

Guardlife

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NEW JERSEY NATIONAL GUARD



177th Fighter Wing Returns from Iraq

May 2006

Guardlife

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Cover

Home from Iraq

Family members greet the 177th Fighter Wing as approximately 200 wing members returned on April 8. For more information on the Wing's deployment turn to page 12. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA.

Inside Cover

CST Trains (And Buses)

Members of the 21st Civil Support Team perform a sweep on a New Jersey Transit bus during an exercise at the Kearny, N.J., maintenance facility on March 22. The exercise's purpose was for CST members to work with their New Jersey Transit Police counterparts and familiarize themselves with the buses and trains that comprise the New Jersey public transit system. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.

TAG's MESSAGE - You, THE RECRUITER

By Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, The Adjutant General - New Jersey

Every Soldier and Airmen in the New Jersey National Guard is a marketer's dream. The perfect combination of qualities which people look up to or inspire others to emulate.

You are the embodiment of selfless service, integrity, determination, motivation, leadership, loyalty and respect for others. Those outstanding personal traits are wrapped up in a drug-free and physically fit body.

You are taking advantage of free college tuition or VA educational benefits to further your education to expand your civilian and military careers. You are planning your future by putting away a portion of your Guard pay into the Thrift Savings Plan to save money for retirement.

You are the best advertisement we have.

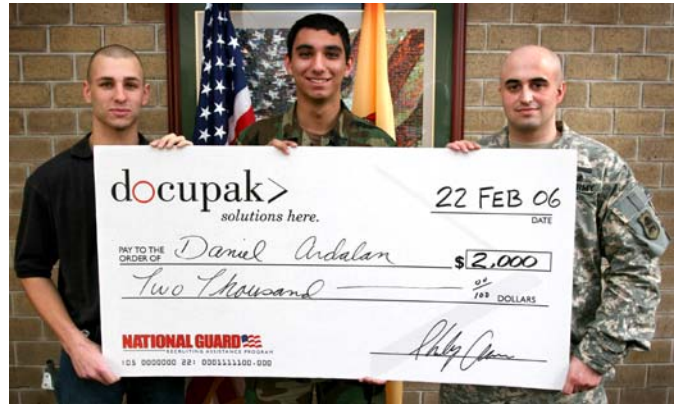
If a recruiter approached your friend or relative to talk about joining the National Guard, no matter how good a presentation about the benefits, that recruiter is still viewed as a stranger. Every word or idea is questioned when it comes from a stranger, no matter how personable or persuasive they may be.

It comes down to a matter of trust.

Now imagine that same conversation with you talking to a friend or relative about the Guard, the whole discussion has a reference point, you. The people that are within your sphere of influence have seen the positive changes in your life and the how your passion for success has opened a vast landscape of options for the future.

Belonging to the National Guard is not a commodity. It is commitment, a lifestyle, and a choice. And you are the best person to explain why you have chosen the New Jersey National Guard.

That is why it is so important for everyone who wears the uniform, especially our younger enlisted



G-RAP Recruiter Receives Check

In a ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters – New Jersey, Rutgers University student and Army ROTC cadet Daniel Ardalan (center) received \$2,000 for serving as a Recruiting Assistant (RA) March 10. Through Ardalan and recruiter Sgt. Nick Heitzmann's (right) efforts, Anthony Sottile (left) became the first New Jersey Army National Guardsman recruited through the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program (G-RAP). Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.

and officers, to take the time to join the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program (G-RAP).

The Program works with the Guard's greatest asset, you.

You have heard the phrase that "every Soldier/Airman is a recruiter," many times over the years.

Now with G-RAP, you actually learn to become a Recruiter Assistant. You get paid as you train to help others and earn money for every recruit you assist in joining the Guard.

Tapping our strength from within will assure the New Jersey Army and Air National Guard has the right personnel to protect the state and nation as we take the fight to the enemy in the Global War on Terrorism.

HOW TO BECOME A RECRUITER ASSISTANT

Go to <http://guardrecruitingassistant.com/> and pick either Army or Air National Guard. Take the review class (prepares you for the qualification class), then submit an online application at <http://guardrecruitingassistant.com/>

Fill out the online application form and click "submit". Read the Contractor's Agreement and click on "I Agree", then choose the Opt-in link within the confirmation e-mail

(you will receive this message from grap@docupak.com)

You will receive a second e-mail from grap@docupak.com announcing your acceptance into the Guard Recruiter Assistance Program and directing to you login to begin training. Once you become qualified, you will receive \$50 and a welcome packet from Docupak.

CSM's Message: Farewell

By New Jersey State Command Sergeant Major Richard S Adkins, Jr.



Well after 38 years of working with and serving alongside many of you, I find myself saying it's time to go. I have had the pleasure of serving in Battery A and C, 4th Battalion, 112th Field Artillery; Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 4th Battalion, 112th Field Artillery; the 117th Maintenance Company, the 119th Maintenance Battalion, Joint Force Headquarters and finally as the State Command Sergeant Major for the New Jersey Army National Guard.



Whether I have served alongside you, mentored you, supervised you, or worked for you, the experience has undoubtedly impacted my life.



Times have changed and so have I; so while I can still complete a marathon and walk up a set of stairs (smile), I would like to spend time enjoying my family, my friends and my number one hobby: drag racing.



Despite challenges presented, one of the lessons I have learned and continue to believe is that a military leader succeeds by following the regulations and upholding standards. Remember to always instill the Army values: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless-Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage and to "do the right thing, even when nobody is looking."



