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Spring 2013

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STAFF

*114th Public Affairs Detachment,
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*157th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs Office
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On the cover: Spc. Nathan Huntley of the 237th Military Police Company and his wife, Alexis, embrace on the morning of the unit's departure from the Concord armory Feb. 13. The MPs were headed to Fort Bliss, Texas, for two months of pre-mobilization training before deploying to Afghanistan.

Photo by 1st Sgt. Mike Daigle, Deputy State PA



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The 237th Military Police Company, New Hampshire National Guard, stands in formation at the start of its deployment ceremony at the Southern New Hampshire University fieldhouse Feb. 10. Photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Gordon, 114th PAD

237th MPs bid farewell

By Staff Sgt. Brian Gordon, 114th PAD

The fieldhouse at Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester echoed with applause, music and cheers Feb. 10. However, the cause was not the excitement of a hard-fought basketball game, but of soldiers bidding farewell to family and friends before beginning a yearlong deployment.

A departure ceremony was held for the 237th Military Police Company, 54th Troop Command, New Hampshire Army National Guard, which is headed to Afghanistan for nine months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The mission promises to be a busy one for the company's 110 soldiers.

"As military police we have two different roles," said Staff Sgt. Nicholas Zachos of Hillsborough, platoon sergeant for 2nd platoon. "We have our law and order job, and we also have a combat support role that involves things like convoy security and area security. So we train in a full spectrum of roles."

The 237th will also mentor the Afghan National Police and conduct joint presence patrols to locate and defeat enemy insurgents.

The soldiers marched into the arena to the sound of the New Hampshire Police Association Pipes and Drums and stood stoically in formation.

A State Police Honor Guard and Patriot Guard Riders holding American flags created a patriotic atmosphere. State dignitaries including Gov. Maggie Hassan, Sen. Kelly Ayotte and Congresswoman

Ann Kuster joined NH Guard leadership on stage to praise the soldiers, known collectively as "The Regulators," and their families.

Lt. Col. David Mikolaities, commander of the 54th Troop Command, commended the support of the families during his remarks to the soldiers.

"In addition to thanking you for your service and dedication, I again want to thank your families, friends and employers," Mikolaities said. "They too are sacrificing in their service of their country."

Capt. Samuel Weber, commander of the 237th, applauded the work his soldiers did to prepare for the deployment.

"You have trained harder and longer than what was required; you excelled at every challenge I have thrown at you," Weber said. "You have all risen to the

occasion and should be proud of your exceptional progress. The quality of soldiers in this company would be the envy of any commander."

The soldiers of the 237th shared that conviction.

Pfc. Gabrielle Hurd of Meredith, a driver for 1st platoon, said she was looking forward to the deployment and feels very secure in her ability to do her job.

"The annual training we went through helped so much," Hurd said. "I feel a lot more confident."

For 77 of the soldiers, this will be their first deployment.

"This will be the longest I've ever been away from my family and friends," said Spc. Taylor Hallett of Hillsborough, with the 3rd platoon. "That will be the hardest part of the mission." ♦



Gov. Maggie Hassan greets the 237th Military Police Company prior to its deployment ceremony at the Southern New Hampshire University fieldhouse Feb. 10. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Attila Fazekas, 114th PAD

The KC-46A is built based on the 767 commercial jetliner family. Boeing is contracted to design, develop, manufacture and deliver 18 initial combat-ready tankers by 2017. Courtesy photo



Pease on short list for new tanker

By Jim Haddadin, Courtesy of Foster's Daily Democrat

PORTSMOUTH – The field of Air National Guard bases being considered to receive the new KC-46A air refueling tanker has been narrowed to five, and Pease is a finalist.

On Jan. 9, the U.S. Air Force released a list of bases in the running to house some of the first KC-46A tankers that roll off the assembly line. Pease Air Guard Base is among those under consideration.

With the guts of a commercial Boeing 767 airplane, the new KC-46A tanker will present a significant advancement over the existing fleet of aging KC-135 Stratotankers.

The KC-46A comes equipped with worldwide navigation and communication

systems, airlift capability on the entire main deck and improved “force protection” features, among other things.

Because of its design, the new aircraft can also be used for a variety of purposes beyond air refueling, such as evacuating people and moving cargo.

The Air Force considered a field of 83 Guard bases before cutting the options down to five, according to an announcement from Air Force 1st Lt. Aaron McCarthy, wing executive officer of the 157th Air Refueling Wing, headquartered at Pease.

“It’s obviously a good thing to be on the list,” McCarthy said. “It just shows the hard work we’ve done.”

In addition to Pease, the other Guard facilities being considered by the Air Force to house the KC-46A are Forbes Air Guard Station in Kansas, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey, Pittsburgh International Airport Air Guard Station in Pennsylvania and Rickenbacker Air Guard Station in Ohio.

The Air Force contracted with Boeing to make 179 KC-46As. The first tankers are scheduled to be available in fiscal year 2016, and production is scheduled to continue for about another decade after that.

The Air Guard base chosen to house the first KC-46As will begin receiving them in fiscal year 2018.

An Air Force “site activation task force team” will now visit all of the bases under consideration during the next several weeks.

During the review, the team will assess operational and training requirements, potential impacts to existing missions, housing, infrastructure and manpower at each base. They will also develop cost estimates for moving the aircraft to each facility.

Once the site surveys are complete, the results will be reported to the Air Force secretary and chief of staff, who will select “preferred” sites, as well as alternatives. The decision is expected by this spring.

Then the Air Force will launch extensive environmental impact studies at the chosen locations. The process is expected to continue into 2014.

One advantage Pease holds in the base selection process is its proximity to the “refueling track,” or travel path, that more than 90 percent of all fighter aircraft use to reach operations in the Middle East. Planes carrying cargo and personnel to Europe and Africa also pass within a few minutes of Pease.

Members of the 157th Air Refueling Wing say another argument in favor of bringing KC-46As to Pease is the base track record of putting planes to use.

Pease has remained open 24 hours a day since the Sept. 11 attacks. With refueling missions scheduled at all hours, Guard troops at Pease flew more hours per airplane last year than any other Air National Guard unit in the country.

Another factor that has contributed to high utilization is the fact that Pease is home to three KC-135 active associations, according to an announcement from the 157th Air Refueling Wing. The associations comprise both Air National Guard and active-duty personnel.

“The 157th Air Refueling Wing has the ideal combination of strategic location, total force personnel and infrastructure to give the country the optimum performance and efficiency of air refueling operations,” Wing Commander Paul Hutchinson said in a prepared statement.

New Hampshire’s two U.S. senators have both wielded their authority on the Senate Armed Services Committee to make the case in favor of Pease Air Guard Base. They praised the Jan. 9 announcement in a joint statement.

“This is welcome news for Pease and the 157th Air Refueling Wing, which provides the best tanker support in the Air National Guard,” Democrat Jeanne Shaheen and Republican Kelly Ayotte said in written remarks. “As the Air Force’s evaluation

process moves forward, Pease continues to be well-positioned to receive the new tanker.”

In addition to selecting a Guard base, the Air Force will also send KC-46As to one active-duty base and one so-called “formal training unit.”

Altus Air Force Base in Oklahoma and McConnell Air Force Base in Kansas are the two bases being considered in the training unit category.

Altus is also in the running to house KC-46As as an active duty base. Also being considered are Fairchild Air Force Base in Washington state, Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota and McConnell Air Force Base in Kansas.

