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THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR THE LOUISIANA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

SUMMER 2010 -

- GULF COAST OIL SPILL photo essay
- NATIONAL GUARD SENIOR ELISTED LEADER VISITS LOUISIANA
- ACTING ARMY GUARD DIRECTOR PRAISES GUARD EFFORTS
- SUICIDE PREVENTION
- FIVE GUARDSMEN GRADUATE FROM WARRANT OFFICER COURSE
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- FATHER AND SON ANSWER GUARD CALL TOGETHER
- ENGINEERS TRAVEL TO GERMANY
- A THREE-YEAR JOURNEY
- MINUTEMEN RECOGNITIONS



Battalion, along with Belize military forces, prepare braces July 12, 2010, for school walls to be filled with concrete to construct a

Cover Photo Spc Christopher Foster

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CULF COAT LOUISIANA OIL-SPILL NATIONAL GUARD PROTECT WHAT MATTERS

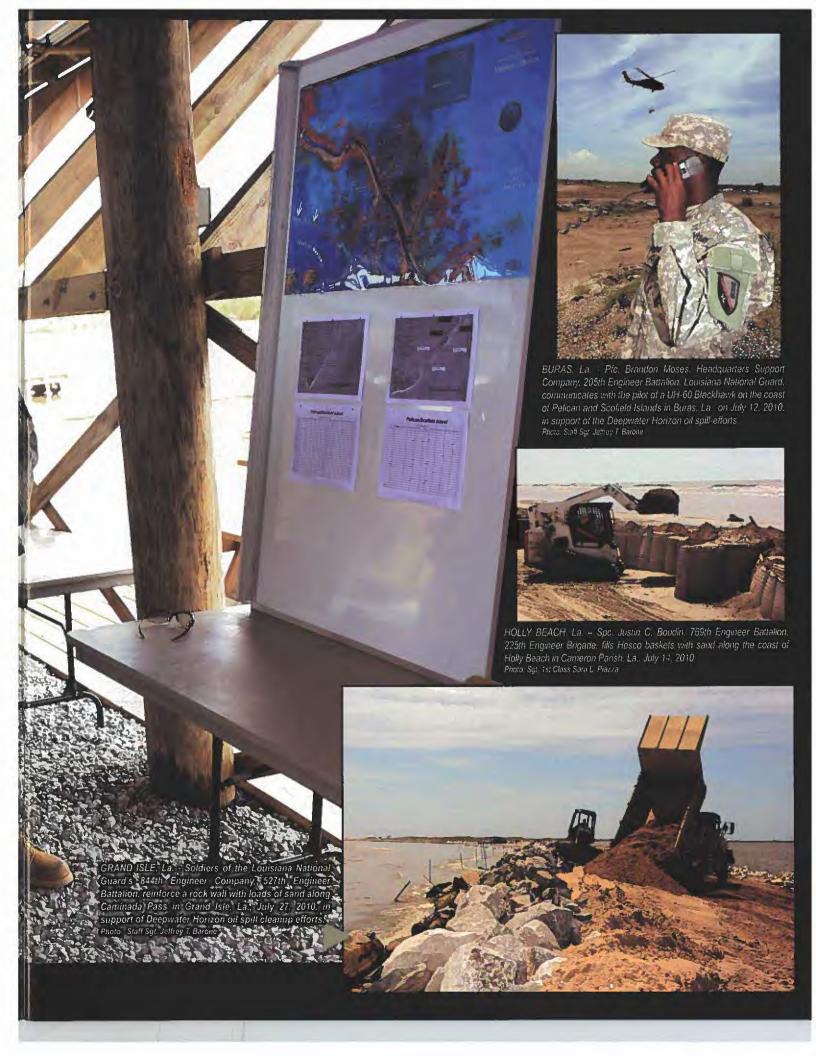
BY THE NUMBERS

The Louisiana National Guard answered the call to help protect our coast from oil intrusion after the tragic explosion April 20, 2010, on the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico. As of July 30 with more than 1,100 Guardsmen responding, we had —

