major [combat readiness training validation exercise](#) and re-instituted [Expert Infantry Badge](#) testing. 📷



**Command Sgt. Maj. Joel Rothbauer** accepts the non-commissioned officer sword of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team from **Col. George Rand**, brigade commander, symbolizing the transfer of responsibilities from former brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Conde to Rothbauer during a May 15 change of responsibility ceremony at the Wisconsin Military Academy at Fort McCoy, Wis. 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team photo by Sgt. Kimberly Miannecki



# Volk Field gains new commander

**Staff Sgt. Andrea F. Rhode**  
*115th Fighter Wing*

VOLK FIELD — Airmen, state leaders, family and friends attended the change of command ceremony at Volk Field Air National Guard Base, Camp Douglas, Wisconsin, Aug. 13.

After three and one-half years, Col. David W. Romuald relinquished command of Volk Field — which includes the Combat Readiness Training Center, the 128th Air Control Squadron, and the 126th Weather Flight — to his successor, Col. David W. May.

“We’ve had the privilege of having Col. Romuald leading us for the last few years,” said Maj. Gen. Donald P. Dunbar, Wisconsin’s adjutant general. “As the commander, he has faced a lot of challenges with personnel and budget cuts, which affected a lot of people. People we care about. When things go bad, it takes a good leader to get his Airmen through it. He did an awesome job.”

Dunbar showed appreciation for Romuald’s accomplishments by shedding light on the importance of the CRTC.

“Most of us in this room appreciate what a wonderful training venue we have at Volk Field, not only Airmen from the 115th Fighter Wing or the 128th Refueling Wing, but our colleagues from across the nation who come here to train know its value too,” he said. “We offer a great training venue that is second to none. It allows us to continually ensure we, as the Air National Guard, remain the Air Force’s best wingman.”



Romuald gave kudos to his Airmen for their hard work throughout the duration of his command.

“I’m competent that our CRTC is as good as it can be right now,” Romuald said. “We’re leaner, we’re more capable, and our resiliency has been tested time and time again. We’ve had many accomplishments over the past three and a half years and it’s a tribute to every one of you in this room who has helped me get the organization there.”

Romuald’s excitement about their



115th Fighter Wing photos by Master Sgt. Paul Gorman

accomplishments did not stop there. He also gave some insight on the adventures to come during May’s command.

“We’re going to have the best tactical airspace for training fourth and fifth [generation] fighters in the entire National Guard, and that’s thanks to the hard work that we’ve put in,” he said. “It’s been an eight-year process and we’re pushing it across the land right now.”

Romuald then addressed May.

“Col. May, you are about to lead some

of the finest Airmen in the Air National Guard,” Romuald said. “I am confident under your leadership they will continue to excel.”

As the ceremony drew to a close, May addressed his new Airmen.

“To the men and women of Volk Field, I am thrilled to be your commander,” May said. “I’m anxious to get to know all of you, get to work, and begin the process of writing the next chapter of Volk Field together.”

**Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, left, Wisconsin’s adjutant general, joins Wisconsin Air National Guard senior leadership during the Aug. 13 change of command ceremony for Volk Field Air National Guard Base, Wis. During the ceremony, Col. David May (far left) assumed command of the installation from Col. David Romuald, and will oversee operation of the 128th Air Control Squadron, 126th Weather Flight and Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center.**



# From cockpit to Capitol Hill, veteran serves in uniform and out

**Staff Sgt. Andrea F. Rhode**  
115th Fighter Wing

From committees to meetings with constituents to Capitol Hill, he keeps himself informed and spends his time passing on the information he has gathered throughout the day, hoping to make a difference in the lives of others.

One weekend a month, he chooses to make a difference in the lives of others in a completely different way — he puts on his flight suit and gears up to fly the RC-26 Metroliner.

As a traditional Guardsman, it is his duty to perform various missions across the United States of America. The RC-26 supports both state and federal missions to include southwest border operations, regional support for domestic operations and counter-drug missions.

“It’s a neat kind of dichotomy to play,” said Maj. Adam Kinzinger, RC-26 pilot and U.S. congressman. “The second I put my uniform on, I’m a major and I’m saluting lieutenant colonels and calling them sir. The next day, I’m talking to generals in my office and they’re asking me for my support on various programs.”

Kinzinger did not always play both roles. He began his career as a Guardsman and decided several years ago he wanted to do more.

“If I’m willing to defend my country from the outside, I have to be willing to defend it and serve it from the inside,” he said. “I made the decision because I’m really passionate about doing the right thing. I saw it as a way to extend my service and do something that was meaningful.”

When Kinzinger decided to switch from full-time to a drill-status Guardsman to allow himself more time for the campaign trail, the pilots he was working with were surprised.

“At the time, we all thought he was



**U.S. Rep. Adam Kinzinger speaking last October in support of the National Defense Authorization Act — otherwise known as the defense budget.** Photo from U.S. Rep. Kinzinger’s official Facebook page

crazy,” said Col. Stephen Dunai, 115th Fighter Wing maintenance group commander. “Looking back, it was really neat to see him pursue his dream. He’s one of the relatively few congressmen who have combat experience. He’s a great voice among that contingent for what the Air National Guard can offer. He has helped both introduce that mission and increase awareness of what it can do among fellow lawmakers.”

Doing both jobs has been relatively time-consuming for Kinzinger.

“When I have time at home, which is rare, I’m usually thinking about how I can make up some of my military time,” Kinzinger said. “I only spend an average of four or five nights at my home in Illinois per month, but I love it. It’s something I

really believe in. To be able to serve in both capacities gives me a level of career satisfaction that I really wish everyone could experience.”

