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Maryland MUSKET

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DESTINATION
RENOVATION



Sgt. Willie Johnson sets his sights on his target during the 1297th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion's Warrior Training Challenge. Soldiers were able to use paint ball guns rather than Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System gear, which gave a more realistic feel. Photo by Spc. Sarah Samoraj



on the cover...

Staff Sgt. Robert Hough, a construction supervisor with the 244th Engineer Company, frames a window for Gunpowder Military Reservation's rappel tower. The Company renovated the rappel tower as well as an obstacle course during their annual training in June. Photo by Capt. Mark Citarella

Maryland Musket

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COMBAT



Pfc. Aaron Hawkins of B Company, 729th Brigade Support Battalion, is executing a maneuver known as passing the guard in an attempt to establish a dominant position on Sgt. 1st Class Carrie Heinze, an operations non-commissioned officer with the 70th Training Regiment

TRAINING

Since August of 2007, the Maryland Army National Guard's 70th Training Regiment has been offering a level one combatives course at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation in Reisterstown, Md.

This course helps the Maryland National Guard comply with the Army chief of staff's directive to the whole Army that every Soldier should receive some combatives training, said Sgt. 1st Class Charles Brubaker, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the marksmanship training unit of Joint Force Headquarters. Brubaker also said Maryland is one of only a handful of states that have been proactive about getting a combatives program started.

At present, the course provides level one combatives certification under Aberdeen Proving Grounds because a level three combatives instructor is required, and all instructors at Camp Fretterd are currently level two

strategy that consists of closing the distance with their opponent, establishing dominant position and ending the fight with a submission move, said Martin.

However, Soldiers attending this four-day, forty-hour train-the-trainer course are tasked with not only mastering level one maneuvers, but with learning to teach them as well, said Brubaker.

"In order for students to test out of the class, they have to demonstrate and instruct back one of the three drills they've learned plus a submission move, and they don't know ahead of time what that's going to be," Brubaker added.

The ability to send one Soldier through training and have them disseminate information to their unit is the main advantage of offering such a course, said Martin, but both instructors agree that this dissemination has been the main



instructors, said Brubaker.

Brubaker, who was injured in his last level three course attempt, will probably be the one who ascends, Martin said. He also stated that if and when this occurs, the course at Camp Fretterd will be a self-sustained Maryland National Guard operation.

There are four levels of combatives. A level four instructor is needed to certify level two instructors, and level three and four certifications can only be attained at Fort Benning, Ga.

The term combatives itself refers to an army-wide, martial arts-based program that was designed to teach Soldiers how to defend themselves in combat, should they lose their weapons, explained 1st Lt. Ron Martin, an Officer Candidate School and Warrant Officer Candidate School project manager for the 70th Regiment and combatives course instructor at Camp Fretterd.

In the level one course, Soldiers are introduced to basic ground fighting skills based on a three-phase fighting

downfall for the few students who have failed it.

"If you can't teach the material back, you're not going to get certified," said Martin.

For this reason, they urge units to take the training aspect of the course into careful consideration when choosing to enroll a Soldier.

"A unit needs to look for a person who they believe can teach the information back. There are several people who may come through but they might not be good teachers. You can learn the material but you need to be able to regurgitate the material and teach so others can understand," remarked Martin.

"It's a fun class," said Spc. Edward Neyra, a student in the course.

"It's all about how you come in and your mind frame; whether you think you can handle the class or not and be able to teach somebody after you're done with the course," said Neyra, a JFHQ records sergeant.



MAINTAINING WARRIOR TASKS AND SKILLS

*Photography by Spc. Sarah Samoraj
Text by Capt. Edward Liu*



Four units came together to compete in the first Maryland Army National Guard Army Warrior Training Challenge hosted by the 1297th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion in August.

The challenge consisted of 18 teams from the 224th Area Support Medical Company from Pvt. Henry Costin Armory in Laurel, 1229th Transportation Company from Lt. Col. Melvin H. Cade Armory in Baltimore, and the 1729th Maintenance Company and 1297th CSSB from Havre de Grace Armory in Havre de Grace. Soldiers competed in four-man teams, receiving goes and no-goes on tasks among five stations, earning 10, five and zero points per event depending how many teammates received goes.

