



# Louisiana Guardsman

Volume 10

Published in the interest of the Louisiana National Guard

2nd Quarter 1997



Photo by John Sullivan

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## News in Brief

### *Air Force searching for ROTC commissioned officers*

"VOLS Air Force ROTC" at the The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is searching for all officers who received their commissions through AFROTC Detachment 800. Contact: Ms. Gorman, AFROTC Detachment 800, 215 Stokely Athletic Center, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996-3120; phone: (423) 974-3041; or e-mail: frankieg@utkux.utcc.utk.edu".

### *Special travel rates*

Carlson Wagonlit Travel offers federal retired and active duty personnel special deals

Carlson Wagonlit Travel (CWT) and several cruise lines are now offering special military/government cruise rates to retired and active duty personnel.

These special cruise rates called "FedSavers" will save you up to 60% off regular brochure rates and are significantly lower than general public discounted rates. Rates begin from \$199 for three day Bahamas, \$429 for 7 day Caribbean/Mexico and \$899 for Alaska sailing. They have also offered several last minute specials like \$399 for a 7 day Caribbean, \$749 for a Transcanal and \$699 for Alaska sailing.

"What's great is that these military/government special rates are good for retired and active federal employees," said Vickie Standifer, Branch Manager of USP&FO. "It is also offered on some of the best cruise lines known for their entertainment and food like Commodore, which sails from New Orleans, Norwegian, The Big Red Boat, and Royal Caribbean" said Vickie.

Another added benefit of booking your travel with Carlson Wagonlit is that a large part of your money goes to support USP&FO/Louisiana Morale, Welfare and Recreation Centers.

You can reach your USP&FO, Carlson Wagonlit leisure travel agent located at Jackson Barracks, 6400 St. Claude Ave., Area A, Building 39 or by calling (504) 278-8409.

### *AGR Enlisted Inequity Fix*

Included in the 1997 Defense Authorization Bill Conference Report is a provision that would fix a longstanding inequity between officer and enlisted personnel. Title VI, Section 634 retirement of Reserve enlisted members who qualify for active duty retirement after administrative reductions in enlisted grade would allow a Reserve enlisted member who qualifies for active duty retirement and who is reduced in grade for reasons other than misconduct to retire at the highest enlisted grade held.

Current law permits officers to receive retired pay based upon the highest grade held on active duty, but requires enlisted members to wait until completion of 30 years of service to do likewise. This provision would allow enlisted personnel to also receive retired pay based upon the highest grade held at time of retirement.

Although the Conference Report is still awaiting Senate action, it doesn't appear to be at risk of not being approved by full Senate. The real test, however, will be the threat of a Presidential veto.

### *Guardsman named superintendent*

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Louis L. Joseph, Unit Personnel technician for the 205th Engineer Battalion, was appointed as the assistant superintendent of the Tangipahoa Parish Schools. The school board announced his appointment on October 22nd, 1996. Joseph replaces Bette Laird, who retired in December after 36 years.

He has been an employee of the Tangipahoa school system for 24 years. He will supervise staff development, the Title I Program, the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program, and Section 504.

Joseph enlisted on November 13, 1976. He has served in various capacities within the 205th Engineer Battalion. His service includes a tour of duty with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, Republic of Vietnam.

### *VA reaches out to women*

More than 400,000 women veterans will receive letters from the Department of Veterans Affairs about VA programs specifically designed to meet their needs, including sexual trauma counseling.

Veterans Affairs Secretary Jesse Brown said, "Some women veterans who are the victims of sexual assault have come to VA for counseling and treatment, but we know there are many more who are reluctant to come forward for help -- a common reaction to sexual trauma. I want women veterans to know there is help available. VA staff can help them cope with the long-lasting effects of sexual trauma and improve the quality of their lives."

Legislation signed in 1992 authorized VA to provide counseling to eligible women veterans to overcome psychological trauma resulting from sexual assault, battery or harrassment while on active duty. Since that time, VA has treated more than 15,000 women in its Vet Centers and medical centers.

Women veterans seeking information about education, claims or benefits can call the national toll-free number at, 1-800-827-1000. For information about medical care please contact Marlene Kramel at 1-800-375-8387, extension 2729.

## LOUISIANA GUARDSMAN NEWSPAPER

The Adjutant General  
La. Army and Air Guard  
Maj. Gen. Ansel M. Stroud, Jr.

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Col. William R. Hilborn

Deputy Commander (Afr)  
Col. Harry Trosclair

Public Affairs Officer  
Maj. Maria LoVasco

Public Affairs NCO  
MSG John Sullivan

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Original articles pertaining to Louisiana National Guard units or individuals that would be of interest to the Guard community may be submitted to Louisiana National Guard, Public Affairs Office, Jackson Barracks, New Orleans, LA 70146-0330.

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## On the cover..

Honor guard presents the colors during a change of command ceremony at the 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry in Abbeville.

## Do You Know?

How many miles long is the "Chunnel" -- the tunnel under the English Channel between England and France, completed in 1994?

Tegucigalpa is th capital and largest city in what country?

31 miles

Honduras

# General comments

*Stroud looks at the future and beyond...*

The following question-and-answer session with Maj. Gen. Ansel M. Stroud Jr., was conducted in his office during a recent drill weekend. During the interview, Stroud discussed a variety of issues he saw as critical to the Louisiana National Guard as it prepares to enter the 21st century.

**Q. As we approach the end of the century, what are the concerns you have about the Louisiana National Guard?**

A. I'm not so much concerned with the next century as I am about this year and the next year and three years away. Adequate funding is the issue that I see affecting the National Guard. Without proper funding, soldiers can't go to schools. That affects their promotions and that begins to have an effect on retention and unit readiness.

My primary goal has been to ensure adequate funding for all units, not just the enhanced brigade, but for all the units. All these soldiers took the same oath, and they deserve the same opportunities. Funding is critical to provide the soldiers with the best possible training possible.

**Q. The Associated Press has released an article detailing the 1998 budget by the Clinton administration. Under that budget, the Guard is facing some serious funding cuts.**

A. Yes. The budget proposal cuts almost \$740 million from the operating budget of the National Guard. This brings funding to a 1995 level. This cuts funding across the board. It cuts everything from maintenance to flight time for aviators. As you know, when you start delaying or prolonging maintenance, then you have a problem.

We have to make sure that the young man or woman who gets sent out from the Louisiana National Guard to the next conflict has receive the best training possible. They made a commitment to this nation, and the nation owes it to them to provide the funding to ensure they are as trained as they can be.

**Q. As the role of the military changes, was evidenced by such operations as peacekeeping missions to Bosnia and Haiti, do you see the traditional role of the National Guard changing?**

A. I think the role of the military is changing. The role of the National Guard is also changing, but to what extent, I don't know. There are some who say that there is no threat out there now. But we know that there is the potential in the Mid East with Iran and Iraq, with North

Korea. And, then there's China. So, to say there is no potential threat, I believe is misleading. And we are seeing a downsizing in the Army, Air Force and Navy and to some degree, in the Marines as well. This could all equate to more deployments for the Reserve Components.

I believe it is up to the American people to fully support both the regular and reserve forces. I believe that the American people will continue to support the military.

**Q. How does active duty officers taking command of National Guard units fit into this?**

A. I don't really see this playing into this equation. We were the pilot state for this program and I believe it is a win-win situation. We get the experience of a full-time officer who gets to understand the National Guard a little better.

It was never the intent in this program for Active Component officers to invade or take over the National Guard.

In the 50,000 members of the National Guard Association, there have only been 16 letters in opposition to this program, so I believe it is being met with acceptance.

**Q. Do you see the concept of the Enhanced Brigade being carried forward, and do you think this is a positive direction for National Guard combat brigades?**

A. It is a very positive direction. I think it is very important for the Enhanced Brigades to have a relationship with an Active Duty corps or division, though. That warfighter-to-warfighter relationship is critical for this program to reach its full potential. The number of Enhanced Brigades may be changing, so the ones that are left, I believe, must have contact with an Active Duty corps or division so their level of training can remain constant. It's a very important program, and I think it will become even more important in planning for future conflicts as the downsizing of the regular forces continues.

**Q. How do you see decreased resourcing as impacting the readiness of the Louisiana National Guard and what can be done to minimize this impact?**

A. It's a reality that we have to face. There will be less funding and that means we in the Louisiana National Guard will have to better utilize our time at drill. We will have to rely on simulations more for training purposes and it may see us using M-Day soldiers to do a lot of things that full-time guardsmen use to do. That could mean administrative work or maintenance. We will have to have quality training time.



In other words, make every minute count.

I am not concerned about Annual Training. The Louisiana National Guard always does very good during Annual Training. I see us having to train harder with less during weekend drills. It may mean, as I said, relying on simulations or more actual hands-on training. Overall, though, we will have to train harder during weekends with less. It is a very big challenge, but it's one I think we can handle.

**Q. What will training be like in the 21st century?**

A. I'm not a real futurist. I'm looking at one-three years away. I think things are changing, but here in Louisiana and across the nation there is a large move from the inner cities to the outlying regions. I think this will reflect a change in the traditional way the National Guard relates to the community.

This may require us to look at the traditional role of the armories in the community. Are they in the right location? Are they in the best location?

We will have to think about what we can do to better serve our soldiers, the state, the nation and our communities. The battlefield of the future. Yes, it will be more hi-tech. It will involve more computers and more reliance on those types of items, but it will still come down to the soldier. And we will have to make sure that the soldiers are getting the best training possible.

And, you know what, there will

never be a computer that can replace an NCO.

**Q. What role do you see the Army Performance Improvement Criteria playing in preparing the individual soldier for battle?**

A. A very important role for the future. It's a way for us to improve the quality of leadership, on all levels. We have great officers and NCOs and this is a way of continuing that tradition and making sure that we keep that level of professionalism as high as we have it now. It's a cost-effective program.

**Q. What does the future look like for the Louisiana National Guard?**

A. I see great opportunities for the Louisiana National Guard in the future. The Louisiana National Guard has always been an instrument of change in the state. The National Guard has been a constant bright star for this state and that's because of the good people we have in uniform.

One big thing I think we should focus on for the future is illegal drugs. There are 13,000 members of the Louisiana National Guard and if everyone of them makes a stand against drugs, think of the impact it could have. I'm not talking about drug busts or things like that, but to make a public stand against illegal drugs.

Our future is bright and it is that way because of the men and women we have in the Louisiana National Guard. We have a good force and a good future.

# Bang, bang

## La. combat shooters compete in Arkansas

By Bernard E. DeLisle  
Arkansas Air National Guard

Some of the best shooters in the world, including those from the Louisiana National Guard, came to Camp Joseph T. Robinson in North Little Rock, Arkansas during October. The 25th annual Winston P. Wilson Championships and the sixth annual Armed Forces Skill at

training.

Combat training and combat firing are receiving even greater emphasis now that the active forces are relying more heavily on the readiness of the reserve components.

Spec. Micah M. Marchand of Company C, 769th Eng. Btn., took second place in Novice Class in the aggregate Combat Rifle Individual

"I'm thinking about trying to shoot rifle next year, just to get a change-up." Chester, a fulltime student and a locksmith in Baton Rouge, says he likes the competition environment and encourages everyone to try and get on a marksmanship team.

"It's good experience and a lot of fun, too." His teammate, Spec. Jeffrey W. Graves is also a first time

the best in his company achieving expert with a pistol with a score of 286 out of 300. Graves then competed at battalion level and was picked along with five others to compete nationally. When all is said and done, Graves and his teammates will have gained lots of valuable experience and have much to talk about as they reflect on their experiences at WPW.

