Watertown Daily Times | The Malone Telegram

SPECIAL SECTION

HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED

NOVEMBER 11

VETERANS DAY

After September 11

Fort Drum and the North Country in the years after the attacks



AFGHANISTAN / 2004

Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment regroup during a mission.

The Mountaineer file photo



FORT DRUM / HOMECOMING

Families welcome soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team back from Afghanistan.

Jennifer Caprioli / The Mountaineer

Northern New York Newspapers
260 Washington St.
Watertown, NY 13601
****ECRWSSEDDM****
Residential Customer

PRSRT STD
US Postage
PAID
Watertown, NY
Permit No. 184

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The deployments, the families and the homecomings

U.S. withdraws forces in Iraq as balance of power shifts to Iran

Mustafa Salim, Alex Horton, The Washington Post

BAGHDAD - U.S. military forces are set to depart from bases in Iraq on Sept. 30 following two decades of American involvement that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians and thousands of U.S. troops, and now leaves a battered but increasingly influential Iran at the center of the region's future.

The last remaining forces are relocating to Jordan, the headquarters for the ongoing mission to fight Islamic State militants, U.S. officials said.

The withdraw concludes a Biden administration agreement made in 2024 to zero out U.S. military personnel in Iraq by this year. Recently, there were about 1,500 combined U.S. personnel and anti-Islamic State coalition members in Iraq, a U.S. official said, as forces consolidated and departed ahead of the Sept. 30 deadline.

That mission will continue in Jordan, from where the Pentagon says it can target militants who pose a threat to U.S. personnel and interests, the official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss military planning.



Gov. George E. Pataki shakes hands with soldiers in Oct. 2004 after the ceremony at Fort Drum for the departure of the New York National Guard's 42nd Infantry, which is going to Iraq. Watertown Daily Times

The redeployment of U.S. forces has been a muted event in Washington. The 2003 invasion triggered a significant human and financial toll that will be felt for generations. As many as 210,000 Iraqi civilians were killed between the invasion and 2023, along with 4,599 U.S. service members, according to figures from Brown University's Cost of War Project.

Roughly 170,000 U.S. troops were in the country at the height of the war in 2007, when sectarian violence spiraled out of control. President Barack Obama vowed to end the unpopular conflict after he was elected in 2008. He declared an end to combat operations and an eventual pullout in 2011.

The Islamic State, borne of al-Qaeda militants and other extremists, blitzed across Iraq and Syria in 2014, prompting Obama and an international coalition to reenter the region in a campaign that lasted into the first Trump administration.

The decades of conflict has cost U.S. taxpayers more than $2.8 trillion, Brown estimated, including related veterans care and operations in Syria.

Iraq emerged from the conflict with the Islamic State with a growing economy and a quasi-democracy that has been tested by religious sects in the government, particularly those with close ties to Tehran.

The U.S. departure has been celebrated as a victory in Iran, which remains in an uneasy ceasefire with the U.S. and Israel following months of war.

Iran has long taken advantage of Iraq's destabilization, seeding the government with friendly officials and arming militia groups that have expanded Tehran's influence.

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran's parliamentary speaker, remarked on the U.S. withdrawal last month during a diplomatic visit to Baghdad that included a visit to the site where Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani was killed in a U.S. strike in 2020.

"The resistance front is the one prevailing now," he said at a news conference, referring to cross-border Iranian political and military groups.

The Sept. 30 departure of U.S. forces was meant to coincide with the disarmament of those Iranian-backed militia groups, which has largely ignored or defied the calls to disband. The timeline for the militias to disarm has been extended to June 2027, Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi has said.

Iran may be boosted by the U.S. withdrawal, but its recent behavior in the region has also created unlikely alliances against Tehran that challenge its power, said Mark Cancian, a senior adviser with the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank.

The 2003 operation that toppled Saddam Hussein threw Iraq into chaos, eliminating Tehran's adversary on its western border, Cancian said. But its targeting of countries that house U.S. troops during the Iran war has pushed some nations like Saudi Arabia closer to Israel, Cancian said, creating a bulwark that was "unimaginable" decades ago.

"That's a great help for the United States," he said, "because we always had difficulty in balancing the Arabs and the Israelis."

U.S. forces in Jordan will focus on Islamic State militants. If the group "metastasizes to something beyond [Iraq and Syria's] control, and they want our help, then we'll come in and help them," the U.S. official said.

Iranian-allied militias in Iraq have for years targeted Americans in the region, escalating attacks after Israel launched its devastating campaign in Gaza. Three U.S. soldiers were killed in one such attack in Jordan in 2024.

"We only went after [Iranian-backed militants] in response to attempted attacks on our people," the U.S. official said. But overall, contending with those groups will henceforth be an "Iraqi responsibility."

Iran's hard-line Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has recently evolved their paramilitary operations in Iraq, which may pose difficulties for Baghdad, according to a senior official in the Iraqi prime minister's office.

The IRGC has focused its resources in Iraq on smaller cells outside the larger militia networks to evade detection and deterrence, the official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive security matters. The recent disarmament process has highlighted concerns about splinter groups.

The Iraqi official said, for instance, that the Iranian-backed militia group Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq turned over only about half the arsenal they were estimated to have, with its leaders saying the rest had been claimed by defectors who formed a new militia.

That new organization receives substantial Iranian support, has cooperated with Houthi allies in Yemen and was involved in recent attacks on energy infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, the official said.

THANKS TO OUR VETERANS

We are filled with gratitude for our great nation, and to those who serve, sacrifice and protect our freedom.

2026 SUBARU OUTBACK



BOB JOHNSON AUTO GROUP SUBARU

18352 US RT. 11, WATERTOWN, NY 13601 • (315) 782-1600

2026 HYUNDAI PALISADE



BOB JOHNSON AUTO GROUP HYUNDAI

18352 US RT. 11, WATERTOWN, NY 13601 • (315) 782-1600

2026 VOLKSWAGEN ATLAS



BOB JOHNSON AUTO GROUP

18493 US RT. 11 • WATERTOWN, NY 13601 • 315-788-8989

2026 DODGE CHARGER



BOB JOHNSON AUTO GROUP DODGE

18712 US RT. 11 • WATERTOWN, NY 13601 • 315-788-7400

2026 FORD 250 SUPER DUTY



BOB JOHNSON AUTO GROUP

84 CAPRARA DRIVE • PULASKI, NY 13601 • 315-298-5114

2026 CHEVY SUBURBAN



BOB JOHNSON AUTO GROUP

4 CAPRARA DRIVE • PULASKI, NY 13601 • 315-298-5181

FORT DRUM TROOPS DEFENDING OUR FREEDOM

Watertown Daily Times

Editor's Note: This editorial was published by the Watertown Daily Times on Dec. 7, 2001.

Much the same way that Dec. 7, 1941 lives in our memories as the day of infamy, Sept. 11, 2001 will forever be known as the day the world changed. It stands with that now distant December morning as a painful reminder that the freedom we cherish as Americans will only remain ours if we are determined and courageous enough to defend it. America has once again been awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. That same fighting spirit that was stirred in the wake of the Pearl Harbor attack has once more mobilized the people of a peaceful nation.

There is no better example of our spirit than the men and women of Fort Drum's 10th Mountain Division.

The single most deployed division in our military during the last decade, the 10th Mountain Division has carried out missions in Iraq, Somalia, Haiti and the Balkans, none more dangerous than the one they face today in the Afghanistan theater.

They are playing a crucial role in writing the war on terrorism, and as they carry out their mission, they take with them not only the deep respect of the American people, they take with them our gratitude as well.

But this war is unlike any we have fought before. It will not be like Iraq, with its swift conclusion or Kosovo two years ago, where no ground troops were used and not a single American was lost in combat.

This war is being fought on many fronts, in more than 60 countries. Every part of this fight will be difficult. Every part requires courage, conviction and hard work. But in every part, we know justice is on our side.

It is important that we never forget why we have sent our troops into harm's way. Important that we never forget how we felt watching the planes fly into the twin towers or listening to those chilling answering machine messages. Important that we never forget the bravery of the firefighters, police and emergency workers who died trying to save others.

The crimes committed on Sept. 11 were not just crimes against America, they were crimes against humanity and civilization itself and were an attempt to steal our freedom.

President Bush said, "Americans have known wars - but for the past 136 years, they have been on foreign soil, except for one Sunday in 1941. Americans have known casualties of war - but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful morning. Americans have known surprise attacks - but never before on thousands of civilians. All of this was brought upon us in a single day, and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself was under attack."

Make no mistake, we are in a fight for our principles and our way of life. And as the 10th Mountain Division fights to protect our freedom, those of us at home must do everything we can to keep America strong and united so that when they return they know exactly what they were fighting for.

Every citizen must uphold the values of America and remember why so many have come here. We must be patient and have confidence in our economy, and we must teach our children about the tragic events of Sept. 11 as we were taught about Pearl Harbor.

President Bush, Governor Pataki and Mayor Giuliani have demonstrated tremendous compassion and leadership during these difficult times, and we should stand behind them and support their efforts to rebuild and protect our families.

And we must come together to rebuild New York City. Let a rebuilt Manhattan stand as a testament to American strength and resolve.

Throughout our proud history, America has united during times of crisis. We were united in our response to the atrocious attacks on Pearl Harbor 60 years ago, and our nation is united now against the forces of terrorism.

Consider the words of the 10th Mountain Division's song: "We are the 10th Mountain Infantry, with a glorious history on our own two feet, all our foes we'll defeat, light fighters marching on to victory. We go where others dare not go, through the heat or cold or snow, we are proud to be in the Army of the free. Climb to glory, Mountain Infantry. Climb to glory, the Light Infantry."

To the top troops. To the top.

