GuARDIANS
Quarterly Magazine for the Pennsylvania National Guard – Fall 2007

ROLLIN’ ON

Jump Start
Find out how PA Guard helps as eyes and ears on border

Wish ‘Grant’-ed
Discover how wishes come true for boy colonel

Shining Diamonds
How the ANG celebrated their 60th Anniversary
We were there when you landed on the northern coast of France.

We were there when you returned to the Philippine shore.

We were there when you fought in Korea and Vietnam.

We were there when you rolled across the deserts of Iraq.

We were there then.

We will always be there.

Proudly serving those who serve.

1-800-MILITARY
(1-800-645-4827)
or your local GEICO office
This unofficial magazine is an authorized publication for members of the Pennsylvania National Guard. Contents of the magazine are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, Department of the Army and/or the Air Force or the Pennsylvania National Guard. The appearance of advertising in this publication does not constitute endorsement by the State of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania National Guard, DoD, AQP Publishing Inc., the Department of the Army and/or the Air Force or the publisher of this magazine of the firms, products or services advertised.

Pennsylvania Guardians magazine is published by the Pennsylvania National Guard to keep its members, the Guard command and public officials, better informed on the issues and events affecting the Pennsylvania National Guard.

Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Office of Public Affairs, JFHQ-PA. All photographs and graphic devices are copyrighted to the Pennsylvania National Guard, unless otherwise indicated.

Fall 2007 / GUARDIANS / 1
NEW ARMY UNIVERSAL PRINT
GORE-TEX® OUTERWEAR
BUILT TO ENDURE THE MOST BRUTAL CONDITIONS.

Propper™ now offers the official NSN issue Universal Camouflage 2nd Generation ECWCS Parka and Trousers made with GORE-TEX® fabric.

This parka and trouser combination is constructed of strong, durable and waterproof GORE-TEX® fabric. These garments offer the only n-IR image suppression technology which is durable for the life of the garment. These garments are windproof, breathable and have a moisture-wicking barrier for maximum comfort in even the harshest conditions. MADE IN USA

Orders can be placed directly through Propper International Sales or GSA.

For complete ordering information contact Propper International Sales or visit www.goremilitary.com.

GSA:
www.gsaadvantage.gov
GSA Contract No: GS-07F-0228M
Model No: F7462 (Parka)
Model No: F7262 (Trousers)
Final Roll Call

“These heroes are dead. They died for liberty – they died for us. They are at rest. They sleep in the land they made free, under the flag they rendered stainless, under the solemn pines, the sad hemlocks, the tearful willows and the embracing vines. They sleep beneath the shadows of the clouds, careless alike of sunshine or of storm, each in the windowless Place of Rest. Earth may run red with other wars - they are at peace. In the midst of battle, in the roar of conflict, they found the serenity of death. I have one sentiment for Soldiers living and dead: Cheers for the living; tears for the dead.”

– Robert G. Ingersoll

Sgt. 1st Class Sean Thomas, 33, of Howard, Pa., was serving with the 28th Division Support Command (DISCOM), Harrisburg, when he was killed in Baghdad’s Green Zone, Iraq on March 27, 2007. He was killed by a rocket attack in the secured area in the Iraqi capital city where the U.S. Embassy and the Iraq government and parliament are located. His dedication to his country is exemplified through his service record. After an eight-month deployment to Afghanistan in 2005, Thomas spent less than a year at home before volunteering to serve in Iraq. He is survived by his wife Carrie, infant daughter Alexa, his parents Daniel and Diana Thomas, brothers David and Danny, and sisters Mindy and Kelly. Thomas was posthumously promoted to master sergeant and awarded the Purple Heart and Combat Action Badge. Thomas is the 27th Pennsylvania National Guard soldier to be killed in action in the Global War on Terror.

Sgt. 1st Class Daniel A. Brozovich, 42, of Greenville, Pa., was serving with the 213th Air Defense Artillery, Spring City, when he was killed in Ashraf, Iraq, on October 18, 2006. He was the commander of an M-1117 armored security vehicle (ASV) and was on a multi-vehicle patrol when a large improvised explosive device detonated near the vehicle, killing him. This was Dan’s third deployment since 9/11. He was a warrior committed to preserving peace in Iraq and ensuring our safety. He is survived by his wife Mary, son Ryan and parents Anthony and Gloria Brozovich. He will posthumously receive the Purple Heart and the Combat Action Badge. Brozovich is the 26th Pennsylvania National Guard Soldier to be killed in action in the global war on terror.

FROM THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

Maj. Gen. Jessica L. Wright

September 1, 2007

Dear Fellow Guardmembers and Friends of the Pennsylvania Guard,

I am truly pleased to welcome you back to the pages of Guardians magazine. We’re glad to be back from a period of self-imposed hiatus, during which we sought to reshape the magazine in order to better serve you. We are certainly excited about our new “look,” but have not lost sight of the fact that what’s on the pages is what matters the most.

I hope you enjoy what we’ve got in store for you in this new issue, and look forward to your feedback.

Sincerely,

Jessica L. Wright, MG, PAARNG
The Adjutant General
Medical specialists from the 171st Air Refueling Wing and 111th Fighter Wing recently traveled to Panama to assist the medically underserved. More than 6,000 people were provided medical, dental or optometry support. The medical teams, joined by Col. Dr. Victor Onufrey from the Joint Force Headquarters (on right), worked in the communities of Valle Saron, Miramor and Chiriqui Grand.

Spc. Christopher Chadwick (left) talks to Sgt. Maj. Wade Heilman about the prior evening’s attempted border crossings along the Colorado River in Arizona. Read more about the Pennsylvania National Guard’s participation in Operation Jump Start on page 20.

Strykers hit the highway throughout the Commonwealth the last several weeks. As part of the 56th Stryker Brigade fielding, dozens of vehicles were driven from Fort Indiantown Gap to home station armories and readiness centers. For more on this please see page 24.

Editor’s note: Graphics represent just some of the recent PA Guard deployments worldwide.
Since July 2006, the Johnstown-based Det. 1, Company C 1-169th “Witchdoctors,” have been deployed to Kosovo. The unit has flown more than 1,000 hours on three airframes during its deployment. The unit will continue to provide a safe and secure environment for all of Kosovo until returning home to Pennsylvania later this year.

Members of the 111th Fighter Wing are back on the front lines in Iraq. Operating and maintaining the A-10 Thunderbolt II, the 111th has played a critical role in supporting coalition efforts in the region.

Staff Sgt. Don Baker learns the intricacies of weaving a Persian rug. Baker was part of the Pittsburgh-based 171st Air Refueling Wing’s recent deployment to Turkey. The unit sent nearly 400 Airmen from March-May to support military operations in the region.

Living up to the unit motto “Honor First,” 213th ASG had its Transfer of Authority ceremony July 25 in Iraq. The Soldiers of the 213th ASG are now fully mission focused and ready to serve the combat warriors.