"There's a lot of experience here and I'm sure I'm going to learn a lot of marksmanship skills and learn a little bit more about how the Guard operates, how things work and hopefully, I can take some of the skills I learn here back to my company and teach some of the other guys to better their marksmanship skills," Graves said.

A four year veteran of the Louisiana National Guard, Graves works as an off-shore wireline operator in Houma.

Sgt. 1st Class Roy J. Brasseaux, II was a combat pistol shooter from HHC, 2/156th Infantry from Abbeville. The 19-year veteran works as a AGR soldier and is his battalion's supply sergeant.

Brasseaux said,

this was his first year to shoot competitively in the military, "We're all a new team." He said he really favors shooting rifles, but the rifle team was already selected so pistol was his next choice.

Brasseaux especially enjoyed the Combat Pistol Match 205 course of fire. "It's very exciting, gets you pumped up. [The course] kept you on your toes, constantly scanning. It really gets your skills going, gets the heart pumping and I think everyone should get a chance to experience it at some point," he said.

Brasseaux said the Louisiana Guard team has received good support. "The state has been very helpful to us in providing the ammo, so we've had a lot of the assets, also using the ranges at Camp Beauregard, so we've had as close to this [competition] as we could get with our facilities."



Photo by Cheryl Zorn

Sgt. 1st Class Roy J. Brasseaux gets into position for the first pop-up target during a combat pistol assault match.

Arms Meeting began Monday, Oct. 14. The WPW concluded on Oct. 18 and the AFSAM concluded on the 20th.

A total of 718 rifle and pistol marksmen, snipers and machine gunners represented National Guard units from 48 states, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico in the WPW matches. Alongside them were approximately 275 rifle and pistol shooters from eight foreign countries, the U.S. Army Reserve, the U.S. Marine Corps, and the National Guard Combat Team, competing in the AFSAM. The Wilson matches were named in honor of Major General Winston P. Wilson, former chief of the National Guard Bureau. He was a member of the Arkansas Air National Guard.

The major focus of both events is battle focused combat "move and shoot" courses of fire. The courses have continued to evolve over the years to reflect more realistic

Championship, Match 325. His score was 694 with 24V.

He also won second place in Novice in the Match 304 Long Range match. Marchand tallied a total of 72 with 3V and took third in Novice in Match 303, the run down match. Marchand fired a 122 with 7V in Match 303.

Cpl. Shawn C. Chester, compet-

itive shooter in a national championship event. "I've been interested in shooting for a long time," he said.

Graves, who is assigned as the driver of a Bradley Fighting Vehicle, said that his job gave him the "opportunity to carry the 9mm and to qualify with it." Ever since then he's been doing real well with it.

**"Over seventy-five percent of our company has qualified as expert..."**

ing at his first WPW as a pistol shooter said, "I know my marksmanship will improve. There's a lot of competition, so I think you do better when you're shooting against people that are on this level."

Although Chester shot as a pistol competitor this year, he said he may try something else next time.

According to Graves his unit places a lot of emphasis on marksmanship.

"Over seventy-five percent of our company has qualified as expert with either rifle or 9-mm weapons. I almost didn't come because it was pretty close between me and a couple of other guys to come on the team." But Graves ended up firing

# Youth Challenge graduate named Soldier of The Year

By Maria L. LoVasco  
State Public Affairs Officer

There's a show on CBS that deals with a man who receives the newspaper a day early and how he uses the information to change people's lives.

And it was a newspaper article that changed Christina Martindale's life in 1994.

Problems at home in New Orleans had caused school to become overwhelming. She dropped out and spent the next two months figuring that her destiny would be that of most high-school drop-outs — bleak.

Until an article in the newspaper on the Louisiana National Guard's Youth Challenge Program (YCP) caught her eye.

That was in 1994.

It's 1997 and Pvt. 1st Class Martindale was just selected as the Louisiana National Guard's Soldier of the Year. In March she'll go before the 5th Army Soldier of the Year board. Beyond that she sees a college degree and a 20-year career in the Guard.

Martindale tricked destiny, and now she's helping other YCP cadets pull the same act.

"The Youth Challenge Program taught me how to be independent and not rely on others," Martindale said. "It taught me leadership skills. And it showed me that no matter how difficult the past was - the future didn't have to be the same way."

After graduating from the Youth Challenge Program and earning her G.E.D. Martindale returned to serve as a mentor for other YCP cadets. It was during this period that she joined the Louisiana National Guard.

"I joined the Guard because the people who helped me were guardsmen," she said. "They had a great influence on me, and I wanted to be like them."

She joined the 225th Engineer Group at Camp Beauregard as an

administrative specialist. She wanted to remain at Camp Beauregard where she had attended YCP, but more important, she wanted to stay far from New Orleans and the circumstances that overwhelmed her in the first place.

Camp Beauregard is her new home. She works full-time as an administrative technician at Post Headquarters and she lives on post. In return, she continues to stay involved with the Youth Challenge Program.

"I get introduced to the cadets as sort of a role model," she said. "I'm only 19...close to their age. They see me. They see I'm not much older. And they see that they can change."

Further impressing the young cadets is the military uniform that she wears - the same uniform as the YCP cadre.

Martindale feels her experience in the YCP gave her an advantage in basic training over her fellow recruits.

"Most people were scared, but I'd become used to being screamed at and waking up early," she said. "Besides, I knew that nothing they did was going to hurt me. It was all done for me - to improve me."

It was in basic training and Advanced Individual Training that she became familiar with the process of going before a board.

"In basic I competed for the Soldier of the Cycle," she said. "But I only had five minutes notice, so I was pretty ate up."

In AIT I was up for Soldier of the Week."

Although Martindale got neither of those honors, the experience helped her calm any fears she had about going before a board.

"My first sergeant, Joseph Cole, told me about the Louisiana National Guard Soldier of the Year competition and gave me an option whether to compete or not," she said. "I saw it as a challenge - like taking a test."

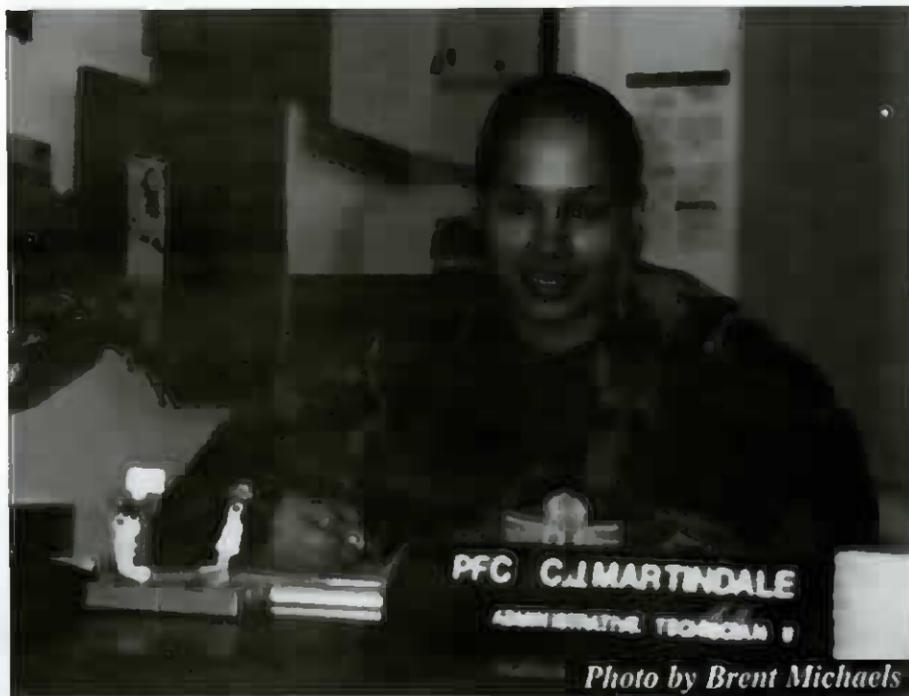


Photo by Brent Michaels

*Pvt. 1st Class Christina Martindale, a graduate of the Louisiana National Guard's Youth Challenge Program -- a high-school drop-out G.E.D. course -- was recently named the Soldier of the Year for the Louisiana Army National Guard. She will compete in the 5th Army soldier and NCO of the Year Board this spring.*

The Louisiana National Guard board, she discovered, was different. While the boards she faced at basic and AIT concentrated on appearance, the guard board looked at everything.

"It was much harder," she said. "They don't specify what you'll be asked."

They give you a big book and say 'study it.' They asked about leadership, current events and the chain of command."

When Martindale saw her competition, she didn't believe she had a chance. They appeared to have more experience and knowledge than her. So when she found out she was selected as the Louisiana National Guard Soldier of the Year her first reaction was disbelief.

"In the back of my mind I kept thinking they'd call and say, 'Sorry Private. We made a mistake'," she said.

Now that she's going up before the 5th Army Soldier of the Year board she'll be spending a lot more of her time studying. But the studying will work toward helping her

with her long term goal - to earn a degree in anthropology.

"I didn't even think about going to college 'til I was in the Youth Challenge Program," she said. "That was the first time I felt that I didn't have to live out the life that seemed destined for me."

She plans to put 20 years in the National Guard. She hopes to get an AGR job, but will become an anthropologist if that doesn't happen.

Martindale understands that she represents hope to those YCP cadets striving to follow in her footsteps. She now also serves as a role model for other junior enlisted soldiers hoping for a successful military career.

But ultimately she represents the triumph of the human spirit and the endless possibilities of what the future can hold.

"When you've seen so much trouble in your life a little bit of sunshine makes you change a lot," she said.

## Cynthia's got the blues, and rhythm, too

By Suzanne Chaillot  
159th FW/PA



*Tech. Sgt. Cynthia Bland Thomas' first CD, "Cynthia Bland and the Blueframe, I wonder" is released.*

She appears like any other Air National Guardsman, standing proud in her dress blues. What few fellow guardsmen realize is that she also sings the blues.

And sing them she does.

On the brink of her first CD release, Tech. Sgt. Cynthia Bland Thomas, a graphic specialist with the 159th Combat Communications Flight, is realizing the international appeal of her soulful voice.

Her singing career started at a

young age when she was exposed to a variety of music from Thomas' third cousin, the famous blues artist, Bobby Blue Bland to her maternal grandfather who used to travel the river roads of Point Coupee Parish playing the blues. "My mother told me my grandfather used to play the blues guitar with his teeth," she said with a smile.

She explained how her singing came as natural as breathing. She would sing every Sunday in church and would find herself singing along with the modern music on the

radio. "I would say my greatest influences were Aretha Franklin and Anita Baker," Thomas said. "I can't really say I have a favorite style of singing because I love all kinds of music."

Her big break came when New Orleans gospel artist, Davell Crawford asked Thomas to open for his Gospel Ensemble during their 1993 Italian tour. It didn't take long for the European audience to realize the power in her voice. For the

see Cynthia, page 18

# Engine shop recognized for superior performance

Submitted by  
159th FW/PA

Twenty airmen from the 159th Maintenance Squadron Propulsion Section were awarded the 159th Fighter Wing Coin of Excellence by Lt. Col. Brod Veillon, Logistics Group Commander.

They were awarded for superior performance in the completion of several monumental taskings which required unprecedented team-

work and unwavering dedication to duty.

Prior to the Operation Readiness Exercise, last minute engine changes were required because of time changes.

Then several days before Phase II of the Operational Readiness Inspection, another situation occurred which required a last minute push to change out five engines.

In January, an engine tracking

discrepancy surfaced which mandated 14 installed aircraft engines to be grounded. The 300 cycle inspection required the engines to be removed from the aircraft, disassembled and inspected, reassembled, run through the hush house and undergo a final inspection before reinstallation.

