

# ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD PRAIRIE SENTINEL

VOLUME 3

## AIRMEN ON THE FIELD 2019 SALUTE TO SERVICE

HONORING OUR THOSE WHO GAVE ALL:  
FALLEN HEROES REMEMBRANCE

183RD WING WELCOMES NEW  
COMMANDER

HISTORY ON DISPLAY AT ILLINOIS  
STATE MILITARY MUSEUM

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2019



# ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD PRAIRIE SENTINEL



For more, click a photo or the title of the story.

## **Paying Tribute: ILNG Fallen Heroes Memorial 4**

*The Illinois National Guard honors its 34 fallen Soldiers and Airmen, their sacrifices and their families at the Kankakee Army Aviation Support Facility, by Sgt. Stephen Gifford, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment and Spc. Shaylin Quaid, 1844th Transportation Co.*

## **Airmen on the Field 6**

*A photo spread of the 182nd Airlift Wing and 183rd Wing on the field with the Chicago Bears for the Salute to Service game by Sgt. 1st Class Bryan Spreitzer.*

## **Refuelers welcome a new commander 8**

*Colonel Thomas Jackson of O'Fallon, Illinois, a veteran with multiple overseas tours, named the next Commander of the 126th Air Refueling Wing based at Scott Air Force Base, by Lt. Col. Brad Leighton, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs.*

## **Illinois Units sourced for missions 9**

*The Illinois National Guard's 106th Cavalry Regiment is heading for missions in Africa and the 176th Cyber Protection Team lands a federal stateside mission, by Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs.*

## **On Display: Illinois State Military Museum showcases the history 10**

*The Illinois State Military Museum displays relics and artifacts from the Illinois National Guard's storied history, by Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs.*

## **Springfield Police recognize servicemembers that wear the badge 12**

*Springfield Police Department recognizes its officers that have served or are serving in the military, by Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs.*

## **ESGR awards PNC supervisors for support of the ILNG 13**

*Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs, details how two PNC supervisors were awarded the Patriot Award by the ESGR for supporting the Illinois National Guard.*

## **BEST A24 mobilizes for Afghanistan 14**

*The six-Soldier team, BEST A24, held a ceremony to mark their deployment to Afghanistan with the Polish Land Forces, by Sgt. Stephen Gifford, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.*

## **Passing the Torch: 183rd Changes Command 15**

*A photo spread highlighting the 183rd Wing's change of command ceremony, by Senior Master Sgt. Patrick Kerr, 183rd Wing Public Affairs.*

# Take it From the Top:

## *Senior Leader's Corner*

### Focus on Training to Build Combat Power



Maj. Gen. Michael Zerbonia, Assistant Adjutant General - Army, Illinois National Guard

**T**HE most important thing our Soldiers can do to ensure the Illinois Army National Guard is successful in all of its missions. Training at the tactical level is the foundation for success at the operational and strategic levels. Personnel, logistics, intelligence, and operations all depend on competent professionals able to perform their jobs and that competency comes from training, re-training,

and training again. There is a reason that one weekend a month we have "drills." They are for drilling in the Soldier, crew/team, squad and platoon skills that we need to thrive and survive on the battlefield. IDT drills and annual training are critical times to focus on training as it is the time when crew/teams, squads and platoons are together.


Leaders must be involved and focused on training readiness, providing tough, realistic and mentally and physically challenging training that excites and motivates soldiers. Highly trained squads and platoons are the foundation of ready units. Training progression begins by achieving proficiency at the Soldier, crew/team, and squad level through progressive repetitions, building towards platoon proficiency that is vital to achieving the lethality desired in our more complex collective training events. When properly planned, the successful completion of each successive training activity builds on the last and increases the capability, motivation, and lethality of Soldiers and units.

The new Army marketing campaign, "What's your Warrior?" highlights the ways the Army can develop recruits' unique skills, and integrate them into teams, squads, and platoons on up. No one has been better than the National Guard at integrating unique civilian and military skills to make better teams. When we get together, we integrate those individual skills into the crew/teams, squads and platoons. We figure out the areas where we are strong and weak and work on those weak areas. This time is precious. The Army throws a lot of administrative requirements at us. While there have been efforts to reduce these requirements and allow Commanders to accept some risk in certain areas,

I know that these requirements seem cumbersome. Commanders must protect Soldier, crew/team, squad and platoon training time as much as possible. Set your priorities and stick to them.