AMERICANS PONDER THE PROSPECT OF WAR; OPINIONS RANGE FROM GUNG-HO TO DON'T GO

Associated Press

Editor's note: This story originally appeared in print on October 4, 2002.

The young soldiers at upstate New York's Fort Drum are ready to fight in Iraq. A preacher near their base prays those orders won't come. Out in Ohio, a man who flew 35 combat missions against Nazi Germany ponders the prospect of a new war and says, "I'd go a little bit slow."

While the ultimate decision on attacking Iraq will be made by the powerful in Washington, citizens elsewhere are engaged in a distinctively American tradition - debating in public forums and private thoughts whether going to war is wise.

On the fringes, some Americans wish a war against Saddam Hussein had already started; others oppose U.S. military action of almost any type. But in dozens of interviews conducted across the nation by Associated Press reporters, most people - like Pam Gillispie of Sioux Falls, S.D. - sensed that the choices facing their leaders are complex.

"We need to protect ourselves," said Gillispie, 52, who grew up in the Vietnam era, and has a 22-year-old son. "At the same time, I hate the thought of going to war. I just want to be ready. I would hate to see another 9-11."

In Athens, Ohio, 82-year-old John Jones, the World War II veteran, has been working hard at keeping up with Iraq-related news.

"I'd like to see the United Nations unified behind us, rather than just the United States and England," he said. "If we get the U.N. behind us, it would be all right to go into an all-out conflict. Until then, I'd go a little bit slow."

Jones said he has noted an occasional gap in the rhetoric of the Bush administration and some military commanders.

"The political people are pushing, and the military are saying hold back a little," Jones said. "That gives me pause."

At Fort Drum in Northern New York, some active-duty soldiers suggested war was necessary.

"The U.N. has given Saddam enough chances," said Pfc. Brent Litchard of Northumberland, Pa., who is convinced Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. "We just can't sit around and wait for him to use them."

Lindsay Forfa, a private from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., said she recently got married, "so personally I'm not looking forward to the possibility of being deployed to Iraq."

"But I think the United States has to take control of the situation," she said. "Saddam is a terrorist in every way."

Sgt. Alex Meek of Red Oak, Iowa, said he was "impartial" about whether war should start, but added, "If the president tells me to do my job, I'm going to be one of the first ones to jump up and say, 'Ready!'"

See WAR T5

EARLY ROLE FOR 10TH APPEARS LIKELY IF U.S. INVADES IRAQ

By Paul Hornak
Times Staff Writer

Editor's Note: This story was published by the Watertown Daily Times on Nov. 14, 2002.

FORT DRUM — War plans leaked by senior Bush administration officials last weekend appear to point to an early role for the 10th Mountain Division if U.S. forces invade Iraq.

The plans, outlined in the New York Times, call for quick capture of land in Iraq to be used as a springboard for attacks deeper in the country. These so-called forward bases would need to be secured against counter-attack and guerrilla or terror strikes.

See IRAQ T6

War

From T4

In nearby Watertown, N.Y., Jehovah's Witness preacher Armand DeBardelaben suspects war is inevitable, but hopes he is wrong.

"Any time you have war, people die," he said. "I don't want anyone to die."

DeAnna Tonak, 18, of Centerline, Mich., is a student at the University of Michigan's Dearborn campus and worries that some fellow students might have to fight if war breaks out. She also fears war would raise the danger of terrorist attacks in the United States.

"This is going to be a war fought here," Tonak said. "There will be bloodshed in this country."

In South Dakota, the Iraq debate has particular resonance because of the pivotal role of native son Tom Daschle, who as leader of the Senate's Democratic majority has sometimes differed with President Bush.

Stan Lorenz, 51, a Sioux Falls businessman, voted for Bush and will stand by him in the event of war.

"That's why we elect a president," Lorenz said. "Whatever he decides, I guess I would support it."

But Morris Oakie, an American Indian from Sioux Falls, said the United States would risk overextending itself by invading Iraq.

"It's kind of dumb," said Oakie, 27. "We're already dealing with another problem on terrorism. I don't know why the president would get himself into a bigger hole than the one he's already in."

At a bar in Des Moines, Iowa, engineer Mike Hoffmann, 47, said war with Iraq was overdue. "We should have finished it the first time," he said, referring to the Gulf War.

By contrast, Josh Armbruster, 25, a Des Moines chef, was skeptical of Bush's motives.

"It sounds more like he's trying to do what his dad didn't quite do," Armbruster said. "The president's calling anybody who doesn't support the war un-American - give me a break."

In Seattle, Chinese immigrant Pokow Chun, 73, said she lived through Japan's invasion of China in 1937, and wishes the United States would decide against invading Iraq.

"I saw the result of war," she said. "It's horrible spending all our time fighting each other."

Another immigrant, Iraq-born Ala Faik, 50, of Ann Arbor, Mich., also hopes bloodshed can be avoided, but not at all costs. Saddam, he said, "is a war criminal who needs to be removed."

We support our Troops and Fort Drum.
Thank you for your Service



Li'l Stinker

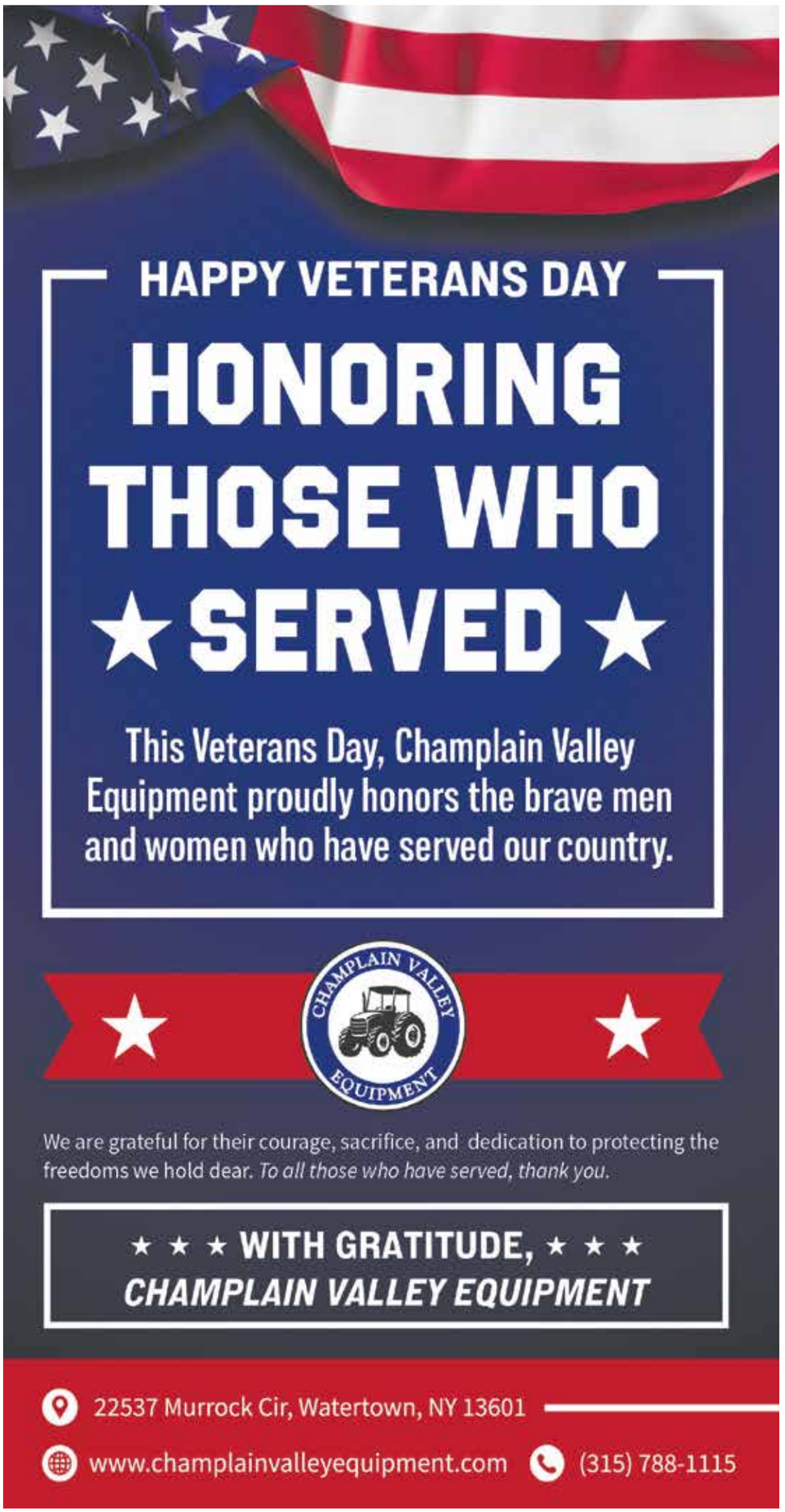


Double "B" Contracting

• 315-346-6215 •
Gary, Linda, Mark & Jon Bush

Clean & Repair Septic Tanks

Portable Toilet Rentals For Any Occasion



Iraq

From T5

That's exactly the task the 10th performed earlier this year in both Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

Again referencing unidentified administration officials, the Times report said any move against Saddam Hussein will build on U.S. successes in Central Asia - further reason to bring Fort Drum-based light infantry troops into the fight early. The 10th had previously been mentioned as likely to join the fray late, possibly in house-to-house urban warfare in Baghdad.

Officially, the division is mum on the Times report.

"We can't comment on any current or future plans," Maj. Bryan Hilferty, public affairs officer, said Tuesday. Reciting the standard answer to speculative queries, he said the division is ready to "do whatever the president calls on us to do."

Troops didn't practice securing forward bases during regularly scheduled war games at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La., last month, he said. "They did low-intensity conflict working their way up to operations other than war," he said.

About 3,500 2nd Brigade soldiers engaged in highly publicized urban warfare practice while at JRTC in October. Units from 1st Brigade get a crack at Fort Polk aggressor forces in December.