His military background has been an asset in his congressman role.

“The military teaches you how to work as a team,” he said. “Running for congress and being in congress takes a lot of teamwork.”

His military background also taught him to be confident in his decisions.

“I honestly don’t worry about what a vote means for my career,” Kinzinger said. “I’ve taken a lot of really tough votes because I know that there are young people out there who are willing to give their life for this country. I have to be willing to give my career for the same cause.”

**Maj. Adam Kinzinger, 115th Fighter Wing RC-26 Metroliner pilot, salutes Col. Jon Kalberer, 176th Fighter Squadron commander, after he receives the Meritorious Service Medal during a March 5 ceremony at Truax Field in Madison, Wis.** 115th Fighter Wing photo by Staff Sgt. Andrea F. Rhode



# Packers blitz armory

**Sgt. Kimberly MianECKi**  
32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team

Two great Wisconsin traditions teamed up to give the Soldiers of a Wisconsin Army National Guard unit a memory they will never forget.

Soldiers of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment stood patiently waiting in formation June 18 for a surprise they could not have imagined. After two weeks in the field training for the National Guard's dual mission as the Army's primary combat reserve and first military responder in the homeland, the only thought on the Soldiers' minds was going home.

The unit had just returned to its armory after two weeks of hard training, sleeping in tents and bearing the summer heat, when the doors to their armory in Waupun, Wisconsin, opened and current and former Packers participating in the Packer Tailgate Tour entered.

"This was a pretty awesome way to end annual training and none of us saw it coming," said Cadet John French, of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. "The leadership was kind of baiting us making it sound like we were going to have to stay at the unit longer to do more work, but seeing these guys come through the door was outstanding and a great surprise for us."

Staff Sgt. Jared Beyer took the call when the Packers asked if the unit would be interested in the exclusive experience.

"I think it is awesome," he said. "I love it. I have been a Packer fan all my life, and I knew it would be a great experience for the guys."



**Former Green Bay Packer Robert Brooks talks with Staff Sgt. Matthew Nicks, of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment June 18 at the Wisconsin Army National Guard armory in Waupun, Wis., during a surprise Packer Tailgate Tour visit**

The leadership at the unit knew for nearly three weeks that the Packers were coming, and with such a tight-knit group, it was a challenge keeping the surprise from the Soldiers.

"The key was to keep it a secret, and it was very hard," said 1st Lt. Jason Morrison, the commander of Company A.

Keeping the surprise a secret worked.

"I had no idea who was coming today and was ready to go home, and I was waiting for it," said Spc. Zakary Kurtz. "I thought it wasn't going to be anything super important and then they bring the Packers

team which was a huge surprise."

As the question and answer session continued Jayrone Elliott, a Packer linebacker, noted the similarities between a military unit and a football team.

"We're all teammates," he said. "You need to learn about each other, the habits, and develop camaraderie in the locker room or in the field. Our schedules are similar. We get up early, work out, and be around your teammates all day and have your meals together. Great brotherhood."

Beyer agreed.

"I think it is good," he said. "They come

to the unit. The visit from the Packers was a surprise after the unit completed its two-week annual training at Fort McCoy, Wis. 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team photo by Sgt. Kimberly MianECKi

from a team-building activity, and we can relate to each other on how we work together and how they play as a team."

Morrison said that there were many Packers fans among his formation.

"They watch the team every weekend and it's huge to see them," he said. "We use a lot of football analogies in our job, too. Talk about team. Talk about leadership."

Kurtz was thrilled to have the opportunity.

"I think this was pretty sweet, and it is definitely a morale booster," he said. "It was great having the NFL vets and new guys

here, picking their brains, seeing where they are from and how they are normal people like us."

The players were grateful for the opportunity also.

"It was tremendous," Elliott said. "To be able to meet them and show them respect was great. They do so much for us, sacrificing their time for a bigger cause and giving great effort. We're thankful at the end of the day."

The Soldiers now have an unforgettable annual training memory and connection that they can share for years to come. 📸



# CAMP!

## ■ Military children reconnect with three-day activity event

**Sgt. Kimberly Mianeki**  
32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team

“All right Frank, how are you doing? Is your heart rate down? Are you ready for this?” Sgt. 1st Class Nathan Gear, rappel master, asked Frank Elert, a 15-year-old camper after he landed safely to the ground from a 35-foot rappel tower.

Frank’s job upon landing at the bottom of the rappel tower was to act as the belay ensuring his fellow camper Nolan rappeled safely the down the tower at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin during their three-day camp.

“Nolan, you are locked in and nothing is going to happen to you,” Gear said, reassuring the camper before he began his descent down the tower. “Don’t worry — Frank’s got ya.”

Frank and Nolan were among the 100 children attending the Wisconsin National Guard Youth Camp, hosted by the Wisconsin National Guard Family Program July 29-31 at Volk Field and Fort McCoy. Campers were divided into three age groups — 8-10, 11- 13, and 14-17.