In leaving you behind, I pray that your lives are filled with challenging and rewarding experiences. 🇺🇸



Paraguayan Air Force Visits 108th

By Senior Airman Robbie Finley, 108ARW/PA; photos courtesy 108ARW/PA



Members of the Paraguayan Air Force visited the 108th Air Refueling Wing March 3 through the 16.

The 14-member team, headed up by Paraguayan Air Force Lt. Gen. Arnulfo Soley, spent time in New Jersey furthering their knowledge about the maintenance and operations of the KC-135E Stratotanker, which is almost identical to the Boeing 707, Paraguay's presidential aircraft, and the plane the Paraguayan Air Force crew maintains.

"We are known as the heart of South America," Lt. Gen. Soley said of his home country.

The trip was conceived of in October, when Maj. Timothy Burke, a 141st Air refueling Squadron pilot, was asked by the Office of Defense Cooperation, Paraguay, if the 108th would be willing to assist the Paraguayan Air Force in learning more about the maintenance of their aircraft, since the aircraft are so similar.

"We told them yes, that it would be a great opportunity," remarked Senior Master Sgt. Robert Dempsey, Maintenance Superintendent, 108th Logistics Squadron. He added, "The Office of Defense Cooperation took care of all clearances, diplomatic issues and funding."

A team of four, headed by Senior Master Sgt. Dempsey, traveled to Paraguay November 5, and returned to the U.S. November 15.

"We helped them evaluate maintenance conditions of



Lt. Gen. Soley climbs out of the boom operator's pit after observing a mid-air refueling mission on March 15.



Members of the Paraguayan Air Force pose for photo during a refueling flight on a 108th KC-135E Stratotanker. Left to right, Lt. Col. Aristides Dominguez, Col. Luis Noceda, Lt. Gen. Arnulfo Soley are escorted by Tech. Sgt. Porfirio Diaz, 108th ARW Quality Assurance Inspector.

their aircraft, their maintenance programs and compared similar aircraft problems," noted Senior Master Sgt. Dempsey.

While here, the Paraguayan Air Force members worked side-by-side with their 108th counterparts, but also had time to check out New Jersey in their spare time.

"We liked the food... (and) we are making good friends," Lt. Gen. Soley said.

Besides learning useful maintenance tips, the Paraguayan Air Force toured the base and took trips on a C-17 Globemaster III and a KC-135E. Everyone involved felt that the visit was very productive.

"It was an outstanding effort from all involved. The exchange was very productive, and our people gained a new appreciation for the Paraguayan Air Force," Senior Master Sgt. Dempsey said.

The Office of Defense Cooperation is already working on a return trip. 🇵🇷

SIGNAL WELCOMED HOME



On March 10 and April 1, Welcome Home and Freedom Salute ceremonies were held at the National Guard Armory in Westfield for Headquarters and Headquarters Company and A Company and at the Cherry Hill Armory for B and C Companies, 250th Signal Battalion.

The 250th had served in Iraq from November 2004 to November 2005 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Freedom Salute Campaign is one of the largest Army National Guard recognition endeavors in history, designed to publicly acknowledge Army National Guard soldiers and those who supported them during the President's call to duty for recent military operations. Photo credits: top and right: Capt. Jon Powers, 444MPAD. Bottom right and below: Lt. Col. Roberta Niedt, NJDMAVA/PAO. 🇺🇸





Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Robert Stephenson, NJDMAVA/PA

3RD - 112TH FA RETURNS HOME

By Sgt. 1st Class Robert Stephenson, NJDMAVA/PA

Members of the 3rd, Battalion, 112th Field Artillery returned from their year-long deployment to Heidelberg, Stuttgart and Wurzburg, Germany and Pisa and Vicenza, Italy.

The 220 Soldiers in the Battalion were comprised of members of Alpha and Charlie companies, as well as volunteers from the 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry; 2nd Battalion, 113th Infantry; 2nd Battalion, 102nd Armor; and the 5th Squadron, 117th Cavalry. There was also one Soldier from the 253rd Transportation Company. The remaining thirty Soldiers will return in the early summer.

The Soldiers, a mix of Artillerymen, Cavalry, Tankers and Infantrymen were all trained and awarded the Military Police military occupation specialty code at Ft. Leonard Wood prior to the overseas deployment. In addition to performing their MP mission, many had the opportunity to fulfill their Basic Non-Commissioned Officer Course requirement and two Soldiers even earned the Air Assault badge at the base in Grafenwoehr, Germany.



Photos credits: top right and right: Kryn Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA; second from left and left: Sgt. 1st Class Robert Stephenson, NJDMAVA/PA.

Toms River Welcomes Home Soldiers



The Toms River community held a Welcome Home Ceremony for C Battery, 3rd Battalion, 112th Field Artillery at the High School's Ritacco Center April 12. During the ceremony, the unit formalized their mission by swapping the Military Police guidon for the Field Artillery colors. The event was attended by more than 1,000 family members, friends and community leaders. Photos by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.





Alfors Is All For New Test

Photo and story by Sgt. 1st Class Robert Stephenson, NJDMAVA/PA

"The day isn't over until you get a workout in," is the mantra of Col. Ronald Alfors, Air Chief of Staff, New Jersey Air National Guard.

These words embody the latest directives from the Air Force that state all members must be physically fit. Commanders and supervisors are to incorporate fitness into the Air Force culture, establishing an environment for members to maintain physical fitness and health to meet mission requirements and deliver a fit and ready force.

Alfors takes his mission personally.

"What we need to do for the traditional Guard member is lead by example," notes Alfors, who says it was a pride thing for him. "I want to be able to say we are not requiring airman Smith to do something that the leadership has not bought into. You don't want them to do it in a way that says, I'm just trying to get a passing score."

