

The First Friday Briefing

Serving the National Guard and State Defense Force of Georgia

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September 2008

“Train Hard. Fight Easy.”



Photo by Sgt. Tracy Smith

Weapons familiarization and infantry tactics were a part of the day-to-day training during the mission to Devon, England in 2007. Here a 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldier with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry works with a British Army weapons instructors to master the 5.56mm SA-80 rifle. The 188th Field Artillery left Friday, September 5 to spend two weeks in Scotland for this annual exercise.

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The latest in Guard news at a glance. Full stories available on the DoD website and the online briefing.

4 Annual Enlisted Conference

National Guard enlisted association officials lauded the numbers attending mid-August's annual conference in Savannah as the largest in that organization's history.

7 118th Field Artillery heads to Scotland

48th IBCT Soldiers prepare for a two week training exercise in Scotland. The group will work with Scottish military on infantry tactics and weapons familiarization.

12 48th IBCT in Georgia

Members of the Georgia National Guard's 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team are using exercise Patriot '08 to prepare for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. The National Guard-sponsored training exercise has brought together Army and Air National Guard elements, active duty and reserve units, and Canadian, British and Dutch forces.

News Briefs: the latest news at a glance



Photo by Amanda Kenny

Guard, SDF learn dignitary protection techniques

Marietta, Ga. -- National Guard Soldiers and State Defense Force personnel were taught the finer points of protecting and escorting a dignitary in multiple situations during a training course in mid-August at Naval Air station-Atlanta.

The National Guard collaborated with Law Enforcement Consultants, an organization focused on training and consulting law enforcement and government agencies on dignitary protection. The curriculum included topics ranging from dress and appearance to the history of assassination.



Contributed photo

Sergeant 1st Class Deidre Perry accepts a check on behalf of the Army Aviation Support Facility at Hunter Army Air Field in Savannah from Lt. Col. Vernon Atkinson, HAAF commander. Perry wrote the winning essay on recycling, and how AASF 3 participates in the Hunter Army Airfield Recycling Program. The award was given after a thorough inspection from Installation Recycling Program Directors.



A family welcomes home a deployed 116th Air Control Wing member. The wing received the 2007 Outstanding Family Readiness and Support award for programs aimed at supporting 116th families.

Full stories for all news breifs can be found on the Georgia Department of Defense website at <http://www.dod.state.ga.us/>

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Family Support Foundation News

6th Annual Top Gun motorcycle ride for children

The Georgia National Guard Family Support Foundation was selected as the military support organization to receive funds from the 6th Annual Top Gun Ride for Children sponsored by The Center for Children and Young Adults in Marietta, Ga.

In August, the Center presented a generous check to the Foundation in the amount of \$6,337.70. This is the second year that the Foundation has been the recipient of this event.

The Center provides facilities and support programs for abused, neglected and abandoned children in the Metropolitan area of Atlanta.

The Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) organization and provides statewide emergency relief assistance to members and families of the Georgia National Guard.

Both organizations depend on private and public donations for support and extend heartfelt appreciation to all



Worley, Committee Chairman for the Top Gun Ride for Children, presents a check to Col Jay Peno, Foundation President, at The Center for Children and Young Adults in Marietta, Ga.

who were able to participate in this fun and worthwhile event.

The 6th Annual Top Gun Ride for Children was held in Kennesaw, Ga., on April 19, 2008. The Cobb County Police Motorcycle Unit led the ride through a one hour escorted tour of Kennesaw before arriving at the main gates of McCollum Field to the Flightworks hangar.

The GA National Guard provided a UH-1 Huey Helicopter as a static display at the Flightworks hangar.

Savannah Armed Forces Festival on River Street Benefits Ga NGF

Command Chief Master Sergeant Steve Thornton, 165th Airlift Wing, presents a check for \$4000 to Foundation Board Member Frank Baker. These funds were the results of the Sixth Annual Armed Forces Memorial Day Festival on River Street, put on by the 165th Airlift Wing and the City of Savannah, on May 24-25, 2008.

For the past six years the Wing has taken the Memorial Day weekend as a major fund raising project. The Festival includes music, crafters, food and beverage sales, and military demonstrations. Members of the unit, as well as family members and retirees coordinate all of

the activities and man booths selling bottled water, snow cones, pop corn and soft drinks. They benefit from sales by the crafters and other vendors as well. It is a great event and the Foundation extends our sincere appreciation to all involved for their continuing support!



The Georgia National Guard Family Support Foundation, INC. is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization established in 1994 to provide emergency relief assistance during times of financial crisis to the members and families of the Georgia National Guard, our State's reservists and qualified active duty service members in the State of Georgia. The Foundation, although not a military organization, is recognized as an official support organization of the Georgia National Guard.

In November 2005, Georgia Chamber President & CEO, George Israel, announced with David Ratcliffe, Chairman, President & CEO, Southern Company, and 2005 Chair of the Georgia Chamber, Governor Sonny Perdue's initiative to raise ONE million dollars to support Georgia-based troops and their families through the Georgia National Guard Family Support Foundation.

Through the generous support of donors, both large and small, the Foundation was able to reach that goal by the end of 2006. We received \$1 in cash in an unmarked envelope as well as a \$100,000.00 check with an Atlanta Journal donation coupon.

As a result of these contributions, we have been able to help hundreds of families, both traditional and deployed soldiers and airmen, with emergency relief assistance. In 2006, we were able to provide over \$252,000.00 in financial aid. In 2007, that amount was increased to over \$25,000.00 and our projections for 2008 are about \$400,000.00.

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO DO MORE.

www.georgiaguardfamily.org

Annual enlisted conference leaves mark on Savannah, Guardsmen

By Sgt. 1st Class Roy Henry
124th MPAD

SAVANNAH – With the opening of the 2008 Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States conference in mid-August in this historic city's trade and convention center, officials are touting this as the largest conference the association has ever hosted.

The conference, which runs for four days, officially began Monday, Aug. 18, with a ribbon cutting ceremony outside the convention center's main exhibit hall. It ends Thursday, Aug. 21, with a banquet recognizing the attending states and territories, and the District of Columbia, and an awards program in the center's Chatham Ballroom.

"This is without a doubt the largest conference we've ever hosted," said Ron Hagan, EANGUS vice president. "It's quite an amazing thing."

