

The Louisiana **Citizen Soldier**

“Preserving Our Legacy”

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NOVEMBER 2001

COVER STORY:

*Louisiana’s Tiger Brigade
gives OPFOR a run for its money,
leaves mark
on the National Training Center*

Inside:

*Louisiana’s Engineers travel
abroad,
stay home
to perform AT missions*



NTC rotation a grand success

By Capt. Ed Bush
Deputy PAO

In his opening comments at the recent National Training Center “Hotwash” held in Durham, N.C., Lt. Gen. Roger C. Schultz, Director of the Army National Guard, referred to Louisiana’s rotation through the premier training site in the United States Army as “an overwhelming success.”

The Hotwash provided the setting for the official passing of the NTC Torch as the members of the Pelican State Task Force and the Louisiana Brigade officially closed their books on Operation Tiger Strike.

In addition to passing the torch, Louisiana turned over volumes of After Action Reports, copies of a two-inch book titled “Lessons Learned,” and a multitude of compact disks that could have been titled “Everything you wanted to know about NTC but were afraid to ask!”

All of this information was passed on to North Carolina and Tennessee — the next two states scheduled for NTC rotations.

As Guardsmen throughout Louisiana brush off the last of the Mojave Desert sand, let’s reflect on some of the particular accomplishments of our rotation.

SAFETY: The Louisiana National Guard transported over 6,500 soldiers from Louisiana to California, and then safely home again. Additionally, the Guard conducted rigorous training in a hostile environment as well as operated and worked with all types of heavy equipment ranging from tanks to trains and from helicopters to HET’s. The Louisiana National Guard did all this for over seven weeks and not one



Guardsmen suffered a serious injury. Cadre from NTC commented that they could not remember ever having such a safe rotation.

EQUIPMENT TURN IN: Ninety-six percent of the equipment the Guard drew from NTC facilities was returned in a fully operational status. Such a high return rate is unprecedented for NTC and reflects highly not only on the Guard’s maintenance systems, but on the emphasis of the Louisiana Guard’s leadership.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRO-GRAMS: California has the most stringent environmental protection legislation in the country. The Louisiana National Guard was not only a true caretaker of the land, but in the areas of soil contamination and spill prevention, its environmental section broke records. Over 100,000 pounds LESS contaminated soil than the previous rotation was processed and Bill Vincena, of the NTC Environmental Department, referred to the Louisiana Guard as “superstars in his eyes!”

PSTF: The ability of the Pelican State Task Force to come together and overcome countless obstacles ensured the success of the Brigade and demonstrated true excellence. Over 200 pieces of equipment were line-hauled and 485 rail cars with 1,600

pieces of equipment were sent to California. Over 6,500 soldiers from 19 different states were processed through the rotation. The numbers are staggering, the challenge was monumental, and the success is noteworthy.

256th Brigade: Observer-controllers from NTC will be the first to say that the National Training Center experience is not about winning or losing the battle(s) against the Opposing Force. In fact, the deck is stacked against the rotating unit.

But when the dust settled, and ENDEX was called, the scorecard showed that the warriors of the Tiger Brigade had twice penetrated the OPFOR defense and forced commitment of all of the OPFOR combat multipliers. In translation, the OPFOR is going to remember Louisiana for a long, long time.

Gen. Freddie E. McFarren, commanding general of the 5th U.S. Army, commended the Louisiana National Guard and its rotation through NTC. “In no other outfit have I seen the quality and quantity of leaders at all levels that exists in this organization,” McFarren said. “It is truly the key to your fantastic success out here. This was an absolutely superb rotation.”

Hats off Louisiana!





256TH INFANTRY BRIGADE TESTS READINESS, SYNCHRONIZATION

By Spec. Jessica E. Revell
Det. 1, 102nd MPAD

FORT IRWIN, Calif. – In the Mojave Desert where temperatures reach a scorching 120 degrees and snakes, scorpions and coyotes meander, the native Krasnovians anticipate their next victims.

The unbearable heat and mountainous terrain are an advantage to this Opposing Force as they defend their homeland. It's a routine battle with a repeated victory, but this time could be different.

What seems to be a dust storm is a mirage, the fog of war, and behind it the advancing signs of a force equally equipped.

The nation's number one enhanced combat brigade is scheduled to uphold their title once again. In July, the 256th Infantry Brigade from Lafayette and other Louisiana Guardsmen will participate in a set of "played" war games at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., to prove that they can fight and win anywhere in the world.

As an enhanced readiness brigade, the 256th is required to complete an NTC rotation once every eight years.

"The enhanced readiness brigades, or e-

brigades, are designed to be highly trained and ready to be deployed anywhere in the world in a very short time. This means that our training standards and personal standards have to be quite high. There's no fooling around," Command Sgt. Maj. Donald Hemphill said.

Hemphill knows that actual war is not the place for mistakes. That's why the brigade has been preparing for this deployment for the past three years.

"One of the things that will help us is that 98 percent of the leaders in the brigade have been here throughout the entire train up," Hemphill, senior enlisted Guardsman of the 256th, said.

In the summer of 2000, the 256th completed a full dress mission rehearsal at Fort Hood, Texas. The goal was to uncover potential weakness or problems that could later hinder proficiency in the unit.

"It was also important for the soldiers to work together and learn how each other thinks and operates. That comes in handy during a deployment like this," Hemphill said.

Unit cohesion was definitely tested at Fort Irwin. NTC provides an as-close-to-real-war scenario without using live fire. The OPFOR playground of 430,000 acres provides a challenging battlefield, which allows no cover or conceal-

ment. The most modern equipment and tactics will be used to create a realistic training environment.

The goal of the 256th was not to win, but to enhance readiness, utilize combined arms, and improve their ability to synchronize.

"This exercise will test whether we have been training as smart as we should be. This will also show how well trained our junior leaders are. Our strength will be tested, our equipment challenged," Hemphill said.

Thousands of pieces of equipment have been railed from Louisiana and unloaded in California. After the Brigade's arrival, they will inspect and draw equipment daily for the first week.

Next, the Brigade, now known as Blue Force, will enter the maneuver box where they will compete in four force-on-force battles for victory.

Awaiting them "in the box," OPFOR soldiers, dressed in desert camouflage adorned with black berets and often seated in the turret of replicated foreign vehicles. They are precise, competitive, unrelenting and painfully realistic.

"Each day our command will be challenged by a constantly changing situation. By our command I mean from the commanding officer all the way down to that young soldier who has only been home from basic training for a few weeks before coming out here," Hemphill said.

Not only will they engage in force-on-force battles, but their reaction to civilians and the media in time of war will also be tested.

"They were never taught how to deal with civilians on a battlefield. Here is a big part of the learning process. When dealing with the media, they will have to know what is appropriate to say and what isn't. They will also have to know when not to say anything at all and refer a reporter to a senior NCO (non-commissioned officer) or officer," Hemphill said.

The training they will receive here can only result in a win-win situation. If they emerge victorious, they have practiced soldier skills and have increased readiness. If they are defeated, at least they have found their weaknesses and know what areas need improving.

After successfully sustaining the force, the 256th will turn in their equipment and return home July 28-29.

"When this mission ends and these Guardsmen and women return home, I hope the people of Louisiana will come out and welcome them. They will get the job done and I want the folks back home to know that these are some great citizen soldiers that they can all be proud of," Hemphill said.



At NTC, the Brigade's budding power included the M109 Paladin, a weapon capable of reaching vast distances in any weather environment. The Paladin, a recent addition to the Brigade's fire power, is state of the art.



AWD : half a world away from home



Private 2nd Class Carlouis Brack, a Hornbeck native, trained at AIT with soldiers who are now members of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

**By Sgt. Kevin Cowan
Det. 1, 102nd MPAD**

FORT IRWIN, Calif. – Although the situation was different, Dorothy said the same thing too, Toto.

“We’re not in Kansas anymore,” Spec. Dustin Eldridge of the 256th Military Intelligence Company from Lafayette said with a laugh as he headed down the tarmac with the rest of the soldiers.

But the point was clear. Sure, he’s not from Kansas, but he’s not back home in Louisiana, either. After years of planning and training, the 256th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) from Lafayette, along with all of its support elements, is in the most hostile environment to be found short of combat.

They have arrived at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., to participate in “Operation

Tiger Strike,” a series of war games used to evaluate their combat power, effectiveness and readiness. The exercise begins July 14.

“We’re ready as we’ll ever be,” said Capt. Chris White from Alpha Troop, 108th Cavalry out of Natchitoches. “Everyone’s anxious. We’re ready to get out here and do it.”

It just happens to be taking on the 1st Armored Cavalry Regiment, one of the toughest units around when it comes to desert warfare.

It is their job to be the Opposing Force in this exercise and it is played in their own back yard.

“I think it will be interesting,” Private 2nd Class Carlouis Brack said. “We’ll surprise a lot of people, even Brack, with the 108th Cavalry, just graduated from his Advanced Individual Training in October as a tankner, where he trained with soldiers

all downhill from here.”

Annibalie added that the planning stage was the most difficult and now is the execution stage when everyone does the job they have been training for over the last couple of years.

Although these soldiers have trained for years and are confident in what they have learned, anxiety still abounds.

With a nervous laugh “Ask me (what I think) in five days,” joked Spec. Elizabeth Lowery, medic for Charlie Company, 199th Support Battalion.

In five days, all hell will break loose when these two formidable forces meet in the heat of battle.

Dust clouds will rise; the skies may darken. But when the dust clears, thank goodness, we still won’t be in Kansas.



Guard's desert training impressive to visitors

By Dusty M. Shenofsky
LANG State PAO

CAMPBEAUREGARD—A group of 32 state senators, elected officials and employers recently traveled to Fort Irwin, Calif. — where the Louisiana National Guard is conducting its largest combat training exercise since 1987 and its largest deployment as a group since Operation Desert Storm/Shield — to see what it takes to be a Guardsman.

Approximately 5,000 Guard soldiers are currently conducting heavy combat training against a world-class opposing force at the U.S. Army's National Training Center in Fort Irwin. NTC spans the Mojave Desert and provides realistic heavy combat training for enhanced mechanized brigades, such as the Guard's 256th Infantry Brigade, headquartered in Lafayette.

The trip, sponsored by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, afforded attendees the chance to see firsthand the top quality training the Louisiana National Guard undergoes and just exactly what a soldier does as a member of one of the leading Guard organization's in the nation. This trip was one of four on which state legislators; local and state government leaders; local and state law enforcement agents; local and state community leaders; and Guard employers traveled to the desert to see the Guard in action.

"I recognize the awesome responsibility placed upon our Louisiana Guardsmen who must be ready at all times for possible combat duty," Sen. Jerry Thomas, R-La., said. "It's imperative that our Guard has proper training now, more than ever. They may be called to active combat duty at any time and must be fully prepared to respond. This visit convinced me that our adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Bennett C. Landreneau, and our Louisiana leadership is committed to providing the best training experience available to ensure their readiness state is tops should they be called upon by the governor or the president."

Training at NTC is tough and indeed real-world training for the Guard's federal mission. It entails the logistical challenge of rapidly deploying 2,169 pieces of equipment including tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles and Humvees; and the deployment of the thousands of soldiers involved in the rotations. Everything the Guard needs to fight this battle and survive in the heat of the desert must be taken with them and once again re-deployed to home station once the mission is completed.

Such tough training surprised Sen. Fred Hoyt, D-La., who said his only real exposure to the Guard came in the form of disaster aid and the Youth Challenge Program, rather than real-world missions such as those being trained for at NTC.

"I truly had little exposure to the Guard before this trip," Hoyt said. "To see the hat the Guard wears while training for its federal mission is extremely impressive to me. Visiting the troops at NTC certainly enlightened me on the capacity of the Guard and its ability to mobilize and implement an attack — it's second to none."