Soldiers began the competition navigating from one point to another, working both individually and as a team. Teams were built with both experienced and non-experienced Soldiers so skills could be built and practiced, making the teams more equitable.

“Our team did better than what was expected since it consisted of three cooks and one nuclear, biological and chemical specialist,” said Spc. Kenneth T. J. Smith, a nuclear, biological and chemical specialist from the 1229th. “We had to prove our skills are still proficient when a mission comes into play.”

The teams worked together engaging seventeen different tasks including recovering an M18A1 Claymore Mine, reacting to an unexploded ordnance hazard, employing hand grenades, identifying terrain features on a map and reacting to direct fire.

“I think the [competition] went exceptionally well for its first time,” said Lt. Col. Adam R. Flasch, the

1297th CSSB battalion commander. “It will build esprit de corps amongst the ranks, as well as construct competent, lethal and tactfully efficient Soldiers who are able to do their military occupational specialty as well as being combat ready.”

When insurgents see the 1297th bumper sticker on the back of a HUMVEE, they will know not to mess with us,” said Flasch, whose motto is “stay alert, stay alive.”

Though the competition had a couple of initial problems to overcome including a tornado warning, the mission was a success, Flasch said. The challenge will become an annual event and, instead of being for two days, will expand to a three-day challenge in August 2009.

The first-place team received a trophy, and teams placing in the top three earned bragging rights and cash awards, Flasch said.

“It’s \$240 well spent,” said Flasch, who is giving \$100 to first-, \$80 to second- and \$60 to third-place teams.

Bragging rights and trophies only go so far. The money will build motivation since there are a “few extra bucks on the line,” he said. “They can say, ‘I got \$100 of the battalion commander’s money!’” Leaders should always endeavor to make their training interesting and memorable, he continued.

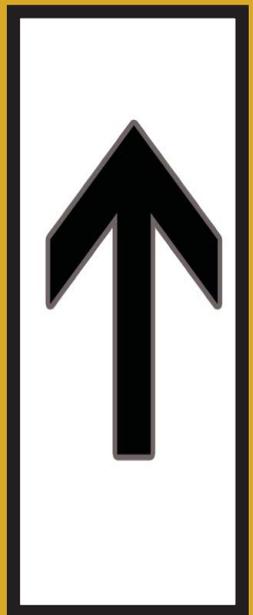
Though cash prizes were an added bonus, Smith said the overall mission was an incredible experience.

“I felt that this was the best battalion event I have had since being in the Army,” Smith said. “In the classroom, there is a limited amount of involvement that can be done. In the field, the sky was the limit. ... Did I mention I loved this weekend?”



From the
Ground

Up



Photography and Text by Capt. Mark Citarella



Some change is hard to recognize, but in the case of a 60-foot rappel tower the repairs are hard to miss. This is thanks to the efforts of Soldiers of the 244th Engineer Company.

The vertical construction unit, based out of Cade Armory in Baltimore, spent their annual training, remodeling the rappel tower and obstacle course at Gunpowder Military Reservation this June.

The 80-Soldier company, made up of carpenters, plumbers and electricians spent two full weeks re-building the rappel tower, that was originally constructed in 1974, and upgrading the obstacle course. “The project was an overwhelming success,” said company commander 1st Lt. Chris Whong.

The Engineers were originally scheduled to attend Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, La. for their annual training, but when planning fell through, Whong came up with a new plan. After reviewing three different construction projects within the state, Whong chose the 24-year-old tower as the best choice for his unit and got the whole project off the ground in less than 90 days.

The work that needed to be done on the

tower itself included replacing all rotted boards from the ground up, piece by piece.

The size of the stairs and hatches were made wider for safety reasons. The unit also built a window in the middle of the tower so units could practice entering a building by rappelling from the roof. The standing infrastructure of the tower was not changed.

“It was great to practice my skills, as well learn new skills,” said Pvt. James Fields, a carpenter/mason, who has been with the unit for just seven months. “It is rewarding seeing all of our hard work,” said Fields.

