

GUARDLIFE

December 2018



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Above: U.S. Army survey team member Staff Sgt. Nicky Lam, 21st Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team, New Jersey National Guard, bags a container in an evidence bag during an interagency coordination exercise at the Homeland Defense Technology Center, Picatinny Arsenal, N.J., July 18, 2018. (New Jersey National Guard photo by Mark C. Olsen)

Cover: U.S. Army Spc. Stephon Thompson with the New Jersey National Guard's D Company, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry, carries a belt of 40mm M385 practice grenades during Mk 19 grenade launcher training on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., July 26, 2018. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Matt Hecht)

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FACING CHALLENGES TOGETHER

By Brig. Gen. Jemal J. Beale, The Adjutant General of New Jersey

You and your family are our most precious resource!

As 2018 closes, I believe we have worked together to improve the organization.

The health of our Guard family is our highest priority. Recently, we suffered three suicides in a short time period.

Although any loss can be tragic, when it comes to suicide, we feel a deeper sense of loss because we know that suicide is preventable. Losing a fellow unit member to suicide can be very confusing and upsetting.

Two words to remember: Awareness and Resiliency. These are the key ingredients to suicide prevention and reduction.

We need to ensure that every member knows there is no stigma in talking about their struggles or asking for help.

That is why we need to be "Always Ready, Always There" for our battle buddies and wingmen. To listen...to show you care...and to know the resources available.

All of us need to be vigilant about the well-being of those in our ranks and support resiliency efforts, so suicide never becomes the solution of choice.

No Soldier or Airmen fights alone.

Having a mission-ready force is critical to fulfilling our obligations to the state and nation. Maintaining readiness is accomplished in a number of ways, but it comes down to our most important asset, our people.

Our strength comes from the diversity of our team. We are serving in one of the most racially and ethnically diverse states in the nation. We need to showcase the hundreds of opportunities, which are now available to more members of our society than ever before.

We will capitalize on this strength to grow our organizational talent and strive to be the employer of choice. We will utilize critical thinking to embrace the future while respecting our past.

I know each of you have a story to share on how the Guard has helped you achieve personal, professional, or educational goals in your life.

I am personally asking every member in our organization to promote the Guard by telling our positive stories and to provide personal support for our recruiting and retention efforts.

Moving forward we will not lose sight of leader development of our current force. Training and mentorship are so important to develop our junior enlisted and officers. That will be our legacy, as a tradition of excellence that will continue in the years ahead.

As someone who has come through the New Jersey National Guard ranks, I am excited about the future and you should be as well. Let us work together to make for a stronger and fairer Guard.



Shawanda Beale, third from left, holds the bible as her husband, Brig. Gen. Jemal J. Beale, third from right, the Adjutant General of the New Jersey, while their children and New Jersey Governor Philip D. Murphy, right, watch as Judge Lisa P. Thornton, left, administers the oath of office at the New Jersey State Archives in Trenton, N.J., April 2, 2018. (New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs photo by Mark C. Olsen)

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THE BIGGEST PUNCH

Story and photos by
Master Sgt. Matt Hecht
New Jersey National Guard
Public Affairs Office



**"TODAY WE'RE HAVING A LOT OF FUN TRAINING,
BUT ALSO GAINING VALUABLE EXPERIENCE."**

**CPL. GEORGE GOTTUSO
1ST BATTALION, 114TH INFANTRY**



Opposite page: New Jersey National Guard Soldiers with D Company, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry, prepare to load a Mark 19 grenade launcher with 40mm M385 practice grenades at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., July 26, 2018. Above: 114th Soldiers fire a Mk 19 grenade launcher. Below: A M385 practice round can be seen in mid-air. Below right: M385 practice rounds hit targets.

When Soldiers are in combat, they rely on the tools of the trade that provide the biggest punch. After a year of training on a variety of weapons, troops from Delta and Golf Companies, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry, finally got hands-on experience with the Mark 19 automatic grenade launcher. The Soldiers trained with the Mark 19 July 25-26 on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst's expansive ranges.

"The Mark 19 is a fully automatic grenade launcher that throws 40mm rounds downrange," said Spc. Sean Platt. "It's great against area targets, enemy troops, and light vehicles."

The Mark 19 was originally designed in 1966, and the U.S. Army adopted the Mod 3 version in 1983. The Guardsmen got to shoot the Mark 19 on several platforms.

"We have them set up on the tripod mount, as well as the CROWS system," said Staff Sgt. Michael Cartwright, a senior gunner.

CROWS, which stands for Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station, is a remote weapons station for use on top of tactical vehicles. The New Jersey Soldiers, firing on tank targets, operated in teams of three: loader, gunner, and spotter.

"With the CROWS, they can sit inside the vehicle and watch everything on a screen," continued Cartwright. "They can shoot a laser that measures the distance to the target, and make small adjustments to keep locked onto that target."

"Today we're having a lot of fun training, but also gaining valuable experience," said Cpl. George Gottuso.

"This kind of training is awesome, as a group we get a lot closer," said Gottuso. "We get to spend time with guys that are new to the unit. It's a great experience."



CRUSHING BOUNDARIES



Story and photo by
Master Sgt. Matt Hecht
108th Wing Public Affairs Office

From playing high school football, to being a certified combatives instructor, Tech. Sgt. Heather Perez hasn't just been breaking boundaries, she's been crushing them.

"When I was in high school, I started out as a cheerleader my freshman year," Perez said. "At the end of my junior year they were advertising open positions on the football team, so I tried out and made it."

Some of her classmates didn't think she had what it takes to play football.

"I told my drill teammates I wouldn't be back the next year because I was playing football," recounted Perez. "They said, 'you can't, you're a girl,' and I was like, what do you mean, I can do what I want."

Perez started out as a kicker, but soon replaced the starting safety on defense.

"I told the coach I wanted to be in a position where I could hit someone, and they let me try out for safety," said Perez. "It was a great position, I loved every minute of it."

As part of the 108th Security Forces Squadron Training Office, Perez assists Airmen with getting the training they need to be deployable.

"We teach dismounted operations, military operations in urban terrain, call for fire," said Perez. "We have to be familiar with all aspects of Security Forces, which is cool because we get to see a lot of different things."

Perez, who is a veteran of operations in Iraq, knows the value of training Security Forces members firsthand.

"Making sure that our Airmen are ready to deploy, that they

have the knowledge and the tools that they need, that makes me feel good about being in the training office," said Perez.

After a grueling course, Perez was certified as a combatives instructor, and is in charge of the program for the 108th Security Forces Squadron.

"They learn dominant positions, submissive positions where you're in someone's guard, choke holds, arm bars, things like that," said Perez. "The troops love it."

When reflecting on Security Forces, says it's like being part of a family.

"There's a stigma with Security Forces that it's male dominant, but it's like being in a squadron with our brothers," said Perez.

Over the past year, women in the 108th Security Forces Squadron have deployed, won numerous awards, and even qualified for the German Armed Forces Test Gold Badge.

"A lot of the women in our unit are headstrong and determined," said Perez. "I'm constantly inspired by them."

"Making sure that our Airmen are ready to deploy, that they have the knowledge and the tools that they need, that makes me feel good about being in the training office."

Tech. Sgt. Heather Perez

SIX WEEKS ON WHEELS



Story and photos by
Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Woolley
Joint Force Headquarters
Public Affairs Office

Spc. Dillon Moore is an infantryman with the 101st Airborne Division, and he loves his job.

But the 22-year-old Fayetteville, N.C. native recently started thinking about how he wants to make a living when he leaves the military someday.

“I’ve always been pretty good at turning wrenches,” Moore said. “Everybody needs a good mechanic.”

So Moore is one of 14 Soldiers from around the country who enrolled in a six-week wheeled vehicle mechanic class offered by the New Jersey Army National Guard on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.

They are a blend of Army active duty, Army Reserve and Army National Guard troops. Most are like Moore, reclassifying from a different military career field in search of greater opportunities.

Take Spc. Quisqueya Pickens, 23. She’s a tank mechanic assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, Texas. She likes fixing tanks, but feels like her skill set is too limiting.

“Not every Army duty station has tanks,” she said. “I want to be a wheeled vehicle mechanic so I can be stationed anywhere. No limits.”

An attempt to break down a barrier is what brought Spc. Carlos Santos to the wheeled vehicle mechanic course as well.

The 28-year-old Army Reservist from Puerto Rico works as a butcher in civilian life. But he loves serving in the military and believes that adding the wheeled vehicle mechanic certifications to his existing specialty of generator repair will help him land a full-time position with the Army Reserve.

“I have a good feeling about taking this course,” he said. “I can really feel my mechanical abilities taking off.”

Above: U.S. Army Spc. Dillan Moore, right, disassemble a 6.2 liter diesel engine while Spc. Jordan Miles observes at the New Jersey Army National Guard’s Joint Training and Training Development Center, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Jan. 24, 2018.

Below: U.S. Army Staff Sgt. William Greeley, left, discusses the workings of a 6.2 liter diesel engine to Spc. Quisqueya Pickens, center, and Spc. Carlos Santos. They are among 14 students from a cross section of active duty and reserve component Soldiers attending a wheeled vehicle mechanic course offered by the New Jersey Army National Guard.





