



## NEWS YOU CAN USE

*Weekly News for National Guard Families*

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## Websites:

### **National Guard Family Program Online Communities for families and youth:**

<http://www.guardfamily.org/>

<http://www.guardfamilyyouth.org/>

**TRICARE** website for information on health benefits

<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/>

**Civilian Employment Information (CEI) Program Registration** for Army and Air National Guard, Air Force, and Coast Guard Reserve

<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/esgr/index.jsp> (Note to those viewing this page in Word or PDF format: You may have to copy this address and paste it into your browser's address window.)

**Cumulative roster** of all National Guard and Reserve who are currently on active duty

<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2004/d20040331ngr1.pdf>

**Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)** contains links and information about schooling, distance education, scholarships, and organizations devoted to the military family

<http://www.militarychild.org/>

**Militarystudent.org** is a website that helps military children with transition and deployment issues. It has some great features for kids, parents, special needs families, school educators, and more—even safe chat rooms for kids.

<http://www.militarystudent.org>

### **Disabled Soldiers Initiative (DS3)**

This website provides information on the new DS3 program. Through DS3, the Army provides its most severely disabled Soldiers and their families with a system of advocacy and follow-up.

<http://www.armyds3.org>

The **Guard Family Team Building** website provides online training and access to valuable contact information, documents, and links to assist in meeting the challenges of Guard life.

<http://www.gftb.org>

The **Guard Family Action Plan** website provides information on actions to improve Family Programs, benefits, and entitlements for the National Guard Community.

<http://www.gfap.org>

**Have an article, announcement, or website that you'd like to share with the National Guard Family Program Community? Send your suggestions in an e-mail to [Michelle.Bohlen@ngb.ang.af.mil](mailto:Michelle.Bohlen@ngb.ang.af.mil).**

## **Soldiers Learn To Combat Hidden Explosives**

Rolla Daily News

August 31, 2005

FORT LEONARD WOOD - Army National Guard soldiers from around the country traveled to Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri this week for Counter Improvised Explosive Device Awareness Training to prepare them for what they will encounter in Iraq if they are deployed.

"Improvised Explosive Devices, or IEDs, are the No. 1 killer of soldiers in Iraq," said Sgt. Brian Kirkpatrick, non-commissioned training officer for the IED course. "This is the most important, most crucial training any of our soldiers are going through right now. Counter IED Awareness Training is the best way to prepare soldiers for what they will experience in Iraq."

Even though what every soldier will experience in Iraq is different, the Counter IED Awareness Training is teaching tactics, techniques and procedures on how to find IEDs and deal with the situation when it occurs overseas.

The four-day training period consists of two days in the classroom and two days in the field.

"The IED hunting portion of the training teaches soldiers how to find an IED before it detonates," Kirkpatrick said. "This type of training is very tricky and very dangerous because an IED could be anywhere or hidden in anything. It's difficult training because IEDs are so hard to detect."

An IED could look exactly like a rock, be hidden in a pile of leaves, somewhere in a tree or masked in a variety of ways, according to Kirkpatrick.

"Soldiers in Iraq have to clear the route of IEDs before it can be used for other tasks," Kirkpatrick said. "Their job is to find the device before it explodes. This is the most difficult and dangerous task soldiers are faced with in Iraq, and it's important they know how to do it."

It took 20 soldiers nearly two hours to cover 300 yards of a gravel road during IED hunting at Fort Leonard Wood Tuesday morning.

"It's a very slow, methodical process," Kirkpatrick said. "We tell the soldiers to take their time and check out anything they feel is suspicious."

Instructors teaching the course try to make the training much like the situations soldiers will encounter in Iraq. If an IED is triggered during training, a paintball or an explosion of powder will result.

"If a device is triggered, it won't harm anyone," said Sgt. Rod Baker, training instructor for the IED course. "But they'll definitely know it's there."

No IEDs were triggered during the training on Tuesday, which means the soldiers were doing their jobs well.

When soldiers do find what they think is an IED, they back out of the area and call an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team to destroy or disarm the device.

"It's the EOD team's job to render the device safe," Baker said.

Baker said the training at Fort Leonard Wood is helping soldiers in Iraq locate hidden IEDs.