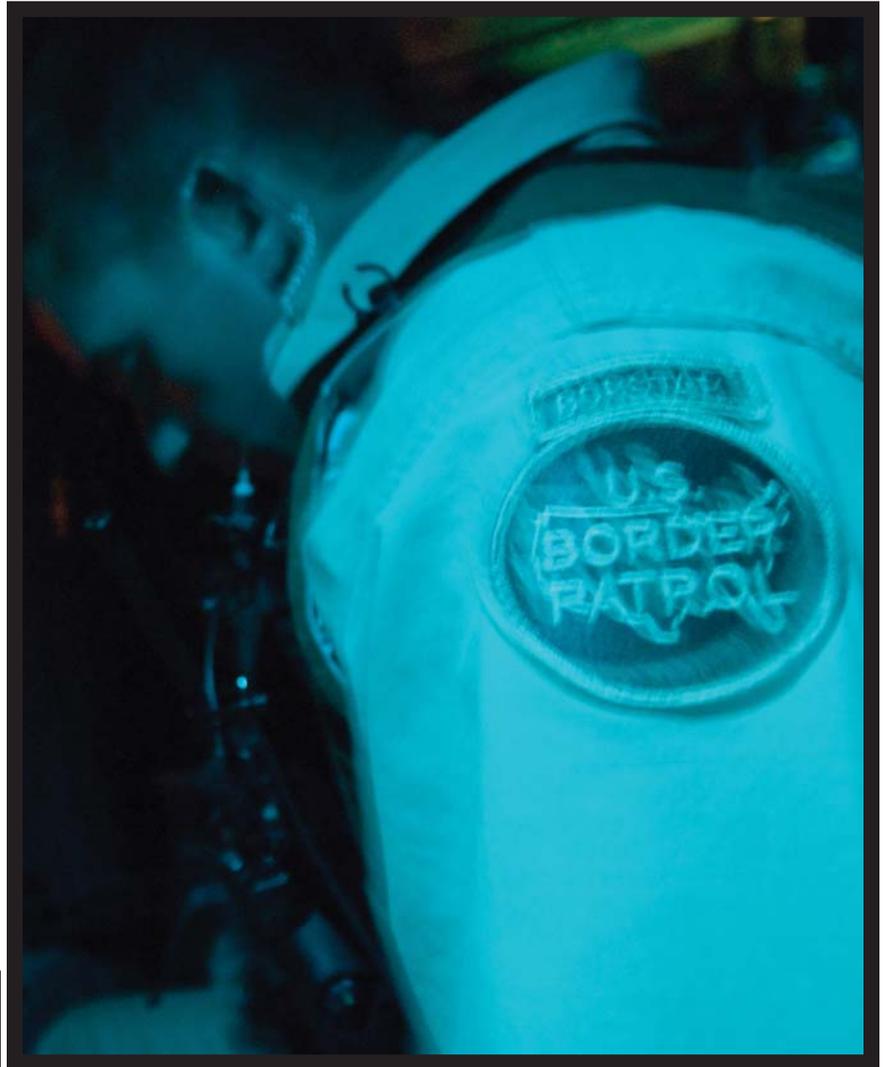
The obstacle course renovations were mostly cosmetic in nature. They included upgrading and replacing the lumber, as well as, constructing new signs and replacing the ropes. “I hope the Soldiers who use the tower and obstacle course have fun,” said Pfc. Charles Morrison, a material electrician. Morrison was cross-trained during the project on carpentry, since he was not working in his military occupational specialty.

The total value of the project was estimated at approximately \$30,000 and was given to the unit by the state G-3 office. Whong said that he was given “general guidance” from higher, but he was able to develop the plan that was based off of what needed to be done.

Whong plans on taking his unit to rappel on the tower in August of 2008 for a company field training exercise.

PATROL

BORDER



*Photography by Spc. Aaron Bishop and
Spc. Thaddeus Harrington
Text by Spc. Thaddeus Harrington*

A Maryland Army National Guard Blackhawk flies through calm night skies over the Arizona desert to rendezvous with a BORSTAR border patrol agent. Dotted with rock formations, and in some parts mountain ranges, the flat deserts near some of the Arizona-Mexico border are so remote that cell phones become useless.

For over six hours, the sight from the helicopter window seemed repetitive: desert, flat cityscape, mountains, and long stretches of desert; there are often no towns for miles. After surveying the Arizona and the Southern California-Mexico borders for several hours, the Blackhawk returned to base by sunrise.