Lafayette resident Linda Gremillion agreed with Hoyt and said although she had been exposed to some training the Guard performed at Fort Polk earlier this year, the trip to NTC was "extremely impressive and



Members of the group were able to visit soldiers and get a closer look at equipment while in the Mojave Desert at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif. These trips were sponsored by the Employers Support of the Guard and Reserve.

enlightening."

"The logistics of bringing the equipment and personnel to California to conduct such a massive exercise is quite an undertaking," Gremillion said. "I am most impressed at how very well the Louisiana National Guard planned for this mission and how well they implemented that plan."

At the center of the Guard's NTC rotation is the Tiger Brigade, Louisiana's 256th Brigade, whose soldiers are being put to the test under the toughest training the Army offers.

As today's Army is relying more and more on its reserve components as a result of downsizing, the Guard must complete more rigorous training, such as that offered at NTC, and be on the cutting edge of today's technology in order to fill these shoes.

While the Guard has a tri-fold mission at the state, federal and civil levels, the 256th's federal mission calls for the brigade to back-fill the 5th Army Corps during a Major Theater of War Conflict in the Pacific Theater. This means that Louisiana's 256th Brigade is postured as the first unit in the nation to be activated if such a conflict were to break out.

Being one of only eight enhanced mechanized brigades in the nation, the 256th must undergo training at NTC every eight years. Fighting against the active-duty Army's 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment — who is stationed at NTC and trains day-in and day-out to win wars, the soldiers of the 256th have their work cut out for them.

But the 256th stands ready. Ranked by the Department of Defense at the No. 1 enhanced brigade in the nation, its soldiers are ready

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19 STATES JOINED FORCES TO PARTICIPATE IN "OPERATION TIGER STRIKE"

Spec. Jessica E. Revell
Det. 1, 102nd MPAD

The mission of today's Army is being able to say they can fight and win anywhere in the world. NTC creates a pseudo-war atmosphere and produces soldiers that can do just that.

Participating in NTC, however, requires millions of dollars. Not every state can send troops due to lack of funds. By Louisiana having open slots, other states were given an opportunity they otherwise would not have gotten.

"NTC is good training. Other states were eager to get a chance to hone in on their skills," Worral said. The Louisiana National Guard will deploy 4,544 troops to California, with the other states sending a combined total of 1,982 troops. The Army Reserves will send 41 soldiers.

"The support has been great," said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Lowell Bradford from New Orleans. "Every-one has come here very mission focused and ready to work."

Lafayette the National Guard unit in the Hurricane Desert

FORT IRWIN, Calif. – The Louisiana National Guard is traveling 1,700 miles to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. But it's a journey the Bayou State Guardsmen didn't make alone.

In 1995, the 256th Infantry Brigade from Lafayette was designated as an "enhanced readiness" brigade. This made them one of the Guard's highest priority combat units entitling them to better training, newer equipment and more financial support.

Enhanced combat brigades are also required to uphold their titles by attending NTC once every eight years. With this in mind, Louisiana began planning for battle.

As in any battle, the first phase involves assessing resources. Louisiana found that although they had sufficient funds, they lacked the required units

By Master Sgt. John Sullivan
Det. 1, 102nd MPAD

when it comes to funding for training and

readiness. The unit is expected to be ready to deploy anywhere in the world within a short time span of less than a month to conduct combat operations.

"This is the best place in the world to conduct brigade combat team level operations," Mayeaux said. Because of space limitations, training like this could not be conducted in Louisiana or other states.

Located about 60 miles from Barstow, Calif., NTC is home to a space-age battlefield where every movement of soldiers, tanks, armored vehicles, Humvees and even aircraft are monitored and analyzed by Army and private industry technicians. Every weapon system used on the battlefield is equipped with a laser so that when it hits a target it gives computers a signal showing the target has either been killed, wounded or disabled.

For the next week or so, the Louisiana Guardsmen are preparing for the big moment when they will rumble into the desert and the wargame will begin.

"Right now they are getting organized," said Sgt. Maj. Ronald Grant from Shreveport. "This is the time that they can use to get their equipment here at Fort Irwin and then get all of their personnel on the ground."

More than 1,000 pieces of heavy equipment from M1A1 Abrahams tanks, Bradley infantry fighting vehicles, Paladin self-propelled artillery pieces, to Humvees have been moved from Fort Polk to a staging area about 30 minutes from Fort Irwin by rail. On Saturday, teams from the 256th will begin conveying this equipment.

"They brought all of their vehicles except National Guard units that are given top priority

Enhanced readiness brigades are usually years, enhanced readiness brigade and once every eight Mayeaux, of Lafayette, said. "The 256th is an for heavy formations in the Army," Lt. Col. Jay "The NTC is the premier training center them from Acadiana.

The trip to Fort Irwin means the end of three years of planning and training for almost 5,000 Louisiana National Guard soldiers, many of



ECONOMICS 101: THE COST OF GOING TO WAR

**By Master Sgt. John Sullivan
Det. 1, 102nd MPAD**

FORT IRWIN, Calif. – The cost of going to war, even a simulated one, can be staggering.

According to figures released by Maj. Gen. Bennett C. Landreneau's office at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans, the cost of moving more than 5,000 Louisiana National Guard personnel to this base in the Mojave Desert will cost about \$30 million.

A spokesman for Landreneau, adjutant general of the Louisiana National Guard, said that members of the 256th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) along with members of other units from across the state are currently enroute to Fort Irwin to take part in Operation Tiger Strike.

The 256th Brigade is headquartered in Lafayette but has units in New Orleans, Shreveport, Lake Charles, Alexandria, Opelousas, New Iberia, Houma and Ville Platte.

By July 8, Landreneau said, the entire Louisiana contingent will be at Fort Irwin to take part in a series of war games in one of the nation's only bases that allows large-scale armor formations to maneuver. He added that Louisiana National Guard troops would remain in California until August when the entire exercise is completed.

The \$30 million figure includes pay, the cost of shipping the equipment and troops to California as well as for the repair and maintenance of equipment used in Operation Tiger Strike.

But, according to Col. Lloyd Lacoste with the Louisiana National Guard's state headquarters at Jackson Barracks, there is no accurate way to attach a dollar amount to the training the guard troops are receiving

here.

"Is this money well spent?" Lacoste said. "Yes. How can you fix a price tag on the type of training that every soldier is getting out here?"

The colonel explained that the training here at Fort Irwin involves more than just members of the 256th Brigade going into battle.

"Everyone thinks about the war fighters," Lacoste said. "But what about the people supporting them? This is the job they would do in a real-world situation. From privates to colonels, everyone is getting training out here that we couldn't do back home."

As a member of the staff supporting the 256th Brigade, Lacoste said from his vantage point, the money being spent for Operation Tiger Strike is a wise investment.

"We leave here better trained and at a higher state of readiness," Lacoste said. "There is no real way to put a dollar figure on that."

Landreneau said that the Louisiana National Guard's annual economic impact in the state is now \$300.6 million.

"The total federal economic impact of the Louisiana Guard on the state is based on the cost of training, clothing, feeding, education and paying personnel; providing modern weapons and equipment; and building and maintaining training facilities and armories," Landreneau said.

A breakdown of that figures shows:

- \$52.6 million for North Louisiana;
- \$52.4 million for Central Louisiana;
- \$77.7 million for South Louisiana;
- \$20.8 million for the North Shore of Lake Ponchartrain; and
- \$96.9 million for the New Orleans region.

LOUISIANA'S TIGER BRIGADE HAS HIGH PROFILE, HIGH IMPACT

**By Sgt. Kevin Cowan
Det. 1, 102nd MPAD**

FORT IRWIN, Calif. – The Tiger Brigade from Lafayette is attracting a lot of attention.

Not only are they getting noticed by the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment who plays the enemy here at the National Training Center, they are being noticed by some heavy-hitting VIPs.

The 256th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) traveled to NTC to participate in "Operation Tiger Strike," a series of war games used to evaluate their combat power, readiness, and effectiveness. According to the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army and the National Guard Bureau, the Brigade is the number one Separate Enhanced Brigade in the nation, which means because of their past performance they are entitled to the most current equipment and extra funding to train on that equipment.

"I didn't want to miss the opportunity. I was anxious to be a part of what the Louisiana National Guard was doing," explained Louisiana State Senator Jay Dardenne from Baton Rouge who made the trip to visit the troops and to get a feel of what the operation was all about. "It's great to be first and to be respected by your peers across the country and the Louisiana National Guard obviously is."

Dardenne, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, emphasized that this exercise is necessary.

"The needs of the National Guard are not a frivolous concern. It's something that's very real. It's an important preparation and organizational opportunity for our soldiers and it obviously bodes well for the State of Louisiana."

Col. Hunt Downer, civil affairs officer for the Pelican State Task Force supporting "Operation Tiger Strike," said that although Fort Polk is a great training opportunity, it is restrictive because of size and

terrain. But at NTC, the premier military training center in the United States, battalion and brigade size units can maneuver and operate on a much larger scale.

Training on this scale is important, not only for the brigade to keep its enhanced status, but also to maintain preparedness.

"The challenge is to keep them ready," said Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz, Director of the Army National Guard. "A level of readiness is realized by way of training like this."

"In terms of our nation's military strategy, the 256 (Infantry Brigade) is one of the brigades we are counting on to be ready should we have a national emergency, something that requires a mission beyond the current combat units in the active force," said Schultz. "They are the highest priority combat unit in the Guard."

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.....From the Front Lines.....

Soldiers, airmen set new standards during AT

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of everyone involved in this summer's rotation through the National Training Center.

Over three years ago, we began the process of planning and preparing for our 2001 rotation through NTC — the premier training site of the United States Army. The road to NTC has been a long and challenging one for all levels of leadership throughout the Louisiana National Guard — you met the challenge!

A rotation through NTC is a logistical challenge of enormous magnitude. We deployed over 5,000 Guard soldiers to the Mojave Desert and then brought them home safely. That alone is an indication of the tremendous ability of this organization.

The fact that we were able to move that many soldiers and that much equipment, AND go head-to-head with the best Opposing Force the Army has to offer is indeed something of which we should be extremely proud.

The National Training Center is going to remember the Louisiana National Guard for some time — we



Maj. Gen. Bennett C. Landreneau

truly left our mark there. Not only did the Tiger Brigade give the OPFOR a real run for their money, but we also set some new standards while executing such a large-scale rotation.

For example, despite conducting fast-paced, rigorous training, our safety record in the Mojave Desert was exemplary. We had no serious training accidents and this is truly an accomplishment.

Additionally, anyone who deployed to the National Training Center knows the Army at Fort Irwin is extremely environmentally conscious.

The Louisiana Guard received considerable praise for our environmental conservation and spill prevention programs at the end of our rotation. We left the Mojave Desert cleaner than when we arrived!

I am very proud of all that we accomplished at the National Training Center. We set a new standard, and yet again, the men and women of the Louisiana National Guard demonstrated their ability to achieve excellence and raise the bar another notch.

Let me also congratulate our engineers and airmen who were involved in overseas missions this summer. Our Guardsmen acted as true ambassadors as they deployed to Germany, the Azores Islands and to Australia.

Overseas deployments are so very important to this organization and to our nation. In these face-to-face encounters with citizens and military members of other nations, our Guardsmen continue to prove themselves, representing not only the values on which this country was founded, but also the very essence of the Citizen Soldier.

Let me close by again congratulating all of you on an outstanding Annual Training period for 2001. Your efforts and success reflect the great things that this organization is capable of and true excellence.