But Maj. Hilferty said the division is ready at any time for a variety of tasks. "We're prepared to do almost anything. That's the beauty of light infantry," he said.

As early as October 2001, less than a month after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, divisional units were securing coalition facilities in the Middle East and Central Asia. Three elements of 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment deployed to Kuwait to hold Camp Doha and As-Saliyah.

The battalion's anti-tank platoon ended up at a decrepit former Soviet base in Karshi-Khanabad, in southern Uzbekistan, securing a forward operating base for troops headed into nearby Afghanistan. Task Force 1/87, also on guard at Karshi-Khanabad, became the theater's quick-reaction force, ready to back up Special Forces troops in a pinch.

Troops eventually moved to Bagram Air Base, north of Kabul, Afghanistan, another long-disused outpost of the Soviet empire standing in the middle of the most fought-over real estate of the war between Northern Alliance warlords and the Taliban. Again part of the division's job was base security.

Both task forces 1/87 and 4/31 went on to confront al-Qaida remnants in the eastern Afghan mountains, 1/87 famously in Operation Anaconda.

The plan revealed in the Times envisions 250,000 troops attacking Iraq by air, land and sea to avoid early massing in countries such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia. The Saudis have forbidden the United States to use its territory for an attack on its northern neighbor, and the Turks also have expressed reluctance to participate.

Iraq on Wednesday accepted a unanimous United Nations Security Council resolution calling on Saddam to disarm and allow unfettered inspection of suspected weapons plants. Some observers have said that, in the event the Iraqi dictator balks, the United States could retaliate by the end of the year.



10TH MOUNTAIN PRACTICES FOR TOTAL DEPLOYMENT

AN EXERCISE IN PLANNING PROMOTES THE PROCESS, NOT THE END RESULT, OF SENDING OUT A COMPLETE DIVISION

By Paul Hornak
Times Staff Writer

Editor's Note: This story was published by the Watertown Daily Times on Nov. 30, 2002.

FORT DRUM — The Army's most-deployed division spent two days earlier this month practicing how to send more soldiers off to battle than ever before - but never went anywhere.

The 10th Mountain Division's exercise in total deployment took place around a U-shaped table using, in addition to the brainpower of about 100 participants, maps of the forbidding but fictitious country of Gorgas. Experts on hand from the Battle Command Training Program at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., spurred the discussion.

"We've deployed a lot in the past year, but we've never deployed the whole division," said Maj. Stevan J. French, division simulations officer. "Our discussion was, what happens, what is different about, sending 40 percent versus the whole division."

It was the first of two seminar-style exercises in November involving the division's top officers and their assistants. The second, at Fort Leavenworth, focused on planning for battle.

Prepped by these and other dry runs in the coming weeks, the division will undergo the granddaddy of simulated battles, the Warfighter, next March.

Neither of the November exercises referred to Afghanistan, where headquarters troops from the 10th spent the better part of a year recently, or Iraq, where so many seem to think the 10th will go next. But the Army's exercise philosophy is that they shouldn't have to.

"This is generic. What are our procedures? Have we done everything we need to do in coordination with other agencies to make sure we have a good plan, so when we're called on to do something, we don't jump through hoops," said Maj. French. Generic or not, there was some familiar geography. The target country, Gorgas, looked remarkably like Central Asia, the major said.

"It was mountainous, without a major river but lots of little ones in our way," he said.

Senior division officers, including Maj. Gen. Franklin L. Hagenbeck, division commander, were asked to get 10,000-plus troops and all their equipment and supplies from Drum to Gorgas doing on paper everything they would do in real life. That included coordinating with trains, aircraft and ships with the assistance of Transportation Command staffers.

Participants weren't scored and there was more than one right answer, flex-

See DIVISION T8



Training our Albanian allies



Albanian and U.S. National Guard soldiers practice room-clearing tactics during combined training exercises at the 'MOUT' compound on Fort Drum in August 2004. NORM JOHNSTON / WATERTOWN DAILY TIMES

Division

From T7

ibility being the key. "Every deployment is going to be different, but do we have a plan, and can we adjust to a specific situation?" said Maj. French.

He said the planning exercise at Leavenworth concentrated on answering the question, "How do you do this?" - "this" being defeating the "bad guys" from Redland. Divisional headquarters staff were from Blueland. Also thrown into the mix for realistic unpredictability was a country calling itself neutral.

"They were wavering. They may or may not be on our side," he said.

Having received its "slice" of the action, or mission, the staff set about using the combat tools at its disposal to see to it that Redland couldn't win.

"Because there are a hundred different ways to do things, this makes you discuss whether we have the same understanding of how we do deception, how we integrate the Air Force, and so forth," Maj. French said.

By the end of the week the division had its plan. It was hefty - detailed enough to inject thousands of troops into "a real situation in a real country," the major said.

But the Leavenworth exercise controllers shelved it. They do that to every division staff they train.

"It's not the product they're looking for, it's the process," said Maj. French. They wanted to make sure "we have our decision-making process down," he said.

Next on the calendar for the division will be a series of command post exercises early next year. An exercise involving its parent unit, the 18th Airborne Corps, follows in February.

The culmination of the series is Warfighter. In that computer-driven exercise, sophisticated communications and processing equipment moves outdoors to tents, giving the headquarters staff a taste of the rigors and, inevitably, the glitches of field operations.

That exercise also will be managed by Fort Leavenworth.

DRUM SOLDIERS GET WAR ORDERS



Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade, 78th Division at Fort Drum observe a simulated vehicle-borne improvised explosive device, at one of the training exhibits on base in September 2003. Norm Johnston/ Watetown Daily Times

By Paul Hornak
Times Staff Writer

Editor's Note: This story was published in print on Feb. 8, 2003.

FORT DRUM — The Pentagon has told two companies of the battalion famous for hunting al-Qaida in the caves of Afghanistan that they'll be moving out for territory "centered on Saudi Arabia," their commander said Friday.

A and B companies of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, are expected to depart the north country in March, Lt. Col. John Spiszer said. Some 260 soldiers began lining up for shots and checking legal and other details in their personnel folders at battalion headquarters.

The order adds the first 10th Mountain Division combat units to the growing force assigned to the "Central Command area of operations." That force numbers about 100,000 now, with more to come, the Pentagon has said.

It will be the division's first tactical deployment since fierce fighting in Central Asia about a year ago.

Col. Spiszer broke the news Thursday, telling troops "they're going in support of the war on terror and to prepare for future operations." Those staying behind will be training with soldiers tapped to go, on the assumption that they'll be called next, he said.

"We'll be having Opsec classes, medical training, NBC again, before we deploy," he said.

Opsec is short for operational security - how to keep secrets from the enemy. NBC means nuclear, biological, chemical. The unit's executive officer, Maj. Thomas Christensen, said NBC has been a focus of recent training.

"We have been training on how to react to that threat and fight in that environment," he

See ORDERS T10

Orders

From T9

Christensen, said NBC has been a focus of recent training.

"We have been training on how to react to that threat and fight in that environment," he said.

One of the shots on a laundry list being administered Friday was to counter the effects of anthrax. Immunization against smallpox, another potential threat in Iraq's arsenal, wasn't made available.

A medical officer, Maj. Michael E. Flaherty, said the Army followed the advice of the Centers for Disease Control in omitting the vaccination. CDC recommended it be given only to "medical providers because they'd be the first to encounter smallpox," he said.

Troops have undergone urban warfare training in the past two months, said a platoon sergeant from Company B, Sgt. 1st Class Jamie Nakano. "We've been following just our usual training schedule: qualification, MOUT training," he said as his soldiers waited, folders in hand, for a so-called readiness check.

MOUT is the acronym for military operations in urban terrain. The fort uses a mock village deep in the northern training area to practice clearing hostile forces from multistory buildings.

Leaders are forbidden from divulging exact destinations of the two companies to be deployed. But Drum officials have said that units would be stepping up training on skills most in need on likely battlefields in advance of departure.

It is understood, though not officially confirmed, that in the event of war with Saddam Hussein, the mobile, yet lethal 10th Division will probably fight the final Battle of Baghdad street by street. And if Saddam's alleged order to use chemical weapons against invaders becomes a reality, the division will be staking its survival on the rapid and correct use of gas masks and rubber suits.

"We are better at urban operations than most units I've been with," Maj. Christensen said. "But everybody with a light infantry unit spends a lot of time on urban combat."

The major saw action in eastern Afghanistan during the 4/31st's cave-clearing operations. Some soldiers who will be shipping out soon returned last April after as many as six months fighting al-Qaida and the Taliban.

Pvt. Josh Smith, a Company B rifleman, spent months in Afghanistan and other trouble spots in the Central Command area of operations, which extends from the Persian Gulf to China. "I'm ready to do it again, to go where they send me," he said. "I hope we'll be doing something great again."

Most in Company B weren't in Afghanistan, said R.D. Murphy of the Drum Public Affairs Office.

"The guys are ready. They're really well-trained," Sgt. Nakano said.

According to Col. Spiszer, members of A and B companies won't be confined to the installation while they wait to deploy. They'll get a chance to take some time off, he said.

When the units deploy, they may end up in scattered locations. "I told them they're not going to be together, they're going to different locations," he said, describing his talk to his men. "I said I don't know how long this will last; it's an open-ended thing."

