
TAG Update

December 2008

COMMAND INFORMATION FOR THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

From The Adjutant General

As we approach this most sacred of seasons, it is a bittersweet time for many in our organization. We welcome back the 3 1/103rd Armor from their combat tour in Afghanistan and the 1/104th Cavalry from their peacekeeping mission in the Sinai. Both organizations performed superbly. While we celebrate their return, however, nearly 6,000 more Soldiers and Airmen are preparing to deploy early next year.

During this holiday season, I ask all of you to remember our fallen who gave the last full measure of devotion. We must honor their memory and keep their families in our thoughts and prayers. We also should keep in mind our fellow Guard members who will be deployed and will not be able to share this holiday season with their loved ones. Our nation's call to duty comes with great sacrifice, and many of them will spend the holidays ensuring our safety here at home.

In closing, Chuck and I extend warmest wishes and holiday greetings to you and your loved ones. We are so fortunate to be part of the Pennsylvania National Guard and Military and Veterans Affairs family. Happy Holidays to all.

JESSICA L. WRIGHT
MG, PAARNG
The Adjutant General

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| <h2>Air Guard Updates</h2> |
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| <h3><u>111th Fighter Wing</u></h3> |
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Inspections

- The Air Combat Command inspector general conducted a unit compliance inspection of the 270th Engineering Installation Squadron Aug. 12-14, resulting in a "compliant" rating for the unit. Immediately after the inspection, the inspector general team conducted an operational readiness inspection. The unit received an overall rating of "excellent" for its first-ever ORI. According to the report, "The 270th EIS was well prepared for this inspection. Unit command and control was exceptional. Superb leadership by unit non-commissioned officers kept members focused and highly motivated."
- A team from the headquarters of the Air Force Inspection Agency, Directorate of Medical Operations, conducted a health services inspection of the 111th Medical Group Aug. 14-17. The unit was awarded a rating of "excellent" after being evaluated on various areas

including force fitness, aerospace medicine management, medical management, training, organizational management, medical readiness planning and deployment processing.

- The environmental division of the Air National Guard visited the 111th FW to conduct an assessment of a base-level auditing program for achieving compliance with federal, state and local regulations. The assessment resulted in positive finding with very few negative findings.

Deployments

- A 45-day deployment for approximately 200 Guard members who deployed to Bagram Air Base ended in late September. During the deployment, the 103rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron dropped more than 30,000 pounds of ordnance and fired more than 25,000 30 mm rounds. The deployment may turn out to be the last A-10 deployment.

Miscellaneous

- Members of the wing participated in a golf outing at the Huntingdon Valley Country Club on Aug. 30 to raise funds for the Folds of Honor Foundation, an organization that provides scholarships for dependents and spouses of service members that have been killed or disabled as a result of their military service.
- The wing provided displays, foods and people of Italian-American heritage at the first annual Pennsylvania National Guard Unity Day on Sept. 18 at Fort Indiantown Gap. Many members of Italian heritage have helped shape the culture of the wing as we know it today.
- The Pennsylvania National Guard's Northeast Counterdrug Training Center came to Willow Grove Air Reserve Station from Sept. 30 to Oct. 3 to host "Desert Snow," a drug interdiction training course for law enforcement officers. Law enforcement and homeland security personnel from various local, state and federal agencies participated in training focused on concealment methods commonly used on highways by drug smugglers and terrorists. The exercise utilized approximately 2,000 pounds of fake narcotics and various explosives simulations.
- Members of the 111th participated in the Navy Integrated Training Exercise at Willow Grove on Oct. 9. The exercise tested the two services' abilities to respond to an on-base emergency based on their section-specific emergency response plans. The exercise evaluated security procedures, airfield intrusion, securing the runway after an attack, casualty care, incident command operations and consequence management. This is the fourth such exercise performed jointly between the two services.
- The wing competed against 14 other A-10 units in "Hawgsmove 2008," the Air Force's biennial A-10 bombing and tactical gunnery competition held from Oct. 15-18 in Salina, Kan. Our pilots won the top Strafe Team award, and Maj. Bill Zutell captured the Top 30-Degree Dive Bomb award.
- Service members from the 111th FW commemorated Sept. 11, 2001 by participating in a Patriot Day ceremony before 40,000 spectators at Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia. Air National Guardsmen joined the Army National Guard, as well as active duty Navy and Marine Corps members, to unfurl a 120-by-250 foot American flag across the outfield in the ceremony before the game.

171st Air Refueling Wing

Deployments

- More than 450 members of the 171st deployed to Kyrgyzstan, Curacao and Guam. The six-month deployment lasts into next year. During the deployment, three quarters of the

unit's KC-135 fleet will offload thousands of pounds of fuel worldwide.

Orientation Flights/Community Relations

- The orientation flight program concluded in October, with the last two flights held this quarter. Members of the unit had the opportunity to invite people they know from the local community to gain firsthand knowledge of the mission we support at the wing. In August, the second employer flight was held and 37 civilian employers of our traditional Guard members participated. In addition, October's clergy flight hosted 28 local religious leaders who have a significant impact throughout our community.
- We hosted a leadership workshop for 24 members of the Upper St. Clair High School Soccer Team. In addition to problem solving and teamwork exercises, the students participated in a leadership panel and toured the base and aircraft.
- The 171st participated in the Pittsburgh Pirates' Operation Military Salute during the 2008 baseball season. Unit members and other local military members created video messages from their deployed location. The videos were shown on the stadium's video board, sending well wishes to their families, friends and Pirate fans.
- A donation of plastic airplane models was presented to the 171st in August from Pittsburgh native Ryan Relic, a former air combat camera captain in the Air Force. The 250-300 kits were flown on our aircraft to our deployed location to be enjoyed by our members and their active duty counterparts.

Events

- As part of Pittsburgh's 250th Celebration, Brig. Gen. Uptegraff, wing commander, performed a mass "swearing-in" of 13 new local military members in October in front of an audience of thousands at Point State Park.
- Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street, and the USO teamed up to provide the Sesame Street Experience for Military Families for members of the 171st as well as other local service members and their children. The program, a free traveling tour to military installations across the country, came to the 911th Airlift Wing in Pittsburgh.