This monumental tasking was accomplished in record time.

Every member of the propul-

sion section took every adversity in stride and proved they were professionals in every sense of the word.

"The members of the engine shop have continually risen to the challenges put to them and excelled," said Senior Master Sgt. Charles C. Helmer, component repair superintendent.

"They continually maintained an accelerated work level with no complaints."

*Engine shop personnel are MSG. Scott Calcagno, MSG. Janet McChord, MSG. Lance Bunge, Tech. Sgt. Bobby Hargis, Tech. Sgt. Jackson Ruffin, Tech. Sgt. Stephen Wilgus, Staff Sgt. Marcus Day, Staff Sgt. Charles Slocum, Senior Airman Ignacio Assaf, Staff Sgt. Charles Culpepper, MSG Rene Aubert, MSG Timmy Hotard, Tech. Sgt. Kenneth Holifield, Tech. Sgt. Leon Cary, Tech. Sgt. Tyron Colin, Staff Sgt. Kenneth Blanchard, Staff Sgt. William McLean, Staff Sgt. Chad Bates, Senior Airman Michael Dupre and Tech. Sgt. Steve Sancho. The shop received a prestigious award for showing teamwork and excellence in achieving their missions.*



## Soldier honored for work with children

By Samantha Theriot  
159th FW/PA

On May 14, 1996, Tech. Sgt. Michael C. Sanders was presented the Military/Citizen Award for the Reserve Military Personnel by New Orleans Chamber of Commerce and City of New Orleans for his outstanding community service.

The Military/Citizen Award is presented to one active duty military person and one reserve military person in the New Orleans area.

Sanders, a full-time employee with the 159th Fighter Wing, has been active in the community since 1992 when he became a Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteer with Jefferson Parish Juvenile Services.

As a CASA volunteer he spent several hours a week helping children with homework, taking them to the library, or taking them to the zoo. Most importantly Sanders was there for the children.

Participating as a CASA vol-

unteer was the stepping stone which led Sanders to the development of Operation Pave.

"The main reason I founded Operation Pave was because I got tired of seeing children going through the juvenile system and ending up in court," Sanders said.

Operation Pave is a non-profit organization with a goal to provide mentors and counseling to troubled and at-risk youth in the community. Also, Operation Pave works with local schools to establish mentoring programs where none exist.

Each mentor is required to attend a mentor orientation training session where they are screened and get the opportunity to hear encouraging testimonials from other mentors who are helping these children fulfill their dreams.

"Operation Pave relies on volunteers from the community who have a strong commitment to help out the children. I want all these children to achieve positive values," Sanders said.

As president and founder of Operation Pave, Sanders said, "The most important thing is for these children to achieve self esteem. I feel that children need to have values to fulfill their dream."



Tech. Sgt. Michael C. Sanders

### Worth Repeating



*"Examine what is said, not who speaks."*

*--Arab Proverb*

*"Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless; and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and fearful."*

*--Samuel Johnson  
(1709-1784)  
English writer*

*"Progress is not an accident, but a necessity."*

*--Herbert Spencer  
(1820-1903)  
English philosopher*

## FORSCOM commander visits National Guard unit

By Gregory Player  
Public Affairs Officer  
256th Infantry Brigade

FORT POLK, La. - Gen. David A. Bramlett, commander, U. S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) visited the Louisiana Brigade during the July Annual Training cycle at Fort Polk, Louisiana. The 256th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) was the first National Guard unit Gen. Bramlett had visited.

"We are honored to have General Bramlett visit us," said Col. (P) Bennett C. Landreneau, the 256th commander. "Gen. Bramlett asked the National Guard Bureau what was the best unit for him to see and they told him the 256th. We are the best in the Guard and are excited to be the first Guard unit he will visit."

Gen. Bramlett arrived at the Alexandria International Airport and flew to Fort Polk by helicopter. He received an initial briefing by members of the brigade staff concerning training and the operational readiness of the brigade. He then toured various units in the Brigade.

During his tour of the 1st Battalion, 156th Armor and the Fort Polk Multi-Purpose Range Complex, Gen. Bramlett sat in on the pre-

brief of a tank crew about to roll down-range for its gunnery qualification. Each crew is thoroughly briefed about its mission, possible enemy activity, avenues of approach and suspected enemy locations.

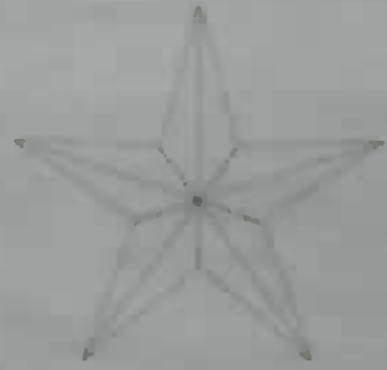
Crew members receive this briefing during their "rock drill," a rehearsal done on a sand-table miniature representation of the terrain. This allows the tank commander the opportunity to wargame his actions during contact with the enemy.

"I am very impressed with the level of training and the great morale I see in the units," said Bramlett.

"It is hard enough to study the art of being a soldier full-time, but the Guard must work even harder to keep up the same level of expertise. I have a great deal of respect for the M-Day soldier."

Gen. Bramlett was accompanied by Maj. Gen. Frank Catalano, deputy commander for reserve components, and Brig. Gen. Edmund Chering III, deputy commander, State Area Command.

Gen. Bramlett assumed command of FORSCOM July 1, 1996. He arrived at Fort McPherson, Ga., after serving as deputy commander in chief and chief of staff, US Pacific Command, Camp H. M. Smith, Hawaii



## Guardsman promoted to Brigadier General

Lafayette, La. - Bennett C. Landreneau, son of Mr. and Mrs. Audley Landreneau of Mamou, was promoted to Brigadier General in the Louisiana Army National Guard during a ceremony held at Fort Polk, Dec. 5. Landreneau is currently the commander of the 256th Infantry Brigade, a Louisiana Army National Guard unit with its Headquarters in Lafayette.

The Brigade, with more than 5,000 soldiers, has units located throughout the state and is the only combat brigade in Louisiana.

It is also the largest National Guard unit in the state and was mobilized for Operation Desert Storm. It is currently one of 15 enhanced readiness Brigades in the National Guard.

Landreneau began his Army career in 1970 as an enlisted sol-

dier. Commissioned through the Officer Candidate School on Feb. 15, 1971, he went on to serve in a variety of engineer assignments in the Louisiana Army National Guard.

During February through May, 1991, while commanding the 527th Engineer Battalion, Landreneau participated in Operation Desert Storm in both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Landreneau graduated from Vidrine High School in 1965. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Agronomy from the University of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette.

He worked as Assistant State Conservationist, Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. He now works full-time as the Special Assistant to the Adjutant General.

*Fuel the force...*

*...save Army energy*

## Farewell and hail to the Chiefs



*Col. Paul D. Alford retired from the Louisiana Army National Guard in December, 1996 after serving six years as the Chief of Staff. Prior to this he worked in the State Aviation Office since 1971, culminating in his assignment as the State Aviation Officer. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps and saw action in Vietnam, before joining the Louisiana National Guard. Upon his retirement Alford received the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious service from January 1987 to December 1996. He also received a second Louisiana Distinguished Service Medal for the period September 1991 to December 1996. The medals were presented in a low-key setting during a monthly staff meeting. Alford had to be talked into having an informal retirement party for the benefit of the many people whose lives he had touched and who wanted to honor him with gifts and remembrances.*

*Alford retires to his farm in Mount Hermon.*

*The new Chief of Staff is Col. William Randy Hilborn. Hilborn brings with him a rich store of experience earned in several positions he has held, among them: Commander, 61st Troop Command; Commander, 204th Area Support Group; Director of Surface Maintenance; Facility Manager, Camp Beauregard, and Commander, 769th Engineer Battalion. In his new position he will oversee and coordinate the efforts of a multi-faceted staff of directorates and special staff officers.*

*Hilborn is a native of West Monroe.*

### 527th Engineer projects on a roll

A groundbreaking ceremony took place in July for the new 1.3 million dollar facility that is part of the 4.2 million dollar construction project for the 527th Engineer Battalion's Ruston location.

The new building will be an organizational maintenance shop which will be used for repairing vehicles, said Maj. Ronnie Stuckey. The OMS facility, which is 13,000 square-feet, is being funded 100 percent by the federal government. "It's a worthwhile investment of our tax dollars," said Sen. Randy Ewing who was on hand for the ceremony.

Construction has already begun on the 2.9 million dollar armory which is being funded 75 percent by federal money and 25 percent state funds. The armory, which is 32,000 square feet, will house the headquarters of the 527th Engineer Battalion, as well as the Headquarters Support Company and Company B. Scheduled completion date should be mid-September.

The projected completion date on the OMS shop is next July.

### 122nd Weather Flight moves to Hammond

By Kristi Moon Graves  
159th FW/PA

As the fall season approaches, so do many changes for the Louisiana Air National Guard's 122nd Weather Flight.

The unit moved from its current home at the New Orleans Naval Air Station to the Hammond Airport in November. Brigadier General Ken Ross, chief of staff for the La. Air Guard, said that the airport is an ideal location for this unit and emphasized that the Hammond area has always provided outstanding support to the Guard.

The 16-person flight is now collocated with the 236th Combat Communications Squadron and conducts training at the airport on a regular basis.

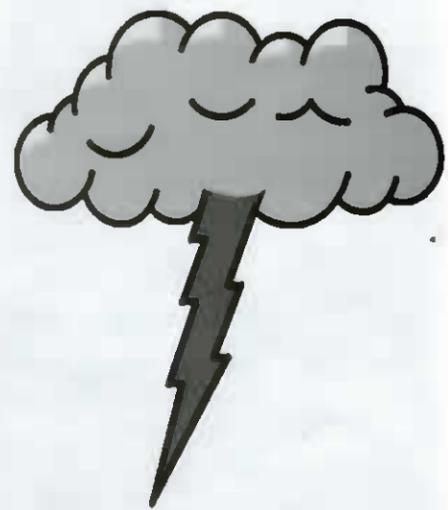
Capt. Stephen C. Trauth, the 122nd flight commander, said, "The 236th has a real family oriented atmosphere" and that he is looking forward to working closely with them. He expects the combination of communication equipment be-

longing to both units to work well together. The strong Air Guard presence in the Hammond area will also be reinforced.

With the move comes a change in the 122nd's customer, but not the mission. The mission has always been to provide complete meteorological support on a worldwide basis. The new customer will be the La. Army Guard's 256th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized). The 122nd will provide the Brigade with forecasts that affect close air support, target acquisition, weapon systems, state of terrain, troop comfort and heat stress.

Since 1981, the 122nd Weather Flight has supported an Army mission. Until now, the unit supported the Alabama Army National Guard's 31 Separate Armored Brigade. The unit's airmen live with Army soldiers, train with them and do everything the Army requires of its soldiers.

"It'll be great to support a La. unit because we'll be able to interface with them more, simply be-



cause of the location. The benefits in the long run will include increased flexibility and accessibility." Tech. Sgt. Paul Lobre said of his unit's changes.

Ross also said the new Air Force Space Command mission will be established in Hammond in the near future. This new mission and unit is being programmed by the Department of Defense and will be the first Air National Guard unit in the nation focusing in new ultra-high tech space communications.



## For our Families

# Family support shines for top brass

By John Sullivan  
Public Affairs NCO

Family support isn't just a cute phrase for two women who visited Jackson Barracks recently.