Iraq
Headquarters 213th Area Support Group
Company C, 1-213th Air Defense Artillery
Company C, 131st Transportation
- 628th Finance Department
- 111th Fighter Wing
- 146th and 203rd Weather Flights

Afghanistan
55th Brigade Embedded Training Team

Kosovo
Det. 1, Company C
1-169th Medical Detachment
YOUR ROLE CHANGES
WITH EACH MISSION

SO DOES OURS

At DHS Technologies, we know how important the Guard is to our national security. That is why we offer products to fit all aspects of your mission.

Our DRASH Sheltering Systems have been forged in the harshest environments of Afghanistan and Iraq, while our Reeves Decontamination Systems have been used extensively in domestic mass casualty incidents.

Deployable within minutes, our products are rugged, reliable and versatile enough to accommodate all of your operational needs – whatever or wherever they might be.

DRASH

Reeves

EMS LLC

845.359.6066
drash@drash.com
www.drash.com

800.328.5563
info@ReevesEMS.com
www.ReevesEMS.com

DHS-TECHNOLOGIES, LLC

SHELTER SOLUTIONS FOR THE MILITARY AND HOMELAND SECURITY
The first-ever Pennsylvania National Guard Combined Joint Leadership Workshop was held April 27-29, at the Wyndham Hotel in Gettysburg. The Pennsylvania National Guard Associations (PNGAS) was the co-sponsor of the workshop.

In recent years, it has become common for Guard leaders, both officers and noncommissioned officers, to attend a number of statewide conferences and meetings in the spring, including the PNGAS Annual Conference and many others. Maj. Gen. Jessica Wright, the adjutant general, decided to combine these conferences into a single event spanning three days, and she asked PNGAS to help make arrangements.

PNGAS had already decided to hold its 23rd Annual Conference at the Wyndham in Gettysburg, so they began working on a much more inclusive event combining elements of leadership, safety, personnel and other conferences with the PNGAS conference.

Wright named Col. Jeff Jahnke as project officer. PNGAS coordination was provided by a team headed by PNGAS chairman Maj. Tim Gwinn and retired Chief Master Sgt. Karl Spohn, as well as executive director Dean Oswald and Dennis Guise.

Mountain View Golf Course was the site of the PNGAS annual golf tournament, which was held April 26. More than 90 golfers teed off in a four-person scramble event with a shotgun start. Prizes were provided by a number of corporate sponsors and supporters of the event.

The winning foursome included Col. Joe Laneski, Chief Master Sgt. Duke Munford, Senior Master Sgt. George Vasiloff and Lt. Col. Terry Robinson. A great time was had by all participants.

Nearly 450 workshop participants attended the opening session April 27 at the hotel. After welcoming remarks from the adjutant general and state representative Dan Moul, whose district includes the Gettysburg area, Navy Cmdr. Scott Waddle presented the keynote address titled “Failure is not final.”

Waddle was the commander of the USS Greenville, which in February 2001 collided with a Japanese fishing boat off Hawaii while performing an emergency surface maneuver during a VIP training cruise.

Gov. Ed Rendell delivered a speech after lunch and spoke of his support for the National Guard. He emphasized the efforts to save Willow Grove and the 111th Fighter Wing, and his “Support our Troops” legislative initiatives. Rendell praised the Guard’s response to state emergencies, including the floods in June 2006, and said he was proud to serve as our commander in chief.

PNGAS sponsored the dinner on April 27. The event was kicked off by a reception in the exhibit area where our corporate sponsors and supporters mounted exhibits of interest.

The president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, surprised and delighted the more than 400 dinner guests by making a surprise guest appearance. Lincoln told stories about the Civil War, General Grant, whose birthday was April 27, and Gettysburg. Lincoln concluded his remarks with a rousing rendition of the Gettysburg Address.

The president’s remarks about the devotion and accomplishments of the brave Soldiers who fought at Gettysburg led into a brief ceremony of remembrance for the honored dead of the Pennsylvania National Guard who have died in Operation Iraqi Freedom and the global war on terror since Sept. 11, 2001.

After dinner, Pennsylvania Superior Court Judge, Air Force Reserve Col. Seamus McCaffery, regaled the audience with a presentation about his military and judicial service.

State Sen. Bob Robbins kicked off the workshop session April 28, with brief remarks about his support for the Guard, the importance of our Washington congressional visit and the work of the General Assembly.

Robbins was followed by Lt. Gen. Craig McKinley, director of the Air National Guard, who briefed attendees on the major issues confronting the Guard today at home and abroad, including the coming “reset” of the Air National Guard.
Pennsylvania National Guard Combined Joint Leadership Workshop (Continued from page 7)

The morning events also included the business meetings of PNGAS, the National Guard Association of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania National Guard Enlisted Association, which included the adoption of resolutions of importance to the Pennsylvania National Guard.

The legislative director of the National Guard Association of the United States, Brig. Gen. Richard Green, briefed the NGAPA business meeting on pending federal legislation. The PNGEA meeting was one of the best attended and most interesting ever, according to PNGEA Chairman Karl Spohn.

In addition to the workshop sessions, spouses and guests went to the historic Dobbin House in Gettysburg for breakfast and a program on the impacts of the Civil War. After the program, spouses visited the Gettysburg Village outlets, where a greyhound parade was underway, as well as other shops and attractions around town.

The afternoon was focused on the history, heritage and heroes of the PNGAS, as more than 350 workshop attendees loaded on buses for a tour of the Gettysburg Battlefield with licensed battlefield guides.

The Battle of Gettysburg was the largest military engagement ever on the North American continent, and it proved to be the pivotal battle of the Civil War in the east. More than 150,000 Soldiers from the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia clashed at Gettysburg July 1-3, 1863. There were 51,000 casualties (killed, wounded, captured or missing), of which about 8,000 died during the battle.

During the evening, nearly 160 workshop attendees went on Gettysburg Ghost tours. From spooky basements to historic streetscapes, guides described the many ghost stories that surround the Gettysburg battlefield and the town of Gettysburg. No one reported seeing a ghost, but there were some strange photographs produced during the tours.

The final day of the conference got off to a reverent start with a nondenominational worship service conducted by Chaplain Lt. Col. Doug Etter, with musical assistance from Staff Sgt. Valerie Moyer and retired Brig. Gen. Dean Oswald.

Then it was back to business with command briefings led by the adjutant general and the senior leaders (Army and Air) of the Pennsylvania National Guard.

The workshop culminated with remarks by Lt. Gen. Russel Honore, commanding general of First U.S. Army. Honore, who gained national prominence for his leadership as commander of Task Force Katrina in response to the 2005 disaster, spoke about the issues confronting the Army and the Army National Guard in his typical no-holds-barred style. It was a great finish to a great conference. ☞
General French appointed as PEMA head


At PEMA, French will replace Brig. Gen. James Joseph, who will become the full-time deputy commanding general, 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania Army National Guard.

“The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency is our commonwealth’s first responder in times of crisis and I am confident Rob French will continue to enhance the agency’s outstanding ability to protect and serve our 12.4 million citizens,” said Rendell. “I also thank Jim Joseph for his leadership at PEMA and wish him well in his important new role.”