For about two years, thousands of National Guard members have assisted the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol along the 1,969-mile U.S.-Mexico border spanning four U.S. states: California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and six Mexican states. Named Operation Jump Start, this mission helps USCBP with logistics and observation, freeing agents from many back end tasks and allowing them to patrol the border.

In support of OJS, members of Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment, Maryland Army National Guard rotate about six Soldiers in four rotations to Papago Army Airfield, Phoenix, Ariz., providing transportation for USCBP agents. Stationed in Edgewood, Md., the C/2-224 is part of the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade. The unit sent pilots, maintenance personnel and two UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters to Papago April 21 and will completed its mission July 31.

Although OJS fulfills Soldier's annual training requirements, this is an operational mission, states Capt. David M. Paolucci, commander of C/2-224. "What probably best prepared most folks is our time in Iraq: high [operational] tempo, flying late at night, long missions, hot desert environment. . . . Some of the newer guys did not deploy with us to Iraq, it's a great opportunity for them to get the training that'll prepare them."

C/2-224 and all other aviation elements supporting OJS fall under Task force Raven which falls under Joint Task Force Arizona. TF Raven provides an aerial surveying vehicle, transporting and alerting border patrol of any illegal crossings, persons or vehicles, as well as performing search and rescue missions.

"The aircraft is a platform for them (USCBP) to search and interdict. When we find undocumented aliens we get on the radio to contact ground forces," said Maj. Perry E. Jones, operations officer for Task Force Raven and airspace management officer 29th Infantry Division, Fort Belvoir, Va. "A lot of what we get involved with on this mission (OJS) includes not only the undocumented aliens but also the apprehension of narcotics. We find the coyotes (smugglers) and the drug runners out there."

Most of C/2-224's missions are flown at night. The May 27th night mission picking up agent R24 and surveying the Yuma, Ariz., and the Southern California borders was uneventful. There is a 92 percent decrease in illegal crossings in the Yuma sector, stated R24, a U.S. Border Patrol agent.

Performing daily missions, with over 190 flight hours in sandy desert conditions reminiscent to Northern Iraq, the aircraft require heavy maintenance to keep flying. Maintenance is performed daily. Heavier degrees of maintenance occur at different periods: 120-hour inspection, 10 and 40-day corrosion inspections and a 90-day inspection – the dismantling and reassembly of the helicopter.

"When we got here for our rotation, we had a total of eight aircraft, of which five were flyable. And then, as the week proceeded, we were down to three flyable aircraft; as of this past weekend (May 25) we got it up to seven flyable aircraft," said Sgt. Kenneth R. Skidmore, a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter repairer for C/2-224.

About 200 Maryland National Guard members have deployed in support of OJS since its beginning. In 2007, the 175th Wing deployed 53 Airmen to Arizona and New Mexico. Many Maryland Guard members continue to support this mission at home and on the Southwest Border.

"The mission that we're doing here is definitely having a positive impact on the security of the United States," said Jones. "Slowing the flow of narcotics into this country is definitely of strategic importance. The intel people for the Border Patrol have personally told me that in the time that I have been here they have caught members of Saddam's Fedayeen crossing the border with groups of aliens; they've caught known Al-Qaeda members crossing the border. So absolutely, securing our border is strategically important and the Guard's helping to get that done."

Diversion Tactics

*Photography by Sgt. Isolda McClelland
Text by Capt. Mark Citarella*





It seemed like a normal Saturday morning at drill for the 200th Military Police Company, but this was no ordinary Saturday. It was a drill weekend that consisted of civil disturbance training, which is some of the newest training for all of the Maryland National Guard's military police.

The 115-person company is commanded by Capt. Trisha Weitzel, and their main mission is to be the state's quick reaction force. But as the National Guard's mission expands, so does theirs. That is the reason for civil disturbance training.

Aside from their normal unit mission of security and assistance to local authorities in cases of emergency, the civil disturbance training has been added to the list of duties.

The weekend consisted of classes and demonstrations on Saturday and practice exercises all day on Sunday. The classes included lessons on crowd dynamics, riot control formations, squad formations and shield and baton training. One final class consisted of the introduction of non-lethal weapons kit of which a total of eight have been given out in the state; all eight of them are with the 200th MP Company.