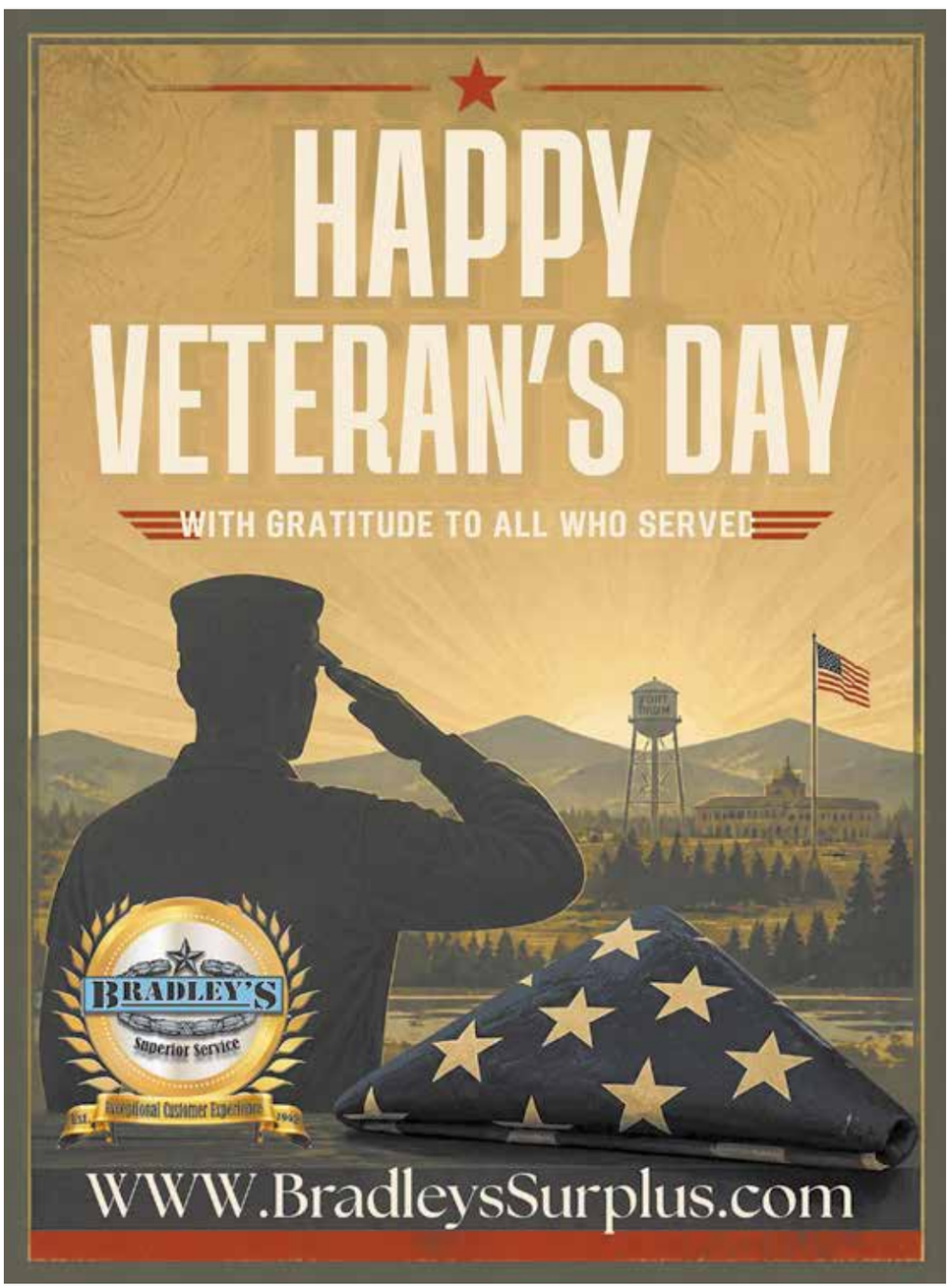
He said, however, that the unit has received more notice this time around than it did before deploying immediately after Sept. 11.

"Charlie Company went to Aberdeen Proving Ground on four hours' notice during Operation Noble Eagle. Another group went to Kuwait on very short notice," he said.

Units from 4/31 entered the Shah-e-Kot valley as a follow-on to Operation Anaconda last year. They scoured rugged mountainsides in the waning days of winter searching for enemy holdouts and caches of weapons and supplies.

They killed a handful of suspected al-Qaida fighters and captured thousands of pounds of explosives and weaponry before turning the task over to the British Royal Marines in April.

Last week, about 100 division soldiers trained to decontaminate vehicles and fight fires began deploying to Central Command areas. The 59th Chemical Company and 95th and 520th engineer firefighters are support units not ordinarily exposed to front-line combat.





10TH DIVISION TROOPS AFGHANISTAN-BOUND

By Paul Hornak
Times Staff Writer

Editor's Note: This story was published in print on March 22, 2003.

PARTS OF THREE UNITS HEADING OUT IN SUMMER

FORT DRUM — A day after announcing some 2,500 10th Mountain Division troops will be heading overseas, presumably to Iraq, the Army said Friday that hundreds and perhaps thousands more will go to Afghanistan this summer.

"A 1st Brigade combat team will be going to Afghanistan this summer at a date to be determined to relieve the 82nd Airborne Division to continue the Operation Enduring Freedom mission in Afghanistan," said 1st Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe.

All three battalions of the brigade will be involved, he said. In addition to the 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, which fought in Operation Anaconda in eastern Afghanistan a year ago, also making up the combat team will be the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment and 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment.

Sgt. Maj. Grippe didn't say how many troops from each unit would be deployed. The last time around, the 10th Division contributed a force of about 1,000 plus Maj. Gen. Franklin L. Hagenbeck and his headquarters, which commanded coalition ground troops.

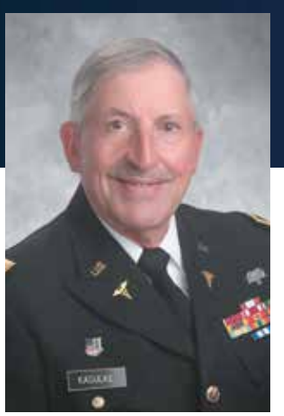
Gen. Hagenbeck is 10th Division and Fort Drum commander. There is no indication he will be returning to Afghanistan.

The Fort Bragg, N.C.-based 82nd Airborne Division took the reins from the 10th and the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) divisions in Afghanistan last summer. Both the 10th and 101st had tangled with al-Qaida and the Taliban in the Army's biggest battle since Vietnam, at

See TROOPS T12

With Honor

On this Veteran's Day, Hospice of Jefferson County celebrates the 250th Anniversary of the US Army and remembers and honors all Veterans for their service and dedication to our Country.



We also remember and honor our former medial director and friend,

Retired U.S. Army Reserve Major General
Robert J. Kasulke, M.D.

We miss you, Dr. K. and are grateful for your dedication to Hospice and our We Honor Vets program.

We Honor Veterans

Jefferson County Hospice
Make Every Day Matter

To all who have worn the uniform, thank you for your courage and sacrifice.

Honoring Our
TROOPS & VETERANS

130 Canal St,
Carthage, NY 13619
Phone: (315) 554-9376

ZERO DOCK STREET

Wednesday thru Saturday
4pm-9pm
Drinks til 10pm

Coming Home



Specialist Dwayne K. Trueheart holds his daughter Jaeden C., 4, while talking to Douglas R. Everly after they and about fifty other soldiers returning from Afghanistan were reunited with their families at Fort Drum in 2006.

Troops

From T11

Shah-e-Kot, near the Pakistani border.

Some two dozen 10th Division troops, most from 1/87th Infantry, were injured during the fight, which began with 18 straight hours of combat followed by nearly three weeks of follow-up maneuvering in the rugged hills in March 2002. The unit spent about six months in Afghanistan based at Bagram Air Base, north of the capital, Kabul.

Sgt. Maj. Grippe, then command sergeant major of 1/87, was among the wounded.

He announced 1st Brigade's new assignment to journalists on hand to watch troops practice skills needed to win the Expert Infantry Badge. The badge is awarded to soldiers who score sufficiently high in a long list of events, from weapons firing to map and compass to first aid.

"All these skills apply to open combat," he said, adding soldiers would use them "to hunt down and kill al-Qaida next summer through winter."

Some 3,500 soldiers from the 82nd Airborne are serving in Afghanistan.

The 1/32nd and 2/22 infantry regiments' most recent overseas assignments were as peacekeepers in Kosovo and Bosnia, respectively. A light infantry battalion has about 600 troops.

A combat team of the sort the 1st Brigade will lead could be composed of portions of the three units named, plus groups providing artillery firepower, supply and medical support and other needed services. The team's commander can fashion it to his liking, however, based on his idea of the ideal mix to accomplish tasks it is assigned.

Col. William Garrett III commands 1st Brigade.

GENERAL: 10TH WOULD LIKELY HELP WITH ATTACK ON IRAQ

By Paul Hornak
Times Staff Writer

This was published June 11, 2002 by the Watetown Daily Times.

If the United States attacks Iraq, the 10th Mountain Division likely will be involved in the action, Maj. Gen. Franklin L. Hagenbeck said today.

Summarizing remarks made to the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization (FDRLO), the 10th's commanding general said he based his supposition on the size of today's Army.

"In reintegration training this fall, we're training to be prepared for that type of eventuality," he said.

He said, however, that the division is not preparing specifically for an invasion but is including Iraq in a list of possible targets.

"The president has said that Saddam Hussein is a bad guy, and at some point the U.S. and international community has to do something about that," he said. "I don't know how that will occur: through diplomacy or by conventional attacks. If it's by conventional means, there are only 10 divisions in the U.S. Army.

"I'm quite sure that the 10th Division will be part of the fight in some form or fashion."

He said small or large units could eventually be involved.

Reintegration training is directed at reintroducing returned forces into the combat training cycle. Large parts of two divisional elements, the 1st battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment and the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, got back from Afghanistan about two months ago.

The units fought al-Qaida/Taliban forces in the eastern part of the country and helped clear caves and bunkers of die-hards afterwards.

Other 10th units recently completed six-month peacekeeping assignments the southern Yugoslav province of Kosovo and in Bosnia- Herzegovina.

