

ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD

PRAIRIE SENTINEL

VOLUME 5

OUTBREAK: ILLINOIS RESPONDS TO COVID-19

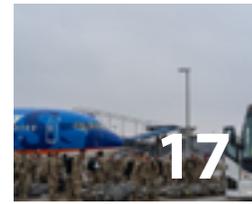
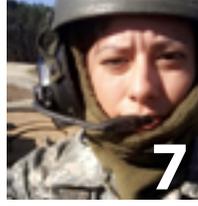
**COL. RODNEY BOYD SELECTED TO BE ILLINOIS ARMY
GUARD'S 2ND AFRICAN-AMERICAN GENERAL OFFICER**

**POLISH MEDICAL GROUP COLLABORATES
ON COVID RESPONSE**

**WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS: CONTAINING A
FLOOD DURING COVID-19**

SPRING 2020

ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD PRAIRIE SENTINEL



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

Boyd selected for Brigadier General

4

Colonel Rodney Boyd, a combat veteran of both Iraq and Afghanistan and the former police chief of Bellwood, Illinois, has been selected as the next general officer in the Illinois Army National Guard. By Lt. Col. Brad Leighton, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs.

Welcome Home: 182nd Returns from SWA

6

Thirty Airmen return from a deployment to the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing, Southwest Asia, in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel. By Tech. Sgt. Lealan Buehrer, 182nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Chicago Native Becomes Illinois National Guard's First Female Armor Officer

7

1st Lt. Eileen Figueroa of Chicago, Illinois, became the first woman to complete the Armor Basic Officer Leaders Course (BOLC) at Fort Benning, Georgia. By Sgt. Stephen Gifford, 139th MPAD

Outbreak: Illinois Responds to COVID-19

8

Highlights of the Illinois National Guard's response to COVID-19 through May. By Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs.

More than a thousand words: The ILNG COVID Response in pictures

11

A photo spread highlighting the Illinois National Guard's Response to COVID-19. By Sgt. Christopher Garibay, 139th MPAD

Going Cross-Country: 182nd Delivers for Alternate Care Facility

12

A photo spread highlighting the 182nd's Delivery of PODs for an historic Alternate Care Facility at McCormick Place in Chicago. By Senior Airman Jay Grabiec, 182nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Polish Military Medical Personnel Join Illinois' COVID-19 Response Efforts

14

Nine members of a Polish Armed Forces visit the Illinois National Guard to share insight in their fight with COVID-19 in Europe. By Robert Adams, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

Fur Therapy: Benji visits the 1844th

15

A photo spread highlighting Benji, the 126th Air Refueling Wing's therapy dog, and his visit to the 1844th while the conduct COVID-19 operations. By Sgt. Stephen Gifford, 139th MPAD

Illinois Air Guard C-130s join the fight against COVID-19

16

The 182nd Airlift Wing delivers isolation pods from Eugene, Oregon, to Springfield to combat the effects of COVID-19. By Tech. Sgt. Lealan Buehrer, 182nd Airlift Wing

Chicago-based 178th Infantry Battalion returns home from deployment

17

Approximately 400 Soldiers from the 178th Infantry Battalion based in Chicago return from the Central Command area of operations. By Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

When it rains it pours: 766th BEB helps contain the flood during COVID-19

18

Approximately 60 Soldiers from the 766 BEB are activated to combat rising flood waters near Meridosia on the Illinois River. By Sgt. Stephen Gifford, 139th MPAD

Take it From the Top:

Senior Leader's Corner

Equality and Improvement

To the Soldiers, Airmen, and Civilian Employees of the Illinois National Guard and Department of Military Affairs:

The diversity within our ranks gives us strength as an organization. Different cultures, ethnic backgrounds, and genders provide different perspectives and voices within our formation. We can disagree, while still giving each other the dignity and respect that each human being deserves. We can learn from each other. We need to learn from each other.

I believe in humility and that humankind is imperfect. As part of being human, we will never be finished. We strive, and struggle, to be consistently better and better both within ourselves and in relating to others. Humility is an underrated trait in humankind and particularly in the military. We are trained to be confident in ourselves, in our teams, in our units, our services and in the Illinois National Guard.

We should be confident. The Illinois National Guard is immensely powerful and the source of that power is the 13,000 well-trained, highly skilled and disciplined Soldiers and Airmen in our force and the cadre of talent and hard-working civilians backing them up. Our capabilities are incredible. While performing our wartime mission, we can exercise overwhelming force. In our state mission, we are capable of helping our fellow citizens in countless ways as we have proven during numerous domestic operations this year to include responding to our citizens for COVID-19, flooding on the Illinois and now support to law enforcement to ensure our citizens are able to peacefully protest.

As I meet you around the state on mission, I am truly inspired by incredible people that make up the Illinois National Guard.

Like you and so many of our fellow citizens, I am angry by the callous inhumane death of George Floyd by those placed in a position of power. I am outraged by the deaths of Breonna Taylor, Botham Jean and many others. It is undeniable that racism was at work in these many deaths. It is as undeniable as the painful history and scars

of lynching, or the realities of the holocaust, or the Trail of Tears. I am also angry at the wanton violence and looting perpetrated in our cities, destroying businesses and homes. I am angry at the violence against good people trying to help, including police officers such as David Dorn.