Sunday's drill was the hands-on portion of the training. It began in the morning with practicing all of the techniques taught in class on Saturday, including work with the baton and shield, setting up the formations and a live civil disturbance situation in an urban environment.

During the live exercise, senior members of the company staff acted as the civilians causing the disturbance while the lower enlisted Soldiers had to protect certain parts of the urban area. It was in this portion of the training that Capt. Weitzel's company motto held to form. The unit displayed teamwork, cohesion, and most of all, the Soldiers had fun together.

"Have fun together, but work hard together," said Weitzel. She keeps it as a company motto.

Each of the company's three platoons took their opportunity at controlling the civil disturbance. The platoon leaders and platoon sergeants conducted after action reviews to correct and re-enforce the training.

The Company will use this training as the QRF unit for the state in addition to their other missions. According to the company training non-commissioned officer, Staff Sgt. Peter Hatfield, the unit has conducted security operations for events such as the annual Preakness Parade and the Army-Navy game at M&T Bank Stadium in December of 2007.

Combat Preparedness Training

*Photography by Staff Sgt. Howard Hodges
Text by Staff Sgt. Howard Hodges and
Pfc. Stephen Scott*



In the civilian world, a person's job title usually denotes his or her primary job; a secretary is a secretary, a finance manager is a finance manager, a cook is a cook and so on. In the Maryland Army National Guard, that same person's title is; a secretary is a Soldier, a finance manager is a Soldier and a cook is a Soldier. Guardsmen and women are always Soldiers first and any other label attached to them, while important, always follows.

So when the question is posed: what do administrative specialists and support personnel in the National Guard do during their annual military training, the answer is simple. They do the same thing every other Soldier does, they train. Serving as a testimony to this was Joint Forces Headquarters.

In July, at Camp Baker, in northwestern Maryland and Camp Fretterd in Reisterstown, they trained on many of the essential skills required of any Soldier.

According to Master Sgt. Glenn A. Beares, the training non-commission officer-in-charge, "The purpose of the training was to train Joint Force Headquarters Soldiers in warrior tasks."

"Soldiers were refreshed on things that they had learned years ago," said Master Sgt. Perlisa D. Wilson, the JFHQ Readiness NCO.

Soldiers tackled such tasks as: react to direct fire (utilizing color-marking M-16 rounds), react to indirect fire (using grenade simulators), map reading, first aid, rappeling, urban warfare training, nuclear-biological-chemical attacks, as well as familiarization with combatives (hand-to-hand combat).

During the react to direct fire exercise, JFHQ evaluators had the Soldiers use simunition rounds. The rounds are 5.56 mm caliber reduced-energy non-lethal cartridges that are tactically accurate up to 100 feet. Best of all, unlike blanks, they leave a detergent-based, water-soluble color-marking compound. This allows evaluators to accurately assess any simulated hits in any force-on-force training while still providing a realistic combat training environment.

"AT went great. It was excellent. The training was very efficient," said Wilson.

Despite the summer heat and humidity at Camp Baker and Camp Fretterd, these administrative specialists assaulted the opposing forces during the react to direct fire exercise, responded to the billowing colored smoke during a mock chemical attack and assisted the simulated casualties in the first aid drill.

In short, they did what Soldiers do.

Rebuilding Bosnia

Photography and Text by Spc. Thaddeus Harrington





The National Guard's State Partnership Program began in 1993 following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The program aimed at increasing cooperation between former Warsaw Pact Eastern European countries and the United States. It also fosters mutual interests and establishes long-term relationships across all levels of society. It introduces these countries to democracy, assists them to build professional military intuitions and helps their responses to civil emergencies.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were the first countries to join the partnership program and the Maryland National Guard was partnered with the Republic of Estonia. The Maryland Guard was instrumental in getting Estonia into NATO, and in 2003, became one of the first states to have a second partnership; one with Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"Maryland was setting an example with the state partnership program with Estonia," said Major Jon C. Eisberg, deputy chief and bilateral affairs officer for the Office of Defense Cooperation, U.S. Embassy, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Eisberg, a Westminster, Md. native and the former commander of A Company, 1-158 Cavalry Regiment, was asked by the adjutant general to take the Deputy Chief position in 2006.