F. Anthony Keating, civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army, said today that the possibility the 10th Division might be fighting again soon comes as no surprise.

"We kind of know the 10th is going to be tested again. It would be pretty unusual if it didn't get another call," he said.

During the Gulf War, U.S. ground forces numbered around 750,000, but troop strength dropped to around 450,000 during the 1990s, the lowest level since before World War II. Seconding the general's comments on the size of the Army - now some 490,000 troops - he said that with so many commitments around the world, every unit has to pull more than its weight.

"It really stretches the Army. The Army and the Marines depend more on manpower and less on technology than the other services," he said. "Soldiers are stretched across all these missions and it creates huge difficulties for commanders."

He said the 10th Division must be ready to "respond to whatever is decided by the commander in chief of this country. The whole military does."

Gen. Hagenbeck addressed 40 FDRLO members here Monday at the organization's annual meeting. The general, who serves as coalition ground forces commander in Central Asia, is back in the north country until early July, when he will return to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan.

He said he could be stationed in Afghanistan until Christmas, though he said it

See IRAQ T14





*You must maintain both a Rewards Checking Account and a Rewards Savings Account relationship with the North Country Savings Bank to open this account. A deposit of $50 is required to open the required Rewards Savings Account, and a $25 deposit is required to open the required Rewards Checking Account. A daily balance method will be used to calculate interest on each of these accounts, and a daily periodic rate will be applied to the principal. You must deposit $1,000.00 to open an account and you must maintain a minimum balance of $500.00 in the account to obtain the disclosed annual percentage yield (APY). If you withdraw any of the principal before the maturity date, we may impose a penalty of ninety days simple interest at the rate in effect on the account. Interest earned within a term may be withdrawn, but withdrawal will reduce earning. Fees could reduce earnings. APYs are effective November 3rd, 2026.



In January 2006, Chief Warrant Officer 4 George B. Murphy, an instructor pilot with the 10th Mountain Division's Headquarters Company, surprises his wife, Sarah, with a phone call Saturday afternoon before deploying to Afghanistan from the Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield on Fort Drum. More than 7,000 10th Mountain Division soldiers will spend the next year in Afghanistan. Michael Fagans/ Watertown Daily Times



Soldiers in the 10th Mountain Division's Headquarters Company wait on the tarmac to deploy to Afghanistan from the Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield on Saturday in January 2006. Michael Fagans/ Watertown Daily Times



Soldiers in the 10th Mountain Divison bow their heads for a moment of silence during a 9-11 memorial service held at Bagram airfield in Afghanistan, September 11, 2003. Michael Fagans/ Watertown Daily Times

Iraq

From T13

was likely he would be home again sooner.

He said any decision on deploying forces against Iraq would remain in the hands of the Central Command chief, Gen. Tommy Franks.

The FDRLO was also told New York is providing the group with $250,000 to help ensure the post is not included on any future lists of base closings.

"The soldiers and their families who are based here have become our friends and neighbors and we want to make sure they stay here in Northern New York," said State Sen. James Wright, R-Watertown, in a press release. "It is good for the economy and good for the Army."

Mr. Wright announced the money jointly with Assembly members Dierdre K. Scozzafava, R-Gouverneur, and H. Robert Nortz, R-Cape Vincent. The state gave the FDRLO $250,000 in 1998 during the previous round of base closure discussions.



A U.S. Army Chinook helicopter departs an observation post after resupplying 3-71 Cavalry troops in a remote area in Afghanistan. J.R. Ridgeway

DRUM TROOPS LIKELY GONE 'TIL WAR'S END

Watertown Daily Times

Editor's Note: This story was published in print on March 25, 2003.

FORT DRUM — Troops from the 10th Mountain Division deployed to fight in Iraq are likely to be gone for the duration of the war, a Drum official said Monday.

"I think until the war is over, I think it's up to Saddam. He gets a vote," said Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty, division public affairs officer, responding to a question at a press conference.

He said another 120 division soldiers left by air for the "Central Command area of operations" Sunday night and Monday morning. This brings to about 1,000 the total number of Drum-based troops deployed since late January.

Another 2,000 division soldiers are expected to depart soon, Col. Hilferty said. Additionally, some 3,800 Reserve and National Guard soldiers from 28 units are mobilizing at the fort, he said.



Soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division salute Tuesday during a 21-gun salute honoring Maj. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III and Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai. Amanda Voisard/ Watertown Daily Times



Proudly Serving Those Who Serve.

HONORING THOSE WHO ANSWERED THE CALL.

This Veterans Day, Watertown International Airport proudly honors the brave men and women who have served our nation, along with the families who have stood beside them. We are grateful for their courage, their sacrifices, and their commitment to protecting the freedoms we cherish. We are proud to play a small part in connecting those who serve with the people and places they call home.

WATERTOWN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

www.watertownairport.com

AFGHAN DUTY FOR 5,000

Watertown Daily Times

Editor's Note: This story was published in print on April 26, 2003.

As many as 5,000 Fort Drum-based troops could be pulling duty soon in Afghanistan, many of them assigned to train the Afghan army, a task up to now left to the Special Forces.

Col. Emory R. Helton, Fort Drum garrison commander, said Friday that at least a third of the 10th Mountain Division - 3,500 soldiers out of about 10,000 - will be returning to Central Asia for six-month stints. A few will deploy in the next 30 days, he said.

"The division has been tasked to go back to Afghanistan," he told the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization. "The commanding general will have the whole enchilada."

An infantry brigade and the fort's aviation brigade will form the core of a task force that will replace the 82nd Airborne Division, the Fort Bragg, N.C., unit that has provided muscle for Operation Enduring Freedom since last summer. Col. Helton said the "enchilada" falls to the 10th Division commander as the 18th Airborne Corps exits the on-the-ground leadership picture.

The corps is parent unit of both the 82nd and the 10th divisions. A senior general from the 18th stepped in with the departure of Fort Drum's Maj. Gen. Franklin L. Hagenbeck from Afghanistan. With the latest move, the command structure returns to the status quo of the 10th's earliest days in the country.

For at least some soldiers, the change will come as a relief. There were complaints of excessive spit and polish at Bagram Air Base, U.S. headquarters in Afghanistan, as a three-star general and his staff took up residence last year.

See DUTY T18





Coakley Home AND Hardware
coakleyhomeandhardware.com

2535 State Hwy. 68, Canton, NY 13617
(315) 386-8161
Monday - Friday: 7:30 AM - 6:00 PM
Saturday: 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Sunday: 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

622 Lake Flower Ave., Saranac Lake, NY 12983
(518) 891-8161
Monday - Friday: 7:30 AM - 7:00 PM
Saturday: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Sunday: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM



A Chinook helicopter lands in a field next to an almond orchard during the 10th Mountain Division's Operation Mountain Viper in the Deichopan Valley in eastern Afghanistan in the September of 2003.Michael Fagans/ Watertown Daily Times

Duty

From T17

The new two-star at Bagram apparently won't be Gen. Hagenbeck, however. The man who oversaw a coalition forces victory against al-Qaida in Operation Anaconda in March 2002 is coming to the end of his two-year tour with the 10th Division.

He is expected to move on to another assignment in July, the colonel said.

Whoever replaces Gen. Hagenbeck is in for a long stretch away from the north country. The Army has decided to post him in Afghanistan for 12 months rather than the usual six months or less for lower-ranking troops, said Col. Helton.

"Our leaders are going to be there for a year," he said.

He called Afghanistan "still a dangerous place to be." The division will go back to hunting al-Qaida terror forces on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, but will also train the Afghan army.

"One of the most important things that we do, if not the most important thing that we do" is how the colonel described the training of foreign soldiers. The 10th will teach not just the basics but also "human rights and democracy," he said.

"We show them what democracy is about," he said.

He pointed to Latin America, formerly a region of dictatorships, now budding with democracies, as an example of the fruits of U.S. military training programs. Afghanistan has tried to form 800-man units graduated from a program run by U.S. Special Forces, but has encountered obstacles.

Newly trained troops haven't performed as well as expected, and competing forces of rival warlords have yet to be quelled.

Col. Helton said a brigade will be devoted to training the Afghans. That could mean as many as 1,600 division soldiers.

Col. Robert T. Guglielmi's 10th Mountain Division Support Command will operate a joint logistics center - a central supply and maintenance system for U.S. forces in Afghanistan. "They did it before, they'll do it superbly again," Col. Helton said.

The magnitude of the 10th's presence in the country will vary with changes in mission. He put the likely crest of involvement at half the division's strength.

Hints of a new Drum deployment to Afghanistan have been dropped for months, but Col. Helton's description to some 40 people at Jefferson Community College was the fullest yet. About 1,000 troops spent around six months in Central Asia beginning in November 2001.

A new Afghanistan commitment will draw off men from at least one duty the 10th has been performing regularly for years. The fort won't be sending a full complement downstate this summer to help train West Point cadets.

"We won't have that full mission. We will have part of it," said Col. Helton. "We simply will not have enough soldiers to take that on."

There are some 1,500 division troops presently deployed to Iraq. The colonel did not mention what effect, if any, the undertaking in Afghanistan will have on their future.

MILITARY SUPPORTERS, TAKE NOTE: FOLDERS, OTHER GEAR MADE IN NNY

Norah Machia
Watertown Daily Times

Editor's Note: This story was published by the Watertown Daily Times on Feb. 15, 2004.

JRC WORK CENTER IN WATERTOWN TURNS OUT ITEMS CARRIED BY GIS IN FIELD

Military items manufactured at the Jefferson Rehabilitation Center's work center in Watertown are being used by soldiers, including Fort Drum troops, deployed throughout the world. The Production Unlimited work center at 615 W. Main St. produces military equipment folders and equipment tags, said David A. Moran, JRC director of vocational services and training.