This type of disrespect and racism has no place in our country or our organization. As service members, we are called to higher standards as we uphold our service values and the Constitution. We must continue to set the example for our society as an institution that respects everyone and that listens. The military has become a great melting pot over the years. However, that has not always been the case as we struggled with race and

gender equality issues. We have had it wrong in the past and there is more work to do as we grow to become a more inclusive organization. I want each of you to know that you have a voice in our organization, no matter your race, gender, or sexual orientation. You have a voice to discuss these issues or to voice your concern about equality within the organization.

The Joint Diversity Executive Council that we resurrected in November 2019 is one tool that we can use within your units (Brigade or Wing) to help us give equal opportunity to all of those in our force. It is a tool to help us communicate and to help us grow as an organization. However, like any tool, it will only work if we pick it up and use it. That takes commitment and hard work by each person in the organization.

I am committed to helping us improve. I am committed to helping the Illinois National

Guard become better and more just. I am committed to providing the young women and men who join our ranks the opportunity to become the best versions of themselves. You have my pledge. Join me.

I am a man of faith, I believe in hope. I know we as a country and as an organization will come through these challenging times better and stronger. Never give up!



Brig. Gen. Richard Neely
The Adjutant General,
Illinois National Guard

Bellwood Soldier promoted to brigadier general, appointed Assistant CoS, Joint Logistics, USFK

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

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois - Colonel Rodney Boyd, a combat veteran of both Iraq and Afghanistan and the former police chief of Bellwood, Illinois, has been selected as the next general officer in the Illinois Army National Guard.

Boyd was appointed as the Assistant Chief of Staff, Joint Logistics (Wartime) for U.S. Forces Korea effective immediately and will be promoted to brigadier general. The promotion will make Boyd the second African-American general officer in the Illinois Army National Guard since Brig. Gen. Walt Whitfield retired in 1997. Whitfield commanded the 33rd Separate Infantry Brigade.

"It is an honor and privilege to be selected for promotion to brigadier general," Boyd said. "I look forward to serving my country as a brigadier general at the national level. I will continue my efforts to mentor and inspire service members of color."

Brig. Gen. Richard Neely, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard, said that when the opportunity arose to have an Illinois National Guard officer fill this position in U.S. Forces Korea, Boyd was the best-qualified officer. In fact, Boyd had been selected as the Land Component Commander for the Illinois Army National Guard, when this national level opportunity arose. Boyd is well prepared for this significant opportunity to serve at the next level, said Neely.

"Colonel Boyd has an extensive background in logistics and operations including his command of the 108th Sustainment Brigade. His leadership has been tested in combat, both in Iraq and Afghanistan. He has held all the key development positions and has completed all his professional military education requirements," Neely said. "He's an excellent officer who will make an outstanding general."

Neely, who has re-established the Joint Executive Diversity Councils within the Illinois National Guard, said Boyd's race is important, but was not

the deciding factor in his selection. "It is important in that a good portion of our troops can look at our leadership and see someone that looks like them.

It is important in that an African-American officer was given the opportunities to excel and to acquire those key positions that led to becoming a general."

Maj. Gen. Michael Zerbonia, the Assistant Adjutant General-Army of the Illinois National Guard, has mentored Col. Boyd for several years. "Rodney Boyd has worked hard and has taken on tough assignments. He has deployed on multiple occasions and excelled in leadership positions both at home and abroad," Zerbonia said. "I couldn't be more proud."

Prior to his selection as the Assistant Chief of Staff, Joint Logistics (Wartime) for U.S. Forces Korea, Boyd served as the Strategic Plans Officer for the Illinois National Guard since December 2017. He served as the Commander of the 108th Sustainment Brigade from February 2015 until November 2017.

In his civilian life, Boyd served with the Bellwood Police Department for 23 years, working his way up from a patrolman in 1990 to the Chief of



Police from 2011 to 2013. After retiring from the Bellwood Police Department, Boyd worked as a vice president for operations for JP Morgan Bank and as a supervisory criminal investigator for the Northwestern University Police Department. Since April 2018, he has worked for AASKI Technology Inc., which supports the Army National Guard Mission Command Training Support Program.

Boyd began his military career as an enlisted Marine Corps Reservist in 1982. After completing his enlistment with the Marines, he joined the Illinois Army National Guard. From 1989 until 1990, he attended the Illinois Army National Guard



the U.S. Army War College and the Joint Combined Warfighter School-Hybrid.

He has held many leadership and staff positions during his more than 35 years of service to include company, battalion and brigade command and multiple staff positions in operations and logistics at all levels.

He was deployed to Afghanistan as an ammunition officer with the 33rd Area Support Group from 2004 to 2005, where he received the Combat Action Badge. In 2007 to 2008 he deployed to Iraq and then deployed to Kuwait in 2014, both with the 108th Sustainment Brigade.

Some of his military awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (2nd Award), National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Service Star, Iraq Campaign Medal with one Campaign Star, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with one Campaign Star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.

Boyd received a bachelor's degree in Criminology from Northern Illinois University, a Master of Arts degree in Education from the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle and a second Master of Arts degree in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College. He is married to Darlene Boyd and they have two children (Rodney Jr. and Randy) and one grandson. 🏆



Officer Candidate School, receiving his commission as a second lieutenant in the Quartermaster Corps in August 1990.

