



## NEWS YOU CAN USE

**Weekly News for National Guard Families**

### **Index of Articles**

*Note: Topics below are now bookmarked! Click on the underlined topic below to link to the pages on that topic.*

#### **READINESS**

Conn. Tests State's Readiness in Hurricane Drill

Guardsmen Offered Emergency Training

#### **DEPLOYMENT**

Nearly 71,000 Troops Supporting Katrina Relief Efforts

Support Group Keeps Families Together After Soldiers Depart; Network Can Be Called On To Help with Cars, Birthdays and Hugs

#### **GENERAL**

Louisiana Guard Troops Head Home; Majority Will Aid in Hurricane Relief

New Program Aims to Help National Guard Families in NC

Hotline: One-Stop Shop for Guard Families Affected by Hurricane Katrina

Displaced Military Families Can Seek Safe Haven within United States

## Websites:

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

**TRICARE** website for information on health benefits

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

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

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

**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.

### **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.

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.

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

**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).**

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

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

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

<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.)

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

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

<http://www.militarystudent.org>

<http://www.armyds3.org>

<http://www.gftb.org>

<http://www.gfap.org>

**Conn. Tests State's Readiness In Hurricane Drill**

Insurance Journal

September 7, 2005

Associated Press

With this year's hurricane season far from over, Connecticut public officials plan to test the state's response capabilities in a hurricane drill today.

Advertisement

Gov. M. Jodi Rell said she wants to make sure that Connecticut's state agencies have a disaster plan ready to go should a serious storm like Hurricane Katrina strike.

"I want to make absolutely certain that Connecticut is at the highest possible stage of emergency planning and readiness," Rell said. "Frankly, after watching the tragedy of New Orleans, I need to have a higher comfort level that we are at that point."

Emergency officials are drawing up a route for the mock hurricane, and will focus on how to respond if it struck any section of the state. For example, emergency officials will sort through who declares an evacuation, under what circumstances it is declared and how it is conducted, said David Dearborn, a spokesman for the governor's office.

They will also look at things such as how to get food, water and other basic supplies to victims should parts of Connecticut be devastated.

The drill will kick off at 10 a.m. at the state armory in Hartford. Staff and commissioners from the departments of public health, public safety, **National Guard**, environmental protection, transportation, correction, agriculture, education and mental retardation will participate in the exercise.

The last hurricane to strike Connecticut was Hurricane Bob in 1991. The remnants of Hurricane Floyd caused severe flooding in 1999. The hurricane of 1938 killed 600 people in New England and caused \$306 million in damages.

In August 1955, a one-two punch from the tail ends of Hurricanes Connie and Hurricane Diane swelled rivers and streams and created deadly floods. Fast-moving waters washed away buildings and entire neighborhoods, killing nearly 100 people and causing \$500 million in damage.

Today's drill will focus on how to respond to a category 5 hurricane.

"While Connecticut's topography gives us many advantages over locations like New Orleans and the flat Gulf State coastlines, the fact remains that severe flooding is a real possibility," said Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Commissioner James Thomas.

State officials held a hurricane drill in mid-August, but that focused more on tracking hurricanes and planning for them in advance. This drill will focus more on what happens

after the hurricane, Dearborn said.

---

## Guardsmen Offered Emergency Training

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

The Arkansas Democrat Gazette

September 7, 2005

By Heather Wechsler

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences hopes to help relieve a statewide need for more emergency medical workers through a partnership with the Arkansas Army **National Guard** announced Tuesday.

The Department of Emergency Medical Sciences in the UAMS College of Health Related Professions will train the Guard's combat medics as emergency medical technicians, so they can be certified in Arkansas as EMTs while they receive their military medical training. The Arkansas Army **National Guard** will pay the medics' tuition. Previously, the guardsmen had to apply for Arkansas EMT certification on their own if they wanted to offer emergency care in the state.

"This is a great demonstration of leadership on the part of UAMS," said Maj. Gen. Don C. Morrow, Arkansas' adjutant general, who gave UAMS a statue of a Concord Minuteman — a symbol of the **National Guard** — in a show of gratitude. "This is also a great demonstration of patriotism."

An estimated 75 medics will begin the program as early as December at Camp Robinson, near North Little Rock. The training will take about two weeks.

That won't be soon enough to help victims of Hurricane Katrina, but UAMS training will enable soldiers to help in disasters when they're not on active duty, said Ronald Winters, dean of the College of Health Related Professions. "When soldiers return from deployment, they will be prepared to serve in civilian emergency medical care or other health-care professions where there is a shortage of such workers," Winters said.

Arkansas has about 5,500 certified emergency medical workers, said Danny L. Bercher, the chairman of the college's department of emergency medical sciences.

That's about 25 percent less than are needed to fully staff ambulances statewide, he said.