193rd Special Operations Wing

Flight of Freedom Ceremony

- The 193rd Special Operations Wing hosted the 20th annual Pennsylvania Air National Guard Flight of Freedom Honors Ceremony in September. This colorful and spirited assembly gave members of today's Pennsylvania Air National Guard an opportunity to reflect upon their accomplishments of the past year; remember fallen comrades; honor prestigious Pennsylvania Air Guardsmen; and publicly demonstrate our pride, patriotism, and dedication. Presiding over the military formation was Col. Jerry Otterbein, wing vice commander. The keynote speaker was Congressman Tim Holden.

148th Air Support Operations Squadron

- Staff Sgt. Shawn Bearinger, who deployed to Iraq as a Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) supporting the 15th Air Support Operations Squadron and the 3rd Infantry Division, has been awarded the Army Commendation Medal and Army Achievement Medal for his effort.
- Staff Sgt. Damian Temperine, who deployed to Iraq as a TACP supporting the 11th Air Support Operations Squadron and the 1st Cavalry Division, has been awarded the Army Commendation Medal for his service.

- Maj. Stacy Zdanavage, who deployed to Iraq as an ALO supporting the 15th Air Support Operations Squadron and the 3rd Infantry Division, has been awarded the Bronze Star for his service.
- The squadron completed a command post exercise and leader training program at Camp Shelby, Miss., and Fort Polk, La. Both the JRTC and Green Flag East Staff cited the 148th personnel as the “best seen to date support of any Army brigade, Guard or active duty.” Both events were in support of the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team as they prepare for their Joint Readiness Center rotation at Fort Polk. JRTC is a full scale, force on force exercise to train the 56th SBCT for operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Miscellaneous

- The 201st RED HORSE Squadron hosted its 10th annual golf tournament on Aug. 29 at the Hidden Valley Golf Course in Pine Grove. Proceeds totaling \$1,500 were donated to the American Red Cross, Lebanon County Chapter.
- Lt. Col. Annette Rico has been selected as the 193rd Logistics Readiness Squadron commander. She previously served as the services flight commander and inspector general for the wing.
- Congressman Tim Holden presented a check for \$6.3 million at a groundbreaking event for the new RED HORSE Operations and Training Facility at Fort Indiantown Gap. Lt. Col. Terry Robinson accepted the check.
- The wing hosted its 17th annual golf tournament on Aug. 21 at Felicita Golf Resort in Fishing Creek. The event raised \$10,000 for the Special Operations Warrior Foundation and \$8,500 to the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank; and \$712 to the 193rd Family Readiness Group.
- The wing hosted the 27th annual Air National Guard Northeast Regional Bowling Tournament on Oct. 11-12 at ABC West Bowling Lanes, Mechanicsburg. This tournament was open to Air National Guard members from 15 surrounding states.
- Master Sgt. Bradley Meals was presented with a commendation letter from the Pennsylvania State Police for his role in assisting K-Mart store security in apprehending a shoplifter on Sept. 13. Meals chased the shoplifter by foot and held him until police arrived on the scene. Once turned over to state police, it was revealed that the shoplifter had three outstanding warrants for arrest.
- Two wing members helped save the life of a woman who collapsed at a local McDonalds in early October. Senior Master Sgt. Chris Shull, a Services Flight member, and Sgt. Spencer Schultz, a Maintenance Group member, performed CPR until the ambulance arrived on the scene. Their efforts kept the woman alive until paramedics transported her to the hospital.

National Guard Training Site

Ceremony Celebrates Stevedore Training Area at Fort Indiantown Gap

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission commemorated the rich history of a site where Army soldiers were trained more than 60 years ago to load and unload ships and cargo vessels to aid the Allied effort in World War II. The two agencies dedicated a historical marker at the former “stevedore” training site, which is located at the eastern end of Fort Indiantown Gap. Maj. Gen. Jessica L. Wright, the adjutant general of Pennsylvania, participated in the ceremony, along with Lt. Col. Grey D. Berrier II, commander of the training site; and Karen Galle, coordinator of the commission’s historical marker program.

Ribbon cut on New Facilities and Ranges

Twenty-three new facilities and ranges at the Fort Indiantown Gap were dedicated during a ribbon-cutting ceremony in November. The facilities will support the training of the 28th Infantry Division's 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, other Guard units, and personnel that use the training site.

The 12 Stryker Brigade Combat Team construction projects are:

- Battalion Training Complex - \$22 million
- Battle Command Training Center - \$4.5 million
- Combined Arms Collective Training Facility - \$11 million
- Infantry Squad Battle Course - \$2.9 million
- Live Fire Shoot House - \$2.3 million
- Modified Record Fire Range - \$3 million
- Multi-Purpose Grenade Range - \$4.9 million
- Multi-Purpose Machine Gun Range - \$4.2 million
- Sniper Field Fire Range - \$3.2 million
- Unmanned Aerial System Training Facility - \$2.6 million
- Unit Storage Site - \$2.1 million
- Urban Assault Course - \$2.7 million

Other Fort Indiantown Gap construction projects:

- Virtual Simulations Facility (Bldg. 5-100) - \$604,000
- Multi-Purpose Facility (Bldg. 4-201) - \$656,000
- Multi-Purpose Facility (Bldg. 4-202) - \$479,000
- Telecom Building (Bldg. 9-100) - \$1.3 million
- Area 10 Fuel Point - \$175,000
- Combined Support Maintenance Shop Paint Prep Facility – \$1.4 million
- Waste Water Treatment Plant - \$7.2 million
- EAATS Aviation Building - \$1.5 million
- Ammunition Supply Point - \$8.4 million
- Tactical Training Base - \$862,000
- Driver Training Course - \$115,000

Dedication Ceremony Highlights Historic World War II-era Artifact

A boxcar that was given to the United States as a gift from France following World War II and has been displayed prominently at Fort Indiantown Gap for nearly 60 years was commemorated with a plaque noting its historical significance. The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Questors, a Philadelphia-based antique and historical preservation organization celebrated the “Merci Train” boxcar, which is often referred to as a “40 and eight” for its capacity to transport either 40 troops or eight horses during World War I and World War II. The artifact was one of 49 original boxcars sent to the U.S. from France in 1949.