Boyd's military education includes Quartermaster Officer Basic Course, Quartermaster Officer Advance Course, Transportation Officer Advance Course, Combined Arms and Services Staff School (CAS3), Intermediate Leadership Education Course, Theater Sustainment Command Course, Combat Service Support Pre-Command Course,

Welcome Home



Peoria Airmen return from Southwest Asia

By Tech. Sgt. Lealan Buehrer, 182nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

PEORIA, Illinois - (March 12, 2020) – Approximately 30 Airmen stationed at the Illinois Air National Guard's 182nd Airlift Wing in Peoria, Illinois, returned March 12 from a deployment to the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing, Southwest Asia, in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel counterterrorism operations. A total of approximately 115 Airmen from the 182nd have returned from deployment in the past two weeks.

The Airmen provided airlift, airdrop, and aeromedical evacuation capabilities to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility using the unit's C-130H Hercules airframe.

"It's been a very busy year for us here," said Col. Daniel McDonough, the commander of the 182nd Airlift Wing. "We've had multiple deployments from all over the base and several different specialties. Right

now we're closing in on the aircraft, aircrew and maintainers coming back – normally one of our biggest packages to go. We're just glad to have them back safely."



McDonough said the Airmen will get much needed time off before returning to work and starting preparations for whatever missions arise in the future.

The deployed Airmen were on the last of two rotations deployed from Peoria in October.

"Getting to move ammunition or medical supplies or even aircraft parts that are needed in forward operating locations [are a] big value to us as a crew," said Master Sgt. Joseph Scurto of Downers Grove, Illinois, a C-130 instructor flight engineer with the 182nd Operations Support Squadron. "You know what you take to whomever in the field is going to be used and it's needed. You feel like you have a purpose and the times that you were training at home station, you know why now."

About the 182nd Airlift Wing

The 182nd Airlift Wing's mission is to provide the president of the United States, the governor of the state of Illinois and the adjutant general of Illinois Airmen capable of providing C-130H Hercules airland and airdrop; joint terminal attack control and support; command, control and communications; logistics; civil engineering; security; and support services for the nation, state of Illinois and domestic community. 🇺🇸

Chicago Native Becomes Illinois National Guard's First Female Armor Officer

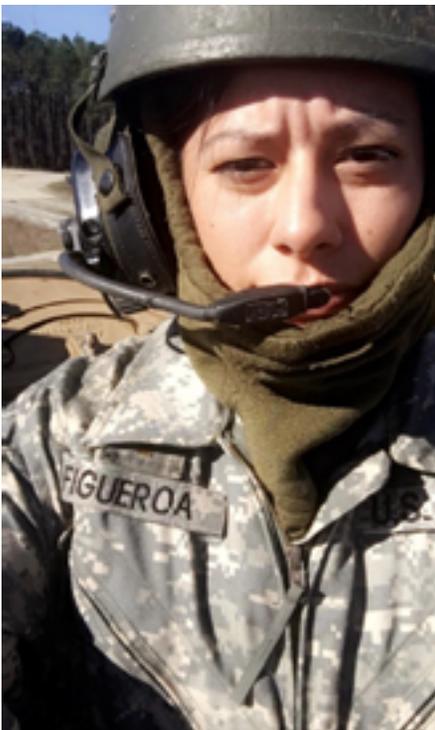
By Sgt. Stephen Gifford, 139th MPAD

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois - It is not often that someone is the very first to accomplish something these days, but in 2018 1st Lt. Eileen Figueroa of Chicago, Illinois, did just that when she became the first woman to complete the Armor Basic Officer Leaders Course (BOLC) at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Figueroa, a first generation Mexican-American, did not come from a family with a history of military service. The first of her extended family to be born in this country, she explained that joining the military was an opportunity to show her gratitude for the opportunities her family experienced since immigrating to the United States.

"I joined the military to give thanks to all those who have died in fighting and maintaining our freedom, and to everyone that has ever served," Figueroa said.

Figueroa enlisted in the Illinois Army National Guard in 2013, five years after completing a bachelor's degree. She explains that there was still a



lot of questions about what path she wanted to take. After completing basic combat training at 27 years old, she completed Officer Candidate School at Camp Lincoln, Springfield, Illinois. She chose Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) as her first branch.

"When I first enlisted and commissioned

into the Guard, the combat arms was not available to women, so I chose CBRN as my branch," Figueroa said.

In 2016 U.S. Army policy changed to allow women into combat arms roles, and the door opened for women like Figueroa to choose a new path for their military careers. That year the first female officers graduated Infantry BOLC. Around the same time, Figueroa attended a meeting with then 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Commander Col.

Mark Alessia with three other women.

"I followed Colonel Alessia into his office, as he discussed the steps that would need to be taken for me to switch

branches. I sat in a chair across from him...I gave him all the reasons why he shouldn't allow me to do this - all the ways I could fail and disappoint my state," Figueroa said. "A week later he called me to let me know not to attend drill with the unit I had been assigned to. He put in the paperwork to have me transferred to the 2nd Squadron, 106th Cavalry Regiment."

During her training at Fort Benning, Figueroa knew that she was the first woman to attend the course. She remembers that knowledge as being more terrifying than exciting. As the first attendee, Figueroa was blazing a trail for other women to follow. She was showcasing her abilities not only for colleagues in the United States Army and Marines, but officers from foreign militaries attending the course as well.