The training unit and active-duty base will begin receiving aircraft in fiscal year 2016. ❖



The advertisement features a central photograph of a smiling family: a man in a military uniform holding a young child, and a woman standing behind them. To the right of the photo are two overlapping circles, one blue labeled 'benefits' and one purple labeled 'you'. Below the photo is the headline 'CONNECTING YOU TO EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS'. The text below the headline states: 'We believe the experience, skills, and talents you've developed are valuable. That's why Hesser College offers reduced tuition rates and access to other special programs for students interested in earning a bachelor's or associate's degree.' Below this, there are two columns of text. The left column lists 'Reduced tuition rates you may be eligible for:' followed by a bulleted list: 'Active duty personnel - 55% discount', 'Veterans - 38% discount', and 'Military spouses - 10% discount'. The right column is titled 'Learn about other educational benefits:' followed by a bulleted list: 'Montgomery GI Bill', 'Post-9/11 GI Bill', 'Federal financial aid*', and 'Yellow Ribbon Program*'. At the bottom left is the phone number '888.647.1050' and the website 'go.hesser.edu'. At the bottom right is the Hesser College logo. Below the logo is the text '5 LOCATIONS AND ONLINE: MANCHESTER | CONCORD | NASHUA | SALEM | PORTSMOUTH'. At the very bottom, there are two footnotes: '*Financial aid is available for those who qualify.' and '*The Yellow Ribbon Program is not available at all campuses. Please contact us for more details.'

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Airmen of the Year

By Tech. Sgt. Mark Wyatt, 157 ARW PA

The 157th Air Refueling Wing, New Hampshire Air National Guard, recognized five outstanding performers during its December 2012 commander's call.



Airman of the Year



Airman 1st Class Joy DeWitt, an aircrew flight equipment journeyman with the 157th Operations Support Flight, was recognized as the Airman of the Year.

In addition to completing upgrade training to a five-level, DeWitt completed four demanding schools necessary for accreditation toward becoming an aircrew flight equipment instructor. DeWitt also is a full-time student at the University of New Hampshire.

She served as a subject matter expert for aircrew flight equipment exchange during an international visit to El Salvador. During the visit, DeWitt participated in an exchange with the Salvadoran Air Force that fostered positive international relations and showcased the 157th Air Refueling Wing to the people of El Salvador.

DeWitt also volunteered to fill a short-notice deployment to the CENTCOM AOR in June 2012. She supported combat flight operations and provided aircrew flight equipment to more than 750 combat sorties that ensured 100 percent mission success.

DeWitt routinely assists those returning from deployments in offloading bags and cargo without regard to time.

Airman DeWitt is an active member of the base honor guard team, completing more than 120 funerals, flag presentations and official ceremonies honoring fallen military veterans and their families throughout New England. Additionally, she serves as a big sister in the Big Brothers, Big Sisters of the Greater Seacoast program and is also a Pease Kids Corps volunteer.

NCO of the Year



Tech. Sgt. Mitchell Boden, NCO in charge of the readiness flight for the 64th Air Refueling Squadron, was recognized as the Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

As a result of his diligence in ensuring that deployment readiness was achieved, Boden has received several awards throughout the year for his outstanding accomplishments.

Boden was responsible for securing unit deployment manager school positions for several new Air National Guard mobility staff that resulted in a significant savings to the Air National Guard.

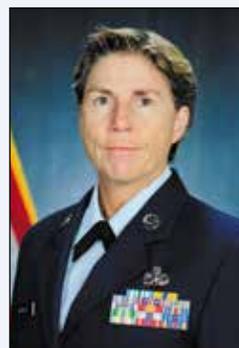
In addition, he successfully managed 34 CENTCOM and CONUS taskings for 117 Pease airmen.

Boden was also credited with leading the restructuring of the squadron's physical training program. He enabled more than 130 members to pass with an average 98 percent score.

Boden completed several courses toward a bachelor's degree in management. He also completed several professional military education classes.

Finally, Boden is active in the community. He supported the Special Olympics, worked with local middle school students on a community project and participated in the United Way Day of Caring. Boden was recognized as the volunteer of the month during a Veterans Day speech at a local school.

First Sergeant of the Year



Master Sgt. Deborah Tzrinke, from the 157th Maintenance Squadron, was selected as the First Sergeant of the Year.

Tzrinke participated in several community projects, such as volunteering for additional training with her civilian employer that allows her to help restore power to New Hampshire communities during natural disasters.

In addition, she is a member of the Air Force Sergeants Association, an active member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Legion Hall in Rochester and routinely volunteers to participate in parades and memorials as well as homecomings.

Tzrinke is the first sergeant for the New Hampshire Air National Guard's largest squadron. She is responsible for ensuring the total force integration and effective morale, welfare and discipline of more than 200 military members.

While deployed as first sergeant, she spearheaded a critical plan for more than 100 personnel from two separate organizations to work together. Her proactive approach enabled the jointly formed organization to operate as one from start to finish.

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Additionally as first sergeant, she provides the commander with timely and accurate counsel on personnel issues. She works long, irregular hours in order to remain in contact with all maintenance group personnel who work second and third shifts.

Finally, Tzrinske demonstrates fitness motivation and dedication by setting the fitness standard for squadron personnel.

Senior NCO of the Year



Senior Master Sgt. Michael Ploof, 157th Civil Engineering Squadron base facility manager and superintendent of operations, was selected as the Senior NCO of the Year.

Ploof leads more than 70 personnel who perform wingwide work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

As the base facility manager, Ploof is responsible for \$1 billion in facilities. He masterfully managed four base budgets totaling \$3.6 million.

In addition, he manages the base's largest government vehicle fleet. As the squadron unit training manager, Ploof is responsible for civil engineer work, personnel issues, inspections and critical information.

He completed a Bachelor of Science degree in business management, completed his third Community College of the Air Force degree in production management, completed his five- and seven-level skills in minimum time and completed the Defense Acquisition University contract management courses.

Finally, Ploof is president of the Minuteman Fund, vice-president of Missions End, and an active member of the winter carnival and military ball committees. He is also active in the Air

Force Sergeants Association and the New Hampshire National Guard Enlisted Association.

Company Grade Officer of the Year



Capt. Eric Galliher, 157th Air Refueling Wing Tanker Task Force Coronet detail planner, was selected as the Company Grade Officer of the Year.

Galliher was lauded by his commander as a "self-starter" and "emergent dynamic leader" dedicated to the mission and recognized for excellence at all levels.

Instrumental in more than 20 Coronet missions completed and 182 combat aircraft moved into combat zones in support of the CVENTCOM commander, he was also responsible for 4.2 million pounds of fuel passed to receivers that resulted in a 100 percent mission success.

Responsible for as many as 40 aircrew and ground support personnel, Galliher is in charge of mission timing, briefings and coordination with ACC and TACC.

Galliher was recognized by Gen. Raymond Johns, Air Mobility Command commander, and Maj. Gen. Frederick Martin, Air Mobility Command director of operations, for efficient and effective planning at the Coronet Planning Conference at Scott Air Force Base.

In addition, he organized a silent auction in support of a fellow wing member whose daughter was diagnosed with leukemia. Galliher raised more than \$10,000 to offset medical expenses.

Galliher has been a constant volunteer with Angelwish, a charitable organization with the mission to grant wishes to children around the world living with chronic illnesses. ❖

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An abiding sense of duty

Even as the U.S. prepares to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by 2014, 160 members of the New Hampshire National Guard are preparing to deploy there in the spring. Many of these soldiers have already had multiple assignments to war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan. For others, it will be their first time. Concord Monitor reporter Molly Connors interviewed several soldiers in the fall and early winter about how they were preparing for their upcoming deployment. [Connors has since left the Monitor to work as a policy adviser to Gov. Maggie Hassan]. They talked about their lives, their families, their aspirations outside of military life and their abiding sense of duty – to their country and to their fellow soldiers.



Photos courtesy of Andrea Morales, Monitor staff photographer

Luke Koladish

When Luke Koladish arrived at Manchester's airport in the fall of 2010 after a few weeks of training, his girlfriend was nervous when she picked him up.