To successfully conduct its dual mission as the state’s first military responder and the primary combat reserve of the Army and Air Force, the National Guard relies on support

**Continued on Page 49**

**Youth Campers and their camp counselors celebrate winning a tug of war competition at the Wisconsin National Guard Youth Camp July 31 at Volk Field, Wis. 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team photograph by Sgt. Kimberly Mianeki**



**Youth campers complete an obstacle course at the Wisconsin National Guard Youth Camp July 29-31 at Fort McCoy, Wis. The camp provides children of service members with a weekend of fun and seeks to build a support network for military families and their children.** 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team photos by Sgt. Kimberly Miannecki



**Youth campers rappel down a tower at Fort McCoy, Wis., during Wisconsin National Guard Youth Camp.**

# National Guard Camp provides military children with fun, challenging activities

**Continued from Page 48**

from the community, employers and strong families, all of which ensure the Soldiers and Airmen of the National Guard are ready to serve their state and nation when called. Youth camp is a key component of overall family readiness.

The camp invites children from all military families to attend camp and provides them with an opportunity to discover and make new friends while engaging in teamwork. It offers an opportunity to network with other military kids, a critical role for military children during deployments. It also helps children gain an understanding of some of the duties their parents perform while away, which can help ease a child's fear of the unknown.

"Military youth for the National Guard and Reserves live a unique lifestyle

being that they are more geographically dispersed than active duty youth," said Shawna Wyman, Child and Youth Program coordinator. "By coming to Youth Camp they are connecting with other military youth who live the same lifestyle that they do."

Mallory Keating, a 16-year-old whose dad recently retired from the Navy, agreed.

"Camp helps because everyone here has a family member that is in the military, or was, and you can relate to them," Keating said. "They know what it is like to have their parents be gone for a year. We also get the opportunity to see and experience a little bit of what our parents are doing while they are gone."

Campers participated in many military-related events: a rappel tower, confidence and leadership development course, self-defense class, land navigation course, urban area water war, water safety and first aid

training, and more. These events presented obstacles the campers had to solve and overcome as a team.

Wyman, after more than four years assisting with coordinating Youth Camp events, most enjoys seeing the children's confidence grow during camp.

"My favorite part of camp is seeing the children when they first arrive," Wyman said. "They are tentative and drawn back because they do not know what to expect but then they begin making friends and doing fun things they normally wouldn't do."

"Like today, for example," Wyman continued, "there was a young boy in the 8-to-10-year-old group who was afraid of heights and was afraid to do the cargo net obstacle, but he pushed through it and at the end he had the most glorious smile on his face because he accomplished something he didn't think he could."

Volunteers are mostly comprised of service members who understand the military lifestyle and duties first hand. Campers learned drill and ceremony, called cadence, and learned about other aspects of military life from these service members.

"My favorite part of camp is marching around and kind of being in the military, getting to experience a little of what my dad does," said Lillyan Burmesch, a 16-year-old camper attending her seventh camp.

"Having a family member in the military can be a rewarding, but it also has its challenges," Burmesch continued. "I like having a parent in the military, because you get to learn new things and meet new people but sometimes it's frustrating. In those times I remember the fun I have had at camp."

The camp has three main goals for the youth: provide opportunities for personal

growth, develop positive connections and citizenship, and conduct camp in a safe and professional manner that demonstrates value to our military families.

"Despite the children not being in the military, they still serve and experience the separation while their family member is away on deployment, drill or at other training," Wyman said. "Camp helps them validate their patriotism and devotion to their country."

Now in its 23rd year, the camp staff continuously strives to make the event enjoyable for the campers.

"I love camp — it is my favorite part of the year," Burmesch said. "I encourage other kids who haven't been to camp to look into it. It is so much fun and you get to learn so much."

Youth Camp registration for next year can be found at [www.wisconsinmilitary.org](http://www.wisconsinmilitary.org)



# Equipped for a challenging world

Vaughn R. Larson  
@ease staff

MAUSTON, Wis. — When they arrived at the Wisconsin National Guard's Challenge Academy at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin nearly six months earlier, cadets from across the state brought with them only a few personal belongings as well as a sense that how they had been navigating their lives was not working.

During a June 17 graduation ceremony, 107 cadets left the residential phase of Challenge Academy with a sense of accomplishment, improved decision-making skills, and a reinforced character.

"Cadets, life is about character," said Kevin Greenwood, Challenge Academy director. "How many times have we heard life is about choices? I firmly believe that the most important principle that guides us in making more right choices and less wrong choices is the strength of our character — the integrity to do what is right in spite of personal sacrifices."

Donald Weber, president of Logistics Health Corporation in La Crosse, Wisconsin, spoke of labels, and revealed that as a high school student he would have been an ideal Challenge Academy candidate.

"Like many of you, I struggled in school — I was not a good student," Weber, a Vietnam combat veteran, said. "I was often absent, and when I was in class I was distracted and tired. I ran with the wrong crowd. I was labeled a bad kid — a failure."

"When you came to Challenge Academy, you may have heard some of these labels

**Continued on Page 51**



**More than 105 cadets are dismissed from the residential phase of the Wisconsin National Guard's Challenge Academy Class 36 during a June 17 graduation ceremony at Mauston High School, Mauston, Wis. Wisconsin National Guard photo by Capt. Joe Trovato**



# Challenge Academy cadets graduate residential phase, prepare for life armed with improved character traits

Continued from Page 50

— troublemaker, loser, delinquent, lost cause, stoner, selfish, violent, lazy, low self-esteem, unmotivated, partier, dropout, failure,” he continued. “Those words don’t feel very good, do they? Let them go. After all that you’ve been through, all your hard work, and all you’ve accomplished, they no longer define you.”

Weber recalled that several of his high school teachers doubted if he would ever amount to anything, and admitted he gave them reason to think that way.

“I made bad choices,” he said. “I lacked motivation when it came to school. Personally, I didn’t even know if I could get my diploma on graduation day because I struggled in school in almost every possible way.”