The Louisiana

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Looking Ahead

Look for these stories and more in the next edition of the Louisiana Citizen Soldier:

■ *The Louisiana National Guard takes an active role in our nation's homeland defense mission*

■ *Guard participates in opening of Pacific Wing at D-Day Museum*

■ *60th Anniversary of the Louisiana Maneuvers remembered*



FEMALE TRACK COMMANDER AIMS 'SKY' HIGH



At Left: BY THE BOOK - Cpl. Rebecca Zicco reads the technical manual for her M-88 Medium Recovery Vehicle during Preventative Maintenance Checks and Services inspection.

'It may be kind of dirty and loud, but it is peaceful in here.'

- Cpl. Rebecca Zicco

**By Sgt. Destiny C. Smith
Det. 1, 102nd MPAD**

FORT IRWIN, Calif. - Electric Sky Church is by no means electric, hovering in the sky or a typical place of worship; but one female soldier calls this her sacred place.

"It's my baby," said Cpl. Rebecca Zicco, a track mechanic and tank commander with Company D, 1088th Engineer Battalion. "It may be kind of dirty and loud, but it is peaceful in here."

Zicco is speaking of "her track," an M88 Medium Recovery Vehicle being used for recovery team operations at the National Training Center (NTC) during "Operation Tiger Strike," supporting the 256th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized).

As she feverishly inspects the vehicle, she moves everything that seems out of place. "What is this sun block doing on my track?" she asks, propelling the bottle away from the vehicle.

She settles down, grabs her Combat Vehicle Crewman helmet, and begins labeling it with a marker.

"I named her Electric Sky Church after a female DJ in Baton Rouge," she said. "Since I am a girl, I wanted

to name her after a girl."

The predominately male engineer battalion she belongs to, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1088th Engr. Bn., actually has two females qualified to operate recovery equipment, but Zicco is the first female track commander in the Brigade.

"You should see the guys faces when they see me pop out of the hatch!" she exclaimed. "It's crazy working with them."

Zicco, who has combat engineer training, did the NTC thing before, but on active duty as a carpentry and masonry specialist. She was assigned to the 62nd Engr. Bn. When she joined the Louisiana Army National Guard, she reclassified as a track vehicle mechanic.

"There were no girls in my class at Advanced Individual Training," she said.

Staff Sgt. Robert Williams, a senior mechanic with Company D and Non-commissioned Officer in Charge of the recovery team said he was not surprised when Zicco volunteered to be a TC.

"At drill one weekend, when we were training for Annual Training, I asked for a driver for the track.

Zicco volunteered and all the guys looked at her funny. She is a track vehicle mechanic though, so she's qualified."

He is currently training Zicco to "take over the track." Zicco is the second female that Williams has trained.

"Since she is going to be TC, she has to know how to do everything for the track," he said, as Zicco struggles with the wrench.

"I am the strongest woman in the world!" she screams as she tightens a nut on the track. Williams and Zicco are a team in the civilian world also. They are both cadre for the Youth Challenge Program in Carville. Williams is Zicco's shift supervisor.

"I can't get away from him," she said.

But the fruits of staying together, the great team they make, lack of gender biases and their high-speed training contribute to the smooth running of the track, and hopefully the recovery mission.

"I want to show my girls (cadets) that anything is possible and that the sky is the limit," she said.

And, Zicco is a living example of just that.

IMPACT

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With the training that comes with being an enhanced brigade is the added responsibility of being the number one enhanced brigade in the nation.

"The 256th, after this rotation, will stay in a 'Ready Pool,' so to speak, in the event that we need to call units early," he said.

Although this exercise, which only comes

around every eight years for the brigade focuses on the ability for them to deploy on short notice to conduct combat operations, there is another side to this operation.

Dardenne went on to add, "There's a tremendous benefit to the state to having such a well-prepared National Guard, for when and if emergencies arise."

Schultz agreed. "The bonus for any state is to take that capability and readiness and apply them to emergencies.

This gives the state, the governor and the adjutant general the opportunity to apply the soldiers, the leaders, the units, the equipment on any mission, any day in Louisiana. The the 'value added.'"



VOYAGE IN THE DARKNESS

By Spec. Jessica E. Revell
Det. 1, 102nd MPAD

YERMO, Calif. - With "Born to be Wild" on the radio and the midnight moon hanging overhead, the two-man crew of truck RC-33 slipped into the darkness.

The driver, Spec. Keith R. Haley, makes driving a 45-ton vehicle look simple as he enters the interstate with ease.

In the passenger seat is assistant driver Staff Sgt. Shannon L. Oliver.

His job is to provide support and ensure that Haley stays awake.

From transporting luggage at the Horse-shoe Riverboat Casino back home in Shreveport to transporting equipment to the battlefield, this is not the first time the Bayou bellmen have worked together.

Haley and Oliver along with other members of the 1083rd Super Heavy Co. from Minden are responsible for the forward movement of the 256th Infantry Brigade's heavy combat equipment from Yermo, Calif., 32 miles away.

Over a span of 10 days, they will move 164 pieces that have been downloaded from rail-heads at the Marine Logistics Support Group in Yermo and convoy them by Heavy Equipment Transporters known by their military acronym as HETs.

Due to California law, heavy equipment can only be transported from midnight until 10 a.m. The heavy haulers are moving tanks, armored fighting vehicles, and self-propelled artillery pieces that will be used by the Louisiana National Guard's 256th Infantry Brigade in an upcoming war game called "Operation Tiger Strike." In the war game, about 5,000 Louisiana Guardsmen will be defending a fictitious county against an aggressive neighbor.

Before the battle can begin, soldiers like Haley and Oliver are busy moving the equipment of war across the Mojave Desert.

The team loads the HETs just as the sun is going down. Floodlights illuminate the work-place, spotlighting soldiers working both diligently and carefully. They must be ready to roll by midnight, but before departing, each piece of equipment will be safely secured to the trucks with heavy chains.

Staged side by side, around 20 trucks move

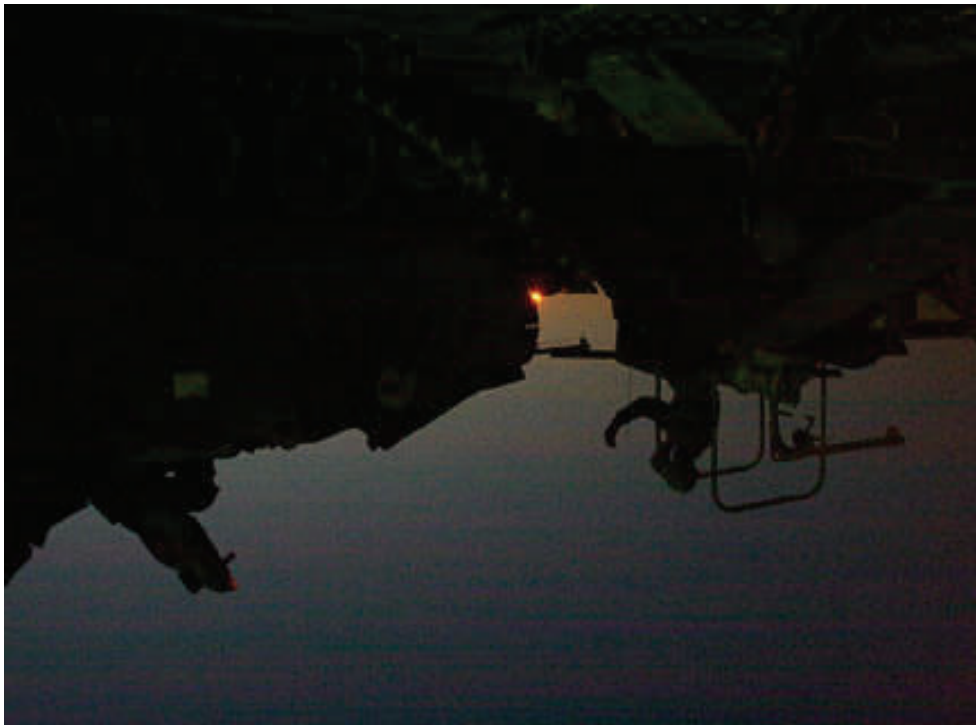
"Yea, good thing there are no trees out here," laughed Haley.

This is their sixth voyage along the desert trail. By now, they know the route and can drive it virtually blindfolded. "For the most part we know where the holes are. There's a couple of places though that we can't dodge no matter what," said Haley.

"And you thought the Grand Canyon was only in Arizona," joked Oliver.

Top speed is 48 miles an hour, but with the additional equipment and rough terrain, the convoy will move at 20-25 miles an hour. Within 20 minutes, a truck pulls over with three flat tires. The other 19 trucks drive around to make their deadline.

"It's not unusual for trucks to break down. Last week ours did three nights in a row. There's a Reverend in our platoon and before each convoy we gather around and he prays our truck will make it through the night. We have nicknamed RC-33 to RC-666," said Oliver.



SLIPPING AWAY - AS THE SUN SLIPS SLOWLY OVER THE HORIZON, THE CONVOY WAITS. SOON THEY WILL BEGIN THEIR VOYAGE INTO THE DARKNESS THROUGH THE MOJAVE DESERT HEADED TO FORT IRWIN AND THE NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER.

forward in order to form a convoy from heavy-est to lightest.

"Heaviest equipment goes first to set the pace and speed. If the lighter ones were in front, they would leave the others behind," said Oliver.

Before embarking on a 27-mile tank trail, they will undergo a manifest check and re-inspect the loads for loose chains.

The trail is dusty, dark and rutted. It's easy to lose sight of the truck ahead and the trail itself.

"Sometimes we can't see the trail at all. That's when we run over bushes and stuff," said Oliver.

high and when you're on the highway you can see over the top of 18-wheelers."

Because of its immense size and weight safety is a key issue.

"You have to pay a lot of attention while driving one of these. You have to constantly steer it. It's not the same as a regular car or truck," said Haley.

After the last vehicle is offloaded, Haley, Oliver, and the rest of their unit will head back to Yermo.

Around noontime they return to their bunks and fight the heat for sleep.



Guard doctors, medics taking the heat in Mojave Desert

By Master Sgt. John Sullivan
Det 1, 102nd MPAD

YERMO, Calif. – From the outside, the tent doesn't seem much

different from the others scattered around the compound.

The only telltale sign that it is special is a small Red Cross discreetly

displayed near the entrance. Also located next to the entrance is a small sign

that reads MEDICS.

Inside, members of the Louisiana National Guard's Detachment 5,

Headquarters STARC, have set up a facility that could be put toe-to-toe with

any urgent care facility in Louisiana. The Guardsmen are at the U.S. Marine

Corps Logistics Depot in this small California town helping support the

Louisiana National Guard's 256th Infantry Brigade.

The 256th Brigade is taking part in Operation Tiger Strike at Fort Irwin,

Calif., located 31 miles from Yermo and home of the National Training Center.

There, in Mojave Desert, the Louisiana National Guard unit will take part in a

series of wargames.

At Yermo, though, there are no wargames. The injuries are real. The

wounds are real. And the care is immediate and direct.

"Our biggest concern at first was taking care of heat casualties," said

Second Lt. James Joubert of New Orleans.

"Now that rail offloading has started, then we have to be as con-

cerned about minor trauma injuries," said Joubert, who is a physicians

assistant with the unit. "With all of that equipment being moved, there are

going to be crush-type injuries, scrapes, bruises and things like that."

With the temperature routinely climbing above the 100 degree mark, Joubert

and Capt. Larry Bates of Mandeville, said the medical personnel under their

command are constantly on the watch for anyone suffering from a heat injury.

"We are pushing them to drink as much water as possible," Bates said. "The

first day we were here, there were a lot of people who were just not used to the

heat. Now, the word is getting out and the soldiers are looking out after each other

and we are seeing fewer heat injuries."