One way to do this is through the disciplined use of Unit Training Management (UTM). This tool provides the ideal venue for leaders to engage subordinates and assess their performance while simultaneously developing their unit training plan. Proper UTM eliminates distractions and brings discipline to tasking, protects training, and leads predictability to our Soldiers. Company and below should use the eight-step training model as an aid when developing their unit training plans. All leaders need to make our young Soldiers and junior NCOs become experts in UTM.

One last note about training. General Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, "The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity." When you evaluate your training as a Soldier, crew/team, squad, platoon and company on up, you need to be honest with yourself and your leadership. We can't get you the resources you need to get to a higher training level if we don't know where you are deficient. Don't wait for an external evaluation. Let your leaders know where you are weak, so we can help you turn that weakness into a strength. Too often we do a task one time and think we are trained on that task. Leaders must anticipate that not all tasks will be done to standard the first time. They must design time into training events that allow for retraining. In planning training, it is more important to train to the standard on a limited number of tasks than to attempt to train on as many and fail to achieve the standard on none. Even when individuals and units have trained to the required level of proficiency, leaders must plan to repeat the critical tasks to ensure those skills are mastered.

Ultimately, as leaders and commanders we must ensure our lowest levels are becoming masters at their skills. It needs to be a building block approach from Soldier to crew/team to squad and then platoon. The FORSCOM commander General Michael Garrett has made the statement that if we have platoons that can fight, we will win every time. I concur with his assessment. We must be masters at shooting, moving, and communicating. I am going to add a fourth to that; we have to be able to support. So as leaders, let's make sure our Soldiers have mastered the skills of shoot, move, communicate, and support at the platoon level before we start working collective training at higher levels. 





# Paying Tribute: ILNG Fallen Heroes Memorial

*by Sgt. Stephen Gifford, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

*Photos by Sgt. Stephen Gifford, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment and Spc. Shaylin Quaid, 1844th Transportation Company*

KANKAKEE, Ill. – Members of the Illinois National Guard, Gold Star families, civic leaders, and other residents gathered to remember the 33 Illinois National Guard Soldiers and one Airman lost during combat operations during the Global War on Terror. The event was held at the Kankakee Army Aviation Support Facility, Kankakee, Illinois, on Nov. 3.

Brig. Gen. Richard Neely, of Springfield, Illinois,

the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard, spoke on behalf of the all Illinois National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, remembering the sacrifice and celebrating the lives of the Illinois National Guard fallen. Neely stressed the continued importance of the relationship between the Illinois National Guard and the families of its fallen Soldiers and Airman.

“You are welcome wherever we gather. You will



always have a place at our table,” Neely said. “If any of our Gold Star families need anything, my door is always open to you.”

The Illinois National Guard has supported several operations overseas including Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom since 9-11 by deploying approximately 20,000 Soldiers and Airmen since Sept. 11, 2001.

The Department of Defense lists approximately 7,000 deaths during overseas operations since 9-11.

**“The warmth we received from all those we met makes us feel a part of the Guard family.”**

The 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team deployed to Afghanistan in 2008-09, the largest single deployment of Illinois National Guard Soldiers since World War II.

During the 2008-09 deployment, the 33rd IBCT suffered 18 fatalities. Soldiers of the 33rd came from 30 units spread across Illinois.

Gold Star families attended the ceremony remembering their loved ones. The


families in attendance were thanked by the several senior leaders of the Illinois National Guard for their continued service to the United States and their ongoing relationship with the men and women of the Illinois National Guard.

Col. (ret.) Ralph and Linda Grieco, of Bartlett, Illinois, attended the ceremony. Their son, Staff Sgt.

Kevin Grieco, died

from wounds sustained when a suicide bomber detonated explosives as Grieco entered a building in Afghanistan in Oct. 2008. The Griecos expressed appreciation for being included in the ceremony.

“The warmth we received from all those we met makes us feel a part of the Guard family,” Grieco said. “I know our son would be the first to say Hooah to all the Guard has done to embrace us all these years later.”