The vinyl tags are used for identification purposes and attached to a variety of equipment including duffel bags, he said. The equipment folders are often placed inside military vehicles.

"These items are made with camouflage materials and they're shipped all over the world," Mr. Moran said. "They go with the soldiers when they are deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq."

In 2003, the JRC work center produced 1.8 million tags and 142,000 equipment folders, he said.

JRC's work center program allows people with developmental disabilities to learn work skills that can be used later if they decide to pursue employment in the community.

For people with more intensive disabilities who aren't able to work in the community, Production Unlimited gives an opportunity for employment.

About 80 individuals with disabilities work at the facility, Mr. Moran said.

"They really love their work," he said. "It helps them develop their self-esteem. They really take pride in their accomplishments."

The agency obtains contracts with assistance from the National Industries for the Severely Handicapped. NISH is a federal organization that works to develop employment opportunities for the developmentally disabled.

The agency's work, however, is not limited to the military.

Blue college exam booklets, used by thousands of students nationwide for essays and other types of written tests, are also manufactured at the JRC work center.

Last year, 120,000 college exam booklets were made at the Production Unlimited center, Mr. Moran said.

While many of JRC's contracts are with state and federal government agencies, the agency also contracts with north country businesses.

The work center provides some assembly and packaging work for Hana Sportswear, Dexter, which manufacturers items such as reflective nylon mesh running vests and wrist bands for Nathan Sports, Great Barrington, Mass.

Packaging services are also provided for New York Air Brake, Mr. Moran said.

JRC also has contracts with Fort Drum to provide services such as recycling and janitorial work on post.

More than 130 JRC clients and staff members are employed in operations at the Army post that are contracted through the rehabilitation center, Mr. Moran said. They also work at the post's Central Issuing Facility, where soldiers are issued their uniforms, helmets and other equipment.

ARMY RESERVISTS ARE MOBILIZED

Editor's Note: This story was published by the Watertown Daily Times on March 9, 2003.

About 250 U.S. Army Reservists from Watertown and Canton will be mobilized next weekend in anticipation of a possible war with Iraq.

The 479th Engineer Battalion, a Reserve unit headquartered at the Leso-Leano Army Reserve Center on Watertown's South Massey Street, will be mobilized March 15, according to Capt. Douglas A. Vanderhoof, Rochester, battalion adjutant.

In addition to Watertown and Canton, the 479th Engineer Battalion has companies in Oswego and Canandaigua, comprising about 450 reservists total.

Capt. Vanderhoof said the reservists will report to Fort Drum and "be there for an unknown length of time."

From there, they will join forces with the U.S. Army Central Command, either in Central Asia near Afghanistan or in the Middle East, and await further orders.

"The duration is likely to be at least a year," Capt. Vanderhoof said. "It could be shorter or it could be longer, depending on the service and the needs of what's going on."

Capt. Vanderhoof, who has been a reservist for 18 years, said this will be his first mobilization, as he suspects it will be for many of the 479th Engineer Battalion members.

"The biggest impact is for family members who are going through the separation," he said.

Capt. Vanderhoof said the battalion will be working closely with infantry and armored units, responsible for activities such as breaching enemy minefields or laying minefields, and constructing field fortifications such as foxholes.

There will be a public ceremony recognizing the reserves' mobilization at 10 a.m. March 15 at St. Patrick's School, 733 S. Massey St, Watertown, and in Canton at 1 p.m. at a location that had not been determined as of Saturday night.



Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), participating in the Combined Joint Task Force Mountain's Operation Anaconda, prepare to dig into fighting positions after a day of reacting to enemy fire. Operation Anaconda is part of Operation Enduring Freedom. (U.S. Army photo/Spc. David Marck Jr.)

A new generation of authors tells personal stories of the Iraq, Afghanistan wars

By Linda F. Hershey

Stars and Stripes (TNS)

After his final Afghanistan deployment, Army veteran David Meek sat down at his desk and began to carefully reconstruct his combat experiences, which included a suicide bombing in Kabul on Oct. 29, 2011, that killed members of his unit.

Meek, a 55-year-old retired major, reviewed dozens of old personal emails, perused notes and letters he had sent home, and studied photos from military duty that he had stored away and nearly forgotten.

A former educator and high school principal, Meek said he realized that he had stories to share about his war experiences that touched on important themes, such as brotherhood and loss, coming home after combat, and the isolation of suffering from a trauma disorder like PTSD.

Meek, who lives in California, penned two memoirs that he self-published and is marketing at local book signings and community events.

"Soldier On: An Afghanistan Memoir of Leadership, Loss, and the Long Road Home" was published last month and is primarily sold through online retailers.

"Still Being Written: God Does His Best Work in Unfinished Stories" is another deeply personal story by Meek about facing crises and finding hope and transformation.

"I understand things now that I couldn't fully appreciate or recognize as a younger man," said Meek, who is about to self-publish a third book, titled "Zina: The True Story of a Military Working Dog."

It is a children's book and true story about a military working dog that Meek brought home from Afghanistan.

A quick scan of new book releases on the Afghan and Iraq wars shows that Meek is in good company as a new author who uses his military experiences as inspiration.

There has been a recent surge of books that offer firsthand accounts by former GIs who fought in these conflicts.

Veterans who did not seek or secure traditional contracts are publishing their deployment diaries, unit histories and personal chronicles about the unseen moral injuries of war, according to Casemate Publishers, an independent publishing house.

The proliferation of books on virtual store shelves reflects the rapid growth and popularity of self-publishing platforms, such as Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing, according to Publishers Weekly.

Memoirs by veterans provide an unfiltered view of military service that would otherwise remain untold in traditional historical accounts, said Julie Kanta, an Air Force veteran.

Kanta recently wrote about the value of memoirs by military veterans in an essay for Ooligan Press, a student-run trade press in the Pacific Northwest.

War stories by these first-time authors often are "nuanced, personal, and impactful," Kanta said.

While historical topics, such as World War II, are popular categories for first-time authors, independent publishing houses also report a steady influx of modern warfare titles, according to Publishers Weekly.

Meek said that the inspiration and material for his books came directly from the weekly emails he sent to friends and family back home, along with information from his military records and his own personal reflections.

"A lot of my writing is an open letter about my life," said Meek, who enlisted in the Army at 37 and retired in June 2025.

"Soldier On" moved up to No. 12 this week, from No. 22, on Amazon's bestseller list of new biographies and memoirs on the Afghan and Iraq wars.

See AUTHORS T21



With gratitude, admiration and respect

We are proud to honor veterans and admire the sacrifices you have made so that we may live in freedom. We thank you for your bravery and the example you set for us all.

Cyril Mouaikel, AWM, MBA
Managing Director – Branch Director

William Tremont
Managing Director – Financial Advisor

Donald Musnicki, AIF®, AWM
First Vice President – Financial Advisor

Patrick Signor, CDFA®, CFP®, MBA
First Vice President – Financial Advisor

Christine Cisco, CFP®, CPFA™
First Vice President – Branch Director

Anthony Surber
First Vice President – Financial Advisor

John Nuber, CFA®
Associate Vice President – Financial Advisor

Charlie Mouaikel
Financial Advisor

The Watertown branch of RBC Wealth Management

19485 U.S. Route 11 | Watertown, NY 13601
(315) 788-4200
us.rbcwm.com/watertown

RBC Wealth Management

Investment and insurance products: • Not insured by the FDIC or any other federal government agency • Not a deposit of, or guaranteed by, the bank or an affiliate of the bank • May lose value

© 2025 RBC Wealth Management, a division of RBC Capital Markets, LLC, registered investment adviser and Member NYSE/FINRA/SIPC. All rights reserved. 25-WO-03212 (10/25)

Authors

From T20

"Still Being Written" has become an in-demand book at some state prisons, which have ordered dozens of copies for inmates to read, Meek said.

"Still Being Written" emphasizes that "the most painful chapters of life do not have to become the last," according to a book passage.

Here is a sampling of some other new books on the Iraq and Afghanistan wars authored by former service members who participated in those conflicts.

"No Excuses: From Haiti to Special Forces, a True Underdog Story" is by Jay Dorleus, a retired first sergeant who served in Army special operations for most of his 20-year military career.

A resident of Brooklyn, N.Y., Dorleus said the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, compelled him to enlist in the military.

The memoir chronicles his emigration to the U.S. as a 10-year-old from Haiti.

But the main focus is on the self-discipline needed to survive in the least hospitable environments during military deployments.

"The Armored Heart: How a Green Beret Learned to Lead with Love — and a Shoelace" is by Fred "Doom" Dummar, a retired colonel in Army Special Forces.

Dummar enlisted in the military as a teenager and worked as a medic. He served for 30 years, including as a senior adviser to Afghan special operations.

His first-person book is a meditation on running in ultramarathons, as a metaphor for surviving hardship and for lasting friendships.

Since 2007, Dummar has run alongside Ivan Castro, a former Green Beret blinded in Iraq, in ultramarathons, which extend beyond the traditional 26.2-mile competitions.

"Nothing as It Seems" is a memoir by former Army infantry officer Dennis J. Call, who fought in both the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

"During his nearly 14 years on active duty, he led soldiers in combat during three deployments in support of the Global War on Terror, serving with the 101st Airborne Division in Iraq and the 10th Mountain Division in Afghanistan," according to Call's biography.

His memoir is a reflection on the author's inner struggles to make sense of his wartime experiences.

Call worked at the Department of Veterans Affairs following military service. He has an adult son who serves in the Marine Corps.

© 2026 the Stars and Stripes. Visit www.stripes.com. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

WHITE'S FARM SUPPLY, INC.

8207 Route 26
Lowville, NY 13367
(315) 376-0300

235 Old Route 11
Canton, NY 13617
(315) 535-4054

WhitesFarmSupply.com

Honoring Those Who Served
This Veterans Day, WATERTOWN FAMILY YMCA proudly salutes the brave men and women who have served our country.