"She was almost shaking out of her boots," Koladish remembered.

By the time the couple was standing under a light in the parking lot, Jaime couldn't take it any more. She handed him an envelope. It contained an image from an ultrasound.

They had been debating whether they should marry before or after they went together to Alabama for 18 months of training. "I guess we're definitely getting married before we go to Fort Rucker," Koladish told her.

This spring, Koladish, 31, will leave for his third deployment in seven years with the Guard. It will be his first to Afghanistan. It will be his first as a helicopter co-pilot. It will be his first as a husband. And it will be his first as a father.

He was 20 when he joined the Guard in August 2001. He was picking up his very first government-issued Army equipment – boots, helmet, bag – when the planes hit the World Trade Center.

"Picked a hell of a time to go in the infantry," a sergeant told him. "We're going to war."

It would be more than two years before Koladish deployed.

He'd grown up in Windham and been on an officer's career track but left the ROTC program so he could deploy to Iraq as an enlisted soldier with his friends – some of them his roommates at the University of New Hampshire.



Warrant Officer Luke Koladish, 31, center, with his wife, Jaime, and his daughter, Rose, 1, at their home in Pittsfield. He is deploying as a pilot with Charlie Company 3-238th General Support Aviation Battalion in April. This is his third deployment.

He'd had only one semester to go before graduation. He wouldn't finish for another three years.

During that deployment, which spanned 2004 and 2005, his prime responsibilities included traveling in armored vehicles to protect dozens of tractor-trailers, helping to train Iraqis and providing security to various officials. His platoon was also part of the intensified assault on Fallujah.

During convoys, more times than he can remember, Koladish and others had to drive under one particular bridge north of Baghdad – 40 Alpha. "We knew we were going to get hit with an IED every time we went," he said. "We knew it was a bad spot."

But they had to go under it. Dozens and dozens of times.

"We used to just pull the gunner down inside the vehicle and try to go through as soon as possible," he said.

Although several people from his unit were injured, primarily from IED shrapnel, no one died during that deployment.

About four years later, when Koladish returned to Iraq for a second yearlong deployment, he revisited 40 Alpha. It was no longer missing chunks of concrete from explosions or surrounded by burnt-out garbage. It had been painted with flowers and seemed more like a mural for kids than a trap for American soldiers.

Koladish has always loved reading and writing; he said he wanted to be a journalist until he learned the average starting salary at a New Hampshire newspaper. So instead,

he worked for the Guard full time, writing stories and working on a history project about veterans.

When he deployed to Iraq in 2009, he helped put out a newspaper and taught Iraqi soldiers the basics of journalism. He rarely had to wear his body armor on that deployment.

When he again safely returned to New Hampshire in March 2010, he noticed a pretty girl working behind the counter at a Manchester coffee shop. Over lunch not long after, she gave him a “speech,” he said, about how she didn’t want a boyfriend.

“I think it was two, three months later she moved in with me,” Koladish said.

Others things were going well, too.

His whole life, Koladish wanted to fly, but his vision wasn’t good enough. But then a long-standing Army rule prohibiting people who had had corrective eye surgery from becoming pilots had changed. With the new rules, he had Lasik surgery and was told he would fly Black Hawk helicopters for the Guard.

When he met Jaime, he knew he’d be leaving for Fort Rucker within a year to learn how to fly.

And after a wedding at Manchester City Hall, the couple moved to Alabama. He learned to fly a helicopter. Jaime gave birth to their daughter, Rose. They returned to New Hampshire and bought a house in Pittsfield. They want more children.

And now, Koladish is getting ready to leave again.

“I think saying goodbye to my daughter is going to be one of the hardest things I’ve ever done,” he said. She’s just old enough now, he said, that she knows when he’s not there.

“When she hears the helicopter now, she says ‘Daddy? Daddy?’”

Koladish said he’d like to stay in the military at least until he’s 50 – he loves the Guard and he loves flying. The time away is difficult, but when he puts it in perspective, it’s not so bad.

“We’ll have all that other time together,” he said.

Shea Ahern

When Shea Ahern was a senior at Raymond High School, he went out for the track team. His event: the two-mile. He had to get in shape – he had joined the New Hampshire National Guard and would be leaving for basic training at Fort Knox in Kentucky about a week after graduating with the Class of 2005.

Ahern’s father, grandfather and two uncles had served in the Army Guard or

Reserve. Motivated by a love for his country and in part by tuition support he’d receive, Ahern decided to follow in their footsteps.

“I have a rich family history in the Guard, and I also wanted help with education benefits,” Ahern said. “So the two of those together, I decided to join the Guard.”

Near the end of that summer, around the time his former classmates were checking into their dorms, Ahern, now 26 and living in Deerfield, headed for Fort Sam Houston in Texas for four months of training as a medic.

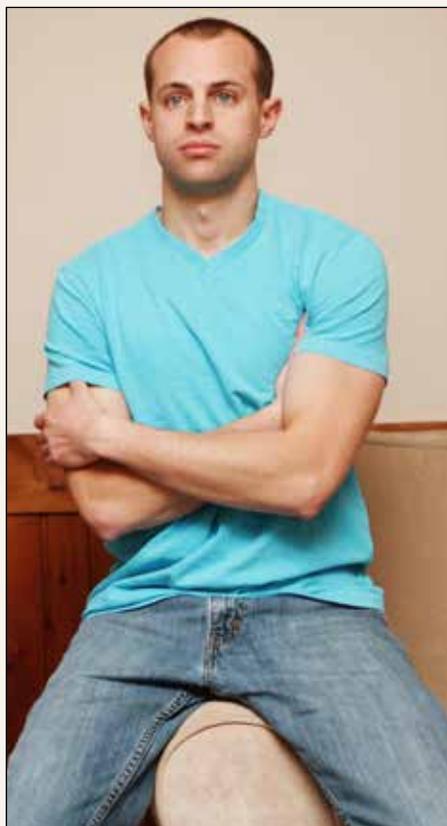
In the fall of 2006, he enrolled at UNH. He started with nursing. Then recreational therapy. But after three years, before he could finish, he had to leave UNH. It was August 2009, and it was time to go to Iraq.

As a medic, his job was largely giving first aid to injured soldiers and civilians, transporting them and ensuring equipment was ready for flight.

The crew worked in 24-hour shifts. Their days were a bit like a firefighter’s – responding to emergencies when called, but traveling in Black Hawk helicopters instead of ambulances.

That year – 2009 to 2010 – was a relatively quiet time in Iraq, but two particular missions stood out, Ahern said.

About midway through the deployment,



Staff Sgt. Shea Ahern, 26, at his apartment in Deerfield. Ahern is deploying as a medic with Charlie Company 3-238th General Support Aviation Battalion in April. It will be his second deployment.

an armored vehicle rolled over in an accident. Two soldiers were injured, and two were killed.

“I remember lifting up (in the copter) and getting right outside the (forward operating base),” he said. Within minutes, they arrived at the accident scene. He helped with the injured.

“They seemed in pain, but they weren’t screaming like in the movies,” he said. They loaded the soldiers and transported them to where they could get more medical treatment.

On another flight, he rescued a German shepherd – he thinks it was a bomb-sniffing dog – that had been cut badly while playing with its handler. “The dog outranked me,” he said.

“The dogs had a lot of jobs over there. There were a lot of dogs there for morale and welfare.”

There were long stretches of down time during the deployment – the troops watched a lot of movies and television series, including all of HBO’s “The Wire” and all of the “Godfather” films. Ahern wishes he had spent his free time more productively.

The deployment interrupted his studies at UNH. In between work and Guard duties, he has taken classes part time at other state colleges since his return.

“I didn’t plan on being in school for eight years and not really having a degree out of it,” he said. “I’m close, but I don’t have it yet.”