Command Sgt. Maj. James Dennis, co-chair of the Georgia committee and the senior enlisted Soldier for the National Guard Training Center at Fort Stewart near Hinesville, said he and the committee hope they had a hand in the success the conference has had so far.

"You can be sure the city and its gracious people, the convention center and staffed played a very important part in making this conference a success," Dennis added. "Most certainly the support of the 100-plus Georgia Army and Air Guardsmen and Georgia State Defense Force personnel has played a huge role in that."

Dennis said he's quite proud of that support and the professionalism the Georgia Guard and State Defense Force continue to show.

The association had expected around 1,700 people to register for this year's conference, said Hagan, a retired Montana Air National Guard chief master sergeant. By Saturday, Aug. 16, that many had already registered online, and they continued to come in. As of noon today, registrations had exceeded the 2,000 mark and were rising.

An exact count won't be known until after the conference ends.

Hotels along the Savannah River

dors with booths at that city's convention center, Hagan said. This year the exhibitors number about 140.

"That's a 25 percent increase over the previous year, Hagan said. "The national committee is quite surprised, and pleased, that so many vendors chose to be with us this year."

Other elements contributing to this year's growth include:

- Nearly 400 junior noncommissioned officers participating in EANGUS professional development programs. Only 225 attended the program in Oklahoma.

- Growth in EANGUS membership, which – at 90,000 – has doubled. Membership at one time was around 40,000. Hagan attributed the increase to the Global War on Terrorism and the larger role the Guard and Reserve play in fighting the war.

- The attraction of more than 275 command sergeants major and state adjutants general who've

come to see whether their Soldier and NCO will be chosen Soldier and NCO of the Year and named as the conference's Best Warrior.

Hagan said the national committee hopes the growth that's taken place continues, and rolls over into next year's conference in Rochester, Minn.

"What all this tells us is that more folks within the National Guard and Washington are that much more aware of the needs of our Soldiers and Airmen, their families and our Guard veteran," she added. "It's through such growth and participation that our organization can better work for keeping the benefits Guardsmen now have, and moving forward toward obtaining new and better benefits for everyone."



Photo by Spc. Adam Dean
Enlisted Soldiers, Airmen, and spouses from across the nation fill the hallway outside the Savannah Trade and Convention Center exhibition hall to register during the first day of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard annual conference.

and on the convention center site across from historic Bay Street and the Riverwalk show that, with so many folks attending the conference, more than 5,400 room nights have been booked for the week, Hagan said.

"It came to the point that the three hotels we're using were so full that we had to pick up seven more to handle the overflow...that's certainly a good thing, a great thing to have happen, not just for us, but for Savannah," he added.

The number of exhibitors, who attended and put everything from education and training opportunities to the newest tactical gear and logistical equipment on display, has also increased. During the 2007 conference in Oklahoma City, there were 124 ven-

Area training center a hi-tech 'Top Gun'

By Pamela E. Walck
Military Editor
Savannah Morning News

In the movie "Top Gun," Maverick and Iceman had to watch amber-dotted bogeys during debriefing sessions after heart-stopping training exercises.

Up until recently, U.S. military technology wasn't too far advanced from those 1986 movie days.

Not so any more - at least not on this side of the Mississippi.

With the infusion of some \$13.4 million in new technology, unveiled during a special cable-cutting ceremony Tuesday at the Georgia Air National Guard's Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center, those amber images are a thing of the past.

Instead, trainers can review or watch live exercises in multiple formats using the new P5 Combat Training System and LINK 16, a network of computers that read information from civilian and military aircraft alike. The information can be compiled into a three-dimensional format from Wilmington, N.C., to Titusville, Fla. - and all points in between.

Maj. Chris Rachael, the Savannah center's operational flight commander, demonstrated the systems' high-tech capacities Tuesday to an audience of military brass and government officials.

Better than 'Top Gun'

There's the old-school "Space Invaders" version - with pink, blue, yellow and green planes representing everything from friendly aircraft to enemy aviators, called bogeys.

Or the "stadium setting" view, with its 3-D images of the planes in flight that rivals the high-definition of the latest PlayStation 3 game.

There's the "God's eye view" of the battlefield, including dimensional land typography.

With the flip of a switch, the view changes to inside the cockpit, seeing move-for-move what any given pilot can see in the heat of the moment.

And that's just the beginning.

"It's the same as 'Top Gun' technology, only better," said Col. Scott Williams, commander of the 169th Fighter Wing based at McEntire Air National Guard Base outside Columbia, S.C. "We are way ahead of the rest of the Air Force. And from our point of view, it's long overdue."

Williams said that until the Department of Defense started funding this technology, Air National Guard pilots across the nation were training on dated programs for combat in high-tech war zones such as Afghanistan and Iraq.

Because of the new high-tech equipment, Williams said, his men can utilize the nearby Townsend Bombing Range, communicate through the Savannah center, and work direct-



(l-to-r) Congressman Jack Kingston of Savannah joins Maj. Gen. (ret.) Wick Searcy, former commander of the Georgia Air National Guard; Maj. Gen. (ret.) William P. Bland, former Adjutant General of Georgia; and Col. Floyd Harbin, commander of the Combat Readiness Training Center in cutting a symbolic cable to debut several high tech improvements to Georgia's Townsend Bombing Range.

ly - using satellite links - with pilots in Texas before hitting the "sandbox."

"When you hear a familiar voice on the radio in bad-guy land, it is such a comfort," Williams said, "especially if that person understands how you fly ... or (because of training) you know what to expect of them when things get crazy."

Multi-tasking technology

Similarly, the technology transcends military branches.

Marine pilots based in Beaufort, S.C., already tap into the system.

Moreover, Rachael said that going forward, the Army also could utilize the technology during training exercises at nearby Fort Stewart. For example, the technology could assist Apache or Black Hawk helicopter pilots working with ground troops.

"The possibilities are endless," Rachael said.

U.S. Rep. Jack Kingston, R-Ga., who attended the ribbon-cutting, said earmarking money for the center has been a worthwhile effort.

"Everyone wants us to stop using earmarks because they say it's pork," Kingston said. "But this is not pork."

Kingston praised U.S. Rep. John Barrow, D-Ga., who has been instrumental in gaining defense funds for additional dormitories at the installation as well.

"Look at your numbers: 62,000 visitors over the last four years and 10,000 missions," Kingston said. "This is good for all of us.