After the ceremony, the families in attendance boarded a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter for a flight with Neely. During the 30-minute flight, Neely and the families were offered unique views of the Illinois landscape and an opportunity to speak about the continued service of the men and women of the Illinois National Guard. 







# Airmen on the Field



*Bears honor Airmen from 182nd and 183rd during Salute to Service Game*

*Sgt. 1st Class Bryan Spreitzer, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs*

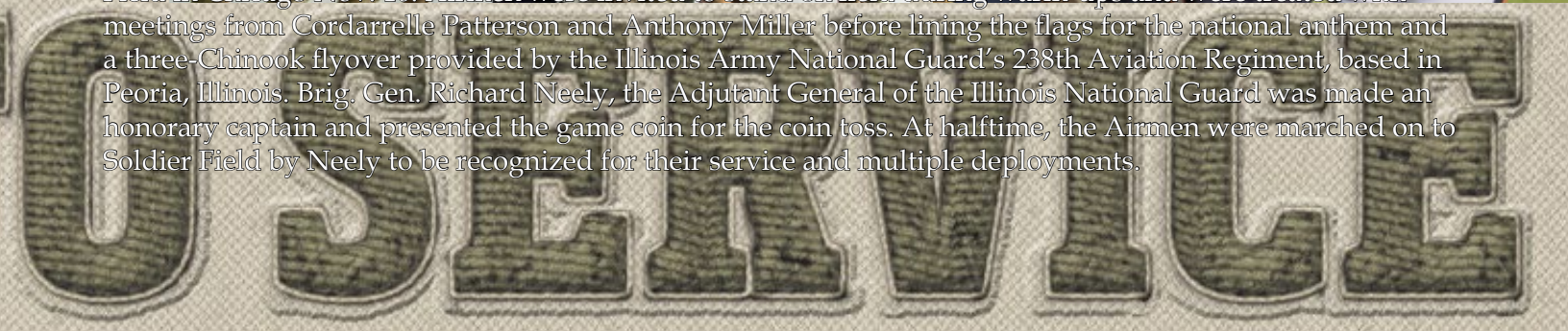


# SALUTE T





Members of the Illinois Air National Guard's 182nd Airlift Wing based in Peoria, Illinois, and the 183rd Wing based Springfield, Illinois, were invited to take part in Chicago Bears' Salute to Service at Soldier Field in Chicago Nov. 10. Airmen were invited to stand on field during warm-ups and were treated with meetings from Cordarrelle Patterson and Anthony Miller before lining the flags for the national anthem and a three-Chinook flyover provided by the Illinois Army National Guard's 238th Aviation Regiment, based in Peoria, Illinois. Brig. Gen. Richard Neely, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard was made an honorary captain and presented the game coin for the coin toss. At halftime, the Airmen were marched on to Soldier Field by Neely to be recognized for their service and multiple deployments.





# O'Fallon Airman Selected to Lead 126th Air Refueling Wing

**By Lt. Col. Brad Leighton, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs**

**SPRINGFIELD, ILL.**— Colonel Thomas Jackson of O'Fallon, Illinois, a veteran with multiple overseas tours, has been named the next Commander of the 126th Air Refueling Wing based at Scott Air Force Base where he will oversee about 900 Airmen with eight KC-135R "Stratotanker" aircraft and an approximately \$32 million operating budget.

Jackson will also be responsible for the Illinois Air National Guard's two Total Force Enterprise Associations; the 120 Airmen of the active Air Force associate 906th Air Refueling Squadron of Air Mobility Command and the 42 Airmen of an Illinois Air National Guard classic associate 126th Supply Chain Management Squadron of the Air Force Global Logistics Supply Center, Air Force Material Command.

"Col. Jackson has been with the 126th Air Refueling Wing since 1989, when they were still at O'Hare in Chicago. He has a deep and thorough understanding of all the wing's operations and has the respect and admiration of the unit's Airmen," said Brig. Gen. Rich Neely, The Adjutant General and Commander of the Illinois National Guard. "He's the right choice to lead the 126th into the 2020s."

Jackson, who is now the wing's Operations Group Commander, will replace Col. Jeffrey W. Jacobson, who has commanded the 126th Air Refueling Wing since March 2018.

