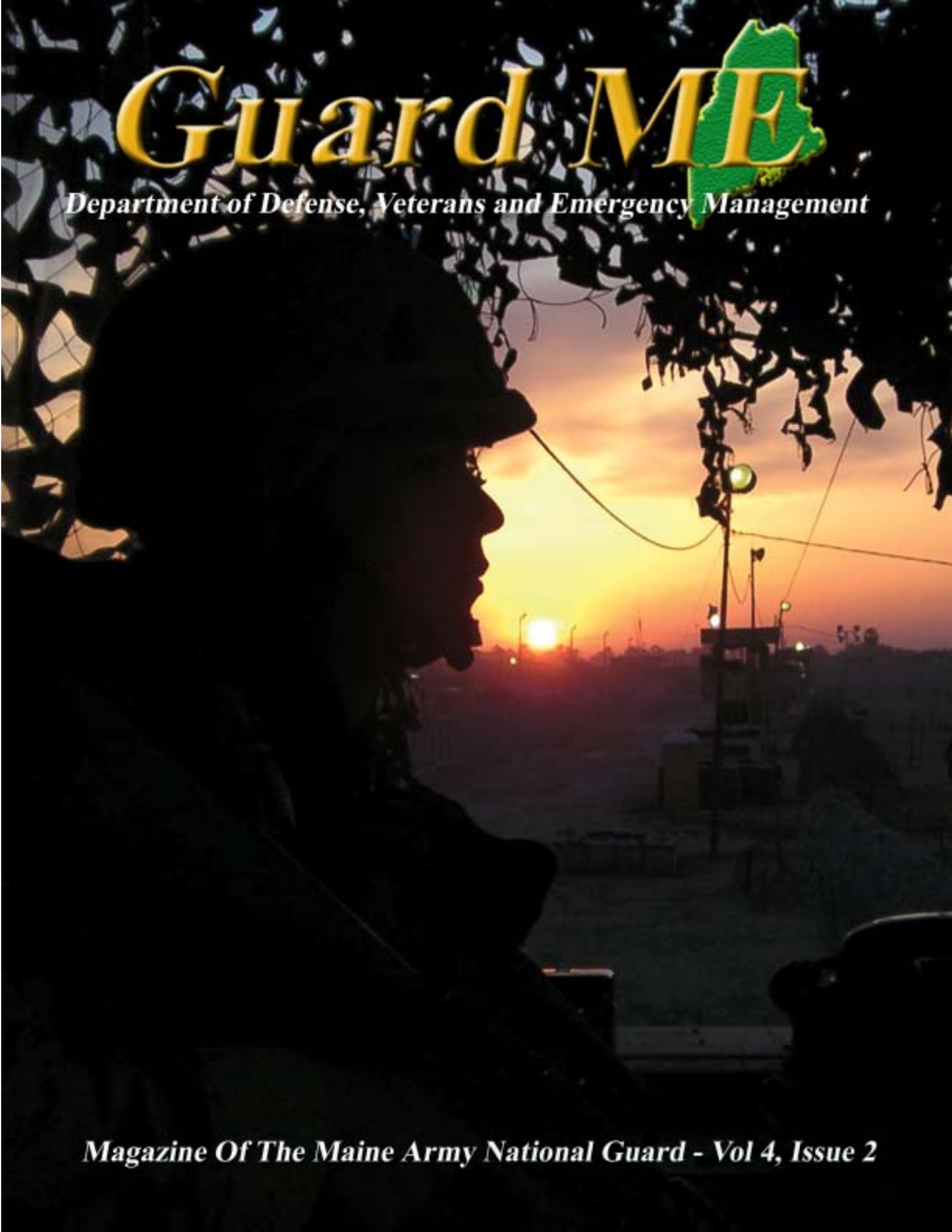
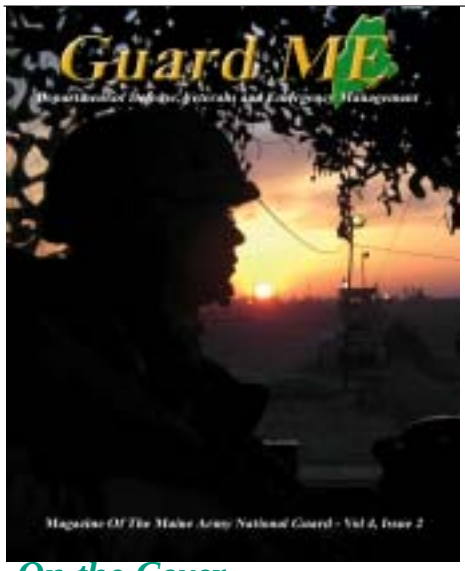
Guard ME

Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management



Magazine Of The Maine Army National Guard - Vol 4, Issue 2



On the Cover...
An evening with the 152 FA, Abu Ghraib Prison, Baghdad, Iraq. (Photo provided by SGT Christopher Soucy)

Guard ME
The Magazine of
the Maine Army National Guard

Volume 4, Issue 2

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News from the TAG

By: BG John W. Libby

BG John W. Libby

The period from September 11th to date demonstrates that the National Guard must and does operate across the full spectrum of national security missions, from combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, to international peacekeeping in Bosnia and Kosovo, to airport and border security operations in the United States. Any talk about irrelevance is gone – we are critically essential.