"(CRTC) has grown to become a major part of the Department of Defense's picture, and it's right here in our backyard."

GWOT milestone reached in aircraft named for 9/11

by Master Sgt. Jeff Loftin
379th Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs Office

Southwest Asia -- A unit deployed from the 116th Air Control Wing at Robins Air Force Base, Ga. recently reached 40,000 flight hours in support of the Global War on Terror fittingly in an aircraft named for the attacks which began the war. The 7th Expeditionary Air Command and Control Squadron reached the milestone Sept. 2 in E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System aircraft 02-9111.

"It's a pretty big event," said Lt. Col. William Gould, 7 EACCS commander. "It has taken us quite a while to get to this. We've been here since the beginning of the GWOT flying these missions and supporting the folks on the ground." The unit provides air-to-ground surveillance to theater ground and air component commanders. The milestone capped more than 3,650 missions for the unit whose service here started just two months after 9/11.

"The Army depends on us for ground coverage so it's very important to me to know we've been supporting them for 40,000 hours," said Capt. Karen Everman, a surveillance officer from Syracuse, N.Y., who was part of the crew on the milestone mission. "I was at Robins the day this aircraft was delivered and I actually flew on its first mission there. It's kind of like a home coming to fly such a significant mission on this jet."

The milestone marks years of unique support to the area of operations.

"We actually bring a huge menu of capabilities," said Colonel Gould. "We are the only platform in the world that provides wide-area surveillance for ground moving target indication. Also, we have a huge suite of battle management specialists who can control other aircraft if we need to, move around the battlespace, support [troops in contact], or support a downed aircraft if necessary."

The Charlotte, N.C., native said the JSTARS can provide data to help iden-

tify areas on which unmanned aerial vehicles should focus. Because what they provide is so important to units on the ground, the aircraft normally includes three Army crewmembers.

"I'm very proud to be a part of this because I know how important this platform is to the theater," said Army Lt. Col. Darryl Verrett, deputy mission crew commander for the flight. "To be here for this milestone is a very proud moment for everyone who is a flyer."

The Army colonel said he has logged more than 600 hours with the Air Force supporting the mission in the AOR.

"Working hand-in-hand with the Air Force is very special," said the El Paso, Texas, native. "You develop a great appreciation for your sister service members once you see them hard at work. You understand exactly what they bring to the fight."

Members of the Georgia Air National Guard are also part of that fight.

"I've been in the Georgia Air National Guard for 23 years," said Tech. Sgt. Eli Lines, crew chief assigned to the 379th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. "To deploy with this unit and meet this milestone is for me personally a big event because I'm helping another country gain their freedom by coming over here and crewing a jet allowing the unit to fight the fight."

The Marietta, Ga., native said he was passionate about helping the unit accomplish each and every mission. That attitude among maintainers has helped the unit maintain a 99.6 percent launch rate throughout the 40,000 hours.

"I attribute this success to the hard work of the maintainers on the ground and the aircrew flying it," said Colonel Gould. "It was definitely a group effort and it includes Northrop Grumman,

the contractors that helped us keep the planes going. It takes a large component of maintenance folks on the ground to keep these planes fixed."

The colonel said the airplanes are 40 years old and require regular maintenance, especially on the engines. The aircraft flown for the milestone mission had been used as a civilian passenger plane for 15 years when the Air Force purchased it in 1982. It was used as an Advanced Range Instrumentation Aircraft until being reconfigured as a JSTARS after 9/11 and renamed for the event.

"This jet would never get off the ground without the hard work of all our people," said Staff Sgt. Frank Grimm, an aircraft electrician from Millersport, Ohio. "I think we do a good job. I think the numbers speak for themselves."

Senior Airman Mike Albreti, another crew chief with the unit called the aircraft maintenance friendly.

"I think the aircraft works great, flies great and is really easy to work on," said the Tur-

lock, Calif., native. "I really like the mission of these aircraft. It gives me a quick thrill knowing I'm doing something important. This is not practice. This is real life. Knowing that and having the aircraft go up and do its mission makes you feel good."

From maintainers to flight and mission crews the unit has come together to make its 40,000 hour contribution to the GWOT, according to Colonel Verrett.

"It makes you realize that we, as a unit, have put in a lot of work for a long time," he said. "It's taken years to reach this milestone. It makes you proud that you can put in your part. When you look at the big picture, you can see that everybody has pulled together to get to this milestone."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Aaron Allmon II

Citizen Soldiers partner with British Territorial Army reservist in Scotland

By Sgt. Tracy Smith
48th IBCT PAO

ATLANTA, Georgia – With the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's upcoming Afghanistan mission in the 'crosshairs' of the Volunteers next deployment, going down-range means taking to the hills in preparation.

Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 118th Field Artillery in Savannah will train alongside the British Army's 4th Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment, for two-weeks in Barry Buddon, Scotland. The mission is an extension of the on-going reciprocal UK-US infantry training partnership. Elements of the 4 Yorks Territorial Army, British Army National Guard component, were hosted by the 48th IBCT during the multi-national, multi-reserve force-in-readiness Exercise Patriot '08 in July.

The Regiment, whose history dates back to 1751 as the Georgia Militia in the District of Savannah, focus will be to "train for the race" according to the British Ministry of Defence, Regimental Sergeant Major of Infantry (RSM), Harry French.

"Fundamentally the advantage of our training to the 48th Brigade Soldier, as it relates to this Territorial Army/Reserve piece, is the (British) Army have a more adaptive concept of training for THE War, whether it is in Iraq or Afghanistan," explains WO1 French who is familiar with the Lightning Brigade and its combat tactics. As the RSM for the Kings Own Border Regiment in 2005, he and his Soldiers arrived in An Nasiriyah at the same time as 48th IBCT. "Of greater significance is the ability to do training that allows the individual (combat) flexibility in making snap decisions during those crucial moments and give the Soldier an edge in adapting to the environment."