"Colonel Jacobson is an outstanding officer who helped build the 126th Air Refueling Wing into the best KC-135 unit in the nation. He is a 1984 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, who served 14 years on active duty before joining the Illinois Air National Guard," said Brig. Gen. Peter Nezamis, the Assistant Adjutant General - Air and Commander of the Illinois Air National Guard. The 126th ARW is a highly accomplished wing, awarded nine Air Force Outstanding Unit awards and at the top of the Air Force's Mission Capability Readiness Rates.

Prior to Jacobson's assignment as Wing Commander, he was the wing's Vice Commander for two years and was the wing's Operations Group Commander from November 2011 until June 2016. Jacobson plans to retire from the military in March 2020 with 35 years and 10 months of military service. He has logged more than 7,000 hours in four different types of military aircraft and has accumulated more than 440 hours of combat flight time supporting operations throughout the world including both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Jackson said he is both honored and humbled to assume command of the 126th Air Refueling Wing.

"The Airmen of the 126th Air Refueling Wing have built a legacy that is truly outstanding which dates back to 1927. We hunted submarines and conducted search and rescue missions in World War II, and have been involved in every major conflict since. In 1961, we conducted the first National Guard air refueling mission. We were fully mobilized for Desert Storm and have played and continue to play a vital role in air combat."

Jackson's military experience includes multiple combat deployments over the skies of Afghanistan, Iraq, Yugoslavia and Libya starting with Operation Desert Storm.

After the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, he flew over the continental United States protecting our nation's airspace.

Jackson started his career as an enlisted crew chief in the 126th. He graduated from the Academy of Military Science and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in February 1994. He has held key command and staff positions at the squadron, group and wing levels.

Jackson holds a bachelor's degree from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale and a master's of science degree from the University of Illinois. He is a graduate of the Air War College and Air Command and Staff College. 🇺🇸





# ILLINOIS UNIT NOTIFIED OF MISSIONS TO AFRICA

by Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

**SPRINGFIELD, ILL. –** The Illinois Army National Guard received notification that approximately 335 Soldiers from the 2nd Squadron, 106th Cavalry Regiment, headquartered in Kewanee, Illinois, will deploy to Africa for missions in Tunisia, Cameroon and Djibouti, in the summer of 2020.

“The Illinois National Guard is vital to our nation’s defense; whether that is overseas, here in Illinois, or elsewhere in the United States,” said Brig. Gen. Richard R. Neely, The Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard. “Their commitment to duty, along with the unwavering support of the entire organization and their families and civilian employers will ensure their success.”



The 2-106th’s military history dates back to July, 1897, when it was constituted by the Illinois National Guard as a squadron of cavalry and organized from existing elements. In 1994, the unit was reconstituted in the Illinois National Guard and consolidated with 202nd Air Defense Artillery before being converted and redesignated as the 106th Cavalry Regiment in 2006. The 2-106th has served honorably in the War with Spain, World War I, World War II and Afghanistan.

The 2-106th most recently deployed to Afghanistan in 2008 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The 2-106th is headquartered in Kewanee, with Troops in Pontiac, Dixon and Aurora. 🇺🇸

# ILLINOIS UNIT NOTIFIED OF CYBER MISSION

by Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

**SPRINGFIELD, ILL. –** The Illinois Army National Guard received notification that approximately 20 Soldiers from the 176th Cyber Protection Team, headquartered in Bloomington, Illinois, are slated to be activated for federal service in the fall of 2020.



The unit is scheduled to obtain, design, maintain, secure, defend, and manage infrastructure for U.S. Cyber Command to enable organic and subordinate elements to conduct overseas contingency operations. The unit will be based at Fort Meade, Maryland, for the duration of the activation.

“The Illinois National Guard is vital to our nation’s defense; whether that is overseas, here in Illinois, or elsewhere in the United States,” said Brig. Gen. Richard R. Neely, The Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard. “The 176th is highly trained and ready to meet the demands of this upcoming mission.”