This shift from being a strategic reserve in the Cold War to being an operational reserve today effects the way we train, equip and man our units. It also impacts my priorities as I succeed MG Joe Tinkham as your Adjutant General.

I direct the Maine National Guard to support mobilizing soldiers and their families by making the transition to Active Duty as seamless as possible and to assist their families to meet any challenges or issues they encounter while their spouse is deployed. Likewise, we will support the demobilization process in a similar manner. The keys to this are in providing operations, logistics, personnel and family support. We will also recognize and support the sacrifice of Maine's employers.

For those units and soldiers not deployed, I direct units to **focus on soldier** and **unit readiness** for possible future deployments with emphasis on the Soldier Readiness Process.

We must continue focused efforts on maintaining and recruiting a quality force for today's National Guard. Strength is and will remain a priority throughout my tenure.

As we continue to fight the Global War on Terrorism we will continue to change. I believe our challenges will lie in how we change, the mobilization process, personnel, equipment and predictability. The Department of Defense is in the process of executing a historic transformation of our defense capabilities. Clearly the distribution of force structure between the active and reserve components needs to be adjusted to preclude us mobilizing field artillery soldiers for military police missions. While the process will take time, it is moving forward and will result in force structure changes in Maine in future years. Additionally, a major overhaul is required to reengineer the mobilization and deployment process. This process is ongoing and will result in an expanded opportunity for "home station" mobilizations as early as OIF III. Finally, DOD is working toward the development of a deployment model which will provide more predictability for soldiers, families and employers in the deployment schedule.

In the past three years our Nation has called for more than 1,500 Maine Guardsmen, the 2nd highest percentage of any state's troop structure in the Nation. They answered the call and have performed in a superior manner. Our citizen-soldiers continue to serve with professionalism and honor. I am proud of you and what you have accomplished, particularly since 911 and I'm honored to serve as your Adjutant General.

Guard ME

The Magazine of the Maine Army National Guard – 2004

In This Issue

Page 2
TAG Comments

Page 3
A Family Affair

Page 4
The Adjutant General

Page 5
Family
AG (continued)

Pages 6 & 7
Awards

Page 8
Joint Forces
Army Assistant Adjutant General

Page 9
Assistant (continued)
Father /Son Reunite

Page 10
Training with the Old Guard

Page 11
Comments from CSM Small

A Family Affair

By: SFC Carl Weiss, PA

Kristine Prosser's rationale for joining the Maine Army National Guard was relatively simple. "My family has always had someone in the military and I was seeking a similar experience, good benefits and needed money for college." A high school senior at Winthrop High in 1996, she took the oath of enlistment and joined the 314th Medical Detachment in Bath as a medic. Eventually she wound up transferring to the medical section of Detachment 1 HSC of the 133rd Engineer Battalion in Gardiner. By 1999 she found full time work as a temporary technician at Camp Keyes. While working at Camp Keyes she met her future husband, Army Guard Staff Sergeant Jason Prosser.

"We both had mutual friends at Camp Keyes so we saw each other socially from time to time. After a while the friendship grew and eventually became love." SSG Prosser proposed in October of 2002 at the military ball and they married in July of 2003. Fittingly, the military couple had the Maine State Select Honor Guard team assist in their wedding as the couple left the church under the ceremonial arched crossed swords.

Like his wife, Jason Prosser joined the Maine Army National Guard while still a senior in high school. He too joined as a medic and, as fate would have it, it was also with the 314th. He drilled just a stones throw away from his hometown of East Millinocket, in Millinocket. Later, he transferred to the 112th and found work as a flight medic. While searching for full time employment with the Guard he also wound up at Camp Keyes and eventually found an AGR job in the personnel section. After a stint as a recruiter, he found himself in his wife's unit as a unit readiness NCO with the 133rd Engineer Battalion.

The newlywed couple bought a house in Durham and settled into the routine of married life and dual jobs with the same employer, albeit in two separate locations. Kristine found herself traveling north to Augusta as the program analyst who manages the state training budget and Jason drove south as training NCO/

See 'Family' on Page 5

SSG Jason Prosser and his wife SGT Kristine Prosser say their goodbyes at the 133d Company B send off in January. (Photo provided by SGT Kristine Prosser)

BG Libby Named New TAG

By: SFC Carl Weiss, PA

Longtime Maine Army National Guard Deputy Adjutant General, Brigadier General John W. (Bill) Libby, received his 2003 Christmas present a couple of weeks late this year. On January 15th, 2004, Libby was appointed Maine's Adjutant General and was also named as the Commissioner, Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management. Libby's appointment as the Adjutant General, a two star (Major General) position will cap a military career that started in 1966 as a Second Lieutenant fresh out of the University of Maine.