For Mrs. Judi Bramlett, wife of four-star Gen. David Bramlett, FORSCOM Commander, and Mrs. Marilyn Catalano, wife of Maj. Gen. Frank Catalano, Deputy FORSCOM Commander RC, it's a subject that deserves more attention.

Both women have seen family support programs, but from different viewpoints.

"This is my first dealing with National Guard family support programs," Mrs. Bramlett said.

"This is the benchmark for others to follow."

Mrs. Bramlett and Mrs. Catalano had a chance to visit with Family Support volunteers from Army and Air Guard units in Louisiana, particularly from two units that had recently completed activations and overseas deployments.

Led by Maj. Donna Lajoie, with the Office of Family Services at Jackson Barracks, the volunteers gave a briefing to Mrs. Bramlett and Mrs. Catalano about the successes and the problems they have encountered.

"Our success lies in our volunteers," Lajoie said. "Without them there wouldn't be a family support program."

Among the success stories Mrs. Bramlett and Mrs. Catalano heard were the deployments of the 1st Detachment, 244th Aviation Battalion to Haiti, and the 209th Personnel Services Co. to Germany.

Volunteers described setting up telephone communications among the families and making sure that vital information was passed on from military sources to the family members.

Lajoie said that during both deployments, "it was the volunteers that kept each other informed. They provided the work and kept things

going."

Mrs. Bramlett and Mrs. Catalano also heard how family support volunteers helped the family of a soldier missing from the Primary Leadership Development Course at Camp Beauregard.

The soldier, a member of the Oklahoma National Guard, was reported missing after failing to finish the Land Navigation Course. An extensive search of the course and the surrounding countryside failed to find any trace of the missing soldier.

A family service volunteer from Camp Beauregard helped arrange lodging and assistance for family members who flew to Camp Beauregard.

"It was a success story because we were there to help," Lajoie said.

"I know a lot about the active duty side," Mrs. Bramlett said. "I don't know your problems and that's why I'm so interested in hearing what you have to say."

Mrs. Bramlett said family support is something that is now being addressed on a command-level.

"There is a lot of interest and concern about family support," Mrs. Bramlett said. "You see it in the way the military is looking after its soldiers now."

"Like the saying, 'We recruit the soldier, we retain the family.'"

Mrs. Catalano echoed those sentiments by adding,

"The National Guard is really pushing family support and I think it's just great. We have to take care of the soldiers and that means taking care of the families as well."

After hearing the briefing, Mrs. Bramlett said,

"My hat is off to all of you. You have a wonderful program that is taking care of the soldiers and their families, and that's the most important thing."

## Family care is nothing new

By John Sullivan  
Public Affairs NCO

The idea of the military taking care of the families of soldiers wounded or killed in action isn't something new to the Louisiana National Guard.

Maj. Donna Lajoie, with the Office of Family Services at Jackson Barracks, said the idea of such a program goes back to the early days of the Civil War.

The Washington Artillery, she said, after taking part in the First Battle of Bull Run, "marched back to Louisiana as a unit.

"And the first thing the unit did when it returned to the state was to take care of the families of soldiers who had been killed or wounded in the battle."

Lajoie said the Washington Artillery "set a standard that we are still maintaining today in looking after our soldiers."

## Employer Support of the Guard/Reserve Committee awards area businesses at meeting in New Orleans

The Louisiana National Guard Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Committee held its annual meeting at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans in February.

The mission of the ESGR committee is to promote public and private understanding of the Guard and Reserve in order to gain employer and community support through programs, personnel policies and practices that encourage employee and citizen participation in the reserve forces.

Present at the meeting were Maj. Gen. Ansel M. Stroud, Jr., State Adjutant General; Rear Adm. Francis W. Harness, Commander, Naval Surface Reserve Forces; Maj. Gen. Thomas Wilkerson, Commander, Marine Forces Reserve; Maj. Gen. Joe Earnst, Commander, 377th Theater Army Area Command; Maj. Gen. (Ret.) James Livingston, United States Marine Corps; Brig. Gen. Jerry Thamo, Deputy Commander, 90th Support Command; Brig. Gen. Will Joffrion and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Lt. Col. Hunt Downer.

The day's activities included a

luncheon where several employers and organizations were honored with ESGR awards.

The "Pro Patria" Award, the highest award given by the Department of Defense to a civilian employer, was given to the First Commerce Corporation in New Orleans. The First Commerce was nominated by an employee in the Air Force Reserve for their outstanding military support policies and practices.

Recipients of the State Chair Awards were:

Service Marine Industries, Amelia, La. nominated by the Navy Reserve; St. Christopher School, Metairie, La. nominated by the Air Force Reserve; PepBoys Automotive Center, Gretna, La. nominated by the La. Air National Guard; Medical Imaging Services, Jefferson, La. nominated by the Navy Reserve; Avondale Shipyard, New Orleans, La. nominated by the La. Air National Guard; Ms. Debbie Ortego, Houma, La. nominated by the ESGR committee; Zeneca Pharmaceuticals, LaPlace, La. nominated by the Army Reserve; Terrebonne Parish Office of Family Services, Houma, La.

nominated by the La. Air National Guard; KLFY TV, Lafayette, La. nominated by the ESGR committee; U.S. Post Office, Lafayette, La. nominated by the Army Reserve; Hi-Tech, Inc., Kenner, La. nominated by the ESGR committee; Navy Communication and Telecommunication Station, New Orleans, La. nominated by the Air Force Reserve; 156th Army Band, La. Army National Guard, Bossier City, La. nominated by the ESGR committee; and U.S. Marine Corps Band, New Orleans, La. nominated by the ESGR committee.



# Passing the reigns through

## Active duty officer commands LANG battalion

Story and photo  
by Maria L. LoVasco  
State Public Affairs Officer

For the first time since World War II an active component officer has assumed command of a National Guard unit.

During the 158th Annual Parade and Review that took place at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans, Lt. Col. John R. Hennigan took command of the 1st Bat., 141st Field Artillery from Lt. Col. Thomas W. Acosta, Jr.

Hennigan is no stranger to Louisiana having graduated from Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, La. During his Army career he also served as a battery commander with the 5th Infantry Division at Fort Polk, La. His wife is a native of Leesville, La.

The decision to select an active component officer to command a Guard field artillery battalion was made to help increase the integration between the active Army and National Guard.

"This decision has the potential of bringing our Army closer together at a time when we, as an

Army, need to be tightly united to prevail," said Maj. Gen. William Navas, director of the Army National Guard. "This action could be the decisive point of change to a cultural divide that has hobbled our Army's maximum potential for 200 years," Navas said.

Hennigan takes over a unit which has 158 years of tradition behind it. The Washington Artillery has fought in the Mexican War, Civil War, World War I and II, and was activated for Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm. It is the oldest militia unit in the state of Louisiana and the oldest Field Artillery Battalion outside of the thirteen original colonies.

Experienced NCOs and young, enlisted troops gave the cry "TRY US!" during the parade and review/change of command ceremony in October. "TRY US" echoed and reverberated to every corner of the huge, crowded gymnasium where the ceremony was moved due to inclement weather.

In attendance to witness this historical change of command were Lt. Gen. Edward Baca, Chief of the

National Guard Bureau and Maj. Gen. Frank Catalano, Deputy Commander, Forces Command, Reserve Component.

Maj. Gen. Ansel M. Stroud, Louisiana Adjutant General, spoke during the ceremony and recognized several individuals instrumental in making the day possible. "When I found out that there was talk of having an active duty officer take over a reserve unit I said, 'Let it happen in Louisiana first,'" he said.

Hennigan's assignment prior to swearing in as a Louisiana National Guardman, was working as a Senior Operations Officer at the Pentagon's National Military Command Center, Joint Staff. He has also served in Korea, Germany and throughout the U.S. His decorations and awards include the Joint Meritorious Service Medal, Army Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal and Humanitarian Service Medal.

Hennigan replaces Lt. Col. Thomas W. Acosta, Jr., who had served as the commander since April 1994. He also served on active duty in Germany before joining the Loui-

siana Army National Guard in 1985. His decorations and awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation with four oak leaf clusters, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal and the Louisiana War Cross. He lives in West Baton Rouge Parish and serves as an attorney in Port Allen. Acosta now moves to a position in STARC.

Capt. Jonathan T. Ball, Alpha Battery Commander is enthusiastic about the 141st being the first to integrate an active duty commander. "We look at it as another challenge in the history of the battalion," he said. "We're looking forward to making Lt. Col. Hennigan's tour a success and making this success for the Louisiana National Guard."

During the Parade and Review, Ball's battery received a Continuous Fire Streamer for the most successful battery in the area of live fire exercises and readiness for the entire training year. His battery also received the Try Us Streamer for the highest administrative readiness ratings in terms of APFTs, MOS qualification and weapons qualification.

## Gieg takes pilot seat

159th FW/PA

Maj. Deon Gieg accepted the reins of command of the 122nd Fighter Squadron, Louisiana Air National Guard from Lt. Col. Vance Neumann during a change of command ceremony held April 13th.

Gieg, a native of San Fernando, Calif., was commissioned into the Air Force in 1978. Upon his graduation from Pilot Training at Reese AFB, Texas, he joined the 480th TFS in Spangdahlem, Germany where he flew the F-4 Phantom from 1980 to 1982. He then joined the 22nd Tactical Fighter Squadron in Bitburg, Germany where he flew the F-15 Eagle from 1982 to 1986. He was a flight instructor for the USAF Fighter Weapons School at Nellis AFB Nevada from 1986 to 1989.

Gieg left the active duty life to fly with Delta Airlines. In 1990 he joined the Louisiana Air National Guard to once again fly the F-15. While a member of the 159th, Gieg held the positions of Chief of Staff, Operational Support Squadron Commander and 122nd Operations Officer before accepting the job as Commander of the 122nd FS.



Lt. Col. John Hennigan receives the battalion guidon from the Adjutant General of the Louisiana Army National Guard, Maj. Gen. Ansel M. Stroud during the change of command ceremony held in New Orleans in October. Hennigan is the first active duty officer to command a National Guard unit since World War II.

# hout the state...



Maj. Jadwin V. Mayeaux, Jr. took command of the 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry at a ceremony in Abbeville. Here, a pass in review is conducted with Maj. Gen. Ansel M. Stroud, Jr.

## Mayeaux takes charge of 156th

By John Sullivan  
Public Affairs NCO

An arctic blast didn't chill the spirits of the 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry during a change of command ceremony at the unit's headquarters in Abbeville recently.

On Jan. 11, Lt. Col. Herbert P. Fritts handed over command of the battalion to Maj. Jadwin V. Mayeaux, Jr. Fritts commanded the battalion from 1993-96 and was awarded the Meritorious Ser-

vice Medal for his tenure as commander.

The award was presented by Maj. Gen. Ansel M. Stroud, adjutant general of the Louisiana National Guard.

"The appearance of the soldiers here today speaks of the professionalism of this unit," Stroud said. He complimented the 2nd Battalion soldiers "for the pride that you have in your unit and yourself."

The general also complimented the community of

*see Mayeaux, page 18*

## Averitt takes over 204th

By Karen E. Leger  
Det. 1, 102nd PAD

Col. Richard W. Averitt took command of the Headquarters, 204th Area Support Group in a change of command ceremony on Sept. 8th at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans.

"I'm a people oriented person," Averitt said. "I enjoy taking care of soldiers because they're first."

Averitt's military service began in 1969 through the Reserve Officers Training Corps. He served in the Republic of Vietnam as a platoon leader in the

152nd Military Police Company in the 199th Light Infantry Brigade (Mech.) during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and served as the Deputy Brigade Commander of the 256th Infantry Battalion (Mech.) since 1992.