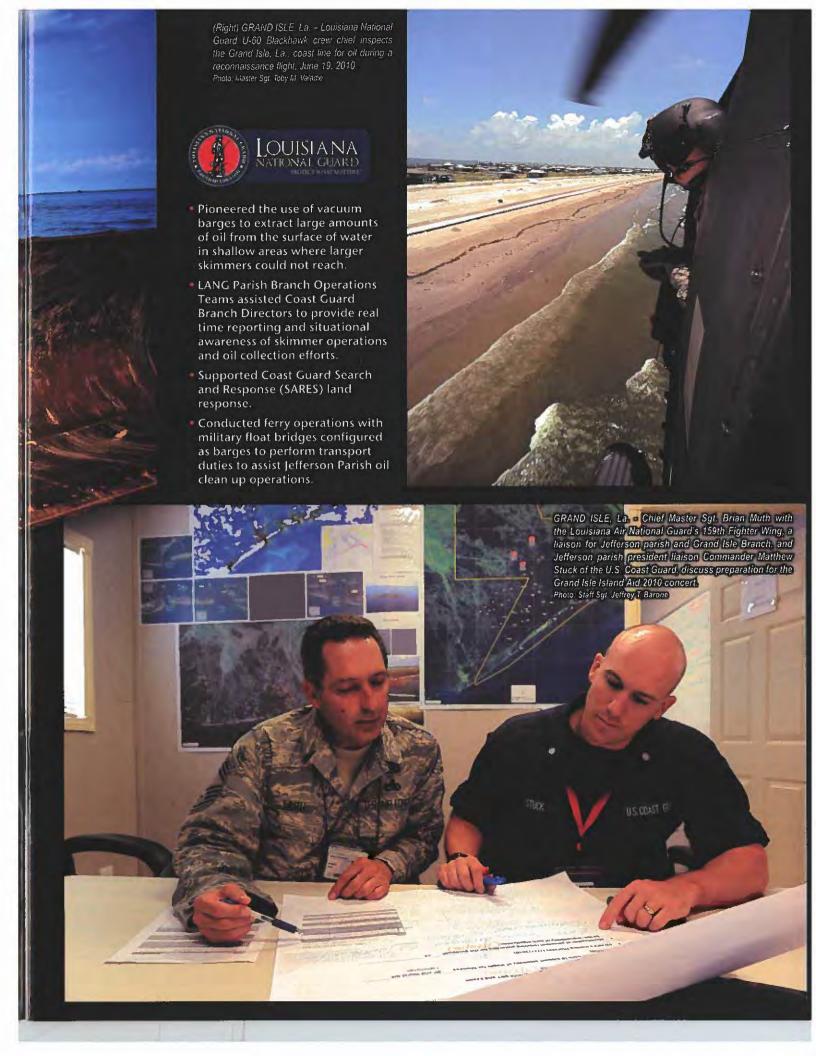
- 96 missions completed, 58 in progress
- 8 parishes helped
- 6 states participated through EMAC program
- More than 2,250 flight hours
- 21,250 sandbags dropped into gaps weighing 46 million pounds
- 11,880 cubic yards of sand and 4,684 cubic yards of rock moved to create land bridges
- 24 miles of protection systems emplaced including:
 - 9,220 Hesco baskets,
 - 14 miles of tiger dam
 - almost a mile of land bridges and gap fills

EMPIRE, La. - Maj. James S. Slaven, 205th Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade, briefs Governor Bobby Jindal, Maj. Gen. Bennett C. Landreneau, the adjutant general, and LSU Football Coach Les Miles on current sandbag operations at Pelican and Scolfield Islands, June 11, 2010.

Photo: Master Sgt. Toby M. Valadie









Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey T. Barone Louisiana National Guard Public Affairs Office

The Senior Enlisted Leader to the Chief, National Guard Bureau, Chief Master Sergeant Denise Jelinski-Hall, visited Guardsmen working the Deepwater Horizon oil spill response effort along the Louisiana coast, July 29-30.

Jelinski-Hall toured project sites in Grand Isle, La., spoke to aircrews at the 159th Fighter Wing and visited with Soldiers and Airmen at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans.

"Chief Jelinski-Hall was extremely proud of our Soldiers and Airmen - their energy, morale, and especially their innovation in adapting to the needs of the crisis with their organic unit equipment," said Chief Master Sgt. James Downing, command chief,

Louisiana Air National Guard. "She wanted to make sure that they understood that she was there for them, and to recognize their efforts and hard work for Louisiana and the nation."

While visiting, Jelinski-Hall took the time to hand out coins to Airmen and Soldiers in recognition for their hard work.

"It was great receiving a coin and to be acknowledged for the work we are doing," said Sgt. Robert Tolbert of Louisiana National Guard's 844th Engineer Company, 527th Engineer Battalion. "The visit definitely heightens awareness of what we are doing, and it gives us extra motivation to keep going on with the mission."



Acting Army Guard director praises Guard efforts

Story and photo by Spc. Tarell J. Bilbo 241st Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Maj. Gen. Raymond W. Carpenter, acting director of the Army National Guard, National Guard Bureau, traveled to Louisiana June 24 to attend a National Guard strength and maintenance conference and visit with Louisiana Guardsmen working the oil spill response mission in Grand Isle, La.

Carpenter, escorted by Brig. Gen. Owen W. Monconduit, commander of the 225th Engineer Brigade, got a close look at the Tiger Dam water diversions system that has been constructed on the beach at Grand Isle.

Monconduit explained the importance of the Guard's effort to protect the marshlands and coastal areas of Louisiana while the two flew from Jackson Barracks to Grand Isle in a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter.

"If any oil were to come into these marshlands, it would greatly disrupt the marine life, as well as the lives of the

citizens of these communities," Monconduit said.

At Grand Isle, Carpenter praised Guardsmen from the 1022nd Vertical Engineer Company, 527th Engineer Battalion, after watching them perform maintenance on the Tiger Dam system.

"These Guardsmen are doing great work," Carpenter said. "The sheer size of what they are protecting just takes you back a bit."

Besides viewing the Tiger Dam system, Carpenter also visited a LANG operations center in Grand Isle and observed military float bridge operations and civilian vacuum barge systems.

In addition to the projects Carpenter visited, the Louisiana Guard has completed land bridges on Elmer's Island and Thunder Bayou, as well as Hesco barrier walls in Port Fourchon.

Suffelde Preventions Warning Signs & Risk Factors

WARNING SIGNS:

When a Soldier presents any combination of the following. the buddy or chain of command should be more vigilant. Help should be secured for the Soldier.

- . Talk of suicide or killing someone else
- . Giving away property or disregard for what happens to one's property
- · Withdrawal from friends and activities
- · Problems with girlfriend/boyfriend or spouse
- · Acting in a bizarre or unusual manner (based on your knowledge
- Soldiers in trouble for misconduct (Art-15, UCMJ, etc.)
- Soldiers experiencing financial problems
- · Soldiers who have lost their job at home (reservists)
- Those soldiers leaving the service (retirements, ETSs, etc.)