It becomes evident when talking with Libby that the military has always been, and always will be, a large part of his life. His desire to become a soldier, while perhaps not ordained at birth, was strongly influenced by his father and uncles at the tender age of 8. As a young boy he would spend quiet summer evenings perched above the elder Libby men at the family camp on Sabattus Lake as they played cards and talked about their experiences in World War II. Supposedly tucked away in bed, Libby would eavesdrop on the conversations and quickly became convinced that serving as a soldier was what he wanted to do with his life. It wasn't the stories of fighting and battles that appealed to him, rather the tales of camaraderie, places visited and things done, that hooked the young boy on becoming a soldier.

Following a year at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, Libby transferred to the University of Maine. Five years later and armed with a degree in mathematics and a Master's in education, he embarked upon a 10 year tour with the United States Army. He saw action as a field artillery officer in Vietnam, taught ROTC at the University of Massachusetts and was stationed in Germany in 1975 when he and his wife Cindy decided to leave the active Army and return to their roots in Maine. Now with 3 young boys to raise, Libby and his wife decided that "we wanted something a bit more stable in our lives."

He wound up putting his teaching degrees to use at Fryeberg Academy in western Maine teaching math for 3 years and serving as Dean of Students. While he left the active Army to return home, teach and raise his family, soldiering never completely left him. Soon, the young Captain found a second home within the Maine Army National Guard's 240th Group in Waterville. Within 3 years, he had secured a full time job with the Maine Guard, becoming part of the full time technician program.

The "Flag Ladies from Freeport" Elaine Greene and Dr. JoAnne Miller, surround General Libby at the 112th homecoming (Photo by CW3 Mark Houdlette, PA)

Over the next 20 years Libby became a fixture in and around the engineer and Guard community, ultimately becoming the 240th Group Commander. In 1992 he led hundreds of Army Guard Engineers into the Central American country of Guatemala as the Task Force Commander of Fuentes Caminos, a six month Guard deployment designed to build schools, medical clinics, roads and drill water wells.

In September 1995 Libby was appointed as the Deputy Adjutant General, DAG, of the Maine Army National Guard. A year later he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. Over the next 8 years, Libby served under two Adjutant Generals; Major General Earl Adams and Major General Joseph Tinkham II. In addition to his tenure as the DAG, Libby also served as the director of the Maine Emergency Management Agency, MEMA, for 5 years.

On December 12th, 2003 Governor Baldacci nominated Libby to head the 3400 soldiers and airman of the Maine National Guard. After a public hearing, the State Senate voted on January 14th and Libby was sworn in as Maine's Adjutant General on January 15th, 2004. Libby said of his nomination, "It was the logical culmination of my career. I spent 10 years on active duty with the Army, been in the National Guard for 20 plus years, was the director of MEMA for 5 years and was the DAG for 8 years."

BG Libby takes over during a time of great transition for the National Guard. In years' past, the typical Guardsman could look forward to performing one drill weekend a month and going to 2 weeks of "summer camp" each year. Barring a World War, and short of a local call up for brief service in response to a natural disaster such as a flood, hurricane or ice storm, this routine had been in place for generations. September 11th, 2001 quickly changed all that. Guardsmen today have come to realize that long term mobilizations to countries halfway around the world aren't the exception, rather they have become an accepted part of the mission.

Today, Maine has over half of its soldiers deployed worldwide in the war on terror. Perhaps the biggest challenge fac-

See "BG Libby" on page 5

Family

Continued from page 3

heavy equipment operator and squad leader with Co. B in Westbrook. Life revolved around each other, their careers, a new house and 3 pets, a dog and two cats.

"With two full-timers under one roof, preparation for attending schools, doing boots and pressing fatigues became a family affair. Jason would hit the boots and I'd iron the uniforms." While being married and working in the same unit might seem like a boon to some, having drill at the same time and attending annual training during the same time frame wasn't always what it might have been. "We were constantly looking for help with the pets or the house if we were to be gone at the same time. While it was nice to be together, ultimately it simply wasn't the best thing for us."

While the Prosser's were making plans and putting the finishing touches on the start of the rest of their lives together, events worldwide were shaping up that would have a profound affect on both of them.

As the war in Iraq unfolded and it quickly became obvious that the Guard and Reserve components of the military would play a huge role serving in the Middle East, the Prosser's like many other soldiers, started to prepare for the potential call to service.

Initially both Kristine and Jason Prosser were excited about the possibility of serving their country. "We have both been through extensive training and our first thought was 'let's go do it'" However, as the mobilization orders became reality, they realized that only one of them would be going overseas and that would be Jason, with the 133rd.

"Since we had both been mentally preparing for a deployment I didn't worry once I found out he was going, but we were cutting orders on hundreds of soldiers (during the Soldier Readiness Process, SRP) and as I cut the set that said 'Prosser" it really hit me that he was going and going to be gone for a long time."