Of the state's emergency medical personnel, about 1,500 are paramedics — specialists with the highest amount of emergency training, Bercher said. He said the state has about 3,800 Emergency Medical Technician-Basics — those with the first level of training. The other 200 emergency workers in the state are emergency medical technicians with the intermediate level of training.

The combat medics will receive the first training level, which will enable them to operate in a variety of civilian situations from resuscitating a cardiac arrest victim to delivering a baby.

Arkansas' lack of emergency workers is part of a national problem, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. Over the next five years, the bureau predicts a 35 percent increase in demand for paramedics and emergency medical technicians. The bureau reports that about 179,000 emergency medical workers held jobs in 2002, the most recent year of available data.

The bureau attributes the current shortage to a variety of factors, including stressful working conditions, irregular hours, limited opportunities for advancement, and modest pay and benefits. For instance, in 2002, the bureau reports the median pay for hospital emergency personnel was \$24,760.

Winters said he didn't know whether the national shortage of emergency personnel exacerbated problems in responding to hurricane victims. At present, the National Association of Emergency Technicians, based in a suburb of Jackson, Miss., is working with Vanderbilt University to gather 2,000 emergency workers to relieve New Orleans emergency personnel. "The recent disaster brought about by Hurricane Katrina underscores the need for this kind of partnership that will increase the number of emergency medical workers," UAMS Chancellor I. Dodd Wilson said in a statement.

---

## DEPLOYMENT

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

### Nearly 71,000 Troops Supporting Katrina Relief Efforts

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (9/9/2005) — The Defense Department established NORTHCOM in 2002 to consolidate homeland defense and civil support missions previously done by various military organizations under a single unified command.

A total of 70,916 troops are supporting disaster relief efforts in the area, NORTHCOM officials said. Of those, 20,800 are active duty and 50,116 are Army and Air National Guard.

Twenty-four ships - 17 Navy and seven Coast Guard - are stationed in the area, with one more ship en route, officials said.

More than 200 members of the Mexican army and 45 vehicles arrived at the former Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio, where they will provide hot meals for up to 7,000 people, potable water and medical and dental assistance. The Mexican vessel MS Papaloapan and Dutch vessel HNLMS Van Amstel are in the Gulf Coast area and are coordinating relief operations with the USS Bataan.

To date, military personnel have delivered more than 31.4 million liters of water, 78.5 million pounds of ice and 15.4 million individually packaged military rations to areas in Mississippi and Louisiana.

Some 2,037 Defense Department medical personnel are in the area: 1,072 active duty and 965 National Guard. Three Air National Guard expeditionary medical support teams,

consisting of about 80 doctors, nurses, medical technicians and support personnel, are deployed to some of the hardest-hit areas and are providing medical support to affected citizens and military personnel.

National Guard helicopters are supporting firefighting efforts throughout New Orleans, dropping more than 120,000 gallons of water over housing fires.

---

## GENERAL

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

### **Louisiana Guard Troops Head Home; Majority Will Aid In Hurricane Relief**

The Concord Monitor

September 8, 2005

By Ellen Knickmeyer

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Hundreds of Louisiana **National Guard** soldiers deployed in Iraq were in Kuwait yesterday as a first stop on the way home, where the majority of their 3,700-strong brigade was likely to help with hurricane relief, U.S. military officials said.

The military was also sending advance teams to help members of the Louisiana Guard's 256th Brigade Combat Team with their own families' disaster assistance, as well as 100 military chaplains to counsel the veterans returning to devastation at home.

"There's no question they got a double whammy after a year in a very tough combat environment and then a catastrophe like this, which might be the biggest disaster in U.S. history," Brig. Gen. Sean Byrne, the U.S. military's director of personnel management, said at Camp Victory in Kuwait.

Nearly 550 of the Louisiana brigade's troops lost homes or loved ones or were otherwise affected by Hurricane Katrina, said Lt. Col. Debbie Haston-Hilger, a U.S. military spokeswoman in Kuwait. Scores of the soldiers have family members not yet accounted for, she said. The brigade, which served in Baghdad, was coming to the end of its normal rotation, military officials said.

Sgt. John Roger, 30, of lower St. Bernard Parish, said his wife and two children were safely at his mother-in-law's house in Kansas. But a neighbor back in Louisiana who was riding out the storm on her roof took a picture of Roger's house floating by, he said.

Asked where his house was now, Roger said: "I don't know. Probably in the Gulf somewhere."

In Baghdad, Roger said, he was in convoys that were hit by roadside bombs at least 10

times. A car bomb claimed the life of another sergeant in his unit, he said.

Before Katrina, "I was looking forward to getting home, taking some time off, getting back into life," he said.

The military was trying to speed transport home for the Louisiana Guard members, the U.S. military said separately in a statement in Baghdad. The entire brigade was expected to be out of Iraq by the third week of this month. Most were expected to help with Katrina relief, said the brigade's commander, Brig. Gen. John Basilica.

"The vast majority of soldiers in this brigade are anxious and ready to help," Basilica said in a statement.