Among those participating in the ceremony were Maj. Gen. Jessica L. Wright, the adjutant general of Pennsylvania; Lt. Col. Grey D. Berrier II, commander of the Fort Indiantown Gap National Guard Training Site; Rita Meneses, cultural resources manager at Fort Indiantown Gap; and Pamela Todd, an official with the Questors.

56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team

The 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team completed its training at Camp Shelby, Miss., and, later,

at Fort Polk, La. The nearly 4,000 soldiers of the Independence Brigade reported to Camp Shelby in September and trained on the individual and unit tasks prior to performing their Joint Readiness Training Center exercises at Fort Polk.

More than 1,300 new Soldiers from other units, IRR and active duty have been integrated into the brigade and in less than two months they become integral members of the Stryker team. In addition to new Soldiers, the brigade fielded new equipment such as the M777 Howitzer and various communications, counter IED and electronic warfare technology. This equipment makes the 56th one of the best equipped brigades in the Army. Once the brigade completes its JRTC rotation, the Soldiers will have 10 days of Christmas leave before deploying to Kuwait in mid January. Soldiers, family and friends of the brigade can keep track of the deployment by checking the 56th's web site and by reading the "Net Call" newsletter at <http://www.dvidshub.net/units/56SBCT-28ID>.

213th Area Support Group

In September, a Freedom Salute ceremony was held to note the April return of the 213th from Iraq. The ceremony culminated with the unit receiving the "Distinguished Unit of the Quartermaster Regiment" award. The 316th Expeditionary Sustainment Command nominated the 213th, and its commanding general, Brig. Gen. Gregory Couch, presented the plaque and streamer to Col. Brian Leonhard, group commander, during the event. The award acknowledges not only the group's successful deployment to Iraq and its role as the first National Guard Sustainment Brigade to deploy to Iraq, but its long history as a logistics unit. The 213th has deployed to Afghanistan and Hungary, in addition to deployment to Louisiana in support of the Hurricane Katrina relief effort.

During the second half of 2008, the 213th stood up four new modular units and transformed a fifth to a new modular MTOE. The most visible is the 213th Personnel Company (Human Recourses). This unit will replace the 28th Personnel Services Battalion and its subordinate detachments. The creation of this new, leaner unit represents the Army's Personnel Services Delivery Redesign. PSDR means that brigade headquarters will have the organic essential personnel service capabilities that previously resided in the Personnel Services Battalions of the legacy divisions.

The 213th Personnel Company's primary mission is to provide command and control and technical support to human resources platoons and teams in the areas of reception, replacement, returns to day, rest and recuperation and redeployment. Additionally, it provides command and control to casualty liaison teams, which provide accurate casualty information at combat surgical hospitals, mortuary affairs units, division headquarters and the human resources sustainment center. This new mission was recently experience by the 283rd Personnel Detachment, which deployed to Kuwait and Iraq.

Directorate of Logistics

Small Arms Readiness and Evaluation Team with Repair

The Directorate of Logistics-State Surface Maintenance Office has over 4,500 weapons ready for deployment. During September, units of the 56th SBCT ensured their weapons were fit to fight for mobilization by processing them through the Army's Tank and Automotive Command (TACOM) Small Arms Readiness and Evaluation Team. The mission of the SARET-R is to

inspect and repair all unit weapons through DS-30 level to 10/20 standards.

The SARET-R mission also helped hone the maintenance skills of the 328th Brigade Support Battalion's 45B (small arms repairers). Soldiers from the 56th SBCT were given the opportunity to work side by side with TACOM's inspectors and received many hours of hands on maintenance training. This will prove to be invaluable during the brigade's deployment to Iraq.

The SARET-R made two stops in Pennsylvania while inspecting and repairing weapons for the 56th SBCT. First, they went to Field Maintenance Shop No. 5 in Cambridge Springs, where the team performed repairs and services on nearly 700 weapons in two days. Once the western units' weapons were completed, the SARET-R team moved its operation to the Unit Training Equipment Site at Fort Indiantown Gap, where they performed the bulk of their work. While at the UTES, the team inspected and repaired more than 3,800 weapons. The team will return to FTIG this month to inspect and repair the weapons of the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade.

Combined Support Maintenance Shop

The Combined Support Maintenance Shop at Fort Indiantown Gap continues its environmentally friendly work environment with the development of water reducible, chemical agent resistant coating and a new facility. The need for an upgraded paint facility was paramount to ensuring the successful use of this new product. This facility was initiated by National Guard Bureau due to the volume of equipment painted in Pennsylvania as well as the outstanding environmental record of CSMS-East. Phase I, a two-bay facility south of Range Road in Area 10, was recently completed. It includes a drying booth and has a footprint of 40 feet by 100 feet. Phase II will be a stripping booth, constructed next to Phase I. It is scheduled for completion in 2009.

Directorate of Information Management

J6 is currently involved in a major initiative with National Guard Bureau to enhance communications capabilities. The Pennsylvania National Guard has a mission to provide robust, deployable and interoperable communications to meet the needs of federal, state and local authorities. The current initiative will allow us to coordinate response efforts to civil disasters within the 50 states, three territories and the District of Columbia.

Presently, the J6 has contracts with two suppliers to design, integrate and field two First Responder Support Network Mobile Systems for use by the Pennsylvania National Guard. The first of these systems, dubbed "FRST 1," is integrated with all new equipment. The second system, dubbed "FRST 1-a," is integrated and comprised of a combination of new equipment and equipment from an original communications package.

Both systems will be fully housed and self-contained in deployable trailers towed by commercial or tactical vehicles directly to disaster recovery sites. Both systems are also air-transportable if it becomes necessary to move the equipment long distances in a short period of time. The Pennsylvania National Guard expects delivery of both systems by Dec. 31.

