

GEORGIA GUARDSMAN

★ ★ SERVING THE NATIONAL GUARD AND STATE DEFENSE FORCE OF GEORGIA ★ ★

WELCOME HOME
48th Brigade returns from Afghanistan



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Regarding the dismissal of temporary technicians

*Maj. Gen. William T. Nesbitt
The Adjutant General of Georgia*

I wanted to take some time to make clear the situation regarding the dismissal of a large number of temporary technicians within the Georgia National Guard. As you may already know, there are several classifications of employment within the Guard – to include both AGR and technician positions. What you may not know is that the National Guard Bureau now requires us to cut 268 temporary technicians from our payroll.

While this is not the first time we have had to restructure our workforce, I cannot recall an instance where this many people have been affected all at once. Certainly, today's tough economy makes circumstances much more challenging for those being laid off. It is because of the severe nature of these layoffs that I feel the need to provide some context.

In years past, the NGB has relied on Georgia to help make end-strength. Because other states were unable to fully execute their technician operations, Georgia was able to compensate by hiring additional temporary technicians. However, this approach is no longer an option because the NGB appropriation budget has been severely cut, redirecting funds to cover other crucial budget shortfalls.

Every state has been ordered to come within the NGB-authorized total number of technicians. These cuts are taking place nationwide, not just in Georgia.

The Georgia National Guard currently employs approximately 1,000 temporary technicians; but now we must cut one third of them from our employment. However, we are exploring every option with NGB for additional funding so as to reduce the number of cuts we will have to make.

While temporary technicians assume their roles knowing full well that their employment is tentative, I understand how hard these changes will hit these technicians and their families. That is why, when NGB wanted to start cutting temp tech positions by the end of December, we negotiated for everyone to get cut at the same time – 13 March – so that some people would not be unfairly laid off before others.

In addition to our efforts to delay the terminations, Col. Jay Peno's human resources department has been working diligently with the Department of Labor to set up job fairs, job loss counseling sessions, and appointments with career centers for those who are getting laid off.

We want to provide our people with the best possible opportunities for future success, whether or not their employment continues with the Guard. In fact, if you know someone who will be affected by these layoffs, please encourage them with a kind word to help them through these rough times.

Note that no one was cut due to performance. These layoffs are entirely due to the National Guard's funding situation.

We appreciate everyone's hard work and service, but these budget cuts simply could not be avoided. I look forward to the resolution of the current fiscal crisis, but – in the meantime – we will continue fighting for the interests of our employees.



Tifton unit mobilizes for Iraq deployment

Georgia Department of Defense
Public Affairs Office

FORT GILLEM, Ellenwood, Feb. 8, 2009 – More than 100 family members, friends and fellow Guardsmen said goodbye to the more than 90 Soldiers of Tifton’s 110th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion during a ceremony at Neil Fitness center. A short time later, the unit boarded buses waiting to take them to Fort Bliss, Texas, where they will prepare for their yearlong deployment to Iraq.

After spending a month at Bliss getting “spun-up” on the unit’s primary mission – upgrading and repairing the equipment destined for return stateside as



The 110th CSB formed up for the deployment ceremony.

part of the drawdown of forces from Iraq– the 110th will move to Camp Adder at Tallil Air Base. Tallil is about 192 miles Southeast of Baghdad and adjacent to famous archeological sites at Ur.

While there, the unit will act as higher headquarters for active, Guard and Reserve units, explained Command Sgt. Maj. Ed Andrews, the battalion’s senior enlisted leader. Andrews is also the full-time shop foreman for the Georgia Army Guard’s Field Maintenance Shop No. 4 in Winder.

“We’ve already validated most of our basic Soldier skills at home station,” Andrews said. “The rest, we’ll take care of for the month we’re at Fort Bliss.

“Our people are confident, capable and ready to do whatever is asked of them,” he added. “They’ll do the unit, themselves, Georgia and their families proud.”

For unit members like Sgt. 1st Class Randy Hobbs of Thomaston, “it’s not their first rodeo.” Hobbs, who

is a full-time quality assurance inspector for the Army Guard’s FMS No. 1 in Atlanta, will oversee the “maintenance side of things.”

As an active duty Soldier, Hobbs deployed with the 10th Mountain Division during the first Gulf War. As a Guardsman with Jackson’s former 166th Maintenance Company, he defended the main gates of Fort Gillem and Fort McPherson as part of the homeland security mission, Operation Noble Eagle.

“I’ve been doing this a long time,” he said while holding on to his wife, Julie. This is her first deployment. “It’s the thing we do as Soldiers,” he added.

“What’s hard is the letting go,” Juile said, clinging to him ever-tighter. “I know he’s got to go, that what he’s doing is important, but it’s still hard having him there and not here with me.”

Captain Shauna Evans, the unit’s intelligence officer, is one of the first-timers. A marketing manager for Clear Water, Florida’s, Tech Data Systems, Evans drives five hours, one way, from Tampa to Tifton for drill each month.

“If you’re like me, and you love what you do, it’s worth the drive. But I also know I’m going home when drill’s over and see my family [Isabella, 11, Devin, 2, and husband Ben, himself a former Army staff sergeant],” Evans said.

She leaned over, kissed Devin’s face and added, “This time, it’s gonna be a year before I hold them again. I love being a Soldier, but I guess I’m also a typical mother, who’s torn between doing the job and being at home with her family.”



Families and friends applaud the 110th CSB.

Air Guard's Shannon Promoted General

Story by Lt. Col. (Ret.) Kenneth Baldowski
Georgia Department of Defense
Public Affairs Office

Air National Guardsman Col. Robert L. "Bobby" Shannon was recently promoted to the rank of Brigadier General in the Georgia Air National Guard. Shannon is the Vice Commander/Chief of Staff for the 2,900-member Georgia Air National Guard. He reports directly to Maj. Gen. Scott A. Hammond, Commander of the Georgia Air National Guard.