We Salute You. We Celebrate You.



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11TH
NO JOINER FEE
for all active and retired military.
on new memberships
Save up to $75 (Based on Membership Type)

At Watertown Family YMCA, we are honored to serve a community that stands shoulder-to-shoulder with our nation's heroes every day.

the YMCA
175 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

WATERTOWN FAMILY YMCA
Serving Watertown.
Supporting Fort Drum.
Strengthening Community.

For U.S. troops who survived Kabul airport disaster, guilt and grief endure

by Dan Lamothe
The Washington Post

This story was published Aug 24, 2022.

From a guard tower overlooking Kabul's airport, two U.S. Marines spotted a man matching the description of a suspected suicide bomber. They radioed their commanders: "Do we have permission to engage?"

Request denied, one of the Marines, Sgt. Tyler Vargas-Andrews, recalled being told. Too many civilians nearby.

The man vanished from view among a crush of people clamoring outside the airport's Abbey Gate, he said. It was Aug. 26, 2021. Hours later, an explosion ripped through the crowd, killing an estimated 170 Afghans along with 13 U.S. troops.

Vargas-Andrews contends that "unfortunately, a lot of people died" because he was directed to stand down. "That's a hard thing to deal with," he said. "You know, that's something that, honestly, eats at me every single day."

The 24-year-old, from Folsom, Calif., climbed down from the tower a short time before the explosion went off and suffered catastrophic wounds in the blast. He has undergone 43 surgeries since, losing his right arm, left leg, left kidney, and parts of his intestines and colon. At least 15 metal fragments remain embedded in his body, he said, silent reminders of the day he almost died.

It's unclear if the bombing at Abbey Gate could have been averted. The event was a low point in the United States' exit from Afghanistan and the treacherous operation that began when Taliban foot soldiers swept into the capital 11 days prior. For the American military personnel involved, much of their experience throughout those two weeks is still coming into focus now, a year later, as they process the suffering they witnessed, and cope with lasting feelings of anger, guilt and grief.

This account of the deployment and the attack, carried out by an Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan, is based on interviews with 14 service members involved, including the top military commander who planned and directed the operation.

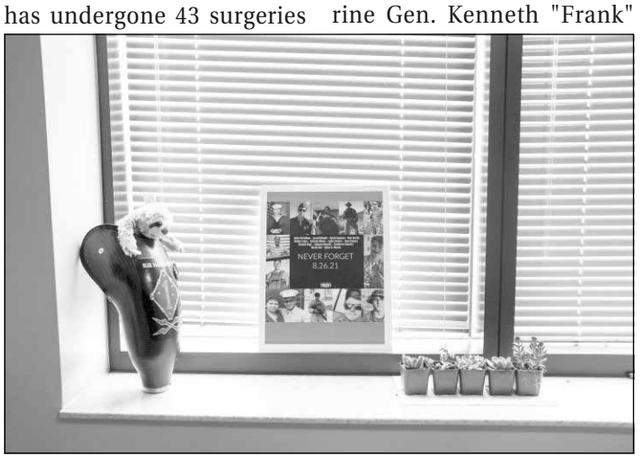
In blunt, often visceral detail, those who survived the final days of America's longest war made clear that what endures is an incalculable sense of loss.

The commander, Marine Gen. Kenneth "Frank" McKenzie, said that he, too, continues to process what occurred, and regrets both the Abbey Gate bombing and a drone strike U.S. forces carried out three days later near the airport, killing 10 civilians. U.S. troops involved mistakenly believed they were targeting another suicide bomber, the Pentagon later concluded.

"We all feel bitterly what happened at the end," the general said.



Marine Sgt. Tyler Vargas-Andrews at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Washington Post photo by Carolyn Van Houten



Marine Sgt. Tyler Vargas-Andrews put together a memorial inside his apartment at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center to honor the members of his unit that were lost in Afghanistan. MUST CREDIT: Washington Post photo by Carolyn Van Houten

---

HEART-POUNDING AND HEART-BREAKING

Nearly 6,000 U.S. service members were dispatched to Afghanistan as Kabul fell, in what would be the greatest test of the Pentagon's emergency-evacuation planning since the Vietnam War's devastating conclusion decades earlier. Nearly 125,000 people were rescued over 17 days. But tens of thousands more were stranded, many with no clear path to be reunited with family in the United States.

For many of the troops rushed to Hamid Karzai International Airport - named for Afghanistan's first leader after U.S. forces ousted the Taliban from power as vengeance for quartering the terrorist group responsible for 9/11 - it was their first taste of a war that, after nearly 20 years, already was lost.

The sudden crisis undercut President Joe Biden's promise of a "safe and orderly" withdrawal, and prompted McKenzie to cut a deal with the Taliban in which coalition troops controlled Kabul's airport while America's longtime battlefield adversary pledged to maintain order outside.

U.S. personnel involved in the mission said the arrangement was exasperating, with militants beating and executing Afghans as they approached the airport. McKenzie described it as a strained but transactional relationship that provided U.S. troops with a measure of security from the Islamic State, which also is in conflict with the Taliban.

A Defense Department review of the operation, first detailed by The Washington Post in February, exposed sharp disagreements within the U.S. government over how to carry out the withdrawal. State Department officials wanted to keep the U.S. Embassy in Kabul open as long as possible, frustrating the military brass who wanted to begin the evacuation of American citizens and Afghan allies sooner.

Top commanders, including McKenzie, had advised Biden against withdrawing all U.S. forces from Afghanistan, preferring to keep a force of about 2,500 in place that would be reinforced by a similar number of coalition troops and backed by air power. But when the president announced in April 2021 that he wanted the military out by that September, the Pentagon began preparing for an evacuation.

A few hundred soldiers from the Army's 10th Mountain Division were positioned at the airport in spring of 2021 to maintain security in Kabul.

See EXIT T23

Exit

From T22

They were intended to be a safety net as the administration, leery of Taliban gains elsewhere, had hoped to retain a diplomatic presence after the military withdrawal was complete.

The Afghan government's collapse on Aug. 15 triggered mass panic, leading tens of thousands of Afghans, many of them American allies who aided the war effort, to rush the airport. First Sgt. Andrew Kelly, of the 10th Mountain Division, said his unit tried but failed to prevent the chaos that unfolded as people, desperate to flee, swarmed the flight line and attempted to reach any aircraft they could find.

In the hysteria, Kelly and other U.S. soldiers responded to a report of gunshots at a traffic circle outside the airport's commercial terminal. As civilians scrambled for cover, a firefight broke out when gunmen brandished weapons at the Americans. U.S. soldiers killed three of them and wounded a fourth.

The small contingent of U.S. troops, linked arm-in-arm at times, attempted to hold back the masses. But the determined civilians broke through, with some boarding parked C-17 cargo planes without permission, and others climbing onto the outside of aircraft before takeoff only to fall to their death moments later.



Marine Warrant Officer Sasha Savage at Camp Lejeune on July 18. Photo for The Washington Post by Allison Joyce

"That's how desperate they were to get out of there," said Army 1st Lt. Timothy Williams. "It was one of those defining moments, I think, for everybody where it was just like, 'Wow, this is terrible.'"

As C-17s carrying American reinforcements touched down, Marines and soldiers were assigned to secure the airport's gates, and to assess, search and admit evacuees. It was heart-pounding, often heartbreaking work.

Among the units instructed to reopen Abbey Gate was the 1st Platoon of Ghost Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines. Comprising less than 45 troops, it had been in Jordan serving as part of a crisis-response force when commanders ordered their departure for Kabul. The group was tightknit and had been training for months, said Gunnery Sgt. Jonathan Eby, the platoon sergeant.

Eby, a 17-year Marine with previous experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, said they formed a line and surged toward the crowd trying to move people backward. There was a writhing, anxious energy, he said, likening the crowd to a mosh pit.

"I would compare it to whatever Leonidas and his Spartans felt like trying to hold back all those people," Eby said, referring to the ancient Greek king and his warriors, who were vastly outnumbered in a famous battle depicted in the movie "300."

In the ensuing days, the Marines maintained a barricade at the gate, adjacent to a fetid drainage canal along the facility's southeastern edge. Many Afghans figured out that wading through the filth was the easiest way to bypass the crowd. Those flashing the requisite paperwork were hoisted to safety. U.S. troops carried out similar work at other entry points.

Teams of U.S. service women, formed on the fly in preparation for the evacuation, supplemented the mission by searching women and assisting children, hundreds of whom had reached the airport without any parent or guardian, or wound up separated along the way.

Warrant Officer Sasha Savage, who led a team of eight women, said the effort never truly found a rhythm, but they assisted who they could. Photographs of her teammates caring for babies went viral online. It was clear that the evacuees were "going through the hardest time of their life," arriving dehydrated, bloody or scared because their families had been separated in the mayhem, she said.

"It feels like you're making impact at that point," Savage said.

To get around the airport, U.S. troops hot-wired baggage carts, forklifts and other vehicles. They pilfered tools found in shipping containers, figuring they might prove useful. Vargas-Andrews grabbed a pair of 18-inch bolt cutters.

At Abbey Gate, he and his scout-sniper teammates took turns scanning the crowd from the guard tower. Several times, he said, Marines interfacing with those hoping to flee retreated into the base of the tower to cry. The Taliban were posted at checkpoints just yards away, and watching them act so ruthlessly made it difficult to maintain restraint.

Vargas-Andrews recalled that after a few days of observing Taliban abuses, he crept closer to their checkpoints to photograph corpses nearby - people the militants had killed, he surmised. He relayed the images to commanders, he said, but understood there would be no recourse.

"If we start firing at them, they're going to start firing at us. Do we want to get in that scenario?" he said. "I get it. But it's a hard thing."