Weber joined the Marine Corps right after high school, and soon after deployed to Vietnam. Seeing fellow Marines killed on the battlefield forced him to put life into perspective.

“I wanted to survive, so I chose to grow up and take responsibility,” he said. “I know now that joining the Marines not only changed my life, it saved my life. And I know for many of you, Challenge Academy has done the very same thing.”

Weber said he faced challenges and failures after leaving the Marines, but he was determined not to give up, and encouraged the graduating cadets to persevere.

“You have a greatness within you, and you are only beginning to see where it can take you,” he said.

Cadet Adam Kaschel, the distinguished honor graduate, spoke about choices.

“Somehow, we recognize that life does not get better by chance,” Kaschel said. “It gets better by change, and that requires new choices.



**Cadet Adam Kaschel, the distinguished honor graduate for the Wisconsin National Guard’s Challenge Academy Class 36, addresses his fellow cadets during a June 17 graduation ceremony at Mauston High School, Mauston, Wis.**

“I find it funny when someone says ‘he made me angry’ or ‘she made me angry,’ or ‘I was just running with the wrong crowd.’ No, you choose to be angry,” Kaschel continued, “just like you choose the crowd you hang around with, just like you choose to be optimistic, resilient or productive. Your mindset affects your behaviors. It is a choice — cadets, it is your choice.

“You are free to make decisions, but you are not free to choose the consequences,” Kaschel said. “Cadets, choose wisely and make your choices count.”

Greenwood said that with this class, the Wisconsin National Guard’s Challenge Academy had graduated more than 3,300 cadets since 1998. This class boasts an 80 percent high school equivalency

diploma success rate, and 53 cadets earned academic honors. En route to graduation, cadets logged 25,894 classroom hours and more than 10,000 study hall hours. They collectively marched nearly 15,000 miles to and from class, and each cadet ran approximately 205 miles during their residential phase. Each cadet performed 74 hours of community service.

Challenge Academy uses military values and a military environment to instill values and character traits that help cadets make better life choices. Sam Owens, who mentored Cadet Ivon Beckman, saw firsthand the changes the Academy brought about.

“His confidence has gotten really strong — he’s able to make decisions,”



**Donald Weber, president of Logistics Health in La Crosse, Wis., speaks to Challenge Academy cadets about labels and a troubled high school past. Challenge Academy uses a quasi-military setting to help teens at risk of not graduating high school learn core values and disciplines make better life decisions.** Wisconsin National Guard photos by Capt. Joe Trovato

Owens said. “It was tough, though. All in all, while he was being challenged, he was pretty determined not to quit. While they’re changing his thinking and giving him a different outlook, they’re also making him more confident, allowing him to make better decisions.”

Owens said Beckman will head to Vicksburg, Mississippi after graduation to work for AmeriCorps.

“He’s pretty excited about that,” Owens said.

Karen Smothers watched her grandson David Smothers graduate Challenge Academy.

“It’s a wonderful program,” she said. “It’s really helped David to mature and get self-esteem. When he was in school he

had very low self-esteem, he wasn’t doing well — he didn’t even care. But he’s grown up and he’s got plans. I hope when he gets home that he follows through with it.”

Eric Britton said he was very proud of his son, Eric Britton Jr.

“I just found out he got ‘most improved cadet,’” the elder Britton said. “When he first learned about the academy he was dead set against it. It took me awhile to just get him to sit down and watch the videos — he told me he’d think about it. Getting him here was half the battle.

“The last time he was home, when he had to get his plan in place, he was a lot more confident,” Britton said of his son. “Standing up straighter, he was able to deal with negativity or not getting exactly what he wanted without a lot of problem. Before that was not the case. Now he has direction — he knows what he wants to do.”

Cadet Nicholas Rueden credited Challenge Academy with keeping him out of jail.

“I saw the effect that my actions were having on my family, and the negative influences that were impacting me,” Rueden said. “I saw this as an opportunity to change my life. I feel like I matured a lot — resilient, humble, respect for authority.”

Cadet Clayton Frank said Challenge Academy repaired his relationship with his family.

“I needed the Challenge Academy because I wasn’t going to school, I was doing a lot of drugs, I had no relationship with my family,” Frank said. “I needed Challenge Academy to graduate high school, to get clean, to get my life on track.”

Frank said now he is more positive and appreciative of his family. He said he no longer takes things for granted.

“If I didn’t come to the Academy, I’d be either dead or in jail,” he said. “The Academy saved my life.” 📷



Sgt. Brandon Swanson of the Wisconsin National Guard and Sgt. Justus Densmore of the Texas National Guard represent the All Guard International Combat Team in a two-man machine gun team match June 24 during the British Army Reserve Operational Shooting Competition June 23-29 in England. Submitted photo

# TARGET ACQUIRED

■ *Wisconsin Guard member part of champion marksmanship team*

**Vaughn R. Larson**  
@ease staff

When the All Guard International Combat Team went to England's Army Training Centre Pirbright to compete for — and win — the historic Fortuna Trophy in late June, it had some help from the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

Sgt. Brandon Swanson, a member of Company D, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, has been a member of the All Guard team for the past few years and taken part in international marksmanship competitions each spring at Camp Robinson, Arkansas.

"This year we finally received the funding to once again attend an international competition in another country," Swanson said. "We were excited for the chance."

The British Army Reserve Operational Shooting Competition, featuring more than 200 international marksmen, was the first overseas contest for the All Guard team since 2006, and the first Fortuna Trophy victory since 2000. According to Swanson, the odds were against the eight-man U.S. team heading into this year's contest.