Shannon's promotion to Brigadier General makes him the first African-American general officer in the sixty-three-year history of the Georgia Air National Guard.

Shannon assists the Air Guard Commander in providing oversight and supervision of the Headquarters Georgia Air National Guard staff. He also assists in the command of 2,900 Georgia Air Guard members who serve in two flying wings, six geographically separated units, and a Combat Readiness Training Center. Additionally, he oversees the Air Guard's strategic planning and initiatives. He previously served as the Director of the Joint Staff for Joint Forces Headquarters-Georgia.

Commissioned through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Program in 1981, Shannon served on active duty for approximately seven years before transferring to the Georgia Air National Guard.

Shannon is a Master Air Battle Manager. He has participated in numerous deployments while on active duty and in the Georgia Air National Guard – to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain, Italy, England, Iceland, Canada, Japan, The Philippines, Dominican Republic, Turks and Caicos, Denmark, Norway, Germany and Scotland.

An attorney, Shannon is a senior partner with Hall, Booth, Smith, and Slover, P.C., Atlanta. He received his bachelor's degree in political science from Valdosta State University, his master's degree in consumer studies from Oklahoma State University, his associate of art degree in business and business administration from Rose State College in Oklahoma, and his juris doctorate at the University of Georgia. Shannon completed Squadron Officers School, Air Command and Staff College and the Air War College and recently completed the Joint Task Force Commanders Course.

He has amassed more than 2,300 flying hours as a master battle planner in the E-3 AWACS, Airborne Warning and Control System.

Shannon is also highly decorated, holding a Meritorious Service Medal with two Devices, Air Medal with two Devices, Air Force Commendation Medal and Air Force Achievement Medal with devices, the Joint Meritorious Unit Award and the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award – to name a few.

He was the Acting Chief of Staff, Headquarters Georgia Air National Guard from August 2007 through November 2007, before he was appointed as Director, Joint Staff, Joint Forces Headquarters in November 2007. In February 2009, Shannon was appointed Vice Commander of the Georgia Air National Guard.



WWW.GADOD.NET

Mission: To celebrate and support the soldiers and families of the Georgia National guard. To provide today's National Guard members with information about Georgia's Guardsmen.

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Adjutant General Of Georgia:

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Updated news and information on the Georgia DoD can be viewed at www.gadod.net

Every Soldier, every Airman MUST receive H1N1 shot

Georgia Department of Defense
Public Affairs Office

JOINT FORCES HEADQUARTERS, Ellenwood, Feb. 8, 2010 – Gen McKinley, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, through the Army Surgeon’s Office, has mandated that all Army and Air Guardsmen nationwide must receive the H1N1 Novel Influenza shot by the end of April, 2010.

Today, the Georgia Army National Guard kicked off its annual H1N1 and Seasonal Influenza vaccination mission, aptly named “Shots Across Georgia.” This operation will meet the NGB policy mandate and simultaneously provide Soldiers and Airmen with other routine vaccinations such as Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Tetanus Diphtheria-Adult Pertussis (TDAP).

Among the first to get their shots were Brig. Gen. Maria Britt, Georgia Army Guard Commander, and Army Guard Command Sgt. Maj. James Nelson.

“We wanted to step up and show everyone that there’s nothing to fear in getting the H1N1 shot, or being vaccinated in general,” Britt said. “As General McKinley said, the health of our Soldiers and Airmen is important to our readiness as a military organization.

“That means we all need to step up and do what’s required, even if we’d rather not,” she added.

“H1N1 poses a threat to the health and readiness of our forces,” Gen. Craig J. McKinley said in a recent memorandum to the Adjutant Generals of all 50 states and territories. “Successful mitigation and prevention is dependent upon vaccination...even members who have a history of H1N1 influenza should receive the vaccine.”

He went on to say that he appreciates the 100% compliance of each state’s senior leaders, as well as their support of National Guard Bureau efforts to maintain “the wellness and mission capability of our service members.”

At one time, there was concern that there might not be enough H1N1 vaccine available for every Guardsman in the country. However, General McKinley’s memorandum states that there is enough to inoculate all uniformed National Guard members.

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According McKinley any Soldier or Airman who has yet to receive any flu shot required for individual readiness must get that shot in order to perform his or her duties in a Title 32 or Title 10 status. Anyone who does not have their flu shots, to include the H1N1, by April 30 “is to be handled by the state in the same manner as having not complied with any other mandated vaccine,” said McKinley.

Should a Guardsman refuse to take the mandatory vaccination – H1N1 or otherwise – that Soldier or Airman’s commander has the authority to take appropriate action According to Chapter 2, Paragraph 2-10, of Army Regulation 40-562, which states:

“The Commander must counsel the individual and recommend approval or denial of the exemption request, by endorsement. The Commander must counsel that noncompliance with immunization requirements may adversely impact deployability, assignment, or international travel, and that the exemption may be revoked under imminent risk conditions.”

Additionally, any Commander making such a recommendation is encouraged to consider the potential impact on the individual, the unit and the mission. Colonel John Mullins, Joint State Surgeon, added that a commander can allow his Soldier or Airman to talk with a healthcare provider to alleviate any individual fears the Soldier may have.

“But in the end, after the Soldier or Airmen has been counseled, the commander can order that person to get the necessary vaccination,” Mullins added. “If the Guardsman continues to refuse, he or she can then be charged under the Uniform Code of Military Justice for disobeying a direct order.”

Of course, compliance with the order to get vaccinated is facilitated by the fact that the seasonal flu vaccine has up to a 90-percent success rate among healthy populations, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Britt concluded, “We expect soldiers to get vaccinated – not just because they’re being ordered to – but because it’s the smart thing to do for themselves and their unit.”