Prior to becoming deputy adjutant general, Gen. French served as chief of staff of Headquarters State Area Command. In this position, he coordinated staff and command actions at the state headquarters, as well as served as liaison between the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, the Governor’s Office and other state and federal agencies.

Seven inducted into Hall of Fame

Seven decorated Pennsylvania veterans were inducted into the Pennsylvania Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Home Hall of Fame, June 14, during a ceremony at the home in Erie.

“It is an honor to recognize a group of veterans whose collective accomplishments are staggering in both their diversity and longevity,” said Nancy Stevenson, commandant of the home. “Collectively, they fought abroad in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. When their service was done, they distinguished themselves further as several of the inductees advocated on behalf of veterans. We are proud to induct them into our Hall of Fame.”


Thomas J. Ridge, governor of Pennsylvania from 1995 to 2001, was a staff sergeant with Company B, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade, and was deployed to Vietnam from 1969 to 1970. In 1982, he became the first enlisted Vietnam combat veteran elected to the U.S. Congress. He was later elected governor of Pennsylvania and is credited with numerous initiatives that benefited veterans. In fall 2001, he accepted an appointment from President George W. Bush to be the first director of the Office of Homeland Security. He became a cabinet member in 2003, when his title was upgraded to Secretary of Homeland Security. He resigned his post in 2005.

Guard assists in bridge repair project

Pennsylvania National Guard members recently completed a June mission in which they airlifted materials to build two bridges in Pennsylvania’s largest state forest, located in a remote area near Renovo, Clinton County.

Col. Steven Mahoney and Chief Warrant Officer Jeffrey Reep piloted the CH-47 Chinook helicopter that transported the materials June 6 from the landing zone in the Sproul State Forest to two nearby areas where bridges were later built on location.

The Huff Run Bridge was built on the Garby Trail and the Middle Branch One Bridge was built on the 50-mile Chuck Kyper Trail.

Without the assistance of the National Guard, the remote location of the bridges would have required forestry workers to carry hundreds of pounds of materials to the site, said Ted Ligenza, a Pennsylvania Forestry Bureau employee.

“I can’t say enough to thank you guys for doing this,” Ligenza said of the National Guard.

Unmanned Aircraft System launches at Gap

The Pennsylvania National Guard recently began conducting test flights of the Shadow 200 Unmanned Aircraft System at Fort Indiantown Gap.

The 11-foot-long aircraft can reach altitudes of up to 19,000 feet and monitor activities 3 miles away. The Pennsylvania National Guard was the first in the nation to field an unmanned aircraft system. Maryland, California and Minnesota also have the UAS.

Members of the York-based Troop D, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry, prepared the UAS for the training exercise.
**SOLDIERS in any language**

*Pennsylvania National Guard lends expertise in hope*

*By 1st Lt. Jay Ostrich*

**A song of hope**

Hand-in-hand, a united chain of freedom and humanity
2 million people strong stretched out across the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The cold and huddled masses of those who yearned and dared to be free lifted their voices to sing illegal songs in defiance of their Soviet oppressors. Their “Singing Revolution” of 1989 would be a mighty chorus of change leading to independence and partnership with free nations.

Today, the concrete and steel reminders of the less than subtle Iron Curtain are few and far between as Klaipeda, Lithuania, welcomed more than 1,500 troops from 10 free nations to Amber Hope 2007 held June 17 through July 1. The biennial exercise aims to improve interoperability in the event of a global or local crisis for NATO and Partnership for Peace countries.

Through the National Guard’s State Partnership Program, members of the Pennsylvania National Guard not only extended their 13-year relationship with Lithuania, they also found an opportunity to partner for peace, while better preparing their allies for war.

“This exercise allows us to work side-by-side with our military counterparts from around the world,” said Maj. Ian Ranberg, who is serving as chief of the mobile civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) team for the Lithuanian Battalion.
“We definitely have been able to lend the expertise we have gained from our training as Pennsylvania National Guard members to this multinational training exercise. It’s an experience we will never forget.”

**Great training, always raining**

For Maj. Ranberg and his CIMIC team, Amber Hope would impose many challenges and little rest. Hundreds of Lithuanian soldiers would provoke them, dressed as angry role-playing protesters in around-the-clock scenarios aimed at duplicating hot spots from around the globe.

“The Lithuanians are preparing to go to Afghanistan. They are doing tough, realistic training and it shows,” said Ranberg.

Violent funeral protests, riot control, children with weapons and roadside bombs became the norm for the teams who battled steady rain and summer temperatures falling into the low 40s.

“My day consisted of helping cold, tired and hungry refugees, translating for drunken Russians nationals who were lost, and meeting with local officials who gave us an IED as a gift,” said Ranberg, a Desert Storm vet and chemist who studied Russian in college. “I wouldn’t say it was a great day, but it was a great training day.”

**Brothers in any language**

But the seemingly impossible barriers created by language were never enough to derail the commonalities fused by the brotherhood of soldiers. One of those bonds was often humor.

“I’ve learned a lot in these past two weeks,” said Ranberg. “In fact, just this morning, a British officer informed me that I am not, in fact, fluent in English. I do however speak American very well.”

Good humor and great attitudes were not only found within English speaking circles though. For Lithuanian Infantry Sgt. Sergei Vladimirov, a mere gesture of friendship would transcend his inability to translate his feelings.

Vladimirov, upon seeing an American uniform from the Pennsylvania National Guard, rushed over to greet his fellow soldier. Not being able to speak English would prove only temporarily frustrating.

Searching for words in Lithuanian, then Russian, he would finally rely on a more tried and true gesture. He embraced his surprised American colleague in a mighty hug then found the only word of English he knew.

“Brother,” Vladimirov exclaimed as he tore off his Velcro name tape and unit patch and gave it to the soldier as a gesture of respect and friendship. That, the Guardsmen understood very well.

**Read, white and blue**

For then 8-year-old Liivi Parrest, who was born in Estonia behind the oppressive Iron Curtain, thoughts of freedom were as much a fantasy as a Hollywood movie. But unlike millions who only saw what strict propagandists wanted people to see, Liivi was awakened by a vision of hope manifested in a few white pieces of paper.

On a recent trip, her father had squirreled away a blue covered atlas, which he fervently kept hidden in fear its discovery would bring severe punishment and retribution. Proudly opening up the page to Europe, he pointed to pictures, the likes of which she had never seen. Rather than showing a giant red mass like the map she was issued in school, his fingertip gently pointed to new boundaries and a sentence written in English.

According to the atlas, “The annexation of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in 1940 by the Soviet Union has never been officially recognized by the United States government.”

“That’s when I found out that the emotion ‘pride’ lives in your chest – not in your head nor stomach nor anywhere else, but the chest – because that’s where I felt this very strong and powerful feeling,” said Parrest, 24, who, as a public affairs specialist, ensures accurate information is delivered to a free press in her native Estonia.