"People usually hear about the bad things happening in Iraq, but we are finding a lot of IEDs before they go off and that's a good thing," he said. "They can be found thanks to successful training programs like this one."

Fort Leonard Wood is the only place, other than the Regional Training Institute (RTI) in Maryland, that offers this type of training.

The first Counter IED Awareness Training at Fort Leonard Wood was in May and about 200 soldiers have gone through the course. Kirkpatrick, Baker and Sgt. A.J. Guimont are the ones responsible for the start-up of the training program at Fort Leonard Wood.

"We recently started this type of training because it's the best way to prepare our soldiers for how to locate IEDs in Iraq," Kirkpatrick said. "Unfortunately we didn't have this training before I went to Iraq, but it's definitely something I wish we would have had before I went over there."

Kirkpatrick said the Counter IED Awareness Training is being pushed more than any other training he's seen during his 14-year career in the Army National Guard.

"This push is coming right from the top down," he said. "This type of training is absolutely necessary to deal with what's going on in Iraq, and in many cases it will literally mean the difference between life and death."

Although some of the Army Reserve and Army National Guard soldiers participating in the Counter IED Awareness Training at Fort Leonard have served in Operation Iraqi Freedom, most of them have not and could be deployed at any time.

"Of course we don't know for sure, but it's likely that many of the soldiers in training today will be deployed to Iraq in the future," Kirkpatrick said. "That's why it's important we train our soldiers now. Hopefully what we teach them will help them survive in Iraq."

It's not just those going through the training at Fort Leonard Wood who will benefit from the program. Army National Guard unit leaders from around the country will be taking what they learn back to their respective bases.

"This is the best type of training to prepare us for Iraq," said Nathan Smith, second lieutenant in the First Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment based at Whiteman Air Force Base. "I'm going to take what I learned here and teach it to my soldiers back home. Anything I can do to help save our soldiers' lives is a good thing, and this is the best thing we can do right now."

Counter IED Awareness Training at Fort Leonard Wood will be held at least once a month for the rest of the year and will be continued next year. Instructors at Fort Leonard

Wood said they will constantly improve the training program based on what they learn from those who are serving in Iraq.

"The soldiers who come back from Iraq are helping a great deal by giving us tips on how to improve the training so that when others get there they'll be as prepared as possible," Kirkpatrick said.

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## DEPLOYMENT

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### Local Guardsmen Deploy For Hurricane Relief

NewsChannel 10

September 6, 2005

By: Dan Reany

In just 42 hours since the order was given to assist with disaster relief in Mississippi, the Lynchburg **National Guard** is mobilized and on the move.

Lt. Col. John Epperly called the men to sharp attention before addressing them. "All right, white dragons, we have one of the worst storms in American history at the Gulf Coast. Hundreds of thousands of people got nothing to eat. They got no water. They got no place to live. So they called us. Now you guys have all seen the pictures on the TV. You've seen moms hand their babies over to the crowd, to strangers, to get them out. We're going to help fix that. What you're doing today is a noble, noble deed. Okay? I thank your families. I thank you. I thank your employers."

Half of the group of 225 members deploying left early Tuesday morning by bus. They headed to the airport in Richmond, then to Mississippi. The other half will leave Wednesday in a convoy of military vehicles that will be used during the mission.

With ongoing looting and violence, relief and rescue efforts must continue to be tempered with security measures. We asked Capt. Jason Coleman, of Natural Bridge, what he thought about going to Mississippi to provide direct humanitarian relief, versus providing security against looters and gangs. "To us it really doesn't matter. Whatever we can do to help these people out when we go down is what we're going to do."

"The citizens need relief, and the local authorities need relief. And we're there to help both sides," said Sgt. Jody Martin of Bedford.

Coleman was coming home from a football game when he got his orders. Another member of the battalion was camping in the Black Hills of South Dakota, but still managed to get to Virginia in time to deploy.

"I'm proud to serve with you, men," Epperly told the group. "When you get down there you're liable to see things you've never seen before. Scenes of devastation, heart rending

stories. You do your best. Here's what I want you not to do. Don't call them evacuees. Don't call them refugees. These are citizens of America. All right? They are Mississippi citizens. But for the grace of God, any one of us could have been there like this. Okay? We're going down to help the good people of Mississippi, because they need a hand up, and we're going to give it to them."