Brig. Gen. Maria Britt and Command Sgt. Maj. James Nelson receive the H1N1 vaccine.

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Savannah's 118th Field Artillery returns from Afghanistan

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Roy Henry
Georgia Department of Defense
Public Affairs Office

HUNTER ARMY AIRFIELD, Savannah, Ga., Feb. 23, 2009 – Stepping off a chartered airliner early this morning, more than 100 members of Springfield's Battery A, 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery, began the last leg of their yearlong deployment to Afghanistan.



Soldiers bear flags on their return home.

“You have no idea how great it is to be home,” said Sgt. David Clark of Offerman. “Unless you’ve been there and back, you just don’t realize how good it is to be back on Georgia soil.”

This was the first group of Citizen-Soldiers redeploying to Georgia in the next two months. Arrival times for other returning flights, and dates for upcoming welcome home ceremonies are expected soon, but remain somewhat up in the air.

The Soldiers of Battery A are among the more than 2,000 members of Macon's 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team who left in June of last year to support Operation Enduring Freedom. Their mission was to train and mentor the Afghan Army and National Security Force so the Afghans can fully take on the role of protecting that war-torn country's citizens.

“I don’t know that I can ever fully express how proud I am of these guys,” said the unit's commander, Capt. Patrick Grover of Savannah. “From the lowest to the highest rank, they carried out every task and mission asked of them and continually made me and the Georgia Army Guard look good in the eyes of everyone they dealt with.”

After turning in weapons and other sensitive equipment at the terminal, the Guardsmen boarded buses waiting for them outside the airfield's main terminal

and headed for Fort Stewart. Marching onto the post's Cottrell Parade Field with Grove leading it, Battery A received a resounding welcome home from more than 200 family members, friends, fellow Soldiers and dignitaries such as Brig. Gen. Maria Britt, Georgia Army Guard commander.

Stepping to the microphone, Britt welcomed the unit back, and then told its members how proud she and Maj. Gen. Terry Nesbitt, Georgia's Adjutant General, are of them.

“When we stop and think of how being born free is ‘really an accident,’ we realize that our staying free is paid for by our veterans, veterans such as yourselves,” Britt told the Soldiers standing in formation before her.

“And just as we will always remember the eight who lost their lives during this deployment, we’re also grateful to have all of you back safely with us,” she added.

Britt then turned her remarks toward the families who crowded the grandstand behind her.

“You sacrificed as much as our Soldiers did, and yet you stepped up time and again to let them know you are always there for them in these challenging times,” she said. “That love and support is so greatly appreciated and we ask, yes we know, that you keep it coming.”

In no short order after Britt finished her remarks,



A Georgia Guardsman sits with his loved ones after returning from a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan. (Photo By Sgt. Jerry DeAvila, 124th MPAD)

the crowd rushed the formation, each family finding its Soldier, then hugging and holding on tight as if afraid



Stepping off of their airplane, Soldiers from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery return home after spending a year supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. (Photo By Sgt. Jerry DeAvila 124th MPAD)

that the homecoming would be short-lived.

That's the way it seemed to Rashedah Barringer of Columbus and her little girl Morgan, age 3. Frantically searching the formation, mother and daughter found what they were looking for among the sea of Army Combat Uniforms.

Running to her father, Morgan jumped up into Sgt. Joseph Barringer's arms, and hugged him with an intensity he had never known. Holding his little girl with one arm and holding his wife with the other, Joseph Barringer seemed to cringe, just a little.

"I really don't know what to say at this moment," the one-time business major from Columbus Technical College said. He'll be returning there to finish his degree once he's back home. "I'm excited and overwhelmed with the fact that I'm finally home. I just

don't know what to say."

For little Morgan it's about having her father home and finally having him buy her the "princess dress" he promised her before he left.

"I'm going to be so pretty because daddy promised me he'd buy my princess dress and some shoes," she said, clinging to Joseph's neck.

Units from the 48th Brigade will be arriving through April. For all the latest photos, videos and stories visit www.gadod.net/48th

And for up-to-the-hour news updates and coverage in the media, visit www.facebook.com/GeorgiaGuard



Sergeant Joseph Barringer (center) holds his daughter Morgan, age 3, and wife Rasheed after the ceremony welcoming the Georgia Army Guardsman and his unit, Springfield's Battery A, 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery, returns home after spending a year supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. (Georgia National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Roy Henry)

Georgia National Guardsmen open radio stations to give people of Afghanistan their own voice

Story by Sgt. Tracy J. Smith
Georgia Department of Defense
48th Brigade Public Affairs

SHINWAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan, Feb. 3, 2010— In a perfect world, accurate information would be as close as a radio. For a country at war, accurate information is invaluable.

Soldiers of 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment, have opened two radio stations in the Muhmand Dara and Shinwar provinces to give the people of those regions a voice to counter Taliban propaganda. Popularly known as the “Radio in a Box,” this new media program is an initiative of the International Security Assistance Force counterinsurgency process, and it will belong entirely to the Afghan people.

“It will not be a facilitator of military or security mandates,” Afghan Border Police, 6th Kandak commander, Colonel Niazy said. He punctuated the importance of the mission by stressing how the station’s messaging will embrace the needs of the community. “It will be a powerful tool to give our people a voice – a resource. Our mullahs, district government leaders, or our local shop keepers and villagers will have full access and know that they can come to us in a crisis for honest information.”

The Kandak headquarters is a temporary location for the Shinwar radio station. It was also once the site for Radio Spin Ghar, part of a 2005 independent media opportunity project called Support for Independent Radio Stations in Afghanistan, which was co-sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Both stations are fully funded by the coalition with Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) partners offering security, and they employ full-time local Afghan station managers and on-air personalities.