Today Figueroa is a platoon leader for Troop A, 2nd Squadron, 106th Cavalry Regiment, part of the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. She is thankful for the many people who invested in her along the way.

"If you ever let me cry to you, spent hours on the phone doing breathing exercises to calm me down, if you've ever shared your own life tribulations with me, if you cheered me on, motivated me, believed in me when I doubted myself, my biggest thanks to all of you," Figueroa said. 🇺🇸

"I gave him all the reasons why he shouldn't allow me to do this... A week later he called me..."

Outbreak

The Illinois National Guard responds to COVID-19

By Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois – Approximately 865 Illinois National Guard members, including about 560 Soldiers and 305 Airmen, continue to support the state's COVID-19 response operations.

"The Illinois National Guard is proud to support our state partners in the fight against this pandemic,"

said Brig. Gen. Richard Neely, the Adjutant General of the Illinois

National Guard. "The dedicated men and women of the Illinois National Guard are willing and ready to protect their communities, state and nation."

In ongoing missions, approximately 320 Soldiers and 187 Airmen are operating 10 state-run Community Based Test Sites in Harwood Heights, South Holland, Aurora, Rockford, East St. Louis, Waukegan, Chicago, Champaign, Rolling Meadows and Peoria.

Approximately 30 Soldiers and 30 Airmen are providing command and control as well as Force Health Protection operations in support of the COVID-19 response. The mission is ongoing.

About 12 Airmen and 82 Soldiers are conducting warehouse operations in Springfield and Rochelle. Warehouse operations in Springfield began March 26 and Rochelle on May 20. Both missions are ongoing.

Approximately 30 Airmen are supporting

operations at McCormick Place. The mission, which began March 28, is ongoing.

About 108 Soldiers and 43 Airmen are in post-mission quarantine.

Since March 20, Governor JB Pritzker has activated more than 1,500 Soldiers and Airmen

to support the state's COVID-19 response operations.

Nearly every unit

in the Illinois National Guard has had Soldiers or Airmen activated in support of COVID-19 response operations. Operations began in mid-March with the activation of slightly more than 200 Soldiers and Airmen.

The Illinois Air National Guard's 182nd Airlift Wing Medical Group, based in Peoria, Illinois, and the 5th Civil Support Team based in Bartonville, Illinois, started with approximately 65 medically trained Soldiers and Airmen to stand up and run community based testing sites.

At the same time, all three air wings, the 126th Air Refueling Wing, the 182nd Airlift Wing, and the 183rd Wing, along with the 65th Troop Command activated approximately 50 Soldiers and Airmen, approximately 40 were activated to stand up the Joint Task Force to establish command and control and embed at the State Emergency Operations Center.



Ten Airmen from the 182nd Civil Engineering Squadron, based in Peoria, Illinois, conducted reconnaissance and feasibility studies of potential additional healthcare facilities including hotels

and shuttered hospitals to help the state build healthcare capacity. Their findings were used by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to contract the work that needs to be done on sites that could be brought back into use. The CES mission ended on March 26.

As more missions ended, the need for the Guard increased. On March 26, the Governor activated an additional 60 Soldiers; close to 50 from the 1844th Transportation Company based in East St. Louis, Illinois, were assigned to warehousing and logistics operations. The 1844th continues to assist with distribution operations at two warehouses in central Illinois, housing medical supplies and equipment. They are working hand-in-hand with the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois State Police, and other county and municipal

“Every single member of the Illinois National Guard deserves our deepest gratitude.”

Sustainment Brigade, were activated to act as liaisons and planners,

including geospatial planners and medical planners to embed with the State Emergency Operations Center, the Chicago Office of Emergency



Management, and Communications, the Illinois State Police as well as serving at Camp Lincoln, Springfield, Illinois. The liaison mission ended on May 31.

On March 28, as COVID numbers continued to rise, the Governor activated an additional 115 Guard members. These Soldiers came from the 244th Digital Liaison team, the 108th Sustainment Brigade and the 404th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. These Soldiers were liaisons, providing critical information from county emergency medical operations centers to the State Emergency Operations Center. The mission concluded mid-May.

Missions began to ramp up with rising COVID numbers in the state in April. With COVID



outbreaks at multiple correctional facilities, the Governor activated an additional 50 Soldiers from the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team to conduct medical screening missions at Hill, Sherridan and Stateville Correction Facilities supporting the Illinois Department of Corrections. The IDOC mission ended at the end of May.

The 108th was called upon again to provide approximately 40 Soldiers to provide medical screening operations at hospitals across the state from April 6 through the end of May.

Mid-April saw the activation of more Soldiers and Airmen.

“The men and women in our National Guard have been tasked with many challenging missions in this fight against a deadly virus,” said Brig. Gen. Richard Neely, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard. “I’m confident in their abilities, resilience and strength.”

On April 14, the 33rd was tasked to provide some 40 Soldiers to provide mortuary support for various facilities in Cook County. The mission concluded at the end of May.

Nearly 75 Airmen from the all three wings were activated in mid-April. Twenty Airmen from all three wings assisted in setting up alternate housing facilities in Springfield, Schaumburg and Mt. Vernon, Illinois from April 14 through May 15. Approximately 40 from the 126th Air Refueling



facilities. Approximately 100 Soldiers from the 108th Sustainment Brigade began manning sties at Waukegan and Aurora with approximately 50 Soldiers at each while the 182nd Airlift Wing provided close to 50 to man a CBTS at Rockford.