While this concept will allow the Soldier, British or American, autonomy when it counts the environmental and atmospheric aspects of the training may be the most daunting as the variable temperatures and terrain are similar to condi-



Photo by Sgt. Tracy Smith

48th IBCT (L) Soldiers prepare to fly-out to a British 'bivvy' camp courtesy of the Royal Navy in Devon, England 2007. This year, HHB, 118th FA Soldiers will train in Barry Buddon, Scotland with the British 4th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment as an extension of the ongoing reciprocal UK-US training partnership in the global war on terror.

tions in Afghanistan. The 2,300 acre Barry Buddon training facility, spans the East coast, and is one of the British Forces finest infantry training centers. It also boasts the largest rifle range complex with 20 varying range scenarios. This range circuit will challenge the company as they familiarize with the British Army's 5.56mm SA-80 rifle and enhance individual and team confidence with high intensity qualification in individual and team live-fire sequences.

The affirming of camaraderie is what Captain Kevin M. Nicklay, commanding officer for HHB, 118th FA, knows will be invaluable as the deployment date nears.

"Motivation and comprehension is the key to driving our mission with our coalition partners," Captain Kevin M. Nicklay, HHB, 118th FA company commander said. "My expectations, as it relates to our Soldiers' preparedness, remain consistent. We realize this (mission in Afghanistan) requires our being constant in the approach to staying in-step with the physical and mental preparedness to continue to win. Our job, for the next two weeks, is specifically to learn their tactics and share ours so that once we are down range we move as one unit."

JSTARS trains with 961st AACS

by Tech. Sgt. Rey Ramon
18th Wing Public Affairs

KADENA AB, Japan -- The 16th Expeditionary Airborne Command and Control Squadron from Robins Air Force Base, Ga., deployed to Kadena Air Base for 30 days to train with the 961st Airborne Air Control Squadron and participate in an operational readiness exercise on the Korean Peninsula.

The unit is flying its E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System aircraft alongside the E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System, operated by the 961st Airborne Air Control Squadron here.

"We have a great opportunity to share tactics and training opportunities with the 961st AACS as we fly together over the Republic of Korea during the ORE," said Lt. Col. Douglas Kugler, 16th EACCS detachment commander.

The E-8C is a Command and Control, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance asset that provides ground surveillance data to ground and air commanders in a theater of operations.

"The Joint STARS aircraft contributes in a lot of ways; from developing targets of opportunity for attack operations, to supporting personnel recovery operations," said Colonel Kugler. "We use a crew normally consisting of 21 Air Force and Army personnel to detect, track, report and target enemy ground movement while employing various radar modes, computer subsystems and an extensive communications suite."

While training in this exercise, JSTARS will train its eyes



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Rey Ramon

The weapon's section of the E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System aircraft voices targeted information to the fighter and bomber aircraft during their exercises in the Korean Peninsula area July 29.

on the ground situation as fighter aircraft launch sorties. The E-8C crew will pass critical ground data to the E-3 Sentry crew and other units like common ground stations from the Army's 2nd Infantry Division and the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force. In turn, the AWACS will share the air picture, enhancing situational awareness for JSTARS crews.

AWACS and JSTARS crews coordinate with friendly aircraft to expedite identification of targets of opportunity. Training opportunities available during this visit offer both units a chance to improve critical coordination skills and reduce the amount of time it takes to coordinate air-to-ground targets.

"When you start putting these two pictures together,

See JSTARS, page 10

Fourteen Air Guardsmen Return from Deployment to Iraq, Afghanistan

Fourteen members of the 224th Joint Communications Support Squadron (JCSS) of the Georgia Air National Guard returned home to Brunswick, GA on August 27, 2008 completing a 105-day deployment in support of OIF/OEF. The team deployed with the 2d Joint Communications Squadron (JCS) of the Joint Communications Support Element (JCSE), MacDill AFB, Fla., to locations in Qatar, Iraq and Afghanistan providing communications for Combatant Commanders of the Joint Coalition Forces.

The team of communications technicians were responsible for operating and maintaining secure and non-secure voice, data and video communications

equipment.

Leutenant Col. Nazimiec, 224 JCSS Commander, received a letter from General David H. Petraeus, Commander, Multi-National Force-Iraq specifically recognizing Master Sgt. Ricky Dickens, of Deleon Springs, Fla., Staff Sgt. Jesse Widvey, of Aiken, S.C., and Senior Airman Anthony Anders, of Woodbine, Ga., of the 224 JCSS for their outstanding professionalism and performance for providing communications and audio/visual support for the

"Friends of Iraq Conference."

Recognizing these Guardsmen, Lt. Col. Debra Nazimiec said, "This is just one example of the many outstanding achievements made by these dedicated outstanding Airman while deployed in support of coalition forces.



FRG Volunteers honored at 2008 conference

By Sgt. Tracy J. Smith
48th IBCT (L) PAO

ATLANTA, Georgia- Family Readiness Group volunteers were honored for giving ‘the time of their lives’ at the 2008 conference. The Crown Plaza Ravinia was an elegant environment to educate volunteers and unit leadership on programs, literature and resources for preparedness during the two day event.

In its mission statement the Georgia National Guard FRG handbook outlines the program’s primary responsibility to the families of Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen is promoting ‘healthy National Guard families...during both deployment and peacetime through education, outreach services and partnerships....’ Partnerships define the sustainment of FRG for Georgia focusing beyond the normal scope of the words meaning.

Addressing the crowd of volunteers and their spouses, military leaders and supporting sponsors, the Georgia National Guard Adjutant General, Major General Terry Nesbitt, thanked attendees for giving of themselves, embodying the mission of the organization and for making the program work.

“You understand the military and the mission because you have been there. We look out for each other and emphasize the WE by working together,”



Photo by Sgt. Tracy J. Smith

Nesbit said. “Each day we give more of ourselves than we thought we could and provide ways to bring our families and our armories closer.”

Heather Williams, a student at the University of Georgia, who now calls Liberty, Ga. home, has lived the military deployment experience. The oldest of five children she has had to be all things to her family during separation and, as a child, began to take on more responsibility at home helping her mom as her father was called on numerous deployments. When she joined the 4-H co-operative in the 10th grade she discovered alternatives to the stresses that come with what she deemed ‘the job.’

“It was overwhelming at first,” Heather somberly shared with the audience. “There’s a lot of waiting...and there’s a lot of anxiety.”

When she learned of the Liberty County’s local 4-H program, Operation: Military Kids, she was able to manage the anxious moments and help her siblings.

“The 4-H (military program) helped me learn how to cope with things better,” she said. “And it helped me help my mom... prepare my mom, especially now that I’m not there.”

Penny Schneider and Kim Schroeder understood the anxiousness Heather described.