“The Gate” (102.1 FM) began airing full-time Jan.

17 at Forward Operation Base Torkham in Muhmand Dara province near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

The Shinwar station (95 FM) celebrated its debut Jan. 21 during the anti-Taliban Shinwari Pact jirga. This gathering of about 170 tribal representatives, the first of its kind, was organized by the 6th Kandak ABP and prominent tribal leaders. It was held, while embracing the strictest traditions of the six district Shinwari tribal councils, to denounce Taliban tyranny and passive governance. The radio station gave prominent Afghan leaders and security forces a new media

platform to announce their solidarity during the station’s first broadcast.

“It brings us together as one community,” Malik Usman said of the opening and the reading of the council’s decision to stand with their uniformed brothers in arms. “We can share information with the people immediately when a crisis is identified and ensure their safety.”

Council elders received gifts of hand-held radios at the conclusion of the jirga. The same radios will also be distributed by ANSF and coalition forces during patrols to outlying villages.

Niazy welcomes the new media as an extension

of service to the people and says programming will be created by locals with call-in segments and unique on-air radio talk shows that will engage government and village officials.

“The station will have a strict traditional format, from the reading of mourners’ names, to jirga results and the distribution of public service information,” Niazy said. “They will celebrate with music programs, but we can reinforce their personal security with information.”



Staff Sgt. Scott F. McElroy, [headphones], of Canton, Ga. and Sgt. Angelo O. Bravo of Jasper, Ga., both 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Mountain Warrior communications non-commissioned officers, finalize the setup of the Radio in a Box [RIAB] broadcast stations at the Afghan Border Police 6th Kandak headquarters in Shinwar district. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tracy J. Smith, 48th IBCT Public Affairs)

GeorgiaGuard engages social media

Story by Seth G. Stuck
Georgia Department of Defense
Public Affairs Office

A recent web poll conducted by the U.S. Department of Defense asked users which social media sites they used most often. While web polls aren't exactly considered "scientific," the results of the web poll were telling.

Almost 85 percent of respondents said that they used Facebook frequently. By contrast, only about 79.5 percent of respondents said that they used e-mail frequently.

Well aware of this popular shift in news consumption, the Georgia Department of Defense Public Affairs Office has ventured into the rapidly evolving world of social media – providing Georgia National Guard members, families and friends with a wide array of online engagement.

The Georgia National Guard Facebook fan page provides a live stream of news coverage, images and videos about the organization. The Flickr page offers an image library, while videos are published to

the YouTube profile. And, for those who frequent the Twitterverse, the Georgia Guard has a microblogging presence on Twitter as well.

All of these social media are integrated with the organization's primary website – www.gadod.net – making the website a comprehensive source for all GaDOD news.

You can find the Georgia National Guard social media sites here:

Facebook: [facebook.com/GeorgiaGuard](https://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaGuard)

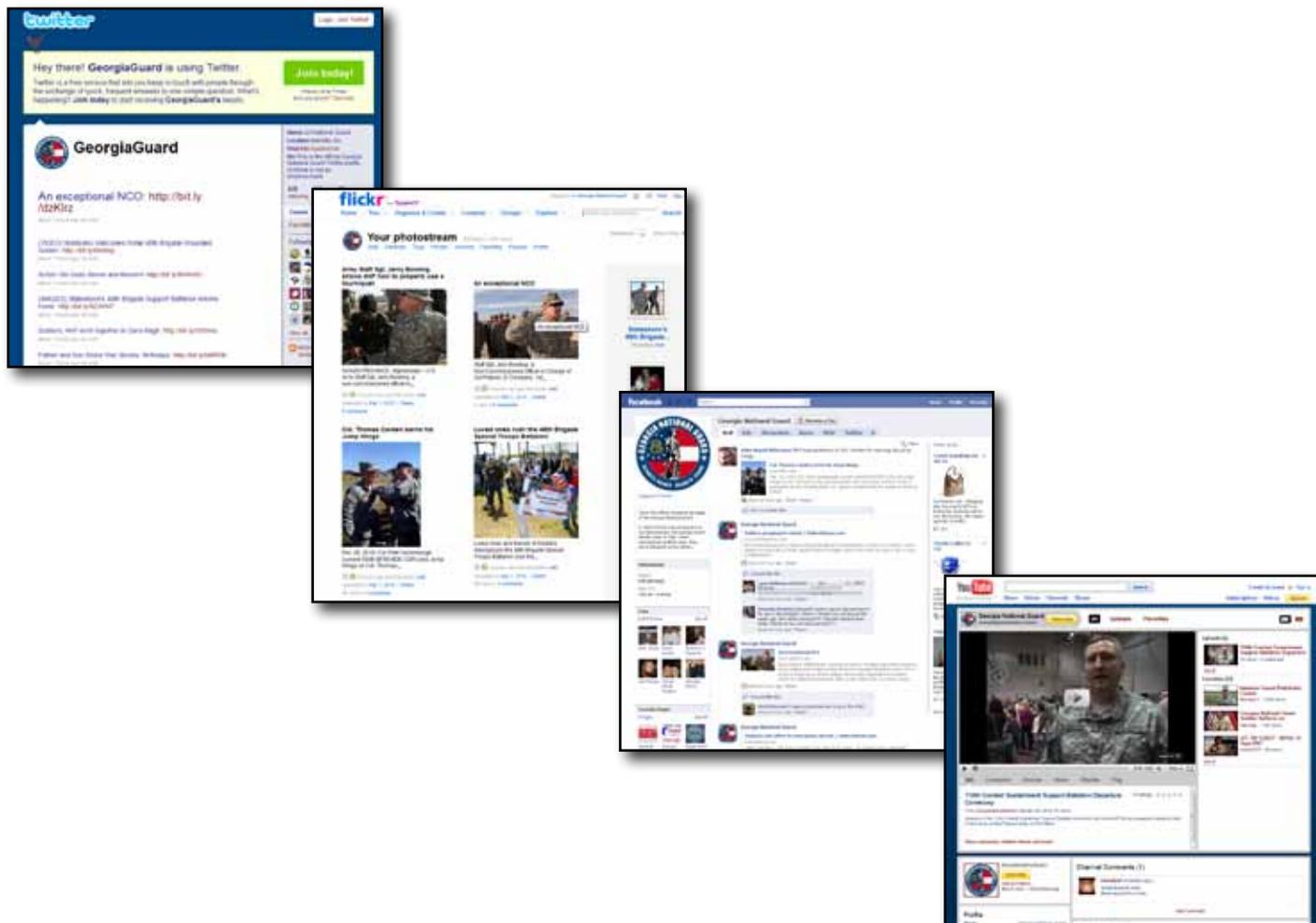
Flickr: [flickr.com/photos/GaNatlGuard](https://www.flickr.com/photos/GaNatlGuard)

