

# The Georgia Guardsman

Vol. 1, Issue 3

*Serving the National Guard and State Defense Force of Georgia*



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The Georgia Guardsman

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# Georgia Soldier named Region 3 Soldier of the Year

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Roy Henry, photo by Spc. Mike Perry

**GREENVILLE, Ky.** – Specialist James Bowels of Atlanta has beaten out competitors from five other states, and one territory, for the title of Region 3 Soldier of the Year.

Bowels, a fire team leader with Lawrenceville's Company A, 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry, went into the four-day competition at the Kentucky Army Guard's Regional Training Institute having been selected Georgia's Soldier of the Year in March.

"Having won at the state level is a great honor," Bowels said shortly after competition ended in March at the Guard Garrison Training Center Command on Fort Stewart. "Representing Georgia at the regional event, will be an even greater moment for me."

An even higher honor is the opportunity to represent Georgia at the Best Warrior national competition in Washington, D.C., later this summer. Whether that happens, though, remains to be seen.

Bowels is one of the more than 1,000 members of 1st Battalion who are deploying with Macon's 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team some time in June to Afghanistan. Right now, he and his unit are at Camp Shelby, Miss., going through mobilization training and getting spun up on their mission to train, and mentor, Afghan soldiers and the National Security Force.

"As much as I would really like to be in D.C. representing my state, I don't know if that's going to be possible," Bowels said before leaving Fort Stewart in March to return to his unit and Camp Shelby. "I hope I can."

Officials at First Battalion say they're doing their best to try to arrange that.



**Specialist James Bowels is the Region 3 Soldier of the Year for 2009. Here he adjusts the sights on his M16 rifle during competition for the title of Soldier of the Year for Georgia in March.**

# “Helping with the heavy lifting”

*An interview with Maj. Gen. Larry Ross*

In March, the National Guard Bureau (NGB) announced that Maj. Gen. Lawrence H. Ross, Georgia Army National Guard, had been selected to serve as director, Manpower and Personnel (J-1), National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C., effective May 1, 2009. The position entails primary responsibility to provide overall human resource strategic planning, integration, analysis, manpower and personnel policy, and oversight for the chief, National Guard Bureau, in order to enhance NGB and Joint Force Headquarters initiatives, personnel readiness, operational capabilities and sustainment of the National Guard community.

Recently, *The Georgia Guardsman* had a chance to talk with Ross about his new assignment and what he foresees as the opportunities and challenges in his new position.

**GG:** *Sir, you will soon assume a significant area of human resources for the National Guard. What will be your duties and responsibilities?*

**Ross:** My main responsibility is to support and provide a kind of cover for the 11 division chiefs I have, and in total, there are 98 personnel, both military and civilian in the J1 section. However the 11 division chiefs are technical experts that really do the heavy lifting. The way I see my job is seeking to understand the issues of the division chiefs, particularly relating to policy and resources, and supporting them with the director of the Joint Staff and the chief of the National Guard Bureau, and with the directors of the Army and Air National Guard, so we can further those particular policies.

One way to look at the structure of the J1 is as two major sections. The first is the policy and resources section, dealing with organization and manpower, personnel readiness, compensation, and the Title 10 program - the technician program, which many folks recognize. Also, we're talking about the Title 5 Department of Defense Civilian program we deal with out of our office for the entire National Guard.

The second piece is what we call affectionately, at J1, the “six-pack.” This is dealing with specific Soldier and family

issues, including functions such as family readiness. We've got a national family readiness conference coming up here in a couple of months that my office will be managing.

The Warrior Support function is assuring that we're taking care of our wounded warriors, both mentally and physically, when they come back from war. The Yellow Ribbon campaign is now a Congressionally mandated program, and has grown tremendously. As the commander of the 78th Troop Command, I was quite amazed to see the difference in the units that deployed, from the beginning of the deployments



until now, and how much better we're able to integrate the soldiers back into their units and back into their families after deployment. The other functions in that “six-pack” are employer support, which having been a traditional Soldier and still am a traditional Soldier for my whole career is very near and dear to my heart. We also have Sexual Assault Prevention and Response in my section and the Psychological Health, better known as Behavioral Health. We really need to take care of our Soldiers and families as they go through the cycles of deployment.

So you can see it's a wide range of topics, ranging from

high-level policy issues, but diving very quickly down into very specific issues that impact every Soldier and every Airmen in the National Guard.