MOPP RECOVERY



U.S. Air Force Airmen with the 177th Maintenance Group, New Jersey Air National Guard, recover an F-16C Fighting Falcon in Mission Oriented Protective Posture gear during an exercise at the 177th Fighter Wing, Atlantic City Air National Guard Base, N.J., June 9, 2018. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Cristina J. Allen)

ONE PHONE CALL

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
MARK C. OLSEN
NEW JERSEY NATIONAL GUARD
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



The call came in, two security guards had gotten sick after entering an abandoned building at Naval Weapons Station Earle.

One of the guards said that there was some kind of home-built laboratory in the building.

Within 30 minutes, the New Jersey National Guard's 21st Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team (WMD-CST) advance team was on site. Three

hours later, the entire team was in place and preparing to enter the building.

As the military first responders for this region, these Soldiers and Airmen are the first line of defense when it comes to responding to a natural, or man-made disaster.

U.S. Army survey team chief Staff Sgt. Cory Sweetman and survey team member Staff Sgt. Nicky Lam entered the building wearing protective suits,

which can sustain them in a contaminated environment for up to an hour. During that time, Sweetman and Lam investigated the building, which was now being treated as a crime scene; discovered two makeshift laboratories that were being used to create weaponized chemicals; took photos of the setup, and used various types of detection equipment to identify the chemicals.

Their job, like their name, is to survey the site and get information back so

Above: U.S. Army survey team chief Staff Sgts. Cory Sweetman, left, and survey team member Nicky Lam, both with the 21st Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team (21st WMD-CST), New Jersey National Guard, prepare to enter a simulated crime scene during an Army North mandated training proficiency evaluation at Naval Weapons Station Earle, Colts Neck, N.J., June 12, 2018. Bottom left: Lam, left, and section leader 1st Lt. Brandon A. Botley set up chemical and radiation detection gear at a simulated crime scene. Bottom right: Survey team members Sgt. Tricia C. Madrigal, left, and Lam prepare BG4 rebreather units for a mission.



the Naval and CST leadership can decide what to do next.

The decision is made to send a second team in to collect samples. U.S. Army Sgts. Joseph A. Bercovic and Mauricio Caceres return to the lab and collect and bag samples of the solid and liquid chemicals. Because this is a crime scene, each sample is treated as evidence and placed in sealed bags.

Everything is going just as they had trained countless times before.

Then things go bad.

Bercovic tears his suit on exposed piece of metal. The room's atmosphere is saturated with an unknown agent and Bercovic is rendered unconscious in seconds.

Caceres radios in a man-down emergency and proceeds to seal the tear to prevent any additional contamination. Survey team members arrive and transport Ber-

evaluation run by U.S. Army North civilian observer controllers.

So no one had died and no one was permanently injured.

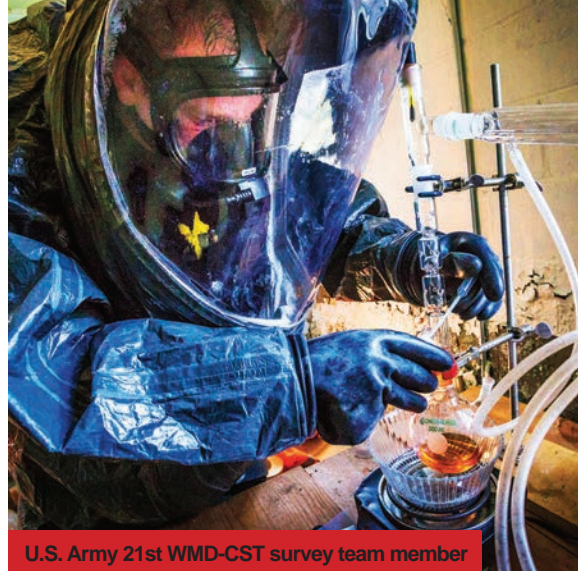
This time.

The assessment, which was done in preparation for their upcoming recertification exercise in April 2019, tested all aspects of the unit's command, operations, communications, administration/logistics, medical/analytical, and survey sections.

"This is to see where the unit stands before the actual test," said 1st Sgt. Steve Katkics, first sergeant, 21st WMD-CST.

For the 21 New Jersey National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, the evaluation gave them a snapshot of what areas needed improving prior to the 2019 exercise.

In essence, it's like taking a practice exam before the test.



U.S. Army 21st WMD-CST survey team member Sgt. Joseph A. Bercovic places a sample in a container at a simulated crime scene.

to ensure that the unit is ready in the event of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear threat.

The 21st WMD-CST is one of 57 weapons of mass destruction civil support teams established to support local authorities at man-made or natural disasters by identifying chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear substances, as well as assess the consequences, advise on response measures, and assist in requesting follow-on forces.

The 21st has provided support at Super Bowl 48 at the MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, the papal visit to Philadelphia, United Nations General

Assembly, along with numerous national and state special security events.

And the 21st WMD-CST is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

And all it takes is one phone call.

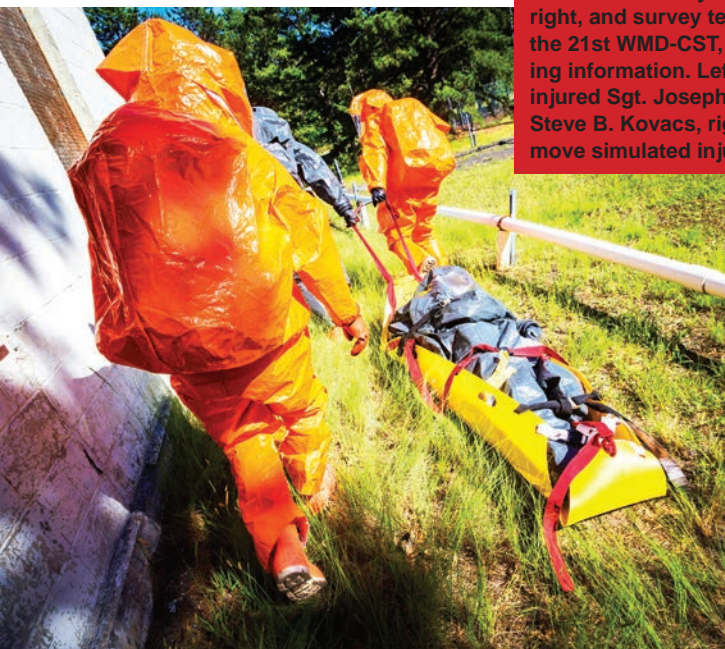


convic to an emergency decontamination line where he is decontaminated. Caceres' quick response has made the difference between life and death for Bercovic.

Fortunately, June 12's event at Colts Neck, New Jersey, was a proficiency

Every 18 months, the CST must be validated on common tasks, which include identifying threats, the decontamination process, and working with civilian authorities in a real world setting

Above: U.S. Army survey team chief Staff Sgt. Cory Sweetman, right, and survey team member Staff Sgt. Nicky Lam, both with the 21st WMD-CST, leave a simulated crime scene after gathering information. Left: Survey team members retrieve simulated injured Sgt. Joseph A. Bercovic. Right: U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Steve B. Kovacs, right, and 1st Sgt. Steven Katkics Jr., back, remove simulated injured Bercovic from his Level A Protective Suit.



IT'S ALL ABOUT



DRIVE

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Woolley, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs Office

To Sgt. 1st Class Shereka Danzy, success in life boils down to drive. The kind of drive that made her the first college graduate in a family where few have graduated from high school. The kind of drive that made her the first female Drill Sergeant in the history of the New Jersey Army National Guard. “I’m a goer. I’m a machine,” Danzy, 36, said recently. “I am happiest when I am working as hard as I can.”

Danzy grew up in Patterson, New Jersey, and was raised by her grandmother because her parents were absent, off battling substance abuse. Danzy longed to play sports in high school, but it wasn’t an option, because she needed to work to help her grandmother pay the bills.

As Danzy’s graduation neared, she and her grandmother, Geraldine Danzy, had a talk. “I can give you what you need, but I can’t give you what you want,” the older woman told the younger one. Danzy met an Army recruiter at her high school and jumped at the chance to enlist.

“I was like ‘sign me up’ and where do I go?” Danzy recalled. It turned out to be



Korea after training to become a supply specialist and then on to Fort Campbell, Ky. After three years on active duty, Danzy got out and enrolled in William Patterson University in Wayne, N.J. By then, she had encountered another recruiter, this one from the Army National Guard. She jumped at the chance to keep serving part-time.

In 2004, Danzy and her unit, a heavy maintenance company, deployed to Iraq. While Danzy was serving at Forward Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, she said she started thinking about the impact the military was having on her life.

“I thought ‘I have the ability to meet people and I am making bonds that will last a lifetime,’” she said. “You don’t get that in any organization.”

When Danzy returned to New Jersey in 2005, she applied for a National Guard



job that would allow her to serve full-time as a supply sergeant. But in 2012, Danzy returned to serving part-time to take a job as a New Jersey State Parole Officer.

She said she took pride in the job, which included supervising as many as 70 registered sex offenders at a time, because it helped keep her community safe.

Danzy knew she had to go home, but was terrified.

“My fear was that they wouldn’t send me back,” she said.

She went home, helped care for her mother, who ultimately succumbed to her injuries.

In September, Danzy returned to the drill sergeant course. She graduated in November.

Now, she serves as a full-time recruiter and one weekend a month, she dons the Drill Sergeant hat and helps National Guard enlistees prepare for Basic Combat Training.