The deployment did, however, give him greater focus. He knows he wants to be a paramedic.

“The way I look at it, everybody has a bad day at some point in their lives,” he said. “It’s always kind of nice to be able to be the one that can help somebody out.”

He has a gentle demeanor, but Ahern likes the excitement of emergency response. “I find myself kind of being an adrenaline junkie.”

After he returned in 2010, Ahern enrolled in an intensive program to become a paramedic. He hopes to be certified before he deploys to Afghanistan as a medic this spring.

He’s torn about the deployment, where he’ll be in charge of about 10 other soldiers and responsible for more of the mission’s logistics. “I basically want to do it and do the mission, but at the same time I want to be here with my family and friends, too.”

Ahern’s going to be an uncle soon – one of his sisters is pregnant and the other is in the midst of adopting a baby.

And now Ahern has a girlfriend. He didn’t three years ago.

"I'm nervous," he said. "I hope that it doesn't make her run."

Does he ever feel like the deployment is a disruption – from schooling, from the girlfriend?

"I'd be lying if I told you no."

But he's not the complaining type.

"I always look at things with the glass half full," he said.

Sam Weber

Running a prison isn't sexy, but from 2006 to 2007, Sam Weber was one of the New Hampshire Guardsmen who had to do it.

"I don't think there's many soldiers who say, 'Hey, I want to go do detainee ops,'" Weber, 30, said.

He and his fellow soldiers dealt with riots, arson, assaults and the bizarre pecking order among Iraqi prisoners at Camp Cropper, a prison of more than 3,000 in Baghdad.

But most of the time, it was mind-numbingly dull. "You work really long hours, and it's boring," Weber, of Dover, said. "But you have to be alert because they'd try to escape every once in a while."

Weber spent a year deployed in Iraq as an MP responsible for police-type activities. But growing up, he wanted to be in the infantry, the all-male division of the Army devoted to more in-the-field type exercises.

"It's kind of like being on a sports team," he said. "That's what it feels like, it feels like you're playing high school sports all over again."

Later this spring, Weber will deploy for a second time as an MP, this time to

Afghanistan. His mission is likely to include helping train Afghan nationals in police and anti-terrorism tactics.

Weber's parents didn't serve in the military, but both his grandfathers did – one in the Korean War and the other in Europe in World War II. They didn't talk a lot about it during his childhood in Colebrook, but Weber grew up knowing he'd join the Army.

He attended the University of New Hampshire on an ROTC scholarship, graduated in 2005 and was commissioned an officer in the Guard.

About a year later, after stints as a Guard recruiter and a temporary employee at the post office in Concord, he left for Iraq. He had been living with his brother and sister-in-law and had no dependents, so he didn't have too much to pack.

"Everything I owned fit in a duffel bag and one tote," he said. "I just left it at my mom's house."

When you're deployed, Weber said, you sometimes get so busy that you don't have time to feel lonesome. He said he has it easier than some others because he doesn't have a wife and kids to worry about. But it can be hard when you realize your friends back home are having barbecues, going to the movies and throwing parties without you.

"It's definitely humbling when you're like, 'Wait a minute, they're fine with me gone. They'll survive. The world hasn't ended because I'm not around,'" Weber said.

It's also hard to have no privacy or alone time during a deployment. Even the prisoners knew his name.

"They have nothing but time," he said. "These guys knew all the guards' first and last names."

They knew the battalion commanders' names."

And they didn't hesitate to raise hell now and then. Mixing the silt-like sand in the prison with chai, they'd make rocks to chuck at guards. Urine-filled bottles? They'd toss those. Steal matches to burn the building down? They tried that, too. And then there were the full-on assaults.

Soldiers had to adapt to keep things under control, Weber said.

"They wanted to see if they could sneak somebody out in the garbage, and so they found a little guy, killed him and put him out in the garbage," Weber said. "The garbage collectors found him when his arm kind of fell out of the bag."

The prison staff started using clear plastic garbage bags and checking the garbage more thoroughly, Weber said.

On top of that, he was also responsible for the welfare of 40 other soldiers whose problems seemed outside his own frame of reference.

"I've got married guys asking me for advice on their relationship," he said. "I've never been married, so there you've got to be prepared to deal with stuff or offer advice on stuff maybe you haven't experienced."

When he finally returned in 2007, he just relaxed at first.

Eventually, he took a full-time but temporary position with the Guard to fill in for an employee who had deployed. He has had a few similar positions since.

"I've managed to make a career out of not having a permanent job with the National Guard," he said.

Even if he eventually gets "a big-boy job someday," he'd like to stay in the Guard.

When he deploys to Afghanistan in the spring, he'll be a company commander in charge of 110 soldiers.

His soldiers will help train Afghan police, which will require a lot more patrols outside a base. Things are different on the home front this time, too. Now he has an apartment to vacate, furniture to store. A niece and nephew he dotes on. And a girlfriend. He says they haven't decided what to do when he's gone.

Weber said this deployment is a good opportunity for him and that he didn't really hesitate about it.

"New Hampshire soldiers are deploying, so how could you really say no?" he said. "What is more important than doing that?"



Capt. Sam Weber, 30, with his niece Bristol, 2, and nephew Kael, 4, at their home in Gilmanton. Capt. Weber is leading 110 soldiers in the 237th Military Police Company when they deploy in February. It will be his second deployment.



Spc. Sara Furmanick, 23, at the New Hampshire National Guard base in Concord. Furmanick is deploying as a medic with the 237th Military Police Company in February. It will be her first deployment.

Sara Furmanick

Sara Furmanick, 23, is shedding. Knickknacks. Furniture. Her boyfriend.

In a few months, she'll leave for Afghanistan for her first deployment with the Guard. She's going as a medic, and she's got to get ready.

"It's a long process of just trying to get rid of as much as I can before I leave so there's less to store," she said.

A lot of the items remind her of stages she's already been through in her life.

There was a stage when she collected a lot of black candle holders. Those have got to go, she said. But the firefighter-themed one her mom got her – decorated with boots, bunker gear and a helmet – that's a keeper.

Furmanick, who grew up in Holderness, will also keep select items from school; she graduated from Plymouth Regional High School in 2007.

Her grandfather served in the Navy in World War II, and she'd always wanted to be in the military, too.

She made it happen halfway through her senior year.

"I saw a recruiter at my high school, and I chased her down," she said.

Then 17 and the second-youngest of six children, Furmanick went home that day and told her parents she needed their signatures to join the Army. "They weren't happy at first, with the war going on. But they're my family, and they support me," she said. "They always support everything I do."

So shortly after graduation, she was off to basic training at Fort Jackson in North Carolina, and then Fort Sam Houston in Texas for training as a medic.

Around that time, she started to drift away from her high school friends.

"I didn't have a cell phone at basic to be able to call (friends) and meet up with them, and so a lot of those friendships are not there now."

Since she enlisted, a brother has joined the Navy, and a sister has joined the Army.

When all her initial training was done, Furmanick returned to New Hampshire, worked as a recruiter for the Guard and started taking classes, first in criminal justice and now nursing. She'd like to continue to pursue nursing when she returns from Afghanistan.

"I really like pediatrics," she said.

But right now, she's preparing to go to Afghanistan, where she'll likely go on patrols and provide first aid.

About a month ago, she broke it off with her boyfriend. It's easier for her this way, she said.

"That's the last thing I need to be worried about," she said. "He understood. If (the relationship) had been more long-term, it would have been different."

This is her first deployment, after all.

"I need to be focused on that."

Kory McCauley

His whole life, Kory McCauley wanted to serve in the military. He came pretty close to joining the Marine Corps when he was a high school senior.

Then he met a girl.

"Stupid 18-year-old," McCauley said.

"I fell in love, and I couldn't leave her, all this, so I didn't go. And then I didn't end up with her."