"We were huge underdogs," he said. "We had a very young team with no experience shooting in England and didn't know what to expect. Their matches are different than what we shoot here, so it took a little getting used to."

The differences included how the competitions are administered. In the United States, the range controller gives commands to the competitors on the course of fire before each firing round. In England, the range controller only issues the command "Watch out, watch out" to signify the start of a round — competitors are responsible for knowing the course of fire for each match.

The Fortuna consists of four matches — the Defense Assessment, the Advance to Contact, the Pistol Close Quarter Battle, and the Urban Contact Assessment-Rifle. Contestants wore

**Continued on Page 53**



# Wisconsin Guardsman part of champion marksmanship team

Continued from Page 52

body armor plates and at least 25 pounds of equipment, and sprinted a minimum of 100 yards to each firing line.

“We hardly ever fired a shot without being winded,” Swanson said. “One match even had a 500-yard sprint prior, and then we went into the sprinting and shooting portion.”

While physically demanding, Swanson quickly grew to respect the rigorous and realistic demands of the Fortuna competition.

“We learned to build better shooting positions that worked under duress, and how to make it more combat-effective by adapting it to our body armor,” he explained.

The competition is built on a foundation of fair play, as the All Guard team was given the opportunity to practice the course, which not only improved familiarization but allowed for strategy development.

“On game day, everyone just focused on shooting the best they could,” Swanson said. “After it was all said and done, the U.S. came out on top. The margin of victory was very narrow.”

Every All Guard team member finished among the top 30 as individual shooters. The team won the Overall Individual Aggregate Championship, Overall Individual Rifle Aggregate Championship, and the Overall Individual Pistol Aggregate Championship. Swanson finished third in the international Fleeting Encounter event.

Sgt. Justus Densmore of the Texas Army National Guard was the high shooter for



**Sgt. Brandon Swanson (front row, right of trophy) of the Wisconsin Army National Guard was one of eight marksmen on the All Guard International Combat Team to win the Fortuna Trophy at the British Army Reserve Operational Shooting Competition June 13-29 in England. Submitted photo**

the All Guard team and also named Best International Individual Champion. He placed first in the Rural Contact and Urban Contact events, and third in the international Attack and Reorganize event.

“As an individual, it was a great honor winning the Fortuna Trophy,” Densmore said, “but it took our whole team to pull it off. We all came together to build each other up and help each other shoot the best possible scores we could.”

Swanson said he was grateful and honored to be one of eight marksmen to take part in the competition.

“It’s one of the pinnacles of a lot of hard work, focus, self-critique, and really honing an individual skill,” Swanson said, noting

that team members practice in their home states and then learn to collaborate as a team.

“If someone is struggling, we are all more than willing to help them out,” he continued. “We share experiences and tips that help each other get better. It definitely made me a better-rounded shooter. When you consistently shoot with the top 20 shooters in the U.S., you can really learn a lot.”

The Fortuna Trophy competition dates back to 1882, when the National Rifle Association of the United States presented the trophy to the Great Britain Volunteer team in the International Military matches at Creedmoor, England. The competition

took an extended break between 1932 and 1993. The All Guard team last won the trophy in 2000.

The names of winning team members are engraved on the trophy. In addition to Swanson and Densmore, this year’s All Guard team includes Maj. David Stapp, officer in charge, Arkansas Army National Guard; Master Sgt. Greg Neiderhiser, noncommissioned officer in charge, Pennsylvania Army National Guard; 1st Sgt. Jonathan Chapman and 1st Sgt. Tommy McGee, Louisiana Army National Guard; Sgt. 1st Class Paul Deugan, Iowa Army National Guard; Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Noe, Arkansas Army National Guard; Sgt. Evan Messer, North Dakota Army National

Guard; and Sgt. Jeremy Steffel, Virginia Army National Guard. The trophy remains in England due to its size.

“My name will join another Wisconsin Army National Guardman’s — Lt. Col. J.R. Treharne,” Swanson said of the Soldier who was a captain on the All Guard team in 2000. “He is the person I owe much of my shooting career to. I definitely would not have been on that trip or be half the marksman that I am today if he hadn’t taken the time to help me out.”

The All Guard team plans to return to next year’s competition. 📷

*Capt. Theresa Walker and 2nd Lt. Memory Strickland contributed to this report.*



# Fighter Wing firefighters perform CPR, save civilian passenger's life

**Staff Sgt. Andrea F. Rhode**  
*115th Fighter Wing*

MADISON, Wis. — They were more than 10 hours into their shift when the call came in. None of them knew the impact they were about to make, or that the events of May 24 would be burned into their memories forever.

Capt. Jeffery Barker, Mathew Bartol, Steven Dempsey, Chris Klapoetke, Casey Klossner, Ryan Pafford and Joshua Popanz, firefighters for the 115th Fighter Wing Truax Fire and Emergency Services, were all on shift that day. They had spent the morning completing refresher training on the exact equipment they would need later that day.

Klossner took the call from the primary crash phone at 5:15 p.m.

"I heard the pilot call on ground frequency to the tower that there was an emergency, so I knew something was coming," Klossner said. "I was in the alarm room when the call came in. At that time it was only thought to be a seizure so I immediately paged out for a seizure and they were enroute by 1716," military time for 5:16 p.m.

Klapoetke, Dempsey and Bartol were on Engine 9, the primary response vehicle.

"Before we even made it out to taxiway bravo, the tower was already calling us and giving us clearance to cross one of the main runways to the other side," Klapoetke said. "They already knew there was something big going on over there so they were giving us clearance to get there as soon as possible."