Twitter: twitter.com/GeorgiaGuard

YouTube: [youtube.com/GeorgiaNationalGuard](https://www.youtube.com/GeorgiaNationalGuard)

Nearly 900 Georgians across the state are already "fans" of the Georgia Guard Facebook fan page, which serves as an all-inclusive, up-to-the-minute source for GaDOD news coverage.

So next time you're on the web, surf by and see what's new.



TAG hosts first-ever Georgia Commanders Summit

Story by Seth G. Stuck
Georgia Department of Defense Public Affairs Office

DOBBINS AIR RESEVE BASE, Marietta, Jan. 26, 2010 – Major Gen. Terry Nesbitt, Georgia's Adjutant General, called together commanding officers from every military and defense installation in the state today for the first ever Commanders Summit. The event was held at the Georgia Air National Guard Headquarters.

This gathering is the first of several this year aimed at strengthening each organization's ability to prepare and support state and emergency operations through unprecedented collaboration, information sharing and effort coordination.

"By gathering all of Georgia's commanders in one place," Nesbitt said, "we hope to streamline discussion, clear-up the lines of communication and better define the chain-of-command within the state relative to certain emergencies." He added, "We all want the same thing: for our local, state and regional citizens to be supported in the best way possible. These summits will allow us to facilitate one another's efforts and, hopefully, prevent us from stepping on each other's toes."

Attending this first summit were the commanders of Coast Guard Air Station Savannah, Dobbins ARB, Fort Gillem, Fort Gordon, Fort McPherson, Hunter Army Airfield, Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base, Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany, Moody Air Force Base, Naval Supply Corps School and Naval Supply Activity Athens, and Robbins Air Force Base. Emergency preparedness liaison officers for the Air Force, Army and Navy were also present, as were the directors of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and Georgia Military Affairs Coordinating Committee (GMACC). Unable to attend the summit were the commanding officers from Fort Stewart and Fort Benning.

Representing the Georgia National Guard were Nesbitt; Brig. Gen. Maria Britt, Georgia Army Guard commander; Maj. General Scott Hammond, Georgia Air Guard commander; Col. Joe Ferrero, Georgia Air Guard director of staff; Brig. Gen. Jerry Bradford, Georgia State Defense Force commander; and Brig. Gen. Timothy Britt, director of the Joint Staff.

FAA Administrator to License first aviation Cadets from Georgia's Youth Challenge Acaemy

Bruce Dean Oaster
Chairman and CEO
On Wings of Eagles Foundation, Inc.

FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt personally presented Private Pilot certificates with Instrument Ratings to the first two cadets from the On Wings of Eagles Foundation flight academy (OWOEF) as part of the National Guard Youth Challenge Foundation's conference in Washington on February 23, 2010.

OWOEF is working in partnership with the National Guard Youth Challenge program, and it offers scholarships for flight training to selected graduates of the Youth Challenge program for at-risk youth.

Georgia YCA cadets Clarence Wesley Jones and Ryan Armenta graduated with honors from the Ft. Gordon YCA campus in 2009. Formerly high school dropouts, these two cadets completed their high school education and excelled at character training and mentoring – two key components of the Youth Challenge program.

These young men were the first cadets selected for full scholarships to flight training, and they have been flying at Trans-Pac Aviation Academy at Deer Valley Airport in Phoenix, Arizona, since August. Upon completion of their Commercial and Flight Instructor certificates, these trained pilots will become flight instructors for the next class of OWOEF cadets, set to arrive in the summer of 2010.

On Wings of Eagles Foundation provides at-risk youth with scholarships for aviation training and provides mentors for character development, in order to create productive citizens for America's future, provide competent workers for aviation industries and influence life pathways toward moral and spiritual excellence.



National
Guard Youth
ChalleNGe
Program

Army/Air Basketball Match to again help military families

Story by Lt. Col. (Ret.) Kenneth Baldowski
Georgia Department of Defense
Public Affairs Office

It's an inter-service grudge match of significant proportions. Service reputations are at stake. An ignominious defeat at the hands of the Army Guard last year hangs heavy on the Air Guard, who contend that revenge will be sweet. Saturday, March 13th at 7:00 p.m. at Philips Arena, the second annual Army/Air basketball matchup will take place with proceeds from ticket sales going to the Georgia National Guard Family Support Foundation.



The Saturday evening matchup follows the NBA game between the Atlanta Hawks and the Detroit Pistons. A ticket to the Hawks game constitutes a ticket to the Army/Air game.

Reports suggest that both teams have now completed their rosters, and practices have already begun for the Army team in Atlanta and the Air team in Warner Robins.

"We have a huge score to settle," said Air Coach Lt. Col. Mike "Pops" Rumsey of the 116th. He says his team is determined to revenge the 66-57 drumming last year by the Army. "We've got some of our same guys from last year, but also a few new jocks that seem anxious to take the play up a notch."