On that count, Alfors has gone the extra mile. Literally.

"I've been working out over the years, and seriously running the last five," he says. "Last summer we did our fitness test and we got weighed during that period. I was 177 pounds; my waist was 35 and a half inches. And I actually did very well and maxed out all the events but I did not get a perfect score."

Not content with those results, Alfors stepped up his regimen (see box) and this January, half a year later, he was tested again.

"We tested here in January and I now have a 30 and a half inch waist and I'm 155 pounds even," the wiry 52-year-old notes with pride. And he scored 100 points on the revised Air Force physical fitness test.

Not everyone in the Air Guard will lose 22 pounds, five inches off their waist, and max the total score on the test, but Alfors wants every Air



Guard member to know that he is serious about the new Air Force physical fitness standards.

"We've turned the corner here particularly within the last year because I think it has sunk in over the previous two years that this is serious and it isn't going away," said Alfors. "A lot of this is trying to encourage people to be fit. The fitness test ends up being a score and a gauge, but the real emphasis is for people to be fit and to get on a program and hopefully on a frequency that is benefiting them."

There is a practical reason why he, and the Air Force, are placing more emphasis on fitness. Since the advent of the Global War on terrorism, the Operational Tempo for Air Guard deployments has increased. Air Guardsmen, are being deployed more frequently, for longer periods of time and to more hostile environments.

"Your ability to react, to keep your energy level up, to construct a base, or if you end up in a combat role, I don't think you can underscore the need to be fit," he stresses. "That's where the rubber meets the road. It's part of the job description. It has to be."

Editors Note: This is the first of a series of articles on improving or maintaining your fitness levels and overall health. If you have a fitness success story whether it is improving test scores or losing weight Guardlife would like to hear from you. Soldiers or Airmen please contact the NJDMAVA Public Affairs Office at (609)530-6950 with your success story.

HIS PERSONAL REGIMEN:

400 push-ups a day. 300 crunches a day.

A three mile run in less than 22 minutes.

Other Tips:

"The trick is NOT locking yourself into a particular time of day. That way you don't tend to skip it if you miss your prescribed time. If you like to go at lunchtime but you know you have a meeting or something else at that time then schedule PT for early that morning. You've got to get yourself in a habit of working out on a regular basis. You should get to a point where you feel bad if you're not exercising. You should be thinking that the day isn't over until you get a workout in."

AVIATION HITS THE STREETS IN PARADE

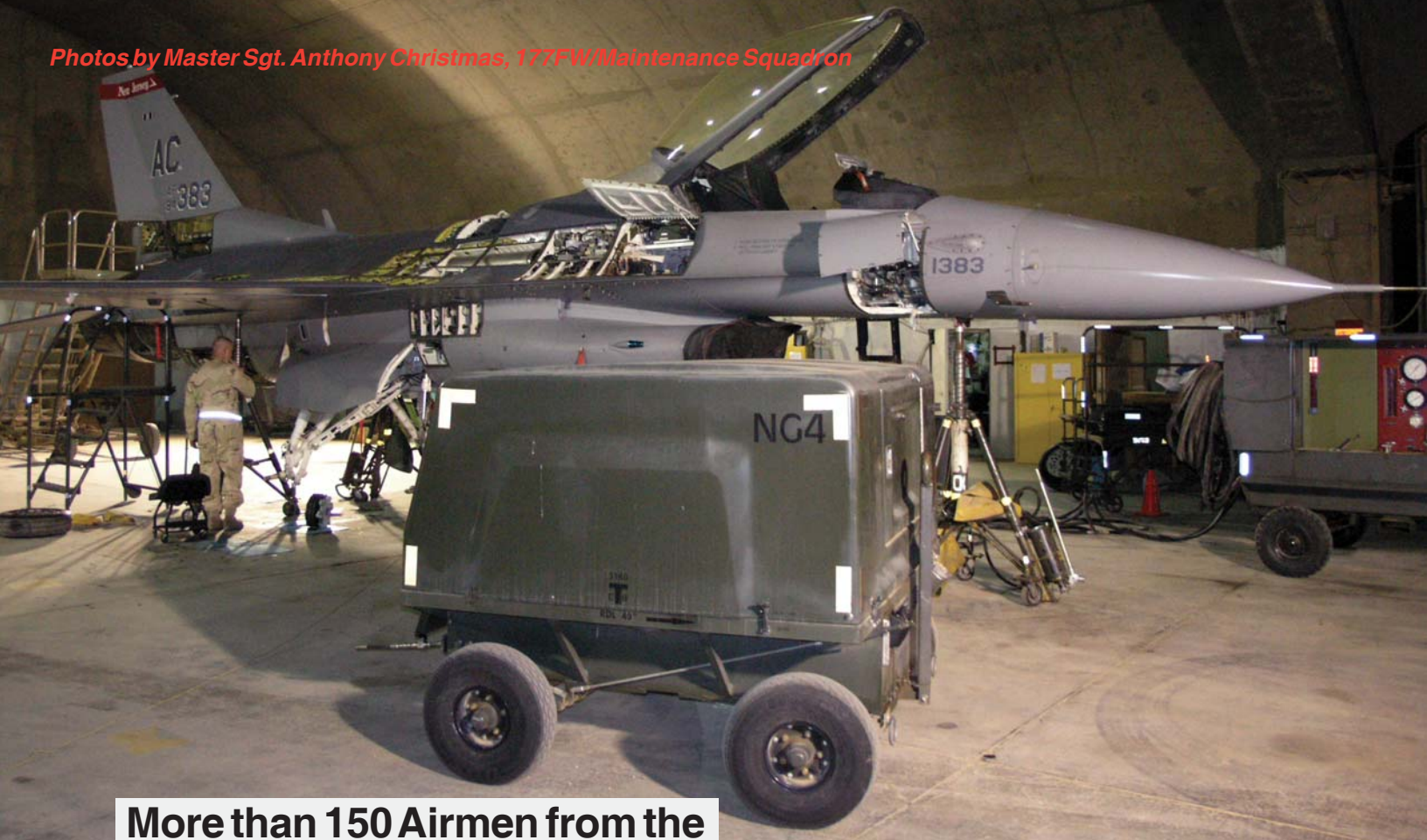
Photo by Staff Sgt. Joseph Donnelly, 444MPAD