During the transition from home station training in Maine to mobilization training at Fort Drum in New York, Kristine and Jason were able to stay in touch via cell phone every day. "At night he would call me with his 'tuck in phone call', so the last thing I heard before going to sleep was his voice." The Prosser's also invested in a laptop, webcam and digital camera prior to the deployment to help ease the burden of being so far apart for so long.

"I was able to go down to Drum to visit him one weekend. Our families have been great, as have the neighbors, with signs of support and ribbons. Also my co-workers have been overwhelmingly supportive and flexible."

As one of hundreds of people in Maine dealing with a deployed spouse, Kristine gets through each day with this philosophy, "The key for us is to keep the communication open and strike a balance between too much contact and not enough. He has a job to do and I know that and miss him, but also don't want him worrying about me when he needs to be focusing on his soldiers, mission and safety."

BG Libby

Continued from page 4

ing the Maine National Guard in the coming months will be the retention of its soldiers. "It's going to be difficult to keep many of our self employed soldiers as well as those with a 20 year letter in the National Guard. There will be pressure from spouses, and from employers, to get out of the Guard." Said Libby. "We need to capitalize on the popularity of the service right now and the good will of the people of the country to help maintain our numbers."

Retention issues are nothing new for the military in general and the Guard specifically. Ten years ago the offer of paid college tuition in exchange for National Guard service helped fill the ranks with a younger generation of soldiers. Today, Maine's newest BG Libby sees the offer of medical and dental insurance to the traditional Guardsmen as a way to help persuade the soldier, who is thinking about getting out of the Guard, to stay. While not a benefit right now, proposals to make health and dental insurance part of the Guardsman's incentive package are in lawmaker's hands.

As he looks toward the future, Libby is excited about the opportunities that Maine's approximately 154,000 veterans have. "Maine has the highest percentage of veterans in the country (Total number of citizens divided by veterans currently living in the state.) By consolidating their voices and channeling their efforts, the Bureau of Veterans Services has an opportunity to greatly assist Maine's Veterans and help them with benefits and the Veteran's agenda."

Additionally, the General is also greatly interested in the National Guard increasing its association with Maine's youth. A long time active member in his community as a hockey coach and referee, moderator at his church, and chairman and past president of the Waterville Parks and Recreation, YMCA and Waterville High hockey and soccer boosters, Libby is excited about the opportunity to continue to work with Maine's youth. "I would like to explore the Challenge Program, which is a boot camp style program, by sitting down with the commissioner of the Department of Education. I'm also interested in the About Face Program, an after school program for the economically disadvantaged. This program focuses on study habits, employment opportunities, building character and includes a stipend for the participants."

General Libby talks with the Soldiers of 1136th Transportation as they depart the state. (Photo by SSG Joseph Desmond, PA)

Air Traffic Controllers Awarded

First Award for A National Guard Unit

By: MSG Angela Blevins, PA

The Maine Army National Guard's Echo Company 120th Aviation (ATS) was recently awarded the Army's Aviation Air Traffic Control Award for 2003, for safely talking down two air crews in a 24-hour period.

In December of 2002, high above a Bosnian mountain range, thick clouds encompassed a UH-60 helicopter with only 26 minutes of fuel left in its tanks. Idaho National Guard pilot, Chief Warrant Officer Three Hatt, found himself unable to fly high enough to get above the cloud cover and couldn't fly under them because of the mountainous terrain below. Therefore he was forced to fly through the cloud coverage and found himself flying blind. He called the Air Traffic Controllers of Echo Company for assistance.

"Twenty-six minutes is not enough time to play games while looking for a hole, we needed to bring him home right away." said Sergeant First Class Galen Thompson.

Echo Company picked them up on radar 20 miles from the Sarajevo Airfield. After identifying the helicopter as a friendly bird, Thompson proceeded to give the pilot proper vectors (directions) and altitudes to bring him towards the runway. Thompson continued, "When you talk down a lost pilot, you are letting them know where they are in relationship to the run way and glide path (elevation) every 5 seconds. Assuring them we are going to bring them home." Upon landing, the plane had 12 minutes of fuel left.

"I have been an Air Traffic Controller since 1993 and this is the I first time I have ever had to talk an aircraft down. We train so hard, that it is almost normal to be stressful." Thompson said.

Less than 24 hours later, Thompson faced a second emergency brought on by the weather and terrain. UH-60 pilot Captain Rio of the New York National Guard also called for ATS services from within the clouds looking for help in landing. Although not on duty, Thompson was able to assist in the safe landing of another Army National Guard (Blackhawk) by attaching a line to his communicator wire and helping to talk the pilot down. "I am right here with you sir, don't worry about it, I'm right here" said Thompson reassuringly.

"We are the eyes of the airplane. The Air Traffic Controller is telling the pilot what direction to turn and what altitude to be at. That is the primary mission of the Air Traffic Controller," said First Sergeant Steven Craig. Each year all Air Traffic Controller units Army wide submit their successful stories for consideration for this prestigious award. There was obvious pride in the 1SG's voice "We are the first National Guard unit to ever receive this award."