Directorate of Operations

Training

We recently completed another successful iteration of the Company and Detachment Level Pre-Command Course (CLPCC). Fourteen officers are returning to the field with the latest policies

and guidance in the areas of recruiting, mobilizations, family readiness and property accountability. By the end of the Fiscal Year 2008, the PAARNG executed 169 percent of available school seat opportunities, thus finishing the year at a percentage that is higher than the national average for duty MOSQ.

Marksmanship Training Unit (MTU)

- The MTU successfully trained over 700 soldiers in weapons training during Operation Atlas from Sept. 5-19.
- The Pennsylvania Marksmanship Team finished third out of 38 States competing in the 38th Annual Winston P. Wilson Marksmanship Sustainment Training Exercise conducted from Oct. 12-17. The Team consisted of 3 Army Guard soldiers and seven Air Guard personnel.

Pre-mobilization Training Assistance Element

The PTAE continued to work with the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team and the Combat Aviation Brigade during drill weekends and annual training in August and September, prior to their mobilization. This included over 750 soldiers trained during Operation Atlas.

Mobilization Readiness

The Pennsylvania Army National Guard continues its support of the Global War on Terror. Currently, we have units deployed in various areas and units continue to prepare to mobilize and deploy to support this effort.

- The 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade and the 828th Finance Detachment are preparing to deploy to theater in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.
- The 1/104th Cavalry and Company D, 228th Support Battalion, have recently returned from serving in the Sinai Peninsula.
- Detachment 1 of the 126th Aviation is in Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.
- The 28th Finance Management Company and 3/103rd Armor Regiment have recently returned from serving in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.
- The 55th Brigade Combat Team has soldiers in Iraq, Afghanistan and Qatar.

166th Regiment

During the first quarter of TY 2009, the 166th Regiment continued to lead the way as one of the nation's premier regional training institutes, graduating more than 1,100 Soldiers who will answer the nation's call in the War on Terror. The number of Soldiers trained during this quarter is especially noteworthy considering the regiment's support of the 56th Brigade for its pending deployment. The 4th Battalion provided one of the most significant accomplishments by successfully conducting the first iteration in Pennsylvania of Accelerated Officer Candidate School (OCS) Phase III. By training Phase III OCS, the 166th is now able to commission officers without sending them to another state as part of their candidate process. This year, 82 officer candidates graduated OCS Phase III in Pennsylvania and 14 of them were Pennsylvania soldiers. Other significant accomplishments include the completion of conversion to a new TDA that better supports mission requirements; continued expansion of the "thin client" network which will automate courseware for all courses taught at the 166th; and the start of construction for a dedicated Forward Operating Base which will be capable of housing 160 Soldiers and will provide a more realistic staging base for field operations. All these efforts increase the regiment's ability to train Soldiers for both our commonwealth and our nation.

Simulations

The Deployed Digital Training Campus underwent testing to comply with Army standards. The systems were then distributed to the 56th SBCT for use during post mobilization training. The DDTC is a network of 21 laptops for online classroom training in support of units that are preparing for deployment. The DDTC is in the process of achieving certification which will authorize connection to Army networks. The soldiers of the 56th used this system at Camp Shelby and Fort Polk. At Camp Shelby, over 900 soldiers totaled over 1,500 hours of system use. System operation at Fort Polk is ongoing at this time.

The Laser Marksmanship Training Systems were fielded to six additional unit armories, five of them in the 28th Infantry Division and one in 213th Area Support Group. These trainers are used to prepare for the weapons qualification range and result in improved scores and more productive time on the ranges.

Medical Battalion Training Site

The Medical Battalion Training Site's Sims Center has made several significant improvements. One upgrade was the installation of 16 infrared cameras to record and observe training during low light conditions in the simulation rooms. Also, an outdoor sound system capable of simulating battle sounds added realism to outdoor urban operations training.

There have also been significant training mission accomplishments. The MBTS recently obtained the 68W reclassification mission, which will enable certification of MOS qualified soldiers. We also supported the Veteran's Affairs Emergency Medical Response Team by training 90 of their personnel. MBTS personnel recently certified 223 soldiers on Heartsaver/AED and 109 soldiers on CPR. The unit also certified 125 soldiers on NREMT-B and re-certified 24 soldiers. In all, MBTS trained a total of 2,379 personnel in medical related tasks for TY 2008.

MBTS personnel have also greatly contributed in the realm of international training. Our instructors participated in the Lithuanian NCO Professional Development Exchange. Two instructors were part of a program that compared, contrasted, and improved the academic professionalism for the KASP (Lithuanian National Reserve Forces). The leadership of MBTS is currently coordinating with the 21st Theatre Sustainment Command to provide Combat Lifesaver Training in Kaiserslautern, Germany.

Eastern Army National Guard Aviation Training Site

Aviation Training Battalion

UH-72 Lakota Training Begins

During the fourth quarter of FY 08, the Eastern Army National Guard Aviation Training site began the first institutional training for the UH-72 Lakota. To date, the EAATS has trained eight students in the UH-72 instructor pilot transition course. This course is designed to take both National Guard and active duty instructor pilots and train them to become instructor pilots in the new UH-72 aircraft. This training is in very high demand due to the aggressive fielding schedule for the UH-72 throughout the Army.

The EAATS is scheduled to accept its third and fourth UH-72's this month. This will allow the training site to increase course capacity to meet the demands of both National Guard and active duty units. We are also finishing up the development of the UH-72 aircraft qualification course,

the UH-72 enlisted flight instructor course, and the UH-72 functional check pilot course. Upon receiving approval, the EAATS plans to start training these courses in the second quarter of FY 2009.

CH-47F New Equipment Training Team

We have continued to support the new equipment training for the CH-47F aircraft with the cargo program manager office. The CH-47F is the newest aircraft to receive the common avionics architecture system in the Army. The Eastern AATS has successfully qualified four instructor pilots and two flight engineer instructors and is in the process of getting a fifth instructor pilot and third and fourth flight engineer instructors qualified during the current training iteration at Fort Bragg, NC. The Eastern AATS has played an integral role in supporting the cargo program manager by training the first four units equipped to the Army. These units included the 101st Airborne Division, 4th Infantry Division, 1st Cavalry Division and 82nd Airborne Division.