Both have held the title as FRG president for Company B, ‘Black-sheep,’ 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment. Penny during the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team’s deployment in 2005 and Kim, as the current president, will take the lead during the brigade’s Afghanistan deployment.

“When he, (Penny’s husband, Sgt. Peter Schneider), left for Iraq the first three weeks felt like three years,” Penny explained. “Heading a FRG program isn’t easy but it definitely helps as an outlet for those times you want to wallow and feel sorry for yourself. The time clock doesn’t tick as slowly when you have your hands full.”

Culminating with a formal awards



Photo by Sgt. Tracy J. Smith

dinner, the Georgia FRG recognized all volunteers and named its 2008 volunteer of the year.

When his son, Sgt. Michael Stoke-ly, was killed in August 2005, Robert Stokely never imagined he would be where he was today. He considers himself a humble man who wants to do ‘right by people.’ When he was asked to be the FRG coordinator for the Company B, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment he didn’t think he could make a difference. After all, no one really knew who he was, nor did he have family except for his ‘kindred brethren’ who embraced him when his son was killed on the battlefield of Mahmudiyah, Iraq. It was his son that made the final decision for him to take on ‘the job.’

A foundation, organized in his son’s honor recently delivered school supplies to a small school in the village where Sgt. Stokely was killed. The leaders of the school were so moved by the Stokely families kindness that they requested a photo to hang in the school.

“My son, Mike didn’t know a stranger,” Stokely explained. “I am living each day to live up to his standards and want to make sure the picture on the wall at that school in Iraq will be looked at with pride and purpose.”

JSTARS, from page 8

you get a lot of situational awareness of enemy activity for faster operational and tactical level decisions," said Colonel Kugler.

Senior Master Sgt. James Reid, 16th EACCS senior director technician said the information taken from both platforms enables commanders on the ground to make real-time decisions based on real-time data.

The crew aboard JSTARS consists of members from the active-duty Air Force, the Air National Guard as well as the U.S. Army. The 116th Air Control Wing at Robins AFB is the sole unit operating JSTARS with a total of 17 operational aircraft providing worldwide support to combatant commanders.

"Though we [both units] have unique missions, it's the synergistic effect of combining the assets that makes the impact in the battle space," said Sergeant Reid.

This Month in Georgia Guard History

September 1950 – Members of the 121st Infantry honored their former commander, Brig. Gen. John W. Barnett with a testimonial dinner. Presiding was Col. Roy W. Hogan, current commander of the unit. Mrs. Barnett summed up the evening by telling the assembled guests: "I pray God you may never have to go on the battlefield again, but my prayers and best wishes go with you and the 121st always."

September 1953 – The Georgia Air Guard's senior Air Instructor Col. Philip A. Sykes, gave what one Georgia Guardsman magazine writer called "a thought-provoking" speech to annual meeting of the National Guard Association of Georgia. Sykes' address emphasized the new importance the minute man. During his address, the Colonel stressed that "The Air National Guard must be prepared to step between an aggressor and the brightly-lighted cities of America, and do it on the hour. To discharge this responsibility, each Air National Guard unit must bring itself to the minute man standard, ready for instant, effective counter-air action."

September 1954 – Georgia Army Guardsmen moved into Eatonton and began the task of piping water to the drought-stricken city's reservoir, which has been dangerously low during the summer. Some 29 Guardsmen of Atlanta's 201st Ordnance Company were deployed and quickly began laying 1300 feet of pipe between the reservoir and a pond 2 miles away. Once a 1500 gallon per minute pump was installed, normal water service was restored within 25 hours.

Soldiers make history in record time

By Spc. Tracy J. Smith
48th IBCT PAO

VAZIANI MILITARY BASE, Tblisi, Republic of Georgia – In the Georgia Army National Guard training schedules are tight. The annual two week *horse-blanket*, an age-old infantry term used for the unit's training schedule, turns into the proverbial coat-of-many-colors as the required training elements are annotated and punctuated in vivid and pronounced time sequences. There is no question what has to be done when critical lifesaving certifications are on the schedule in preparation for deployment.

"We have certified 110 Soldiers through the crucial paces of combat life saver training in four days," Sergeant Gery Pollack, a combat medic with 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team said. His pride is unmistakable as he visually scans his un-air-conditioned classroom.

Recognizing the significance of this achievement takes a more impressive posture when you realize the instructors could not comprehensively communicate with the students.

"At first it was an issue with that many Georgian Soldiers," Pollack recalls. "It was a little overwhelming."

His smirk only punctuates the determination he and the

other 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (L) Volunteers have in giving the Republic of Georgia Warriors the best possible training.

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Photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith
It is a history making first for the 48th IBCT (L) Warriors and their fellow Global War on Terror partners as well as a record breaker. Sgt. Gery Pollock and his team trained and certified 110 Soldiers in four days as combat lifesavers!

CHAPLAIN HOOAH

BY SPC. TRACY J. SMITH
48TH IBCT PAO

SETAF Chaplain takes the message to the field

VAZIANI MILITARY BASE, Tbilisi, Georgia- An hour drive from the Vaziani Military Base in the country of Georgia a group of Soldiers take a break from training for a Sunday worship service in the field. The small pewter cross set carefully atop a box of MREs gets a lot of attention from the Georgian soldiers embedded with the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's Company E, 148th Brigade Support Company.

Colonel David Smith, the presiding chaplain, says there is a sense of awe when they look at the makeshift altar in the middle of this mountainous terrain. His seemingly permanent smile encourages the Georgian soldiers to approach him, albeit tentatively, as he is an anomaly to them and he is not versed in their language.

"They don't have a chaplaincy in their military," Smith explains matter-of-factly with a pleasant aura that draws you to listen. "They came by my altar and crossed themselves and one of these soldiers who knew a little English asked if I was a priest because they find it different that I wear a cross on my uniform."

Smith has worn that cross for 25 years and couldn't imagine doing anything else. As the Command Chaplain for the Southern European Task Force, he has a strong sense of presence every commander prays will be part of his staff.

A minister for more than 31 years, endorsed by the United Methodist Church, he originally came to the United States Army thinking he would serve for only three years yet, "22 years later I'm still here," Smith says.

Smith decided early on to make a commitment to those he was charged to serve, including doing what they do and being where they are. "What kind of witness would I be if I weren't enthusiastic and being one they can trust to do what they do and be there when they need me?"



Photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith, 48th IBCT PAO
Chaplain (Colonel) David Smith offers fellowship and prayer to 48th IBCT (L) Soldiers during field services in Tbilisi, Georgia. The 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment traveled to Georgia to train in Immediate Response 2008 with 1000 American and 1000 multinational forces. Smith is the Command Chaplain for Southern European Task Force.

Smith has six deployments under his belt including two combat tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. You might want to call him Chaplain HOOAH because there is nowhere he won't go and no one he will deny a comforting ear to.

"I jump out of planes with them, I eat chow with them, I run [physical

training] with them and am beside them in battle and will be with them in the hospital when they need me," he explains. This last thought temporarily erases the smile from his face as if an unpleasant memory has come to mind. "Most important, I pray with them."

Half a world away from the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldiers' home of Georgia, (that would be the one in the United States), he finds his smile and opens his arms to invite the Soldiers from both Georgias to fellowship and prayer together in an open field.

"Look around you," he offers to the small gathering. "This is perfect! Serenity with no pews or doors, just mountains, clear sky and clean air. HE is wonderful."

Heads nod in agreement as Smith continues with a sermon on adversity. Pointing out the makeshift showers, open air tents, sleeping cots and the ever-present biting flies, scorpions, and snakes he encourages the National Guardsmen to be content where they are.

"Life," Smith begins, "is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent of how I react to it. Your attitude can be a poison if it is negative or if you allow yourself to feed on the negativity of another."

Specialist Charles "Chuck" Westrick, a mechanic from Lilburn, Ga., is very aware of the need for strength when faced with adversity.

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Combatives benefit Georgians preparing for combat

By Spc. Tracy J. Smith
48th IBCT PAO

VAZIANI MILITARY BASE, Tbilisi, Georgia- It has been said that the best offense is a good defense - a theory that applies to Brazilian Jujitsu, the youngest martial art form. The American military adopted this form of hand-to-hand combat because of this

Ultimately; however, the most dominant posture is with the opponent's initial attack. As physical altercations will often end with the combatants wrangling on the ground it can give the Soldier an added edge.

"This training in patrolling and combative arms will be very useful as we prepare for our deployment."

Lieutenant Zurab Gogishvili
platoon commander
Georgian Army's 4th Brigade.

principle. At the very least basic hand-to-hand techniques - called 'combatives' - are taught to all Soldiers these days. While here in Vaziani to participate in an international military exercise, Georgia Army National Guardsmen are sharing their combative training with their Georgian counterparts.

the advantage early on and disable your opponent with a few simple moves."

Another advantage of the combatives is that great agility is not necessary. The methods and moves can be performed even

with the protective equipment Soldiers wear for patrols.

"The combative maneuver training has two purposes," 2nd Lt. Christopher Edgecomb explained. Edgecomb is a platoon leader and the course training instructor. "The first is to teach them how to deter the enemy when he comes into arm's reach; the other is to build confidence in their ability to fight the enemy using their hands and body weight."

The Georgia Guardsman find it easy to make an exchange of methods and movements with their Georgian Army counterparts despite the language barrier. The Georgians have previous training in Israeli hand-to-hand maneuvers and are willing to incorporate aspects of the storied



Photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith, 48th IBCT PAO
Second Lt. Christopher Edgecomb, a platoon leader for Company C, 1-121, 48th IBCT instructs Corporal Alexko Kheladze, a 4th Brigade Georgian soldier, on combative maneuvers training. The hand-to-hand contact maneuver training is part of the multinational exercise Immediate Response 2008



Photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith, 48th IBCT PAO
Specialist Bobby J. Thompson (top), a Georgia Army National Guard wheeled-vehicle mechanic, engages in basic combative maneuvers. He is partnered with Warrant Officer Johnny Kelley, who works as the unit maintenance technician in Calhoun, Ga.

Israeli method into this new combat form. Their willingness to participate is essential to the overall purpose of the joint training mission.

"We will use this in our war fighting," said Lieutenant Zurab Gogishvili a platoon commander for Georgian Army's 4th Brigade. "This training in patrolling and combative arms will be very useful as we prepare for our deployment. The most important thing is that we make friends with America and with our fellow Soldiers."

Edgecomb has a broader appreciation for the training. "Besides the straight war fighting ability," Edgecomb begins, wiping a sheet of perspiration from his face, "the Soldiers enjoy it and feel more confident than when they came to the mat. Anytime you see a Soldier with increased confidence and drive it always gives you a rush."

Caring for the Children

Georgia Soldiers reach across continents to assist children's home

By Spc. Tracy J. Smith
48th IBCT PAO

VAZIANI MILITARY BASE, Tbilisi, Georgia- 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldiers and their Georgian Army counterparts reached out to the local community at a local children's home, 20 minutes west of Tbilisi, where the Soldiers united to improve the lives of children who otherwise would have nothing

The coalition partners, participants of the multinational exercise Immediate Response 2008 in Tbilisi, Georgia, collected more than \$600.00 to purchase a new freezer, toys and school supplies for the Tskneti Children's Home regulated by the ministry of Education. They rely heavily on the contributions of U.S. and Western organizations as well as donations by private individuals.

The visit by the Georgia Army National Guard is not the first. Six years ago the 878th Engineer Battalion of Augusta, Ga., took a break from their training with the Georgian Army and got to work building an elaborate playground and made extensive repairs to the offices and grounds infrastructure.

"We have an excellent relationship with organizations throughout (the state of) Georgia," said Manana Tsilosani, who has served as director for the home to some 115 children for 16 years. "We receive donations from various organizations in Atlanta and enjoy a wonderful relationship with your National Guard Army Soldiers."

The children entertained the visiting Soldiers with traditional songs and games. The Soldiers found it easy to attach themselves to the children.

"How can you deny such a lovely child," said Lt. Zurab Gogishvili, a platoon commander with the Georgian Army's 4th Brigade. "I hope to one day become a father and I want to continue to help places such as this."

Many of the children that reside at Tskneti come from single parent households. Oftentimes

the parents are simply unable to afford to give proper care or there are situations where the children may be in vulnerable. Unlike an orphanage, the parents and relatives still have visitation and no conditions are placed on when they may visit with them. The parents or relatives may retrieve the children at anytime and are often free to visit with family during the summer months.