The beginning of May saw COVID numbers again spiking in the state prompting the activation of nearly 60 Airmen from the 126th Air Refueling Wing and the 183rd Wing to stand up a Metro-East CBTS in East St. Louis. Mid-May the Governor asked for more testing sites and additional forces to man them. Approximately 120 Soldiers and Airmen were activated to stand up test sites at the Chatham Theater in Chicago and Champaign, Illinois. The 33rd IBCT and 404th MEB provided some 60 Soldiers to man the Chatham site, with the 182nd, 183rd and 126th providing nearly the same to man the Champaign site.

As COVID numbers began to flatten in the state in May, and as operations started to wind down an additional 20 Soldiers and Airmen from the 108th SB, the 65th TC, the 244th DLD and the 183rd Wing were activated to provide medical screening for off-ramping Soldiers and Airmen on May 11. In the latter half of May, with COVID numbers on a downward trend, the state activated an approximately 120 Soldiers from the 108th to man two testing sites, one moving from Bloomington to Peoria, and the other a new site in Rolling Meadows, Illinois.

“Every single member of the Illinois National Guard deserves our deepest gratitude,” said Governor Pritzker. “In the midst of this COVID-19 emergency, the Illinois National Guard set up drive-thru testing facilities, helped build the alternate care facility at the McCormick Center, provided critical surge support and provided airlifts and logistical support and transportation to get protective equipment to the front lines in the COVID-19 battle. ON behalf of the entire state – thank you.” 🇺🇸



Wing and the 183rd Wing provided support at Illinois Department of Public Health development centers in Kanakakee and Park Forrest, Illinois, providing medical screening for workers and residents from April 20-27.

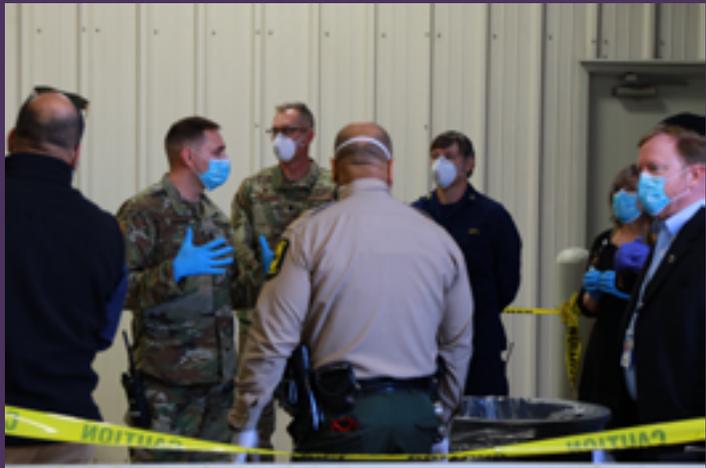
As April drew to a close, the Governor called up an additional 150 Soldiers and Airmen to stand up additional community based testing



More than a thousand words

The Illinois National Guard's COVID Response in pictures

By Sgt. Christopher Garibay, 139th MPAD



Going Cross-Country

182nd Delivers for Alternate Care Facility

By Senior Airman Jay Grabiec, 182nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Two 182nd Airlift Wing C-130 aircraft and aircrews flew pods containing medical beds and equipment cross-country and overnight in a homeland defense mission for use at the McCormick Place COVID-19 alternate care facility.

This is NOT a hospital. It's an alternate care facility that may be needed if hospital beds become scarce, and it's the first of its kind according to Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker. The Governor, during a visit on April 3, 2020, described the alternative care facility as an intervention for citizens in the Chicago area not assigned to critical care related to COVID-19. He credited the work of all the agencies involved.

"Monumental, round-the-clock dedication got this done before we need it-preparing for saving lives in the event things become as bad as some have predicted," Pritzker said.





Polish Military Medical Personnel Join Illinois' COVID-19 Response Efforts

By Robert Adams, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois – Nine members of the Polish military's Medical Corps were in Chicago to support the state's response to COVID-19 April 23 to May 2.

The Polish doctors, nurses and emergency medical technicians recently treated COVID-19 patients in Italy and Poland.

They visited Illinois as part of the Illinois National Guard's State Partnership Program with the Polish military, one of the longest standing and the most successful such program in the United States.

"The Illinois National Guard has been on the frontline of our state's fight against the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, alongside our healthcare workers and first responders," said Illinois Governor JB Pritzker. "We look forward to welcoming medical professionals from Poland and learning from their experience leading the coronavirus response efforts in both Poland and Italy. Illinois and Poland have shared a strong relationship for decades and by continuing to work together, we can help save the lives of Illinoisans."

Piotr Janicki, Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago, also spoke of the strong ties between Illinois and Poland. "With rising concerns over the coronavirus spreading in Illinois, strong alliances, wise decisions and determined efforts remain of utmost importance. Therefore the Polish military medical services are here to bring help at the time of need," Janicki said.

The Polish medical team observed, advised and assisted at medical facilities in the Chicagoland area. The team shared the lessons it learned, insights gained and best practices from COVID-19 response efforts in both Poland and Italy.