Due to the tremendous success of the EAATS within the initial new equipment training team, we are programmed to receive three CH-47F aircraft in FY 2010. This will allow us to initiate qualification training at our training site. These aircraft will represent the first CH-47Fs fielded to the National Guard.

Aviation Support Battalion

Aviation Combined Arms Tactical Trainer

The battalion acquired one more AVCATT device for scheduling during this period. This brings the total to five devices and covers National Guard users from the Mississippi River to the east coast. In August, joint testing was conducted between the Fort Indiantown Gap Battle Command Training Center and two AVCATT suites, and the Close Combat Tactical Trainer devices to validate interoperability and proof of concept in support of the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade Aviation Training Exercise in October. Air and ground integration had not been achieved prior to this event. October's exercise was a complete success from a simulation standpoint and received accolades from the director of simulation at Fort Rucker, Ala..

UH-72 Cockpit Procedure Trainer

The UH72 Cockpit Procedure Trainer, positioned at the Eastern AATS in April, passed accreditation by the director of simulation and received approval to count flight time in this state-of-the-art procedural trainer. We are preparing to receive a second CPT in November 2009.

UH-60M/L Transportable-Blackhawk Operations Simulator

The Transportable-Blackhawk Operations Simulator is a reconfigurable simulator designed to support the UH-60M and UH-60L aircraft programs. The construction of a pad and electrical service to support the new T-BOS was completed ahead of schedule. Delivery of the device is scheduled for January 2009. This new simulator, in addition to the two existing UH-60 simulators, provides the capacity required to support the expanding needs of the Army's overall aviation transformation plan for regional aviators and the Eastern AATS formal courses of instruction.

Medical Company

The Medical Company, in conjunction with its normal regional aviation medical support requirements, provided support to soldier readiness processing for both the 56th Stryker Brigade and the Combat Aviation Brigade. This support involved an unprecedented surge in door gunner

flight duty medical examinations.

State Safety Office

The State Safety Office is proud to announce that Army Aviation Support Facility No. 1 at Fort Indiantown Gap is being recommended for “star” status in the Occupational Safety & Health Administration’s prestigious voluntary protection program. The facility was chosen by Maj. Gen. Wright in February 2007 to pursue the special OSHA program. A team of OSHA experts audited the facility in October 2008 and found the ground safety and health program at the AASF to be exceptional and worthy of “star” recognition. AASF No. 1 is the first Army National Guard facility to be honored with this special status. The Combined Support Maintenance Shop-East and the Unit Training and Equipment Site are the next facilities pursuing the star.

Facilities and Engineering

This past summer, Facilities and Engineering awarded the following military construction projects for readiness centers/field maintenance shops

- South Mountain (Gettysburg), new RC
- Huntingdon, new RC
- Hollidaysburg, new RC
- Carlisle, new RC
- Graterford, new FMS
- Philadelphia (Southampton Road), add/alt RC
- Philadelphia (Southampton Road), new FMS
- Kutztown, add/alt RC
- Lebanon, add/alt RC
- Hanover, add/alt RC
- Hazleton, add/alt RC
- Willow Grove, new RC
- Waynesburg, new RC

These projects represent a total construction value of approximately \$115 million. In addition, the eleven 2007 projects are all well underway in the construction phase, with many of them scheduled to be completed in the spring and summer of 2009. Due to the deployment of the 56 SBCT, the senior leadership has elected to suspend ribbon-cutting ceremonies associated with these projects until the 56th Brigade returns from its deployment.

In addition to the construction projects, we have designed and awarded 18 minor maintenance projects with a total construction value of \$2.4 million. These projects improved operating conditions at 18 readiness centers. Also, through additional funding from the National Guard Bureau, we were able to design and award an additional \$5.4 million in military equipment parking area expansions and improvements at nine different readiness centers and four locations at Fort Indiantown Gap.

U.S. Property and Fiscal Office

Government Travel Card

The transition to Citi will soon be here and cards have been distributed. Card holders should confirm receipt of their new card by following the instructions provided and can access an automated system to customize their PIN by calling 1-800-200-7056. If you have a Bank of America card and did not receive your Citi card, please contact Lauri Kollar at 717-861-8766. Citi applications are now available. Citi cards became effective November 30, the same date that the Bank of America cards were deactivated. They should be destroyed.

Our current Bank of America delinquency rate is 13.5 percent, a figure well above the Department of the Army's goal of 2 percent. Card holders should ensure that their accounts with Bank of America are current and paid in full. Transition to Citi does not relieve a card holder's obligation to pay outstanding Bank of America balances. Failure to pay off delinquent accounts could affect personal credit ratings and may result in loss of card privileges. Travelers who lose their cards for misuse or non-payment are not eligible for travel advances.

Receipts are required for reimbursement of all authorized travel expenses over \$75. This includes airfare costs charged to the Government Travel Card. Receipts or e-invoices for airfare can be obtained by calling Carlson-Wagonlit at 1-800-296-2959. Receipts are required for the following regardless of the dollar amount: extra baggage some airlines have recently been charging for checking a second bag, rental vehicle fuel, and parking.

Unit commanders, readiness NCOs and travel card holders can obtain a listing of delinquent accounts by unit on Commanders Corner, located on the USPFO web site at <http://pa-42020-app3/Homepage/WebpageHome.asp>. All units are responsible for validating delinquency letters. Delinquency letters can also be printed by clicking on the highest amount the soldier owes. The system will generate a letter for the card holder.

Misuse of the card is a growing concern. Travelers are not authorized to use the card for personal use (i.e. personal cell phones, shopping, haircuts and/or home improvements). More specifically, travelers are not authorized to use their cards at AAFES or Wal-Mart. The government travel card is for authorized expenses during official government travel.

Northeast Counterdrug Training Center

The Pennsylvania National Guard Counterdrug program continues to fulfill its three-pronged mission to interdict the flow of illegal drugs, reduce the demand for drugs and promote training for law enforcement agencies and community-based coalitions.