**GG:** *As you take the reins as the director of Manpower and Personnel, what do you see as your immediate goals?*

**Ross:** I've already begun this process, but I've got some more work to do. My immediate goal is to understand the issues. There are so many things swirling around at National Guard Bureau because of the high op (operations) tempo. We're into understanding the main issues, sorting through them, and then determining where I may have some impact on those issues. As I have already told the staff in a meeting last week, “I am here to support you.” I'll be there to support them, because they're the ones doing the heavy lifting. I need to know when they need some help. And as far specific metrics, we've got a lot of specific metrics that I will be delving into as I get into their issues, but that's primarily it... to understand what they're doing and where I can assist.

**GG:** *Can you give us a few examples of what those issues are?*

**Ross:** Oh, sure. Yellow Ribbon integration is a big one. In fact, are we doing what Congress has mandated in the Yellow Ribbon initiative? Do we have the resources necessary to do what we need to do on the Yellow Ribbon reintegration process?

It's the same with family readiness. Are we covering all of our Soldiers and Airmen in the family readiness arena? And not only that, are we helping out with the other Reserve forces, because we're such a ubiquitous force in the Guard. We're everywhere, in all the states and territories. Well, so are our brothers and sisters in the other Reserve units, and we should be helping them, which we are. I was very pleased to see that there is collaboration between the services in things like family readiness. Warrior Support... there are metrics that go along with all that, for example psychological health.

And then, if you move over into the other issues, the policy arenas for the Title 10 program, and for the Title 5 program. We have to keep track of the numbers that we're authorized, and ask the question, “Are we in fact filling those slots?”

And also, how do we get involved at National Guard Bureau with assisting in the filling of slots for full-time personnel? So we have a lots of metrics that go around that. Another one that we'll be developing soon is the Senior Leadership Development program, and the metrics tied to that. So those give a flavor of the type of subjects that we're dealing with. We are very like the Georgia Guard in that if you measure it, then you will make sure that it gets done, so we have lots of metrics that we will be tracking in these and other areas.

**GG:** *Do you have a message for our Soldiers and Airmen?*

**Ross:** I think the biggest thing I would say is, and this is something I think I need to work on with my staff and with those I am going to be working with at the National Guard Bureau, is that we don't ever forget that it's the Soldiers and Airmen that we're there to support.

It's real easy to get caught up in the technicalities of policy, the numbers regarding funding, the quadrennial defense review going on right now — a big deal at the National Guard Bureau. Those are all fine and dandy, but I think we must not forget that it's the individual and those units that we're out there supporting and trying to create that better environment for. If we ever forget that, we're not going to do the best we can for them. Having been at unit level most of my life, I've seen countless examples of sacrifices by our Soldiers and Airmen that they don't get rewarded for. I want to make sure we do the right thing every time we have a chance to impact policy or get resources for a particular program that it's the right one that is going to help those Soldiers, Airmen, families and employers.

I've always said this is a people business; I can really say that officially now that I'm at the Directorate of Manpower and Personnel. It's a people business, and I'm just excited about being in the people business at National Guard Bureau, and working with these very experienced, talented folks that have migrated to those staffs. They have the expertise to help our Soldiers and Airmen.



Soldiers of Newnan's 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry, get ready to rush the door of a simulated insurgent safe house at Camp Shelby, Miss. Second Battalion is one of several 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team elements heading to Afghanistan as part of Task Force Phoenix.

## As real as it gets ...

*48th IBCT prepares for Afghanistan with training at Camp Shelby*

Story and photos by Spc. Mike Perry

**CAMP SHELBY, Miss.** – Units of Macon's 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team are experiencing why Soldiers destined for Iraq and Afghanistan call this mobilization site – considered one of the largest in the nation – “one of the best they’ve ever seen.”

More than 1,200 Soldiers of Georgia's first and second battalions of the 121st Infantry, are at this 136,000-acre facility, making final preparation for their yearlong deployment to Afghanistan.

Members of the 121st Infantry, who comprise the largest share of the more than 2,000 Georgia Guardsmen set to deploy in the next two weeks, are about midway through their monthlong intensive pre-deployment training. During their training, they experience various combat scenarios linked to the 48th Brigade's mission of training, and mentoring, the Afghan army and National Security Force.

On May 8, 18 Georgia civilian media representatives and elected officials accompanied by Brig. Gen. Maria Britt, Georgia Army Guard commander, visit to acquaint them with the level of training and realism this camp offers.