Because of this pride, Parrest is not bashful in giving thanks to the United States government and people for showing her the realities and possibilities of freedom.

“Americans knew we had been treated unfairly,” said Parrest with a surprising smile. “They were not ashamed, scared or too polite to write it down and print it in a very big book.”

In August 1991, Estonia declared its independence and the last Russian troops left their country in 1994. Today, the Baltic countries of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia enjoy freedom and open relations with the United States, to include the deployment of troops in the global war on terror.

_Pfc. Matt Jones contributed to this article._
Government Rates Available

- 8 Miles to Fort Indiantown Gap
- 80 Spacious Guest Rooms
- Complimentary Comfort Sunshine Breakfast
- Complimentary High-Speed Internet Access
- Heated Indoor Pool
- Game Room and Fitness Center
- Jacuzzi Suites Available
- In-Room Microwave and Refrigerator
- Free Local Calls

We’ll See You There

- 13 Miles to Fort Indiantown Gap
- 76 Spacious Guest Rooms and Suites
- Complimentary Express Start Breakfast
- Complimentary High-Speed Internet
- Seasonal Outdoor Pool
- 24-Hour Business Center
- Fitness Center Privileges at Local Club
- Complimentary USA Today
- Meeting Facilities
- Jacuzzi Suites Available
- In-Room Microwaves and Refrigerators

Stay Smart™
Three years ago, the weather, terrain and local hospitality couldn’t have presented a more startling contrast. It was exceptionally hot and not every person they met in the sands of Iraq’s Sunni Triangle was particularly friendly to these Airmen from the 193rd Special Operations Wing, Middletown, Pa.

But on a frigid afternoon, surrounded by beautifully manicured grass, more than 38,000 rabid Pittsburgh Pirates fans gave Senior Master Sgt. Don Koch and Tech. Sgt. Jeff Myers the warmest reception of their lives.

As the first recipients of the Purple Heart in Pennsylvania Air National Guard history, the duo was honored by throwing out the ceremonial opening day first pitch and catch, April 9. Their participation marked the beginning of a statewide effort, called “Operation Shining Diamond,” to celebrate the Air National Guard’s 60th anniversary at professional baseball parks throughout the commonwealth. The 111th Fighter Wing, Willow Grove, Pa., also provided a three-ship, A-10 flyover during the national anthem.

Throughout a rousing and lengthy standing ovation, fans gave thanks to these Airmen who were injured in an improvised explosive device attack, which rendered both with extensive shrapnel wounds outside Mosul, Iraq.

“It gave me a big chill to be in front of that crowd,” said Myers, who later received a second Purple Heart and a Bronze Star after returning to duty in Iraq. “I know they appreciate what Airmen do and the sacrifices we make to ensure freedom and our way of life.”

With more than 50 years of combined service to their commonwealth and country, the team supplied convoy security as gunners with the 1058th Air Expeditionary Force Transportation Company in 2004. Their seven-man team ran convoys for the U.S. Army’s First Infantry Division throughout some of the most austere and hostile regions.

But the pair weren’t the only people being recognized for more than a half-century of dedication. Pittsburgh native John Wray, a Pirates fan who has logged in 50 straight opening day events, couldn’t help but give a personal salute for their efforts. For the first catch, he loaned Koch the very glove he wore to his first opening day game when he was just six years old.

“These guys are really unbelievable heroes,” said Wray, who works as a fundraiser for a national church organization. “It couldn’t be a greater honor to me than to have these servicemen use this glove and go make history.”

With a steely eyed gaze and perfect bearing, Myers wound up and delivered an inside strike into the history books and a well-weathered glove.

“History matters, because it means that what we did as a team has touched someone’s life and hopefully made it a little better,” said Myers. “We never planned on making history, we just wanted to make a difference.”

Judging by the inundation of applause, high fives and thanks given the Airmen here, they have done just that.
A raw recruit

As the dark brim of a drill sergeant’s hat peered menacingly around the corner, the recruit’s shoulders stiffened, eyes widened and watered ever so slightly as a look of obvious fear came across his face.

Looking upon his newly issued army combat uniform, it was obvious there must be more to the story of this raw, if not diminutive recruit standing at attention in the hallway. So easy it would be to dismiss his 4-ft. frame, fragile build and wire-rimmed glasses as anything other than a charade.

Beside him stood much older young men and women who were motivated, fit and prepared for shipment to basic military training. Undeterred by the contrast, the heart and dream of a young man who fought all his life to get here beat steadily beneath the camouflage. As if his life depended on it, he would stand determined not to give up.

“Why are we looking around at the position of attention?” shouted Drill Sgt. Andrew Frengel, a drill instructor for the 166th Regiment of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard.

Frengel shouted, “In cadence!”

All the recruits dropped to the cold hallway floor and began to chant.

“First to fight, last to fall….,” they shouted in unison as their physical training started.

And so it was, Grant Brackner, a 12-year-old West Jordan, Utah, boy with cystic fibrosis, dropped to the floor and knocked out flutter kicks just like any other recruit.

As he rose to his feet, he would realize that his Make-A-Wish Foundation dream of becoming a Soldier was starting to come true.

“I can’t even believe I did all they did,” said a smiling Grant, who had dreamed about being a Soldier since he was 4 years old. “It just makes me very happy.”

Wishing upon stars and bars

Times of happiness have sometimes been few and far between for Grant and his family, said his father Dan Brackner, who helps lead his son through three to five hours of therapy every day.

According to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Web site, cystic fibrosis is a life-threatening disease causing mucus to build up and clog some of the organs in the body, particularly in the lungs and pancreas. When mucus clogs the lungs, it can make breathing very difficult and ultimately damages the lungs.

“When we first found out it was quite a shock, because until recently, most children (with cystic fibrosis) did not live past their teens,” said Mr. Brackner.

Though Grant has done exceptionally well in his therapy, that is the reason the Make-A-Wish Foundation stepped in to honor Grant’s wish, said Kim Ferrere,
regional assistant of their York office.

Since 1980, the Make-A-Wish Foundation has enriched the lives of children with life-threatening medical conditions through its wish-granting network. The Foundation’s mission seeks to make life-changing impact on children, families and entire communities.

“He told me once that if he has to die young, he wanted to die for a reason,” said Emily Brackner, Grant’s mother.

But far from teaching Grant how to die, Soldiers and Airmen of the Pennsylvania National Guard taught him more about how to live.

Throughout his two-day stay at Fort Indiantown Gap, Nov. 16-17, Grant would undergo basic training, graduate, be promoted to the honorary rank of colonel and tour some of the most exciting and technologically advanced equipment the National Guard had to offer.

**Hands on, hearts open**

“He’s an inspiration to all of us,” said Heck. “We wanted to do anything to put a smile on his face and he ended up teaching us to appreciate living life and having fun.”

Heck was not alone as Grant would continue to touch the hearts of Soldiers and Airmen here throughout his tour.