The SPP consists of military-to-military interactions – training exercise, unit personnel exchanges and non-commissioned officer development; military-to-civilian interactions – military support of civil authority, disaster response and consequence management; and civilian-to-civilian interactions – developing professional intuitions through civic leader visits, university education exchanges, professional and chamber of commerce exchanges.

"As the program matures, then we'll start to get into the civilian aspects. We have done some civilian-to-civilian events. We've done two civic leader visits. We brought both civilian leaders from Maryland as well as business leaders and educators over here to meet some of their counterparts in an attempt to create self-sustaining relationships," said Eisberg.

The many military-to-military events that the MDNG supported have helped reform the BiH armed forces, contributing to their entrance into the Partnership for Peace program. SPP is a bilateral program while the PFP program is a multilateral NATO program and among the first steps into NATO accession. The two programs are not tied together, but the SPP can assist a nation in getting into PFP.



During the June 5 U.S.–BiH Military Cooperation Day in Mostar, the MDNG’s Color Guard conducted a joint presentation of the colors. This was the first time that they have played such a role in a Bosnian event. The ceremony included a joint U.S.-BiH paratrooper drop and F-16s fly over. Later, the Ambassador, along with the BiH government signed a memorandum of understanding, confirming continued funding of the International Military Education and Training program.

In the summer of 2006, the 175th Air Wing of the Maryland Air National Guard completed a medical humanitarian mission. They served more than 2,000 patients in 14 different villages, providing medical access to people who normally would not have had it.

The 235th Civil Engineering Flight of the 175th Wing is scheduled to renovate the interior of a primary school in the town of Vlasenica in eastern Bosnia. This humanitarian assistance project falls under the Guard’s deployment for training program to get training on real-world projects for members of civil engineer squadrons.

They will work and live in the town where the school is located for 30-40 days. In addition to renovating the school, the 235th along with Bosnian engineers plan to repair the Igman War Memorial. The memorial is dedicated to a U.S. ambassador, a U.S. diplomat, a U.S. Army colonel and a French Army driver who were killed in 1995 when their vehicle rolled off the road on the side of Igman Mountain.

September 1-16, the 115th Military Police Battalion sent 15 MPs to Sarajevo to conduct joint training exercises.

This is the first time we’re doing an MP unit-level exchange, and this is where we’re going to start maturing our military-to-military aspect, said Eisberg. “We’re going to start creating unit partnerships. We’re going to partner the Maryland MP Battalion with the Bosnian MP Battalion.”

From its 1993 start, the State Partnership Program has evolved and now pairs 59 countries around the world with 50 state Guard organizations.

“I see the program maturing from mil-to-mil to civ-to-mil and civ-to-civ,” said Eisberg. “I see Maryland becoming an integral partner in assisting BiH refine a professional, well-trained military on the road to NATO integration. I see Maryland and Bosnia conducting more and more activities together to include deploying together.”

“Today, our armed forces remain committed to preserving peace and stability in this region and stand ready to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina as it further integrates into NATO. The United States armed forces stood by Bosnia and Herzegovina during some of the most difficult times in its recent history and will remain a deeply committed friend, partner and ally as you move towards a brighter future,” said Charles English, U.S. ambassador to BiH, during the Military Cooperation Day ceremony.





RED ARMY





“This is a 180-degree difference,” said mechanic and Staff Sgt. Mark D. Singleton, gesturing around the recently constructed Field Maintenance Shop in Dundalk, Md.

Singleton, who has 12 years experience as a mechanic, began working at the new 20,000-square-foot Maryland Army National Guard facility shortly after its completion in May.

The \$7.1 million FMS at Dundalk’s armory replaces a 50-year-old, 3,500-square-foot building and helps mechanics to better service and repair the vehicles and equipment often needed for critical Guard missions.

“Over there, we only had two bays for five mechanics,” said Singleton of an older Maryland Guard FMS where he worked at the Parkville armory. “Here we can double the amount we put out in a week compared to the other shop.”

The upgraded Dundalk shop provides a better quality work environment through its increased space.