When the team arrived on the west ramp, the aircraft had not pulled up yet. This gave them a little time to gather their equipment and get up to the jet bridge.

"Just as we got up to the top of the jet bridge, the aircraft reconnected and the



**A team of firefighters from the 115th Fighter Wing Truax Fire and Emergency Services outside their fire truck in Madison, Wis., June 6. This team of firefighters helped save a woman's**

flight attendant came out saying the patient wasn't breathing," Klapoetke said.

The patient not breathing meant the situation had escalated. Klapoetke, Dempsey and Bartol rushed onto the aircraft.

"We saw the patient laying on the floor," Klapoetke said. "She was unresponsive and wasn't effectively breathing, so I did a quick assessment. Yup, no pulse, she's not breathing. We immediately removed her shirt, attached our [defibrillator] pads,

verified no pulse and started CPR."

CPR stands for cardiopulmonary resuscitation, a lifesaving technique used when someone's heartbeat has stopped or that person is not breathing. In order for the CPR to be effective, one of the firefighters needed to get to the patient's head. Bartol quickly shimmied his way past the aircraft passengers and got himself in place.

"He took airway management and started giving breaths with a bag valve

**life by performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation, a lifesaving technique used when someone's heartbeat has stopped or that person is not breathing.** Photo by Master Sgt. Gary Peck

mask," Klapoetke said.

In the meantime, Dempsey was running the automated external defibrillator, a portable electronic device that checks heart rhythm and can send an electric shock to the heart to try to restore a normal rhythm.

"We did two minutes of CPR, delivered the shock and got right back onto CPR and then Dempsey and I switched out," Klapoetke said. "Sometime during that switch is when she started fighting the bag

and started breathing on her own again."

The firefighters back in the alarm room were listening intently through all of it.

"I was sitting here wishing I was on scene helping, but you know, someone has to do this part too," Klossner said. "Hearing Ryan call CPR in progress and shock delivered and everything — I was like oh my God, they're right on, this is going to work. Sure enough, it did."


Once the patient had a consistent heartbeat and breathing rhythm going, the team got her on a backboard and carried her out of the aircraft where the Madison Fire Department team was waiting.

"It doesn't usually happen like that," Klossner said. "I mean they were on scene within two minutes and CPR was in progress right away. Everything was absolutely textbook as far as time goes."

Their Truax Field location meant they did not need any extra clearances besides the tower and they were given the go-ahead to get to the other side of the runway in a matter of seconds. There is not a single emergency team in the Madison area that could have gotten there as fast as the 115 FW Truax Fire and Emergency Services team did.

According to the firefighters, they credit their close location and the trusting relationship they have with the Dane County Regional Airport for saving this woman's life.

"In this instance, we were lucky that we were there fast enough to ensure she got an organized breathing rhythm back and her brain still had enough oxygen in it where it could say, 'hey we're going again,'" Klapoetke said. "Time was on our side."

The 115th Fighter Wing Truax Fire and Emergency Services provides fire and emergency services for both the fighter wing and the Dane County Regional Airport. 



# Meritorious Service

## Two receive Wisconsin Army National Guard's highest honor

**Staff Sgt. Matthew Ard**  
*Wisconsin National Guard*

The Wisconsin Army National Guard inducted two retired Soldiers into its Hall of Honor May 15, during a ceremony in Witmer Hall at Joint Force Headquarters, Madison, Wisconsin.

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Edgar J. Hansen of Manitowoc, Wisconsin, and retired Brig. Gen. Dominic A. Cariello of Racine, Wisconsin, were praised for their years of loyal service.

"We choose people of substance and significance who have made a tremendous contribution to this state and to this nation," said Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general and commander of the Wisconsin National Guard.

Hansen enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1968 and served in Vietnam for more than 18 months. He left the Army in 1980 and returned in 1990 joining the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 32nd "Red Arrow" Infantry Brigade, eventually to become the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team's command sergeant major.

"The thing that always drove me was the fact that I got to be a Soldier for the finest, freest nation on this planet, and the best people in the world," Hansen said.

"You've got to remember what kind of business we're in," he said prior to the ceremony. "This is service above self."

Hansen said there were too many people that influenced his military career to mention.

"I thank all of the Soldiers that served with me, all of the good commanders that gave me direction, and God bless America," he said.

Cariello enlisted in 1981 in the U.S. Army Reserve and commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1983 in the Wisconsin Army National Guard. He served for 24

years in the 57th Field Artillery Brigade and assumed command of that organization in 2004. He led the unit's reorganization into the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade and commanded Task Force Wisconsin in New Orleans for the Hurricane Katrina response. He then commanded a training team in Afghanistan between 2005 and 2007 that trained Soldiers in the Afghan National Army.

Upon promotion to brigadier general, Cariello served in two vital roles — as assistant adjutant general for readiness and training, and also as deputy commanding general for First Army's training support division (west). He retired in 2012 with 31 years of service.

Regarding the most memorable part of his career, Cariello said his goal was "making sure that every Soldier that left the state of Wisconsin was trained, prepared and ready to do the job and come home."

A unit transitioning from one mission to another is a very difficult and complex task, Dunbar said of Cariello's success during

the 57th's transition from field artillery to support.

"Such is the talent of this officer," Dunbar said. "You did an awesome job for us."

Cariello fondly remembered all of the Soldiers he served with during his long career.

"Having a plaque in the hall is exciting, but the true meaning of this award is knowing that the Soldiers I served are now leaders in the Wisconsin Army National Guard," Cariello said.