A decade later in 1997 – after getting married, becoming a father and working as a manager at UPS – he finally joined the Army.

"It took me another 10 years," he said, "so I actually went in at 28."

And after all that, he kind of hated it, largely because fraternization rules prevented him from socializing with soldiers of a different rank, even if they were his age.

"I just had to hang out with privates," he said. "They're 18, and I'm 28 and have nothing in common with them."

He served from 1997 to 2000, and in that time, he did several monthslong deployments to countries including Honduras, Panama and Belize.

But eventually he rejoined the military, and this spring, he'll deploy to Afghanistan. It will be his second deployment – the first was to Iraq – in six years.

Now 44, McCauley grew up in North Reading, Mass., and settled in New

Hampshire about 12 years ago, after he left the Army.

He got steady work at the men's prison in Concord and enlisted in the New Hampshire National Guard in 2005, after hearing about the \$15,000 bonuses. It turned out it wasn't so bad this time.

"I really came in for money, but when I came back in, I realized that I loved it," said McCauley, who lives in Concord. "I missed it. I didn't even realize I missed it."

McCauley said he had been the only one in the Guard at the time who'd been an MP on active duty. All his years of experience came in handy, and he was quickly promoted.

"I found that I actually knew a lot more than everybody else," he said.

From 2007 to 2008, he deployed to Iraq, where most of his responsibilities involved training Iraqis at a police station. "You didn't know which ones were working



Master Sgt. Kory McCauley, 44, with his wife, Gail, and their son, Parker Scherrer, 13, at their home in Concord. McCauley is deploying with the 237th Military Police Company in February. This will be his second deployment.

for the insurgency,” he said. “So I’d half train them because I didn’t want them to go to use something against me.”

McCauley, who’d been a police officer before working at the prison, said he also grew frustrated by the Iraqis’ approach to police work.

“They don’t go on patrols and do presence patrols like we do in the U.S.,” he said. “They’ll go get in their police car and go sit on the side of the road all day. They’re reactive.”

He likened a lot of the challenges there to mind games. Every morning he’d review the intelligence briefings and learn that some of the Iraqis he was working with were likely involved with the insurgency, including one of the police chiefs he saw every day. But he couldn’t let on that he knew.

“It messes with you,” he said.

When he thinks back on the times the chief told him not to travel a certain route, McCauley knew that keeping a poker face and smiling at the chief probably kept him

alive. “I know he saved my ass a few times,” he said.

When he returned from deployment in 2008, McCauley got his job back at the prison, but it required a little adjustment: He had been able to wear a lot more equipment when he dealt with detained Iraqis. “You feel a little naked for a minute,” he said.

This August, he married for a second time – he and his first wife divorced years ago. He said his wife hates the fact that he’s leaving for a deployment so soon. He tries to ignore her dissatisfaction, though he knows it’ll be hard on his two children and new stepson when he’s deployed.

He’s working full time for the Guard to help with the preparation, and he’s starting to focus on the mission.

When you leave, he said, it’s like flipping a switch. You simply have to put anything that would distract you out of your mind.

“I’ve got all these people’s lives under me, I’m not going to be thinking about anything at home,” he said. “I don’t want

to hear about issues that are going on – this broke, that broke.”

His role will be different this time around. He’ll likely be in a command center, monitoring and providing support for missions.

And just as he’s preparing those he’s leaving behind, he’s preparing those he’ll be taking over.

He tells them to be always respectful of the local people, even when it’s counterintuitive.

“If you talk down to them and demean them, sometimes getting back at you in their culture is killing you,” he said he tells soldiers deploying for the first time. “If I piss this guy off, he might not be a bombmaker but he knows who is. So you’ve got to understand that and put on a game face when you get over there and be friendly to them.”

It’s a head game, he said. Keep it together.

“Go over there and make the best of it.” ♦

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Task Force Jaguar eager for mission

By Tech. Sgt. Mark Wyatt, 157 ARW PA

Soldiers and airmen from the New Hampshire National Guard scheduled to deploy next month in support of the Beyond the Horizon mission to El Salvador traveled through wintry weather Feb. 9 to participate in a pre-deployment event.

The event, hosted by the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, provided two days of briefings for soldiers and their families participating in the BTH deployment, named 'Joint Task Force Jaguar.'

"The intent of the Yellow Ribbon program is to limit the amount of stress at home so that there is less stress for service members while deployed, this results in soldiers being better able to focus on the mission," said Maj. Eric Hogancamp, service member and family services director. "This all means that fewer people are injured, and the mission is successful."

According to the JTF commander, who opened the event with a briefing on the importance of the mission and the role families play at home, the opportunity to gather before a deployment is critical to the success of the mission and also the success at home.

"It is absolutely important and really a necessity, to have everyone together like this, especially for a unique mission like this," said Lt. Col. Ray Valas, Joint Task Force Jaguar commander. "When we have a family that is well prepared, well informed, better able to handle things at home, the soldiers are able to focus on the mission to the best of their potential."

For family members, many of whom have experienced yearlong deployments, the challenges are real, but the Yellow Ribbon Program assists greatly in preparing spouses and children.

"What we've learned from the past is that often people wait until it's too late to get information or seek help," said Jennifer Bennett, wife of Maj. Sean Bennett.

"What this does is get people in a good environment to learn what's out there for families."

Eager at the opportunity, Valas is encouraged by the mission and the team collected to complete it.

"This is not a state partnership event, but it is an event with our state partner," said Valas. "We have an ongoing relationship with El Salvador. For New Hampshire to be able to lead this task force and lead 1,300 soldiers and airmen as they do a mission in our partner country, it's an important step forward in our program."



Material for a two-room school to be constructed in El Tamarindo, El Salvador, during Beyond The Horizon 2013 are loaded into a shipping container Feb. 13. Photo by 1st Sgt. Mike Daigle, Deputy State PAO

Beyond the Horizon is a U.S. Southern Command-sponsored, U.S. Army South planned and led annual humanitarian and civic assistance exercise. The exercise provides construction and medical assistance to partner nations in Central and South America and the Caribbean. The exercise generally takes place in rural, underprivileged areas and is a major component of the U.S. military's regional engagement efforts. It affords a unique opportunity to train U.S. service members alongside partner nation personnel while providing needed services to communities throughout the region. ❖



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*A New Day
for the Great Service*

The education of Colonel Samuelson

An open letter from Lt. Col. Ryan Samuelson, outgoing commander of the 64th Air Refueling Squadron, an active associate unit serving with the 157th Air Refueling Wing, New Hampshire Air National Guard, at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington.

“What’s with these Guard guys?!”

It was a question I heard many years ago in a land filled with sand. It was a time when I had never served side-by-side with someone from the Air National Guard. It was a time when the Total Force was just beginning to serve with each other overseas. The tone was derogatory. The question stated in antipathy. Maybe it was said out of frustration, maybe it was said out of resentment. It was likely said out of ignorance. Not intentional ignorance, but ignorance born of unawareness and inexperience. At the time, I didn’t ponder it much as I was getting ready to fly a mission. Here is what I wish I could have conveyed as a response to that question:

I have learned the Guard is about working in a collaborative environment; one where ideas from all are shared both up and down the chain of command – a chain of command that actively seeks the free flow of ideas and is genuinely interested in “buy in” from the people it leads.

I have learned the Guard is about managing the complexity of personnel who operate in a multitude of “statuses” all while supporting more mission set, both federal and state combined, than many active duty units do. A single Air National Guard aircrew complement could be composed of four personnel, who while overseas are all governed by federal Title 10 rules, yet back home all four may operate under different statuses and management rules. I still haven’t figured out how they do it.