Between Aug. 1 and Nov. 1, Counterdrug interdiction operations assisted law enforcement agencies in seizing over \$11 million in assets. We helped take 610 weapons out of the hands of criminals and enabled law enforcement to seize \$10 million dollars in marijuana, cocaine and other illegal drugs. The support of Counterdrug analysts, aviators, linguists and other experts resulted in 122 arrests this season.

Our Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) section has eight specialists located in communities throughout Pennsylvania working to provide anti-drug messages in support of educational institutions and community-based coalitions. With the beginning of the school year, the DDR section has continued to provide a National Guard-sponsored prevention program, "Stay on Track," which blends the appeal of motor-sports with drug prevention. The program is being

taught by teachers and National Guard members in 44 classrooms throughout the commonwealth.

Since Aug. 1, the Counterdrug Training Center has instructed 1,727 students from law enforcement and community organizations. One highly requested course, Desert Snow Phase I-III, was hosted in November at the 111th Fighter Wing's hangar at the Horsham Joint Interagency Installation in Willow Grove. The course, highlighting effective techniques for intercepting drug traffickers and terrorists on highways, was a great success and received favorable media coverage.

Public Affairs Office

Biographies

Commanders and senior leaders are reminded to keep a biography on file in the Public Affairs Office. In the past, short-notice requests for senior officer and commander biographies could not be fulfilled due to the lack of a biography on file. Contact the Public Affairs Office at 717-861-8352 for a biography format.

Speaking events

Interested in speaking at public functions? The Public Affairs Office receives many requests for speakers and would like to include you on the list of available participants. If you would like to participate, the Public Affairs Office will assist you with speaking points for the event. If interested, contact the Public Affairs Office at 717-861-8468.

Media communications

If you are currently deployed or are deploying soon and would like to establish a communiqué with news reporters please let the Public Affairs Office know. There is a growing need for Soldiers and Airman to share daily experiences with the public. These updates have been well received and have led to many feature stories on National Guard personnel. These stories usually include interviews with family members and friends. If interested, call Public Affairs at 717-861-8468.

Official DA photos

In order to schedule an appointment, please contact the Public Affairs Office at 717-861- 8330. Please schedule photos at least a week in advance. For more information about DA photos, please visit www.dmva.state.pa.us and click on the "Other DMVA offices" link on the navigation bar on the left side of the page. Click on "Public Affairs" and access the DA photo link.

History

Many soldiers and airmen have their own wild and wonderful stories from their deployments. Often, these stories are never told. Since the September 11 attacks, the operational tempo and deployments has increased to a level not seen in Pennsylvania since World War II. This, coupled with the loss of the military history detachments, has resulted in a huge loss of historical information throughout the Pennsylvania National Guard. Your story or pictures may have significant value to the historian writing your unit's contribution to the Guard. Help add to the historical record by sending your pictures and journals to Sgt. Maj. Walter Zapotoczny, 28th Infantry Division historian, at walter.zapotoczny@pa.ngb.army.mil. He can also be contacted by calling (717) 787-0895, cell, or (717) 821-3304.

Military Support to Civil Authorities (MSCA)

Support for Public Events

TAG Circular No. 2, Pennsylvania National Guard Support for Public Events, was issued on Oct. 15 to Army and Air Force organizations. Commanders at all levels are strongly encouraged to read the document. It provides specific guidance concerning approval authority for military support for civic events. Key points are highlighted below:

- The Adjutant General of Pennsylvania is the sole approving authority for support of events that are public in nature and support an event sponsored by a commercial enterprise. Examples are sporting events, grand openings, conferences, conventions and any activity whereby the commercial enterprise may receive added value by having a military presence.
- The Adjutant General of Pennsylvania delegates approval authority to the commanders of the 28th Division, 213th Area Support Group, Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion, Fort Indiantown Gap Training Site Command, State Army Aviation Officer, 171st Air Refueling Wing, 111th Fighter Wing, and 193rd Special Operation Wing for events that are sponsored by local governments, veteran's organizations, non-profit civic organizations (Boy Scouts, YMCA, fire departments, etc); and state and federally operated veterans' homes and cemeteries. All other events will be forwarded to Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Attn: J2/3 Military Support for Civil Authorities (J2/3-MSCA), for validation and approval.
- MSCA will serve as the point of contact and facilitator for coordination of support to civilian authorities and loans of equipment in coordination with USPFO. In addition the MSCA point of contact will monitor support, maintain a community support log; develop costs for support; provide statistical information to the command group; and administer the innovative readiness training program. The MSCA point of contact is retired Col. Joseph A. Laneski. His phone number is 717-861-8938 and his e-mail is joseph.laneski@us.army.mil.

Analytical Laboratory System

The 3rd Civil Support Team Analytical Laboratory System is a fully mobile laboratory system that provides incident commanders with rapid identification of chemical and biological threat agents on-site. Rapid threat identification enables incident commanders and government officials to make data-based decisions required by our national consequence management programs. In October, the ALS underwent a major upgrade. These upgrades enable the CST to deliver robust, high-complexity, and real-time analysis to identify threat agents with a high degree of precision and accuracy.

Office of Chief Counsel

As 2008 comes to a close, the most pressing challenge facing the Horsham Joint Interagency Installation ("Willow Grove Naval Air Station") and its adjacent military enclave is the need to firmly establish a future military flying mission for the 111th Fighter Wing of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard.

Under BRAC 2005, this unit, and its allotment of personnel (end strength) are to be maintained at Willow Grove for missions assigned by the Department of Defense. Although the BRAC decision approved redistribution of the 111th Fighter Wing's A-10 (Thunderbolt) aircraft – which is scheduled for June 2009 – it also encouraged the Air Force to keep an A-10 flying mission for the 111th.

The Congressional actions with regard to the Horsham Joint Interagency Installation have removed a huge hurdle to assignment of a future flying mission to the 111th FW. These actions, coupled with the commitment of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania to the future of the installation, effectively assure that a fully functional 8,000 foot runway with associated infrastructure will be available in the future. The installation, with its key strategic location and well-maintained facilities, is ready and able to support future military and government flying missions, and the commonwealth must focus its efforts to convince the Department of Defense and other federal government agencies to base appropriate flying missions at this location.