When a Soldier presents any one of these concerns, the Soldier should be seen immediately by a helping provider.

- Talking or hinting about suicide
- Formulating a plan to include acquiring the means to kill oneself
- Having a desire to die
- · Obsession with death (music, poetry, artwork)
- . Themes of death in letters and notes
- Finalizing personal affairs
- · Giving away personal possessions

RISK FACTORS:

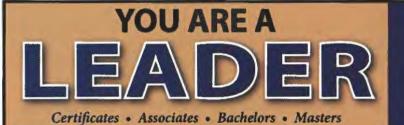
Risk factors are those things that increase the probability that difficulties could result in serious adverse behavioral or physical health. The risk factors only raise the risk of an individual being suicidal; it does not mean they are suicidal.

These risk factors are often associated with suicidal behavior include:

- · Relationship problems (loss of girlfriend/boyfriend, divorce, etc.).
- . History of previous suicide attempts.
- · Substance abuse.
- · History of depression or other mental illness.
- · Family history of suicide or violence.
- · Work related problems.
- . Transitions (retirement, PCS, discharge, etc.).
- · A serious medical problem.
- · Significant loss (death of loved one, loss due to natural disasters, etc.).
- · Current/pending disciplinary or legal action.
- · Setbacks (academic, career, or personal).
- · Severe, prolonged, and/or perceived unmanageable stress.
- · A sense of powerlessness, helplessness, and/or hopelessness.

SUICIDAL RISK HIGHEST WHEN:

- The person sees no way out and fears things may get worse.
- . The predominant emotions are hopelessness and helplessness.
- . Thinking is constricted with a tendency to perceive his or her situation as all bad.
- Judgment is impaired by use of alcohol or other substances.



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Louisiana National Guard Command Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kim E. Janneck, and LANG Warrant Officer Strength Manager, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tammy M. Lang, join LANG's five newest Warrant Officers as they stand together after an official appointment ceremony at the United States Army Aviation Museum in Fort Rucker, Ala., June 29, 2010. This was the largest group of candidates from Louisiana ever to graduate at one time from Fort Rucker.

Five Guardsmen graduate from warrant officer course

Story and photos by Spc. Tarell J. Bilbo Public Affairs Representative, Recruiting and Retention Command

The Louisiana Army National Guard welcomed five new warrant officers during an official appointment ceremony June 29 at the United States Army Aviation Museum in Fort Rucker. Ala. This was the largest group of candidates from Louisiana ever to graduate at one time from Fort Rucker.

After graduation, all candidates were promoted to the rank of warrant officer.

The graduates were Warrant Officer 1 Michael C. Arceneaux of New Orleans. Warrant Officer 1 Ivan S. Bean of Jena, La., Warrant Officer 1 Raymond J. Harris of Pineville, La., Warrant Officer 1 Amanda L. Holmes of Baton Rouge, La., and Warrant Officer 1 Jennifer L. Morrow of Pineville, La.

Bean was born in Jonesville, La., and has served 13 years in the military, currently as an automotive maintenance warrant officer with the 1087th Transportation Company. He attended the University of Louisiana at Monroe and is enrolled at Northwestern State University. He decided to become a warrant officer to provide opportunities and challenges for himself to grow as a Soldier, as well as an employee of the Louisiana National Guard.

"Any Soldier thinking of becoming a warrant officer should know that it's a very rewarding experience," Bean said.

Harris was born in New Orleans and has served 11 years in the military, currently as a human resources technician with Joint Force Headquarters. He is enrolled at Upper lowa University, working toward a degree in business administration.

With a passion for taking care of Soldiers' needs as a human resource specialist, and with the support of his family. friends and fellow Soldiers, Harris decided to take his profession to the next level.

"I have always been intrigued by the warrant officer corps and its professionals." Harris said. "It was a hard and challenging road, but I had the confidence to get through it

Holmes was born in Breaux Bridge, La , and has served years in the military, currently as a human resources technician 769th Engineer Battalion. She graduated from St. Leo.



Warrant Officer Candidate Jennifer L. Morrow, of Pineville, La., stands at attention as her family pins warrant officer rank on her uniform during an official appointment ceremony.

University with a bachelor's degree in business administration.

Holmes was drawn to becoming a warrant officer by the standards they live by.

"Their creed of integrity and no lying, cheating or associating with those who do, is exceptional," Holmes said.

Morrow was born in Greenville, Miss., and she and her family moved to Lake Charles, La., shortly after. She attended Northwestern State University and has served 15 years in the military. She works as communications chief of the 139th Regional Support Group.

Morrow's husband, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sean W. Morrow, was a big influence on her decision to advance her career.

"Seeing the joy in his eyes when his father and I pinned him at his graduation was the beginning of my quest to become a warrant officer," she said.

The candidates attended the Warrant Officer Candidate Course, which is developed and administered by the Warrant Officer Career College at Fort Rucker. Training is conducted in a rigorous, high-stress environment, which challenges the candidates mentally. physically and emotionally.

In addition to participating in physical training six days a week, candidates received formal instruction in leadership. Army doctrine and tactics, drill and ceremony, wear and appearance of military uniforms, military history and professional ethics.

"Going through the training was hard. but it was worth it," said Morrow. "It really shows you what you're made of and how far you can push yourself."

The LANG Command Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kim E. Janneck, and LANG Warrant Officer Strength

Manager, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tammy M. Lang, attended the ceremony.