I have learned the Guard, through its development of the Air National Guard Strategic Plan and Domestic Operations Equipment Requirements process, fully supports and greatly enhances the future capabilities of the Total Force – not simply Air National Guard efforts, and not simply a subset of active duty plans. But Air National Guard plans, which develop and field much of our national security capabilities. Just look here within Pease Air National Guard Base to our medical partners who built the medical element of the CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package – CERFP – team. If you don’t know what I am talking about, you need to check it out.

I have learned it is the Guard that incorporates many of the positive changes



Lt. Col. Ryan Samuelson addresses his airmen after assuming command of the 64th Air Refueling Squadron at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington, June 2, 2011. Photo by 157 ARW Public Affairs

to the AFIs and technical orders that guide our greater Air Force compliance-based approach to operations. I am amazed at the depth of knowledge that personnel who might not have deployed in two years have on current national operations and future requirements.

I have learned the Guard is absolutely a learning organization capable of achieving any task it is given. In standing up the active associate squadron here, the Air National Guard in partnership with the Air Force solved complex issues often with little clear written guidance from higher headquarters. In the absence of an approved integration plan, which was held up in staffing, the Air National Guard established memorandums of understating or MOUs, internal policies and previously untested processes. In the numerous instances where existing AFIs called out different criteria for active duty and Air National Guard personnel, this wing chose to find an integrated answer to the problem and to codify it into a local OI or process rather than leave it as a disconnect in an integrated unit. In light of the fact we often operate in the “?” realm where other established organizations have clear guidance, our daily focus has always been to ensure we were meeting the direction of the Air Force chief of staff to fully

integrate active duty personnel into the structure of our host wing in order to best serve the combatant commanders’ needs. That is a learning organization.

I have learned that the Guard provides roughly 33 percent of the Air Force capability at 7 percent of the budget with a force that is 70 percent traditional. There is often a lack of understanding of how the Air National Guard is currently structured, budgeted and often funded as a strategic reserve yet operates as a fully viable operational force – and a busy one at that. I do hope the education and understanding of both active duty and Air National Guard patriots continue about each other’s constraints as we serve together in the coming years of fiscal challenges. We are one team.

I have learned the Guard is proud of its culture and should be. It is a culture where people blend friendship and camaraderie perfectly with a burning desire to rapidly respond to any mission, state or federal, in need of accomplishment. Pease ANGB has proved national mission effectiveness and efficiency can be enhanced while blending and preserving the things that make Active Duty and ANG “culture” each distinctly unique – and worth protecting.

I have learned the Guard is about taking care of the people who make up the organization, the families, the communities and the country. A country whose fabric is tied together with strong family and community bonds is destined to remain a great one.

I have come to know and immensely respect the Guard. I’m glad we’re on the same team.

For me, it’s been fun, it’s been educational, and it’s been life changing. As I wrap up my tour as the 64th Air Refueling Squadron commander, I say thank you, Pease Air National Guard Base, for three and a half great years. You are making your people, your communities, your Air Force and your country better every day. Thank you for letting me be a part of it and thank you for helping teach me how to answer a very simple question. I will not forget my future answer. I know you have come to see the active duty in a special way as well. I wish all of you absolutely the best life can offer! ♦

Some have never felt the earth shudder

By 1st Lt. Andrew Schwab, 197 FiB PAO

The Master of the Punch, Lt. Col. David Baker, held up a small piece of metal. “This represents that iron monster, the artillery pieces we have learned to love. This primer is needed to get all things started, including our punch!”

Baker tossed the primer into a large vat of mixed liquors. Known as “Artillery Punch,” the brew is the centerpiece of the 197th Fires Brigade’s annual All Saints Ceremony. The ceremony itself is part of a longstanding artillery tradition where “Redlegs” honor each other, their families and their history.

But some soldiers in the audience haven’t actually seen a cannon primer before. They’ve never served on a howitzer, experienced the unity of the gun crew, or felt the earth shudder as a round escapes the barrel. In 2007, New Hampshire’s artillery community transitioned from M-198 howitzers to M-142 HIMARS, from shell artillery to rocket artillery. There are no more cannons in New Hampshire.



Col. Thomas Spencer awards Capt. Christopher Thompson the Order of Saint Barbara medallion during the 197th Fires Brigade’s All Saints Celebration on Dec. 1, in Manchester.

Photo by 1st Lt. Andrew Schwab, 197 FiB PAO



The Master of the Punch, Lt. Col. David Baker, watches from the podium as Capt. Heath Huffman pours one of the 10 ingredients that will make the night’s Artillery Punch. The punch was part of the 197th Fires Brigade’s All Saints Celebration on Dec. 1, in Manchester. Photo by 1st Lt. Andrew Schwab, 197 FiB PAO

Excommunication

For nearly a century, artillery defined New Hampshire’s Army National Guard, and roughly two-thirds of New Hampshire’s soldiers are part of the Fires Brigade. With the transition to rocket artillery, these soldiers are at the forefront of the artillery community’s continuing evolution.

“For the past 10 years, the Army has been in consistent conflict and consistent change. The artillery soldier is going to have to be more technologically advanced,” said Col. Thomas Spencer, 197th FiB commander.

Spencer noted, however, that while the technologies are changing, the responsibility of the artillery soldier remains the same. “The culture and pride of the artillery has always been strong and will always be strong as long as we all strive to be masters of our craft. We must be able to deliver accurate, predictable fire where and when the maneuver commander requires.”

Pursuit of this mastery has shaped the artillery community since its inception, driving innovation and building a distinct culture. The Moors first brought gunpowder artillery to Europe in 1100, firing small balls from wooden bowls. By the 1400s, Scottish nobility were leveling each other’s castles with bombards, one of which could hurl a 20-inch iron ball nearly a mile. This power changed the face of warfare, and the keepers of this power became a class unto themselves.

The design, maintenance and operation of cannon were closely held secrets, and master gunners were more often civilian experts than regular military. The noted author and historian Albert C. Manucy wrote, “Gunnery was a closed corporation, and the gunner himself a guildsman. The public looked upon him as something of a sorcerer in league with the devil, and a captured artilleryman was apt to be tortured and mutilated. At one time the pope saw fit to excommunicate all gunners.”

The Vatican relented, but the pursuit of more powerful, mobile, and accurate artillery continued.

Saint Barbara

At the All Saints Ceremony, Maj. Travis Jones, master of ceremonies, shared the legend of Saint Barbara. Jones explained how, after Saint Barbara was murdered by her father for converting to Christianity, God struck her father down, killing him instantly with a bolt of lightning. For this reason, it became tradition to call upon Saint Barbara for protection from sudden death.

Jones concluded, “When gunpowder made its appearance in the Western world, Saint Barbara was invoked for aid against accidents resulting from explosions. Since some of the early artillery pieces often blew up instead of firing their projectile, Saint Barbara became the patroness of the artilleryman.”

By the 1600s, the artillery community was facing another danger as well. For years, improvements in ground tactics and weapons had made musket and pike the decisive tools on the battlefield. Cumber-some artillery was a liability when pitted against fast, agile and increasingly deadly infantry.

In response, the Swedish military transformed artillery tactics during the mid-1600s by developing smaller cannon that could be quickly massed, fired and displaced. Compact cannons operated by three-man teams returned artillery to relevance and laid the foundation for the future of artillery warfare.

The current transition to HIMARS follows in this same spirit, although today's technologies will enable artillerymen to be simultaneously more maneuverable and more devastating.

"A HIMARS section has three soldiers," said Spencer, "An M-198 gun section has 13 soldiers. The HIMARS system's capabilities replace many 'tubes' of artillery so three artillery soldiers in a HIMARS can effectively deliver the equitable firepower of 40 soldiers with the M-198."

The Battle

With rifling and breech-loading becoming mainstream in the late 19th century, artillery was the preeminent force in land warfare. During World War I, cannon artillery accounted for 75 percent of battlefield deaths. Stalin called artillery the "god of war," and during World War II, the majority of battlefield losses were again the product of artillery fire.