Veterans' Affairs Updates

Training

Approximately 115 people received veteran service officer accreditation training during a five-day session held at the Aviation Brigade Armory on Fort Indiantown Gap. Course instructors from the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers taught the required subject matter. A final examination certified veteran service officers (VSOs) as being qualified to assist veterans with applying for and receiving veteran's benefits, pensions or compensation.

The attendees came from all over Pennsylvania and consisted of county VA directors and their assistants; appointed state homes' representatives and other individuals approved by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. VSOs are required to recertify every five years. This training allows current VSOs to remain certified and to train individuals who are new to the job. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, a veteran who uses a service officer, as opposed to applying alone, receives on average \$6,509 more in benefits annually.

Delaware Valley Veterans' Home

- On Oct. 27 we published our first newsletter, "News and Views at the Valley." It will be published quarterly.
- New lighting for our driveway will be a significant safety upgrade for our facility. It will help visitors, staff and residents as they navigate the rather lengthy roadway leading up to our facility.
- The Washington Dining Room is now complete and is adorned with artwork depicting the Washington Monument and other war monuments. We have also added pictures in our conference room, and these pictures have become quite popular conversation pieces.
- We had a fun summer with many barbecues sponsored by the Cooties and other Veterans of Foreign Wars posts. These barbecues are very popular with live entertainment and dancing. Our residents really have a great time.
- On Oct. 3 we had our first annual Fall Ball. It was a joy to see our residents talking about the upcoming event and to see the anticipation on their faces. They told each other what they would be wearing and who they were taking to the ball. They are looking forward to next ball which will likely be held in spring.
- Our residents had a great time in October watching the Philadelphia Phillies make their way through the playoffs and into the World Series, where they emerged victorious.

Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center

- Five decorated Pennsylvania veterans with lengthy service to veterans' organizations were inducted today into the Gino J. Merli Veterans Center Hall of Fame in November. The inductees were: Robert L. Alper, Kingston; Almon J. Long, Larksville; Thomas J. Mattie, Barnesville; Eugene J. Slabinski, Hanover Township; and Robert F. Tuffy,

Dunmore. Brig. Gen. Scott D. Wagner, deputy adjutant general for Veterans Affairs, and Samuel Greenburg, president of the Gino Merli Advisory Council, presented the plaques to the inductees. The event received good coverage in the Scranton Times-Leader newspaper.

- The annual summer carnival was held on the patio. Residents played carnival games and won stuffed animals and cash prizes. It was funded by American Legion District 11, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 665 and American Legion Auxiliary Unit 86.
- The Burlington Welsh Male Chorus from Canada performed for the residents during their tour of New York and Pennsylvania.
- Residents attended the United Nations Day luncheon program at St. Mary's Center in Scranton, celebrating 63 years of the United Nations. The keynote speaker was Martin Palous, UN ambassador from Czech Republic.
- The Pennsylvania Empowered Expert Residents (PEER) group worked with Carl Weinschenk, commandant, Wes Massey, facility manager at Gino Merli, on the "Flags of Honor" project. The addition includes flags from the five branches of service along with the Pennsylvania and POW/MIA flags. The flags and newly installed poles are arranged around the driveway in front of the facility. The PEER Group also sponsored musical programs in August and September as part of the Concerts in the Garden project.
- Organizations and individuals continued to support the Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center through monetary donations to the residents' welfare fund. During this period, there were eight donations of \$500 or more. The two largest donations were \$5,400 from Rolling Thunder Chapter 3 and \$5,000 from the Foresters.

Hollidaysburg Veterans' Home

- On Oct. 14, the cross country team from Hollidaysburg Senior High School ran from the school over to our home and visited with residents. Approximately 30 students dressed up in camouflage and face paint and took the time to visit with our residents in the Eisenhower Hall Multipurpose Room.
- An awards assembly was held in Arnold Hall. Commandant Adams presented certificates from the 2nd Pennsylvania Activity Professional Association (PAPA) Creative Arts Festival to the following residents: Bruce Garnes, 2nd Place, creative arts division; Marian Georgiana, honorable mention, oil painting division; and Sandy Newfield received the Hero Award.
- On Oct. 19, the U.S. Marine Corps held a poker run for Toys for Tots and their last stop was at the HVH. Staff donated eight bikes and five large bags of toys and also gave a cash donation. The residents at HVH enjoyed the visit and the Marines plan to make this a yearly event.
- Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association training was held at HVH on Oct. 28-29. Approximately 100 people attended from all over the state. HPNA was established in 1986 and is the nation's largest and oldest professional nursing organization dedicated to promoting excellence in hospice and palliative nursing care.

Pennsylvania Soldiers' and Sailors' Home

- The first Veterans Information Fair was held at our home on Oct. 29. This event was organized by Kimberly O'Toole, volunteer coordinator, and Gary Skovron, administrative officer. Publicity was provided by WICU, Channel 12, and refreshments were provided by PNC bank. Twenty-nine organizations attended, including the American Legion, AMVETS, The Liberty House, Erie VA Medical Center, Vietnam Veterans of AM, PA Career Link, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Blind Veterans of Pennsylvania Association. Representatives from state and federal offices also were present and the event was a great success.

- Two northwestern Pennsylvania soldiers who were awarded the Medal of Honor for giving their lives while performing heroic acts were inducted posthumously into the Pennsylvania Soldiers' and Sailors' Home Hall of Fame in November. Army Spec. Ross A. McGinnis, a former resident of Knox, Clarion County, was 19 when he was killed in Iraq in 2006; and Army Staff Sgt. John G. Gertsch, formerly of Russell, Warren County, was 24 when he was killed in Vietnam in 1969.