The captain added that personnel in his section also monitor the heat and

then give that information to the task force commander.

Joubert said the unit is made up of veterans who have trained together for

several years now and some who took part in Operation Desert Shield/Storm

during the Gulf War. All of that adds up to a unit that is highly trained.

"We have some outstanding people," Bates said. "We can provide

immediate care to a casualty. Then we can transport that person to Barstow if

necessary for further care."

The captain said that the only problems the unit has had since being

deployed to the desert from Louisiana was dealing with some of the pure military

aspects of their operation.

"We aren't a field unit," he said with a laugh. "We did have a little problem

putting up the tent. But we got it up and now we are open."

The officers and men of the medical detachment operate 24 hours-a-day and

every morning a sick call is held where Guardsmen with minor ailments have a

chance to come in and be examined by a doctor or a physicians assistant.

"Our primary goal is to provide medical care for the guardsmen out here,"

Bates said. "That's what we are here for. That's what we do and we have the staff

to do it very well."

Louisiana's Guardsmen move to Fort Irwin

By Master Sgt. John Sullivan
Det 1, 102nd MPAD

FORT IRWIN, Calif. – For more than 5,000

members of the Louisiana National Guard, all

roads now lead to this U.S. Army post in the

Mojave Desert.

The Louisiana Guardsmen and women,

along with 1,500 other National Guard troops

from 19 other states will be taking part in

Operation Tiger Strike, a series of wargames

that will be fought on the high desert here in

California.

"Right now we are getting everyone

here," said Chief Warrant Officer Four Lowell

"Doug" Bradford of New Orleans. "For the next

week, a lot of people will be coming here."

The Louisiana National Guard's 256th

Infantry Brigade, headquartered in Lafayette,

will be the center of the exercise.

The unit will take the field against units

stationed at Fort Irwin to train in large-scale

maneuvers that will be just short of actually

going to war.

A spokesman for Maj. Gen. Bennett C.

Landreneau, adjutant general of the Louisiana

for improcessing," Bradford said.

armories and then travel to Camp Beauregard

"The Guardsmen will report to their

and preparing for the trip to California.

parts of the state will be reporting to their units

Guardsmen from across Acadiana and other

Back in Louisiana, more than 400

official end of the exercise," Bradford said.

scheduled to leave Aug. 15 and that will be the

"The last Louisiana Guardsmen is

Guardsmen arrived in California on June 10.

began, Bradford said, when the first Louisiana

Reserve and Air Guard members. The exercise

guardsmen, regular Army soldiers, Army

charge of a task force made up of the 6,500

The Louisiana Guard unit will be in

national emergency.

be mobilized quickly in the event of a war or

by the Department of Defense as a unit that can

National Guard unit that has been designated

An enhanced readiness brigade is a

since it is an enhanced readiness brigade.

that this type of training is critical for the 256th

training. In his statement, the general added

tion of more than two years of planning and

National Guard, said the exercise is the culmina-

Park where they catch a commercial charter or

military transport for California."

At Camp Beauregard, Bradford said,

the Guardsmen have personnel, medical and

other records checked before they can leave

the state.

"The focus now is getting everyone here

and getting them here safely," Bradford said.

As a member of the task force supporting

the 256th Brigade, also known as the Louisiana

Brigade, he and other members of the staff are

tracking not only the arriving members of the

Louisiana National Guard, but the Guardsmen

and women from the other 19 states taking part

in the exercise.

"We are in the process of moving people

now," Bradford said. "The trains with the heavy

equipment are already here or will arrive

shortly."

Most of the 256th's heavy equipment was

moved on the railroad over the past three to

four weeks after being loaded at Fort Polk.

"There's going to be a lot of people

moving around Louisiana over the next few

days and weeks," Bradford said. "We want to

make sure that they all arrive safely."



VOODOO IN THE DESERT

By Sgt. Kevin Cowan
Det. 1, 102nd MPAD

FORT IRWIN, Calif. – Voodoo is common practice in places such as Haiti and New Orleans where rituals, stick pins and voodoo dolls can be found next to Coke, MTV and Jerry Springer.

But 2000 miles away, in the high desert of Southern California, Voodoo has shown up and it is spreading.

This Voodoo, however, is in the form of Task Force Voodoo.

Task Force Voodoo is an aviation support battalion for “Operation Tiger Strike” at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif. The 256th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) from Lafayette, who trained for this exercise for over two years, has traveled here to participate in a series of war games to evaluate their combat power, effectiveness and readiness. Over 5,000 Louisiana National Guard members are taking part in this major event.

Aviation assets from National Guard units in Louisiana, New Mexico, Washington and Wis-



consin are being utilized in this operation that will help the brigade go to battle with “The People’s Republic of Mojavia.” This fictional republic is actually the formidable 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, who lives and trains at Fort Irwin.

The assets are 1st Battalion, 244th Aviation Regiment from New Orleans and Pineville, the 717th Medical Company (-) from Santa Fe, New Mexico; Alpha and Bravo Companies of the 185th Aviation Battalion and Echo Company of the 168th Aviation Battalion from Tacoma, Washington; and a Detachment from the 147th Command Aviation Battalion from Madison, Wisconsin.

But first, in order for this wide range of helicopters to be utilized by the brigade, they had to make it to California.

Once the 244th Aviation Regiment received the mission, the planning stage began its motion. Planning required assessing resources and personnel and coordinating assistance.

“We had to request strategic support from the Air Mobility Command,” said Chief Warrant Officer Four Travis Johnson, State Aviation Safety Officer for Louisiana. The reason ... risk management. “It’s less risky than flying individually.”

When the time came to deploy the Louisiana aircraft, they were flown to England AirPark in Alexandria. A pre-deployment Load Team then prepared the UH-60 Blackhawks for loading onto C-5 Galaxy transport aircraft from the 105th Air Wing of the New York Air National Guard.

“The original design concept of the UH-60 required that it fit into a strategic airlift aircraft,”

said Johnson who lives in New Orleans.

The design called for the main rotors to be foldable and stabilized over the tail and the stabilizing wing on the tail to be removable for transport.

The whole break-down process can take the load crew less than two hours because parts are only being removed, but only minutes to load the helicopters onto the aircraft. After they are ready to be loaded into the super-transporters, a Joint Technical Inspection is conducted by Air Force.

At the Southern California Logistical Airport in Victorville, Calif., the previous process is done in reverse.

“It only takes a minute to unfold the rotors,” said Spec. Joshua Clement, also from New Orleans.

Clement, attached to the 244th for the NTC exercise, added that usually the rotors are done last because of space restrictions.

It takes a crew about two hours to complete because the bolts must be tightened to a specific torque and after the helicopters have been put back together, they must pass a technical safety inspection before a test pilot takes them for a short performance test flight.

The Louisiana, New Mexico and Washington helicopters will participate in “Operation Tiger Strike” by flying combat support missions during the exercise, whereas the Wisconsin aircraft will fly VIP missions during the exercise.

All air assets will revert to their home states after “Operation Tiger Strike” is over in mid-August and go through these processes once again.





WISCONSIN DOCTOR HAS PATIENTS WAITING ON PINS, NEEDLES

By Sgt. Kevin Cowan
Det. 1, 102nd MPAD

FORT IRWIN, Calif. – A visit to the doctor's office usually has the patients waiting. A visit to Maj. Kenneth Lee's office has the patients waiting on pin and needles.

Company B, 118th Area Support Medical Battalion out of Waukesha, Wisc., is here providing real-time medical care to patients during "Operation Tiger Strike," a series of war games being played by the 256th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) from Lafayette and the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment stationed here.

This exercise is used to evaluate the brigade's combat power, effectiveness and readiness. With over 5,000 National Guard soldiers from 19 states taking part in this exercise, a major necessity is medical support.

One of the ways Lee helps is with acupuncture.

Modern science has proven that humans are complex bioelectric systems, and although this has only been proven recently, it has been known for thousands of years.

This inherent knowledge, passed down through the centuries, played an instrumental part in the development and use of acupuncture.

Originating in China over 2,500 years ago, acupuncture is effective in treating physical, psychological and emotional problems, mostly because it promotes the body's natural healing process.

According to traditional Chinese medicine and philosophy, the Yin and Yang represent all the opposite principles in the universe.

Since no single principle dominates the other eternally, conditions are subject to change into their opposites. Acupuncture helps to balance the Yin and the Yang.

The acupuncture theory is, according to Lee, that we, as human beings, have energy, or *Chi*, flowing within us. *Chi* is a vital part of our well-being.

If there is an accident or injury, the *Chi* gets a little off balance because some of the channels are broken or blocked so that the *Chi* cannot flow properly.

Although acupuncture has been practiced in the United States for many years, only recently has it received credibility and widespread acceptance.

In 1996, the Food and Drug Administration reclassified acupuncture needles from their previous experimental status to a class II medical device. This paved the way for some insurance reimbursement for acupuncture treatments.

In that same year, Lee was a rehabilitation resident working on his board certification in physical medicine and rehabilitation.

He had no idea he would be using acupuncture a few years later. His acupuncture training came through UCLA and lasted about a year. But that training is paying off.

"I just want it to stop hurting," said Sgt. Terry Albright with Company B, 199th Support Battalion from Alexandria.

Albright originally suffered a neck injury while playing high school football and re-injured it assembling a 50-caliber machine gun here during "Operation Tiger Strike."

Although hesitant about trying acupuncture

at first, the Baton Rouge native decided, "I'm fair game. I've had absolutely everything ... physical therapy, traction, ultrasound, and every kind of medicine you can think of."

Lee offered the alternative to being held in the ward for a couple of days. He explained the process and immediately set about going to work.

"It's already working," Albright said during the short, 15-minute procedure.

Immediately after the treatment, he felt better, so much that he wanted his gear to go join his team. But part of the healing process is rest.

After the procedure, Albright was made to rest for six hours so that the energy channels could re-establish the balanced flow.

"His energy is back in flow again and we were able to get him to his rally point so that he could go out with his team," Lee added.

The U.S. Army is not the first military power to try alternative medicine.

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Maj. Kenneth Lee utilizes acupuncture, which originated in China over 2,500 years ago, to help promote the body's natural healing process. At NTC, Lee's acupuncture techniques helped soldiers overcome adversity.



ESGR

Continued from Page 5

to be put to the test and put an end to the three-year train up that has gone into readying themselves for the NTC battle.

New Roads resident Joe Cotton said there is no doubt in his mind that this brigade is ready for combat.

"Until you see this training as we have been able to, it is difficult to understand," Cotton said. "But I would tell anyone that the 256th Brigade is No. 1 and if we were to go to war, we would be safe because this training puts the brigade at the top. The training is extremely realistic and tough. We saw the brigade go head-to-head with the 11th ACR for 2 ½ hours on the battlefield and that's a credit to the Louisiana National Guard. I truly believe they could have defeated the opposing force. What I saw was outstanding."

Retired Brig. Gen. Edmund Giering also accompanied visitors on this trip. Giering retired from the Louisiana National Guard in 1999 and was very involved in the train-up for NTC. After seeing the training for which he'd worked hard to help prepare the brigade, he couldn't be more proud of their performance.

"It was extremely gratifying for me to go to NTC to observe the 256th in action as they were implementing the training/preparation they'd been doing over the past few years," Giering said. "It was particularly gratifying to me to see the successful implementation of the training we worked hard for roughly three years to go to NTC and they were able to successfully employ that training. I am exceptionally proud of the brigade in that I was able to work with them two years prior to



The ESGR group traveled through the Mojave Desert to see the various areas in which soldiers were fighting battles against the Opposing Force.

retirement and thought they were doing an outstanding job on and off the battlefield."