In his civilian career, he's employed with the Louisiana State University at Alexandria as the Registrar and assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. He graduated from Northwestern State University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Elementary Education and

*see Averitt, page 18*

## 415th gets new boss

By John Sullivan  
Public Affairs NCO

The 415th Military Intelligence Battalion (Linguist) has a new boss.

During ceremonies at the battalion's headquarters in Baton Rouge in January, the flag was passed from Lt. Col. H. Glen Kent to Lt. Col. Walter D. White.

Kent assumed command of the 415th in October, 1994 and was recognized for his leadership with the Meritorious Service Medal, which was presented to him by Maj. Gen. Ansel M. Stroud, Jr., adjutant general of the Louisiana National Guard.

Stroud spoke to the battalion of the challenges that face the National Guard and the U.S. military in general. He also complimented the battalion's achievements under Kent.

Specifically, he mentioned the 415th's involvement with representatives from the former Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan. The 415th pro-

vided translators who spoke Russian and Uzbekistan during a visit of the Uzbekistan delegation to Louisiana as part of the NATO Partnership for Peace Program.

As the outgoing commander, Kent spoke from a different perspective.

"I see a lot of pride here today," Kent said.

"I see pride in our unit, pride in the Louisiana National Guard, pride in our state, pride in the U.S. Army and pride in this great country of ours."

He challenged the officers, NCOs and soldiers of the battalion to continue the traditions they have already started. As the incoming commander, White had a short statement for the battalion.

"I will give you my best, I expect you to give me your best," White said.

A short reception was held following the change of command ceremonies.



## National Guard signs Landmark Environmental Plan

It was a strange marriage of sorts as members of the environment camp shook hands and signed agreements with members of the Louisiana National Guard in July.

The Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service handed over stewardship of the longleaf pine habitat on Camp Beauregard to the National Guard.

The official signing made Camp Beauregard the first military installation in the U.S. to manage land potentially occupied by species listed under the Endangered Species Act.

The agreement is known as "Safe Harbor" and it requires the National

Guard to contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should there be a "reestablishment of red-cockaded woodpeckers" on the area which could interfere with military training.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would then have jurisdiction over the removal of the bird to a safer area.

"The focus is less on the bird and more on the ecosystem it lives in," said Chief Warrant Officer Carl Thompson, a training site environmental specialist.

Under the agreement, the National Guard will be able to expand its training exercises from Camp Beauregard into three outlying longleaf pine areas.

One of the areas contain several

abandoned red-cockaded woodpecker cavity trees.

Representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nature Conservancy expressed no doubt about the National Guard's ability to watch over the land.

"Initially, we were pretty far afield," said Elizabeth Creasman, director of the Nature Conservancy. "With an agreement like this, you don't know where it's going to lead. But with this agreement, both sides are now flexible."

Currently, there are no red-cockaded woodpeckers within the proposed action area, and the conclusion of the Fish and Wildlife Service is that

military usage will not jeopardize the continued existence of the bird.

Should there be the chance of harm to the endangered bird, the Fish and Wildlife Service recommends the National Guard: monitor the proposed longleaf pine demonstration areas for the presence of red-cockaded woodpeckers, notify the Service of the need to remove any active red-cockaded woodpecker cavity trees and allow the Service or a designee access to Camp Beauregard for the purpose of locating the birds, including monitoring and banding.

*Reprinted in part from Alexandria Daily Town Talk*

## Protecting Longleaf Pine

Knock on Wood: Prospects for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker may be on the upswing with the July 24 signing of an innovative agreement between The Nature Conservancy of Louisiana, the Louisiana National Guard and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Relying on the new "Safe Harbor" conservation approach, the three groups have found a way to accommodate the Louisiana National Guard's future land use requirements with land management practices that favor the beleaguered bird.

Under the agreement, the Louisiana National Guard will work with the conservancy at Camp Beauregard in Pineville to protect, restore and maintain the longleaf pine ecosystem -- the woodpecker's primary habitat.

Using the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan developed by the Conservancy for Camp Beauregard, the Guard will keep longleaf pine areas in longleaf, as opposed to harvesting the trees and then replanting with other pin species. And because longleaf pine depends on fire for perpetuation and survival, the Guard will manage the habitat with fire.

The Guard will also keep trees of all size classes, including some relic longleaf between 80 and 150 years old. The woodpeckers typically select these older trees, or those at least 60 to 80 years in age in which to excavate their nesting and roosting cavities.

These and other conservation steps in the management plan will help restore one of the most degraded ecosystems in Louisiana. Longleaf pine habitat in the southeast has shrunk from approximately 70 million acres 100 years ago to less than four million acres today. As its habitat disappears, the popu-



lation of red-cockaded woodpecker follows suit, dropping from an abundant status at the turn of the century to less than 4,500 family units in 13 southern states today.

Although concerned about the situation of this endangered woodpecker and longleaf pine habitats, initially the Louisiana National Guard leadership was reluctant to undertake any land management steps that might attract the woodpeckers onto their property for fear of incurring land use restrictions under the Endangered Species Act.

The Guard also was initially hesitant to open themselves up to the scrutiny of an environmental organization, but the reasonable terms of the "Safe Harbor" agreement convinced them a partnership with the Conservancy was possible.

"The Louisiana National Guard is committed to the environmental stewardship principles of proper resource management and conservation," said Louisiana National Guard Major General Ansel M. "Buddy" Stroud, Jr.

Under the "Safe Harbor" agreement, the Louisiana National Guard is under no obligation to protect any habitat the endangered woodpecker may colonize as a result of voluntary red-cockaded woodpecker habitat maintenance and restoration.

If managing for longleaf pine does attract new red-cockaded woodpeckers to Camp Beauregard, the Guard has agreed to notify the USFWS in the event that a Louisiana National Guard activity may threaten or harm the bird. In this situation, the USFWS would relocate the woodpeckers.

"What happens is that public and private landowners convert their forests to species other than longleaf pine to avoid attracting the birds and facing severe limits on land use as a result," explained State Director Lisa Creasman. "This program not only protects longleaf pine for the woodpecker and other species, but also in a sense protects the Guard, so they can legally continue activities on this land. It's a balancing act between the needs of the birds and the needs of the landowners," she said.

"Ironically, the management plan in the end is a bonus not just to the woodpeckers and other wildlife that gain new habitat, but to the National Guard as well, as longleaf-dominated forest tends to be relatively open and more hospitable for trainings and troop maneuvers. We're thrilled to be involved in this partnership," said Creasman.

### Forest grant received by National Guard

*By Maria L. LoVasco  
State Public Affairs Officer*

The Louisiana National Guard's training facility, Camp Beauregard, recently received an Urban and Community Forestry Program grant from the Louisiana Office of Forestry.

The Urban and Community Forestry Program recognizes efforts to promote tree care and to educate the public and residents about the importance of community forests. "The program encourages tree planting, care and maintenance," said Chief Warrant Officer Carl Thompson, environmental officer for Camp Beauregard. "We plan to use the grant funds to plant trees, to conduct a tree survey, train tenants and residents, and we hope to achieve Tree City USA status for Camp Beauregard. This is a special honor for us because we are the first military post in Louisiana to be accepted into the program."

To celebrate this award, the Guard planned an Arbor Day ceremony and Commemorative Tree Planting on December 14, 1996. Graduates of the Guard's highschool drop-out program, the Youth Challenge Program, planted the trees.

"Trees are important to our environment," said Maj. Gen. Ansel M. Stroud, state adjutant general. "They improve the quality of our lives, clean the air that we breathe, shade us from the sun, shelter us from the wind and beautify our communities."

Gen. Stroud noted that the Camp Beauregard ceremony is one step toward achieving the highly coveted Tree City USA status.

*See grant, page 18*



Photo by Karl Kratzberg

Five members of the Louisiana National Guard assisted Hazel Park Elementary School's beautification project by digging trenches to lay down PVC pipes to provide a water source to magnolia trees donated by a local garden club. They were (from left to right) Cpl. Lester Schmidt, Jr., SRA Johnny Platz, Charles Clavier, CW4 Kim Hogan and Sgt. Richard Cusimano.

## Coastal Restoration gets national attention

U.S. Senator John Breaux (LA) hosted a special ceremony held in January recognizing the support of the Clinton Administration for the Louisiana Coastal Restoration Program. Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Secretary Jack Caidwell will participate in this special dedication ceremony where some 80 trees from the White House lawn will be transported to Louisiana to benefit the state's Christmas Tree recycling and coastal erosion projects.

Senator Breaux is the author of the "Breaux Bill" legislation known as the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act that allocates funds for protection of Louisiana's coastline.

Secretary Caidwell said that the White House trees will be used in the Jefferson Parish restoration program where nearly 50,000 trees will be utilized this year. Caidwell also noted that the Christmas Tree program over the years has generated and continues to promote enormous public support and volunteerism for the environment. "This show of support from our congressional delegation and Washington will mark the kickoff of Louisiana's National Outreach campaign geared at public awareness and education for coastal protection, restoration and management, as well as bring attention to the crisis Louisiana is challenged by," Caidwell said.

The press conference and ceremony in Washington D.C. (Ellipse near White House) will begin at 9 am with comments from Senator Breaux and other members of the

see Coastal, page 18

# Engineers dig deep to help children

By Maria L. LoVasco  
State Public Affairs Officer

Members of the Louisiana National Guard's Post Engineer Facility at Jackson Barracks came to the aid of school children at Hazel Park Elementary in River Ridge by digging irrigation trenches for their campus beautification project.

Several donated pine trees planted last year in the play yard failed to take due to a lack of water. Children were attempting to irrigate their gardens by carrying plastic jugs of water to the location. Before a donation of magnolia trees would be

made this year the garden club wanted assurance that a water source would be provided to ensure the success of the trees.

Enter the Louisiana National Guard engineers.

Ms. Darcie Burnett, Hazel Park School PTO President, turned to the Guard to provide the labor and machinery needed to trench the ground and connect the PVC pipes donated by Jefferson Parish.

The work was accomplished in one day in November, and the children's school beautification project was back on track.



Photo by Maria Lovasco

White House Christmas trees are delivered to protect Louisiana coastlines. The trees are placed in wood fences to decompose and trap sediment for growing vegetation.

## White House Christmas trees delivered to protect La. coastline from erosion

By Maria L. LoVasco  
State Public Affairs Officer

Eighty Christmas trees that graced the lawn and interior of the White House this past Christmas became part of the 50,000 or so that will work toward stemming coastal erosion in South Louisiana.

Eighty percent of the nation's total wetland loss occurs in Louisiana where coastal erosion is recorded at a rate of approximately 25 to 35 square miles each year.

The Christmas Tree Fence Project is just one unique method used throughout the coastal zone parishes to help combat coastal wetland loss. The trees that are placed in the marsh in constructed wood

fences decompose and trap sediment that form growing vegetation. The tree fences also break the force of incoming waves, preventing the washing away of shoreline.

Secretary Jack Caldwell, La. Department of Natural Resources, felt that adding the White House trees to the Tree Fence Project would help bring national awareness to the problem. He encouraged Governor Mike Foster to make the request of the White House and involved the cooperation and support of the entire Louisiana legislative delegation.

But the challenge remained of how to get the trees from Washington DC to Louisiana. Secretary Caldwell dialed 911 and the Louisiana National Guard answered.