“We really appreciate that we had this opportunity,” said Sgt. Dwayne D. Murphy, training technician for the simulator. “It makes me feel good, where words really can’t explain what this means.”

The opportunities were made possible by the Guard’s Family Action Center staff who worked diligently to prepare a schedule to exceed all of Grant’s expectations.

“The service members who participated in this event were tremendous,” said Janet R. Marquis, state youth coordinator for the Pennsylvania National Guard. “Everybody put down the issue of rank and importance and put Grant’s enjoyment at the top of the day’s agenda.”

(Continued on page 17)
Career Training Benefits!

Use 100% Tuition Assistance to pay for your Allied Schools’ career training and draw from your GI Bill benefits too!

High Income Career Training in:
Real Estate, Medical, Business.

- Nationally Accredited Career Training
- Over 20 Online Training Programs
- LIVE Student Support & Laptop Included
- Serving All Branches Of The Military

CALL TODAY
for a FREE Career Packet.
888-822-2928

www.Education4Military.com
Marquis said this united effort was one of the greatest projects in her 26-year career in working with kids. "I saw full bird colonels salute him and call him Sir," said Marquis. "I saw majors get on their knees to speak to him. I saw generals take time from their day to give him their attention. The entire two-day mission was a huge success. This was one of the largest contributions to a single child that I’ve ever had the pleasure to participate in. Both professionally and personally, I was humbled, honored and proud to be a part of this project. It will live in my mind for the rest of my life."

A legacy of hope

As the sun slowly started its journey down the mountains of Bollen Range, home of the 148th Air Support Operations Squadron, Pennsylvania Air National Guard, Airmen snapped to attention and rendered a salute for the young colonel. After welcoming him to the facility, Airmen showed Grant the wonders of night vision goggles and navigation techniques used to succeed in their new tactical air control party mission meant to support the 56th Stryker Brigade of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard.

Lurking in the background though was a 90-foot observation tower – a climbing challenge for the fit, let alone an ailing child who had just completed a whirlwind two-day tour. But since sorties had been scrubbed for the day, climbing was rendered prohibitive and unnecessary.

Today was to be different, though. It was Grant’s day after all and word was an A-10 Warthog just happened to be in the area. Without hesitation, Grant bolted for the tower as the sounds of an aircraft could be heard in the distance.

Within scant minutes, Maj. Terry Koudelka, unit commander, and Grant ascended the tower in order to guide the incoming pilot. "Tell the pilot who you are," said Koudelka, handing him the tower microphone. "This is Colonel Grant Brackner," said an out-of-breath Grant, who couldn’t hold back a radiant smile. "Nice to meet you, sir, now get ready to wave," said the pilot before swinging by the tower at more than 300 nautical miles per hour and tipping his wings in respect for Grant. "That was just sweet," said Grant.

On the ground, Grant’s parents stood in wonder of what they had just witnessed. "I never thought he would get up that tower," said Mr. Brackner. "At home, he never seems to have the energy and here he has really shown us what he is made of. These are the kind of memories that will help him keep hanging in the fight." "He proved to us that he really could do it," said Mrs. Brackner of Grant’s will to fight. "This proves that he can do it again."

With a duffel bag of goodies, memories and hopes, Grant made his way off post and onto the battlefield of his life. With his wish come true thanks to the Pennsylvania National Guard, he marches off to be the first to fight and the last to fall.
Guard facilities to get face lift

By Kevin Cramsey, Information Specialist, DMVA

It’s a face-lift that would make Joan Rivers envious.

More than just a nip here and a tuck there, a cosmetic makeover of epic proportions is underway for Pennsylvania National Guard facilities.

Buildings, that in some cases date back to World War II and earlier, are being systematically replaced with brand spanking new, state-of-the-art structures.

Mark Austin, director of facilities and engineering for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, said the hectic pace that is being set was a major reason he accepted his new position last year.

“We’re doing more projects in the next five years,” said Austin, “than we’ve done in the last 50 years.”

A ceremony held last spring to mark the start of construction on a new $20 million readiness center and field maintenance shop in the Crawford County town of Cambridge Springs also served as the symbolic kickoff of the Guard’s $300 million military construction program tied to its transformation to a Stryker Brigade.

In the next two years alone, DMVA plans to build 10 new readiness centers and six new maintenance facilities. In addition, 11 existing armories will be transformed through extensive alterations, additions and upgrades.

The shortlist of readiness center projects slated for either later this or next year will occur in Bradford, Easton, Punxsutawney, Reading, Lewistown, Elizabethtown, Chambersburg, Butler and Carlisle.

While the transformation to Stryker is the driving force behind much of the activity, non-Stryker projects are also flourishing. These include the construction of three joint armed forces reserve facilities (Columbia/Montour County, Scranton and Williamsport) between the Guard and the U.S. Army Reserves, as well as new projects for the Pennsylvania Air National Guard.

One of the Air Guard projects already in the works is a new training facility in State College for the 112th Air Operations Squadron.

With more than 22,000 sq. ft. and a 1,900 sq. ft. battle laboratory that will stand 20 feet high, this state-of-the-art facility will be located on the grounds of the University Park Airport. It is expected to be ready for occupancy in late 2008 or early 2009.

“This is the first time they will have a facility designed for their high-tech mission instead of being a forced fit,” said Capt. Joel Sattazahn, base civil engineer for the 193rd Regional Support Group.

In an interesting twist, the squadron’s current home in State College will be renovated and turned over to an Army Guard unit currently housed at Bellefonte.

“This swap allows the Army Stryker units to occupy existing facilities that are appropriate for their mission, so we are saving taxpayer money,” said Lt. Col. John Buffington, supervisory civil engineer for DMVA.

Another exciting Air Guard project is at Fort Indiantown Gap, where a new Tactical Air Control Party is planned in Area 1 for the 148th Air Support Operations Squadron. An 18,000 sq. ft. facility will be designed specifically for the 148th’s new mission of providing Stryker air support.
Air projects also waiting in the wings for Area 1 include a 22,500-sq.-ft. Air National Guard Operations and Training Facility, which will allow for the replacement of five obsolete World War II-era buildings; and a new Air National Guard Troop Camp that will provide billeting for more than 80 military personnel attending training on post.

“All of these projects are really about improving quality of life and mission effectiveness,” said Sattazahn.

On the Army side, no less than a dozen projects totaling nearly $70 million are planned for Fort Indiantown Gap. The various ranges and training facilities are all intended to support the 56th Stryker Brigade and other units training at the post.

“These are exciting times for Fort Indiantown Gap,” said Col. Robert Hodgson, garrison commander. “But what’s even more important is that we will now be able to offer state-of-the-art training to all the Soldiers who are preparing to deploy to defend our country.”

Two other major priorities for DMVA involve a proposed Combined Surface Maintenance Facility at the Pittsburgh International Airport and a joint interagency complex for the Willow Grove Naval Air Station, the current home of the Air Guard’s 111th Fighter Wing. Willow Grove has been a subject of intense political debate ever since the Base Realignment and Closure Commission targeted it for closure several years ago.