Artillery continued to play a key role in Korea and Vietnam. During the Vietnam War, New Hampshire's 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery, earned a reputation for excellence. Forward units knew that poorly aimed artillery was as likely to strike friendly forces as it was the enemy, and they would specifically request 3rd Battalion on account of their exceptional accuracy and reliability. By then, however, a different form of warfare – a form that resisted the traditional artillery role – was already maturing.

Sgt. 1st Class Mark Hickey, a seasoned artilleryman with more than two decades of service in New Hampshire, said, "The needs of the Army differ today from the warfare of the past. We are filling a role of security and prevention, or peacekeeping. The days of steel rain falling from the sky to pulverize the enemy and break their stuff are only a distant memory."

Artillery has, at times, been the victim of its own success. Bombards, in making



Artillerymen from Bravo Battery, 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery, fire an M-114 howitzer in Vietnam. During the war, 3rd Battalion gained a reputation for exceptional accuracy and reliability.
Photo courtesy of 3rd Battalion

castle defenses untenable, worked themselves into obsolescence. Now, as then, the artillery community is adapting. Rapidly deployable, digitally guided rocket artillery gives commanders more flexibility to engage enemies who refuse to mass, use civilians for cover, or operate in extremely remote locations.

"The artillery will continue to develop technologically advanced systems in order to deliver precision and near-precision munitions to the desired target with minimum collateral damage," Spencer said, "The maneuver force requires artillery in order to shape the battle. The ability to reach out at long distance and inflict damage to the enemy – in all weather – is a characteristic that only the artillery possesses."

Redlegs

Artillerymen don't wear red on their field uniforms anymore because it would make it easier for the enemy to shoot them. The red cord on an artilleryman's dress uniform is the last remnant of the red-laced field uniforms U.S. artillerymen once wore as they worked their guns.

What a Redleg looks like will continue to change. "One change that is happening

– and it is long overdue – is that female soldiers can now be accessed into a certain artillery MOS such as 13M [HIMARS crewmember]," Spencer said. "The artillery is moving away from being a male-only occupational skill and is being opened for all citizens who want to serve."

This next generation of artillery soldiers will have no more direct experience with metal primers than they will with red-laced field uniforms. But whether toggling a switch or pulling a lanyard, they will share having been masters of some of the most powerful weapons of land warfare.

"The artillery soldier is very adaptive. We deal with munitions that travel high and far, and when they impact, cause significant damage," Spencer said. "This requires artillery soldiers to be confident experts that mitigate risks by being masters of their trade."

Artillerymen who have demonstrated that mastery are eligible to be inducted into the Order of Saint Barbara.

"The award of Saint Barbara is the highest level of pride and accomplishment for any artillerymen," Hickey said.

"Artillery is regarded as the king of battle and members of Saint Barbara are known as the best of the best."

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Considine was recognized as a member of the Ancient Order of Saint Barbara, and Command Sgt. Maj. Victor May, Maj. Daniel Ouelette, and Capt. Christopher Thompson were inducted into the Order of Saint Barbara. With their awards, Spencer gave each a small medal on a red ribbon, the Order of Saint Barbara Medallion, the mark of a master artilleryman. ❖

*References: www.fieldartillery.org/redstripe.html
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3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery, fires their first HIMARS rockets during training at Fort Drum in 2009.
Photo courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class Alexander Thurston, NHARNG

The future of field artillery

By Brig. Gen. Craig Bennett, commander, New Hampshire Army National Guard

Year after year of in-lieu-of missions and several transformations in the field artillery community have forced the leadership of the New Hampshire National Guard to evaluate the relevance of the 197th Fires Brigade. This article explains some of the challenges and provides some clarity about what the future may hold for the state's longest serving Army National Guard unit.

The 197th Fires Brigade traces its lineage back to one of the oldest field artillery units in the United States Army. Its many battlefield streamers represent major American campaigns dating back to the Revolutionary War. Today, the 197th is the largest fires brigade in the Army's inventory, with battalions from Rhode Island, West Virginia and Michigan as well as New Hampshire. Its soldiers are among the most dedicated and well-trained in the force.

But since 9/11, the field artillery branch, more than any other branch in today's Army, has been assigned in-lieu-of missions instead of its traditional warfighting function. The last time New Hampshire fired an artillery round in battle was in 1969 during the Vietnam War. In Operation Iraqi Freedom, our field artillery soldiers worked as military police. In Operation New Dawn, they were assigned to security missions in Kuwait and Iraq. It is no

wonder that artillerymen have earned a reputation for being the most adaptable in the armed forces. But the nontraditional roles have resulted in a significant deterioration of core competencies for a whole generation of Redlegs. The 197th has only fired its high mobility rocket system once since fielding it in 2009. Under normal training requirements, they would be fired annually.

Additionally, two Army-wide transformations in the last decade eliminated more than 600 brigade positions and key pieces of equipment that could be used in state emergencies as well as combat. In the last six months, the threat of restructuring the brigade's 3643rd Brigade Support Battalion, which is addressed in a Department of the Army study known as "Decision Point 2015," could result in the loss of another 100 jobs, more vehicles and equipment. In total, that would equate to a 30 percent loss in New Hampshire Army Guard force structure.



Then Lt. Col. Thomas Spencer, commander of 3rd Battalion, 197th FA, explains HIMARS to a group of state and civic leaders prior to the battalion's first live fire Sept. 22, 2009 at Fort Drum, N.Y. Photo by 1st Lt. Andrew Schwab, NHNG PA



Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery gather with their newest weapons system, the HIMARS, in Center Strafford on June 29, 2009.
 Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Ginger Dempsey, NHNG PA

It's not that the traditional fires mission is fading from the modern battlefield. The Army is adding three fires brigades to its inventory – two active duty and one National Guard. Transformation gave us a modern rocket system that is more accurate and mobile, and requires fewer people and less equipment to deploy than conventional howitzers. These changes don't degrade the relevancy of the mission, but rather improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness with which it can be executed.

The in-lieu-of missions reflect the asymmetrical warfare our military has fought over the past 12 years in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the wake of some painful lessons learned, it's highly unlikely the U.S. will expose itself to another large-scale insurgency operation anytime soon. For artillerymen, that will mean a renewed focus on the core competencies of a fire mission.

Here in New Hampshire, the challenge for us as senior leaders is to reverse the current trend. We are obligated to have contingency plans to address strategic-level mandates that are gutting the 197th. Do we acquire additional units and missions aligned with the 197th, other existing units such as Troop Command, or find completely new missions such as cyber? We know the path of least resistance is to build upon our existing units. Last year, the 197th acquired a target acquisition battery from the Massachusetts National Guard, which brought 48 jobs, key equipment and counter battery capabilities. And we know it is easier to recruit from within for key NCO and officer positions.