The 176th, whose mission is to protect U.S. and state interests within the cyber domain, is a shared unit between the Illinois and Wisconsin National Guards. The 176th was stood up as a unit in November 2017, one of 13 additional cyber protection teams across 23 states announced for activation by the National Guard Bureau by the end of Fiscal Year 2019. The teams are positioned around the nation’s 10 Federal Emergency Management Agency response regions. 🇺🇸



# On Display

*State Military Museum showcases history.*



By Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

**SPRINGFIELD, ILL.** – Tucked in behind Camp Lincoln, in Springfield, Illinois, is a building resembling a castle that houses the history of the Illinois National Guard.

The Illinois National Guard has a rich history dating back to 1723 when Kaskaskia residents participated in the first militia muster under the French. It wasn't until 1878 when the Illinois State Legislature mandated the Illinois National Guard to house and maintain its artifacts and archives, that tell the story of the Illinois National Guard.

The museum was established in 1878 as Memorial Hall and was in the State Capital Building. Eventually the contents of Memorial

Hall ended up in the military museum. In 2003, the Illinois State Military Museum moved into the "castle".

"The purpose of the Illinois State Military Museum is to preserve the heritage of the Illinois National Guard and teach the important role and contributions made by Citizen-Soldiers in our communities, state and nation," said Col. (Ret.) Paul Fanning, Illinois State Military Museum Director.

According to Fanning, the museum's collection of artifacts includes uniforms, weapons, equipment, vehicles, aircraft and other items associated with the military. Not all of the museum's artifacts are on display though, Fanning said.

"Our special event displays are changed out every three to six months," he said. "A portion of our static displays are changed out once a year so annual visitors see something new when they tour the museum."

The Illinois State Military Museum has more than 13,000 artifacts in its collection, including more than 1,000 historic military flags. Museum Curator Bill Lear said the museum participates in a loan program with 17 other institutions which allows additional artifacts to be on display at various locations throughout the United States for others to see.





"The benefits of loaning these artifacts gives the public an opportunity to see them up close and from different locations within the country. These partnerships foster a sense of a team within the museum community," Lear said. "Our relationships are very important to us. I have always used the motto "One Team, One Fight" in regards to other museums. Our overall goal as a museum is to educate the public and their success is our success."

Spring and Fall are the two busiest times of the year for visitors touring the museum. In October, more than 1,200 people toured the museum, according to Fanning.

"We have visitors from school groups, veterans who are in the area attending military reunions and individuals who are just traveling through and stop for a tour," he said.

One of the most popular artifacts in the museum's rotating collection is the artificial leg of Mexican General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, which was brought home from the Mexican War, Battle of Cerro Gordo, by Soldiers of the 4th Illinois Infantry, according to Fanning. The leg display is in a resting cycle and not out for viewing for now.

In addition to Santa Anna's leg, the museum has a piece of wood President Abraham Lincoln fired seven shots into in 1863.

"Christopher Minor Spencer visited Lincoln at the White House and asked him to personally test fire his invention, the Spencer Repeating Rifle," Fanning said. "Lincoln agreed and after the two fired the rifle, Lincoln presented the board to Spencer as a souvenir. Spencer donated it to the state of Illinois to be placed on display in Memorial Hall."

Fanning said the target board represents Lincoln's interest in the military technology of the day.

"It was his hope a weapon could be invented which would bring a speedy end to the American Civil War," Fanning said.



Fanning said without their corps of volunteers, the museum staff couldn't do what they do.

"These volunteers allow visitors to interact with living history reenactors who can tell the story," Fanning said. "They are a critical part of the museum's operations and allow us to maintain operations on weekends."

Fanning said he's been told by visitors to all the museums in Springfield the Illinois State Military Museum is the most interesting museum in town.

"We're a recommended stop by the European Route 66 group," he said.

The Museum staff plans events periodically. On Jan. 11, from 1 to 3 p.m., the museum will present "In Their Letters, In Their Words, Civil War Soldiers Write Home," by author Mike Flotow. The events at the Museum are always free and open to the public.

The Illinois State Military Museum is located at 1301 N. MacArthur Blvd, Springfield, Ill., 62702, two blocks north of the intersection of MacArthur Blvd. and North Grand Ave., and is open Tuesday through Saturday from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Special arrangements for tours can be made through the museum at (217) 761-3074. 🗺️



# Springfield Police Department recognizes its veterans and serving members

by Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

**SPRINGFIELD, Illinois** – The small military branch pins presented to Springfield, Illinois Police Officers Nov. 26 are intended to serve a dual purpose, according to Illinois National Guard staff sergeant and Springfield, Illinois, Police Patrolman Gino Maldonado.