"I'm very proud of all of them," said Lang, who recruited the candidates. "I'm honored to be a part of something so big, and seeing them accomplish their goals is truly exciting."



Warrant Officer Candidate Raymond J. Harris, from Pineville, La., stands at attention as his family pins warrant officer rank on his uniform.

Janneck and Lang also had the opportunity to pin the warrant officer rank on the uniforms of some of the candidates.

"This is really something to celebrate," Janneck said. "You can see the change in them after all they have experienced. They're going to be great warrant officers."

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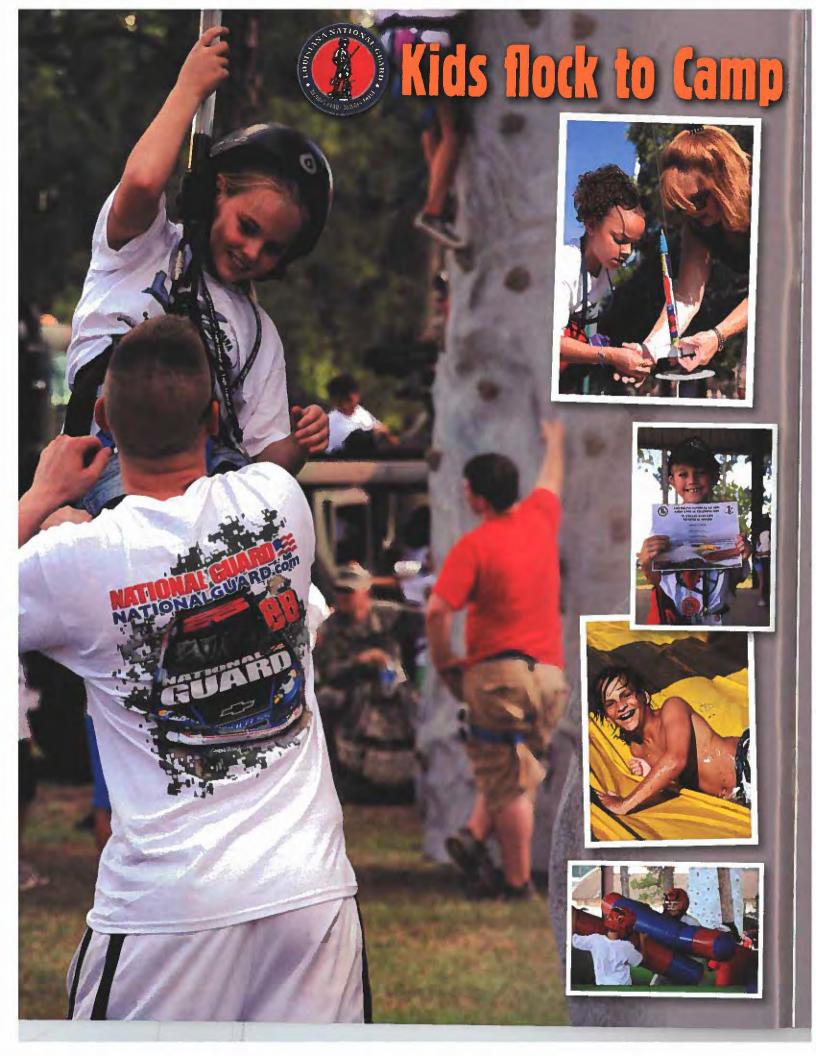
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UNITED CONCORDIA



Beauregard for annual training

Story and photos by Sgt. Rebekah L. Malone Louisiana National Guard Public Affairs Office

Annual training is not just for Guardsmen anymore. More than 170 youths from across Louisiana reported for roll call June 15-18 at Camp Beauregard in Pineville for four days of barracks sleeping, cadence calling, obstacle course running and marching, to learn what it's like to be a Louisiana National Guardsmen.

The young persons, aged 8 to 13, had a jampacked schedule. Divided into platoons and directed by their sergeant, just like military units, the kids began a part week of learning about the military. The kids conquered obstacles such as rock wall climbing, shooting rockets, swimming and most important, connecting with other military kids.

Kids Annual Training began in 1997 for children who are dependents or siblings of LANG members. Angela D. Ott. child and youth coordinator for the Office of Family Programs, explained that the program's intent is to help youths with feelings and experiences unique to children of military service members.

"We want these kids to learn that there are other military kids out there. We want them to interact with kids that have deployed parents." Ott said. "The nature of the National Guard leads to these kids being spread out across the state."

Ott said another goal of the camp is to teach children important life skills that build confidence.

"We want them to learn more about themselves and how to adapt to new situations. It's about them learning leadership and life skills." she emphasized.

Each platoon has youth counselors, aged 14-18, who are also children of National Guard members and who help guide

the younger kids during the week. The youth counselors spend a few days prior to the arrival of the kids at Youth Camp preparing for their leadership roles.

"We (counselors) do a bunch of teamwork activities. CPR training, first aid and learning about treating kids with respect, prior to attending Kids' A.T.." said Kelsey L. Roach. "I think this is a great experience. You learn leadership abilities, and I always like seeing the kids have fun."

1st Lt. Cody L. Paulk, deputy commandant of Kids' A.T., helped coordinate the non-stop activities aimed at teaching the overall theme of leadership building.

"It's great to be able to watch the different youth's leadership abilities come out at such a young age. Anyone who is a Soldier and has kids should participate." he said. "There is no better way to have a direct impact on the future of our LANG then to be able to share with, support and develop our future leaders."