“We want you to see the training our Soldiers have been experiencing for the past several weeks,” Britt told the group. “What you will see is





**Georgia Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Shandel Funderburg (Standing), an infantryman with Newnan-based 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry, takes a break from training to enjoy lunch with fellow Soldier Sgt. Jason Abercrombie (sitting).**

as realistic as the trainers can make it, and it will serve our Soldiers well when they face the realities of Afghanistan.”

From Afghan-Americans role playing as village leaders, police chiefs, religious leaders, shop keepers, street vendors and unruly demonstrators to authentic looking shops, police stations and even jails, everything the Guardsmen experience in this intense training environment is as close to authentic as the Army can make it.

Mock Afghan villages were built solely for acquainting Soldiers to the reality of the small towns and villages that surround the city of Kabul, one of the five places in which they’ll be located.

“While slightly different from the ordinary MOUT (Military Operations in Urban Terrain) training facilities familiar to anyone who has been in Iraq, the Afghan village looks quite real,”

said Spc. Jeff Taylor, a rifleman with Newnan’s 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry.

While here, media witnessed a coordinated attack on “suspected insurgents” taking refuge in a small wooden framed building. A squad of heavily armed Soldiers kneeled close to a wall awaiting entry to a small enclave. Once the door was blown off, the squad swarmed in on the enemy position.

In another area, the acrid smell of gunpowder filled the air while the crack of automatic weapons fire broke an early afternoon silence. The Georgia Guardsmen inched along, firing their weapons, reloaded as they went, and then crouched behind walls to return fire. On a far hill, specially designed targets shaped to resemble insurgents popped up and then dropped as bullet after bullet struck their target.

“Our soldiers are performing magnificently out here,” said Command Sgt Major Mike Hurndon, 48th Brigade and Task Force Phoenix command sergeant major. Hurndon was at Camp Shelby assisting with training. “We’ve put them through just about all we can in this environment, and they are clearly up to the task. “I’m mighty proud of them,” he said with a knowing smile.

Lunch with the Soldiers was followed by the entry of Britt’s group into Ghazni, a replica of a real Afghan town of the same name, where elements of the 48th will be stationed. Street vendors hawked their wares for the passing guests, while Soldiers kept a watchful eye on a group of unruly demonstrators congregating at the far end of the street.

Without notice, a loud “boom” sent everyone to the ground. As the Soldiers took up defensive positions, three locals screamed out in pain as “blood” spewed from open wounds. Chaos ensued as the wounded were dragged to safety behind nearby shops.

“These wounds look awfully real,” commented a civilian radio host as he watched combat medics rush to the wounded, and apply bandages and tourniquets.

“You’re automatically conditioned to anticipate another incident immediately following the first,” said a Soldier from Winder’s 1st Battalion crouched behind a steel drum and looking through the sights of his M-4 rifle. “They come in pairs.” But this time, there was only a single devastating blast.

One “severely wounded villager” required evacuation by helicopter from the makeshift landing zone outside the village’s perimeter.

“I’m very pleased with the progress of our Soldiers here,” said 2nd Battalion’s commander, Lt. Col. Kenny Payne. “I am convinced that they’re ready to handle the physical and cultural challenges of the mission.

“We have exposed them to an environment that’s as close as possible to what they are about to face in country, and they are ready,” Payne added.

As one media representative said during the return trip to Atlanta, “If I hadn’t known where I was, I would be convinced that I was coming back from the actual war zone.”



**Soldiers of Newnan’s 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry, conducts room-clearing operations at Camp Shelby.**

## 165th and CRTC firefighters respond to severe auto accident

Story by Capt. Amy Sandbothe and photos by Master Sgt. Leslie Branson.

**SAVANNAH** - Firefighters of the 165th Airlift Wing were quick to the scene of a traffic accident with multiple injuries that happened directly outside the Garden City armory, April 28, 2009.

A loaded dump truck and a two-door sedan collided, blocking traffic and spreading debris across the highway. Multiple first responders were called to the accident site. Firefighters of the 165th had to use Hurst Jaws of Life equipment to remove the driver's side to gain access to the occupant of the sedan.

Other firefighters stood ready with charged water hoses and aided medical crews from Med-Star Emergency Medical Service. Two people were taken by ambulance to area hospitals for treatment.