They might be ordered or allowed to take part in state relief efforts in Louisiana, or they might simply be demobilized at Fort Polk, La., and return to civilian life, Lt. Col. Dave Sheridan, a **National Guard** member from New York state, said at Camp Victory.

A Mississippi **National Guard** unit based south of Baghdad also had hundreds of members affected by the hurricane. They are not due to return until January.

---

## New Program Aims To Help National Guard Families In NC

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

WFMY-TV 2 News

September 12, 2005

Greensboro, NC -- The Defense Department is testing a new program in North Carolina that organizes local agencies, services and individuals to help families of **National Guard** members.

The Defense Department has given a one-point-eight million dollar grant to operate Citizen Soldier in five areas in the state, the Triad, Asheville, Charlotte, Rocky Mount and Wilmington.

Unlike most active-duty personnel, who live on or near military bases and have access to a range of support services, Reserve and Guard members are scattered throughout the state's 100 counties. Retired Navy Commander Roman Bowles is leading the effort in the Triad. He says families of Guard members often have no idea where to turn for help.

---

## **Hotline: One-Stop Shop for Guard Families affected by Hurricane Katrina**

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

By Gary Hicks

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. (9/2/2005) — Families of deployed Guard members affected by Hurricane Katrina, should call the National Guard helpline (1-888-777-7731) as soon as possible.

By calling the number above and the National Guard will be able to contact the deployed Guardsman and let them know of the family's current situation.

"There are four ways to connect with their service member. Either through the Family Assistance Center (FAC), state Family Program director, wing Family Program coordinator, or through the rear detachment of their unit," said Col. Anthony Baker, Chief of the National Guard Bureau Family Programs. "We will bridge that gap for them by making sure they have all of the information necessary. In cases where they can't make that contact, we will make it for them."

Deployed service members can also call the hotline to contact their families.

"If a service member calls in and asks us to find their family, we'll call one or all of the services in that state and say, 'please connect, find the family and get back to us,' so we can let that service member know that they are all right," Baker said.

If a deployed service member cannot call one of the toll free numbers, they can make contact through [www.army.mil/ako](http://www.army.mil/ako) or [www.guardfamily.org](http://www.guardfamily.org) Web sites.

Baker and his team of coordinators have already been successful in contacting deployed service members with family information.

In addition to helping Guard families and service members make contact, operators at the hotline can assist families in getting help and services from federal, state and local agencies.

"Once they call the hotline, the person can expect a live person to answer the phone, listen to their issue or concern, provide information, or provide a referral or outreach to another agency," Baker said. "Before we hang up the phone, we'll contact the Family Program director or other assisting agency while they are still on line and let them know, what their issues are and what type of assistance they need. The two are then connected."

The assistance provided through the hotline is very extensive and all encompassing. National Guard Family Program personnel are deeply connected with numerous federal, state and local agencies. This partnership allows them to assist families with those operating in the immediate geographic location.

No matter what the problem or issue, Family Programs has the ability to find, contact and connect the family with the proper service. Such as the American Red Cross, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, American Legion, Department of Veterans Affairs and

other services operating in the area.

Numbers to call:

1-888-777-7731 for emergencies.

1-800-342-9647 for a Family Program Office near you.

Fast Facts:

- Family Assistance Centers were established in 2003
- There are 430 FACs nationwide
- FACs provide services, support, information, referral and outreach efforts to families of service members.
- Centered around Joint Forces Headquarters in each state.
- Deeply connected with the local community and services
- Help is not limited to the National Guard. FACs will provide services to anyone
- If a service is not directly available through an FAC, the FAC coordinator will contact the proper servicing agency

---

## **Displaced Military Families Can Seek Safe Haven Within United States**

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

By Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (9/7/2005) — Military family members ordered to evacuate military installations in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama due to Hurricane Katrina are now authorized to select an alternate safe haven anywhere in the continental United States, defense officials confirmed today.

David S. C. Chu, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, announced the new policy in a memo sent to the service secretaries Sept. 1.

The authority applies to family members whose housing was declared uninhabitable following the hurricane, Chu wrote.

Families affected by the policy qualify for up to two months of advance pay, and military family members will receive safe haven allowances for up to 180 days after arriving at their alternate safe haven location, Chu wrote.

Allowances will be paid in accordance with the Joint Forces Travel Regulation, with calculations generally following rules for temporary duty travel: the actual cost of lodging, plus a separate meal and incidental allowance, explained Air Force Lt. Col. Al Bruner, from Chu's office.

Family members age 12 and over will receive travel pay and 100 percent of the per diem for their safe haven location for the first 30 days, Bruner said. DoD will pay full travel costs and 50 percent of the per diem rate for family members under age 12.

For more information, servicemembers should contact the Defense Finance and Accounting Service's 24-hour, toll-free hotline at (800) 756-4571 and request option 6.

---

End

[\*Back to Table of Contents\*](#)

---