The 1086th Transportation Company, Jena, used this hauling mission as a training opportunity to practice its long haul driving skills. Two tractor-trailers and an escort vehicle driven by Staff Sgts. Tim Smith, Michael Tradewell, John Grimm, James Robertson, Richard Luneau, and Sgt. Rafael Comas were sent to Washington DC to pick up the trees. After a ceremony held at the Ellipse near the White House, which was attended by Col. Richard Averitt, 204th Area Support Group commander, the trucks began the 1,000 mile journey to the trees' eventual destination in

See Erosion, page 18

# Engineer brings tools of hope to schoolgirl



*Sgt. Drexel Stewart shares a light moment with his friend, eighth-grader Noelle Cowo in the Solomon's Seventh Day Adventist School addition he helped construct during "New Horizons - Belize."*

*Photos by Bud Roberts*

*By John Fundator  
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment  
Illinois Army National Guard*

**BURRELI. BOOM.** Belize — Louisiana Army National Guard Sgt. Drexel Stewart is constructing more than schools in this remote location — he's building a special relationship with a Belizean schoolgirl that's as solid as the structures he builds.

Stewart, a Baton Rouge resident and carpenter extraordinaire, recently made a return trip to Belize as part of a U.S. military training, humanitarian and civic action exercise called "New Horizons — Belize" to help build another rural school. He also found time to check out two schools he previously helped construct last year, pay a surprise visit to his Belizean pen pal, Noelle Cowo, and celebrate his 49th birthday at her school as she and classmates sang, "Happy Birthday."

Cowo, an eighth grade student at Solomon's Seventh Day Adventist School in Orange Walk, met Stewart last February when he and fellow engineers with 769th Engineer Battalion headquartered at Baton Rouge, began construction of a three-room addition to the cramped school as part of Joint Task Force Bayou.

"When I got home, I sent her a bunch of school supplies and then we started writing one another and became good friends," said Stewart.

That bond was strengthened when Stewart returned to the English-speaking Central American nation to participate in "New Horizons — Belize," the largest U.S. military civic action, training exercise in the Western Hemisphere this year. After completing the first phase of construction on a school in Sand Hill, Stewart traveled to Orange Walk to see the completed Solomon's School and visit his friend Noelle.

He didn't arrive empty handed. Toting a bag full of school supplies, an enlarged photo of him and Noelle taken at the construction site last year, and a hair brush, comb and hand mirror set, Stewart was greeted by Armondo Correa, assis-

tant principal and eighth grade teacher, who informed Noelle that she had a visitor.

The happily surprised Noelle and Stewart chatted for awhile while her similarly cheery classmates gathered around, inspecting the bounty she received from her Louisiana friend.

Peering at the photo, the small, soft-spoken Noelle said, "It's very beautiful. I'll put it on the wall."

After an hour-long visit, Stewart and his friend parted again.

To many National Guard, Reserve and Active Component service members who participate in exercises such as "New Horizons," the fruits of their labor are often immeasurable.

On one hand, the U.S. military gains superior training while improving the infrastructure of the host nation by building or expanding schools, improving roads, and providing medical and dental care to residents.

This part is tangible and the benefits are readily apparent.

More difficult to weigh are the deep friendships fostered through exercises such as "New Horizons." To those who know him, the fast friendship formed between Stewart and Noelle Cowo was no surprise.

"He's a big, soft-hearted fella and well-liked by everyone. He just found a good relationship," said Master Sgt. Randy Davis, who manages battalion operations for the 769th for



*Soldiers create forms for the initial phase of construction.*

two consecutive annual training exercises in Belize and "borrowed" Stewart to help with the school projects.

"We had to pull him for his special skills," Davis said of Stewart, who is a mechanic in the military and an expert carpenter in his civilian life.

Stewart's skills, Davis said, helped the 769th jump ahead of schedule in their mission to help construct eight schools and public buildings and improve more than 10 miles of highly traveled roads in support of "New Horizons — Belize."

Correa, assistant principal at Solomon's School since 1982, said the improvements made by Joint Task force Bayou to the Orange

*See Engineer, page 18*

# LANG builds bridge between two nations

By John Fundator  
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment  
Illinois Army National Guard

BURRELL BOOM, Belize -- Louisiana Army National Guard soldiers training in this Central American nation are building much more than schools and roads here.

They are building a bridge between the two nations that is paying off in a big way for the citizens of Belize, especially the children who will take pride in their new schools, and for the soldiers who learn that military training can be richly rewarding in human terms.

Through "New Horizons -- Belize," the largest U.S. military training, humanitarian and civic-action training exercise in the Western Hemisphere this year, U.S. military troops from both the active and reserve components will work with the Belize Defense Force and the ministries of Works, Education and Health to improve roads, build eight new school buildings, and provide free medical screening and treatment for thousands of Belizeans.

The six-month, multi-million dollar exercise, which kicked off in January, will be headed by the 225th Engineer Group of the Louisiana Army National Guard.

Referred to as Joint Task Force Pelican, it will receive additional support from the U.S. Army, Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy, as well as National Guard and Reserve units from California, Colorado, Florida, Kansas, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas. Belize Defense Force soldiers will also train with the U.S. engineer and military police counterparts.

Louisiana Army National Guard Lt. Col. Cliff Oliver, commander of Joint Task Force-Peli-



Sgt. 1st Class David Dykes takes time out with his friend, Dawn Ortiz, a student at Sand Hill School, who gave the citizen-soldier a handmade greeting card expressing her gratitude to him for helping build a new school in Sand Hill.

can, said planning for the exercise began in November 1995. Project feasibility studies, budgets, indentifying required equipment and personnel, and seemingly countless other tasks were needed before the vehicles and heavy construction equipment could be loaded on barges in Louisiana bound for Belize.

In mid-January, Oliver said, the first engineer unit and support personnel providing supply, security, maintenance and medical services arrived. Blessed with dry weather, Oliver said the first deployment aggressively tackled the road and school construction projects.

"We're probably a good week and a half ahead of schedule at this point, three weeks into the exercise," Oliver said. "We've been fortunate...no accidents and we're anticipating a good exercise."

And that's just what Louisiana Army National Guard soldiers with Company A, 769th Engineer Battalion based in Baker, La., got. Tasked with beginning work on significant improvements to a rough seven-mile stretch of the Burrell Boom to Hattiesville Road, the engineers managed to raise one mile of road three feet and replaced a deteriorated culvert with a new, 50-foot culvert.

"A couple of farmers down there are pretty happy that we're improving their road," said Louisiana Army National Guard 2nd Lt. Andrew Huisman, officer-in-charge of the road project. One, in fact, brought some coconuts for the soldiers. "He cut them open and gave us the juice."

Huisman said his road crew has been busy, but noted that's the way the citizen-soldiers like it.

"As long as they're burning diesel and moving dirt, they're happy," said the Baton Rouge, La., resident and college junior majoring in construction management at LSU.

Sgt. Michael Lewis, who in his civilian career works for Novartis in St. Gabriel, La., agrees. This two-week annual training, however, offered more than the typical training at Camp Beauregard.

"I feel happy to help other people," Lewis said. He said he was also struck by the pleasant nature of the local Belizeans. "Everybody is so

friendly. They all like to talk to you and they treat us good."

In addition to the Burrell Boom-Hattiesville road project, 769th Eng. Bn. citizen-soldiers began construction of three-room schools at Hattiesville, la Democracia and Sand Hill.

There, too, soldiers got much more than the experience of purging concrete and making forms for the facilities.

"When we got here, these kids sang to us and prayed for us. We got them out here and showed them where the classrooms were going to be. They were pretty excited about that and they all gave us little cards with their names, addresses and thank you's on them," said Sgt. 1st Class David Dykes, NCO in charge at the Sand Hill School site.

Dykes, a private contractor in Denham Springs, and his crew poured concrete, put in door frames, and laid corner blocks for the structure. The new facility will replace one of two old wooden buildings, one of them which also serves as a chapel.

It will house 70 students in grades one through eight, said Norris Williams, principal of Sand Hill School.

"It will accommodate more students. It will make the facilities for both students and teachers much better," said Williams, who shares the excitement of his students and local residents as they watched the building progress.

"We're definitely going to have a party," the principal said.

Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Hebert, who conducted the initial site survey on the Sand Hill project, said efforts like this one are personally fulfilling.

Hebert, a surveyor for Salmon and Associates in Baton Rouge, said getting involved in humanitarian and civic-action missions like this one and a similar project in Orange Walk, Belize, last year "makes me feel really good. It's going to make conditions a lot better for the kids."

The single-floor school and separate latrine



Sgt. Michael Lewis, a heavy equipment operator for Co. A, 769th Eng. Bn., uses a soil compactor as he helps his crew lay a 50-foot culvert during his two-week AT in Belize. (Photo by Chief Warrant Officer Bud Roberts, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Illinois Army National Guard.)



# You and the Law

By Col. James J. Donelon III, State Judge Advocate

## Understanding how lawyers charge

### ■ Time and advice are a lawyer's stock in trade

When most people think of legal services, they think of lawyers appearing in court. While this may be the most visible example of lawyers rendering service to their clients, there are many different ways in which lawyers may provide services--some of which are not so obvious but all of which require time and training.

Lawyers are licensed professionals who, after completing their college educations, received advanced educational degrees in law and passed intense examinations to become certified to practice law. Only people admitted as members of the Louisiana State Bar Association may practice law in Louisiana.

If you need a lawyer, do not fail to contact one simply because you are uncertain about the cost. Your lawyer will want you to be satisfied both with the services and the charges.

### ■ What will it cost?

Lawyers have come to understand that clients are consumers and are entitled to the best possible service at the best possible price. Every lawyer has an incentive to provide you with the best representation. Lawyers know if good service is given and the charge is fair, you will be pleased. If you are satisfied with the services your lawyer provides for you, you will return to that lawyer and will refer others. This is how lawyers build their practices.

Further, lawyers are obligated by the Rules of Professional Conduct to charge only a fee that is reasonable. These rules of Professional Conduct were established by the Louisiana Supreme Court and govern all lawyers in Louisiana.

### ■ Is a fee reasonable?

The Rules of Professional Conduct require that a lawyer's fee be reasonable and that certain factors be considered in determining the reasonableness of the fee, including:

- The time and labor required, the novelty and difficulty of the questions involved, and the skill required to properly perform the legal service;
- The likelihood, if apparent to the client, that the acceptance of the particular employment will preclude other employment by the lawyer;
- The fee customarily charged in the area for similar legal services;
- The amount involved and the results obtained;
- The time limitations imposed by

the client or by the circumstances;

- The nature and length of the professional relationship with the client;
  - The experience, reputation and ability of the lawyer or lawyers performing the services;
- and
- Whether the fee is fixed or contingent.

When you first consult a lawyer about a matter, ask about the fee to be charged and what services the lawyer can deliver. You are entitled to inquire about the lawyer's qualifications to perform those services and the probability of success in resolving your legal matter before deciding to entrust your affairs to any attorney.

When a lawyer has not regularly represented a client, the Rules of Professional Conduct require that the basis:

### • Hourly Rate

Often lawyers base their charges on a fixed dollar amount for each hour spent on your behalf. They keep records of the time spent on your case. This fee arrangement is called an hourly rate. The rendering of any legal service necessarily involves a lawyer spending time with you or on your case or legal matter.

When paying for legal services rendered, you are essentially paying lawyers for the time they spend on your legal matter, whether it be in court, in their office, on the phone, researching, drafting documents or simply talking to and advising you.

Time, therefore, is the key to most of the professional fees charged by lawyers.

The hourly rate charged by lawyers can vary greatly from one locality to another and within certain specialties of law. Generally, the rate varies from \$60 to more than \$100 per hour. Fees based on hourly rates focus on the amount of time necessary to perform the legal services required to resolve the matter, and not on the client's interpretation of what is important or trivial. In other words, when lawyers are working on your legal matter, they are not working on someone else's legal matter.