“The intended purpose of the pin is to

recognize the members of the Police Department who have or are serving in the Armed Forces and to thank them for their service to our country,” Maldonado said.

“But when we go out to calls interacting with the public, we don’t always know if they are veterans.”

Maldonado, who has served in the Illinois National Guard for 18 years and has been with the Springfield Police Department four years,

**“It’s important we recognize all our officers for their service to our country. This pin which our veterans wear on their uniform opens a visual dialogue between our officers and the public.”**

said it’s important to have a connection with veterans when interacting with the public.

“You may not have served the same time, or in a same situation as that veteran, but you have shared experiences,” he said. “This pin allows us to identify ourselves as veterans, not just a police badge.”

Maldonado is a Fire Control Specialist assigned to Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 123rd Field Artillery based in Springfield, but originally served as a 31B, Military Police.

According to Springfield Police Department Assistant Chief Ken Scarlette, Jr., who served in Security Forces in the 183rd Air Wing, Illinois Air National Guard, here in Springfield, there are 74 members of the

Springfield Police Department who have served in the military or are still serving in the reserve component, including the Illinois National Guard.

“Of the 74 officers who have served or are

serving still, 13 are still serving in the reserves component,” Scarlette said. “It’s important we recognize all our officers for their service to our country. This pin which our veterans wear on their uniform opens a visual dialogue between our officers and the public.”

Scarlette said that while the pin may be small, it could be the key which may help someone through a crisis, and Maldonado couldn’t agree more.

“We may not have all the answers, but I can get the telephone number to the Department of Veterans Affairs if a veteran is in crisis and needs help,” Maldonado said. “I feel it is my duty to help a fellow veteran when they can’t help themselves.” 🇺🇸





# ESGR recognizes supervisors at PNC Financial Services Group for Support of National Guard

by Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

**CHICAGO** – The Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) recognized Sherry Jursa and Brian Ayala from PNC Bank with the Patriot Award for their support of employees who also serve in the armed services during a ceremony Dec. 17 at the PNC Centre in Chicago.

Brig. Gen. Mark Jackson, Assistant Adjutant General – Army, Illinois National Guard, told attendees at the ceremony he was honored to recognize outstanding people for incredible achievement.

“The 13,000 men and women in the Illinois National Guard could not focus on their jobs without the support of their employers,” he said. “PNC, Sherry and Brian are excellent examples of how employers should and must support their citizen-Soldiers.”

Jursa, a PNC Retail Banking Manager, was nominated by Staff Sgt. Giovanni Perez, 135th Chemical Company, based in Machesney Park, Illinois. Perez credited Jursa’s unwavering trust and support for service members and veterans for his ability to balance his civilian employment and his military duties with the Illinois Army National Guard.

“PNC not only has helped me during times of short notice for leave, they always support my abrupt military absences,” Perez said in the nomination. “I really appreciate working for a company who values my career at my company but also understands, values and accommodates my military service. Because of the flexibility that PNC provides, it has really helped my work life balance.”

“I am truly humbled and honored by this recognition, but this award is for all of us at PNC. It is a collective team effort to promote our company culture by supporting the needs of our military personnel,” Jursa said. “We are proud of Gio and will continue to work together to help him balance his career and military priorities.”

Ayala, a PNC retail banking manager, was nominated by 1st Lt. Emmanuel Cherry, Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery, based in Sycamore, Illinois. Cherry credits Ayala’s support with being able to juggle management training at PNC while conducting several weeks of military



training.

“Brian has always been supportive of my military obligations,” Cherry said in the nomination.

“When I first met Brian, I knew I would be one of his managers. During my first year here, I was called up for military training at the same time we were looking at management development training at PNC. In most cases, advancements would not be considered when an employee is absent. However, when I returned after military training, it was as if I never left. Brian picked up with my advancement within PNC and now almost a year later, I’ve completed my first year of management with PNC.”

“Both my wife and I have family in the military so we understand, we see the work, the effort and the sacrifices made by our service members,” said Ayala, “It is an honor to accept this award, but most deserving are the people that do the work. As employers, it’s critical that we help develop and nurture career paths to ensure that when military personnel return, it is a seamless transition.”