She admits that she yells. A lot.

“I do it because I care,” she said. “I want every one of them to be ready and to do well.”

She adopts the same mindset as a recruiter.

“I tell them that the National Guard is the best of both worlds,” Danzy said. “We serve our country – and we serve our community.”

But Danzy decided that there was another way to keep her community safe. She applied to return to the New Jersey Army National Guard and was assigned to the Recruiting and Retention Battalion.

In addition to helping young people learn about the benefits of serving in the National Guard, Danzy also worked with new enlistees who have not yet reported to initial entry training.

“I have a passion for mentoring new Soldiers and I think my leadership recognized that,” Danzy said.

She left for U.S. Army Drill Sergeant School at Fort Jackson, S.C., in the summer of 2017. But she was only two weeks into the 10-week course when her mother, Victoria Danzy, with whom the sergeant had reconciled, suffered a life-threatening head injury and was placed on life support.





One goal, one mission

Story and photo by
Senior Airman Julia Santiago
108th Wing Public Affairs Office

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Deborah Macalalad, right, an aerospace medical technician with the 108th Medical Group, New Jersey Air National Guard, places a patient onto a litter during PATRIOT North 18 at Volk Field, Wis., July 18, 2018.

New Jersey National Guard Airmen from the 108th Wing Medical Group and members of the Wisconsin-1 Disaster Medical Assistance Team (WI-1 DMAT) treated and processed patients after a simulated earthquake during PATRIOT North 18 at Volk Field, Wis., July 18, 2018.

"PATRIOT has been one of the best training exercises for us," said Lisa Hass-Peters, the WI-1 DMAT commander. "The collaboration, integration, and cohesiveness between us and the military members has taught us so much, especially with the Airmen of 108th Wing."

PATRIOT North is a joint agency civilian and military exercise, sponsored by the National Guard Bureau for civilian emergency management and first responders to work with military entities in the same manner that they would during an actual disaster. This exercise tests the National Guard's abilities to support response operations based on simulated emergency scenarios.

The annual exercise, which ran from July 17-19, included approximately 900 participants including civilians, volunteers, and National Guard Soldiers and Airmen from more than 20 states.

"This exercise has taught me a lot. Now when a real world scenario comes up, I'm ready to go."
Master Sgt. Rasha Burton
medical administrator
108th Wing Medical Group

"It was amazing," said Master Sgt. Rasha Burton, a medical administrator with the 108th Wing Medical Group. "This exercise has taught me a lot. Now when a real world scenario comes up, I'm ready to go."

PATRIOT provides innovative, and cost-effective training as the U.S. military

transforms to meet new missions, realignments, and budgetary allocations.

"We've learned so much from training with the 108th Wing," said Hass-Peters. "The members of the 108th Wing made this experience great for us. We were one team. Same goal, same mission."

Hass-Peters supported the training session where the participants accepted patients on to their base of operations after a simulated earthquake. The Airmen and DMAT treated and stabilized the patients prior to evacuating them to a larger, more equipped medical facility.

For many members of the 108th Wing Medical Group, this was their first experience with a large-scale, joint exercise.

"Many Guardsmen haven't had the opportunity to work in this type of environment," said Lt. Col. Roger Brooks, PATRIOT exercise director. "This exercise will help all of us prepare for any disaster."

ON BECOMING A WARRANT OFFICER

By Mark C. Olsen, New Jersey National Guard Public Affairs Office

In today's Army, warrant officers are highly specialized technical experts in fields ranging from intelligence, to maintenance, to personnel management. They're also helicopter and fixed wing aircraft pilots and in the rare instance, can command detachments.

The warrant officer corps comprises 44 specialties across 17 branches.

They are the trainers and leaders who operate, maintain, administer, and manage the New Jersey Army National Guard's technical systems, support activities, and equipment.

"In essence, they are the subject matter experts," said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Michele Thomas, New Jersey State Command Chief Warrant Officer. "Chances are, whatever field you are in, there is a warrant officer providing the technical expertise."

New Jersey is authorized 164 warrant officers. The state currently has 30 openings, including warrant positions in the field artillery, maintenance, ordnance, signal, and transportation branches.

The path to becoming a warrant officer is through the Warrant Officer Candidate School – Reserve Component (WOCS – RC). The program offers an alternative to the traditional warrant officer course at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

It's designed for the part-time Soldier who can't afford to get away from their full-time job. Only technical (non-aviator) service warrant officer candidates can attend the program. Aviation



Brig. Gen. Jemal J. Beale, right, the Adjutant General of New Jersey, passes the warrant officer guidon to incoming State Command Chief Warrant Officer 5 Michele Thomas during the Women's History Month event at the Joint Military and Family Assistance Center in Bordentown, N.J., March 29, 2018. (New Jersey National Guard photo by Kryn P. Westhoven)

candidates are still required to complete the full-time course at Fort Rucker.

The program is divided into three phases. Phase One consists of distance learning and usually takes about three months to complete. Students can access the coursework at home or from local distance-learning centers.

Phase Two is held during five drill weekends at the regional training institutes at either Camp Niantic, Connecticut, or at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, where New Jersey Soldiers learn about operations, military history, and leadership.

Finally, students spend Phase Three at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, for a two-week field training exercise to test their physical

and mental abilities, as well as their warrior and leadership skills. There are, of course, some requirements.

Candidates must have less than 12 years' time-in-service

and be a high school graduate.

They must also hold a military occupational specialty code that falls under one of the 17 warrant officer-eligible branches. Other requirements include being between the ages of 18 and 44, score a 110 or higher on the general aptitude area test, be a U.S. citizen, and pass the Army Physical Fitness Test. Finally, all applicants must have 12 months remaining on their enlistment contract.

If you are interested in becoming a warrant officer, contact Chief Warrant Officer 2 Yetzabel Sierra-Medina at (609) 694-2865.

WARRANT OFFICER REQUIREMENTS

- 12 years' time-in-service and be a high school graduate.
- Hold a military occupational specialty code in one of the 17 warrant officer-eligible branches.
- Be between the ages of 18 and 44.
- Score a 110 or higher on the general aptitude area test.
- Be a U.S. citizen.
- Pass the Army Physical Fitness Test.
- Have 12 months remaining on their enlistment contract.



SWIM

'NOT JUST A SWIM

A person is captured in the middle of a burpee exercise on a green mat. Their body is in a low, horizontal position, with arms extended forward and legs bent. The background is a blurred green surface, suggesting an outdoor or gym setting. The text 'EAT' is overlaid in large, light green, block letters at the top, and 'MOKE SESSION' is overlaid in a similar font below it.

EAT MOKE SESSION'

Story and photos by
Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Woolley
New Jersey National Guard
Public Affairs Office

At 3 p.m. on a recent day, Sgt. Richard Hutton sat in an air conditioned classroom, learning about proper nutrition and loading up on rice cakes and apples.

Two hours later, Hutton was soaked in sweat, fighting for air, and wondering if those healthy snacks were on their way back up.

Three instructors who look like they were born in a gym circled Hutton, screaming for him to do another burpee.



Welcome to SWEAT.

It's a two-week New Jersey Army National Guard program that stands for Soldier Wellness Education and Training and it was created to help Soldiers whose careers have been set back – or will end prematurely – unless they improve their physical fitness.

“For some people, this may be their last chance,” said 1st Sgt. Peter Sarni III, one of the instructors. “We’re showing them that they may have dug themselves a hole, but they can get themselves out with the right tools.”

Those tools include the yin of low-key classes on topics such as nutrition, basic physiology and resiliency, where healthy snacking is encouraged, and the yang of blood-boiling workout



Top: U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Marsha Grant, left, offers encouragement to Spc. Poonam Singh during a pool workout at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst July 24 for the New Jersey National Guard SWEAT Program. SWEAT stands for Soldier Wellness Education and Training and is designed to help Soldiers whose careers have been set back – or will end prematurely – unless they improve their physical fitness. Above: U.S. Army Spc. Kleber Rodriguez takes part in a pool workout. Left: U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Peter Sarni III, left, offers encouragement to Spc. Ryan Clarke during a pool workout.





U.S. Army Sgt. Richard Hutton, a student with the New Jersey National Guard SWEAT Program, takes part in a workout at Joint Base

McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. "This course has me back on track. I love it. I just wish it was longer."

sessions where the Soldiers are pushed to their absolute limit. Soldiers like Hutton say the reason they have come to love the program is this balance.

"The cadre are hardcore when we're doing PT," he said. "But they are also compassionate. You know they want you to do well."

Like nearly all of the 23 Soldiers in the current SWEAT class, Hutton, 35, serves in the National Guard part-time. He said that the demands of a new civilian job as a mental health technician, college classes and a new baby took their toll on his workout routine. His failure on his most recent Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) prevents him from attending military schools that make him eligible for promotion and could ultimately end his career entirely.

"It's embarrassing and it's a detriment to my career," he said. "I had started to really beat myself up. This course has me back on track. I love it. I just wish it was longer."

Everyone enrolled in the course volunteered. Spc. Poonam Singh sees the SWEAT program as an opportunity to

pursue a longtime ambition – an officer's commission. But her inability to handle the physical demands of the New Jersey Army National Guard Officer Candidate course forced her to drop out. She vows that if she has the opportunity to go back, her fitness won't be an impediment this time.