"The Polish military's support to us here in Illinois during a global pandemic is a testament to the depth and commitment on both sides of our State Partnership with Poland," said Brig. Gen. Richard R. Neely, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard. "We value the long-

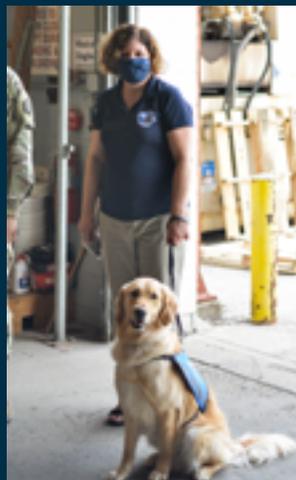


standing enduring friendships we've established with the Polish over more than 26 years. Illinois National Guard Soldiers have fought side-by-side with Polish Soldiers in both Iraq and Afghanistan and now we fight a whole different type of enemy together."

The Polish team exchanged information with local medical professionals through discussions and on-line seminars.

The Illinois National Guard's state partnership with Poland was initiated in 1993 and is one of the oldest and most robust partnerships. Polish military forces have co-deployed with Illinois National Guard units to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003, contributing more than 35,000 troops to both operations. 





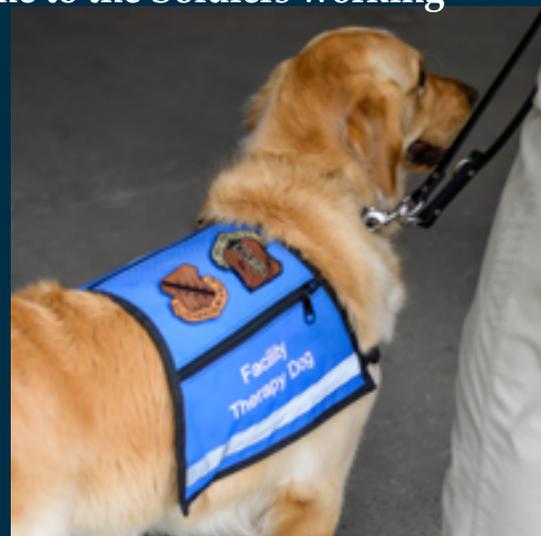
Fur Therapy

Benji visits the 1844th

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



Benji, the 126th Air Refueling Wing's facility therapy dog, from Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, visited Illinois National Guard Soldiers working in Springfield, May 7. Southeastern Guide Dogs trained Benji, a 2-year-old golden retriever, and donated him to the 126th in December 2019. Benji helps to ease stress and raise morale wherever he visits, the stop at the warehouse provides an opportunity for many head scratches and dog kisses to bring a bit of home to the Soldiers working away from their friends and families.



Illinois Air Guard C-130s join the fight against COVID-19

By Tech. Sgt. Lealan Buehrer, 182nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs



EUGENE, Ore. - What could have been a three-day trek across 2,150 miles of interstate highway was shortened to overnight delivery by Air National Guard C-130H Hercules aircraft joining Illinois' fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two aircrews assigned to the 182nd Airlift Wing departed their Peoria air base for the West Coast April 7 to pick up and transport 250 medical isolation pods from the Oregon manufacturer to Chicago Midway International Airport the next day. The negative-pressure tents are for use in an alternate medical facility assembled inside Chicago's McCormick Place convention center. Transporting them fit the C-130's tactical airlift mission set, which allows for a wide variety of oversized cargo and flexible design configurations.

"[The C-130] is the workhorse of the fleet. It's been reliable since the 1950s, and our crews and our maintenance professionals are the best in the business," said Air Force Maj. Justin Childers, a C-130H mobility pilot with the 169th Airlift Squadron who flew on the airlift mission. "We got the people there, we got the airplanes ready to go, and we went off and executed it. The Guard motto about 'Always

Ready' is absolutely true."

The pods are sealed cubicles with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration systems, said Nathan Neckles, a sales manager with the pod manufacturer. The pods will allow medical professionals to work with patients in a contained space using cleaned, recirculated air, helping prevent the coronavirus from spreading.

Childers said that while airlift and airdrop is what they do every day, such a high-visibility operation is not as common.

"It felt really good just to know we're helping get those supplies, so that if this thing spikes, [Illinois] can be more prepared for it," he said. "I'm glad we got to go do it. I really am."

While the Air National Guard operates for the war fight and security cooperation with foreign allies, it also supports homeland operations at the direction of the Governor and Adjutant General.

"We fight America's war, but as the National Guard, we're also here for our communities," said Air Force Brig. Gen. Richard Neely, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard, in an April 8 interview with Chicago's WBBM-TV. "So, this is the most rewarding mission we could possibly have, is to help our neighbors when they're in need."

According to the Air National Guard, the service's homeland defense mission provides life-saving capabilities to local communities and the country during greatest times of need in the event of national emergencies as a result of natural or man-made disasters. Airmen from the 182nd Airlift Wing providing a variety of specialized services are currently mobilized in support of the Illinois state active duty effort against the coronavirus pandemic. 🇺🇸



Chicago-based 178th Infantry Battalion returns home from deployment

By Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois – Approximately 400 Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers who served in the U.S. Central Command Area of responsibility returned home April 18, 2020.