Army Aviation Air Traffic Control Company of the Year award. (Photo by: MSG Angela Blevins, PA)

Wal-Mart "Rolls Back" $2500

By: MSG Angela Blevins, PA

Wal-Mart's Northern Maine District #204 donated a $2500 check to the Maine Army National Guard Family Program coordinator Sergeant First Class Barbara Claudel and Chaplain (Major) Andy Gibson. This donation will help support the families of the deployed soldiers.

Gibson said "Last year we were able to award nearly $7000 in grants and loans for soldier's families in need and this year we have been able to give out $40,000." SFC Claudel added, "What we have received from outside agencies is amazing. For instance, the flowers that every returning soldier carries to give to their significant other also come from Wal-Mart's donation."

Don Emmons, Regional Coordinator of Communications for Wal-Mart, said his son was deployed so he truly appreciates the support of the Family program. Emmons said "There is a yellow ribbon on the Wal-Mart sign, signifying a welcome home to all those returning".

Bangor Coordinator of Operation Community Support, Skip Chappell, was also present and he too has generously provided the Family Assistance Center with tickets to statewide Circus events, Ice Hockey games and other family oriented events for the spouse and children to attend.

Left to right- Richard Catterson, Don Emmons , Allison Carson (Community Relations), SFC Barbara Claudel and MAJ Andrew Gibson, Chaplin. (Photo by: MSG Angela Blevins, PA)

Adventure Program Recognized

By: MAJ Daniel Goodheart, CDC

In January, the Maine National Guard's Drug Demand Reduction, DDR, team received a national award for excellence from Arthur T. Dean, Chairman and CEO of the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, CADCA. The award recognizes and pays tribute to the many valuable and lasting efforts the Maine DDR program contributes to support the local communities, CADCA and community coalitions.

Col Jeffrey L. Bond accompanied LTC John G. Goulet, the Counterdrug Coordinator, to the CADCA National Leadership Forum in Washington D.C. to accept the award from Mr. Dean and Ms. Sue Thau.

From left to right: Arthur T. Dean, CADCA Chairman and CEO, LTC John G. Goulet, Counterdrug Coordinator, COL Jeffrey L. Bond, Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations and Sue Thau, CADCA Public Policy Consultant (Photo provided by MAJ Goodheart, CD)

The DDR program began providing support to citizens and coalitions in Maine in the early nineties. The vision of the program is a commitment to supporting Maine citizens as they help our young people develop the resiliency they need to lead healthy, drug free lives. In order to accomplish this we have embraced adventure-based education from our inception.

The primary focus for our DDR program today revolves around presenting the "Adventure Program". This program is specifically targeted to work with 7th grade students in their schools and at outdoor training areas on our challenge courses and rappel tower. We typically visit one class for sixty to ninety minutes one day a week, over a six-week period. We have also modified our program so we may conduct the Adventure Program in a two day, five hours a day format to take our program to the far northern and eastern reaches of the state. During the past four years over 1750 students have successfully participated and completed this program.

2LT Pantalone facilitates an event with a school on the Gardiner ROPEs course (Photo by SFC Carl Weiss, PA)

We utilize the Maine Youth Drug Alcohol Use Survey as a factor in selecting the target audience and as a measurement tool. Their research indicates that the 7th grade age is likely to be the most receptive in learning how to make healthy choices. This work is centered upon Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets that have been identified as helping young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. Their goal is to support schools/ communities and help build assets in our youth by providing activities that promote self-esteem, teamwork, trust, communication, and problem solving. By supporting schools and communities with their substance abuse programs, we can help build assets in our state's youth that are necessary to make healthy drug-free choices in their lives.

Second Lieutenant Cindy Pantalone has been the central architect behind the expansion of the Drug Demand Reduction's Adventure Program into our schools in Maine. Her leadership, training expertise and ability to foresee and overcome potential problems are demonstrated by the accomplishments within the Drug Demand Reduction section. She has successfully supervised and trained nine personnel in the DDR program to conduct the Adventure Program.

We are also supporting the additional programs such as the Learning, Esteem and Discipline (LEAD) Program. Our facilitators' work with high-risk students in grades K-6 in central and western Maine to help increase their social skills. The students selected for this program represent 75% of youth referrals to mental health centers and are rated #1 on teacher concern surveys. Specifically, they concentrate on cooperation, planning, decision-making, and peaceful conflict resolution using a variety of hands on activities.

For more information visit the Counterdrug DDR web site:

www.me.ngb.army.mil/ddr

Hello Joint Forces Headquarters

By: MSG Angela Blevins, PA

In October 2003 The Maine Army National Guard Headquarters changed its name. For years it was known as STARC for State Area Command. With a growing emphasis nationally on joint operations between the Army and Air National Guard, a new name has been established for the state headquarters at Camp Keyes. The soldiers and airmen now belong to Joint Forces Headquarters (JFHQ). Maine National Guard Soldiers & Airmen may be surprised to know that this is something that has been happening before the "title" was officially changed.