Singh, 37, lost seven percent of her body fat and four inches in just 10 days in the SWEAT program. She said she learned that for her body type, many small meals a day is better than two or three big ones.

"This course has really been about wellness," she said. "It's not just a smoke session."

As the course wound down on July 25, Sarni offered the class words of encouragement after their most challenging day of workouts, which began with 6

a.m. in a swimming pool at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst and ended nearly 12-hours later with a 90-minute workout that included a three-mile run, circuit training and weights.

"We're proud of you," Sarni said. "You have earned our respect."

"This course has really been about wellness. It's not just a smoke session."

U.S. Army Spc. Poonam Singh

ELEMENTS DON'T STOP AIRMEN



108th Wing Airmen are no strangers to the fact that complicated flying machines require constant maintenance, no matter what the temperatures are. Numb fingers and the occasional bruised knuckle plague the tireless mechanics, who can be seen crawling over and around the planes that sit in neat rows on the New Jer-

sey Air National Guard ramp at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.

One of them is Tech. Sgt. Raymond DeMarco, a crew chief who is troubleshooting some lights that aren't working on the KC-135R Stratotanker's refueling boom.

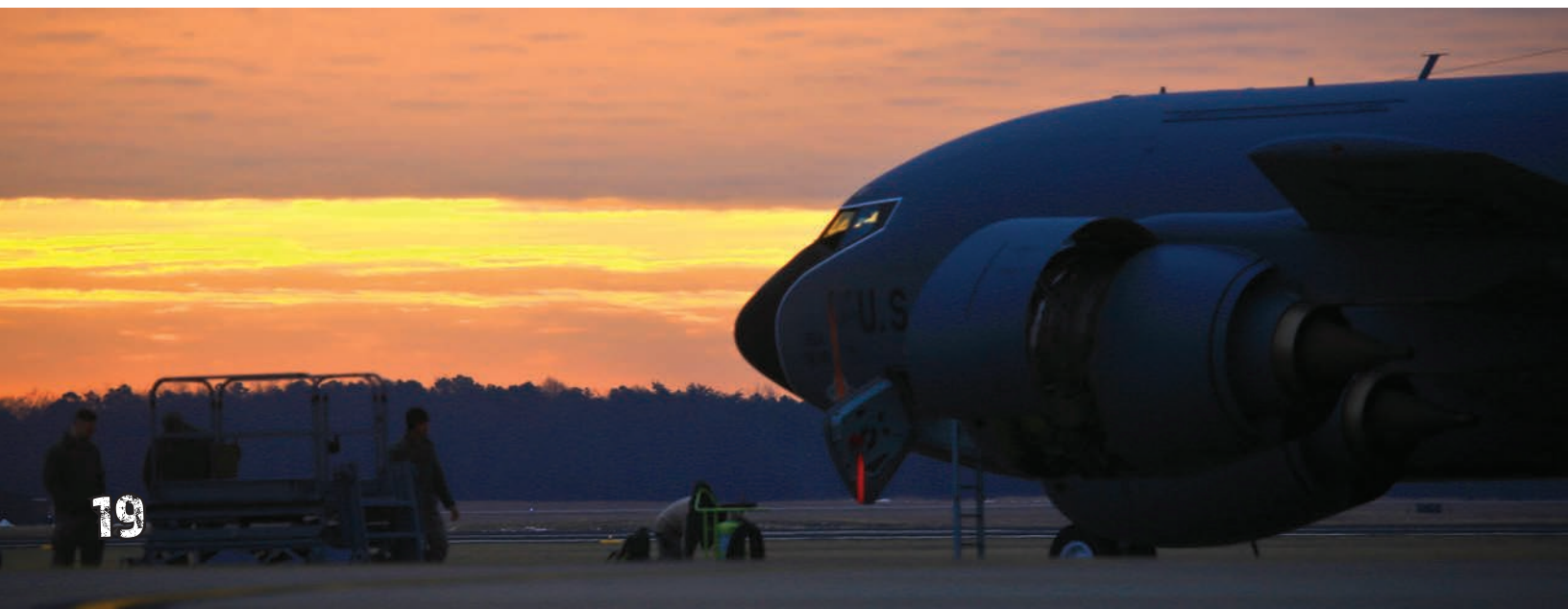
"We've changed out some light bulbs, but these still aren't

working," said DeMarco, gesturing to the boom that extends from the tail of the aircraft.

The boom is the device that unloads fuel to trailing fighters, bombers, and cargo planes.

"If the lights aren't working, it might be something inside, so we have someone from the electric shop coming

Above: A New Jersey Air National Guard KC-135R Stratotanker crew chief with the 108th Wing checks the aircraft's wings prior to a training flight at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Jan. 11, 2018. **Below:** 108th maintenance Airmen wheel a B-4 maintenance stand out to work on a KC-135R at sunrise.





out,” DeMarco continued.

Within minutes, a blue Air Force pickup truck comes by, and Staff Sgt. Garion Reddick hops out.

After consulting with the crew chiefs, Reddick climbed onto the Stratotanker to diagnose the problem with the lighting system.

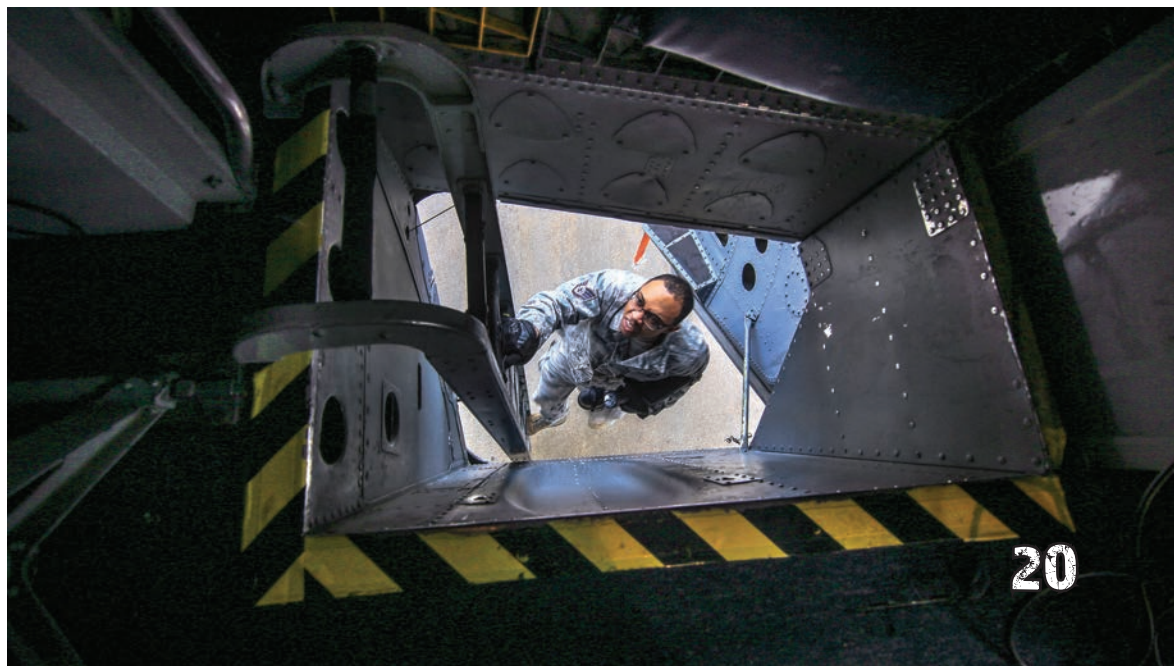
“I’m just making sure voltage is coming through the fuses here to the components. If it is, the lights should be working,” said Reddick. “If I can find where the voltage stops, I can figure out what component is bad.”

Outside the aircraft, DeMarco, along with fellow crew chief Staff Sgt. Robert Cento, make final checks before the aircrew shows up for the first training flight of the day.

The crew chiefs lovingly quip that the KC-135R is like working on a classic hot rod, with all of its inherent mechanical issues.

“These 1960’s aircraft are like a project car you’re working on, and if you’re a dedicated crew chief like some of us are, you’re working on the same aircraft all the time,” said DeMarco. “The best part is taking

Above: U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Robert Cento pulls red tags during pre-flight checks on a 108th Stratotanker prior to a training flight. Below: U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Raymond DeMarco trouble-shoots the lights on a KC-135R’s refueling boom. Bottom: U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Garion Reddick climbs down a Stratotanker’s ladder after doing electrical work on the aircraft.



something that’s broken and making it work again.”

Once the crew chiefs wrapped up aircraft checks, Reddick, the aircraft electrician, emerged with a diagnosis of the problem.

“There’s one component that went bad, it’s an easy fix, maybe thirty minutes.”

Reddick climbed back into his truck to get more parts, and the crew chiefs reflected on the toughest part of their jobs.

“I think the toughest thing about maintenance is the weather,” said Cento. “We’re out here in the heat, the cold, rain, snow, to me it’s the hardest thing we do.”

DeMarco agreed that the flight line is a tough place to work.

“The weather can really get you,” said DeMarco. “Weather that people couldn’t even imagine being out in, and we’re here. Some of the worst is when it’s a hundred-and-something degrees, and you’re on top of the plane when the sun is hitting it, it’s intense up there.”