Highlighting the Air Guard team are Tech Sgt. Melvin Boyd, 165SFS, Capt. Billy Carter, 116OSS, Capt. Cyrus Champagne, 202 EIS, Master Sgt. James Gatlin, 202EIS, Larry Green, 116SFS, Senior Master Sgt. Courtland "Court" Holt, 116OSS, Senior A Prentiss Law, 116MXS, Senior Airman James Reesirman, 116SFS, Capt. Mike Roy, 330th CTS, Master Sgt. Clint Smith, HQ, Master Sgt. "Big D" Dewayne Smith; Maj. Eric "EZ" Smith, 330CTS, Maj. Chad Tuttle 128 ACCS, and Master Sgt. Calvin Willis MXG/QA.

Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Thomas Head Coach,

Recruiting & Retention and Sgt. Camilah Gibson Asst. Coach, A CO 221st MI BN return again to coach the Army hoop masters and laugh off the exorbitant claims of Rumsey and their high-flying Airmen. The Army will be returning with its proven squad of players.

"Our guys play almost year-round in leagues around the city," said Thomas. "Honestly, we are unimpressed with the talents and the idle claims being hurled at us by the Air. While we have a few new plays up our sleeves, we'll beat 'em again just by playing good solid basketball."

The Army lineup features Sgt. Brandon Underwood, 781st Troop Command, Staff Sgt. Jason Flores, 230th Brigade Support Company, Recruiting & Retention BN, Staff Sgt. George Hudson, Recruiting & Retention BN, Sgt. Cory Perriman, 170th Military Police Company, Staff Sgt. Domonique Green, 116th Army Band, Staff Sgt. Darryl Basham, HHC 221st MI BN, Sgt. D'Juan Welton, B Troop 3/108th CAV, Maj. John Keriker Veno, and Johnathan Young.

All bravado aside, proceeds of the annual Army/Air basketball game will go to assisting military soldiers and their families during difficult times through the Georgia National Guard Family Support Foundation.

"The Foundation has approved over a million dollars in emergency relief assistance to more than 1,327 families since 2004," said the Foundation's executive director, Harriet Morgan.

In addition to the proceeds from the Army/Air game, the Foundation is one of Georgia's "Check-Off" charities – meaning designated donations to the charity can benefit your state income tax return. The Foundation is an approved charity for the annual Combined Federal Campaign (CFC 70602), and it is the benefactor of the annual Top Gun Motorcycle Ride for Children, the Savannah Memorial Day Festival, and several other fund-raising events that generate individual and corporate donations.

"This game is very important to our efforts to help Soldiers, Airmen and their families during difficult times and raise awareness about the Foundation," says Morgan, who also notes that additional requests for help may be expected from the return of the 48th. "Regardless, it's a great way for the Guard family to get together for a truly fun event!"

Tickets are \$25.00 each and are still available from: Maj. James Clements at (404) 556-8518.

Wounded warriors recognized at Marietta event

Story, photos by Sgt. 1st Class Roy Henry
Georgia Department of Defense
Public Affairs Office

CLAY NATIONAL GUARD CENTER, Marietta, Feb. 11, 2010 – Seven Georgia Army Guardsmen, who were wounded either during operations this year with Macon's 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) in Afghanistan or in Iraq in 2005-2006, were honored as part the city's Hearts for Heroes program.

Hearts for Heroes is a celebration of the role played by the active duty military, Guard and Reserve in North Georgia's development. It's also a fundraiser to support the addition of an aviation wing to the city's history museum. The event was held at the Earl Smith Strand Theater on the downtown square.

"As most everyone knows, the Guard is unique in that it's comprised entirely of Citizen-Soldiers. These are everyday people willing to put their civilian lives on hold to don the uniform of their country's Army, pick up a weapon and defend their communities and their Nation," Maj. Gen. William T. Nesbitt, Georgia's Adjutant General, told an audience of more than 200 people.

"But the effort of these Guardsmen, and all our service members, comes at a price. For the Georgia Army Guard, it's meant the loss of eight of our own last year in Afghanistan and many more wounded, like those you'll meet tonight," Nesbitt said. "It's essential that we always remember and honor their sacrifice."

Organizations like Hearts for Heroes, he added,



Seven Georgia Army Guardsmen who were wounded in Afghanistan and Iraq pose with their wives, daughters, Army Guard Command Sgt. Maj. James Dennis and actor Dennis Haysbert.

have helped send a "clear message to all those who serve: Your sacrifice, your hard work and your dedication are deeply, deeply appreciated."

One by one, the seven mounted the stage, and one by one, they stepped forward as Nesbitt called their names and read aloud how they became Purple Heart recipients.

Of the seven, 1st Lt. Matt Smith, sergeants first class Michael Murphy and Jeffrey Boyles, Cpl. Nathan Watson, and specialists Andrew Sullens and James Creager were among the more than 2,000 Soldiers who deployed to Afghanistan with the 48th Brigade for a year in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Sergeant Sean Long was with the brigade as a Cavalryman during its deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005-2006.



Corporal Nathan Watson receives an award from singer Katie Kasben. Next to him are 1st Lt. Matt Smith and Sgt. Sean Long.

Last May, Sgt. 1st Class Boyles' combat patrol was ambushed in Afghanistan and his vehicle was destroyed by an IED. Boyles suffered burns on the upper half of his body and severe fractures to several parts of his vertebrae. Despite his injuries, Boyles responded to the ambush by helping to establish security and treating other injured Soldiers.

Last September 12, Spc. Creager was shot by a Taliban insider who was disguised as an ANP Soldier. Despite suffering severe wounds to his leg and significant blood loss, James pulled himself up to help his team leader provide life-saving aid to another injured Soldier.