Lt. Col. Mark A. Preston (bottom), Commander, 1st-150th General Support Aviation Battalion (GSAB) leads the Soldiers of both the GSAB and Detachment 1, 642nd Division Aviation Support Battalion in a parade following the Freedom Salute ceremony at the National Guard Armory in West Trenton on April 2. The parade was followed by a barbecue at the Brig. Gen. Betor Memorial Park in West Trenton.

177th DEPLOYS TO BALAD

Photos by Master Sgt. Anthony Christmas, 177FW/Maintenance Squadron



More than 150 Airmen from the

177th Fighter Wing deployed to Iraq on Feb. 19. This contingent coupled with previous deployments brings the total to 229 unit members supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom at Balad Air Base in Iraq. The deployments can last anywhere from 45 to 120 days. The 177th Fighter Wing combined forces with the 158th Fighter Wing, Burlington, Vt., and the 122nd Fighter Wing, Fort Wayne, Ind., to meet the Aerospace Expeditionary Force requirements. The three units provided F-16C aircraft, pilots, maintenance and support personnel while assigned to the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing at Balad Air Base. While deployed, the 177th will augment existing U.S. forces through the use of precision-guided munitions, enhancing the close air support mission of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing.

Above: An F-16C Fighting Falcon undergoes phase inspection before the next day's mission sorties. Below: Master Sgt. Kenneth J. Krebs works on an F-16 during the inspection. Phase inspections enable crew chiefs and other maintainers to keep the aircraft flying through timed maintenance programs.



AIR BASE, IRAQ



Crew Chief Tech. Sgt. Frank Spano checks the forward avionics bay on an F-16 during the aircraft's phase inspection.



Left to right, Tech. Sgt. Richard Miller and Senior Airman Robert M. Maddrey, II check a technical order before beginning work at a test station.



More than 150 members of the 177th Fighter Wing gathered at the headquarters for the deployment to Iraq on Feb 19. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA.

Challenge Youth — Changing Lives Like Mine

CHALLENGE Youth — CHANGING LIVES LIKE MINE

Cadet Steve Matias, New Jersey National Guard Youth Challenge Academy

I was cutting class; hanging with the wrong crowd; I severed any good ties I had and I cut myself out from my family. By the time I realized where I was headed I was completely lost.

Many would say I was a screw up, a loser and a disappointment, but lucky for me I found the New Jersey National Guard Youth Challenge Academy (NJNGYCA). The NJNGYCA is a New Jersey National Guard supported youth program at Fort Dix designed to give high school level dropouts a second opportunity at life.

As a Youth Challenge cadet, we have the eight Core Components and the Honor Code to abide by. This covers anything from staying out of a fellow cadet's area to not lying. But there's more. The core components consist of subjects like educational excellence, life coping skills and responsible citizenship. These, along with the honor code help the staff enforce a structured environment.

One of the major opportunities that Challenge offers is the GED (General Education Diploma). Many would say that a GED is nothing but a simple test. To a Challenge Cadet it is what we work for. The GED is the stepping stone to our future that makes our goals accessible.

Before Challenge I had no goals. I lived day-by-day working at a dead end job. Realizing I wasn't getting anywhere fast I decided to find a way to get my diploma.

Though there are so many other cadets at Challenge with harder lives and tougher backgrounds we all share one common thing, the longing for a future. We are not at Challenge to burn time. We are there for ourselves, to attain a goal: making people and ourselves happy for a change!

"At risk," is a common phrase used when describing a person before they become a Challenge Cadet.

But what is "at risk?" I see "at risk," as a term that describes teens as a whole who are not enrolled at a high school, may be involved in gangs or anything that isn't going to benefit them in the future or let them prosper from.

I was a loser, I was a disappointment, I was a screw-up, and I was "AT RISK." But a simple five and a half month course at Fort Dix changed me. Not only did it open my eyes to show me that I could succeed but as one of my fellow cadets Timothy Keefe states, "As the program nears an end we have been given the tools for the future...our lives."

One year ago I was never thinking about preparing for my high school graduation or getting ready for college in

September. Challenge took me from the wrong crowd, enforced school and instilled family values again. Challenge changed me. I overcame the "challenge," and now as I prepare for the future I take it into my own hands.

I will succeed and I will prove everybody who ever doubted me wrong. I am a person, not an "at risk" youth. I am a Challenge cadet and now I am a high school graduate with a future, awaiting the next task or challenge that comes my way.

If this program sounds remotely like it can help somebody you know please help them. This was my second chance it could be theirs.

For more information call the New Jersey Youth Challenge Academy at 1-800-997-5587 or go to their website at www.ngycp.org/state/nj.