DeMarco grabs an orange safety vest and lights, and marshals the plane off the flight line to its takeoff position where the Stratotanker throttled into the sky, the crew chiefs first mission of the day complete.

BUSTING THROUGH THE GLASS CEILING



Story and photo by
Master Sgt. Matt Hecht
New Jersey National Guard
Public Affairs Office

New Jersey Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kristina Sofchak, a Black Hawk helicopter maintenance test pilot with Detachment 2, C Company, 1-171st Aviation Regiment, loved to talk to her mother about career paths.

"I would say, 'I want to be a waitress,' and my mom would say, 'why not own the restaurant?' I would say, 'I want to be a nurse,' and my mom would say, 'why not be a doctor?'" recalled Sofchak. "She was constantly challenging me to think about the things I could accomplish as a woman."

Sofchak noted that her mother even named her in a way that could aid her with job applications.

"My mom purposefully named my sister and I with gender neutral names, so I could put Kris on a resume, and my sister could put Casey," said Sofchak. "She wanted us to be judged on our merits, not because we're women."

Sofchak was inspired in the 1980's by women like Lynn Rippelmeyer, who became the first woman to fly the Boeing

747 and in 1984 became the first woman to serve as a captain.

"I heard about women making history in aviation while I was in school, and I told my guidance counselor that I wanted to be a pilot," said Sofchak. "He said that girls couldn't be pilots."

A chance encounter put Sofchak on a path towards a career in aviation.

"My mother took us to Great Adventure, and there was an AH-1 Cobra static display there. I knew I wanted to work with Cobras," said Sofchak.

She went to her high school guidance counselor, and told him she was going to join the Army National Guard.

Sofchak enlisted in the New Jersey Army National Guard as a helicopter mechanic, and soon was running maintenance teams on the hangar floor.

"I was working on a helicopter one day, when a supervisor of mine, a male, told me I hit the glass ceiling. I was confused about what he meant," said Sofchak. "He said that I was going to climb as high as I could go on that ladder; that I could

see the rest of the path, but I could never get there. I was angry."

After twelve years as an enlisted maintenance Soldier, her dream of flying was realized when she became a helicopter pilot.

As a young pilot, she found herself going from the lush Pine Barrens of N.J. to the dangerous skies over Iraq.

"I was scared at first, but the more missions we did, the better it got," said Sofchak. "We were doing the air assault mission, taking Soldiers right to compounds to pick up high value targets."

She is the New Jersey Army National Guard's first female maintenance test pilot.

"I love what I do, and I just want little girls out there to know that this is something they can do too," said Sofchak.

And that supervisor that told Sofchak she hit the glass ceiling?

"I saw my old supervisor after I came back from flight training, and he was really happy for me. He said I didn't hit the glass ceiling. I busted right through it!"

254th trains Albanian soldiers

Story by
Master Sgt. Matt Hecht
New Jersey National Guard
Public Affairs Office

New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers from the 254th Regiment (Combat Arms) with the Regional Training Institute, based out of Sea Girt, N.J., provided range operations and marksmanship training for three infantry battalions and special forces soldiers with the Albanian armed forces, as well as conducting a junior noncommissioned officer course in Tirana, Albania July 10-13, 2018.

For nearly twenty years, New Jersey and Albania have been connected through the State Partnership Program.

The 254th has been conducting NCO/officer professional development events for several years which have also included Albanian Armed Forces sending teams to the 254th for instructor development.

The 254th Soldiers were excited to work with their Albanian counterparts.

“It’s a good feeling that everything we have learned throughout our careers in



U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael P. Lowert, center, 254th Regiment (Combat Arms), New Jersey Army National Guard, addresses a group of Albanian soldiers during marksmanship training. (Courtesy photo)

the U.S. military will now become standard for a foreign military,” said Staff Sgt. Matthew Sams, a weapons instructor with the 254th. “We plan on building upon what we taught, eventually conducting a squad designated marksman course.”

The New Jersey - Albania State partnership Program has seen joint deployments to combat zones such as Afghanistan in support of the NATO-International

Security Assistance Force, which were an important contribution toward the development of the Afghan National Army.

In addition to serving together, New Jersey has provided law enforcement, fire service, and educational training to Albania. The New Jersey Counter Drug Program DARE course has reached more than 12,000 Albanian schoolchildren and has been lauded as a huge success.



TAG meets with Defence Minister

Brig. Gen. Jemal J. Beale, right, the Adjutant General of New Jersey, meets with Albanian Defence Minister Olta Xhaçka in Tirana, Albania, June 14, 2018. New Jersey and Albania have been State Partners since 2001. The National Guard State Partnership Program is a U.S. Department of Defense program managed by the National Guard Bureau that links U.S. States with partner countries around the world. (Courtesy photo)

NJNG ENDS SEGREGATION

**STORY AND PHOTOS
BY MARK C. OLSEN
NEW JERSEY NATIONAL
GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS
OFFICE**

Although history credits President Harry Truman with desegregating America's military, the truth is that racial integration had already arrived in New Jersey, thanks to a governor and National Guard leaders who had stubbornly insisted on equality in their forces.

In the space of four months, from November 1947 to February 1948, the New Jersey National Guard changed history.

The story begins at a time when the New Jersey National Guard was growing.

World War II had been over for more than a year and the New Jersey National Guard was recruiting new members to fill the recently created 50th Armored Division.

The National Guard Bureau, which fell under the War Department, had authorized New Jersey to organize the 372nd Anti-Aircraft Artillery group.

Because integration did not yet exist in the military, the 372nd would reflect the United States Army's policy toward Blacks – the unit was to be composed entirely of Black Soldiers.

"The organization of the National Guard with respect to colored units of the National Guard was governed by War Department policy as contained in the Gillem Report," said Col. Donald W. McGowan,

Deputy Adjutant General, New Jersey National Guard.

And this is where the story would have ended except for one event.

In 1947, New Jersey voters overwhelmingly approved a new constitution which read in part: "No qualified person shall be denied any civil or military right, nor be discriminated against in exercise of any civil or military right, nor be segregated in the militia or in the public schools because of religious principles, race, color, ancestry or national origin."

This meant the 372nd's creation was illegal based on New Jersey's new constitution.

Numerous groups and civic organizations, including the New Jersey Military Affairs Committee, pushed back against the 372nd's formation.

And they had an allies in New Jersey

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	DOMESTIC	CABLE	1211	CHECK
CLASS	ORDINARY			ACCOUNTING INFORMATION
LETTER	URGENT RATE			TIME FILED
DAY	DEFERRED			
LETTER	NIGHT LETTER			

WESTERN UNION
A. N. WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

of the following telegram, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

DECEMBER 16, 1947

HON. JAMES V. FORRESTAL
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE NEW CONSTITUTION FOR THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, APPROVED BY THE VOTERS OF THIS STATE, WHICH BECOMES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1948, PROVIDES THAT QUOTE NO PERSON SHALL... BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN THE EXERCISE OF ANY CIVIL OR MILITARY RIGHT, NOR BE SEGREGATED IN THE MILITIA...BECAUSE OF...RACE, COLOR...UNQUOTE.

THE ARMY POLICY WITH RESPECT TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF NEGRO MANPOWER ENUNCIATED IN CIRCULAR NO. 124 AS AMENDED BY CIRCULAR NO. 32, CURRENT SERIES, (OCTOBER 30, 1947) DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, APPEARS TO BE IN CONFLICT WITH NEW JERSEY'S NEW STATE CONSTITUTION, IN THAT THE FORMER PRESCRIBES THAT QUOTE EMPLOYMENT WILL BE IN NEGRO REGIMENTS OR GROUPS, BATTALIONS OR SQUADRONS, AND COMPANIES, TROOPS, OR BATTERIES... UNQUOTE.

DOES THE ARMY DEPARTMENT POLICY PROHIBIT MIXED COMPANIES AND SIMILAR UNITS COMPOSED OF BOTH WHITE AND NEGRO SOLDIERS?

ALFRED E. DRISCOLL
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Telegram sent by New Jersey Gov. Alfred E. Driscoll to James V. Forrestal, Secretary of Defense on Dec. 16, 1947, asking: "Does the Army Department Policy prohibit mixed companies and similar units composed of both white and negro soldiers?" New Jersey had passed a new constitution in 1947 that ended segregation in the New Jersey National Guard. U.S. Army policy at the time prohibited racially mixed units.

Governor Alfred E. Driscoll, Maj. Gen. Clifford R. Powell, commander, NJNG, and Brig. Gen. James I. Bowers, the Adjutant General, NJNG.

Driscoll replied to the Committee on Oct. 24, stating "General Powell is organizing the headquarters of the Group as a mixed unit composed of both white and colored officers, and has also eliminated the segregation of Negro units in separate armories."

On Dec. 3, Driscoll went further stating "All of our citizens must be given the opportunity to enlist in the New Jersey units of the National Guard and participate in any of its activities for which each individual is considered qualified."

There was one obstacle; the United States Army and by default, the Air Force, followed the War Department regulation that stated "negro manpower will be employed in negro regiments or groups, battalions or squadrons, troops or batteries."

Bowers wrote to the National Guard Bureau on Dec. 5, asking if the Army would authorize racially mixed units. The Guard Bureau did not immediately reply.

The stakes were high, if the War Department rejected New Jersey's request, the New Jersey National Guard would lose its federal recognition, which would result in losing funding for equipment, training, and payroll.