The 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment, headquartered in Chicago, with companies in Chicago, Bartonville, Elgin, Kankakee, and Woodstock, mobilized in July in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker welcomed the battalion home in his press conference today. The Governor praised the "fundamental strength" of the battalion's Soldiers and expressed his "deepest reverence and gratitude" to the 13,000 women and men of Illinois National Guard. He said the battalion added to a proud history that included the famous all African-American "Fighting" 8th Illinois Infantry Regiment.

Company A, based in Bartonville, and Company C, based in Kankakee, arrived at the General Wayne A. Downing Peoria International Airport Friday, April 17. Company A was released to their families in Peoria and Company C was bussed to Kankakee where they met their families.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, based in Chicago, Company B, based in Elgin, and Company D, based in Woodstock, landed at O'Hare International Airport Sunday, April 19. The Soldiers were bussed to the North Riverside Armory in Chicago, where they met their families.

"We are very proud of these Soldiers who performed difficult combat missions in austere conditions," said Brig. Gen. Richard Neely, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard. "In other days we would have a big welcome home ceremony with crowds of families, veterans and other supporters. During the pandemic, we brought them home quietly to protect their safety and the safety of the public. That in no way diminishes our gratitude to these great women and men."

While deployed to Afghanistan, the 1-178th Infantry Battalion served as part of Task Force Southeast in Paktiya and Logar Provinces from September to December and as part of Task Force Southwest in Helmand Province from December to March, providing base defense and area

security.

After arriving at the Combined Joint Operating Area-Afghanistan, the battalion separated across two locations in Task Force Southeast.

"Three companies were assigned to Advising Platform Lightning to provide base defense and local security mission support and augment the Task Force Southeast Commanding General staff," said Lt. Col. Matthew Garrison, the battalion commanding officer said. "The remaining units provided daily 24-hour coverage of the joint operations center."

Four months into the deployment, the battalion moved to Task Force Southwest, according to Garrison.

"While part of Task Force Southwest, the 1-178th Infantry Battalion executed daily security missions outside the wire and fire missions in support of maneuver elements," Garrison said. "We successfully executed complex missions to meet the U.S. Forces Afghanistan Commander, General Miller's, intent to secure coalition forces in three different provinces."

According to Garrison, the battalion conducted more than 95 security patrol missions in two different provinces and more than 30 Advisor Security missions in multiple provinces throughout Afghanistan.

"Our Soldiers were present for the two historical milestones, both the Afghanistan national elections in September and the Reduction in Violence Agreement earlier this year. The battalion Soldiers and leaders conducted an exceptional job under very austere conditions" Garrison said.

According to the battalion commander, Soldiers received various awards, including

Bronze Star Medals, Meritorious Service Medals, Army Commendation Medals with combat device, Army Achievement Medals with combat device, Purple Hearts, Combat Infantry Badges, Combat Action Badges and Combat Medic Badges.

In addition, the 1-178th Infantry Battalion has been recommended for the prestigious Meritorious Unit Citation.

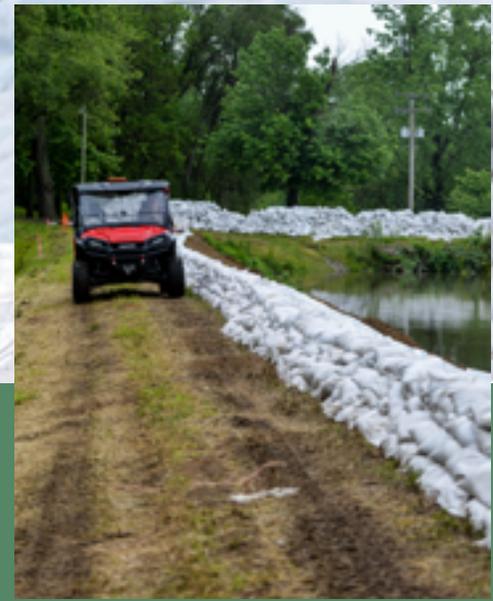
Each unit will hold an official Welcome Home Ceremony at a later date. 🇺🇸



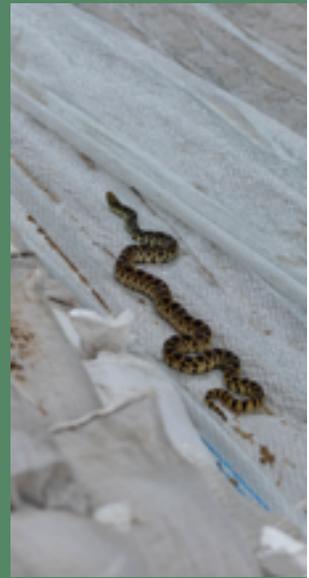
When it rains, it pours

766th BEB helps contain the flood during COVID-19

By Sgt. Stephen Gifford, 139th MPAD



Approximately 60 Soldiers of Company D, 766th Brigade Engineer Battalion based in Bloomington, Illinois, worked over Memorial Day weekend to build up the Illinois River levee system around the Meridosia and other areas along the Illinois River to protect communities in danger of flooding. Soldiers worked to place approximately 40,000 sandbags along the levee in order to increase the height to 30 feet.



THIS DAY IN HISTORY

17



Staff Sgt. Ivory Phipps

2004: Illinois Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Ivory L. Phipps, 44, of Chicago, Ill., died March 17, in Baghdad, Iraq, of wounds sustained from a mortar attack. Sgt. Phipps was assigned to the 1544th Transportation Company, Illinois Army National Guard, Paris, Ill.