Governor Ed Rendell and DMVA envision the facility as an interagency hub for homeland security and emergency preparedness missions. There is also interest in constructing a readiness center at Willow Grove for the Stryker Brigade, officials said.

“There are a wide range of possibilities and opportunities,” said Buffington, “including some new construction.”

The proposed Surface Maintenance Facility, which could be as large as 180,000 sq. ft., is intended to provide facilities for the administrative, supply and maintenance needs of the Guard’s entire western Pennsylvania ground vehicle fleet. The building will allow the Guard to close several inadequate facilities.

With so many long-considered projects coming to fruition and still others being planned, the pace in the engineering offices for DMVA and the Guard is hitting a peak.

Said Buffington, “I don’t see how it could get any busier.”
YUMA, Ariz. – The last time Pennsylvania Guard members manned outposts in this desert landscape, they were trying to stop Poncho Villa from crossing the border and raising havoc with civilians.

Nine decades later, Keystone Soldiers and Airmen have taken on a mission with many similarities: Stop illegal border crossings and the contraband associated with it.

Directed by President Bush, Operation Jump Start is the name given to the deployment of 6,000 U.S. National Guard troops along the 1,300 mile U.S.-Mexico border.

To date, hundreds of Pennsylvania Army and Air personnel have supported different missions, but the bulk of the force worked in Yuma, monitoring the border.

Soldiers and Airmen work in small four-man units called entry identification teams. Guard personnel at the EITs are there to observe and report suspicious activity to the Border Patrol.

The Guard members refer to their duties as working “on point.” The teams are equipped with an array of night vision equipment, radios and plenty of water to stave off the Arizona heat, which often pushes temperatures into triple digits.

The heat is not news to Sgt. 1st Class Bruce Thomas. As he takes a break from his watch, Thomas peels back his Kevlar vest and the steam rises off his chest. An employee with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation who is assigned to the Joint Force Headquarters, Thomas leads a team of three other Soldiers at Site 15.

“This is a unique opportunity for me to help out with this important mission,” said Thomas, who finds many similarities between supervising 30 field personnel at PennDOT and leading Soldiers in performance of daily tasks.

“In many ways, I am a platoon sergeant with both jobs,” joked Thomas, who has been with PennDOT for 33 years and the National Guard for 23 years.

In Yuma, the border is defined by the Colorado River, but from their position high on a dirt road above a levee, it’s impossible for Guard members to see the river through the scrub brush and trees.

“Some of these people crossing are just looking for a better way of life,” said Thomas. “The problem is, others are criminals, drug dealers or even murderers. We can’t tell the difference.”

According the Border Patrol officials, about 10 percent of those apprehended have some type of criminal record.

Yuma was one of the busiest areas for illegal border crossings. But since the deployment of the National Guard, the activity has dropped significantly.

“This is an important mission and we appreciate the work the Guard is doing,” said Agent Lloyd Easterling, Yuma sector Border Patrol spokesman. “They are making a difference.”

Border crossings are down 67 percent from last year, largely due to Operation Jump Start and the hiring of new border agents, added Easterling, The Yuma sector arrested 5,362 individuals in January and 14,681 since last October – the start of the federal fiscal year.

The numbers matter little to Thomas and his team as they diligently watch for activity. With the sun starting to set, binoculars are swapped for night vision goggles. Illegal crossings often spike in the late evening hours.

As he scans the scrub brush for any activity, Thomas laments that there is probably no easy answer to this problem. But he remains focused on what he is here to do.

“I can’t get caught up in all the politics with this issue,” he said. “I am here to do one thing: Monitor the border for illegal crossings.”
NOGALES, Ariz. – While the main focus of Operation Jump Start is guarding the U.S./Mexico border, hundreds of Guard personnel support dozens of other missions to complement the effort.

From monitoring the numbers of personnel and resources, to assisting Border Patrol agents with processing paperwork, there is a unified effort to stop the flow of illegal immigrants into the country.

Pennsylvania Air Guard engineers recently supported this effort by tackling several complex and challenging projects in Nogales, Ariz. With the RED HORSE unit as lead, Prime BEEF engineers from the 193rd Special Operations Wing and 111th Fighter Wing also participated, working side-by-side in the desert landscape.

Located 70 miles south of Tucson, Nogales has a reputation as a tough border town. For combat hardened Air Guard engineers, however, this desert site was a respite from recent deployments to Iraq.

“Most of the guys have said that as long as we are not getting shot at, it’s a good mission,” said Capt. Eric Mannion, deployment commander.

Sixty engineers rebuilt several miles of dangerous road, installed utility poles, transformers and lights and rebuilt portions of border fence.

The three-phased, six-week mission was called Operation Diamondback, and is a subset of Operation Jump Start. “It’s rare that we have the opportunity to work on projects in an environment like this,” said Mannion, adding that the steep inclines provide unique challenges, and the projects themselves, including installing utility poles and moving hundreds of tons of dirt, is work they rarely get to perform.

For the road-building efforts, steep, treacherous slopes were carved into gently rolling hills with some of the largest graders in the country. The newly built inclines afford safe passage to Border Patrol agents and their four-wheel-drive vehicles. More than 100,000 cubic yards of dirt were moved – enough to fill a city block 30-feet deep, according to the engineers.

“This was a great project, and it’s the first time many of us have had the chance to be with the civil engineers from the other wings,” said Master Sgt. Chip Koons, structures non-commissioned officer in charge. “We really made a difference here in Nogales. It was an honor to do this mission.”

Perched 30-feet high in a bucket truck on a steep Nogales hillside, Tech. Sgt. Wilmer Bucher (left), and Senior Airman Eric Altice, install transformers for a lighting project. The Airmen were part of Operation Diamondback, assisting the U.S. Border Patrol with engineering projects along the Arizona/Mexico border.
The Southeastern Veterans Center (SEVC), situated on 70 beautiful acres in northern Chester County alongside the meandering Schuylkill River, is a 15-minute drive from Valley Forge and a 45-minute drive from Philadelphia.

The site has housed a state facility since November 1908. In the beginning, it was a school and hospital, known as Pennhurst, operated by the Department of Public Welfare for persons with developmental disabilities, with 40 buildings spread over 1,200 acres.

As institutional care was replaced by community care, the need for the Pennhurst facility declined, and the Department of Military Affairs took possession of 120 acres of the facility in December 1986.

That followed a search by a special selection committee that began in November 1983, for a site for a third veteran’s home. At the time, there was only the Erie Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Home and the Hollidaysburg Veterans Home. Spring City was designated as the new site on Jan. 3, 1985.

SEVC accommodates 304 veterans and their eligible spouses in three main units: 112 in the personal care/domiciliary unit, 160 in the nursing care unit and 32 in the dementia unit.

Additional services of a specialized nature, such as mental health services, podiatry and speech/audiology therapy, are provided as necessary to maintain a resident’s quality of life. All residents receive medical, clinical and nursing services; drug and nutritional therapy; rehabilitative services, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy and recreational therapy; dental services; social services; laundry; transportation; housekeeping; maintenance; security; business management; and related services.