At the conclusion of camp June 18, the young persons gathered for an awards ceremony. One of the most celebrated honors given is the W. Collin Ratcliff Memorial Award. The award went to the child that shows the most improvement and begins with "an abundance of desire and ends with the courage to realize their dreams."

Winner for 1st platoon was Andrew Roehm. 8. son of 1st Lt. Jeremy Prince and Sgt. Rebekah Prince of Pineville, La. This was Andrew's first year attending camp, and Prince said she cried when she dropped Andrew off because of the realization

her little boy was growing up.

But there were only beaming smiles of pride when Andrew won the prestigious award.

"It's awesome." both of his parents echoed, "to be chosen his first year at camp out of so many kids!"

Andrew said spending time with his friends and shooting his rocket were among his favorite activities at annual training, but winning the award sure wasn't bad either.



A SOLID FOUCATION FOR HAITI'S FUTURE



Idiers of the 1021st Engineer Company.

5th Engineer Battalion, along with
lize military forces, prepare braces July
2010, for school walls to be filled with
nerete to construct a roof for the U.S.
ny South New Horizons - Haiti 2010
iquoi School Project in Gonaives.



Story and photos by Spc. Christopher Foster Louisiana National Guard Public Affairs Office

GONAIVES. Haiti - With the collaborative efforts of Task Force Kout Men and the government of Haiti, the construction of three new school buildings, one school building renovation, three water wells, two restrooms, a soccer field and fencing around a school are currently in the works.

Hundreds of Louisiana National Guardsmen have participated in the training mission to provide Haitian children with a place to get an education.

"A lot of people from Gonaives area lived in Port-au-Prince. After the earthquake, they moved back to this region," said Valentine, a native of Gonaives.

After the devastating January 12 earthquake, approximately 100,000 displaced citizens and 40,000 - 50,000 displaced students from Port-au-Prince relocated to live with family and friends. The ability of the local school and medical facilities to support the population increase has been strained.

Soldiers with the 205th Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade, and Soldiers with Belize Military Forces have constructed the walls and installed the roof systems for the school building projects.

"Our Soldiers are doing a great job, with high morale. They enjoy working with the joint forces of Task Force Kout Men and are eager to help the Haitians in their recovery efforts," said Staff Sqt. Matthew Farrell, native of Covington, La., 1021st Engineer Company, 205th Engineer Battalion, noncommissioned

officer in charge for the Diaguoi school project.

With so many new students, the school system has resorted to using tents as classrooms for the increased student population. Being a part of a project that is helping to remedy this problem is a fulfilling part of the job for the Louisiana engineers.

"We are excited to work with the units of the Task Force Kout Men and to help the locals rebuild a part of their community," said Spc. Dustin Porte of Mandeville, La., also from the 1021st Engineer Company.

The new schools are projected to be finished in three months and are designed to withstand harsh weather conditions.



19TH ANNUAL FAMILY PROGRAM VOLUNTEER WORKSHOP HOSTED BY LANG

By Maj. Karlyn Reagan Louisiana National Guard Public Affairs Office

Gen. Craig R. McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau and Mai. Gen. Bennett C. Landreaneau, adjutant general, Louisiana National Guard, hosted the 19th Annual National Guard Family Program Volunteer Workshop in New Orleans Aug. 2-4. More than 1,300 volunteers, adjutants general, their spouses, and local and state agency personnel were in attendance.

The theme this year was, "Determination, Courage and Patience: National Guard Volunteers."

"These words have embodied the spirit of volunteering; from the foundation of our country as colonists banded together to develop this land, to today, as volunteers banding together to assist families of troops deploying abroad," said Maj. Gen. Lawrence Ross, director of manpower and personnel, National Guard Bureau.

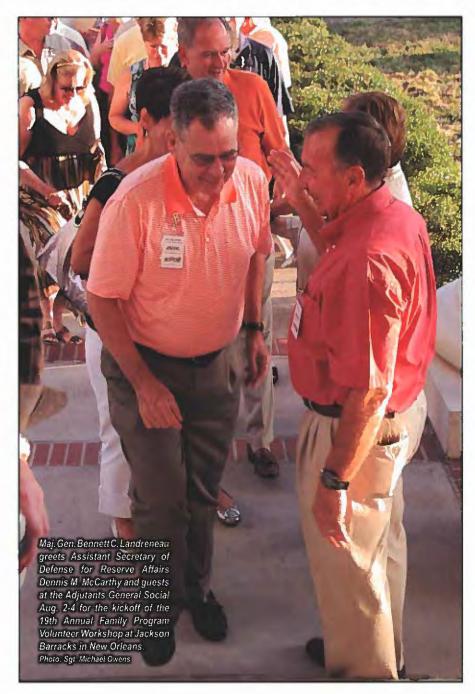
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The three-day workshop was filled with educational and informational breakout sessions that focused on the committed volunteer.

The event concluded with an awards ceremony recognizing volunteers and their families on both the Army and Air side that competed at the national level in five categories such as Guard

Family of the Year and Guard Member of the Year.

A few of the key speakers were Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Dennis M. McCarthy, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen, Chief of Staff, United States Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr., and New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu.





Louisiana National Guardsmen 2nd Lt. Kelly T. Hudson and son Spc. Jacob R. Hudson, both assigned to the 527th Engineer Battalion, chat at one of their worksites along the beach in Grand Isle. La., June 24, 2010.