The Patriot Award honors individuals who provide outstanding support and cooperation to their National Guard and Reserve employees and reflects the efforts made to support citizen warriors through a wide-range of measures including flexible schedules, time off prior to and after deployment, caring for families, and granting leaves of absence if needed. 🇺🇸



# Specialized Unit Mobilizes for Afghanistan

By Sgt. Stephen Gifford, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**SPRINGFIELD, ILL.** – A mobilization ceremony was held at the Illinois Military Academy on Camp Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois Nov. 8 for six Soldiers who will deploy to Afghanistan as part of Bilateral Embedded Staff Team (BEST) A24.

This unit's unique mission will allow them to deploy side-by-side with their Polish counterparts.

The Soldiers are from various towns in central Illinois. They were selected for the mission based on their training and skills.

As part of the deployment supporting Operation Freedom's Sentinel, the team will assist the Polish Military Contingent in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. In partnership with allied and coalition forces, BEST A24 will train, advise and assist the institutions within the Afghan Ministry of Defense and Ministry of the Interior.

"This is a special mission. Very few states deploy with their partner countries. Your mission is special within the National Guard," Brig. Gen. Richard Neely, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard said. "Thank you for leaving the civilian life to serve. You are representing us both at home and abroad."

Neely told the Soldiers they are part of something bigger than themselves.

"We are the few. We raise our right hand and answer the call," he said. "You said I will go, I will serve. You are what we celebrate next week as we



celebrate Veterans Day."

The Soldiers were also reminded of their mission.

"This is a tough mission," Maj. Gen. Michael Zerbonia, Assistant Adjutant General – Army, Illinois Army National Guard. "You have two bosses for the next 7 months. You have the important role of working with a key ally and helping them in the fight."

Lt. Col. Eric Smith, Commander, BEST A24, told the Soldiers and their families regardless of the time length, it is never easy to leave families.

"After 30 years in the military, it doesn't get any easier," he said. "It doesn't matter if it's two weeks of active training or 12 months in a combat theater of operations."

The year 2019 marks the 26th anniversary of the partnership between the Illinois National Guard and

Poland. Established in 1993, it has been the most successful State Partnership in the nation, helping Poland emerge from the Warsaw Pact to become a member of NATO and one of the United States' staunchest allies. In addition, Illinois Army National Guard troops have co-deployed with Poland on every Polish rotation since 2003. 🇵🇱





# Passing the Torch

## *183rd Wing Conducts a Change of Command*





# THIS DAY IN HISTORY

## WINTER

### November

#### 3 Operation Noble Eagle: Nuclear power plants

2001: As part of Operation Noble Eagle, Illinois Governor George Ryan ordered members of the Illinois Army National Guard to provide additional protection for the state's nuclear power plants. One-hundred five Soldiers in Companies C and D of the 1st Battalion, 131st Infantry manned security posts at eight nuclear facilities. Operation Noble Eagle came to a close on May 31st, 2002.

#### 4 Member of ambushed Illinois unit awarded the Distinguished Service Cross

1918: On patrol along the edge of deep woods in St. Maurice, France, a German machine-gun nest opened fire on soldiers of Company A, 132nd Infantry. The squad immediately took cover and returned fire. Sgt. Samuel E. Casaga crawled forward under deadly exchanges of small arms fire and flanked the enemy nest. Despite the extreme danger he managed to get close enough to capture a member of the gun crew, and took the prisoner back to American lines. For his show of courage and tenacity in executing his attack, Casaga received the Distinguished Service Cross.

#### Illinois Soldier Earns Distinguished Service Cross

1918: The 130th Infantry carried out a raid on the French town of Marcheville. The regimental advance on the town halted due to heavy enemy sniper and artillery fire. Worse than the stagnation, the companies had no contact with one another. Penned in by the enemy, Company F had lost all their previous runners in attempting to reach the other units. Sgt. 1st Class Curtis M. Crisp volunteered to seek out support by locating another unit outside enemy lines. Before he embarked on his dash, for the flanking unit, a shell detonated and knocked him unconscious. When he came to, he found himself under fire from one of the many German snipers. Unable to find better cover Crisp engaged the sniper with his rifle and killed him, despite his injuries. For his devoted actions in defense of both himself and his company he received the Distinguished Service Cross.