The incident occurred the same day families of the 165th also bid farewell to the first wave of personnel deploying to Afghanistan. The unit's support of Operation Enduring Freedom continues for the next six months.

Base firefighters responding to the accident were Master Sgt. Barry Coarsey, fire chief; Randy Williams, assistant fire chief; Leland Hayes, station captain; John Heinzen, crew chief; Derek Skinner, firefighter; and Staff Sgt. David Westfield, traditional firefighter.



Firefighters from the 165th Airlift Wing and local police pull accident victims from a car after a dump truck collided with it near Garden City.

## Georgia National Guard History

### Introduction:

Relations between the United States and Mexico in the mid-1840's became increasingly tense due to the dispute between them over the Republic of Texas and our nation's desire to expand its borders. Prior to a declaration of war against Mexico by the United States in May of 1846, the U.S. Congress had voted in 1845 to annex the republic and make it a state. This vote was itself considered a hostile act by the Mexican government.

Further, President James K. Polk had ordered U.S. troops in Texas to advance as far as the Rio Grande River to seize disputed territory (Mexico argued that the border between the two countries was farther north of the Rio Grande, than Texas claimed). General Zachary Taylor, who commanded American forces sent against Mexico, built a fort on the Rio Grande across the river from Matamoros. By April of 1846, tensions finally erupted into fighting when Mexican forces attacked an American cavalry patrol along the Rio Grande in disputed territory, killing or capturing all of the patrol. Once news of this clash reached Washington, Congress granted President Polk's request for a declaration of war.

The federal government sent volunteer troop quotas to the states, and Georgia answered with 10 volunteer companies from across the state for a total of 900 men who enlisted for 12 months. These 10 companies formed the 1st Georgia Regiment led by the just elected Col. Henry Rootes Jackson, perhaps the youngest regimental commander at 26 in the American Army in Mexico. Two of the companies were Company F, the Irish Jasper Greens of Savannah (John McMahon succeeded Jackson as commander of the Irish Jasper Greens) and Company H, the Kennesaw Rangers of Cobb County. Historian Gordon B. Smith recounts that the Irish lads were very quick to uphold the reputation and heritage of their Company and "were not at all averse to individual fist encounters," while the Kennesaw Rangers, being from a pioneer area of the state, had very little if any contact with the Savannah Irish.

After travel by foot, train and boat the 1st Regiment arrived at Camp Belknap on the two mile long narrow Brazos Island. The camp was one of the largest volunteer troop holding encampments during the war.

The following narrative of an incident involving the Kennesaw Rangers and the Irish Jasper Greens, as well as members of the 4th Illinois Volunteers, led by Col. Edward D. Baker, is from Gordon Burns Smith's four-volume work, "*History of the Georgia Militia, 1783-1861*," Boyd Publishing, Milledgeville, Ga., 2000.

### THE BATTLE OF THE BOAT

Trouble had been brewing between the Kennesaw Rangers and the Jasper Greens, and apparently no love was lost between the Georgia and Illinois regiments, camped side by side awaiting movement into the enemy's country. The "Deep South" and the "Midwest" were stirred and divided in sentiment by the issues of tariffs, state rights, and abolitionism. Competition cropped out in the camp. "Ardent spirits" played a part—perhaps a large part.

The steamboat in which the troops were transported was a small boat. Three companies first went forward to Camargo under command of a major. Colonel Jackson and his staff officers and four other companies of his regiment followed a few days later. Lieutenant Colonel Redd remained to command the remaining companies embarking on the steamer for the trip up the Rio Grande. The steamboat had to take the last three companies on board, the Jasper Greens, Kennesaw Rangers, and the Fannin Avengers. The regimental baggage and camp equipment had all been put on board and the time to embark had nearly arrived, when a fight commenced between the Irish Jasper Greens and the Kennesaw Rangers. The Fannin Avengers were ordered to quell and stop the fight, and their commander formed the company and ordered them to cease fighting, but the two companies engaged in the fight paid no attention.