By 5:30 a.m. members of the Lynchburg Guard had stowed their gear, boarded busses, and headed off to help others.

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## **Oklahoma National Guard Members Await Orders In Louisiana**

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KATC-TV

September 6, 2005

ALEXANDRIA, La. -- More than 300 Army **National Guard** members from Oklahoma are in Alexandria today preparing for their mission to restore order in New Orleans.

Major General Harry Wyatt says about two-thirds of the Oklahoma Army **National Guard** are currently deployed overseas or in Louisiana and Oklahoma.

In Alexandria, the Guard members spent yesterday fueling their vehicles and trying to put a lid on the apprehension that was building in camp.

Private First Class James Booze of Tulsa says he thought his unit would be stationed in the French Quarter helping local authorities recover the bodies of people who died when the city flooded.

Task Force Oklahoma consists of more than 22-hundred Oklahoma Army **National Guard** members in Louisiana under the direction of Brigadier General Myles Deering, the commander of the 45th Infantry Brigade.

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## **South Carolina National Guard Unit Is Deployed**

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WLTX

August 31, 2005

(Saluda)-Specialist Montez Adams said, "You live one day a time on a deployment." South Carolina Army National Guard Specialist, Montez Adams knows the clock is ticking.

His unit, the 122nd Combat Support Engineering Company will leave Saluda, headed to Iraq.

Adams said, "It's a bittersweet feeling."

For now, Adams enjoys spending time with his uncle, Retired Sgt. Edward Bates at the grocery store he runs.

The two were once in the 122nd together. In 2003, they were deployed together.

Bates said, "It took us through changes because it's something we never prepared ourselves for."

They were only gone for three months. When orders came for them to return home, but this time around, Iraq is a definite destination.

Bates said, "That's going to take a toll on them to leave their families for 18 months, but that's what you have to pay when you join the National Guard or armed services."

Bates said, "The toughest thing for me is leaving my girls. I have three step-daughters and a little girl and two grandbabies so it's the hardest part."

But this family says prayer will see Specialist Adams through and keep him out of harm's way.

Bates said, "I just hope he returns safely to his family and back to us."

A farewell ceremony is set for 9 a.m Wednesday morning at the Saluda High School Stadium.

You can show your support by standing along West Main and Main Street in Lexington at 11 A.M. as the buses carrying the unit are escorted to the airport by the Lexington Sheriff and police departments.

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## **1116th Returning To Iraq; Ceremony To Send Off Guard Members Set For Wednesday**

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Gallup Independent

August 31, 2005

GALLUP — What seemed like a long shot two-and-a-half years ago became of reality when President George Bush authorized the deployment of some 120 members of the New Mexico National Guard's 1116th Transportation Company to Iraq recently.

Gov. Bill Richardson will be on hand for a Yellow Ribbon ceremony in Gallup Wednesday morning to wish a group of them off. Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley Jr. and Brigadier General Kenny Montoya, who heads the state's National Guard units, are also scheduled to attend.

Soldiers from across the state make up the company's ranks. Some three dozen of them roughly a quarter come from northwest New Mexico and northeast Arizona. Their hometowns read like a map of the area: Gallup, Ganado, Window Rock, Chinle, Navajo, Shiprock, Thoreau and Zuni.

For most, it will be their first deployment to the Middle East in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

But for some, about five or six of them, this will be their second tour of duty there.

And although their deployment comes at a time of mounting criticism of the war and declining public support for the president's handling of the occupation, all the soldiers making their second trip to Iraq are returning voluntarily, according to Maj. Kimberly Lalley, the state guard's public affairs officer.

When the guard's 720th Transportation Company deployed for Iraq in February of 2003, some members of the 1116th, eager for action, volunteered to go along. Together, they spent a year in Iraq logging some 2.2 million transport miles, according to Lalley.

At the time, Lalley said the chances of the entire 1116th deploying to Iraq were slim. Now that it's happened, she said that members of the company who joined the 720th were given the chance to stay home. A few, the five or six heading back, declined.

Following Wednesday's ceremony, Lalley said, the 120-or-so soldiers will get to spend the weekend with their families before heading off to Fort Bliss, Texas, Tuesday for a few more weeks of training. From there, they'll head to Kuwait.