Cadet Stephen Matias (second from left) and the New Jersey National Guard Youth Challenge Academy Public Affairs staff (l-r, back row): Cadets' Jesus Torres, Matias, Jose Ramos, Robert Gaworski, Jasmine Pittman and James Shade. Front row (l-r): Cadets Luis Valle and Meghan Criscione. Photo courtesy NJYCA.

FREEDOM SALUTES HONOR SOLDIERS

Background photo by Sgt. 1st Class Robert Stephenson, NJDMAVA/PA



Maj. Walter Laskowski, Commander, 150th Finance Detachment, awards Sgt. Mark Gibbs, the Combat Action Badge. Photo by Spc. Sherwood Goodenough, 444MPAD.



Staff Sgt. Joseph Donnelly, 444th Mobile Public Affairs, poses with his children Tess and Andrew. Photo by Spc. Sherwood Goodenough, 444MPAD.

Three units were recognized for their participation in Operations' Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom at the Flemington Armory on March 12. Members of the 150th and 350th Finance Detachments spent one year in Iraq supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom while the 444th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment spent more than 18 months stationed at Fort Dix, where they supported the Fort Dix Public Affairs Office. At a ceremony at the Hammonton High School, members of the 119th Corps Support Battalion were honored on March 11. The Soldiers and their family members were honored with flags and coins commemorating their service during the Global War on Terrorism. 🇺🇸



Spc. William Buckley (right), 119th Corps Support Battalion, receives the Army Commendation Medal from Brig. Gen. Frank Carlini (center), Deputy Commander, Joint Force Headquarters- New Jersey and Lt. Col. Sharon Tootell (left), Commander, 119th CSB. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Robert Stephenson, NJDMAVA/PA.

News Guard Families Can Use

Compiled by the Guardlife Staff

DEALING WITH REUNION, DEALING WITH THE RETURN

From the 177th Fighter Wing Family Assistance Center

A great deal of attention is paid to the separation side of military deployment, when military personnel leave families and partners for overseas operations. But the return and reunion with families and partners can be just as stressful - sometimes more so.

The difficulties and strains of return can be surprising and sometimes painfully disappointing to military families.

Be prepared for exhaustion, jet lag, and unpredictability and changes in the return schedule.

What the returning service member can do:

Make a conscious effort to make only positive comments about any changes you notice when you get home.

Look for positive changes, such as how your children have grown and matured, new skills they have learned, or household improvement your spouse has managed. Tell family members that you are proud of them.

Show your appreciation for the extra work your spouse or loved one has taken on while you were away.

What the returning service member can do:

Make time for your family.

Take time to talk with your spouse or partner.

Take time to understand how the family has changed while you've been gone.

Spend time alone with each member of your family.

Watch your spending. It can be tempting to celebrate your return with dinners out or special gifts.

What the spouse or partner at home can do:

Do something special to welcome the returning service member home. Make a banner, prepare a meal with your partner's favorite foods, or have your children make a special homecoming gift. But don't be hurt if your spouse is too tired upon arrival to notice how you've prepared.

Expect your spouse to be a little hurt at seeing how well you have managed on your own. Explain that while you're proud that you were able to keep things going, you want to get back to sharing those responsibilities. Talk about who will do what now that you're both home.



Hero Packs Presented

Marie Durling (left) and Amanda Balas (right), New Jersey National Guard Family Programs, award Storm Yosko a Hero Pack at the National Guard Armory in Vineland April 7. Hero Packs are distributed through the Operation Military Kids program. Photo by Donna Nelson, NJNG Family Programs.

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Counseling Hotline (1-866-838-7654)

INCENTIVE FLIGHTS AVAILABLE

By Staff Sgt. Barb Harbison, 108ARW/PA

I believe I have one of the best jobs a person can have in the military: working in Public Affairs. I am fortunate to have worked in the field both while active duty Army and now in the New Jersey Air National Guard.

While I haven't gone to all the cool places that the pilots and crew have visited, a recent weekend found me traveling on a KC-135E to Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., with a group of Airmen from the 108th Civil Engineering Squadron who were going there for a Silver Flag exercise. I was "embedded" for a few days during the exercise.

I had a great time, wish I could have spent the whole week with them, but Monday afternoon found me back in the Stratotanker flying back to the chilly climes of New Jersey. On the way back home, the crew was performing a refueling and as the sole passenger, I got to watch the entire experience.

I'm lucky. I have escorted various groups on their flights so I have seen a number of refuelings. But this one was special because I didn't have to share it with anyone. I got to watch the entire refueling. It fascinates me that I am thousands of feet in the air and I can see the face of the pilot in the plane below me during the refueling.

A one-time incentive flight is available for all active, drilling members of both the New Jersey Army and Air National Guard and their spouses. And take it from me – it is an experience. (My husband took advantage of the spouse incentive flight two years ago and still talks about his flight.)

I would encourage any Guard member or spouse who has not taken the incentive flight to sign up for one as soon



An F-15 Eagle from the 104th Fighter Wing, Mass., is refueled by a 108th Air Refueling Wing KC-135 from McGuire Air Force Base, N.J. The photo was taken October 30, 2002. Photo by Kenn Mann, 305th Communications Squadron.

as you can. It's free and it's fun.

Just remember to dress warm as the planes can get chilly and bring your camera to memorialize your special moments. Do read your manual to know how to shut off the automatic flash as the flash is not permitted; it could distract the pilots and boom operators and we wouldn't want that.

To sign up for a flight: contact the 108th Public Affairs Office by e-mail at pa.108arw@njmcgu.af.mil or by phone at (609) 754-4173.

New Jersey Awarded 2005 Air Force Organizational Excellence

National Guard Bureau, Washington, D.C.