McGowan wrote to Driscoll's executive assistant, Ransford J. Abbott on Dec. 8, recommending that the governor contact Secretary of Defense James V. Forrestal directly for a decision.

On Dec. 16, Driscoll sent Forrestal a telegram asking: "Does the Army Department Policy prohibit mixed companies and similar units of both white and negro soldiers?" Forrestal did not reply.

Maj. Gen. Kenneth F. Cramer, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, finally replied to Bowers' letter on Jan. 5, 1948. He punted saying "The matter raised by your telegram may possibly affect not only New Jersey units but other units. Consequently this question requires a careful review before any action is taken."

Forrestal in the meantime had delegated the issue to Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royall who replied to Driscoll on Jan. 13.

"The organization of your state militia and the policies pertaining to it are

wholly the responsibility of the state of New Jersey," said Royall. "However the organization of the Army of the United States, of which the National Guard is a part, has been governed by established policies which have been applied uniformly to both regular and civilian components. An analysis of this important matter has been undertaken by the staff in order to produce a sound solution."

Driscoll was unimpressed with Royall's answer.

"Your telegram which I have just

received does not suffice for my wire to Secretary of Defense," said Driscoll. "It will be necessary for any National Guard units placed under the supervision of New Jersey authority to comply fully with both the spirit and the letter of our constitution."

While this was happening, President Truman announced on Feb. 2 that he had "instructed the Secretary of Defense to take steps to have the remaining instances of discrimination in the armed services eliminated as rapidly as possible."

On Feb. 7, Royall finally replied: "I recognize the importance to a sovereign state of a constitutional provision such as yours, and I have determined that for the present, Army militia units of New Jersey, if otherwise qualified, will not be denied Federal recognition on the ground of non-segregation."

The decision had three reservations: It did not change existing Army policy on integration; it applied only to New Jersey, and it was a concession to state sovereignty.

The New Jersey Department of Defense immediately implemented the decision on Feb. 12, when General Order Number 4 was published stating: "no qualified person shall be denied any military rights, nor be discriminated against in exercise of any military rights, nor

be segregated in the militia because of religious principles, race, color, ancestry or national origin."

There was still one nagging problem, the Air Force had not replied, so there was no desegregation policy for the New Jersey Air National Guard.

The Air Force, barely six months old, was relying on pre-existing Army personnel regulations. So when Secretary of the Air Force W. Stuart Symington replied on March 17, he also referenced the Negro manpower recommendations.

I have noted the fact that the people of New Jersey by direct majority vote have provided in their Constitution that "no person shall . . . be segregated in the militia because of race, color . . ." While the authority to determine all questions relating to the Federally recognized National Guard must necessarily be exercised by the Department of the Army, yet I recognize the importance to a sovereign state of a constitutional provision such as yours, and I have determined that for the present, Army militia units of New Jersey, if otherwise qualified, will not be denied Federal recognition on the ground of non-segregation.

Sincerely yours,

Kenneth C. Royall
Kenneth C. Royall
Secretary of the Army

Letter from Kenneth C. Royall, Secretary of the Army, sent to New Jersey Governor Alfred E. Driscoll on Feb. 7, 1948, authorizing racially mixed units in the New Jersey Army National Guard. A similar letter was sent by W. Stuart Symington, Secretary of the Air Force, to New Jersey Governor Alfred E. Driscoll on March 17, 1948, making the New Jersey National Guard the first federally recognized military component to be integrated.

"Inasmuch as the people of the State of New Jersey have, upon direct majority vote, indicated their opposition to the ruling mentioned above in its application to their state militia, Air Force units of the New Jersey National Guard will not be denied Federal recognition on the basis of non-conformance with that ruling if such units are in all other respects qualified for recognition."

New Jersey had succeeded. Its success emboldened other states to end segregation in their National Guard units.

Looking back in 1949, Driscoll observed "Non-segregation in the New Jersey National Guard has now existed for approximately two years, and it is my observation that New Jersey National Guard has functioned fundamentally the same."

"That this provision in our basic charter is working smoothly in the National Guard throughout the State, is due entirely to the intelligent understanding of the problem on the part of all our citizens, regardless of color."

2018 INAUGURATION



New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, second from right, applauds as New Jersey National Guard Honor Guard members, left to right, Staff Sgt. Vaughn Price, Staff Sgt. John Alvarado, and Sgt. Gloria Vargas stand at attention after the national anthem during the governor's inauguration ceremony at the War Memorial in Trenton, N.J., Jan. 16, 2018. (New Jersey National Guard photo by Mark C. Olsen)





**"WE'RE A PART-TIME
HOMETOWN MILITARY. IT'S
THE BEST PART ABOUT
BEING A PART OF THE AIR
FORCE AND BEING A MEMBER
OF YOUR COMMUNITY."**

**STAFF SGT. ANNAMAE YOUNG
RECRUITER
108TH WING**

YOUNG JOINS CENTURY CLUB

**STORY AND PHOTO
BY MASTER SGT. MATT HECHT
108TH WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**

Staff Sgt. Annamae Young, a 108th Wing recruiter, was recently inducted into the Century Club with her 100th recruit.

"I love helping people," said Young, a New Jersey native, who has been a recruiter at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., for three years.

Young, a former active duty Airman, noted that the great thing about being an Air National Guard recruiter is the opportunity to watch people grow throughout their career.

"As a person, they change from the time they sit in your chair to the time they return from tech school," said Young. "It's amazing to see. I love the Air National Guard and I want them to have a great experience."

Being a recruiter has given Young the ability to change people's lives.

"I like being a positive female role model," said Young, who is usually the first military member potential recruits meet. "I've had people come in who have issues at home, who come from hard lives, and it feels great to be able to offer them a path that helps them to be successful in life. Being a recruiter has really opened my eyes."

Being technologically savvy has also helped Young connect with new recruits.

"We make fun little videos, I like using social media," said Young. "Being a recruiter is all about trust, and if they trust me and have fun, they'll tell their friends."

Young sees the Air National Guard as an easy sell.

"We're a part-time hometown military," said Young. "It's the best part about being a part of the Air Force and being a member of your community."

NJ SOLDIERS EXCEL AT JSSD-K

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
STAFF SGT. CHRISTOPHER STOLTZ
386TH AIR EXPEDITIONARY WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



U.S. Army Sgt. William Poley, 117th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, New Jersey Army National Guard, assigned to the Joint Special Operations Forces Support Detachment as a K movements specialist, secures cargo to a pallet June 4, 2018 at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia.



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Abraham Ruiz, right, a K motor transport operator, helps movements specialist Sgt. William Poley, both with the 117th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion assigned to the Joint Special Operations Forces Support Detachment, use a Kalmar RT240 rough terrain container handler to lift equipment June 4, 2018. JSSD-K operates Camp Sparta, a trans-regional, intermediate-level staging base and logistics hub for special operations personnel.

During the 2017 holiday season, most of the current staff from Joint Special Operations Forces Support Detachment – K were in their New Jersey, preparing for an upcoming deployment – but the mission was unknown.

Fast-forward six months, these N.J. Army National Guardsmen with the 117th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion run Camp Sparta. The camp serves as a trans-regional, intermediate-level staging base and logistics hub for special operations personnel and cargo supporting Operations Inherent Resolve and Freedom Sentinel.

This marks the first time the JSSD-K mission, operated from an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia, is led by Citizen Soldiers.

The 'Spartans' are proving they are just as capable as their full-time counterparts – and even provide unique versatility.

“We are all used to the phrase 'do more with less,’” said Lt. Col. Jose D. Maldonado, JSSD-K commander. “In the Guard, we do not have the same time or amount of resources to complete the mission, but we push forward and always find a way to get the mission done to standard.”

Another benefit they bring to the total force is the mixture of their backgrounds. When not wearing the uniform, the Soldiers serve in a variety of roles, including; electrical engineers, vehicle operators, logisticians, police officers, project managers, and even a federal agent.

“We have a generator mechanic who is also an electrician, and we have a logistics officer who is also an engineer,” said Capt. Nicholas Zingara, JSSD-K executive officer. “They are able to serve as real force multipliers working outside of their regular specialties, enhancing mission capabilities.”

Those skills have served them well, as Camp Sparta has men and women who provided support during hurricane Sandy in 2012, as well as other state emergencies. However, they still had a lot to learn in this deployed environment.

“This is an opportunity that a traditional guardsman does not usually get,” said Zingara. “This is something new and exciting, and we are happy to be in a position to help SOF warfighters meet their objectives.”

To support the SOF community, one challenge the Spartans had to overcome was the different methods and terminology between them and their sister services.

The team overcame this by aggressively networking with Air Force personnel during the early stages of their deployment. Camp Sparta’s proximity to Air Force partners serves as a tremendous benefit – which only enhances their mission capabilities.

“It’s important to know how to effectively communicate between services, because an average day for us isn’t average to many,” said Staff Sgt. Abraham Ruiz, JSSD-K motor transport operator. “At any given time, we could be performing maintenance on various equipment, making a run down to the seaport or airport to procure equipment, fixing or modifying communication equipment, installing weapons systems, projecting movement and coordinating movement of assets.”