### 10

#### 12 Illinois National Guard Activated for Operation Desert Shield

1990: Maj. Gen. Harold G. Holesinger, the Adjutant General of Illinois received orders from President George Bush Sr. to activate Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 108th Medical Battalion. The 34 unit members served as a command element for both active duty and reserve component medical units over a 31,500 square mile region in the Persian Gulf. The operation overseen by the 108th treated more than 22,000 sick call patients, 54,000 Iraqi prisoners of war and transported more than 3,000 patients by ambulance.



#### 19 President Abraham Lincoln delivers the Gettysburg Address

1863: Nearly five months after the Battle of Gettysburg turned the tide of the war, President Abraham Lincoln approached the podium before 15,000 people that had come to see the dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery. In two minutes and 272 words, Lincoln forever shaped America's view on war and how to cope with loss. Lincoln allegedly prepared his most famous speech on the sixty-two mile train ride from Washington to Gettysburg.

#### 22 Further mobilization orders brought the total number of Illinois Guard units in the Persian Gulf to six.

1996: President George Bush Sr. ordered Major General Harold G. Holesinger, Adjutant General of Illinois, to activate the 1644th Transportation Company and the 233rd Military Police Company for service in the Gulf War. The 233rd reported for deployment at Fort Benjamin Harrison near Indianapolis, while the 1644th went to Fort Sheridan. The other Illinois units serving in the Persian Gulf at that time included the 108th Medical Battalion, 1244th Transportation Company, 1544th Transportation Company, and the 126th Air Refueling Wing.



# December

## 7 182nd Tactical Air Support Group becomes the first Illinois Air Guard unit activated for Operation Desert Shield

1990: President George Bush Sr. called on Illinois Governor James R. Thompson to activate thirty-one members of the 182nd Tactical Air Support Group for service in the Persian Gulf. The Peoria based unit of the Air National Guard deployed to the Middle East for 180 days. They acted as a liaison between the Army and Air Force coordinating air to ground tactical operations.



## 22 Company B, 192nd Tank Battalion rushed at full speed into the first U.S. tank battle of World War II

1941: Poorly equipped, but desperate to slow the Japanese offensive in the Philippines, Company B of the 192nd Tank Battalion hurried to Lingayen Gulf on Luzon. The 194th Tank Battalion followed close behind. The two battalions had a paper strength of 108 tanks, however only five were serviceable enough to be sent to meet the invasion. The first tank in the column narrowly missed colliding with one of the fifty enemy tanks that met them near Lingayen Gulf. In total, the Japanese landing force included 50,000 infantry, 100 tanks, and 106 artillery pieces. Four out of five of the American tank shells did not explode, meaning that the two units fled almost immediately after arriving on scene. This was the first U.S. tank battle of World War II. It ended with the loss of one American tank and its crew.



## Company B, 192nd Tank Battalion received its baptism of fire in the Philippines

1941: Within hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese launched their invasion of the Philippines. Stationed at Clark Field on Luzon, Company B of the 192nd Tank Battalion found itself directly in the path of the Japanese onslaught. Enemy aircraft strafed the column of tanks lined up on the runway. Days later, the 192nd received word that they were to spearhead the allied counterattack with the 194th Tank Battalion at Lingayen Gulf.

# 8

## 16 Battle of the Bulge

1944: December 16th marks the 75th anniversary of The Ardennes Offensive, better known as the Battle of the Bulge. The Illinois Army National Guard's 2-106th Cavalry, then known as the Army's 32nd Cavalry Squadron, fought valiantly. When the German offensive ruptured the front of the American First Army, elements were committed to defend selected transportation bottlenecks in the path of the German advance. The 106th had a critical role in protecting the town of St. Vith, Belgium. After six days of tenacious defense, nearly surrounded by elements of two German Panzer armies, the 106th withdrew. The defenders of St. Vith prevented the Germans from resupplying, disrupted their timetable, and bought time for the American First Army to consolidate its position on the flank of the German Penetration. One of the unit's Soldiers, Private Harold W. Munson of Decatur, received the Silver Star for his bravery during the battle.





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