There are situations where Tsilosani and her very dedicated staff have had greater concern than is typical for a child's well-being.

"I remember a young child who was living on the street," Tsilosani recalled, her pale brown eyes welling with tears. "We took the child in and he was very withdrawn. After two days he left and went back to where his family lived. The conditions were not good and the child was working, at age nine years, to support his family. When I found him he was ashamed of where he was and I told him he did not need to be as what he was doing was honorable but he needed to take care of himself as well. He eventually came back to us."

Oftentimes children in vulnerable situations romanticize about reunions with family and are disappointed when the situation is not what they desire.

Sergeant Joe Bess, a supply sergeant with Company E, 148th Brigade Support Battalion is aware of how complex the children's situation is. She was taken in by family at an early age after living in a group environment for a short while. A thoughtful leader, her Soldiers call her 'Lady Hooah' because of her tough veneer. Her vulnerability comes through as she recalls being where these children once were.

"I am blessed to never have had it as rough as they have," the Bethlehem, Ga. resident and Gwinnett County Deputy Sheriff said. "You look at their faces and realize that they have the same hopes and dreams I had when I was in their little shoes. Something as simple as a hug makes a world of differ-

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Photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith, 48th IBCT PAO

Sergeants Eric Vance (kneeling) and Joe Bess entertain children during a visit to the Tskneti Children's Home, 20 miles west of Tbilisi, in the country of Georgia. The visit to the children's home was part of the joint community outreach with their Georgian Army counterparts.

Georgian, U.S. Military celebrate differences through leadership commonalities

By Spc. Tracy J. Smith
48th IBCT PAO

United States and Georgian military senior enlisted leaders took time from training during Immediate Response 2008 at Vaziani Military Base in Tbilisi, Georgia to discuss the role of the senior non-commissioned officer and understand their respective military cultures.

Introductions to the events and demonstration of capabilities for the Non-Commissioned Officers Day for the Georgia and U.S. military senior NCOs were succinct. Their focus and predominant responsibility as sergeants major, first sergeants and advisors to their respective commanders was to strengthen and mentor the junior ranks.

“It is more important than ever to have a strong Non-commissioned Officers Corps,” began United States Army Europe Command Sgt. Maj. Ralph

Beam.

Beam, visiting Immediate Response 2008, complimented his host, Georgia Army 4th Brigade, Brigade Command Sergeant Giorgi Dzebisashvili for accommodating the American warriors and maintaining vigilance during the Global War on Terror.

“Much support and sacrifice has been given to make this training successful,” Beam, who had only within days returned from a visit to Iraq, continued. “During my visit to the Wasa Province I witnessed the determination of the Georgian Army. Your Soldiers have brought stability to that province of Iraq and helped to stabilize what was once a fragile infrastructure.”

A formal overview of U.S. and Georgian NCO responsibilities focused on the commonalities and also followed the evolution of senior enlisted leaders’ responsibilities. Once, senior NCOs were mainly overseers of logistics and medical evacuations.

Brigade Command Sgt. Dzebisashvili acknowledged the similarities in the structure and management of the two armies. “Personnel characteristics emulate those of the American military. Significant differences are only in the look of the rank. The ultimate similarity is that NCOs must take care of subordinates and understand their needs to grow and be successful.”

Moving from the classroom environment to the field, the leaders received briefings and observed demonstrations by the Georgia Army National Guard’s 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team’s 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment. The Soldiers have been training and mentoring their Georgia Army 4th

Brigade counterparts during Immediate Response 2008 and learning a great deal in the way of cultural exchange and in preparation for their respective missions to Iraq and Afghanistan.

A scripted squad formation had Georgian and U.S. squads explaining each individual’s responsibilities within the ranks which only differed by native language and weaponry used.

“First of all, the NCO realizes how important his responsibilities are and takes his responsibilities seriously,” said Dzebisashvili, who will be leading his brigade in combat in Iraq. “He knows how he should react in combat and how to take care of his Soldiers.”

Corporal Vincent Nelms is a weapons team leader for Blacksheep Company, 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment. The Newnan, Ga., resident aspires to be the leader Dzebisashvili has become. He cites his mentors as his command sergeant major and his 1st Sgt., Patrick ‘Pappy’ Eaton.

Nelms’ squad participated in the activities of the day and later rallied his American and Georgian Soldiers to hydrate and ‘cool down’. “One thing I have learned from my enlisted leaders is your Soldiers get fixed first,” Nelms said. His uniform is tattered and discolored from days in the dusty Georgian terrain but his focus is evident. “I would do anything for my Command Sgt. Maj. Wilcox and Pappy. They look after the Joes first. I don’t think they sleep! They make sure your training is on-point and won’t accept anything less because our lives depend on it. I’m going to follow in their footsteps and make sure I do the same for my guys.”

Beam describes Soldiers like Nelms; as an extension of the senior enlisted leadership. “The senior sergeant is like the hand and those junior sergeants his fingers. Through them you touch a lot of Soldiers and with him you can be everywhere if you train them properly.”



Photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith, 48th IBCT PAO

Georgia Army 4th Brigade, Brigade Command Sergeant Giorgi Dzebisashvili (right) and Command Sgt. Maj. Ralph Beam observes maneuvers and capability demonstrations explained by a 4th Brigade squad during Immediate Response 2008. The visit was part of the country of Georgia and U. S. Non-Commissioned Officers Day.

Chaplain takes services to Soldiers

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His family suffered a tremendous tragedy days prior to the 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment's departure from home station. The command aggressively encouraged him to remain home but Westrick was determined to stay with his other family: his 48th IBCT family.

"I talked to my family back home a couple of days ago," Westrick says, visibly moved by the Chaplain's message. "They are fine but I couldn't think of not being where my Soldiers are as we get ready for our next combat mission."

Westrick also reflected on Smith's metaphor of the boiling water that affects change. The carrot begins as rigid and hard, then turns soft; the pliable egg boils and becomes rigid and hard. His own determination was to be coffee, the one element that changed the water that surrounded it.

"That is what we do as Soldiers," Westrick said. "You carry a weapon and fight when your country needs you but you still serve your military and your God and attend church. Your family is all around you. I think it's great that they took the time to come out to the field and share Sunday with us."

Later, Chaplain Smith embraces the moment to add a final thought.