March

15



Sgt. Robert M. Weinger

2009: Sgt. Robert M. Weinger, 24, of Round Lake Beach, Ill., died March 15 a result of wounds sustained in Kot, Afghanistan, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. Weinger was transported to Jalabad, Afghanistan, where he later died. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Woodstock, Ill.



183rd Enters the Korean War

1951: The 170th Fighter Squadron, part of the 183d Fighter Wing, based in Springfield, Illinois, is federally activated for the Korean War

19 The 130th Infantry capture Bridge

1945: The Japanese mined the Bauang Bridge to stall the American advance on Baguio, the Philippine summer capital. The bridge was a major line of communication for the Japanese in the Baguio sector. Once engineers succeeded in disarming the explosives on the bridge, the 130th Infantry attacked enemy forces in the nearby town of Bauang, seizing the bridge. This was a key stepping stone in the 33rd Division's drive to capture Baguio.

25 Illinois prepares for war

1917: The 1st, 5th, and 6th Illinois National Guard received notification of activation and organized in preparation for service. The 1st, 5th, and 6th Illinois began duty serving the state, providing security for vital state infrastructure.



Sgt. Simone Robinson

2009: Sgt. Simone A. Robinson, 21, of Dixmoor, Ill., died March 1 at Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio, Texas, of wounds sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near her security post on Jan. 17 in Kabul, Afghanistan. She was assigned to the 634th Brigade Support Battalion of the Illinois Army National Guard, Crestwood, Ill.

29



Staff Sgt. Jacob L. Frazier

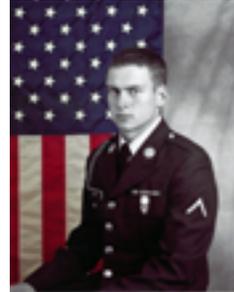
2003: Illinois Air National Guard Staff Sergeant Jacob L. Frazier, 24, of St. Charles, Ill. assigned to the 169th Air Support Operations Squadron (182d Airlift Wing) in Peoria, Illinois. He was killed by suspected former Taliban during an ambush on his reconnaissance convoy at Geresk, in Helmand province in southern Afghanistan.

15



Sgt. Christopher Abeyta and Spc. Norman Cain

2009: Spc. Norman L. Cain III, 22, of Mt. Morris, Ill., and Sgt. Christopher P. Abeyta, 23, of Midlothian, Ill. died March 15 a result of wounds sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near their vehicle in Kot, Afghanistan. They were assigned to the 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Woodstock, Ill.



April

4

The First Illinois goes to war

The 1st Illinois

mustered into federal service on April 4, 1917.

Its primary mission was to protect the people of Chicago, Joliet, and Lockport. The unit guarded power stations around the area, set up posts on important bridges and patrolled waterways. The unit also conducted training at their home armory on the near south side of Chicago in preparation for the war in Europe.



18

Illinois Soldiers Nearly Catch Santa Ana

1847: In one of the closing battles of the Mexican War, 12,000

troops under Mexican General Santa Anna blocked the highway at Cerro Gordo. American Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott needed to drive the Mexican army from the pass in order to open the road to Mexico City. By bombarding the Mexican rear, Scott drove the enemy from Cerro Gordo, and inflicted over 4,000 casualties. The Americans lost 64 dead, 417 wounded. The 4th Illinois Volunteer Infantry intercepted the personal caravan of Santa Anna, and while they did not capture the general himself, they did secure his chest of gold and artificial cork leg.



27

Famous Guardsman: Ulysses S. Grant

1822: Born this day in Point Pleasant, Ohio, Ulysses S. Grant became one of the most famous generals in American military history. Grant began his Civil War service commanding the 21st Illinois Volunteer Infantry. Later he would serve the nation as the 18th President.



29

Sgt. Landis Garrison
2004: Sgt. Landis

W. Garrison, 23, of Rapids City, Ill., died April 29 of an accidental shooting in Abu Ghraib, Iraq, of non-combat related injuries. Sgt. Garrison was assigned to the 333rd Military Police Company, Illinois National Guard, Freeport, Ill.

10

Sgt. Lukasz D. Saczek
Sgt. Lukasz D. Saczek,
23, of Lake



in the Hills, Ill., died May 10 in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan, of wounds sustained from a non-combat related incident. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment, Illinois Army National Guard, Woodstock, Ill.

May

13

Only Illinois unit to serve in Vietnam activated

1968: The 126th Service and Supply Company received mobilization orders for service in Vietnam. The Quincy based unit began overseas service on May 18 as an attachment of the 23rd Supply and Transportation Battalion of the Americal Division. The duties of the 126th included issuing food, clothing, fuel, equipment, and vehicles to units that operated in the combat zone.

18

Sgt. 1st Class William D. Chaney
2004: Sgt.



1st Class William D. Chaney, 59 of Schaumburg, Ill. died May 18, in Landstuhl, Germany from complications after surgery. Chaney was assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation Regiment, Chicago, Ill.

23

Spc. Jeremy L. Ridlen
2004: Spc.



Jeremy L. Ridlen, 23, of Paris, Ill., died May 23 in East Fallujah, Iraq, from small arms fire during an ambush of his military convoy. Ridlen was assigned to the 1544 Transportation Company, Paris, Ill.

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