Once in Iraq, they'll be responsible for hauling all manner of military equipment and supplies. Though not assigned to combat duty, transport vehicles do come under their share of attacks from militants.

The company will be mobilized for an initial period of up to 18 months, no more than a year of it to be spent in the Middle East. Lalley said she did not know precisely where the soldiers would be sent.

Wednesday's ceremony begins at 10 a.m. at Hershey Miyamura Park, at the corner of U.S. Highway 66 and the Miyamura overpass.

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**National Guard Troops In Iraq Stunned By Devastation Back Home**

Associated Press

August 31, 2005

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - Ever since Hurricane Katrina roared ashore, National Guard troops from Gulf coast states serving in Iraq have followed the disaster unfolding on television sets, worried about families and friends back home.

"It's a significant emotional event. Their families are on the forefront of the disaster," said Lt. Col. Jordan Jones of the 141st Field Artillery of the Louisiana National Guard.

"They're all watching TV and some have seen their neighborhoods completely submerged in water."

Jones, from Luling on the west bank of Lake Pontchartrain, said he hasn't been in touch with his own family for three days because of clogged phone lines, but that his neighbors had helped board up their home.

"It's hard, a lot of soldiers are watching this play-by-play, they're having a hard time," said Lt. Taysha Deaton, a spokeswoman for the unit.

The 141st Battalion, which arrived in the Middle East almost a year ago, is based at Camp Liberty, Saddam Hussein's palace complex near Baghdad International Airport. The 400-member unit, which is due to be rotated out soon, has suffered one killed and several wounded during its deployment.

"We're fixing to go home anyway, and now this happens," said Deaton, 25, whose home in Lake Charles was not in the main path of the storm. Most Americans identify the National Guard with providing emergency services during natural disasters. But over the past three years, numerous Guard units have been sent to Iraq to fight alongside regular forces.

Asked how his troops felt being in Iraq while their state was in such difficulty, Jones replied: "Well, we all know our primary mission is the federal one."

"The secondary mission is to serve at the pleasure of the governor in disaster-relief and other missions," said Jones, 44, who works for a company managing the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Louisiana National Guard troops left back home have been busy rescuing people from the deluge and bringing them to safety in their trucks. In other Gulf states, more than 1,600 Mississippi National Guardsmen were activated to help with the recovery, and the Alabama Guard was planning to send two battalions to Mississippi, the hardest-hit area.

One of the Mississippi National Guard units, the 155th Armored Brigade, is attached to the II Marine Expeditionary Force in Iraq.

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## **Military Police To Aid Local Officers**

The Daily Advertiser

September 6, 2005

By Claire Taylor

Military police from the **National Guard** in Washington arrived in Lafayette on Monday to relieve local law enforcement officers, some of whom are working double shifts in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

About 40 **National Guard** military police were at the Cajundome Monday morning. Eighty more were expected by Monday night. They came at the request of local and state officials, said Bill Vincent, Lafayette Office of Emergency Preparedness director.

"We're here to provide security and law and order support for the evacuees and displaced Louisianians," said Sgt. Maj. Michael Collins, 273rd military police company spokesman. "We are here for as long as Louisiana needs us."

The scene outside the Cajundome was calmer and more organized Monday than it was early last weekend. Fewer people milled about outside or sat around in groups, appearing hopeless. Volunteers were expected to complete construction of a 22-stall shower unit in back of the Cajundome for evacuees to use.

Officials could not provide a count Monday morning of how many evacuees remained housed in the Cajundome. Some have left.

"We do have additional capacity and we told the state control point that we can accept more evacuees at the Cajundome," Vincent said. He had received no notice Monday morning that more evacuees were on the way, but he expects more to arrive, possibly unannounced.

City-Parish President Joey Durel said some evacuees left the area, reunited with family members. Others housed at the Cajundome elected to move to off-site shelters offered by area churches and individuals.

"There's no way to know the number of evacuees here," Durel said. "I'll talk to somebody who says they have 12 people staying with them, then somebody else says they have 15 at their house. Then there are the hotels. They're full."

The influx of evacuees is taking its toll on the Lafayette Consolidated Government budget. Durel said he decided immediately that he would not allow money to limit Lafayette's response to the displaced.