In addition to Army and Air Force personnel, the camp is also occupied by logisticians from Support Center Iraq, manned by the Naval Special Warfare Command and Marine Special Operations Command, and Support Center Syria, supported by the 5th Special Forces Group Support Battalion.

“One of the greatest desires a Soldier has is to feel like they are part of a team – like they’re making an impact,” said Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Johnson, JSSD-K operations non-commissioned officer-in-charge. “Seeing supplies get out to Soldiers in need, be it a decent meal or a refrigerator so they can have a cold drink, is an amazing feeling.”

Maldonado stated he is impressed to see his team adjust to the rigors of a deployed environment. He also said he expected them to ‘hit the ground running,’ especially since most have years of experience working together. This ‘pre-built rapport’ serves as yet another added benefit of using guard personnel.

“I am very proud of our team and their service,” he said. “While there may have been some growing pains, I believe keeping a team mindset and focusing on building relationships has helped us to quickly identify and adapt to overcome any challenge. It gives me peace of mind knowing they will always be able to get the job done.”

Additional reporting by Master Sgt. Matt Hecht.



Airman helps accident victims

Story and photo by Senior Airman Cristina J. Allen, 177th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office

A 177th Fighter Wing Airman assisted in rescuing victims from a structural collapse at the Rogue Water Tap House in Savannah, Georgia, March 17, 2018.

Senior Airman Samantha M. Massey, a 177th aerospace ground equipment specialist at the Atlantic City Air National Guard Base entered the bar after a deck collapsed to try to help people who were injured.

“Because I’m short I was able to get back into the building,” said Massey. “I started helping people up and getting them outside. I just kept going in and out.”

According to online reports from local news sources, patrons on the upper deck at the downtown Savannah restaurant fell 12 feet onto the seating area below injuring a total of 14 people, two of which were critically injured as the col-

lapsed deck structure fell onto them.

“As I came down the stairs, I looked back and there were a bunch of people screaming,” said Massey. “There was mud and blood everywhere and there were people with serious injuries.”

Two other Airmen from the 177th Security Forces Squadron, Senior Airmen Abdiel A. Rivera and Jonathon T. Kaminsky, were with Massey before the incident happened.

“We were ushered out by the security guard and were worried about Massey,” said Rivera. “She was able to get back into the building and help.”

Massey helped several people get out of a potentially dangerous environment.

“I helped carry a really tall man out because his leg was in really bad shape and another man had a really bad head

injury so I took off one of my shirts and held it on his head to help stop the bleeding,” said Massey. “I told them ‘I am an Airman from the 177th Fighter Wing and I want to help you.’”

Rivera and Kaminsky waited to make sure Massey was safe.

“I’m really grateful that I ran into the security forces guys,” said Massey. “It finally hit me later and I was pretty upset. They found ice from a street vendor and water to wash the blood off of my face.”

Rivera and Kaminsky helped to calm Massey down and transported her to a safe location where she was checked for injuries and found to be okay.

“She’s not afraid of anything,” said Rivera. “She really cares about people.”

44TH COLORS UNFURLED

By Staff Sgt. Sherwood Goodenough, 44th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The red, yellow, and blue fabric of the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's (IBCT) colors ran through the commander's fingers one last time.

As the guidon rolled up, Col. Timothy A. Coakley smoothed the gold tassels to seat them gently as Command Sgt. Scott E. Maj. Mechkowski pulled the sleeve over the colors, and a chapter in New Jersey military history closed. Moments later, the bright red and blue flag of the 44th IBCT was unfurled.

The casing of the 50th's flag and the 44th IBCT Redesignation Ceremony took place Aug. 12, 2018, at the brigades' headquarters at the National Guard Armory in Lawrenceville.

The 44th IBCT is one of the oldest in the lineage of New Jersey's fighting units. Brig. Gen. Jemal J. Beale, the Adjutant General of New Jersey, commented on the significance of the ceremony.

"The brigade combat team, like the nation's armed forces, is at a transformational juncture," Beale said. "This new unit, with its storied history, is ideal to bring American

combat power to support operations worldwide."

The unit was reflagged as part of its preparation to deploy to support missions in African Command scheduled for early 2019.

Col. Robert W. Hughes, the incoming commander, alluded to the unit's upcoming mission to the Horn of Africa in his remarks.

"We will hold ourselves and each other to a higher standard; we will advance the performance, the history and the lineage of out units, and we will make the unit better than it is today."

Hughes ended his comments to the brigade by stating: "If you want something done, send the New Jersey National Guard. If you want something done well, send the 44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team."

The outgoing commander,

Col. Timothy A. Coakley said to his Soldiers: "Gen. Beale, you have selected the right Soldier to take the reins. Col. Hughes is a force of nature."

Coakley addressed his final words to the women and men to whom he bid farewell to. "Col. Hughes, they're all yours. Let's Go, Jersey Blues!"

"This new unit, with its storied history, is ideal to bring American combat power to support operations worldwide."

**BRIG. GEN. JEMAL J. BEALE
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL OF NEW JERSEY**

U.S. Army Soldiers are presented with the 44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), New Jersey Army National Guard, patch during the 44th IBCT Redesignation Ceremony Aug. 12, 2018, at the National Guard Armory in Lawrenceville, N.J. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Christopher Hill)



FINAL DETAIL



U.S. Army Sgt. Raheem Rowell, right, places an urn containing the remains of a veteran as Sgt. Bless Sherrill, both with the New Jersey Army National Guard, holds an American flag during the 29th New Jersey Mission of Honor ceremony at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery at North Hanover Township, N.J., June 21, 2018. The remains of 10 veterans spanning World War I to the Cold War were honored during the ceremony. (New Jersey National Guard photo by Mark C. Olsen)



COLOR RUN

New Jersey National Guard Soldiers and Airmen participated in the 2018 New Jersey National Guard LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) 5K Color Run at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., June 8, 2018. The Department of Defense (DoD) is observing June as LGBT Pride Month to recognize the DoD's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender service members and civilians. Since 2012, DoD has observed the month of June as LGBT Pride Month. The month observes the anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall riots, an event that many consider to be the beginning of the LGBT rights movement. (U.S. Air National Guard photos by Master Sgt. Matt Hecht)



American Legion honors Airman

By Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Woolley
New Jersey National Guard Public Affairs Office

The New Jersey National Guard family congratulates Staff Sgt. Heather J. Hyon of the Air Guard's 108th Wing for winning the 2018 American Legion Spirit of Service Award.

The award is presented annually by the American Legion to one enlisted military member from each branch and reserve component who has made a difference in their community.

When not serving as a medical technician with the 108th Medical Group, Hyon, volunteers at Covenant House, which is Philadelphia's only all-youth homeless shelter.

Her work for the shelter raised \$1,200, which is enough to ensure a week of meals for two homeless youth as well as additional medical care and educational services.

Hyon enlisted in the Air Force in 2011. She is a 2016 graduate of Rutgers University and holds a bachelor's degree in anthropology and public health.

The Spirit of Service Award has been given annually since 2000 and will be presented by the American Legion National Commander, Denise Rohan, at the Legion's National Convention in Minneapolis later this month.



U.S. Air Force Capt. Ian Caldwell, a dentist with the 177th Medical Group, performs a dental exam on a Soldier at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, June 21, 2018. The 177th is performing their annual training while supporting the Army mission in Alaska. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Kenneth Brown)

NJBEST WARRIOR

Photos by Mark C. Olsen
New Jersey National Guard
Public Affairs Office

Seven Soldiers, one Airman, and five noncommissioned officers competed in the New Jersey Army National Guard's Best Warrior Competition at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., April 24-26, 2018. The top Soldier and NCO will go on to compete in the Region 1 Competition against National Guard Troops from the six New England states and New York. The Competition is an annual event, which tests their military skills and knowledge, as well as their physical fitness and endurance. Photos this page clockwise: U.S. Army Spc. Richard Asarekonadu, 3rd Battalion, 112th Field Artillery, performs the push-up portion of the Army Physical Fitness Test. U.S. Army Sgt. Scott Dorsey, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry, fires an M4 carbine

from behind a barrier. U.S. Army Spc. Jacqueline Robinson, 444th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, drags a simulated casualty. U.S. Army Sgt. Samantha Merryfield, 328th Military Police Company, performs the 12-mile march. Opposite page clockwise: U.S. Army Spc. Daniel Schouten, 50th Chemical Company, performs a high crawl. U.S. Army Sgt. Henri Michael, 2nd Battalion, 113th Infantry, performs the 12-mile march. U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Victor Dulay, 227th Air Support Operations Squadron, evaluates a casualty. U.S. Army Spc. Anatoliy Terentiev, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry, calls in a medical evacuation request. U.S. Army Spc. Karlee Severns, Medical Command, fires her M9 pistol.







FINANCE TRAINS WITH 174TH

**PHOTOS BY
MASTER SGT. MATT HECHT
NEW JERSEY NATIONAL GUARD
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



The U.S. Army's 174th Infantry Brigade trained New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers with the 250th and 350th Finance Detachments at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., June 4-5, 2018. June 4 was range training firing the M16 rifle and on June 5, the 250th were trained on base defense. Photos, top row, left to right: A New Jersey Army National Guard Soldier is given instruction on firing the M16. Finance Soldiers fire the M16. A 5.56mm shell casing is ejected from an M16. Row two, left to right: Finance troops compare targets. U.S. Army Spc. Georgia Varoucha shovels out a hasty fighting position. Row three, left to right: Soldiers evaluate sectors of fire. U.S. Army Sgt. Denzel Brown provides security over watch. Bottom row: U.S. Army Spc. Elizabeth Cuevas reviews a range card.