There is no effort nationally or within the organization to replace or marginalize the brigade. The adjutant general and other

senior leaders and I have taken our collective concerns directly to the chief of the National Guard and our congressional delegation. We are being aggressive, but the most important action the 197th, and all our other units in the New Hampshire Guard, can take to preserve force structure and gain new force structure is to maintain high unit readiness metrics. Our continuing efforts with the N.H. Army Guard's "Way Ahead" roadmap, operations order process, strategic management system and campaign plan are surgically focused to that end. ♦

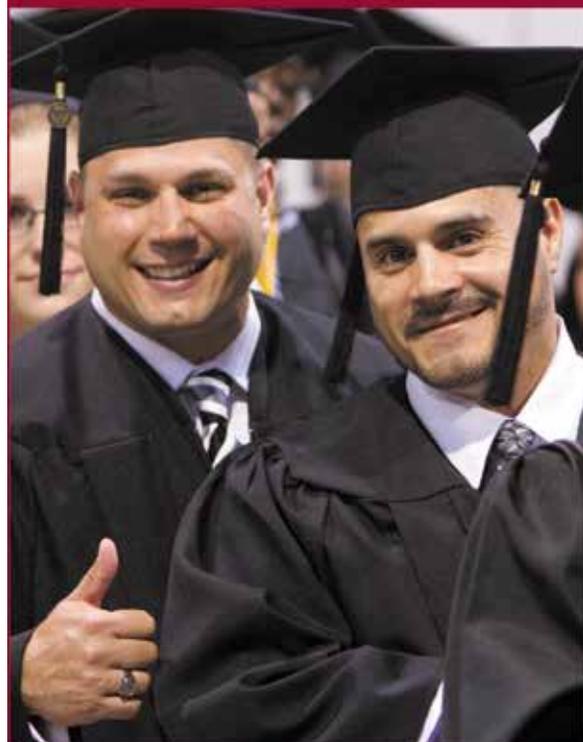


HE'LL GROW INTO IT



Senior Airman Beverly Cole of the 157th ARW PA, NH Air National Guard, helps a boy don a flight helmet and vest at the 2013 Ilopango Air Show, El Salvador, on Jan. 26. The 157th ARW participated in the annual event as part of the NHNG-El Salvador State Partnership Program. Photo by 1st Lt. Aaron McCarthy, 157 ARW PA

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Infantrymen learn new discipline

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Robert Brown, 114th PAD

The soldiers moved at a deliberately steady pace, unloading their white pickup trucks and trailers. Various pieces of equipment, from portable generators and hot water heaters to hose systems and blivets, were set up in positions relative to the huge yellow tents being erected in the midst of this northern Maryland Army post, Aberdeen Proving Ground, in mid-January, 2013. Despite the location, the only real evidences of a military presence were the Army combat uniforms, and even these were offset by various brightly colored vests.

These New Hampshire soldiers made up the decontamination element of a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high yield explosive enhanced response force package. Their mission in Maryland was to engage in a training opportunity with the other CERF-P elements from Rhode Island and Maine, but chemical operations were not something many of them would have seen in their future in 2010.

As part of Charlie Company, 3/172 Infantry (Mountain), they had been assigned to the New Hampshire National Guard portion of CERF-P shortly after returning from a rotation in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. During the course of that deployment, C Company had been attached to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and had been responsible for security and counterinsurgency operations in a district of Paktia Province, not exactly a chemical environment.

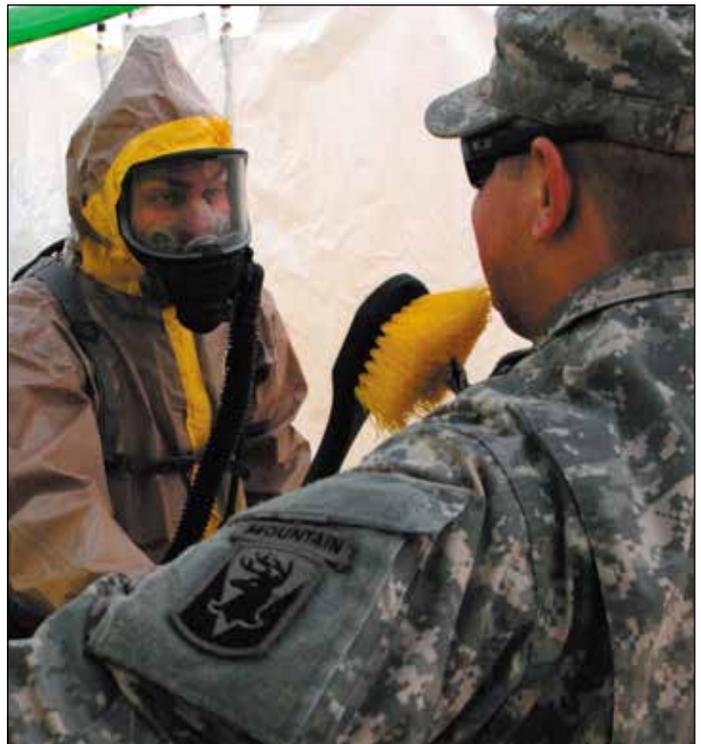
Shortly after redeploying to New Hampshire, the company was informed that a large portion of its soldiers would be trained in civil support-oriented decontamination operations for the NHNG's role in the District 1 CERF-P.

Staff Sgt. Christopher Elliot, an infantryman from Nottingham, summed up many of the infantry soldiers' reactions, "I was disappointed with not being given a security task, like an outer cordon. I was definitely hoping for something more infantry-related."

Despite the challenge of the new mission, the soldiers of Charlie Company began the new regimen of training. They attended a hazardous materials course taught by the New Hampshire Fire Academy and completed online courses designed to familiarize them with the CERF-P mission. Once these were completed, they began the hands-on process of working with the tools, equipment and systems involved in a mass casualty decontamination event.

All of this individual and collective training resulted in being certified as an element by outside evaluators in two separate weeklong exercises in 2011 and 2012.

Lt. Col. William Dionne, the CERF-P commander, pointed out that this did not initially seem like a good fit for a company of mountain infantrymen just back from Afghanistan but that the



Pfc. Anthony Montefusco simulates decontaminating Spc. Kristopher Picott, both of Mountain Company, during CERF-P training at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, in January.

discipline inherent in their primary military occupational specialty served them well as members of the decon element.

"When Sergeant Ski says 'jump,' these guys say 'how high?'" Dionne, of Maine's 52nd Troop Command, joked, while observing decon operations at Aberdeen.

Sgt. 1st Class Shannon Kulakowski, or "Sergeant Ski," is the noncommissioned officer in charge of the decon element. A platoon sergeant in Charlie Company from Epping, he is not shy about expressing his high expectations or his pride in these soldiers for exceeding them.

"These guys have worked really hard to get here. There is a lot more to this job than it looks like from the outside."

Spc. Jon Mexcur of Concord, normally a mortarman in C Company, illustrated Kulakowski's point: "The biggest challenge was the shift in focus from an infantry mindset to a completely different mission, a change in roles. We came from a unit (whose mission) doesn't relate, and we blew the standards out of the water." ❖

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FOR THEIR WORK IN GUATEMALA



Capt. Jason Richard, commander, Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment, (right) commends the his soldiers for their outstanding work supporting Operation Beyond the Horizon in Guatemala last summer. Receiving the Army Commendation Medal are, from left to right; Staff Sgt. Rodney Anderson, Spec. Joseph Cote, Staff Sgt. Justin Dupuis, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Daniel Jacques, Sgt. Aaron DeAngelis, Sgt. Diane Cammarata, and Sgt. Kenneth Jones. In the second row is the newly promoted first sergeant for the unit, Brian McKay. Photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Gordon, 114th PAD

Fires Brigade gains target acquisition battery



Battery E, 197th Field Artillery, New Hampshire Army National Guard, was activated Dec. 1 during a ceremony at the Portsmouth Army. The target acquisition battery is commanded by Capt. Craig Stansfield, front left. The battery first sergeant is Jack Baker, front right. Holding the guidon is Pvt. Corey Collins.

Photo by Maj. Greg Heilshorn, State PAO



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HER FIRST DAY IN OFFICE



On her first official day as Governor of New Hampshire and commander in chief of the New Hampshire National Guard, Maggie Hassan meets with Master Sgt. Jason Hill, left, and 1st Sgt. Glen Drewniak of the 12th Civil Support Team at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Concord on Jan. 4. Accompanied by Maj. Gen. William Reddel, the Adjutant General of the NHNG, Hassan received an orientation briefing from soldiers and airmen on NHNG capabilities and equipment systems.

Photo by 1st Sgt. Mike Daigle, Deputy State PAO



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