Activation for Guardsmen usually means separation from family while serving their country and state. But for Louisiana National Guardsmen 2nd Lt. Kelly T. Hudson, and his son Spc. Jacob R. Hudson, their unit's activation did not cause separation, but rather a chance to serve together along the embattled Louisiana coast.

On April 28, the duo traveled from Harker, Texas, to answer the call of duty when their unit, the 527th Engineer Battalion, from West Monroe, La., 225th Engineer Brigade, began to deploy Soldiers along Louisiana's Gulf Coast.

Instead of saying goodbye to each other as Guard families usually do, the Hudsons saw this as a unique opportunity to serve together.

"I have always wanted to serve with my father," said Jacob, a combat engineer with Headquarters Support Company, 527th Engineer Battalion. "We have always found ways to spend time with each other, and looked at this mission as another chance to do so."

Even though they belong to different units within the battalion, they have been able to work closely with each other

Father and son answer Guard call together

Story and photos by Sgt. Michael L. Owens Louisiana National Guard Staff Journalist

almost every day since coming to the Gulf Coast.

"Jacob comes over to the Tactical Operations Center when he finishes working for the day to chat, and he sometimes helps me complete some of my tasks. I guess he feels sorry for me when I have to work late," joked the elder Hudson,

executive officer of the 1022nd Engineer Company, 527th Engineer Battalion.

Hudson married Jacob's mother when Jacob was young and adopted him when he turned 18 years old. He described their relationship as the 'best in the world' and one he wishes all sons had with their fathers.

"He is my best friend, the smartest person I know, and it is a pleasure to have him around," said the younger Hudson. "He is always there for me, and I cannot imagine what it would be like without him."

Since working on the coastline, the Hudson duo has been able to offer each other some of the comforts of home.

"It has been kind of a stress reliever, because every time I need someone to talk with or confide in, there is not a better person to have around than your father," said Jacob.

Both agreed that serving in the National Guard together has been gratifying because they have a chance to be a part of each other's lives in a special way.

When Jacob participated in the 225th Engineer Brigade's Solider of the Year competition last March, the senior Hudson was by his son's side as a sponsor and watched him out-score the other competitors to win the contest.

"I was very proud of him," he said. "You always want to see your kids do well, and it is a very unique thing for me to be there to help train and mentor him along the way."

When Father's Day rolled around

earlier this month, the Hudsons were able to share in the same activities that families in a normal setting would do.

"We did not do anything extreme. Jacob came over to the area where I live, and we ate together. Then we just sat out on the porch and enjoyed each other's company," said the elder Hudson.

The senior Hudson enlisted in the Louisiana National Guard and immediately went to officer candidate school to become an engineer officer in the 527th.

"I knew people that were already serving in the 527th and heard that it was a great battalion, so I did not hesitate to make it the unit of my choice," he said.

Once Hudson joined the military, his son knew right away that he wanted to become a Citizen-Soldier and join the ranks beside his dad.

"He started in the 205th Engineer Battalion because he was living in Mandeville, La., at the time, but he quickly transferred to the 527th so that we could live out our dream of serving together," said the senior Hudson.

The battalion's leadership praises both Hudsons for the professional examples they provide to the other Soldiers in the unit.

"They are both outstanding and dedicated Soldiers and have a really great father-son relationship," said Maj. Larry Benton, executive officer for the 527th Engineer Battalion. "I am proud to have them both serving among the ranks in our battalion."





Engineers travel to Germany

Construction projects support deployment training operations

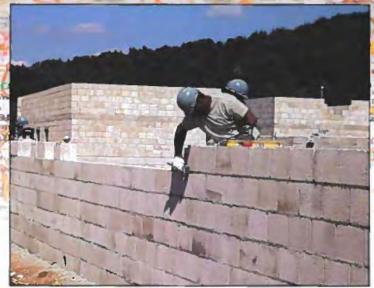
By Sgt. 1st Class Paul C. Meeker Louisiana National Guard Public Affairs Office

Louisiana Guardsmen who enjoy travel to foreign countries often have opportunities to put their training and skills to work abroad on real-world missions ... and not just to the war zones of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Three different rotations of engineer battalions representing the 528th, 205th and 527th Engineer Battalions, 225th Engineer Brigade, traveled to Hohenfels, Germany, each for 17 days, May 22-July 31, to improve the Military Operations in Urban Terrain training sites at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center there.

The commander of the second rotation, Capt. Alan Dunn of the 843rd Engineer Company, 205th Engineer Battalion, said that the overall Louisiana Army National Guard mission there was to improve the MOUT village training sites by conducting both horizontal and vertical construction operations.

The MOUT sites are built to resemble typical villages that might be found in places like Iraq, Afghanistan or Kosovo. They are populated by contracted citizens of those nations,



HOHENFELS, Germany — Soldiers from the 225th Engineer Brigade, Louisiana Army National Guard, lay blocks July 20, 2010, in a mock village used to train multinational troops who are preparing to deploy overseas.





Soldiers from the 225th Engineer Brigade lay blocks July 15, 2010, in a mock village used to train multinational troops who are preparing to deploy overseas. The Louisiana Army National Guard has been supporting this training effort by providing rotational engineer expertise and assets for the Joint Multinational Reediness Center in Hohenfels for the past several years.

as well as by German nationals who speak the representative languages.

Some of the missions the 205th tackled were the construction of block courtyard walls and concrete footers for future buildings, as well as the gravel surfacing of a 150 by 200-meter motor pool.