New Jersey's Air National Guard Headquarters was among the nation's top according to a recent announcement by Maj. Gen. Charles V. Ickes II, Deputy Director, Air National Guard, National Guard Bureau, Washington, D.C.

The Air Force Organizational Excellence Award (AFOEA) is awarded to state Air National Guard headquarters based upon meritorious service.

Headquarters, New Jersey Air National Guard, located at Fort Dix, joined California, Pennsylvania and



Vermont Headquarters in this honor.

"The competition was extremely keen, and each winner is commended for having been selected from an outstanding group of nominees," noted Maj. Gen. Ickes. "The dedication and commitment of the members of these organizations enable the Air National Guard to fulfill its commitment to the missions of peacekeeping, humanitarian relief, domestic improvement, and most important of all - defense of America. Again, our congratulations to the best of the best."

Keeping Good Comms With Your Employer

Story by Kryn P. Westhoven, NJDMAVA/PA



Hank Pierre, Executive Assistant for the New Jersey Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve briefs a returning Soldier on the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Robert Stephenson, NJDMAVA/PA.

Just because there is Federal law that protects your civilian employment while serving in the National Guard, does not mean you shouldn't keep your employer informed of drills or during a deployment.

Communication is vital and a friendlier way of handling your service in uniform issues, rather than invoking federal statutes to keep the peace in the workplace.

"Employees need to keep in contact with their employers," said Hank Pierre, Executive Assistant for the New Jersey Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR).

Pierre, a retired Air Guard Master Sergeant works fulltime at the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs handling the day to day ESGR operations and is assisted by more than 150 volunteers across the state.

USERRA (Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act) came into law in 1994. Instead of making disputes a federal case, there are trained volunteer ESGR Ombudsmen that work to mediate conflicts between management and the worker.

During reconstitution or in-processing, Pierre or an ESGR volunteer talks to each returning Soldier or Airmen about the facts of USERRA and time frame you have to return to your civilian job.

- USERRA provides protection to anyone absent from a position of civilian employment because of uniformed service if: advance written or verbal notice was given to the civilian employer; the cumulative length of absence(s) does not exceed 5 years; and the person's character of service was not adverse.

- A service member must report to work or submit an application for reemployment within a specified period based on the duration of service.

Less than 31 days: Return no later than the first full regularly scheduled work period on the first full calendar day.

More than 30 days, but less than 181 days: Apply no later than 14 days.

More than 180 days: Apply no later than 90 days.


It is worth noting that failure to report or make timely application does not automatically result in loss of reemployment rights, but does subject the service member to the rules of conduct, policies and general practices established by the employer, which may result in loss of USERRA protections.

There are certain circumstances under which a civilian employer may not be required to reemploy a service member. However, the employer has the burden of proving reemployment is not possible within those circumstances.

- **Benefits:** Service members are entitled to seniority and all the benefits of seniority with their civilian employer as if continuously employed.

- **Health Care:** Service members may elect to continue the health care coverage provided by their civilian employer for up to eighteen months. If the period of coverage exceeds 30 days, the employer can require the employee to pay 102 percent of the full premium costs. For periods of 30 days or less, the employer may require the employee to pay only the employee share of the coverage, if any.

- **Pension Benefit Plans:** Employees are to be treated as if no absence in employment occurred and may make up contributions to an employee pension benefit plan. Employers are also required to fund any obligation attributable to the employer of the employee's benefit pension plan.

If you have any questions on your rights or want to nominate your employer for the Patriot Award for their support contact Pierre at 609-530-6879. There are web-based resources at the state ESGR site at www.njesgr.org/ or the National Committee address www.esgr.mil. 

SHORT ROUNDS: BRUNCH, NEW SIGNAL COMMANDER AND NGB AWARD



Airmen's Families Saluted

Michelle Taylor Buster (in white dress) and Minister John Howard, Jr. leads the End Time Levites in the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner" on March 19 during a special Sunday Gospel Brunch held at The House of Blues located in Atlantic City. The brunch was for the families of deployed Airmen from the 177th Fighter Wing in addition to recently returned members of the New Jersey Army National Guard. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA. 🇺🇸



Signal Gets New Commander

Incoming commander Maj. Todd D. Smith (left) receives the 250th Signal Battalion's colors from Col. William Rochelle (right) during the Battalion's Change of Command ceremony at the National Guard Armory in Westfield on April 2. The 250th just recently returned from a year-long deployment to Iraq. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Robert Stephenson, NJDMAVA/PA. 🇺🇸

177th MPF Receives NGB Award



The 177th Fighter Wing Military Personnel Flight (MPF) was recently recognized by the National Guard Bureau as one of nine Air National Guard Outstanding Military Personnel Flights of the Year. The MPF is headed by Capt. Diana Brown who was named as the Air National Guard Base Level Junior Personnel Manager of the Year for 2005. Their accomplishments include the mobilization of more than 600 unit members in support of ongoing contingencies and

exercises as well as personnel support provided for Air Sovereignty Alert and Hurricane Katrina relief operations. In addition they serviced 913 retirees and more than 100 Coast Guard members for identification cards and various updates and 700 plus ID cards for unit and family members. Pictured are front row: Capt. Diana Brown, Tech. Sgt. Barbara Long, Senior Airmen Dorothy Siciliano, Chief Master Sgt. Jean Perry and Master Sgt. Michelle Pierce. Middle Row: Tech. Sgt. Rose Examolitis, Master Sgt. Diajuana Porter, Senior Master Sgt. Carmen Spinnato, Airman 1st Class Jennifer Korman-Osburn, Staff Sgt. Chovone Tripp, Tech. Sgt. Tulip Appleton and Master Sgt. Rebecca Lee. Back row: Master Sgt. John White, Tech. Sgt. Tyra Causey, Staff Sgt. Ian Leonard, Senior Airmen Mark Gorman and Master Sgt. Pat McKernan. Not pictured: 2nd Lt. Joseph Russo, Senior Master Sgt. Jeanette Giza, Master Sgt. David Diaz, Tech. Sgt. Dustin Walker, Tech. Sgt. Christina Vidro, Staff Sgt. Cindy McNally and Airman 1st Class Nina Mercado. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Connors, 177FW/PA. 🇺🇸

