



DMAVA

HIGHLIGHTS



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NJ Soldiers hone their artillery skills in Africa

Story and photos by Sgt. Adam Fischman, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

SHOSHONG, The Republic of Botswana –The ground shook as satchel and improvised Bangalore charges packed with C-4 explosives detonated, to clear the way for Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry Regiment, New Jersey National Guard, Aug. 11, in The Republic of Botswana.

Unrelenting mortar and small-arms fire filled the air with a deafening orchestra of explosions, as rounds impacted the dry, African desert. While support-for-fire rounds landed, infantrymen of Company A rushed the simulated battlefield through dust and debris in tactical bounding movements.

The high-tempo assault and support-for-fire mission was part of Southern Accord 2012, a large combined, joint exercise designed to enhance military capabilities and interoperability between U.S. military forces and the Botswana Defense Force.

“They’re just like us,” said Pvt. Rusty Rogers from Point Pleasant, N.J., and infantryman with Company A, 1-114th. “Most of the BDF perform the same jobs we do, just a little bit differently, which has made it fun for us to learn from one another.”

Once the dust settled, flames still smoldered from detonated ordnance and expended ammunition, creating a mirage-like haze in the air as U.S. Soldiers advanced toward their objective to elimi-



nate their target.

“This is my first time overseas and my first time firing rounds with my new team,” said Camden, N.J. native, Pfc. Brandon Wood with Company C, 1-114th. “It’s a whole new experience, far different than what I expected. Learning a new culture and being around my team for the first time has given me that deployment mindset in an atmosphere close to the real thing.”

Wood’s favorite part about being a mortarman is firing rounds and carrying the heavy gear. He said it is hard work, but it feels like an accomplishment at the end of the day. He also loves the sound of the rounds making contact.

“There is nothing like hearing the sound of a mortar,” said Wood. “It’s like magic.”

Once the assault team reached the ridge where Company C provided supporting fire, the teams switched, which allowed the BDF a chance to run the lanes. Three

separate assaults and support-for-fire missions were completed in addition to the BDF live-fire missions.

“This has been a great opportunity to learn from one another,” said Voorhees, N.J. native, Pvt. John Donatucci of Company C., 1-114th. “To see how the BDF run their missions and teach them how we run ours has provided great training...It’s also a unique experience to train with a foreign military force.”



Pvt. Jason Sanchez of Company A., 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry Regiment, New Jersey National Guard, fires live rounds down range during a field training exercise at Southern Accord 2012 on Aug. 10, at Shoshong Range in the Republic of Botswana, Africa. SA12 is a combined, joint exercise designed to enhance military capabilities and interoperability between U.S. military forces and the Botswana Defense Force.



Mortarman of Company C. 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry Regiment fire carry their equipment to their firing positions during the field training exercise at Shoshong Range.



Pvt. Dhruv Jani of Company C., 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry Regiment, prepares to drop a 60mm mortar round during the field training exercise at Shoshong Range.



Pfc. Brandon Wood with Company C. 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry Regiment carries 60mm mortar tubes back from his firing location at Shoshong Range.



Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff, left, the Adjutant General, and first lady Mary Pat Christie, center, pose with the 10 recipients of the New Jersey Heroes Heart of a Hero Scholarship, Aug. 22. They are in no particular order, Marine Sgt. James Adams, 29, Colts Neck; Marine Cpl. Hunter Carlos Alarcon, 24, Flanders; New Jersey Air National Guard Airman 1st Class Vincent Justin Avallone, 22, Mullica Hill; Army Sgt. 1st Class Harvey L. Craig, 44, North Brunswick; Marine Lance Cpl. Giovanni DeBelli, 22, Garfield; Army Staff Sgt. James Scott Downing, 29, Mays Landing; NJANG Airman 1st Class Breanna Michelle Gagnon, 20, Mays Landing; Army Sgt. Sherri Renee Jones, 45, Hackensack; Army Staff Sgt. Lester Shelley, 59, Somerset; and Air Force Airman 1st Class Andrew Michael Speight, 22, Westampton. (Courtesy photo)

Voting info for upcoming election

Attention military service members, the general election is approximately 90 days away. To register, request a ballot, and vote absentee go to www.FVAP.gov to complete your Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). It takes less than 10 minutes to complete using the online registration and absentee ballot assistant.

Help spread the word! Pass this on to other military or overseas voters, including spouses and voting age dependents.

If you would like more information on the Federal Voting Assistance Program or need help with the absentee voting process, please contact FVAP at 1-800-438-8683, DSN 425-1584, or at vote@fvap.gov. And don't forget your unit or installation voting assistance officers. More info is available at www.FVAP.gov, and don't forget to "like" us on Facebook at [DoDFVAP](https://www.facebook.com/DoDFVAP) and follow us on Twitter [@FVAP](https://twitter.com/FVAP).

E-mail your Photo of the Week or Highlights submissions to

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By Sgt. Bill Addison, 444th MPAD

Approximately 60 civilian employers boarded military aircraft in New Jersey and headed north toward Fort Drum N.Y. Aug. 16 to witness New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers in action during Annual Training.

The Boss Lift, which is sponsored by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, launched from Joint-Base-McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst aboard N.J. Air National Guard KC-135 Stratotankers and landed at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield. From there, they boarded 10th Mountain Division CH-47 Chinooks to reach the approximately 2,000 Soldiers of the 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team training in the field.

The Boss Lift program is designed to educate employers to the tasks and training their military employees received during their time away from the office. That education is integral to foster and maintain employer support for the Guard and Reserves, according to N.J. chapter chairman Alan Smith, a retired Marine Corps colonel.

"Forty eight percent of our entire DoD warfighting capability is in the Guard and Reserve components," Smith said. "If we are going to have a lot of that fighting capability in the Guard and Reserve, we have to have the support of employers, and here in New Jersey we do."

Smith says employers who support their military employees are "patriots." "They are the patriots who you don't see in uniform, but they're clearly as important. Without them, those folks in the Guard and Reserve would not be able to take care of their families and do what they need to do in service to their country," he said.

Employers met with their Soldiers and one of the highlights was a demolitions demonstration with the engineers of Alpha Company, 50th Brigade Special Troops Battalion. Employers donned protective gear, to include helmets and ballistic vests, and observed a variety of breaching techniques used by the engineers. For Capt. Kristian Del Rosario, Alpha company commander, it was a chance to show his boss, Patrick Collins of Secaucus, N.J.-based Ernst & Young, what he does when he's away from the office.

"We're (information technology) guys. We work out of cubicles, so one weekend a month I get to come out of the office and blow stuff up," said Del Rosario. "For me, it's great to have my boss come out and see that other side of what I do."

Collins was impressed by both the demonstration – and the level of responsibility his employee has in the military.

"Personally it's just fascinating to be here, but also to watch Kristian in action is really great," said Collins. "He leads a big team here. He has some huge responsibilities and it's great to see him operate."



Sgt. 1st Class David Thurston helps his boss, Yeadon Assistant Fire Chief Lyle Kunkle, into body armor to prepare for a demolitions explosion, below, by engineers from A Company, 50th Brigade Special Troops Battalion. Photos by Spc. Michael Davis, 444th MPAD.