Southeastern Veterans' Center

- Staff and residents gathered to wish the Pa. Guard's 228th Engineering Company as they left for training and eventual deployment to Iraq.
- CareTracker, a unique collection and reporting system that is helping thousands of long-term care organizations, went live at the center on Oct. 8. CareTracker uses wall-mounted touch screen devices located at strategic locations throughout the facility (and portable computers).
- The archbishop of Philadelphia visited with residents and staff on August 12, 2008. He personally greeted every resident, staff and visitor as he walked through the facility.
- The Professionals Association, Southeastern Veterans' Center, received 15 artist awards this year:
 - Acrylics Art Award: Second Place – Jim Hergan; Third Place – Kate Bote
 - Watercolor Art Award: Second Place – James Robinson (now deceased)
 - Pencil/Marker Art Award: Third Place – Randy Hansen
 - Craft Kit Art Award: First Place – Marsha Iswalt; Third Place – Sara Jane Engle
 - Paint on Wood Art Award: First Place – Jim Hergan; Second Place – Pete Davis
 - Collage Art Award: Second Place – Martin Weeks
 - Woodwork Art Award: Second Place – Mark Kamp
 - Diama Art Award: First Place – Andrew Garvin
 - Individual Dance Art Award: Second Place – Mary Allen
 - Needlework Art Award: Third Place – Gwen Kohler
 - PAPA Creative Arts Award: Henry Paiste

Southwestern Veterans' Center

- August began with the Animal Friends "Dog Days of Summer" event. Each year, volunteers join us with lots of dogs and distribute ice cream bars to the residents to help them forget about the heat of August. What could be more fun than four-legged friends and sweet treats? We packed a few more activities into the waning weeks of summer with a trip to the Air National Guard Refueling Wing and Pittsburgh Pirates baseball games. We held summer cookouts sponsored by Rolling Thunder, a local church and a VFW Post.
- During the Labor Day weekend, a record number of our veterans participated in Sharing and Caring's annual boat ride, enjoying a spectacular day on Pittsburgh's three rivers.
- Our Grandparents' Day celebration was also a hit as residents spent the afternoon with family members for an ice cream social.
- Some of Pittsburgh's premier corporations joined us this fall for the United Way Day of Caring.
- SWVC residents made their voices heard on Nov. 4 as they joined Americans across the nation in voting for their candidate of choice in the Presidential election.
- Veterans Day was celebrated with multiple events, including trips to local schools, proclamations by elected officials and a carnival game.

Scotland School for Veterans' Children

- AFSCME Check Presentation – The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) District Councils 89 and 90 donated \$10,000 to SSVC. The donation was part of an effort by AFSCME to make a contribution to Pennsylvania’s veterans, titled Operation Veterans’ Hope. This money will be used to improve the quality of life for the students that reside on campus throughout the school year. This includes purchasing playground equipment and repairing recreational facilities.
- 2008 Tree of Lights – For the sixth year in a row, the foundation for SSVC provided the opportunity for individuals, businesses, and veteran service organizations to sponsor a light on the campus Tree of Lights. Lights were purchased at a variety of levels, beginning with a white light for \$10 all the way up to a purple light for \$1,000.
- John L. Grove College of Business, Shippensburg University – The John L. Grove College of Business conducted their board of director’s meeting at SSVC. Because of the long history of the University’s involvement with SSVC, they have provided a talented SSVC student with the opportunity to attend Shippensburg University. The University would like to offer additional scholarships to SSVC students.
- Box Tops – Box Tops for Education has been helping schools for over 12 years. You can make a difference at SSVC every time you shop for groceries. For each specially marked Box Top label you send to SSVC, the school receives 10 cents from the program. For a detailed list of labels accepted for this program, visit www.boxtops4education.com. Contact SSVC at 717-264-7187 extension 717 for more information and how to submit.

Miscellaneous

McKinley approved to lead Guard Bureau

Air Force Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley was confirmed by the Senate recently as the 26th chief of the National Guard Bureau. He is the first four-star general in the nearly 372-year history of the National Guard. McKinley was nominated by President Bush in September based on the recommendation of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. As chief of NGB, McKinley is the senior uniformed officer representing nearly 468,000 Citizen Soldiers and Airmen. He will also serve as the principal advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on National Guard issues. He succeeds Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, who was confirmed by the Senate to become the first National Guard deputy commander for the U.S. Northern Command. Blum has served as chief of the Guard Bureau since 2003.

Free YMCA memberships available

The Department of Defense recently announced that families of deployed members of the National Guard and Reserve, active duty service members on independent duty and their families, and active duty service members and their families assigned to selected bases would be eligible for free family memberships at participating YMCAs in their local community.

The free YMCA memberships for Guard and Reserve families will be available while the service member is deployed for a minimum of six months. The deploying service member will also be eligible for three months pre- and post-deployment membership to help promote family participation.

Additionally, 32 hours a month of free respite child care will be available for families of deployed National Guard and Reserve and geographically dispersed active duty service members in 10 states, including Pennsylvania, with YMCA child care programs pre-approved by the Department of Defense.

Participating YMCAs have agreed to cap their monthly fees and waive all joining fees so there is no cost for service members and their families for membership. Some classes may have fees associated with them and if so, the service member will be responsible for those costs.

Signing up for the program requires a YMCA/Department of Defense eligibility form, a copy of deployment orders and military ID. The form is available at <http://www.militaryonesource.com/> . A completed eligibility form, a copy of deployment orders (where applicable) and the military ID are all that are needed for the local YMCA to process memberships.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Nominations

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense agency, has opened the nomination season for the 2009 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. National Guard and Reserve members and their families are eligible and encouraged to nominate employers who have gone above and beyond in their support of military employees. Nominations are being accepted until Jan. 19, 2009 at www.FreedomAward.mil.

The Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award is the highest recognition given by the U.S. government to employers who support their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve. The 2009 recipients will be announced in spring and will be honored at a ceremony in Washington D.C. on Sept. 17. ESGR was established in 1972 in an effort to gain and maintain employer support for Guard and Reserve service by recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of the law and resolving conflicts through mediation. For questions regarding the award nomination process, please visit the web site address mentioned previously or call Beth Sherman, public affairs for ESGR, at 703-380-9717.