Joint Forces is an incorporation of the Army and Air National Guard. If there is a statewide emergency the leadership will call upon those units that have the skills or assets and coordinate to fix the problems. Colonel Donald McCormick is the Chief of Staff for the newly developed JFHQ and is also an Air National Guardsman. He said, "We have used the processes before, but never had a name for it."

Maine isn't the only state implementing this. Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum, who initiated the idea, said "We will balance our forces, focusing on the right force mix and the right kinds of units with the right capabilities in every state and territory." Leadership positions will require good communication up and down the chain of command.

These changes may not be visual day to day, as the Army and Air Guard begin to come together, but it will be seen more when there are emergency operations. At this time staff members from both services will work together through the plan, coordinating and implementation stages of the mission.

During the Ice Storm of 1998, the state called upon the Army for its Engineering Battalion to assist with moving snow and cutting trees, while also using the Air Guard assets for communications and shelters.

Assistant Adjutant General-Army

By: SFC Carl Weiss, PA

For most of us, retirement is something we look forward to. Something to savior, something to relish and certainly something to slow down for, if just to enjoy it a little bit more. For Colonel Robert G. Carmichael Jr. "retirement" after 24 years of service with the Army and Army National Guard meant leaving behind a military career and switching gears entirely as he took a new job as the Vice President of training and human resources with Maine Savings Federal Credit Union. The former Chief of Staff of the Maine Army National Guard was about to turn in his battle dress uniform and jump boots for a sport coat and loafers. Although he was swapping one full time job for another, he was looking forward to spending more time with his wife and young children.

Just prior to his transformation from full time officer to the ranks of the "retired", an offer came along that he couldn't refuse. Brigadier General John W. Libby had just been named the new Adjutant General for the state of Maine and he wanted Colonel Carmichael to be his second in command for the Army Guard. The title of the new position is the Assistant Adjutant General-Army. With this title comes the rank of Brigadier General. A board shall convene this summer and the "nearly retired" Colonel should be swapping his eagle for a star sometime early this fall.

Colonel Carmicheal speaks at a promotion cermemony in Maine's Hall of Flags. (Photo by: MSG Angela Blevins, PA)

Many adults would argue that teenagers live only for the moment, some teens have a vague notion as to what they want to do in the future while others have their life completely mapped out. As a star athlete in 3 sports at Bucksport High School in the early 1970's, Carmichael's goals were more in line with achieving the gold balls associated with a state football, basketball or baseball title, not the gold bars of a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army. While his father, Bob Carmichael Sr., had been a Lieutenant Colonel in the Reserves, the younger Carmichael had no intention of joining the military as a teenager, much less making a career out of it. Rather he wished to follow in his father's footsteps as a teacher and coach.

Following his high school graduation in 1975, Carmichael went to college just up the road in Orono at the University of Maine. He played football for the Black Bears all 4 years, lettering in 3 of them and starting his senior year. As a senior he student taught in the Bucksport school system and coached football and basketball. He graduated in 1979 with a degree in education and psychology, with every intention of teaching and coaching in Maine. That would have to wait however, as he owed the Army a few years of his time. Financial considerations 2 years earlier had caused Carmichael to apply for and be accepted into the ROTC scholarship program. A condition of the scholarship required service in the Army following graduation.

As a young second lieutenant serving during the heyday of the Cold War, Carmichael dove into all the Army had to offer, attending infantry basic and becoming a helicopter pilot. Those skills would be put to the test just a few years later on the tiny island of Grenada. Entering the island as a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter pilot with Task Force 160 (largely comprised of special operators such as Delta Force, Rangers and SEALS) Carmichael was on a mission to help free prisoners and students when his

See "Assistant" on next page

Assistant

Continued from previous page

helicopter was shot at and hit 35 times. He emerged unhurt but a combat veteran with operational experience with the UH-60.

Following 6 years of active duty, Carmichael returned to his roots in Maine and swapped piloting a helicopter for working around ships, taking a job as a sales representative at Bath Iron Works. He joined the Maine Army National Guard and was working for the 112th as a platoon leader when the opportunity for full time employment with the Guard beckoned.

Over the next 10 years Carmichael served in a variety of positions, mostly within the aviation community. In 1997, while serving as the state's Staff Aviation Officer, he was instrumental in bringing an old friend to Maine for the first time. The Army had approved the transfer of a squadron of UH-60 Blackhawks to Maine. According to Carmichael, "The challenge was to get enough crews trained to fly the aircraft from Corpus Christi, Texas to Bangor. We had no pilots trained as UH Instructor Pilots or UH60 Test Pilots, and very few qualified UH60 line pilots. Needless to say, Chief Warrant Officer Five, Steve Buzzell, who was our first qualified UH60 Instructor Pilot, was key to making this successful. CW4 Steve Parsons, the first UH60 Test Pilot also was instrumental to our success."

Just as the world was getting its first peek at the 21st century, Colonel Carmichael was embarking upon a new stage in his career, while at the same time preparing for life after the military. Named Chief of Staff of the Maine Army National Guard in 2002, he was responsible for over 2800 personnel and a $4 million budget. Thinking at the time that he had risen as high as he was going to in his career, Carmichael reflected "As a young officer I had envisioned that making full bird Colonel would be a nice capstone to my career. At that point I was very happy with my career and was ready to move in a new direction, but the opportunity to serve again presented itself and I look forward to the challenge."