The purpose of the Hall of Honor is to encourage esprit de corps, in remembrance of a Wisconsin Army National Guard heritage that spans nearly 175 years. It is designed to give proper recognition to individuals whom have made lasting and exceptional contributions to the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

Fifty-nine recipients have been inducted into the Hall of Honor since its inception in 2000. The award is one of the most prestigious that a former or currently serving Wisconsin National Guard member can receive. 📷



**Gen. Mark A. Milley, Army chief of staff, Capt. Ubaldo Nieves, and James Wofford of the Gen. MacArthur Foundation at the Gen. Douglas MacArthur Leadership award ceremony June 1.**  
U.S. Army photo by Eboni Everson-Myart

## Officer receives prestigious Army leadership award

A Wisconsin Army National Guard officer who taught leadership skills to future leaders received the General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award this year.

Capt. Ubaldo Nieves, who was an Officer Candidate School instructor at the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 426th Regional Training Regiment (RTI) at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, was one of seven Army National Guard officers to receive the prestigious leadership award for company-grade officers during a June 1 ceremony at the Pentagon.

"I am very humbled by this recognition," Nieves said. "This really is a reflection of the great team I had the honor of leading. Without the great Soldiers we have the privilege of leading, the Wisconsin Army National Guard would not be the great force multiplier that it is today — this award reflects the great people that we have the honor of serving with."

Originally from Escondido, California, Nieves enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps as a rifleman in 1993. He attended officer candidate school at the 426th RTI in 2006, and was commissioned as a quartermaster officer — logistics — the following year.

Award candidates are judged according to leadership that exemplifies the ideals

of duty, honor and country; their ability to influence others to accomplish the mission by providing purpose, direction and motivation; technical and tactical competence; commitment to the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage; their ability to develop cohesive teams that anticipate what needs to be done and take initiative within the scope of the commander's intent; and intangible leadership qualities such as people skills, interpersonal communication skills and an effective leadership climate.

Nieves didn't have much time to savor the award, however — he began two years at the U.S. Embassy in Managua, Nicaragua, as the bilateral affairs officer in the Security Cooperation Office as part of the State Partnership Program Wisconsin has with Nicaragua.

"I look forward to serving not only our country in this capacity, but also the great state of Wisconsin," Nieves said.

Previous MacArthur Award recipients from the Wisconsin Army National Guard include Lt. Col. Scott Southworth, Lt. Col. Josephine Daniels, Maj. Doug Kolb, [Capt. Bill Barthen](#), [Capt. Nils Henderson](#) and [Capt. Ron Adams](#). 📷



# Wisconsin Army Guard tops in Army Communities of Excellence competition

**Capt. Joe Trovato**  
*Wisconsin National Guard*

The Wisconsin Army National Guard continues to set the standard in the annual Army Communities of Excellence (ACOE) awards program.

Wisconsin was crowned the Army National Guard's overall winner in ceremonies in May at the Pentagon and the Army National Guard Readiness Center in Arlington, Virginia.

This year's honor was the latest in a long string of success since the Wisconsin Army National Guard began participating in the ACOE awards program in the late 1990s. In 18 years of participation, Wisconsin has 16 top 10-finishes and 11 top-five finishes. It emerged as the overall Army National Guard winner three times and as the runner-up three times.

The ACOE program is an Army-wide initiative that incorporates the Malcolm-Baldrige Excellence Framework to improve efficiencies and effectiveness across the force. The same criteria is widely used in the business community, schools and other organizations as a means of improving processes and customer service.

A full contingent of Wisconsin Guard Soldiers travelled to Washington D.C. to accept the award and participate in an ACOE symposium and workshop May 23-24.

Speaking to other honorees at a May 23 ACOE workshop, Brig. Gen. Ken Koon, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's land component commander, said Wisconsin's success is largely attributable to its focus on analyzing and acting on metrics as well as continuous process improvement.

The Wisconsin Army National Guard developed a team that specifically focuses on managing strategic goals and objectives, asking questions, improving processes and



**Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley, presents the Army Communities of Excellence ribbon to Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, the Wisconsin National Guard's deputy adjutant general for Army, during a May 24 awards ceremony at the Pentagon in Arlington, Va. Also pictured: Sgt. 1st Class Chris Donovan (left), 1st Sgt. Jamie Preder, and Brig. Gen. Ken Koon, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's land component commander. The Wisconsin Army National Guard was named the National Guard's overall winner in the ACOE competition.** Wisconsin National Guard photos by Capt. Joe Trovato

managing systems that improve the overall readiness of the organization.

"[Army Chief of Staff] Gen. Milley says that readiness is number one," Koon told the audience. "There is no other number one, and that's true. We are Guardsmen. We need to be ready for the governor every day, and for our federal mission."

After accepting the award as the Guard's overall winner, Koon outlined Wisconsin's focus on implementing its ALL-STAR concept. In other words, the Wisconsin Army National Guard is scalable, tailored, adaptable and ready to fulfill its domestic mission as the first military responder in Wisconsin and its federal mission as the Army's primary combat reserve.

The organization is scalable in that it can flex to any mission from the individual Soldier level, to the whole of the organization, Koon said. It is tailored

via pre-designed units for specific mission sets or ad-hoc combinations of skills and equipment for unique missions. It is adaptable in its versatility to meet unknown and unanticipated needs, and it is ready – trained and qualified – to carry out its mission here at home and abroad.