He said he hopes the Federal Emergency Management Agency reimburses Lafayette for expenses incurred in caring for Hurricane Katrina evacuees. Meanwhile, Durel said he suspects the city-parish budget probably will have to be amended to reflect costs associated with the hurricane.

For Lafayette area residents returning to work today, Durel urged them to leave earlier than usual and be patient because of the added traffic from evacuees, some of whom are not familiar with the city and parish and may be lost.

"Consider driving 5 miles per hour slower than usual," he said. "Be patient. Leave 10 or 15 minutes earlier than you used to. Nobody can imagine what these people are going through. People need to realize there's a whole lot more pain out there than being 10 minutes late for work."

## **Anchorage Police Commit to Support Guardsmen, Reservists**

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American Forces Press Service

August 31, 2005

ANCHORAGE, Alaska, Aug. 31, 2005 – The Anchorage Police Department has put into writing its verbal commitment to the Guardsmen and Reservists who protect and serve the community when they're not protecting and serving the country.

Anchorage Police Chief Walter Monegan signed a "statement of support" under the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve's "5-Star Employer Program."

"All it (involved) was basically memorializing an existing (verbal) agreement," Monegan said about the statement of commitment he signed in April. "Members of the Guard and Reserve do double duty, and I respect that."

The document declares, in writing, that an employer will adhere to the tenets of the federal law regulating treatment of Guardsmen and Reservists. But it's more than just a statement to those military servicemembers who work for Monegan.

"I think its tremendous (that Monegan signed the commitment)," said Douglas "Scott" Lofthouse, a senior patrol officer with the Anchorage Police Department and a master sergeant with the 3rd Security Forces Squadron of the Alaska Air National Guard. He explained that it solidifies the department's commitment to its servicemembers.

While Guardsmen and Reservists working for the municipality are entitled to benefits afforded to them by federal laws, medical and dental benefits provided by their employer for their eligible family members also are continued. This allows family members to keep their health care providers, Monegan said. He added that financial arrangements can be made to ease the shock of having to cover bills on military pay, which may be less than pay earned from the police force.

Both Lofthouse and Mark Karstetter, an Anchorage patrol officer and a technical sergeant with the 176th Maintenance Squadron of the Alaska Air National Guard, said the welcome home from the department after their recent deployments was "outstanding."

"I went right back in as a detective," Lofthouse said, referring to the position he left when he was activated in August 2002. "The department was great."

Karstetter agreed. He had been called up just after finishing field training for the police department. After a one-year deployment, he returned and found himself with someone riding along with him again, just to make sure his skills were still sharp. But he was put back into the position that he had vacated when he was activated. He said that this accommodation is something other employers should strive for.

"I would encourage employers to be flexible, because we're sending our youngest and brightest overseas to do a (dangerous) thing they don't always need or want to do, but they go because they're asked to," he said. "And with the current laws, I think it's a good thing that they can come home and start their lives over and still ... have a job, they have a routine."

Being first responders gives the police officers a unique perspective on the war on terrorism and, consequently, the activations of the Guard and Reserve required to fight it.

"I think I have a better understanding than most of the general public does about what it takes for the security of the nation and the security of your hometown," Karstetter said. "I've always been extremely patriotic, so getting called up is not something that I'm upset about."

He also said being a first responder makes being sent to a combat zone easier to deal with. When he came under rocket attack while deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan, he said, it really didn't faze him.

"I think the police department helped me cope with certain things better than most (people)," Karstetter said. And that includes other servicemembers. He credits this unique readiness to having already encountered high-stress situations.

Karstetter and Lofthouse were honored Aug. 30 by the Anchorage Assembly during a special meeting. Each was presented with a certificate from the city, thanking them for their service to the police department as well as to the country.

The police officers were honored through a program the municipality instituted to honor the nearly 70 Guardsmen and Reservists in its ranks. An Alaska Army National Guardsman deployed to Iraq is expected to be the honoree at the next assembly meeting.

Monegan's commitment to support the servicemembers working for him, recognition of those servicemembers by the municipal assembly, and the benefits extended to them that exceed federal requirements are ways in which this city has chosen to support the Guard and Reserve. Monegan said he thinks this is a reflection of America's attitude toward its servicemembers, as well.

"Because of Sept. 11, I think the spirit of the country is, 'We support you,'" Monegan said.