Giering said it is important to realize that the objective at NTC is not to win, but rather to improve combat readiness and skills.

"NTC is not about beating the OPFOR," he said. "It's about training against the best opposing force in the country so we can spare lives and equipment in the event we were to become involved in a hostile action anywhere in the world. It's about improving skills and readiness."

NTC is a training site roughly the size of Rhode Island and was created in 1980 to allow the U.S. Army a location where large-scale armored formations could train. Approximately 5,000 Louisiana National Guardsmen will rotate through

NTC, most of them members of the 256th and the remainder members of the Pelican State Task Force, whose mission is to support the Brigade Combat Team from everything to deploying equipment to the desert to preparing food to nourish soldiers.

Taking care of soldiers is always an important mission that cannot be overlooked. Gremillion, who along with her husband, Steve, employs one Guardsman at SIG 5 Corporation, said the way in which the Guard looks after its own is admirable and contributes to the quality of soldiers.

She also feels that the quality of an individual soldier comes back to the employer in many ways.

"I truly believe the sacrifices these soldiers make to be a part of the National Guard is more than the employer makes in losing them for such a short time," she said. "I really wish we had a thousand employees like our Guardsman. We are lucky to have him. He is disciplined, intelligent, responsible and his organizational skills are wonderful – I believe a lot of that comes from the Guard training. If you can hire a Guardsman, you will gain a highly-skilled employee."

In addition to being motivated and disciplined, Gremillion said it is apparent when visiting with soldiers why they make the sacrifices they make to be part of the Louisiana National Guard and this nation's defense.

"It is easy to see that these individuals are proud not only to be in the Guard, but to be Americans," Gremillion said, "and moreover Americans protecting other Americans. I think that American pride and American spirit is what makes our Louisiana Guardsmen and women so great. I am so proud of our soldiers."

PINS

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In the first century AD in Rome, Scribonius Largus, a physician in Nero's army, treated headaches using electric eels. Unfortunately, many of his patients did not survive.

But the good news is that techniques and technology have changed since ancient cultures began using alternative medicine and acupuncture. In the old days the needles were glass, but eventually evolved into bronze. Today, needles are made of surgical stainless steel and are disposable.

The procedure has changed also.

"We use a technique called tonification, which is stimulating the needle once it is in the acupuncture point. In order to stimulate the needle, someone has to sit there and twist the needle back and forth," Lee explained. "That's the way the ancients did it.

"We found that electricity works the same way. I have a device that I hook up to the needles and stimulate it (the acupressure point)." The stimulation helps to redirect the energy.

"On acute musculo-skeletal injuries, acupuncture puts the soldiers back on the battlefield, when normally we have held them back three or four days (for conventional Western treatment). There is a significant advantage to keep the forces going using acupuncture. It's also quick and easy to provide," said Lee.

Quick and easy. Why would any want to wait around?



Former resident has task of building, running small

town in Louisiana Guard desert exercise

Master Sgt. John Sullivan
Det. 1, 102nd MPAD

YERMO, Calif. – “When we got here there were a couple of faucets and a few electrical outlets.”

That’s how Col. Philip Arthur of Monroe and commander of the 165th Quartermaster Battalion described the area that he found about three weeks ago when he and his Louisiana National Guard troops arrived here.

Today, it is home to about 800 national guard soldiers taking part in Operation Tiger Strike at nearby Fort Irwin, home of the National Training Center.

Arthur and his troops are part of 6,500 National Guard soldiers from 19 states taking part in an exercise involving the Louisiana National Guard’s 256th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized), which is also known as the Louisiana Brigade.

At Yermo, Arthur and his troops are

working at the U.S. Marine Corps Logistics Depot, a huge network of railroad lines and staging areas where the Louisiana Brigade’s 2,000 pieces of

equipment have been shipped here on the railroad.

Arthur’s task force is made up of members of the Louisiana National Guard’s 1083rd Super Heavy Transport Co. from Minden, the 1086th Transportation Co. from Bunkie, and the 3673rd Maintenance Co. from Alexandria.

In addition it has guardsmen and women from the New Mexico National Guard’s 1116th Transportation Co., the Kentucky National Guard’s 2113th Transportation Co., and the 276th MP Co. from the District of Columbia National Guard.

“Our part in this mission is to establish rail offload operations,” Arthur said. “We have to offload all 2,000 pieces of equipment for the 256th use. This means everything from trailers to Humvees to M1 tanks to Paladin self-propelled artillery pieces.

Stringing the Network

By Master Sgt. John Sullivan
Det. 1, 102nd MPAD

FORT IRWIN, Calif. – “No. We don’t usually do this kind of thing.”

With a slight smile in the 105-degree heat, 1st Lt. Stephen Durel, the G6 for Pelican State Task Force,

described what he and his team had done in just a little over two weeks.

“We are usually inside helping with software problems and customer service,” said Durel, who is the telecommunications manager for the Louisiana National Guard at Jackson Barracks. “Here, we are dealing with the hardware.

“We were among the first here and we will be among the last to leave. But, you have to have communications.”

That meant having to string fiber-optic cables to dozens of locations and then make sure the computer hookups were functioning and that the different sites could communicate with each other.

“We had some help from the staff here at Fort Irwin,” Durel said. This hot afternoon, the officers

“I’m normally inside in a climate controlled environment,” Moss said. A fulltime technician at the MATES 71 facility at Fort Polk, Moss said he spends a normal day working on radios in an air-conditioned work area.

“Man, this is totally different from what I do everyday,” Moss said. “But, we are getting the job done and I think we are learning a lot while doing it.

“Still,” he added, “it is hot out here.”

“Everything has to be offloaded or the Brigade is sitting out in the desert without any of their equipment.”

Before any of that could begin, though, a small town had to be built on this site, which is located next to Interstate 15 and about 10 miles from Barstow, Calif.

“We had to develop life-support operations for the more than 800 people out here,” Arthur said. “That sounds simple – but it’s a little more complicated than that.”

Arthur said the site chosen for them to work at was barren. Now it has tents for the guardsmen and women to sleep in, a complete medical aid station, vehicle staging areas, a portable kitchen and portable showers.

After setting up this small piece of Louisiana in the California desert, Arthur said the third part of his unit’s mission begins.

“We have to get all of this material from here to Fort Irwin which is 31 miles away,” Arthur said. In California, he said, that is easier said than done. California laws will not allow heavy military vehicles from Yermo to cross I-15 except from midnight to 10 a.m. If he and his troops miss those deadlines, Arthur said, they could face dealing with members of the California Highway Patrol.

“Despite all of that, we are succeeding in our job,” Arthur said. “We are getting the material off loaded, we have sustained life support operations and we are getting the material to the 256th Brigade out in the desert.

“But we didn’t just show up here and have everything fall into place.”

Arthur said he and his task force actually worked together at Fort Hood, Texas last year during a dress rehearsal for Operation Tiger Strike.

“We have a chance to meet and know each other and work with each other,” Arthur said. “We are 100 percent more effective because of all the time we have had to work together with. If we hadn’t worked together in Texas and been meeting on a regular basis then this wouldn’t have happened.”

On July 8 the main body of almost 4,000 members of the 256th Brigade will arrive in California and proceed to Fort Irwin. Once there, they will get onboard their M1s and Bradley armored fighting vehicles and the other equipment that will be waiting for them thanks to the efforts of more than 800 men and women working in a little dusty site about 30 miles away.

“They will arrive and find their equipment waiting for them,” Arthur said. “That’s our mission and we won’t fail.”



Mojave Moments

After a train-up period of three years, the Louisiana National Guard's Tiger Brigade mobilized to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., to take on the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, who comprise the Opposing Force, in the U.S. Army's most realistic war games scenario. The Pelican State Task Force worked to ensure the successful deployment and safe return home of our troops. The Louisiana National Guard gave the OPFOR a run for its money leaving an indelible mark at NTC by raising the bar a notch. On the following pages are images that capture the spirit of the rotation.



*Photos by
members of
the Public
Affairs Office
and Det. 1,
102nd Public
Affairs
Detachment*

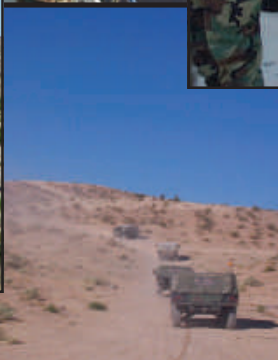


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MOJAVE

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MOJAVE

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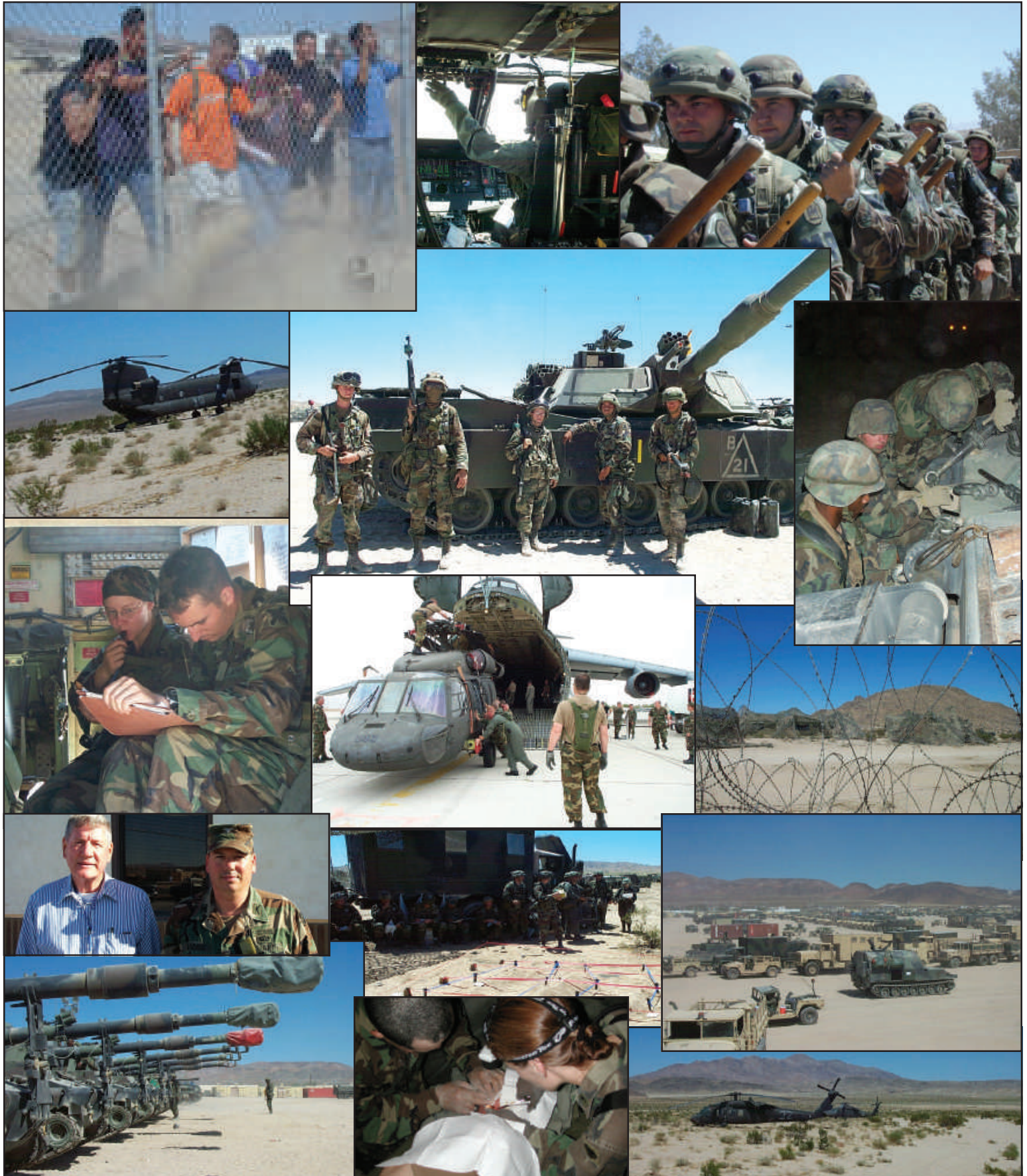


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MOJAVE

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Guard Engineers build athletic field in Haughton

By Maj. Maria LoVasco
STARC PAO

Buck McGee, Haughton Athletics Little League Chairman of Building and Grounds, long ago stopped believing that coincidences were only merely coincidences. So on this day in July as he surveyed the cleared grounds soon to be the site of the new ball fields it was inevitable that the Guard would play such an integral role.