Dunn, a resident of Geismar, La., was especially proud of the work performed at the MOUT village site because his Soldiers could concretely see how their efforts improved the overall training experience of the multinational Soldiers preparing for deployment.

"We try to build these structures as realistically as pos-

sible in preparation for deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan or Kosovo. It's valuable to see how all your work comes together for this purpose," said Dunn.

Capt. Scott Lejeune, commander of the third rotation from the 1020th Engineer Company, 527th Engineer Battalion, said his troops accomplished a lot in a short period of time. They built block walls for the village, also poured sidewalks and expanded a CH-47 Chinook helicopter landing zone.

"Once we received our missions, my Soldiers began work immediately and didn't quit until the last minute," Lejeune said.

Like all Army missions, there were challenges to overcome. 1st Lt. Cody Paulk, a member of the 527th along with Lejeune, said that an initial challenge his unit had to overcome was dealing with project plans that were written using the metric system.

"Our engineers were not used to the metric system, but they adapted quickly and completed the mission ahead of schedule," Paulk said.

The fact that Hohenfels is near many tourist locations was not lost on the unit commanders. They gave their Soldiers time off and organized morale, welfare and recreation trips for them to see some of the area attractions.

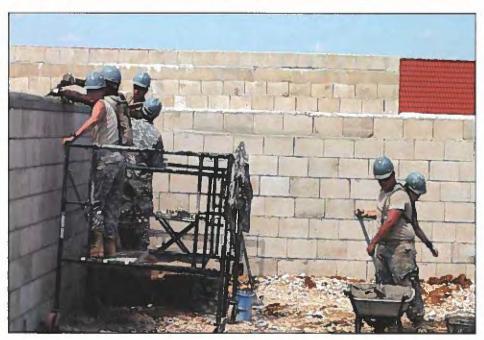
One tour took LANG troops to the Eagle's Nest in Berchtesgaden in the Bavarian Alps, close to the Austrian border. Adolf Hitler had a tea house built on top of the mountain there for his 50th birthday. Of greater interest to some of the touring Guardsmen, however, was the complex underground bunker system at the foot of the mountain. At one time the bunker system ran beneath Hitler's

alternate official headquarters.

Dunn said that this tour was one of the most rewarding MWR trips he'd ever been on, because he was able to learn what happened there during World War II with Hitler. Other tours included visits to the historic cities of Regensburg, Heidelberg, Nuremberg and Munich.

No doubt the trips motivated the troops, but so did the work and its value to the Army's deployment training mission. Lejeune said that his Soldiers were so motivated that at times it was hard to keep track of them.

"It's valuable to see how all your work comes together for the training of deploying troops," Dunn added.



A THREE-YEAR JOURNEY

Senior Airman becomes elite close air support expert

By Staff Sgt. Gabriel Bird 122nd Air Support Operations Squadron

FAIRBANKS, Alaska - For one Louisiana Air National Guardsman from the 122nd Air Support Operations Squadron. 159th Fighter Wing, Red Flag Alaska, held June 10-25, was an intense exercise that tested the skills he had spent nearly three years learning.

In a simulated exercise. Senior Airman Erik Brumfield, a Joint Terminal Attack Control apprentice, from Hammond, La., knelt quietly in the tree line of a hilltop that overlooked a large valley below as he repeatedly checked his map and notes at Eielson Air Force Base near Fairbanks. Alaska.

Strike grids - good; friendly locations good: altitudes and de-confliction plan - good, he thought to himself.

The radio microphone attached to his body armor pierced the silence, "Gun Hog Five-One, IP inbound."

"Gun Hog Five-One, continue. Break, break. Gunslinger fire target alphabravo-zero-zero-one-three. Saber Five-One, depart holding area and proceed to objective Mississippi," Brumfield calmly responded as he depressed the transmit button.

Approximately two kilometers away stood 30-40 armed enemy personnel and five vehicles parked along a road that ran through the river valley. Intelligence had reported the Taliban were looking to conduct a heavy night-time assault on a U.S. Forward Operating Base within the next 48 hours, and this abandoned valley would likely be their route of travel.

A JTAC's job is to keep friendly forces and civilians safe during military air and land operations. On this day, Brumfield had to coordinate the fire of 120 mm mortars from the Army Stryker vehicles with fire from two Air Force A-10 Thunderbolts, also known as Warthogs, and two Army OH-58D Kiowa helicopters to destroy the Taliban convoy and prevent the reinforcement.

The plan was working. The Taliban convoy crept through the valley, believing that no U.S. forces were operating in this area.

Brumfield devised his plan and it was time to execute. If his calculations

were correct, in less than 60 seconds. the enemy personnel would be killed, and the five-vehicle convoy would be reduced to a pile of twisted metal and smoking wreckage.

The radio microphone pierced the silence again, "Shot, over."

Brumfield responded, "Shot, out,"

He turned to the commander and told him the mortars had fired, and the A-10s and Kiowa helicopters were on the way.

"Sounds good, Air Force, good work. Let's do this," replied the commander.

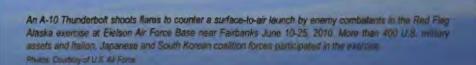
Brumfield gave the plan one last look, making sure to check his targeting coordinates to protect friendly forces and to ensure that the mortars didn't cross paths with the A-10s or OH-58s.

The radio silence was broken again. "Splash, over."

Brumfield responded, "Splash, out."

At his reply, all eyes at the observation point locked on the target - in five seconds the explosions would begin.