Some of the homes’ special features include a wood shop, ceramics shop, chapel, canteen, base ball field, picnic area, gazebo and library.

The homes strives to meet the diverse needs of Pennsylvania’s veterans and their spouses by offering comprehensive medical care, therapeutic and recreational activities, nutritional services, and administrative programs that provide exemplary care for all residents.

A recent Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) customer satisfaction survey of 1,047 immediate family members of residents of the department’s six veterans homes showed that the homes scored higher in customer satisfaction than a similar national customer satisfaction survey regarding nursing homes in the private sector.

In both the DMVA and national survey, people were asked about various aspects of the nursing home environment – from the quality of the nursing care to the food being served there. Two key questions asked respondents in both surveys to rate the overall quality of their nursing home care in terms of their overall satisfaction and if they would recommend it to others.

SEVC scored 85 percent in overall customer satisfaction as compared to 83 percent in the national survey. Additionally, 85 percent of the families surveyed said they would recommend SEVC to someone else as compared to 82 percent of respondents in the national survey.

Comments from SEVC family members included:

“My brother, an Alzheimer’s patient, is treated with respect, kindness and efficiency. Bless you for all the work you do!”

“Love and compassion at SEVC is so obvious. I too am always greeted by such dedicated caretakers that my heart wells with knowing that my brother can live with such dignity. We are blessed.”

“My brother would not be here today if it wasn’t for the excellent care that he is getting at the Southeastern Veterans Center.”

“Our number one goal has always been to help our residents maintain the highest possible quality of life in a comforting and comfortable environment,” said Brig. Gen. Cecil Hengeveld, the state’s deputy adjutant general for veterans affairs. “Our veterans home staff takes their job very seriously and their commitment to the commonwealth’s veterans is reflected in this outstanding level of customer satisfaction.”

For more information about veterans home eligibility, volunteer opportunities or employment at a veterans home, visit the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Web site at www.dmva.state.pa.us.
Kathleen Bote, a Navy veteran and resident of the Southeastern Veterans Center since April 2001, leads an active and independent life despite eight leg operations and reliance on a wheeled walker.

“I like to keep busy and the staff gives me projects all of the time, such as filing and organizing.”

Although she can be found most often working on a project in the wood shop, she also enjoys bingo, ceramics, painting, arts and crafts projects and going on various trips offered by the home.

“This is my home,” states Bote who is one of only 22 females at the center. “It’s a place filled with people who have similar backgrounds and I really enjoy talking to the men.”

The daughter of a Navy veteran and a state worker, Bote says her decision to join the Navy was influenced by the famous words of President John F. Kennedy during his 1961 inaugural address, “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.”

In 1966, one year after graduating high school, Bote followed in the footsteps of her father by joining the Navy and worked her way up to a petty officer third class. She ran a technical library in the aircraft division at Andrews Air Force Base in Washington, D.C., where she maintained shop and maintenance books about aircraft. In 1967, she married and shortly thereafter had a son and daughter and adopted a teenage girl from the Philippines.

While receiving treatment at the Lebanon VA Hospital several years ago, a hospital staffer there told her about the Southeastern Veterans Center. Rather than leading a solitary life after separating from her husband and the death of her mother, she decided to apply to live at SEVC.

“It’s important to me to have someone around who knows me and on an emotional level to have my friends,” Bote said.

She also tries to squeeze in visits with her grown children who now live in Lancaster and Baltimore.

It seems perfectly fitting that Bote joined the Navy based on President Kennedy’s famous words, because the Navy’s unofficial motto is *Non Sibi Sed Patriae.* Translation – Not for self, but for country!

Editor’s note: “Caring for our Heroes” is the fourth in a series of six articles focusing on each of the veterans homes operated by the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.
Strykers move to home stations
28th Division motto of ‘Roll On’ takes on new meaning with Stryker fielding

By Lt. Col. Chris Cleaver

Getting the keys for your first set of wheels is for many one of life’s more memorable moments. The feeling was no different for Pennsylvania Army National Guard Soldiers who recently received possession of several dozen Stryker vehicles and were allowed to drive them from Fort Indiantown Gap back to their home stations.

“This is an important milestone for our Soldiers who have worked very hard over the last several years to get qualified on the various Stryker systems,” said Lt. Col. Marc Ferraro, 56th Stryker Brigade commander. “We are a community based force and it is fitting that these vehicles reside at armories and readiness centers across the state.”

From Erie to Philadelphia, 56th Stryker Brigade units are receiving the new 19-ton, eight-wheel-drive vehicles. The Soldiers have trained on the vehicles over the last two years, but ownership remained with the contractor until the training was complete. Pennsylvania is the only Guard in the nation to receive a Stryker unit. It is considered one of the Army’s most advanced weapons systems. The $2.2 million Stryker comes in 10 models – from ambulance to reconnaissance.

The Erie-based 1/112th Infantry was one of the first units to receive some of the Strykers. The vehicles they received were MEVs – or Medical Evaluation Vehicles. This variant is essentially an ambulance on steroids with numerous advanced life-saving systems.

The MEV and associated vehicles that are part of the brigade will significantly upgrade the Guard’s capability to respond to state active duty missions, according to state Guard officials.

“The Stryker Brigade dramatically increases the tools available to the governor if we have a manmade or natural disaster,” said Col. Xavier Stewart, head of the Guard’s Military Support to Civil Authorities program.

In addition to the 300 Strykers, another 700 vehicles, including Humvees and trucks, are part of the unit.

While many key in on the Stryker’s advanced capabilities and possible role in state active duty missions, the unit’s fielding has also been an economic boom. The Stryker fielding is a $1.5 billion program, according to the Army.

Pennsylvania alone will construct dozens of new facilities, maintenance shops and ranges. In total, more than 80 construction projects are related to the Stryker Brigade.

“We are very proud to be one of the elite units in the entire Army,” said Maj. Tim Foor, executive officer for the Erie-based 1/112th unit. “There is no doubt you have to be some of the best troops in the nation to get this mission.”

Sgt. Donald Twining, 1/112th Infantry, explains the capabilities of the Stryker Medical Evaluation Vehicle. This souped-up ambulance has the ability to provide critical patient care while sending and receiving e-mails and tracking the location and status of other Strykers. Each vehicle costs some $2.2 million.

24 / GUARDIANS / Fall 2007
After a 300-mile drive from Fort Indiantown Gap, Stryker vehicles roll into the Erie, Pa., armory. The 1/112th Infantry was one of the first Pennsylvania National Guard unit to receive its vehicles at home station. More than 300 Stryker vehicles are assigned to the Pennsylvania Army National Guard’s 56th Stryker Brigade.