"We've enjoyed continued success over the years of participation," he said during the awards ceremony. "The real reward, however, is not where we placed but rather in what we have learned as an overall organization."

Maj. Gen. Richard Gallant, the special assistant to the director of the Army National Guard, echoed that sentiment during his remarks, noting that the ACOE program makes organizations better just for participating.

"The journey is the destination," Gallant said. "That is the best part of what the Army



**Col. Brian Wolhaupter (left), Lt. Col. Victor Parziale, Brig. Gen. Ken Koon, 1st Sgt. Jamie Preder, Maj. Michael Hanson, Sgt. 1st Class Chris Donovan, 1st Sgt. Tamara Mell, Staff Sgt. Bradley Everhart, Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, Lt. Col. Scott Bush, Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Shields, and Maj. Shannon Hellenbrand join Maj. Gen. Richard Gallant, the special assistant to the director of the Army National Guard (center), on stage in a May 23 ceremony at the National Guard Readiness Center in Arlington, Va.**

Communities of Excellence Program is. Everyone that goes through the process of filling out the application, of implementing some of the changes that the program directs, learns from the program."

The institutional improvements and changes directed by the ACOE and its criteria directly impact the overall readiness of the organization, he said, and equally as important, it builds a culture of excellence and efficiency.

In a ceremony at the Pentagon, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley, stressed the impact that the ACOE program has on the overall readiness of the force. Quality installations, organizations and communities allow Soldiers to focus on the important missions they face every day.

"They were evaluated in terms of leadership, strategic planning, customer service, process management, and a

whole host of other categories, but most importantly, the awardees that you're going to see come before you are really evaluated most importantly in terms of results," Milley said in a ceremony at the Pentagon.

"They are setting the standard for quality of life that we expect for all of our Soldiers," he said of the awardees from across all three components of the Army. "They are setting the standard for the Army as a whole."

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, Wisconsin's deputy adjutant general for Army, had a similar message, noting how quality employers and stable families are critical to readiness.

"At the end of the day again, it's all about readiness," he said. "That's the only focus of the Wisconsin Army National Guard. Our goal is simple — to be the premiere Army National Guard across the 54 [states and territories]." 🇺🇸



## Troop Movements

### Wisconsin Army National Guard

**Col. Brian Wohlhaupter** has been selected as the Wisconsin Army National Guard's next chief of staff. He succeeds **Col. John Schroeder**, who will retire in January 2017 after nearly 34 years of service in the Army Reserve and Army National Guard.

### 32nd Brigade

**Command Sgt. Maj. John Dietzler** has been selected as the next command sergeant major of 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry Regiment. He follows **Command Sgt. Maj. Curtis Patrouille**.

**Command Sgt. Maj. Georgett Hall** has been selected as the next command sergeant major of the 132nd Brigade Support Battalion. She follows Command Sgt. Maj. Joel Rothbauer, who has been selected as the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team's command sergeant major.

...

### 64th Troop Command

**Command Sgt. Maj. Curtis Patrouille** has been selected as the command sergeant major of the 1st (Assault) Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment. He follows **Command Sgt. Maj. Steve Hintze** who is retiring.

...

### Reserve Officer Training Course

**Lt. Col. Rochelle Maier** has been selected as the next professor of military science at UW-Stevens Point. She follows **Lt. Col. Gary Thompson** who was reassigned as the Wisconsin National Guard public affairs officer.

...

### Wisconsin Air National Guard

**Col. Jeff "Ace" Wiegand** has been selected as the Wisconsin Air National Guard's next chief of staff. He follows **Brig. Gen. Murray Hansen** who transferred to the Missouri Air National Guard.

...

### 115th Fighter Wing

**Col. Erik "Norm" Peterson** has been selected as the next 115th Fighter Wing commander. He succeeds **Col. Jeff Wiegand**.

...

### Volk Field

**Col. Dave May** has been selected as the next Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center commander. He succeeds **Col. David Romuald** who is retiring.

## Retiree Activities Offices

Questions regarding your military retirement benefits? The Retiree Activities Offices (RAOs) are staffed with Wisconsin retirees who can get you answers.



The RAO at Joint Force Headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin, is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:30-11:30 a.m., except holidays. The office can be

reached at 608-242-3115 (DSN 724-3115) or 800-335-5147 (press 2, then 3115). The office fax is 608-242-3111. The e-mail address is: [widma.retiree@wisconsin.gov](mailto:widma.retiree@wisconsin.gov), and the traditional mailing address is: Retiree Activities Office, Joint Force Headquarters Room 160, 2400 Wright Street, Madison, WI 53708-8111

The RAO in Milwaukee located in Building 512 at the 128th Air Refueling Wing is open Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., except holidays. The office can be reached at 414-944-8212 (DSN 580-8212). The office fax is 414-944-8412. The e-mail address is: [rao.128arw@wimilw.amg.af.mil](mailto:rao.128arw@wimilw.amg.af.mil), and the traditional mailing address is: 128th ARW Retiree Activities Office, 1835 E. Grange Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207-6132



## Easy does it

**115th Fighter Wing weapons Airmen carry a live missile to load onto an F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft during the Combat Archer exercise at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., May 10. The 115th Fighter Wing travelled to Tyndall Air Force Base**

**for a training exercise called Combat Archer which allowed pilots, maintainers and operations Airmen an opportunity to train with live missiles. 115th Fighter Wing photo by Senior Airman Kyle Russell**



# Parting shot



A cavalry scout with Troop C, 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, conduct aerial insertion training as part of Annual Training at Fort McCoy, Wis., June 10. 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Spc. Jared Saathoff