On December 29, 2005, Sgt. Long was driving in a convoy along a highway just outside of Baghdad. When they came across a friendly group of 18-wheelers and humvees, a tragic mistake was made and Sean's vehicle took friendly fire from a .50 caliber machine gun. To save the men in his convoy, Sean slammed on the brakes and, as a result, took .50 caliber rounds in his leg – leaving him with a wound so severe it normally would have warranted amputation. At one point, the doctors had to stop operating on Long because the blood loss was so significant he had

gone into shock.

Last August 17, Sgt. 1st Class Murphy's MRAP was hit by an IED near Nawa, Afghanistan. Murphy suffered a broken back and concussion. He now works as Georgia's Warrior Transition Program Manager, where he tracks and monitors Georgia National Guard Soldiers.

On June 15, 2009, 1st Lt. Smith was leading a patrol in response to recent attacks on their combat post in Afghanistan. His platoon was ambushed with direct fire by a group of insurgents. While providing suppressive fire, Smith was shot under his arm and suffered multiple internal wounds. He has rejoined the 48th Brigade Rear Staff, and he continues to support wounded and injured soldiers as they reintegrate from theater.

Last May 17, Spc. Sullens' truck was hit by an IED in Afghanistan and Sullens, who was the truck's gunner, was thrown 30 feet. He suffered compound fractures to his right leg, multiple pelvic fractures, and shrapnel to his left knee and leg.

On August 17, 2009, Cpl. Watson's combat patrol was ambushed while escorting campaign materials for the Afghanistan elections. He was shot in the left arm, but continued fighting until his blood loss forced him to seek medical attention.

After Nesbitt explained each Soldier's sacrifice and valor, they were honored with a small token of appreciation – a Lillie glass memento – from the Hearts for Heroes program, presented on the organization's

behalf by entertainer Katie Kasben.

The applause and cheers for the seven wounded warriors were deafening as they returned to their front row seats.

Actor Dennis Haysbert – known for his portrayal of Command Sgt. Maj. Jonas Blane on the TV series "The Unit" and for representing All-State Insurance in its commercials – later said he was quite proud to have been part of the evening's events.

"Although I've played a Navy Seal, a Soldier and other members of the military, I have never served, but I can tell you this," Haysbert said, speaking to the seven Guardsmen and to the veterans sitting in the audience, "Your service and your sacrifice is something to be revered.

"What you do, what you have done, is something quite remarkable, and should not ever be forgotten by us, those defend," he

you swore to concluded.



Major Gen. Terry Nesbitt, Georgia's Adjutant General, introduces seven Georgia Army Guardsmen who were wounded while supporting operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom during a program that honored the service of America's military.

Program helps loved ones, Soldiers become close again

Story, photos by Sgt. 1st Class Roy Henry
Georgia Department of Defense
Public Affairs Office

GEORGIA GARRISON TRAINING CENTER, Hinesville, Ga., Feb. 24, 2010 – When the Guardsmen of Georgia’s 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team mobilized for Afghanistan last year, they had the difficult mission of getting to know the Afghans they would be helping while simultaneously dealing with the insurgency.

Now, as more than 2,000 Georgia Citizen-Soldiers begin returning home, they face the challenge of making the transition from a full-time combat force to again being fathers, mothers, sons and daughters, members of their communities and civilian employees.

available to them for getting things back on track,” Casey added.

According to the Yellow Ribbon website, the program is legislatively mandated, federally funded and designed to help National Guardsmen, Airmen, Reservists and their families deal with the stresses that come before, during and especially after deployment. To mitigate the factors that can lead to suicide or divorce, Yellow Ribbon brings about “a more positive coming home experience” for Guardsmen, Reservists and their families, said psychologist Amy Stevens who oversees the program here at the training center.



A family life counselor discusses expectations and reintegration with wives, significant others and parents of Soldiers from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery.

They have to step back, take a long look at themselves and decide how they – and their loved ones – can face the changes in their relationships and make their reintegration a smooth one.

“That’s where the Georgia Guard’s ‘Yellow Ribbon Expectations Training’ comes in,” said Maj. David Casey, the brigade’s rear detachment assistant operations officer. “Any deployment, especially a long one to a combat zone, certainly plays havoc with a relationship.

“Through what’s called ‘resiliency training,’ experts in psychology and family counseling work with family members to help them recognize warning signs in their Soldier, deal with those and know what resources are

Resiliency training, she explained, is broken down into a couple of levels.

“Wives, husbands, significant others and even the parents of returning Soldiers receive the training,” said family life counselor Lance Henson. Henson talks with participants, helping them understand why their expectations – and the expectations of the service member – may not always be the same.

“Before the Soldier deployed, he may have been the disciplinarian, handled the household finances or took care of home improvements and vehicle maintenance,” Henson said. “When that person deployed – whether for the first time or the second, third or fourth time – all that changed, and the spouse or significant other



Children, like five-year-old Darien Smith, are profoundly affected by the long absence of a military parent, like Darien's father, Sgt. Marcus Smith of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 1118th Field Artillery. Resiliency training offers children, ages 2 to 17, the opportunity to learn coping skills.

took over those roles.

“When the Soldier comes home, everyone’s happy because he or she’s safe and the family is no longer apart. But as ‘homecoming’ turns into ‘reunion,’ the process of trying to get things back to some kind of normalcy begins,” Henson explained.

“Family members and the service member either expect things to go back to the way they were before deployment or remain as they’ve been during the Soldier’s absence. When those expectations aren’t met, problems sometimes occur, even in the strongest relationships,” he added.

Henson and his colleagues also help loved ones to understand how their Soldier may have changed during deployment – emotionally and mentally – and how to recognize the signs that might tell them their Guardsman needs more “experienced help” than a family member can provide.