"Look around you. You are with people that want to be here and experience the Presence! As an active duty Chaplain we make no delineations of Marine, Sailor, Airman, Reserve component, National Guard, or Nationality. I find it a privilege to be in this setting with these fine Soldiers."

Raise your hand, repeat after me

48th Infantry Regiment Soldiers re-enlist in the country of Georgia

By Spc. Tracy J. Smith
48th IBCT PAO

VAZIANI MILITARY BASE, Tbilisi, Georgia – Guardsmen of 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment reinforced their commitment to duty by a show of hands in the country of Georgia during Immediate Response 2008. Three Soldiers reenlisted before the days training in front of fellow Soldier of the National Guard as well as the Georgian Army.

Sergeant Nicholas Jelks and Specialists Patrick Parris and Armond Parker, all Blacksheep company infantrymen, reaffirmed their dedication to country, mission and their fellow Warriors.

Colonel Lee Durham, commanding officer of the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, gave the oath of reenlistment and commented on the privilege to celebrate their commitment. "To do what you are doing is personally motivating. I want to congratulate you all on your going beyond the standard," he said

"This occasion exemplifies our mandate of going beyond the call by training to standard and not to time. Raising your hand to give more before your colleagues from both sides of the continent is another point of excellence as we grow the brotherhood with our coalition partners."

Specialist Armond Parker, an infantryman from Covington, Ga., said his training has been tough but worth it. Seeing how much the Georgian Soldiers appreciated what they were doing led to his decision to reaffirm his commitment to be with them.

"We have to do what is necessary to protect our country and our families," said Parker. "I've made a lot of new friends here and realized how much I can depend on the guys in my company. This was the least I could do to make sure they knew I was going to be there with them."



Photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith, 48th IBCT PAO

Colonel Lee Durham (left) 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team commanding officer, reenlists Blacksheep Soldiers at Vaziani Military Base in the country of Georgia. (left to right) Blacksheep Company, 1st Bn. 121st Infantry Regiment Soldiers Sgt. Nicholas Jelks, 3rd platoon squad leader of Decatur, Ga., Spc. Patrick Parris, a college student at North Georgia College and State University and .240 gunner, and Spc. Armond Parker of Covington, Ga. recommitted service to country and their fellow Warrior in a field ceremony at Vaziani Military Base, Tbilisi, Georgia before their company and Georgian Soldiers.

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-ence and I have been fortunate to discover that even in the absence of family you can build your own and that's what I try to maintain with my unit, my fellow Soldiers and in my community."

Tsilonsani fully embodies that thought and proudly shows her other Georgia family a continent away. The faded photo of the previous Georgia Army National Guard Soldiers visit begins to show its age around the edges. She looks wistful as she gives her thoughts on the days events and hopes will come.

"In our future I hope to show the memories of today to the next Georgia Army visitors and when I do there will be no need for such a place as this," she continues with a thought she wishes not to utter but manages to accept the reality.. "If there is, I know I can depend on you to work with us to make the lives of these children much improved."

CLS, from page 10

Operation Immediate Response '08 is an inter-operability multi-national training opportunity with our European partners. The three week training schedule in the former Russian state, it was clear they were leading by the tenants of the Soldiers Creed; by example **and** going beyond the task required *check-it-off-the-list* stage.

Corporal George Kenkishuili, a machine-gunner from the Dusheti region appreciates the serious tone and approach given his training. It was his first time welding a needle to learn to save a life..

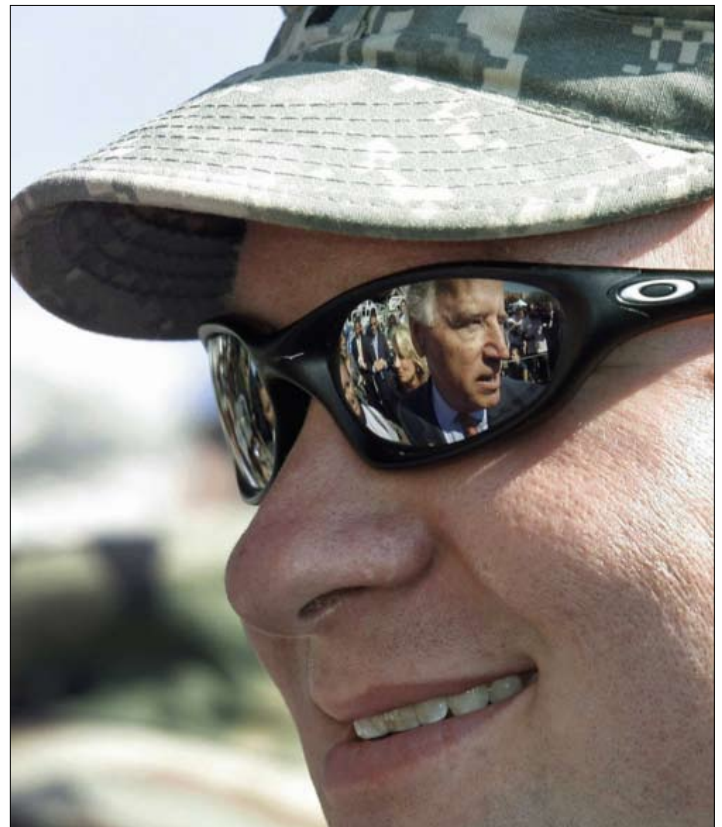
"I was very nervous doing this for the first time," he related through the group's interpreter, "during battle if I need to do any of the procedures I have learned today I will be able to help save a Soldier's life. I will be prepared to do it not only in the military but in my civilian life as well."

Georgia Soldiers assist with Democratic National Convention



(AP Photo/Ted S. Warren)

Democratic vice presidential candidate Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del., and his wife Jill greet Army National Guard troops from Nebraska and Georgia Thursday, Aug. 28, 2008 at Invesco Field in Denver. The troops were in Denver to provide medical and rescue assistance to local and national authorities during the convention.



(AP Photo/Ted S. Warren)

Democratic vice presidential candidate Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del., is seen reflected in the sunglasses of Army National Guard 1st Lt. Collin Rader, of Lawrenceville, Georgia, as Biden met with Army National Guard troops from Nebraska and Georgia Thursday, Aug. 28, 2008 at Invesco Field in Denver. The troops were in Denver to provide medical and rescue assistance to local and national authorities during the Democratic National Convention.