"We'd been talking about building a field for 10 years," he explained. "We were starting to have schedule conflicts with the school fields we used, and the board was starting to talk about cutting back on games cause we had more kids than we had fields to accommodate them. So I made a passionate speech about taking action to finally do something. When I missed the next meeting I came back to find that they'd voted me Chairman of Building and Grounds."

The first challenge was to obtain the land. A local benefactor sold them the 30 acres at a steal, asking only that his generosity remain low-key. But obtaining the permits from the Army Corps of Engineers was taking too long and McGee was running out of time.

And that's when Ted Eilts entered the picture, an employee of the Army Corps of Engineers and coincidentally the commander of the 528th Engineer Battalion. He expedited the permits which permitted the National Guard to begin work on the project this summer.

Eilts battalion also had the dubious honor of undertaking the hard work of the initial grubbing and clearing of the land.

Ultimately the complex will consist of eight smaller ball fields for girls and younger boys and two larger fields

for older boys. Although not yet officially named, McGee refers to it as the Haughton Athletics Sports and Recreation Complex.

He anticipates that the project will grow from 800 to 1,200 kids in about two years. The new field will allow area schools to hold tournaments there, and already he's been approached by local churches to conduct fall leagues at the new complex. It's like the movie says, "If you build it, they will come."

The Guard was first approached last year about the project, and the 225th Engineer Group, headquartered out of Camp Beauregard in Pineville, eagerly accepted.

"This is in keeping with our war-time mission," said Maj. Tim Scott, Group Personnel Officer. "Clearing and grubbing fields and leveling terrain. It's what we train to do."

The groundbreaking ceremony took place June 6, and the first battal-

ion to conduct their annual training on the project was Eilt's 528th out of Monroe.

Two weeks later the 527th of Ruston took over, followed by the 769th of Baton Rouge and finally these final two weeks by the 205th Engineer Battalion out of Bogalusa.

The ribbon cutting took place July 31.

"It's surprising how many people in the community don't associate the Guard with this kind of project," McGee said. "They associate the Guard with helping out after natural disasters."

As McGee looks out over the 30 acres he can almost hear the shouts and cheers of parents encouraging their kids as they come around the bases. He sees his own son outfitted and ready to play.

"It's amazing to see this area come this far in such a short amount of time," he said.



Thirty acres of land in Haughton was cleared in preparation for the Haughton Athletic Complex. (Photo by MAJ Maria LoVasco, STARC PAO)



Gonzales Engineers train in Central Louisiana

By Major Maria LoVasco
STARC PAO

Charlie Company, 769th Engineer Battalion Army National Guard, had been hard at work in the sweltering July heat of Central Louisiana.

Nearly 50 men and women from the Gonzales based unit spent their two weeks of annual training building a cinderblock latrine and a road extension for the Camp Beauregard training facility.

Second Lt. Garold Sherlock of Gonzales, normally a student at LSU, served as the Officer-in-Charge on both construction projects.

Sherlock has been in the Guard for only two years, but has already spent 10 years as an enlisted soldier in the active duty Army.

He oversaw the building of a cinderblock latrine for the Leadership Reaction Course and the extension of an existing road deep in the training area of

Camp Beauregard during his two-weeks.

The latrine, or what the engineers would call a “vertical project” will replace an older wooden building standing only yards away. The new latrine should do a better job of keeping the elements outside.

“The problem in the winter was that the pipes would freeze in the old latrine,” Sherlock said.

Charlie Company spent its first week of annual training doing field operations – training on defense, tactics and other basic soldier skills.

During week two, the engineer skills got put to work as carpenters, masons, bulldozer operators and heavy equipment operators.

Twenty men and two women were assigned to the latrine project, among them Pvt. Anthony Nguyen of Baton Rouge who’s attending LSU and working toward a Mass Communications degree.

This was his first annual training with the unit. “I joined for the college ben-

efits,” he said, “and to be on my own. So far, my first A.T. is going pretty well.”

Nguyen works in retail while he attends college, but he hopes to eventually be on television.

Sgt. Raymond Panquerne, also an LSU student, is majoring in Information Systems.

He’s been in the Guard for six years and has been to Fort Polk, Belize and to Honduras in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch.

“The Guard gives you a lot of help as far as developing you as a leader,” he said. “The longer I’m in, the more I understand the National Guard’s role and the difference I make in the Guard.”

At this point, Panquerne, who is serving as the Non-commissioned officer-in-charge of the vertical project, is considering making a career in the National Guard.

Pvt. 1st Class James Sanders of St. Gabriel, who works full-time as a deputy sheriff for Iberville Parish, joined the Guard about two years ago to have “something different to do.”

On this day, he was pouring cement into a cinderblock wall to reinforce the block and the rebar.

Before his two weeks were up, he and his squad were well along completing the male/female latrine and showers.

Deeper into the Camp Beauregard training area, other members of the Gonzales unit were extending an existing road to provide vehicular access to previously inaccessible areas. The intention was to open up more bivouac sites for National Guard units when they train at Camp Beauregard.

“We widened what was a trail no more than five feet across to a 20 foot road,” said Staff Sgt. Charles Taylor, Non-commissioned Officer-in-charge of the



Cinderblock Latrine: During July, C Co, 769th Engr Bn worked on constructing a new cinderblock latrine at the Camp Beauregard Training Facility to replace an older wooden latrine. This latrine services the nearby Leadership Reaction Course. (Photo by MAJ Maria LoVasco, STARC PAO)

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CENLA

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Tons of earth and hundreds of trees were cleared to extend the existing road feet. The road had been an old abandoned jogging road used years ago. (Photo by MAJ Maria LoVasco, STARC PAO)

“horizontal project.” Taylor works as a deputy sheriff in Ascension Parish. He has been in the Guard for nearly 14 years. “The old road was an old logging road that had been here for years. The woods closed back in on it.”

“Our original scope of work was 4,000 feet,” said Sherlock. “But because we had to wait a day for a piece of equipment that spreads water on the road and compacts the dirt, we went ahead and cleared and grubbed 4,000 more feet. It’s great training for these young troops that don’t get much time on the equipment.”

The resulting 4,000-foot road is 20 feet wide—40 feet with the ditches on each side.

What didn’t get completed by July 20 when the Gonzales unit pulled out was continued by the 205th Engineer Battalion headquartered in Bogalusa.

And the Charlie Company engineers returned to school, to work and to families, having had, in the words of Pvt. 1st Class Snelson, “something different to do.”

527th Engineer Battalion Clerks Trade Computers for Shovels at A.T.

By Capt. Pat Simon
Deputy STARC PAO

Life as a soldier doing tactical field training is a far cry from the cool climate of an office job.

Just ask 29-year-old Army Sgt. Stacey Taylor of Ruston, who underwent two weeks of intense Annual Training in the June heat with the Louisiana National Guard 527th Engineer Battalion at Camp Beauregard in Pineville.

Taylor’s regular job with the military unit is as a 92 Alpha, a unit clerk with the maintenance section of Headquarters Company, 527th EN Battalion. Out in the field, she was a fighting soldier; along with her fellow clerks Specialists Luis Alva and Christopher Mays, both also of Ruston.

“Soldier skills are very important,” said Taylor acknowledging that she needed to beef up on her tactical training; an important part of survival on a battlefield. “I had not done this in a while. We were literally trading in our computers for shovels (to dig foxholes).

Specialist Mays, a 22-year-old Business Management major at Louisiana Tech, found out that National Guard engineers do more than just construction work and building bridges. Mays is a new soldier with the unit.

“It (field training environment) was nothing like office work,” said Mays. “It made you realize how important (combat training) is to the (overall military effectiveness) of the unit.”

Pressure is what came to mind for 32-year-old Specialist Alva when he thought of annual training in the field, especially when he had other important matters on his mind back at home.

“I have five children and one on the way,” said Alva, his eyes gleaming at the thought of his wife’s September 9th due date. Alva’s schooling came in handy. He has been working on his Master’s Degree in Industrial Psychology.

“It helped with getting along with people, team work, and conflict resolution,” said Alva tongue firmly planted in cheek.

On the second day of training, Taylor, Mays and Alva were caught off guard, but in a good way. They were awarded two commemorative coins, one each from Maj. Gen. Landreneau and Command Sgt. Maj. Morrow.



Command Sgt. Maj. John Morrow, State Command Sergeant Major, awards Sgt. Taylor, Spec. Mays and Spec. Alva of the 527th Eng. Bn. with the Command Sergeants Major coin during their annual training at Camp Beauregard in June.



769th Engineer Battalion improves Many Airport

By Maj. Maria LoVasco
STARC PAO

The Many economy will get a big boost thanks in part to a Baton Rouge based Louisiana Guard unit.

For the next three years the Guard will be working on a major earthwork project at the Many airport that will fill a gully at the end of the runway thus enabling the city to apply for a grant to extend the runway.

Gloria Holmes, manager of the Hart Memorial Airport in Many, said that the grant was predicated upon having the earthwork completed, a project which would have cost the city money it did not have, and which, if it came to that, Holmes was prepared to do one dump truck at a time.

Mayor Ken Freeman was jubilant. "Their (the National Guard's) work is cutting our 10-year goal to five years," he said at the groundbreaking ceremony. "By performing these services, they're saving us \$500,000."

These services were excavating a site that formed a hill which not only blocked the view of the terminal to the end of the runway but also prevented other buildings, an apron and a taxiway from being built. The dirt from the excavated site was then hauled to a large gully situated at the end of the runway. This steep drop posed a danger to pilots who overshoot the runway or landed too close to the end. Pilot error could mean an abrupt and potentially fatal plunge into the gully.

On this sweltering day in mid-July members of the 769th Engineer Battalion, headquartered in Baton Rouge, were on the job. A 30-man crew led by Second Lt. Brian Barton, an LSU student majoring in Accounting, was working the project as part of their two-week annual training.

A native of St. Louis, he came to



A dump truck releases a load of dirt into a gully being filled at the end of the runway at the Hart Memorial Airport in Many. Leveling the gully to the height of the runway will enable the runway to eventually be extended. (Photo by MAJ Maria LoVasco, STARC PAO)

Louisiana via Alabama.

"The scope of my mission was to cut, haul and fill 12,000 cubic yards of dirt," he said. "But we exceeded that scope and hauled 15,000 yards."

They were able to push ahead of schedule thanks to an infusion of men and machines when another unit leveling a soccer field in Baton Rouge had to cancel their mission due to the discovery of a pipeline beneath the earth they were working.

The men and women assigned to this project came from Headquarters Service Company in Baton Rouge, A Company in Baker, B Company in Marksville and C Company in Gonzales. This hodgepodge unit assembled in the final weeks before the work began came together as a team and not only met the scope, but exceed it.

"This served as great training for these inexperienced troops," Barton said. "It gave a lot of them some good 'stick

time'."