“Children, too, as adaptive as they can be to almost any situation, are just as affected by a parent’s deployment and return as anyone,” Stevens said. Their physical, emotional and mental state, can become a concern.

“Service members miss quite a lot when they deploy,” she explained. “When they left, the baby was only beginning to put words together and crawl. Now that the parent is back, that child is talking plainly and walking without help. Or the daughter they saw as that eternal ‘daddy’s little girl,’ is dating and rebelling against them,” Stevens added, “and now the expectation of what they’d find when they came home has been dashed.”

“That’s why there is age-appropriate training to help families cope with the coming home of someone who’s been out of their lives for a year,” she said.

The Soldiers, themselves, attend a workshop in which they learn about the “stressors” that affect their return and their reintegration with family and personal relationships. They are taught coping tools, skill-building techniques and resources for getting help if necessary.

Married service members, couples and single Soldiers are introduced to “Strong Bonds.” Started in 2006 after the 48th Brigade returned from Iraq, the program – according to Henson, Stevens and the Georgia Army Guard’s 139th Chaplain Detachment – is quite successful at helping participants see each other and their relationships in a new light. Many married couples even end up renewing their vows.

Families and Soldiers of Springfield’s Battery A, 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery, are the first to attend Georgia’s Yellow Ribbon Program and its family resiliency training. Amber Sarro, wife of Spc. Zachary Sarro of Brunswick, and her two children, Caleb (age 4) and Dalton (age 1) took the training. She and Zachary will do Strong Bonds after he returns home.

“He’s changed. I’ve changed. We’ve all changed in some way,” she said. “This is our first deployment and this program is important to us.

“It’s given us, I believe, a better understanding of why we need to go slow in making our house a home again. And it lets us know that we’ve got people and resources out there to help us get there as a family,” Amber added. “Anyone who doesn’t take the training is missing out on quite a lot.”

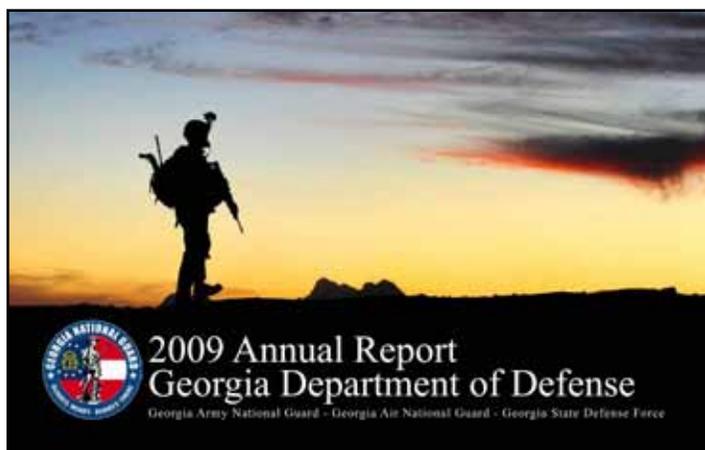
For more information about the Yellow ribbon program on facebook at

facebook.com/pages/Atlanta/Georgia-Yellow-Ribbon



2009 Annual Report

The Public Affairs Office has published the 2009 Georgia Department of Defense Annual Report to the Legislature. It is online and available on the Georgia DOD website at www.gadod.net. Each year, every public agency in Georgia publishes an annual report for the Governor and state legislature. This annual report discusses the GA DOD command organization, identifies Georgia Army and Air Guard units across the state, and recognizes the efforts and accomplishments of the Air and Army National Guard and the Georgia State Defense Force. This year's report also highlights Georgia's Youth Challenge Academy, Counterdrug and DDR program, State Partnership, CERF-P and 4th CST. The report ends with a special tribute to the eight Soldiers of the 48th Brigade who were killed in action while deployed to Afghanistan.



Governor and Maj. Gen. Hammond Examine Lost Heroes Quilt

Governor Sonny Perdue and Maj. Gen. Scott Hammond, Commander, Georgia Air National Guard, view the traveling Lost Heroes Art Quilt which is currently on display at the Georgia State Capitol building. This contemporary art quilt display was designed by Julie Feingold, a soldier's wife, to honor fallen Americans since 9-11 in Iraq and Afghanistan. The display is intended to honor the memory of extraordinary men and women who fought for the nation during these military operations. No political or ideological viewpoint is promoted by the display, only a very personal tribute to these American heroes of our time. The distinctive quilt has traveled throughout the nation since early 2009 and will remain on display in the Georgia State capitol from February 21st through March 2, 2010.

GSDF lends a healing hand to injured Haitians

*Story by Seth G. Stuck
Georgia Department of Defense
Public Affairs Office*

Since the beginning of February, Georgia has received – and provided medical treatment to – dozens of injured Haitians in support of Operation Healing Hands, a program that is helping Haitians recover from the devastating earthquake that demolished their country in January.

The Georgia State Defense Force, Atlanta VA Medical Center, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Georgia Emergency Management Agency, and Dobbins Air Reserve Base have all been actively involved in this operation.

The first five injured Haitians, including an 18-month-old with brain injuries, were airlifted from the USNS Comfort, a Naval hospital ship deployed to Haiti to assist in the massive recovery effort, and transported to Dobbins Air Force Base, Feb. 2. While Florida had been handling the majority of the injured Haitians transported to the U.S., this was the first group directed to Georgia.

The GSDF, specifically, was tasked with supporting the 94th Airlift Wing at DARB with the disembarkation of medical evacuees from Haiti. GSDF troops worked to establish flight lines, ramp controls and offload of injured Haitians.

After the first week of receiving injured evacuees, the GSDF had dedicated a total of 97 troops and nearly 370 man-hours to the cause of helping 34 injured Haitians recuperate.



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