### STRYKER QUICK FACTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Stryker Vehicle (General Motors Defense, General Dynamics Land Systems)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of Equipment</td>
<td>Ground Vehicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Features</td>
<td>- Capable of speeds up to 62 mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Light enough to be transportable by C-130, C-5, C-141 and C-17 aircraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Basic frame can be configured into 10 variants with different mission requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Commonality of parts cuts down on maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Centralized tire inflation and deflation system helps vehicle adjust to different terrain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 8 wheels, a 350-horsepower diesel engine, a 6-speed automatic transmission, and a 2-speed transfer case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons</td>
<td>40 mm grenade launcher, .50 caliber machine gun, 105 mm low profile turret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew</td>
<td>Two, plus nine-man squad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>38,000 lbs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What a difference a day (two weeks) makes

By Staff Sgt. Stacy Gault, 171st Air Refueling Wing

As all military members have learned throughout their careers, deployments can take you all over the world. The opportunities to meet new people and experience different cultures are endless. Recently, the 171st Medical Group had a chance to go and help others, a chance they couldn’t pass up.

In April, 32 Medical Group members deployed to Panama, along with members of the Army, Navy and Marines to provide general health care for people who otherwise couldn’t afford it or find means to it. On her first humanitarian trip, Staff Sgt. Lyndsey Leffel was amazed at what people did to travel.

“Their huts were in the middle of nowhere and they would get in these wooden carved boats and row their families to these villages just to get to see a doctor,” Leffel said.

In a matter of 10 days, the group treated more than 6,000 patients, wrote 1,200 prescriptions and made sure every person went home with vitamins and preventative medicine.

Capt. Jeff Cianflone knew what to expect this time around. Panama was a bit different than his first trip to Peru in 2003. He was able to treat a lot more patients. As an optometrist, he provided reading glasses and treated eye infections for more than 1,700 people.

Their huts were in the middle of nowhere and they would get in these wooden carved boats and row their families to these villages just to get to see a doctor.

He recalled one woman who lived next to the school where they set up treatment. She had never had glasses in her entire life and her vision was so bad she wasn’t able to identify people six feet away from her. The doctors provided her with glasses for the first time in her life.

A typical workday was 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., but some days required overtime. A few patients were physically unable to make the trip, so the medical staff took their services to them, including a 99-year-old woman.

To show their appreciation, the locals brought food and put on performances for the military members.

The medical staff felt the impact from the relationships developed as well. Late in the deployment, the team received word of a tragedy in a village they visited, Valley of Cerone.

“There was a fire in the first village we were at and two little kids died. We took the loss very hard,” said Staff Sgt. Nate Snee.

A young girl was studying by candlelight, fell asleep and knocked over the candle, setting two huts on fire.

Despite the loss and brevity of the trip, it had a positive effect on the unit. Cianflone said it makes him feel good to be able to help other people. But it also gave him a chance to revaluate our country. “You realize how lucky we are here.”

Your Light In The Darkness...
The PowerFlare PF-200 LED Electronic Safety Light Make It Part of Your Essential Safety Equipment!

- Visible to 10 Miles at Night
- Environmentally Smart
- Safer & More Economical Than Flares - It Floats!
- Dozens Of Applications From Traffic Control to LZ Kits
- 10 Flashing Patterns Including The “S-O-S” Distress Signal
- 5 Visible LED Colors To Choose From
- Also Available With Infrared LEDs For Covert Ops

- Size: 4.25" diameter
- Water proof
- Weight 7 oz.
- 16 super-bright LED lights and 360 coverage
- Can Be Run Over!

Call 408-323-2370
Toll Free 877-256-6907
or visit www.pfdistributioncenter.com

PowerFlare

Dealer Inquires Welcome
If the crew of the MEV Stryker Trusts our Lights, Shouldn’t You?

COVERT

Phantom Warrior® Flashlight
(For maneuvering at night without being seen. Totes versions available for a range of missions. Dimming system included. Runs on 4 AA batteries for 1-3 years.)

Phantom Hawk® Mini Light
(Similar to our flashlight but smaller—3 inches long. 2 AAA batteries illuminate the secure white or IR for a long time. Mounting bracket available.)

Phantom Franco X9 Mine Dog Kit™
(For tracking kits for military dogs that conduct minefield clearing operations.)

OVERT

Phantom YFC™
(For illuminating roads not well lit. Mounts on any vehicle. Optional brighter spot bulb available.)

BellaBeam® Marking Light
(For marking perimeters or drop zones. Four AA batteries last 90-190 hours and it is visible 2.5 miles away. Bulbs do not need replacement.)

Phantom AZL-15™
(Use this for perimeter lighting or illumination. It runs on 6 AA Alkaline or Lithium batteries and can be seen 7 to 10 miles away. Remotely controlled.)

When Not Being Seen Is As Important As Seeing™

Phantom Products, Inc.

Cage 3W079
American Made!

474 Barnes Boulevard, Rockledge, Florida 32955
ph: 888-533-4968 fax: 888-533-5669, WWW.PHANTOMLIGHTS.COM
Even in the field, my credit union is with me.

We don’t build branches. Instead, we use state-of-the-art technology so you have access to your account, anywhere, anytime. And when we don’t spend money on branches, we can offer great loan rates, practically no fees and terrific member service.

As a PA Guardsman, you’re eligible to join PA’s largest credit union. Many of your fellow Guardsmen have already signed up for membership with PSECU. What are you waiting for?

No matter where you are, we’re as close as your cell phone.

Join today at psecu.com!

This credit union is federally insured by the National Credit Union Administration. Equal Opportunity Lender
IN THE GUARD?
YOU BELONG AT USAA.

Because of your commitment to service, you and your family can enjoy all the benefits of USAA membership.

- Save up to $600 a year on auto insurance with low member-only rates.¹
- No-Fee Checking and free access to ATMs worldwide.²
- Free financial advice and comprehensive deployment assistance.

Visit usaa.com or call 800.867.0605.
You or your spouse serve in the military? Parents ever been members? See if you can join USAA.

We know what it means to serve.

¹Annual savings based on customer survey of new customers from 1/1/07 through 3/31/07. Savings do not apply in NJ and MA, and include a discount for online purchase. Online discount not available in CA, FL, GA, HI, MA, MD, ME, MI, NC, NE. Actual savings may vary. USAA does not charge a fee for the first 10 ATM withdrawals and refunds up to $13 in other banks' ATM fees each month. Use of the term "member" does not convey any legal, eligibility or ownership rights. USAA means United Services Automobile Association and its affiliates. Property and casualty insurance provided by United Services Automobile Association, USAA Casualty Insurance Company, USAA General Indemnity Company, Garrison Property and Casualty Insurance Company, USAA County Mutual Insurance Company, USAA Texas Lloyd's Company and USAA Ltd., and is available only to persons eligible for PAC group membership. Financial advice provided by USAA Financial Planning Services Insurance Agency, Inc. (known as USAA Financial Insurance Agency in California) and USAA Financial Advisors, Inc., a registered broker-dealer. Banking products provided by USAA Federal Savings Bank, an equal housing lender. Credit cards provided by USAA Savings Bank. Both banks Member FDIC. © USAA 2007. All rights reserved. 1625/20243 09/2007-437