The "affray," as it was termed, resulting in two or more deaths and the wounding of several soldiers grew out of the fact that the Kennesaw Rangers of Marietta and the Jasper Greens of Savannah both had a champion boxer, each of whom was backed by his own company. The rivalry of the two champions had resulted in ill feeling between the two companies. As the troops began boarding the boat, the Rangers, after using grossly insulting epithets, with ensuing hard-hitting altercations, threatening to "run the damned Irish off the boat." Private John Makin of the Greens challenged any Ranger to single combat. Quickly, the two champions "got to sparring." A crowd gathered around and it looked as if there might be a general brawl. Individual fights added to the bitterness in both companies. The opposing sides were "Not to say drunk, yer honor, but in fine fightin' trim," as the Irish would say ... *continued in Issue 4*



## 171st Boss Lift brings civilian employers closer to the guard

**ARMY AIR FLIGHT FACILITY NO.2, Marietta** — Aviators from 171st Aviation, 78th Aviation Troop Command, hosted more than 30 area employers who spent, Saturday, May 2, 2009, learning what their 9-5 employees do while in uniform.

During the day long visit, employers were given a safety briefing followed by a 45-minute flight around metro Atlanta in a UH-60 Black Hawk. Upon touch down, they left the aircraft; their heads tucked low, many of them with cameras in-hand trying to snap the perfect picture to freeze the moment.

Boss lifts, as they are called, are a long-standing tradition that enables Citizen-Soldiers to thank the civilian employers for supporting them. The event also allows the employer to gain a better perspective of the National Guard, and what it means for their employee to be a Guardsman.

Employer Support of Guard and Reserve (ESGR) representatives presented each employer with National Guard T-shirt and Dale Earnhardt, Jr. Baseball cap; Earnhardt drives the National Guard Chevy Impala in the NASCAR Sprint cup series.

Each employer also received a personalized certificate acknowledging employer participation, which emphasized the partnership and understanding between Citizen-Soldiers and the companies for which they work.



**Steve Rier (left) of Atlanta-based Teknion looks over the Mark 19 Automatic Grenade Launcher while Spc. Joseph Snyder of Peachtree City explains how the weapon works.**



**Sergeant Eddie Boyd of Marietta's 171st Aviation "Dragonmasters," explains the flight controls of the UH-60 Black Hawk to Bryan Boyd. Bryan is Sgt Boyd's supervisor at Pacesetter Graphics in Acworth.**



**Colonel Brent Bracewell, commander 78th Aviation Troop Command briefs employers about the Guard and lets the employers know how much the National Guard appreciate all they do to support the troops of 171st Aviation.**



Colonel Craig M. McGalliard accepts command of the 265th RSG as he receives that unit's guidon from Brig. Gen. Maria L. Britt.

## 265th RSG welcomes McGalliard, bids farewell to Blackstock

Story and photos by Spc. Adam Dean

**METTER** – The Georgia Army National Guard's 265th Regional Support Group welcomed Col. Craig M. McGalliard as its new commander during a ceremony at that unit's armory, May 2, 2009.

"I'm looking forward to serving the officers and Soldiers of the 265th RSG," said McGalliard.

The outgoing commander, Col. Thomas H. Blackstock Jr., of Jefferson City, is moving on to head up Decatur's 78th Troop Command.

"I have mixed emotions today as I leave this great unit," said Blackstock, adding that he was proud to serve a group with such an extraordinary tradition of accomplishment.

In remarks before those assembled, Brig. Gen. Maria L. Britt, Georgia Army Guard commander, congratulated Blackstock on three successful years as commander of the 265th, and expressed her confidence in McGalliard's ability to lead the unit in the years ahead.

"Colonel McGalliard is a proven leader," said Britt. "He's got a lot of experience under his belt."

McGalliard began his military career as an enlisted Soldier with Savannah's 118th Field Artillery in 1977. He was first commissioned as a second lieutenant in June 1982 with Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 214th Field Artillery.

McGalliard held many leadership positions and commands within the 2nd of the 214th until that unit was decommissioned in 1993. He next served as operations officer with the 648th Engineer Battalion, and later served as that unit's executive officer. In February 1999 McGalliard returned to field artillery, this time serving as executive officer of Elberton's 1st Battalion, 214th Field Artillery. In June 2001, he became that unit's commander, and served as such until July

2004. He was next appointed deputy chief of training at Joint Force Headquarters, and held that post until he deployed to Iraq with the 122nd Rear Operations Center(ROC) in July 2005. After he returned, McGalliard assumed command of 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery in September 2006. His last assignment before joining the 265th was with the 122nd ROC, which he commanded since August 2007.

McGalliard graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1985 with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. He is a graduate of the Field Artillery Officer's Basic and Advanced courses, Company Level Pre-Command Course, Engineer Officer's Advanced Course, Combined Arms Staff Service School, Command and General Staff College, Paladin Commander's Course, and the United States War College.