Already thinking about the future, Colonel Carmichael sees readiness and strength retention as the two biggest challenges facing the National Guard in the next several years. "The transition from Guardsmen to active duty mobilized soldier is something that will bear close watch. We need to do what we can to keep our soldiers in the Guard. We need to work more closely with their employers and find creative ways to use all our leadership to improve and maintain strength."

For Colonel Carmichael "retirement" will have to wait just a bit longer as he prepares to tackle Guard issues for the new millennia with the same enthusiasm he had at Alumni Field in Orono a quarter of a century earlier.

Father/Son Reunite

By: Aimee Dolloff, News Staff

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HUDSON - Thousands of miles away, Kuwait is not the first place one would think of holding a family reunion. But that's just what happened when American soldiers George and Ben Allen found out that they both would be in Kuwait.

"Just call your father as soon as you get in and we'll hopefully see what can happen," Lisa Allen told her son Ben on the phone before his arrival overseas.

The father and son and were able to arrange a four-hour visit this past weekend after Ben's unit landed in Kuwait for a brief stay before heading to Iraq today. George Allen, 42, is a Black Hawk helicopter pilot with the 112th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) of Bangor. His 20-year-old son, Ben Allen, is a member of the 152nd field artillery unit but has been retrained as military police.

Ben Allen completed boot camp last July, while his father reached 20 years of military service at about the same time. George Allen was able to come home for almost two weeks at Christmas, and is scheduled to head back to the States next month. He should be in Maine by mid-April after being overseas for nearly a year, his wife said.

Initially, Ben wanted to join the same unit as his father, Lisa Allen said. When there wasn't an opening with the 112th, he chose another route. "He just wanted to go," Lisa Allen said.

When she first heard that both her husband and son would be on the front lines, Lisa Allen said, her heart sank. Fortunately, she said, she hasn't been alone. "I've had some good support," Lisa Allen said of her family. The Allens also have two daughters, Jessie, 21, and Kari, 18. Neither woman has any desire to join their father and brother in the military ranks, their mother said.

With loved ones overseas, Lisa Allen said she tends to listen to the news a little more closely and finds that people are often putting newspaper articles in front of her detailing the most recent Iraqi-conflict headlines. Thoughts of her husband and son are always on her mind, but Lisa Allen said that she tries to keep up a normal routine. "[We're] taking it one day at a time," she said. "That's pretty much all we can do." The family waits for phone calls, letters and e-mails and sends care packages with goodies and snacks when possible.

"It's always on my mind, but [I] just keep busy and work and hang around family and friends," Lisa Allen said. When she spoke with her husband on the phone, Lisa Allen asked whether such a reunion of father and son were likely to occur again. George Allen wasn't hopeful, and his answer was honest. "It's too hard to say goodbye again," he said.

Ben and his father George Allen, meet in Kuwait. (photo provided by the Allen Family)

Training with the Old Guard

By: MSG Angela Blevins, PA

Imagine being able to visit Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. for training. In September 2003, five members of the Maine State Select Honor Guard traveled to Fort Myers, Virginia to train with the elite 3rd United States Infantry (The Old Guard). They studied and practiced Drill & Ceremony, 21-gun salutes, casket protocol and folding and posting the colors (the American flag).

The five Maine soldiers spent three days training in various Honor Guard functions. On their first two days in the Nation's Capital they met and trained with the Continental Color Platoon. This special group of soldiers travel back to the days of the Continental Army by wearing the long red coat uniform, complete with white socks, long white hair and training with period colors. Time was also spent with the casket team who trained the Mainers on the proper way to carry caskets and fold colors for funeral details.

Left to right: SGT Hal Maker, SSG Micheal Buhelt, SFC Trevor Bennett, SGT Matthew Shannon, and SSG Christian Behr of the Maine State Select Honor Guard practice flag folding for a funeral detail.

The last two days of training were spent on the firing line, expending many blank rounds, perfecting the task of firing and presenting arms. As a reward for their hard training and practicing efforts they were able to attend the "Changing of the Guard" ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

Just like a member of the Maine State Select Honor Guard, Old Guard members have to apply and demonstrate proficiency to become a member. An active duty soldier who applies to the Old Guard must undergo rigorous training and meet strict standards to become a member. Additionally they must have a Military Occupational Skill (MOS) of 11B (infantry), meet the minimum height requirement of 5'6" and will be assigned to nation's Capital, upon acceptance.

These soldiers will participate in parades, funerals and dignitary functions every day. If a soldier is assigned to a "Casket Platoon" they serve as a pallbearer in the six-soldier casket team, performing the same function at every funeral. "This same soldier is extremely proficient in what they do. Unlike our unit which consists of 20 members, we are detailed to a little of everything. One day you could be carrying the colors and the next event you could be in charge of a firing detail," said Behr.