One of the troops was 22-year-old Spec. Jeremy Cutrer of Baton Rouge. Currently he works in retail but is hoping to position himself financially to be able to go to LSU and study computers.

He works as an Asphalt and Equipment Operator, a job that doesn't get him to many of the glamorous overseas deployments, but in 4 ½ years of guard duty he has worked on a lot of projects that have contributed to improved quality of life for many small communities throughout Louisiana.

Staff Sgt. James Dewhurst, project Non-commissioned Officer-in-Charge is a native of Prairieville and was a veteran of the Nebraska National Guard and the U.S. Coast Guard before settling down in the Louisiana Guard. He came from a family of military members, with a father, a brother, a sister, a son and a

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Many

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daughter all serving their country.

Full-time, he's the manager of the Country Club of Louisiana in Baton Rouge. "I take care of rich people," he said of his job. But on the site he took care of the young troops and made sure that the work was done safely and to standard.

"The project was excellent," he said. "And this was with a lot of green pea operators. These were soldiers that didn't know one another, who came together, unified and worked as a team."

The unit's civilian liaison for the project was Holmes, Contract Manager for the airport. "She is quite a lady," said Dewhurst. "Her father taught her to fly when she was 15."

Holmes was also a plain spoken woman who admitted she almost messed up her chances to have the Guard do the project when she had a chance meeting with the Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Bennett C. Landreneau.

He had some time to kill at the Many Airport and so Holmes gave him the nickel tour. She showed him the hill that needed to be excavated and the gully that needed to be filled and he said, "Well I've got four engineer battalions and that's what we do."

Holmes almost told him that while the Guard may be capable of doing it, they seemed to only want to do it in Central America, alluding to the Guard's history of humanitarian and nation building exercises in Belize and Honduras. "We asked several years back if the Guard could help us and at the time they couldn't," she said. So Holmes continued with her own plan to move it one dump truck at a time. "When I told General Landreneau that, he must have taken pity on me cause he said he'd do a feasibility study on it, and six weeks later the engineers were here."

She didn't expect the Guard to be ready for a couple of years, so when she got the go ahead she hustled to make sure that all of the environmental compliance letters were accomplished.

The project will take a few years to complete, but the Many officials have big plans once

it is. A grant will be secured to extend the runway, enabling the corporations that fly into the airport to arrive with their corporate jets. It will also increase the amount of traffic and types of airplanes that the airport can service. And that, she says, will attract new industry to the area.

"This is going to give the Many economy a shot in the arm," she said. "And it will also benefit four counties in Texas who don't have

this capability."

At the end of their two-week period, the 769th Engineers were relieved by the 205th Engineer Battalion out of Bogalusa.

"We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the Louisiana National Guard for their work on this project," said Freeman. "I can't tell you what their commitment has meant to our community."



In the distance, excavation work takes place by members of the 769th Engineer Battalion. What was a hill was leveled off and the dirt hauled to a gully at the end of the runway. In its place the airport hopes to build an apron, a taxiway and a building. (Photos by MAJ Maria LoVasco, STARC PAO)



Staff Sgt. James Dewhurst of Prairieville worked as the Non-commissioned Officer in Charge during the Many Airport project.



Second Lt. Brian Barton, an LSU student majoring in accounting, led the 30-man crew on the Many Airport Excavation and Fill project.



Engineers build Girl Scout Road in Alexandria

By MAJ Maria LoVasco
STARCPAO

It's been more than 10 years since Mrs. Roy O. Martin, a well-known benefactor in the Alexandria/Pineville area donated land and buildings for the use of the Girl Scouts Council of Central Louisiana.

But it is said that her ghost still roams the grounds checking on things and making sure that all is well.

Martin would be well pleased with the improvements that Headquarters Service Company of the Louisiana Army National Guard's 769th Engineer Battalion based out of Baton Rouge were doing to the road.

"The road was just terrible," said Ms. April Simons, Membership and Adult Development Director of the Girl Scouts Council of Central Louisiana. "It was so bad you couldn't drive down the middle. You had to dodge potholes and crevices."

"It looked like whomever was trying to improve the road just kept putting more asphalt on top of old asphalt," said Louisiana Guard Project Officer-in-charge Second Lt. Dewight Marshall, a resident of Baton Rouge. Marshall and eight other members of his platoon were working on the road improvement project for their two-week annual training in mid-July.

The road, right off of Hwy. 165 in Pineville serves as the main entrance to the Girl Scout grounds. While the improvement was taking place the employees had to enter through another side entrance - a narrow strip no wider than a driveway.

"The first thing we did was strip off the old asphalt and clear it away," Marshall said. "We were also supposed to replace an old culvert, but when we began digging we discovered a pipeline underneath. We had to wait for someone from the parish to come take a look at it."

In the meanwhile, the work continued on widening and leveling the newly cleared road from a 9-foot wide alley to a 23-foot wide road.

"Right now we can do no wrong," said Staff Sgt. Samuel Venable of Patterson. Venable was the Non-commissioned Officer-in-Charge of the project. "The ladies who worked in the building were so excited, they came to visit us and they even brought us cookies."

Venable has eight years in the Guard. Full-time he works as a wildlife enforcement agent with the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in St. Mary Parish.

In all, Venable said the Guard would grade and improve 1,100 feet of road.



This 23-foot wide road widened by the Baton Rouge based National Guard unit was formerly a pothole and crevice rutted 9-foot wide alley. (Photo by MAJ Maria LoVasco, STARCPAO)

"Two cars will actually be able to pass one another," said April Simons. "We just can't wait."

"Morale was good," said Venable, "especially on this project. It helped the troops to talk to the beneficiaries of a project and to see how much it was appreciated. It put an outside face to it, and it meant more to do it and not just cause I and Lt. Marshall said to do it."

One of those troops was Sgt. Joseph Henry of Church Point. Full-time he's a letter carrier with the U.S. Postal Service. He spent seven years in the Army before returning home to Louisiana and joining the Guard.

"I enjoy the military," he said, "and I enjoy running the equipment." Two of his three children were also talking about joining the service.

Pvt. 1st Class Hampton Darenbourg of Baton Rouge joined right after high school, "cause it was the right thing to do and cause I wanted to ride around in Hummers." He is currently attending Southern University and is majoring in Secondary Education. On this project he operated the front-end loader.

Pvt. 1st Class Jerusalem Harms, the only female in the crew, was on board as the medic. She had only been out of basic training and initial job training for four months. She too was taking advantage of the

college benefits and is majoring in Marine Biology at LSU.

Although she could have gone to school on the TOPS program the Guard offered something more that she wanted, she said, direction and discipline.

Spec. Kevin Nabors of Baton Rouge works full-time as a customer service associate with Lowes. In the Guard he works as a heavy equipment operator. Previously he spent four years in the Marine Corps.

"I wanted to learn something new and I like the equipment," he said. His co-workers at Lowes have remarked on how well he handles his engineer job and have asked why he doesn't pursue it full time. "I'm good at it," he admits, "but when it rains outside, this kind of work shuts down, and that affects the pocket book." He also mentioned that working indoors in the air-conditioning had its advantages.

The temperature on this day was pegging in the mid-90s, but these engineers had to continue working for another week.

April Simons believes the new road will increase the traffic to the Girl Scout camp area and facilities and give more young girls a chance to enjoy the benefits of the program.

Somewhere Mrs. Roy O. Martin must be very pleased.



Elements of 225th Engineer Group train overseas

**By Maj. Maria LoVasco
STARC PAO**

While many of the 225th Engineer Group's annual training projects this summer took them no farther than the borders of Louisiana, a critical element of military readiness was missing from these exercises: the ability to train on the preparation, execution and deployment of personnel and equipment to overseas locations.

Therefore when the opportunity arose to train Guardsmen on these mission essential tasks, the 225th Engineer Group, headquartered out of Camp Beauregard in Pineville, eagerly accepted.

This summer, elements of the group were in Germany and the Azores. The opportunity to train in these locations was set in motion at last year's National Guard Bureau Overseas Deployment Planning Conference.

This yearly conference brings together units from throughout the world that have specific projects and units who have specific training needs.

With its abundance of engineer assets – four combat heavy engineer battalions, one of the largest in the Army inventory – it was easy for the Louisiana Army National Guard to have a presence in more than one country, while still providing vital and necessary engineer support to communities back home.

In Germany, nearly 400 Guardsmen rotated in country in two-week periods to conduct a series of projects for the 7th Army Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany.

Among the major projects was building two tank trails and upgrading three existing structures used for Military Operations in Urban Terrain training, as well as building another structure from scratch.

Additionally, the engineers conducted numerous smaller projects such as

constructing soccer fields and parking lots.

All four battalions, as well as a task force of elements from within each battalion, comprised the five rotations of 80 personnel each.

The Group consisted of the 527th Engineer Battalion in Ruston, the 528th Engineer Battalion in Monroe, the 769th Engineer Battalion in Baton Rouge and the 205th Engineer Battalion in Bogalusa. Each battalion has three or more companies located throughout their headquarters' region.

In the Azores, 900 miles off the coast of Portugal, another engineer project took place at the special request of the Portuguese government.

Four rotating units of 30 troops each removed and cut up a 4.2 million gallon underground fuel tank connected by a pipeline to the U.S. Air Force's 65th Air Base Wing at Lajes Field.

It had been an eyesore for the eight years that it had been drained and empty.

In preparation for this mission, the 225th rented two excavators from a Louisiana CAT dealer and sent them by ship overseas. This equipment made short work of their momentous task.

The tank dimensions were formidable: 173 feet in diameter, 24-feet high, sitting on a 15-inch thick concrete base, criss-crossed with steel reinforcing, three feet below ground level.

Additionally it had a nine-inch steel reinforced concrete cap covered by six feet of soil. The walls were sheet steel, about a half-inch thick and surrounded by 9,000 cubic yards of earth.

But according to Master Sgt. Harold McQueen, operator for the duration of the project, the equipment easily **See OVERSEAS on Page 28**



A Louisiana CAT excavator easily cuts through the reinforced steel and concrete fuel tank that sat abandoned at Lajes Field in the Azores. The 225th deployed more than 100 Guardsmen this past summer to dismantle the tank at the request of the Portuguese government. (225th Engr Gr Photo)



OVERSEAS

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cut almost 10 inches of cement with double rebar over the steel. "It just pulverized the cement like there was nothing to it," he said.

The Portuguese government hauled the scrap steel for recycling, and the 225th left the grounds leveled and ready for landscaping.

Although the projects themselves are similar to those the Group has done throughout Louisiana, the invaluable training the staff and members received in preparing their troops and equipment for deployment could not have been duplicated training across town.

"We've got to stage the equipment, get it to the port, receive it at the other end and get it to the project site," said Lt. Col. Ron Stuckey, 225th Engineer Group Deputy Group Commander.

"Mobilization deployment is one of our mission essential tasks and it can't be simulated. The only way to train on it is to do it for real," Stuckey said.

The 225th's ability to do it for real was tested in 1998 when in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch they deployed to Honduras with less than 30 days notice to help rebuild the nation. Since that time, they've also taken part in Joint Task Force Pelican in Belize in 2000.

The Louisiana Guard's reputation for accomplishing these high-visibility, worldwide missions under budget and under time gives them a critical advantage during the yearly Overseas Deployment Planning Conference.

Stuckey is hoping the Louisiana National Guard's 225th Engineers can return to Germany next year as well as pick up a mission to Italy.