A FACE ONLY A MOTHER COULD LOVE



U.S. Army Sgt. Daniel Rivera, a UH-60L Black Hawk helicopter crew chief with the 1st Assault Helicopter Battalion, 150th Aviation, New Jersey Army National Guard, stands for a portrait before a flight at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., May 15, 2018. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Matt Hecht)

TRAINING DAY: JUNE 18

Photos by
Master Sgt. Matt Hecht
New Jersey National Guard
Public Affairs Office

New Jersey National Guard Soldiers from C Troop, 1st Squadron, 102nd Cavalry Regiment, New Jersey Army National Guard, performed tactical training at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., June 18, 2018. Above: 1st Squadron Soldiers move across a field under the cover of smoke. Right: Soldiers climb aboard a Light Medium Tactical Vehicle (LMTV) as they move on to the next portion of their training. Bottom right: U.S. Army 1st Lt. Robert Angelini, right, points out enemy locations to fellow Soldiers. Below: Cavalry Soldiers exit a LMTV after taking enemy fire during training.





Above: C Troop Soldiers provide cover as another Soldier prepares to take a prisoner. Top right: A New Jersey Army National Guard Soldier keeps his M4 carbine trained on a prisoner during an urban operations exercise. Right: A 102nd Cavalry scout sniper provides cover with his M110 semi-automatic sniper system. Below: 1st Squadron Soldiers secure the corner of a building as squads move from one building to the next.



TRAINING DAY: JULY 16

**PHOTOS BY
MASTER SGT. MATT HECHT
NEW JERSEY NATIONAL GUARD
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**

Above: U.S. Army UH-60L Black Hawk helicopters with the 1st Assault Helicopter Battalion, 150th Aviation Regiment, land to pick up Soldiers from Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry (Air Assault) at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., July 16, 2018, where they conducted day and night air assault training. Below: Bravo Company Soldiers move through the woods. Opposite page top: A 114th Infantry M249 gunner secures a building during urban operations training. Opposite page bottom: Air Assault Soldiers search a simulated enemy combatant.



from cabinet to fire

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Matt Hecht
New Jersey National Guard Public Affairs Office



Seven tons of potentially dangerous drugs are off the streets thanks to the New Jersey National Guard Counter Drug Task Force and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

It's all because of "Operation Take Back New Jersey," on Oct. 31, 2017, when 14,527 pounds of unused, unwanted, and expired medications were taken to the Essex County Resource Recovery Facility in Newark, N.J. where they were incinerated.

Since 2009, the program's goal has been to get dangerous prescription painkillers out of the household and to prevent teens from raiding medicine cabinets.

Operation Take Back New Jersey began with collection boxes at 185 locations throughout the state, mainly at police stations. Citizens were encouraged to stop by on Oct. 28 for National Prescription Drug Take Back Day and drop off their unwanted medications. From there, the drugs were gathered at collection points, and picked up by New Jersey National Guard Soldiers in tactical vehicles capable of handling heavy loads.

For Staff Sgt. Roger Galvez, a Counter Drug Task Force veteran, the call to service comes easy.

"We do this for the communities," said Galvez, who started out as a truck driver before finding his calling with the Task Force. "It's a great feeling knowing that by helping, we're potentially taking these drugs off the streets."

After collecting the boxes and bags of drugs, the National Guard Soldiers and DEA agents transported them to Essex County to be destroyed.

"Every year, since we've been doing the National Take back, the DEA and the National Guard have worked side-by-side with collection and transportation of the prescriptions," said DEA special agent Timothy McMahon. "The National Guard is a huge help in collecting a lot of pills in a short amount of time and then getting them to the destruction point."

Moving almost 15,000 pounds of drugs was worth all the effort, according to Sgt. 1st Class Jennifer Sbarro.

"Drugs are too readily available," said Sbarro, a New Jersey National Guard Soldier with the Counter Drug Task Force. "So many young people are, sad to say, dying, and it doesn't have to be that way."

The efforts of the program and other like it may have led to a 45 percent decline in the misuse of scripts among teenagers from 2011-2016 according to Federal statistics.

Top photo: U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Roger Galvez pulls a cart of prescription drugs out of the Bergen County Law and Public Safety Institute in Mahwah, N.J., Oct. 30, 2017. Middle photo: U.S. Army Spc. Anansa Parham dumps prescription drugs at the Covanta Essex Resource Recovery Facility. Bottom photo: Drug Enforcement Administration agents and New Jersey National Guard Soldiers dispose prescription drugs.

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Woolley
New Jersey National Guard Public Affairs Office

When three of the most powerful hurricanes on record battered the southern United States, the New Jersey National Guard came to the aid of its friends.



U.S. Army Pfc. Michaela Thomas, 253rd Transportation Company, New Jersey Army National Guard, climbs into a light medium tactical vehicle as more than 130 New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers at Cape May Courthouse, N.J., deploy to support the Florida National Guard in anticipation of Hurricane Irma Sept. 8, 2017. (New Jersey National Guard photo by Mark C. Olsen) Previous page: U.S. Air

Force Senior Airman Ryan O'Grady, a joint tactical air controller with the 227th Air Support Operations Squadron, New Jersey Air National Guard, loads his gear into a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Aug. 30, 2017, in preparation for a humanitarian assistance mission in response to Hurricane Harvey. (New Jersey Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Woolley)

Just as military first responders from other states came to New Jersey's aid after Superstorm Sandy, the Garden State's Soldiers and Airmen rolled out fast and deep after Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria struck in succession in the fall of 2017.

It began when Harvey battered Texas. Within a day, eight Soldiers and two Army Guard Black Hawk helicopters with the 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion and the Air Guard's 227th Air Support Operations Squadron, along with four Air Guard joint tactical air controllers with the 227th Air Support Operations Squadron were sent to help with the search and rescue operations in the Houston area.

Air Guard Master Sgt. Chris Donohue noted that despite the National Guard's frequent responses to natural disasters, many people associate the Guard with mobilizations to support combat commanders overseas.

"It's a rewarding mission to be able to help people in

America. People are used to seeing the military go overseas. Now people get to see their return on investment and all the good things the military can do here."

There was little letup after Harvey.

Less than two weeks later, Irma battered Florida and the Caribbean.

Before Hurricane Irma made landfall in Florida, more than 130 troops and 40 trucks from the 253rd Transportation Company were headed down Interstate 95 for the 1,000-mile journey to Florida.

Capt. Samuel Waltzer, the 253rd commander, said it was an honor for his Soldiers to put their training and experience to use.

"We have a number of Soldiers experienced with this kind of



U.S. Air Force Airmen with the 108th Security Forces Squadron, New Jersey Air National Guard, load their gear at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Sept. 14, 2017, to travel to the Virgin Islands in support of Hurricane Irma relief efforts. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Ross A. Whitley)

operation. It may have been why we got the call,” he said.

“I’m excited because these are the kinds of things we train to do,” said Spc. Airiell Jackson.

Just a few days later, 26 security forces Airmen from the 108th Wing headed to the Virgin Islands to provide backup to first responders who had been overwhelmed by the destruction left by two powerful hurricanes just days apart.

Many of the Airmen on the deployment are veterans of multiple overseas deployments and domestic operations in New Jersey to include hurricanes Irene and Sandy.

“These guys are pumped up and ready to go,” said Master Sgt. Santiago Tapia. “We deploy a lot, but deployments like this are special. We are going someplace where people need our help.”

Master Sgt. Sharif Hewlett said that all the best missions he’s been on in his 19 years in the Air Guard were

humanitarian-relief operations.

“This is something you always to want to be able to do – help people,” Hewlett said.

The final Hurricane, Maria landed on Sept. 16, 2017, and wreaked havoc across Puerto Rico.

Within days, the New Jersey National Guard was preparing to conduct its largest out-of-state humanitarian relief mission since Hurricane Katrina in 2005. In the end, more than 250 Soldiers and Airmen took part in the mission and were the operations backbone of the Joint Task Force.

Before they left, Spc. Stephanie Lopez, a communication specialist, said she was glad to be part of the mission.

“We’re going to help people who don’t have anything right now,” said Lopez, a senior at Montclair State University. “This is a great opportunity to make a difference.”



U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Christian V. Lawlor, pilots a 108th Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard, KC-135R Stratotanker on a mission to ferry relief supplies to Puerto Rico Nov. 8, 2017. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Woolley)



U.S. Army Soldiers with the 44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team secure supplies on a pallet prior to loading it at the National Guard Armory in Lawrenceville, N.J., to fly to Puerto Rico to provide support in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria Oct. 2, 2017. (New Jersey National Guard photo by Mark C. Olsen)

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A U.S. Air Force KC-135R Stratotanker from the New Jersey Air National Guard's 108th Wing sits on the flight line at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., June 22, 2017. The KC-135R is decorated in a special tiger configuration celebrating the 141st Air Refueling Squadron's 100th Anniversary. The 141st traces its tiger logo to Capt. Hobey Baker, a former 141st Aero Squadron Commander in World War I, who played hockey and football for the Princeton Tigers. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Matt Hecht)