As he looked out across the river valley below and located the convoy in preparation for the impacts, Brumfield



replayed in his mind what it had taken to get to this point.

He thought back on the six grueling months he spent at Hurlburt Field in Fort Walton Beach, Fla. The course was only four months long, but most candidates did not make it straight through on their first attempt. More than half of those that volunteer for the Battlefield Airman Air Force Specialty Code never graduate.

Of those that do graduate, a large number wash back during training because of the challenging combat field skills block – which culminates in a sixday field event where the candidates conduct day and night land navigation and vehicle navigation, small unit and close quarter battle tactics, as well as first aid skills – all on barely 18 hours of sleep for the entire week and only the food they could carry in their rucksacks.

To go through that week once was challenging, twice was rare. Brumfield endured it three times, overcoming injury to finally graduate and earn the coveted black beret of the Tactical Air Control Party AFSC.

He replayed the six months he spent in Afghanistan as a TACP, learning and assisting his JTAC on combat missions.

He looked forward to being the focal point of joint firepower someday – the JTAC.

A TACP must rely on their training on communications systems, infantry tactics and aircraft and firepower capabilities, to become certified to conduct air and artillery strikes in close proximity to friendly forces. The special-duty assignment requires the candidate to be a TACP for a minimum of 12 months, be nominated by their supervisor and certified by the squadron commander, before they are allowed to attend the four-week qualification course at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.



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Blum William Cody

Bonilla Devin Kylon

Blunt Kenton Jawayne

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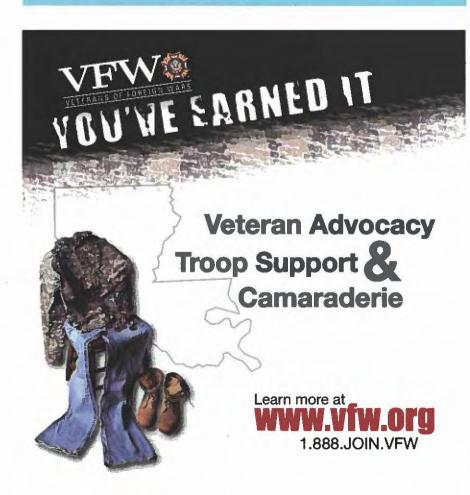
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A THREE - YEAR JOURNEY Continued from page 21

It is there that the TACP learns how to combine the intricacies of the Air Force Theater Air Control System and the Army Air Ground System, to bring effective firepower against the enemy - anywhere on the battlefield, at any time of the day, under any conditions.

This day near Fairbanks was the culmination of all his training: he would coordinate Army mortars that were one kilometer away. with Army helicopters and Air Force A-10s against the enemy, all while remaining undetected in a hostile environment.

As he looked at the targets that in an instant would disappear, he wore a grin that represented the confidence gained through all of his hard work over the past three years.

The flashes brought Brumfield back to present day. Like a spectacular lightning show, the mortar impacts erupted around the convoy. At two kilometers away, the thunder of the explosions would be six seconds behind.

Before the explosions reached the observation point, Gun Hog One-One called on the radio, "Gun Hog One-One in from the south, heading three five zero."

"Cleared hot," Brumfield responded with the official phrase that grants the aircraft clearance to release his weapons on the target.

The plan was executed perfectly. Despite having seen the display numerous times. everyone at the observation point sat in awe at the spectacular display of firepower.

As the dust settled from the bombing and gun attack, Kiowa helicopters reported all targets neutralized - mission accomplished. There would be no night-time assault on a U.S. FOB in this valley.

"The journey from being a JTAC's apprentice, to a JTAC has been a difficult one." Brumfield told his colleagues. "It has tested me on many occasions, to my mental and physical limits. Red Flag Alaska provided a rare opportunity to improve skills many JTACs don't get to practice outside of combat."

With the mission accomplished, Brumfield successfully completed the last training requirement necessary to receive his JTAC certification.

"Becoming a JTAC is what every TACP aspires to do," he said. "Completing that journey has given me an awesome sense of accomplishment and has also taught me that it is not the end of the road, just another leg of the journey."

Brumfield is one of 15 JTACs assigned to the 122nd Air Support Operations Squadron, 159th Fighter Wing in Pineville, La.



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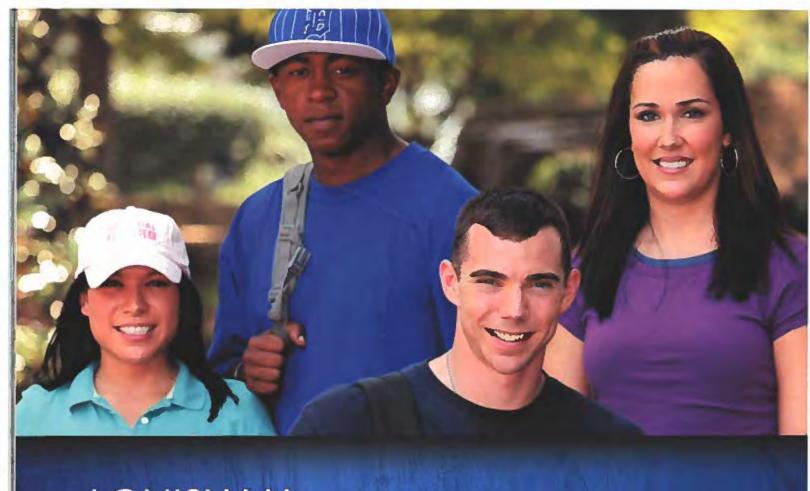


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