Nearly 400 Louisiana Guardsmen deployed to Germany this summer to work several projects for the 7th Army Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany. Among them was construction and upgrading of buildings at the Military Operations on Urban Terrain training area. (225th Engr Gp Photo)



Other projects included building two tank trails, upgrading three existing structures, constructing soccer fields and parking lots. (225th Engr Gp Photo)



225th gets thumbs up from evaluators during Annual Training

By Capt. Pat Simon
Deputy STARC PAO

It is a good day to be a part of HHC 225th Engineer Group.

Two Army active duty evaluators from the 1st/289th Training Support Battalion of Houston have given the group high marks in its latest Training Assessment Module evaluation for this year's annual training period.

Capt. Twana Marks and Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Belt inspected areas from maintenance and supply to APFT (physical training) and discipline.

"They're a really excellent unit," said Belt who has already evaluated Louisiana's 769th and 205th Engineer Battalions. "They (225th EN Group) are a lot more well-rounded than most units we've seen. They work by the book and it shows."

Belt says even in areas where the unit needs improvement (i.e. needing a full-time operational supply) leaders immediately offered a plan to make the necessary adjustments. Belt credits that to exceptional leadership from the group's commander Capt. Keith Williams and First Sgt. Clyde Martin.

Williams takes the compliments all in stride and points to areas he wants to improve on in the future. Getting more field experience is his greatest challenge.

"We need to spend more time in the field doing tactics training," said Williams.

"We only were allowed to train 2 out of the 4 scheduled days in the field. We spend most of our time supporting other (engineer) battalions instead."

Despite that, Williams says he enjoyed a great annual training period with his unit. Bell agrees. "They're on top of their game," he said.

TAG Visits 527th Engineer Battalion during Annual Training 2001

By Capt. Pat Simon,
Deputy STARC PAO

Maj. Gen. Bennett C. Landreneau took a walk back in history for a moment during his recent visit to the 527th Engineer Battalion at Camp Beauregard.

The former commander of the 527th (during its deployment to Desert Storm), remembered a time when tasks, like an SRP (Soldier Readiness Posture), were much more difficult to conduct.

"You make it look easy," Landreneau complimented the 527th staff. "Think back to 10 to 15 years ago when an SRP was a significant event. (Now) You guys knock it out."

Landreneau listed many of the current assignments of the 527th Engineer Battalion along with its current annual training mission.

"You have soldiers in the Azores, Germany, some at the National Training Center and it takes a lot of work and coordination to put it all together," said Landreneau. "You have done that and continue to do it well."

Landreneau also praised the training and morale, welfare, and recreation plans of the 527th Battalion for AT 2001. He also mentioned the opportunity that awaits the 527th when it sets up base camp in Minden to begin construction projects this week.

"Soldiers interacting with members of the community is important," said Landreneau. "They serve as ambassadors for the (Louisiana National)

Guard and the image they leave will last a long time."

In addition, Landreneau told commanders not to get complacent about safety.

"Keep it at your highest priority," he said. "Let's get every soldier back home safely."

The same way Landreneau did when he brought his soldiers back home some 15 years ago.



Maj. Gen. Bennett C. Landreneau, visits the 527th during AT at Camp Beauregard in June. Landreneau, a former commander of the 527th told the engineers that "they make it look easy." (Photo by Capt. Pat Simon, Deputy STARC PAO)



528th overcomes rain, scores a successful AT

**By Capt. Pat Simon
Deputy STARC PAO**

“Let me compliment you on accomplishing your mission.”

That was from the Louisiana National Guard Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Bennett C. Landreneau to members of the 528th Engineer Battalion (Combat) who had just completed their annual training 2001.

“I’m confident we made the right decision to get you (528th EN) back as combat heavy to respond to state emergencies this time and in the future,” Landreneau said.

This time the 528th Engineer Battalion dealt with more than training as a combat heavy force from a once four-wheeled operation. Another challenge struck this year.

Tropical Storm Allison dumped

record levels of rain across Louisiana. Still in all, the 528th managed to complete most of its scheduled AT projects.

In fact, some members of the 528th not only worked on AT missions but also helped with flood relief in and around the Baton Rouge area.

Over 13 inches of rain hampered efforts to build a latrine at YCP-GL, so soldiers at that site were split up to aid surrounding southeast Louisiana communities affected by the heavy rains.

Some soldiers assisted in patching up the levee at Alligator Bayou in Gonzales. Others hauled sand and sandbags to other surrounding parishes.

After the rains subsided, the 528th Engineer Battalion managed to complete its proposed tasks at other scheduled sites across the state.

Those projects included renovating

part of Building 37 at Jackson Barracks; grubbing and clearing a ball park field in Haughton; dirt hauling and filling at the Hart Airport expansion project in Many; and constructing a K-Span building and T6 turning pad and firing point in Minden. The 528th also converted an archery range into a rifle range and completed two erosion control projects at T.L. James Boy scout Camp in Farmerville.

528th Engineer Battalion commander Lt. Col. Ted Eilts said this year’s AT was a tremendous success, both from a tactical and a construction standpoint.

“The 528th Engineer Battalion has completed all scopes possible in extremely hot, wet, muddy, and arduous conditions, with limited personnel, NCO’s and skill levels,” Eilts said. “We are trained and ready to do our mission anytime, anywhere, to the very end.”



*The 527th Engineer Battalion worked on a K-Span building at Camp Minden in Minden during their annual training in June. These K-Spans will later serve as an armory and a dining facility for the 1083d Transportation Company (HET).
(Photo by Capt. Pat Simon, Deputy STARC PAO)*



205th trains throughout Louisiana, world

By Maj. Maria LoVasco
STARC PAO

Members of the 205th Engineer Battalion, La. Army National Guard, completed their two-week annual training period at sites throughout Louisiana during the months of July and August.

The 205th, commanded by Lt. Col. Gary Hammett, is headquartered in Bogalusa and has units in Franklinton, Slidell, Covington, Independence and Hammond.

Members of the battalion also trained in Germany and the Azores this summer.

In Haughton, 26 members from Slidell's Company C continued work on a 30-acre athletic field for the Haughton Athletic Association. The field is comprised of 10 ballfields for senior and little league games. Groundbreaking for the massive project took place in early June and four engineer battalions rotated through the project since. The 205th cut, filled and leveled 25,000 cubic yards of dirt.

Project Officer Second Lt. Charles Mule of Hammond enjoyed the work, "This was all new to me," he said. "I learned trigonometry and calculus in college, and out here I actually got a chance to use it. I got a lot of satisfaction from these projects, and I learned a lot." Currently Mule is attending Southeastern University.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony with Guard and local officials took place on July 31.

At the Camp Minden training facility, former site of the Louisiana Army Ammunition Plant in Minden, two projects occurred simultaneously.

Company B of Franklinton was constructing a firing point at the Guard's state-of-the-art Tank Weapons Gunnery Simulation System. Once the project is completed the Guard's M1A1 tank battalion will be able to train with firing lasers at pop-up targets and moving targets on a range built to 1:5 scale.

Second Lt. Harvey Dickerson of Albany served as the Project Officer-in-charge overseeing the efforts of 15 engineers and one medic.

"This was a project where these troops could really train on their engineer skills," he said. "We had three talented and experienced non-commissioned officers who were teaching these green troops the ropes."

Once annual training was over, Dickerson accepted a full-time position with the Guard's Youth Challenge Program working as a Case Manager at the program's mentor center in New Orleans.

Elsewhere at Camp Minden, Staff Sgt. Simmie Brown of Madisonville supervised the on-going construction of two K-span buildings. Seventeen engineers of Company C in Slidell were running electricity and constructing walls on the front and rear of the arched metal buildings. They will eventually serve as an armory and a dining facility for the Guard's 1083rd Transportation Company.

Brown joined the Guard 20 years ago and said he still felt like he was 18. "I'm going to stay till I can't move no more," he said.

Full-time Brown works with the Louisiana National Guard's Counter Drug Program assigned to U.S. Customs in New Orleans.

Near Pineville at Camp Livingston the 205th extended a road deep in the wooded training areas. This extension opened up more bivouac areas for the Guard.

An abandoned and overrun logging trail has been extended by 4,000 feet and widened from 5 feet to 40 feet, complete with ditches.

Nearby at the Leadership Reaction Course, other engineers were putting the finishing touches on a cinderblock latrine and shower. It replaced a nearby wooden latrine which suffered frozen pipes in the winter months. The cinderblock will offer better protection from the elements for both the plumbing and the soldiers who use it.

In Pineville, 205th engineers were completing a road off of Highway 165 that served as the access road to a Girl Scout campground area. The road had degenerated into a pothole-ridden narrow alley. The engineers tore up the patched asphalt and widened the road to allow two cars



The 205th Engineer Battalion worked on several projects during Annual Training. They continued work on the two K-Spans at Camp Minden that will eventually house the HET Transportation unit. (Photo by MAJ Maria LoVasco, STARC PAO)



to be able to pass simultaneously. In many, the 205th continued work on filling and leveling a gully at the end of the Hart Memorial Airport runway. The gully posed a danger to pilots who overshot the runway which ended in a steep drop. The fill for the job had come from a nearby hill which had obstructed the view from the terminal to the runway and also hindered the building of a taxiway and apron. "Basically we had a mountain here and a valley there," said Gloria Holmes, Contract Manager for the airport. Once the guard is done the Many airport will be eligible for a grant to extend the runway. "This will give the Many economy a shot in the arm," she said. At the Guard's Gillis Long Center, a squad of engineers constructed a latrine, and at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans, another squad renovating a historic WPA-era building for use by Guard headquarters. In Germany, the 205th renovated buildings, built two tank trails and constructed a ball field for the 7th Army Training Center in Hohenfels. In the Azores they worked on the dismantling of an abandoned 4.2 million gallon underground fuel tank for the United States Air Force 65th Air Base Wing at Lajes Field.



Engineers with the 205th also worked on building a firing point at the Minden Laser Tank Range. (Photo by MAJ Maria LoVasco, STARC PAO)

National Guard 'scouts' out erosion, builds rifle range at Ruston's T.L. James

By Capt. Pat Simon
Deputy STARC PAO

Nineteen-year-old Samonica Oliver wanted to be in the Girl Scouts when she was a little girl, but for some reason she changed her mind. Twenty-one-year-old Brandt Lance had no desire at all to be a Boy Scout. It was the last thing on his mind. Yet for both Oliver and Lance, Annual Training 2001 was rewarding for them and the Boy Scouts. They joined the rest of the Louisiana National Guard's 528th Engineers in making Camp T.L. James in Farmerville a much better place for scouting. Army Private Oliver was a dump truck operator. She and Private First Class Lance, the self-proclaimed "Dozer Man" for his expertise on a bulldozer, helped Alpha Company of the 528th convert an archery range into a 20 feet high rifle range at T.L. James. "I hope they don't miss," a joking Lance quipped while on break. "They should get a lot out of it," said Lance, who wears the uniform of a Tensas Parish Sheriff's Deputy when he's not on National Guard duty. "I think it's a good project for young people. I think they'll appreciate it," said Oliver, who's currently studying biology at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston. In fact, the scouts at T.L. James will be using the range as soon as this fall according to Camp Ranger Chuck McLemore. "It looks great," an excited McLemore said. "We'll have to build a target line and then fence it in. It should be ready for use 'Thanksgiving week.'" McLemore said the new rifle range would be instrumental in helping with the camp's National Rifle Association (NRA) safety course for children ages 11-18 and adults as well. McLemore also praised other projects completed by the 528th Engineers at T.L. James to include an erosion control site to keep a main road from washing out and the building of a retaining wall to fight erosion at the camp's lake. "It's good to see our tax dollars expended locally instead of overseas," said McLemore. "You can see firsthand how the money is being properly spent." McLemore's goal is for Camp T.L. James to remain a partner with the Louisiana National Guard for future summer projects like the pending two-year construction of a Cub Scout camp.