“The old shop that’s across from here has three small bays,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Wallace P. Edwards, Dundalk FMS shop chief. “Now (in the new facility) we have four bays that are drive-through. When you’re pulling wheels and different things, you have room to maneuver.”

Inside the recently completed structure, tools of modern technology streamline the workflow.

“Some of the new tooling that came along with the facility offers us a chance to be more productive,” said Edwards. “It allows you to really get under the equipment and move around it better, so you can diagnose quicker and see more

things.”

The new equipment includes an overhead crane that can handle more than seven tons, useful for pulling engines and lifting vehicles.

The shop’s eight mobile hydraulic lifts replace standard jack stands, allowing for vehicles to be raised to a number of different heights, lessening physical strain on the shop’s workers.

“If you’ve got a mechanic that’s four-foot-nine doing an exhaust job, he can drop it down to his level,” said Edwards. “If you’ve got the guy that’s six-foot-five, he can take it up a little higher. So you can be more comfortable while you’re working.”

Other hi-tech additions lessen the workload and protect the environment.

A vacuum pump system, through a hose, transports the used oil products from directly from a collection container beneath the vehicle and into large oil storage tanks that are emptied periodically. A filter crusher for discarded fuel and oil filters extracts fluids from the filters to ensure proper disposal.

Edwards calls their philosophy the “go-green mentality.”

“We have these solar tubes throughout the building,” he said. “A lot of these little rooms don’t even need to have the light on half the time, so it saves [energy] there.”

Because safety is such an important component of any military duty, the new FMS was equipped with this in mind.

The FMS has a standard ventilation system. “When they were doing this build, they went ahead and designed a stack post for us,” said Edwards, “so

when you bring your five-ton [truck] in, you can hook your exhaust vent up.

“In wintertime,” he added, “when the doors are shut, and the mechanics are trying to stay warm, that exhaust is going right out the door.”

Protective considerations were taken further into account, extending even to the Soldiers’ families’ safety at home.

Edwards pointed out a washer and dryer included for the mechanics. “They can use this,” he explained, “instead of taking their stuff home where their kids could be exposed to the same chemicals as they are.”

Demonstrating the tool room, Edwards remarked on the increased storage space that could easily accommodate tools for new equipment, such as the 2.5-ton Light Medium Tactical Vehicle. “There are just so many things going on right now equipment-wise,” he added, “but we have the room to grow as Maryland changes.”

The FMS was officially dedicated during a ribbon-cutting ceremony held on the premises July 24.

The shop will serve 15 Maryland Army National Guard units throughout the Baltimore metropolitan area and service 275 of the Guard’s vehicles.



In a Moment's Notice

Photography and Text by Spc. Keith Muckler



While some military families were grilling in their backyards Labor day weekend, Maryland National Guard Soldiers of the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade were preparing for deployment to Louisiana to help with Hurricane Gustav relief efforts.

The mission for the 29th Aviation Brigade's command section was to "take control of aviation assets and relief missions," said Capt. Aaron Harding.

"Our job is to move troops and supply resources to the community, such as food and clean water," said Harding.

The 29th Aviation Brigade command deployed quickly and was put on standby when they landed at Esler Field in Pinefield, La.

"Within thirty-six hours from the first phone call, we had fifty Soldiers, two Blackhawks and a CH47 Chinook heading to Louisiana. This shows Maryland's readiness and preparedness to react to a major event such as Gustav," said Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Beyard. "Maryland's readiness and preparedness shows we can plan for the worst and hope for the best."

"The planning that went into this mission put us ahead of the game. I would say it is better to have people waiting to be caught of guard like with Katrina," said Harding.

While the impact of Gustav was not as devastating as some hurricanes in the past, including Katrina, Maryland was ready and waiting.

"We're fortunate to have such assets within the Maryland National Guard that can be deployed within hours, and as a result, play a real and meaningful role in helping to save lives and begin relief and recovery efforts," said Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley.



Final Frame...



Spc. Taesik Kil, a native of Salisbury, Md., completes an inspection of the servo area on one of two Maryland Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters sent in support of Operation Jumpstart a part of Task Force Raven at Papago Army Airfield, Ariz. Kil is a Blackhawk repairer and aircraft structural repairer for Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment.

Photography by Spc. Thaddeus Harrington