His military decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, National and Defense Service Medal. He also holds the Iraqi Campaign Medal, The Global War on Terror Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Army Overseas Service Ribbon, Georgia Commendation Medal, Georgia National Guard Service Medal, Georgia Humanitarian Service Ribbon, Georgia Olympic Ribbon, Georgia State Active Duty Ribbon, and Georgia Special Operation Ribbon.

McGalliard lives in Savannah where he is employed as the coastal region engineering manager for Atlanta Gas Light Resources.



## Air base celebrates Berlin Airlift anniversary

Story by Georgia National Guard Public Affairs Office with contributed photos

**MARIETTA** – If shoppers and motorists traveling about the city saw aircraft that seemed out-of-step with modern aviation lumbering in toward Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Friday, May 15, 2009, there was nothing wrong with their eyes.

The planes flew into Dobbins Air Reserve Base to mark the 60th anniversary of one of the Air Force's most significant missions – the Berlin Airlift.

Commemoration of the airlift's end was observed at an invitation only "End of the Berlin Airlift" ceremony on May 15. In conjunction with the celebration, the event also honored the memory of Gen. Lucius D. Clay, a Marietta native, who, as military governor of Berlin, Germany's, U.S. sector, was behind the plan that saved the lives of countless thousands of Berliners during the summer of 1948 through the fall of 1949.

Retired Air Force Col. Gail Halvorsen was among the guests scheduled to speak at the event.

Halvorsen earned the nicknamed "candy bomber" because he and his crew dropped by parachute more than 850 pounds of candy to German children during the airlift. Also engaged to speak was former State Sen. Chuck Clay, General Clay's grandson. Members of the Berlin Airlift Veterans Association will also were present.

Sponsored by the Halle Foundation – a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting relations and understanding between Germany and the United States – the Berlin Airlift celebration featured vintage aircraft of the kind used during what was also known as "Operation Vittles."

The airlift was sparked, when in 1948, Joseph Stalin, leader of the Soviet Union, ordered western rail lines and roadways leading into East Germany blockaded, effectively preventing food, fuel and

other materiel from reaching the Germans living in the U.S., British and French sectors of post-war Berlin, which was located inside the Soviet sector. Ultimately, the Airlift, which saw aircraft landing continuously – about every 90 seconds – broke the blockade.



# Georgia's counterdrug Guardsmen

Story by Lt. Col. Ken Baldowski

**DOBBINS AIR RESERVE BASE** — If you saw Sgt. 1st Class Clark Davis on the sidewalk of a busy street, he would be rather inconspicuous, despite his 6-foot, 3-inch frame and his closely cropped haircut. But that's just what's called for in his work as a covert ground surveillance Soldier assigned to the Georgia Counterdrug Task Force.

"We are the eyes and ears of civilian law enforcement in the war against drugs," says Davis who has worked for the Counterdrug Task Force for almost 20 years.

Davis, together with seven other ground surveillance Soldiers, are called on by law enforcement agencies throughout the state to provide real time visual and audio surveillance of suspected drug operations.

Their packet of tools for this dangerous assignment consists of state-of-the-art photographic and listening technology, combined with additional counterdrug resources from

airborne surveillance units and detailed criminal information and analysis taken from numerous local, state and federal agencies.

"We have the latest in high-tech surveillance equipment, including infrared and extremely low light still and

video imaging capability, highly sensitive recording devices, powerful night vision binoculars and more," says Davis.

"The results gained from our ground surveillance efforts will be used as evidence in the prosecution of drug cases," he adds.

Together with the high-tech tools Soldiers employ to observe drug operations, the unique ability to conceal oneself for extremely long periods of time, under all conditions and in less than pleasant surroundings is a capability that few possess.

"Patience is the key," admits Davis. "I've hidden for hours, sometimes days, in high grass wearing a hot 'gilley suit,' hugging the ground deep inside marijuana fields, or slumped over in parked cars and vans on a busy city street.

"They should never know that I am there," says Davis who displays no reservation about camouflaging himself and crouching within a few dozen yards of his subjects.

Acquiring information is the essential role of the ground surveillance Soldier. The knowledge and skills learned through military training is readily applicable to the role of the Soldier.