An Honor Guard soldier guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Arlington.

You can recognize the members of the Maine State Select Honor Guard by an Honor Guard tab worn on their left shoulder. They were chosen because of their high personal military standard and willingness to give of their personal time for patriotic events.

If you are wondering about joining this team, at a minimum you must be an enlisted soldier in the Maine Army National Guard, meet the height and weight standard, not be flagged and be available for functions on Memorial and Veteran's Days. If you meet these requirements you must attend 3 Honor Guard meetings and after the fourth you will be boarded. Additional duties include assisting with military funerals, parades and various postings. Behr said "I volunteer because I want to be a part of this professional group of soldiers and always present an unforgettable appearance." For more information contact SSG Christian Behr at Christian.Behr@me.ngb.army.mil or ask a soldier wearing the Honor Guard tab.

From the State Command Sergeant Major

After 31 years of honorable service CSM Mark Collins has decided to retire from the Maine Army National Guard. Please join me in giving him sincere thanks for his outstanding contribution to the Maine Guard. And congratulations on a well deserved retirement.

As the newly appointed State Command Sergeant Major, I look forward to serving the soldiers of the Maine Army National Guard. You will hear me talk about coaching, counseling and mentoring young soldiers to success often, as I believe that is the most important thing we do as leaders. And I also use the term "Leader Engagement" versus "Leader Involvement", because it implies action rather than passively managing. I expect all NCOs to be fully engaged in "taking care of soldiers. I have seven key expectations for NCOs within the Command and they are:

1. Know your soldiers and their character. Really know their talents, abilities, strengths and weaknesses.

2. Maintain 100% accountability of your soldiers during all training events.

3. Be responsible for your soldiers' training and education.

4. Be responsible for your soldiers' appearance and demeanor.

5. Be responsible for the maintenance, accountability and security of your section's equipment.

6. Enforce standards by your own appearance, attitude and ability.

7. Coach, counsel and mentor your subordinates to success.

Perhaps the most critical of these expectations is for NCOs to coach, counsel and mentor your subordinates to success. NCOs need to develop excellent communication skills and master the art of developmental counseling (Appendix C of FM 22-100).

Given the current environment that we're in (Deployments and OPTEMPO) our strength remains a priority for the command. Challenge your soldiers to bring in leads and establish internal incentives for those who produce. We need to think "outside the box" to maintain our strength. Be innovative!!

CSM Gregory R. Small

Last, but not least, I just want to pass on to everyone just how proud I am of this organization. We have soldiers deployed all over the world and without exception they are all performing very well. That just validates that we have outstanding leadership and great training. Keep up the good work and let's continue to build on our successes!!

Looking to the Maine Army National Guard Soldier

NCO & Soldier of the Year 2004

By: SFC Paul Pratt

SFC Paul Pratt
Recruiting Command
Maine Army National Guard's
2004 NCO of the Year
& Regional NCO of the Year

I've enjoyed the challenge of preparing for the selection boards and excited to represent the State of Maine and 1st Army North for the Army National Guard in the coming 1st Army competition at the end of July. I've also met some terrific soldiers and NCOs along the way who studied and worked hard to prepare. As the nominee for 1st Army North, I also get some great perks, especially the week long trip to Washington D.C. with my wife Debra. We are both looking forward to touring the nation's capital, meeting LTG Blum, and the other regional NCOs, Soldiers, and Airmen winners.

I see the NCO/Soldier of the Year competitions as an opportunity to develop soldiers personally and professionally. On the one hand the soldier must be organized, disciplined, and focused. These are valuable skills for a soldier to have for accomplishing missions. On the other hand, during the course of studying and preparing for the various levels, I've learned a number of things in a wide range of subject areas. Many subjects I haven't dealt with in a number of years or not at all in my current or past duty positions. Competitors also get to meet very sharp soldiers and NCOs and the opportunity to learn from each other.

There was one NCO at the 1st Army North Regional board who deployed three days after the competition. I'm ever mindful that many of the finest NCOs and soldiers of the MEARNG and the Guard are serving overseas right now. I am fortunate and feel honored to represent them as the competition continues to the next level.

SPC Jacob Pierce
Civil Support Team
Maine Army National Guard's
2004 Soldierof the Year

Leading Soldiers

SSG Daniel Howes accepted an award for outstanding adherance of environmental compliances on behalf of the Organizational Maintenance Shop #1 (OMS) The Portland facility was deemed the most compliant of all facilities inspected during an internal assessment. Some of the criteria for this award was demonstrating proper storage of materials and being able to locate all environmental documentation in their files.

In February 2004 SSG Bruce Roscoe was awarded the Gold Distinguished Pistol Badge and the Silver Excellence in Competition Badge at the National Guard Marksmanship Championships. Roscoe is only the second soldier from the Maine Army National Guard to earn a Double Distinguished (pistol and rifle) badge. These awards are the highest given in the United States military for marksmanship. (Chief Warrant Officer 4 Ed Stanhope was the first to earn the Double Distinguished in Rifle and Pistol).

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