SHORT ROUNDS: 119TH THANKS CHILDREN, CHIEFS RECOGNIZED, ALBANIAN VISIT AND BIT 'O' THE GREEN



Soldiers Serenaded

Spc. Kelly Crager (far left) and Sgt. Rechell Lewellen (second from left), both with the 119th Corps Support Battalion, listen as Mrs. Joan Kelly's first grade class sings "America To Me" during a school visit on March 17. The Soldiers visited Mullica Elementary School to thank the students for their support while the unit was in Iraq. The class adopted the 119th and supported them with letters and packages. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA.



New Chiefs Recognized

Left to right, John Sullivan and Michael Francis of the 177th Fighter Wing, and Tom Dickson of the 108th Air Refueling Wing pose after the Annual Chief's Recognition Ceremony on March 11 at the McGuire Enlisted Club. More than 250 individuals attended the event hosted by the Air Force Reserve and New Jersey Air National Guard Chiefs Groups. Absent is Chief Master Sgt. Don Martenz who was deployed to Iraq. Photo by Chief Master Sgt. James Leopardi, 177FW/LRS.



DAG Leads Albanian Visit

Brig. Gen. Maria Falca-Dodson (left) shakes hands with Albanian firefighters during a ceremony at which the New Jersey-Albania State Partnership Program donated a fire truck to the Albanian Fire Rescue Services Department. The fire truck will be used to support a weapons elimination project as well as supporting routine firefighting capabilities of the Fire Rescue Services Department. The DAG led a contingent of NJNG Soldiers and Airmen on a visit to the Republic of Albania Feb. 18 -25. Photo by Maj. Judie Marranco, JFHQ-NJ.



St. Patricks Day Observed

Members of the Operation Support Aviation Command celebrate St. Patrick's Day in Afghanistan. Pictured (l-r) Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kevin Devery, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Nick Brady, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jim Tobin, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Glenn Malin and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brett Beringer. Photo courtesy of OSACOM.

SHORT ROUNDS: AIR FORCE PICKS GUARDSMAN, RSTA FAREWELL, ANA TRAINERS AND SOLDIERS OF THE YEAR



White Chosen Airman of the Month

Senior Airman Wayne White (center), a firefighter with the 177th Fighter Wing, poses for a photo with Col. Kevin Kilb, Commander, 407th Air Expeditionary Group, and the command chief master sergeant after being chosen Airman of the Month at Talill Air Base, Iraq on Feb. 28. White, who is currently assigned to the 407th Air Expeditionary Group, will now compete at the wing level at Balad Air Base in Iraq. Photo courtesy 407th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs.



RSTA Prepares To Deploy

Col. Frank Caruso (right), commander of the 50th Brigade, spent time visiting with members of the 5th Battalion, 117th Reconnaissance, Surveillance, Target Acquisition (RSTA) and the 250th Brigade Support Battalion at Camp Shelby, Miss., on March 15. The Soldiers comprised part of the 1st Battalion, 34th Brigade Combat Team, which was training at Camp Shelby prior to deployment to Iraq later that month in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Robert Stephenson, NJDMAVA/PA.



Building A New Army

Maj. William Heineman (center) poses with members of the Afghan National Army (ANA). The Major is part of Task Force Phoenix whose mission is to provide trainers and mentors to help the government of Afghanistan build a professional army. Sixteen members of the New Jersey Army National Guard are serving in Afghanistan. Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Dario Marchena.



General Meets Soldiers Of The Year

Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, The Adjutant General of New Jersey, left, recently congratulated the Non-Commissioned Officers and Soldiers of the Year honorees from 2005 and 2006. The winners are, left to right, 2005 NCO of the Year, Staff Sgt. Harold Prickett, 253rd Transportation; 2006 NCO of the Year, Staff Sgt. Robert Freeman, Recruiting and Retention Command; 2006 Soldier of the Year, Spec. Hector Rivera, Recruiting and Retention Command and 2005 Soldier of the Year, Spec. Eric Symonds, Recruiting and Retention Command. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Robert Stephenson, NJDMAVA/PA.

New Jersey National Guard

NEW JERSEY ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

To Command Sergeant Major (E-9):

Vincent E. Bridgeforth
Thomas H. Slowinski
Richard Vander Clute

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Edward C. Camp
Patrick R. Connors
Thomas S. Decker
Raymond H. Hoffman
Gene L. Jones
Patrick A. Kildea
James J. Minch, III
Morales R. Rodriguez
Lavona A. Toplyn
Robert D. Vanbenschoten
Michael D. Warner

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Tammy L. Snyder

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Donald Chapman Jr.
Michael A. Edwards
Philip T. Hussa
Adam C. Johnson
Michael J. Klock
Eric C. Maney
Ruben Ortiz Jr.
Victoriano Rivera Jr.
James A. Smith
James A. Stahl
Gregory Tremarco
Jeffrey F. Williams
Robert J. Winthers

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Marvin A. Carroll Jr.
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Theresa M. Cole
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Dawn K. Crouse
Donald Daily
Terrence L. Daniels
Donju T. Frazier