"Our ground surveillance Soldiers are generally older, more mature, and exhibit a conscientious work ethic," says Lt. Col. Ben Sartain, Counterdrug Taskforce commander.

"We are a force multiplier for local law enforcement," Sartain explains. "The high-tech surveillance and information gathering tools, and experienced and trained Soldiers are often not readily available to all law enforcement

agencies in the state."

"We try to leverage the resources of the military to assist communities in their war against the production, sale or distribution of illicit drugs. We only observe criminal activity," emphasizes Sartain, "We do not gather intelligence."

While the benefits of having actual "eyes and ears" on a subject is readily apparent, the decision to assist in the "up close" surveillance of drug operations is a call made by the covert Soldier.

"Before committing to an assignment, I make sure that I'm not placing myself in a bad situation," admits Davis. "I'll make the final call on that."

Accompanying the covert Soldier on a stakeout is usually a law enforcement officer who has arrest powers. Guard counterdrug personnel cannot arrest a suspect, but can only assist the arresting officer in subduing that person.

Criminal surveillance of drug activity is dangerous business. Davis says he carries a weapon for self-defense but has never had to use it. However, the Soldier's primarily line of defense is his own "situational awareness," he says.

Davis recalls a particular harrowing incident while observing suspicious activities at a house with a narcotics agent.

Law enforcement sought to make forced entry and shots were fired. A law enforcement officer was hit twice, and the narcotics agent on the raid was hit. The shooter was wounded by police. Ambulances were called, but could not respond because the scene was deemed

unsafe. Communications between departments failed. "The situation turned to chaos," remembered Davis.

"Counterdrug Task Force often brings to local law enforcement drug operations a greater sense of planning and structure," says Sartain. "We provide in-depth analytical assessment and greater organization to the entire drug



seizure planning process."

While the local agency makes the initial drug tasking, the counterdrug taskforce comes together with DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) and ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) to compile critical data that will assist in the apprehension and prosecution of drug cases in Georgia," he adds.

... to be continued.

# NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



*From Left to Right, Assistant Commissioner, Georgia Department of Veterans Services Tom Cook; NGB Warrior Support Program Manager Kerry Gehring; Commissioner, Georgia Department of Veterans Services Pete Wheeler; Georgia Transition Assistance Advisor Cosby B. Gay; Georgia Transition Assistance Advisor Allen Carr. (Contributed Photo)*

## Leaders discuss Warrior support

The National Guard Bureau Warrior Support Program manager, Kerry Gehring, along with Georgia Transition Assistance Advisors Allen Carr and Cosby Gay, met with the senior leadership of the Georgia Department of Veterans Service, Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Benefits Administration, GWOT Manager Ken Williams (not pictured), and OIF/OEF Advocacy Outreach Coordinator April Melancon (not pictured) on April 30, 2009.

The meetings provided an excellent opportunity to focus on the current, and future efforts to ensure Georgia National Guard members continue to receive first class attention and care as they return to their civilian lives and reintegrate into their communities. Also included in conversations was the reinforcement of the commitment to excellence that each state and federal agency agreed upon during the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on June 20, 2007.

## Summersaults of enthusiasm



*Cadet Warren Robello (foreground), and a fellow YCA platoon member perform summersaults as part of individual platoon presentations at the Ft. Gordon Youth Challenge Academy's Family Day celebration on April 25, 2009. Dozens of families enjoyed a full spectrum of planned activities by the YCA staff and student body - eating lots of food, touring the cadet's barracks and seeing the Fort Gordon campus. Volunteers from the post and the surrounding area came out and helped make this special day possible. (Contributed photo)*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Friday May 15, 2009 - Armed Forces Day softball game, Fort McPherson Baseball Field
- Saturday, May, 16 - "U.S. Troop Rally," at the Lawrenceville City Hall in Lawrenceville.
- Friday, June 5, 2009 - 1st Annual 139th Intel Squadron Golf Tournament, Bartram Trail Golf Course, Augusta, GA
- June 12-14 - Annual National Guard Association of Georgia Convention, Jekyll Island.
- Saturday, July 4 - Fabulous 4th Festival, City and Horse Park, Conyers (Brig. Gen. Britt, guest speaker).
- July 13-16 - STARBASE Summer Camp, A four-day aviation summer camp for all ages. Open to all Dobbins-based employees military and civilian.
- August 14-16 - 2009 Family Readiness Conference, Renaissance Atlanta Hotel, Atlanta.