If your legal matter is demanding and time consuming, the attorney must charge a fee that is fair and reasonable for the time expended, even though you may consider the matter to be less important. When choosing between lawyers whose hourly rates vary, you should consider which lawyer has the skills or experience to resolve the case faster. If you agree to an hourly arrangement, you and the lawyer may want to include a provision in the agreement requiring that the lawyer not exceed a specified amount

of time or money without obtaining your permission.

### • Contingency fee

Lawyers may base their fee on a percentage of the amount recovered, less certain expenses. Because this type of fee is contingent on the outcome of the matter for which the service is rendered, it is called a "contingency fee." Under a contingency fee arrangement has certain advantages for people who need legal services but do not have funds available to pay an attorney's fee if they should recover nothing. The most frequent type of case handled on a contingency fee basis is a personal injury claim. The Rules of Professional Conduct that certain types of cases may not be handled on a contingency fee basis. These include divorce and criminal cases. The Rules also provide that a contingency fee agreement must be in writing and must state the method by which the fee is to be determined, including:

- the percentage to be paid to the lawyer in the event of settlement, trial or appeal;
- litigation and other expenses to be deducted from the recovery; and
- whether these expenses are to be deducted before or after the contingency fee is calculated.

Upon conclusion of a contingency fee matter, the lawyer must provide the client with a written statement spelling out the outcome of the matter and, if there is a recovery, showing the amount paid to the client and the method of its determination.

The percentage at which the lawyer is to be paid is not set by the court but is agreed upon between the lawyer and the client. It depends upon many factors, such as the possibility that the suit may be lost all together, or will involve a lengthy trial with only a small, if any, likely judgment.

Although many lawyers charge the same percentage, you have the right to ask questions about the amount of work to be performed for the contingency fee, and you are entitled to bargain for a different percentage if you think that is fair.

As in cases involving charges on a straight hourly basis, you are entitled to inquire about the attorney's ability and experience in the type of legal matter for which you are seeking representation.

### • Retainer fee

You also may employ a lawyer on a retainer basis. This may involve either:

- the payment of an agreed upon fee to retain the lawyer's general availability to you for unspecified legal representation during a set period of time;

or

- the tender of a down payment or advance deposit toward the fee to be charged for a particular representation in the future on an hourly or other agreed upon basis.

The first type of retainer, paid to retain a lawyer's general availability for unspecified representation, becomes the property of the lawyer when paid. This fee guarantees that the lawyer will be available to you. With this kind of retainer fee agreement, you may be billed additionally for the legal work that is done.

The second type of retainer, paid for future particular legal services, covers the initial work and expenses related to your legal matter. Your lawyer is required to place these retainers in a special account called a trust account, against which your legal matter will be billed until completed. If the retainer is insufficient, the attorney may ask for additional funds, to be used in the same manner. Likewise, unused funds at the conclusion of the legal matter remain the property of the client and should be reimbursed to the client after all expenses are paid.

In either type of retainer arrangement, the fee must be reasonable under the circumstances and the fee should be in writing. Don't forget to ask questions about the rate which you will be charged and the way in which the fee will be billed. You have a right to know and you have a right to have your questions answered.

### • Fixed fee

One of the most common methods by which lawyers charge for their services is to establish a fixed fee for a specific job or particular representation. This is often used in legal work involving divorces, wills, purchases or sales of property, title examinations, etc. There are some types of cases in which your attorney can tell in advance approximately what the charges will be; in many other instances, he or she honestly can't. Thus charges for a will can range from \$200 or less to more than \$2,000, depending upon the complexity of your estate. When you agree to a fixed fee, be sure you know what it does and does not include. You should find out if any other charges might be added to the bill.

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## 239th Military Police train at the 'real thing' in Belize

Story and photos  
by David A. Durling

**BURRELL BOOM.** Belize -- Ten National Guardsmen from the 239th Military Police Company, based in Baton Rouge, arrived in Belize January 4th, ready to provide equipment and personnel security for Joint Task Force Pelican. The Task Force, composed primarily of Louisiana Army National Guard engineers, is conducting the largest humanitarian exercise in the Western Hemisphere in 1997. The purpose of the exercise, named "New Horizons 97 -- Belize", is to provide U.S. military personnel with challenging construction and medical training as well as practicing the skills required to deploy outside of the continental United States.

Training side-by-side with their Belize Defence Force counterparts, these soldiers man the base camp's guardposts, ensure that the hundreds of engineer vehicles are safe, and most importantly protect the men and women of the Task Force. They do this by controlling access to critical areas with identification checks, and by patrolling the port and the roads around the base camp being constructed in Burrell Boom.



*Sgt. Jody Boyd uses his flashlight to help several Belize Defence Force military policemen fill out their shift change paperwork.*

Sgt. Jack Lightfoot, of Baton Rouge, says that the Belizean soldiers give his men good intelligence on the local area.

"They also assist us by helping us interact with the local civilians, especially translating, because although they speak English, their accent is tough to understand sometimes," says Lightfoot.

Through 12-hour shifts, the

toughest problem the MPs face are the insects that swarm around.

"It'll be ninety degrees outside, and we're huddled around a campfire just to keep bugs away," Lightfoot said.

The MPs have discovered that their Belizean partners are lacking in some of the most basic equipment.

Sgt. Jody Boyd, of Baton

Rouge, notes that seeing the Belizeans "makes you really appreciate what you have back in the United States." Boyd also says that this is by far the best mission he's been on in the Guard.

"It's not training and we're not just pretending. This is the real thing."

According to Spec. David Guidry, of Lafayette, "The toughest thing has been the heat and the mosquitoes, but I think it's a good mission." Guidry and the rest of his team will depart Saturday, January 18th, after two weeks of an unforgettable experience in Central America.

While the U.S. military has conducted similar exercises in the past, the scale of "New Horizons 97" surpasses previous humanitarian efforts.

By the time the exercise concludes at the end of May, over 3,900 soldiers will have rotated through Belize, and will have constructed five new schools, substantially renovated two additional schools, improved 10 miles of roads, and conducted medical assistance training for thousands of Belizean citizens.

## Golf Classique raises money for D.A.R.E.

By Kristi Moon Graves  
159th FW/PA

Everyone needs an excuse to play golf now and then. What better excuse than raising money for a local D.A.R.E. program can there be?

Seven years ago the 236th CCS started their golf tournament just to get together and have some fun. "and we do have fun," Maj. Karl Mapes said.

Mapes, a member of the 214th EIS, was chairman of this year's 7th Annual Golf Classique held at Oak Knoll Country Club in Hammond. Actually, he's been the force behind the event since it got its start with only 10 or 12 players all those years ago.

"This thing mushroomed into 60 or 70 golfers after the first three years so we decided to turn it into a drug (demand) reduction project and donate the proceeds to the local D.A.R.E. program in Hammond," Mapes said. That's when the tournament became a National Guard activity, not just a 236th event.

"It's a fun fund raiser."

Mapes said that the support he and Assistant Chairman Tech. Sgt. Bobby Pinter need is sponsorship. Of course, the event also accepts tax deductible donations. The dates for the upcoming tourney have not been set yet, but stay tuned to the Bayou Militia Press for more information.

## Spotlight on: 1st Sgt. Mark C. Abshier



*Photo by Karl Kratzberg*

*While performing state active duty during a flood, 1st Sgt. Mark C. Abshier, C Battery, 1st Bn, 141st Field Artillery, observed civilians boarding military 2-ton trucks. He noted that the drivers had to assist the elderly, women and children in getting into the back of the trucks. Realizing the potential for injury, he contacted the State Safety Office. Abshier suggested a ladder be used to assist the civilians boarding the trucks. 1st Lt. Richard Kuntz, State Safety Specialist, took the idea one step further and designed a portable stair with a handrail that would fit both the 2-ton and 5-ton trucks. After building a prototype, Kuntz presented it to COL Mike Appe, Director of State Resources. Appe provided the funding to have a local vendor, Longo's Metal Works, build the stairs. For his suggestion, Abshier was presented a Gerber Multiplier Pocket Tool by the Adjutant General.*

## Cynthia

from page 5

following two years, she toured Italy as a soloist and leader of an Italian-American band, The Blueframes. The response was so favorable the band landed a contract with the Italian record company, Blues and Rock Connection.

According to Thomas, the beauty of recording in Italy is the freedom to express her love of all types of musical style, like the Blues or Gospel," Thomas said. "My problem is I can't decide what I like best. I can do the jazz, I can do the gospel, I can do it all."

This ability to perform a variety of music is evident on her debut CD, *I Wonder*, by Cynthia

## Mayeaux

from page 11

Abbeville for their support of the 2nd Battalion.

"No where in America is the National Guard supported better than here in this part of Louisiana," Stroud said.

The 2nd Battalion is made up of units from Abbeville, Jeanerette, Breaux Bridge, Eunice, Crowley, Houma, Thibodaux, New Iberia and Franklin.

"It's great to be an American today, but it's even greater to be a member of the Louisiana National Guard," Fritts said.

"Your accomplishments have been many and the bottom line is you are the best."

Fritts challenged the officers, NCOs and soldiers of the 2nd Battalion to continue upholding the traditions of the unit, which date back to the

## Coastal

from page 13

Louisiana delegation. The National Guard will then load the donated trees onto trucks for transport and delivery to Harvey, Louisiana in Jefferson Parish.

A planned event for acceptance of the White House trees is scheduled Friday, January 31st, at 2 p.m. at Joe's Landing located at 1170 Anthony Lane, Barataria, LA off Hwy. 301.

According to Marnie Winter, Director of Jefferson Parish's coastal restoration program, school students and other community volunteers will celebrate the arrival of the trees and will take part in the bundling and preparation work necessary for placement of the trees in the marsh. Gov-

## Bridge

from page 15

is expected to take three months to complete. First Lt. Andrew Thomas, a member of Headquarters Company 769th Eng. Bn., and officer-in-charge of the first construction crew deployed for the Sand Hill project, said he has gained much from the exercise.

An engineer with the U.S. Highway Department and a former substitute teacher, Thomas said, "It's a warm feeling to know someone really appreciates and cares for what you are doing. You are doing something for children, that they will utilize to better themselves. It really touches me."

Capt. Donald Johnson, commander of the LANG's Co A, 769th Eng. Bn., said the construction projects have also provided his soldiers with excellent training.

"They have to do their primary MOS along with other MOSs," Johnson said, noting the talent in the company and the benefit of overseas training in an austere environment will greatly serve to prepare Co A for an upcoming efficiency evalu-

## Averitt

from page 11

a Master of Arts Degree in student personnel. He is also a graduate of McNeese State University with a Master of Education and Education Spe-

Bland and the Blueframes. The variety of songs flow from spirituals to blues to jazz as easy as a mighty river working its way south. "When I sing, I can't hide the fact that I love the songs," said Thomas with a shine in her eyes. "When the music starts, something inside just takes over. It is a wonderful release of energy."

The talent that started with her grandfather and cousin has not stopped with Thomas. On her CD, her son plays the trumpet and the saxophone. The CD, *I Wonder*, will be available for purchase soon at major record outlets in the New Orleans area.

Civil War when the 2nd Battalion of the 156th Infantry earned the respect of the Union forces it was fighting against as well as praise from the Confederate generals they were fighting for.

"You are warriors to the heart," Fritts said, "Steel Lighting Battalion."

As the incoming commander, Mayeaux said he has a tough act to follow.

"It is a great honor to see the colors of this command," Mayeaux said. "You are the best battalion in the best brigade in the best state in the National Guard system."

The 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry (Mechanized) is part of the 256th Infantry Brigade also known as the Louisiana Brigade.

ernor M.J. "Mike" Foster, Jr. is expected to attend this event. DNR Assistant Secretary Katherine Vaughan will host a brief recognition ceremony honoring those who have participated in the program. An airlift demonstration of the trees into the marshes south of New Orleans is also planned.