Jarod J. Gatson
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John W. Kraemer
Richard J. Lee
Harry R. Martinez
Sabrina V. Mohammed
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Robert Rivera
Miguel A. Roldan
John Ruiz Jr.
Christopher Sarni
Christopher N. Scott
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Gerard J. Tanner
Cassan B. Taylor
John H. Tremper
Bruce Vega
Eric G. Weltner

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Pablo E. Chavez
William Clavell
Martin Coe Jr.
Justin G. Delia
Joseph D. Grillo
Kaissime Karim
Timothy A. Keesee
James R. Keller
Richard D. Liskowitz
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George J. O'Malley
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Joseph T. White
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Carlos A. Cabezas
Jameal R. Calhoun
William J. Camp Jr.
Thomas B. Coleman
Joseph W. Crincoli
Daniel J. Farnkopf
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Chad D. Wilson
Maladrique T. Wilson
Christopher A. Wombacher
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Shawn M. Bachman
Kaili S. Barrett
Eugene Butkovic
Byron L. Cerracchio Jr.
Nicole A. Cleary
Casey L. Cortes
Alexis A. Cruz
Christian J. Cruz
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Crystal L. Dancer
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Sarmiento L. A. Echavarria

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Quadisha E. Seickel
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Dennis Anton
Russell C. Atkinson
Jamile Barrera
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Walter A. Bielecki
Leandro D. Bonaldi
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Jordash M. Clark
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 Christopher J. Endicott
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 Mayra Y. Espinal
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 Scott Floystrop
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 Wayne R. White, II
 Thomas J. Wood

**NEW JERSEY AIR
 NATIONAL GUARD**
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 Jacqueline R. Jackson

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Thomas C. Allewelt
 John M. Budenas
 Robert E. Powell, Jr.
 Henry Roman
 Robert J. Ryan
 Gregory B. Stevens
 Mark A. Tait

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 (E-6):**

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 John S. Albino
 Dwayne P. Anthony
 Michael R. Biggs
 Julio E. Davila
 Ronald Esquiche
 Pamela J. Gabbard
 Randley Gonzalez
 Rose M. Kopala
 James P. Maribo
 Samuel P. Mooney
 Freddie L. Nabb, II
 Felix Respeto
 Steven E. Landis, Jr.
 Christopher R. Schauers
 Robert Stokes, Jr.
 Michael A. Thompson
 Mary M. Weisbecker
 Ginger M. White
 Ronald E. Wilkens, Jr.
 George C. Wutsch

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Agustin A. Alvarado,
 Christopher J. Bosch
 Misty L. Capanas
 Tyler A. Chytraus
 James P. Eckert
 Myriam L. Galindez

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Phillip P. Bunk
 Maria L. Curcio
 Eric M. Fuller
 Lucas G. Gunther
 Nathaniel J. Harris
 Jason M. Hartke
 Jose A. Monge
 John D. Parillo
 Frankie A. Perez
 Roger E. Rachelski
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 Rashaan A. O'Neal
 Christopher N. Palm
 Mark W. Ruff
 Nathan R. Schaefer
 David F. Spaeth
 Ahniesha C. Wallace

To Airman (E-2):

Erubeck E. Figueroa
 Fabiany R. Fonseca

**CONGRATULATIONS
 To ALL!**
*Compiled by
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 Paul B. Thompson, Jr.
 (Air).*

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**One Toll Free Phone
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LAST ROUND: 50TH PSB ASSUMES COMMAND

Story and photo courtesy of the 50TH PSB

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan --- On March 15, the colors of Task Force (TF) 50th Personnel Services Battalion (PSB) were uncased at a formal ceremony conducted at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

The Soldiers of the 50th PSB assumed the human resources and postal services mission from Task Force 510th PSB based in Mannheim, Germany.

"Today's Transfer of Authority Ceremony is a significant event for the Soldiers," remarked Lt. Col. Walter L. Alvarado, the Task Force commander. Alvarado's task force is comprised mostly of Army National Guard and

undergoing 45-days of mobilization training at Camp Atterbury, Ind. Since their arrival, 50th PSB Soldiers have been processing identification cards, promotion packets, passports, records updates, theater personnel accountability, casualty reporting and manifesting operations at the major Coalition Afghanistan Airfields. The Task Force has also processes an average of 30,000 pounds of inbound and outbound mail per day. Many Soldiers have had the opportunity to participate in the heart-stopping and eye-opening convoys. Master Sgt. Edgar Paulus, Battalion Operations Sergeant observed, "Once you go on one, you


Army Reserve units. Alvarado reminded the audience, which comprised of senior leaders from the 10th Mountain Division, that "America's wars cannot be won without the contributions of the Citizen-Soldiers of the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve."

Col. Larry Wyche, Commander, Joint Logistics Command, 10th Mountain Division stated that he had full confidence in the qualities and abilities of the Soldiers of the 50th PSB. "There is no doubt that this organization will make significant contributions to the fight...they are definitely an integral part of the 10th Mountain Division team."

The 50th arrived in Afghanistan on March 27 after

learn to appreciate not only your life but also the quality of life we enjoy at home."

Pfc. Kesha Stocks, an administrative specialist, stated that "I feel very enthusiastic about being a part of Task Force 50th PSB and serving my country here at Bagram."

Soldiers of Task Force 50th PSB are located at multiple Forward Operating Bases in Afghanistan. They are responsible for providing human resources services and postal support to more than 17,000 military and civilians in the Afghanistan Combined Joint Operations Area supporting Operation Enduring Freedom VII. 

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