For more information on this topic, please contact Phyllis Darensbourg, DNR Public Information Office at (504) 342-8955 or Marnie Winter, Jefferson Parish Environmental and Development Control Department at (504) 828-4230.

ation.

Johnson said several of his soldiers have been to Belize in the past and have asked to come back.

That would suit the Honorable George Bruno, U.S. Ambassador to Belize, just fine. Visiting Sand Hill School prior to the opening ceremony of "New Horizons-Belize," Bruno said more work by the U.S. military is readily welcomed as the tiny Central American country moves toward the upcoming century.

"If this country is going to leap into the 21st century, these people need to have a good solid education. And these schools provide an opportunity for education, training, and development," Bruno said.

"So it's a very positive thing for the United States to come down to do our military training and, at the same time, provide tremendous benefits to the people in Belize."

cialist Degree.

Averitt and his wife, Diana, live in Lecompte. They have three children and a grandson.

## Engineer

from page 14

Walk Town facility last year "means a lot of prestige to the community."

By doubling the size of Solomon's School and constructing a separate latrine, Correa said the project added luster that helped boost enrollment to 215 students in grades one through eight.

For Drexel Stewart, the job is still not over. The 19-year military veteran — 17 of them in Headquarters Company, 769th Eng. Bn. as a mechanic — said he knows the compelling urge to see the completed school at Sand Hill, the one he has helped construct during his most recent deployment to Belize, will be overly powerful.

So, too, will the desire to see the Belizean students who appreciate his efforts.

"These kids," he said, "really kept me going on these two projects. The thing about building schools is that it makes it better for them."

And that satisfaction can't be overstated.

"It makes me feel good, real good," he said. "I know they appreciate that building. I just wish we could have done more."

## Erosion

from page 13

Jefferson Parish, La.

A ceremony was held at Joe's Landing in Barataria to receive the trees and recognize the many volunteers and organizations that made this endeavor a reality.

Representatives from the La. Department of Natural Resources, the Governor's Office, the State Legislators Office, the State Coastal Restoration and Management Program, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Jefferson Parish Coastal Restoration Program, area high-school and university volunteers, the media and the Louisiana Army National Guard were in attendance.

After the ceremony, those in attendance boarded a boat to view the Christmas trees being placed in the marsh. Two UH-1H helicopters and crews from the 812th Medical Company sling-loaded the bundled trees from a barge to a nearby designated fence area. This was the fifth year that Army Guard aviation units have been involved in the Coastal Restoration Program.

Maj. Gen. Ansel M. Stroud, the adjutant general, spoke at the ceremony of the perfect fit between this requirement and the training mission of the 1086th Transportation Company and the 812th Medical Company. He also emphasized the Louisiana National Guard's ongoing commitment to preserving and protecting the environment.

"Every single member of the National Guard is also a citizen of the state of Louisiana," he said. "The environment is very, very important to us."

## Grant

from page 12

"We are working on the other Tree City USA requirements including the appointment of a Tree Board, funding a tree care and planting program and developing a tree ordinance for Camp Beauregard," Stroud said. "When Camp Beauregard achieves Tree City USA status, we will join 2,000 other communities in America that proudly fly the Tree City flag of accomplishment."

Camp Beauregard is located in central Louisiana on the northeast outskirts of Pineville in northern Rapides Parish.

# October activities bring Christmas early

Story and photos  
by Suzanne Chaillot  
159th FW/PA

The look on her face was one of a child on Christmas morning. Mrs. Eva McCallon could not hold back the joy when members of the 159th Fighter Wing arrived at her home armed with everything from hammers and nails to handsaws and lumber. More than forty volunteers from the Louisiana Air National Guard were about to transform the home she had occupied since the early sixties.

McCallon was the grateful recipient of the restoration project known as Christmas in October. The New Orleans program was implemented in 1988 to address the needs of homeowners, namely the elderly and disabled, who are ill-equipped to manage home repair.

Here is how it works. Eligible homeowners submit applications to the New Orleans Preservation Resource Center. These owner occupied homes which need renovation and/or repairs are screened and selections are made by a board of professional contractors and architects.

Volunteers from corporate and community organizations then pickup the torch and are responsible for completing the repairs. All supplies are donated and provided to the teams of volunteer carpenters, electricians and painters. McCallon's turn-of-the-century shotgun house located in Algiers Point was one of the homes chosen for 1996.

"I picked up three pamphlets at my church and filled out all of them," said McCallon as Air National Guard workers moved around her in a flurry of activity. "They told me I had been chosen and I tell you, I was so happy. I gave it a chance and it worked. It's like a dream come true.

While floors were being replaced and paint was being applied to freshly sanded boarding, McCallon watched with pride as she witnessed her home's transformation before her eyes.

Master Sgt. Don Chavin of the 159FW Safety Office stopped his sanding for a moment to comment on how great it made him feel to be part of the volunteer force. "To see Mrs. Ava's face when she saw us arrive this morning was great," said Chavin. "I really feel like we are helping her see one of her dreams come true."

Volunteering comes natural to members of the Louisiana Air National Guard. Besides being a volunteer military force, the organization carries out community improvement programs throughout the year.

Lt. Col. Rocky Hill is another Air National Guard volunteer with Christmas in October. "This is my fourth year volunteering for this program,"



F-15 pilot Capt. Scott Bommer replaces a water pipe during Christmas in October.

said Hill. It's great to be able to provide this type of service for people who could not ordinarily afford renovations. After we complete our project we usually see the neighborhood follow suit by cleaning up their yards and making improvements on their homes, too."

If there was ever a question of whether the Louisiana Air National Guard and the New Or-

leans Reservation Resource Center could make a difference in the local community, the look on Eva McCallon's face beamed with a resounding "yes."

"This is the biggest and the best Christmas present I have ever received," stated McCallon with grateful pride. "I can't find enough words to express my happiness."



MSG. Curtis Williams, civil engineer for the 159th FN cuts a new floor for Eva McCallon's home.

*It is with profound regret that we  
announce the untimely deaths of  
fellow Louisiana National  
Guardsmen.*

**Spec. Michael Watson Self, 20, died December 25, 1996.**

Self enlisted in the Louisiana National Guard on April 29, 1994 and was assigned to Company A, 527th Engineer Battalion, Pineville, La.

His military awards include the Army Service Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, and the Army Reserve Component Overseas Training Ribbon.

He is survived by his father, Danny O. Self, of Hornbeck, La.

**Spec. Dalton Wayne LaForge, 23, died November 19, 1996.**

LaForge enlisted in the Louisiana Army National Guard on April 10, 1991 and was assigned to Company C, 527th Engineer Battalion, West Monroe, La.

His military awards include the Army Service Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, Louisiana General Excellence Ribbon, and the Louisiana Longevity Ribbon.

He is survived by his father, Wayne LaForge of Monroe, La, and his mother, Elsie R. LaForge of West Monroe, La.

**Pvt. 1st Class David Nelson Gauthier, 18, died December 4, 1996.**

Gauthier enlisted in the Louisiana Army National Guard on November 21, 1995 and was assigned to Company B, 769th Engineer Battalion, Marksville, La.

He is survived by his parents, Daniel S. and Alfreda L. Gauthier, of Effie, La.

**Spec. Jeromy Allen Cooper, 19, died December 8, 1996.**

Cooper enlisted in the Louisiana Army National Guard on November 15, 1994, and was assigned to Detachment 1, Company A, 205th Engineer Battalion, Hammond, La.

His military awards include the Army Service Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, and the Army Reserve Component Overseas Service Ribbon.

He is survived by his mother, Melba S. Yarborough of Tickfaw, La.

**Pvt. 1st Class Raymond Calvin Liner, III, 19, died November 4, 1996.**

Liner enlisted in the Louisiana Army National Guard, Detachment 1, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Battalion, Jeanerette, La. on December 30, 1994.

He is survived by his parents, Raymond C. and Charmaine A. Liner of Franklin, La.

**Spec. Kemble Anthony Faul, 25, died October 29, 1996.**

Faul enlisted in the Louisiana Army National Guard on December 2, 1994 and was assigned to Detachment 1, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry, Eunice, Louisiana.

His military awards include the Southwest Asia Service Medal, Bronze Service Star-2, Kuwait Liberation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon and the Overseas Service Ribbon.

He is survived by his wife, Jana A. Faul and his daughter, Alexis J. Faul of Eunice, La.

**Staff Sgt. Chester Wayne Henson, 40, died December 8, 1996.**

Henson enlisted in the Louisiana Army National Guard on October 25, 1982. He enlisted into Battery A, 1st Battalion, 141st Field Artillery, New Orleans, La. Since his enlistment he has served in several units of the 256th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized). His most recent assignment was with Troop A, 108th Cavalry, Natchitoches, La. his Primary Military Occupational Specialty was tank commander.

His military awards include the Army Service Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Army Lapel Button, Army Achievement Medal (4th Award), Overseas Service Ribbon, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal (2nd Award), Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Louisiana War Cross, Louisiana Longevity Medal (3rd Award), Louisiana General Excellence Medal (3rd Award), and the Louisiana Emergency Service Ribbon (2nd Award).

He is survived by his wife, Dorothy M. Henson, and daughter, Beth A. Henson, of Gretna, La.

**Spec. William Paul Jolly, III, 20, died December 22, 1996.**

Jolly enlisted in the Louisiana Army National Guard on January 21, 1994, and was assigned to the 156th Army Band, Bossier City, La.

His military awards include the Army Service Ribbon and the National Defense Service Medal.

He is survived by his parents, William P. Jolly, Jr. of Shreveport, La. and Susan E. Sayes of Plain Dealing, La.

## TAPS comforts loved ones

By John Sullivan  
Public Affairs NCO

It's the mournful tune played as a last respect to a fallen serviceman. It's haunting notes always seem to linger in the still air after a military service, a fitting end to a solemn service that pays tribute to the fallen man or woman.

It's also a word that in a way stands for hope for those left behind.

TAPS stands for Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors.

It was started in Alaska in 1992 after the crash of a single aircraft that killed a number of top officers and non-commissioned officers in the Alaskan National Guard.

Besides leaving a hole in the leadership of the Alaskan Guard, it left a hole in the life of Bonnie Carroll. Her husband was one of the guardsmen killed in the crash.

In a taped interview played before members of the Family Services Group at Jackson Barracks, Carroll described the days after the crash. There were memorial services and then the funeral and the final act when a member of the military honor guard handed her the flag that had draped her husband's casket.

It was then that she said she realized there were no support groups "or anyone to turn to" afterwards.

Carroll said that after the funeral, realizing there weren't any support groups for the survivors to turn to, created TAPS.

TAPS has a 24-hour toll free number for anyone wanting to call as well as E-mail access.

How important is it for the survivors of a military death?

In a recent newsletter, TAPS received a letter from Gen. C.C. Krulak, commandant of the Marine Corps.

In his letter, Krulak thanked Stefanie Bekehr, president of the California chapter of TAPS.

"Your organization truly does 'serve the families and friends of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country.'"

As further evidence of the importance TAPS is gaining, U.S. Senator Ted Stevens wrote to the Secretary of Defense.

"TAPS will continue to be a valuable resource for the surviving family member, long after casualty assistance officers have completed their responsibilities. I am hopeful that the Department (of Defense) will give strong consideration to promoting this program within the military community."

TAPS can be reached by calling: 1-800-959-TAPS, fax 202.638.5312, or E-mail: TAPS AK(a)aol.com or TAPS DC(a)aol.com.

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