- - -

A FLASH AND THEN 'BOOM'

Fire from the explosion swallowed the tightly packed corridor outside Abbey Gate, ejecting ball bearings that cut down those closest to the epicenter and left a gruesome path of carnage. U.S. personnel manning the gate had been warned that a suicide bomber was likely to be nearby, but they had not received orders to suspend operations.



Marine Sgt. Tyler Vargas-Andrews, a double amputee, is seen at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., on Aug. 4. Washington Post photo by Carolyn Van Houten

See EXIT T28

VETERANS DAY
November 11



2021 CHEVROLET TRAVERSE LS 4DR SUV
Stk#17109. Summit White, Auto, 101,907 mi.
$15,998 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2021 CHEVROLET TAHOE LS 4DR SUV
Stk#17120. Stain Steel Metallic, Auto, 91,237 mi.
$31,998 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2023 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 1500 RST 4DR TRUCK
Stk#17014. Black, Auto, 94,982 mi.
$36,998 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2023 CHRYSLER PACIFICA TOURING L 4DR VAN
Stk#17163. Silver Mist Clear, Auto, 79,762 mi.
$19,998 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2022 FORD BRONCO BIG BEND 4DR SUV
Stk#16833. Carbonized, Auto, 53,125 mi.
$30,698 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2020 FORD EDGE ST LINE 4DR SUV
Stk#16938. Agate Black, Auto, 49,387 mi.
$20,998 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2023 FORD F-150 4DR TRUCK
Stk#17114. Oxford White, Auto, 67,770 mi.
$38,998 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2018 FORD FUSION ENERGI SE LUXURY 4DR SEDAN
Stk#17218. White Gold, Auto, 106,068 mi.
$10,699 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2018 GMC SIERRA 1500 SLE 4DR TRUCK
Stk#16068. Summit White, Auto, 97,805 mi.
$24,998 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2019 GMC YUKON DENALI 4DR SUV
Stk#16787. Jet Black, Auto, 58,955 mi.
$35,998 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2021 HONDA PILOT EX-L 4DR SUV
Stk#16891. Modern Steel, Auto, 56,422 mi.
$25,698 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2021 JEEP GLADIATOR SPORT 4DR TRUCK
Stk#17181. Granite Crystal, Auto, 75,746 mi.
$27,998 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2022 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE LIMITED 4DR SUV
Stk#17045. Bright White Clear, Auto, 67,784 mi.
$25,698 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2022 JEEP WAGONEER SERIES II 4DR SUV
Stk#17157. Silver Zynith, Auto, 71,522 mi.
$33,998 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2022 JEEP WRANGLER UNLTD RUBICON 4XE 4DR SUV
Stk#17025. Black Clear Coat, 48,239 mi.
$27,998 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2024 KIA FORTE GT 4DR SEDAN
Stk#17139. Deep Sea Blue, Auto, 21,911 mi.
$22,798 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2023 KIA SORENTO HYBRID SX PRESTIGE 4DR SUV
Stk#16805. Gravity Blue, Auto, 89,147 mi.
$25,998 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2020 LINCOLN NAUTILUS RESERVE 4DR SUV
Stk#17166. Pristine White, Auto, 50,845 mi.
$24,998 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2023 NISSAN ROGUE S 4DR WAGON
Stk#16821. Glacier White, Auto, 112,982 mi.
$17,598 plus tax, title & reg. extra



2022 RAM 1500 BIG HORN/ LONE STAR 4DR TRUCK
Stk#17210. Bright White Clear, Auto, 75,047 mi.
$29,998 plus tax, title & reg. extra

WIDRICK AUTO SALES
★★VETERAN OWNED★★
"We make it easy, that's what we do! For 45 years."
Outer Washington St.,
Watertown, New York
(315) 788-1913
www.widrickautosales.com

New Exhibit at NYS Military Museum Tells the 20-Year Tale of the Global War on Terror

By Eric Durr

SARATOGA SPRINGS, New York— An exhibit commemorating New Yorkers who fought the Global War on Terror—GWOT in military speak-- officially opened on Thursday, Nov. 5 at the New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Major General Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, cut the ceremonial ribbon along with retired Major General Joseph Taluto, who commanded the New York National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division in Iraq in 2005.

The museum, located in the Saratoga Armory, is maintained by the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs. It tells the story of New York's military history from the American Revolution to the present.

The 20 years of conflict that began with the Sept. 11, 2001, suicide attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City, needs to be remembered, Sheilds said.

"I think it's just really critical that we highlight that," he said.

As a colonel, Shields served as the chief of staff for the New York National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team during a 2008-2009 deployment to Afghanistan.

The conflict – pronounced 'gee-wot'—is significant for New York because it started in New York, said Richard Goldenberg, the director of military history for the Division of Military and Naval

See MUSEUM T26





Museum

From T25



A section of the "New York in the Global War on Terror" exhibit which was officially opened in the New York State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs, New York on following a formal ribbon cutting ceremony opening the permanent exhibit on Nov. 5, 2026. The exhibit, underwritten by the Friends of the New York State Military Museum tells the story of New Yorkers in the Global War on Terror from Ground Zero on Sept. 11, 2001 to the evacuation of Afghanistan in August 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Lt. Col. Jean Marie Kratzer)

two airliners into New York City's Twin Towers.

"This was an attack on our soil, an attack on our neighbors, our city," he said.

The exhibit employs photographs, text, uniforms, artifacts, and weapons to tell the story of that conflict and New Yorkers' role in it.

On Sept. 11, 2001, New York Air National Guardsmen at the Northeast Air Defense Sector worked to sort out the terror in the skies. Meanwhile, New York Army National Guardsmen in New York City converged on "Ground Zero" in lower Manhattan to assist the police and fire departments.

Just short of 20 years later, at the end of August 2021, the crew of Reach 824, a C-17 flown by the New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing, brought home the remains of the last 13 Americans killed in Afghanistan.

The exhibit—formally titled " "New Millennium, New Challenge: The Global War on Terror, 2001-2021" -- tells visitors what happened in between.

One panel outlines the rescue of American Thomas Hamill, a civilian truck driver captured by Iraqi insurgents, on May 2, 2004, by members of C Company of the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment south of Tikrit Iraq.

The New York Army National Guard Soldiers from Gloversville came upon Hamill who had been held for 22 days during a patrol.

Another panel discusses the 27th Infantry Brigade's command of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix, a multinational team of 9,500 personnel training the Afghan Army and police in 2008.

Sections of the exhibit are crafted to look like the ubiquitous "T-Walls" which were used to protect temporary buildings and tents from mortar rounds in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

One of the uniforms on display was worn by Staff Sgt. Donald Leinfelder, a member of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, who received the Purple Heart after his Humvee was hit by a rocket propelled grenade in Baghdad in 2005.

Leinfelder's battalion was tasked with securing "Route Irish" between Baghdad International Airport and the secure "Green Zone" in downtown Baghdad.

A uniform, helmet and ballistic vest worn by Taluto as commander of the 42nd Infantry Division and Task Force Liberty in North Central Iraq, helps tell the story of the first National Guard division to deploy to a combat zone since the Korean War in 2005.

In his remarks, Taluto emphasized the importance of remembering the sacrifices of veterans and the part exhibits like this play.

"We have always honored, recognized, and memorialized our veterans, through every conflict," he said.

"So, it's perfectly appropriate that we have an exhibit here for post 9/11 veterans, primarily the Iraq and Afghanistan veterans that deployed for over 20 years. That's the longest war in our country's history," Taluto added.

The $100,000 cost to research, design and install the permanent exhibit was raised by the Friends of the New York State Military Museum. The non-profit works with donors to help supplement the taxpayer dollars which pay museum operating costs.

Taluto is serving as the chair of the group's GWOT committee, and said the next goal is to create a GWOT traveling exhibit which could go to communities around New York.

The New York State Military Museum's collection dates back to 1863 when the adjutant general of New York was instructed to collect information and items about New York's role in the Civil War.

See MUSEUM T27

Income tax preparation for
• Individuals
• Businesses
• Farms

Payroll processing
Sales tax processing
Bookkeeping services

NORTH COUNTRY TAX & RECORDS

Office: (315) 376-4424
Fax: (315) 376-6374

Wendy Hoskins
President

TOTAL RETURN INC.
NORTH COUNTRY
TAX & RECORDS

Email: totalreturninc@outlook.com | *Website:* www.nctrsi.com
Mailing: PO Box 38 Glenfield, NY, 13343 | *Physical:* 6588 State Route 12 Lowville, NY 13367



A visitor to the New York State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs, New York, views the "New York in the Global War on Terror" exhibit following a formal ribbon cutting ceremony opening the permanent exhibit on Nov. 5, 2026. The exhibit, underwritten by the Friends of the New York State Military Museum tells the story of New Yorkers in the Global War on Terror from Ground Zero on Sept. 11, 2001 to the evacuation of Afghanistan in August 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Lt. Col. Jean Marie Kratzer)

Museum

From T26

committee, and said the next goal is to create a GWOT traveling exhibit which could go to communities around New York.

The New York State Military Museum's collection dates back to 1863 when the adjutant general of New York was instructed to collect information and items about New York's role in the Civil War.

The museum holds a collection of 1,000 Civil War-era flags-- one of the largest in the world-- along with 700 weapons, 30,000 other artifacts, 17,643 photographs, and 1,415 oral history transcripts.

The exhibits in the military history museum highlight New York's role from the Revolution to the Cold War and now the first war of the 21st Century.



The exhibit, underwritten by the Friends of the New York State Military Museum tells the story of New Yorkers in the Global War on Terror from Ground Zero on Sept. 11, 2001 to the evacuation of Afghanistan in August 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Lt. Col. Jean Marie Kratzer)

Asked about Vargas-Andrews's contention that the bomber could have been killed before the explosion, McKenzie said that no request to do so reached his level or surfaced during a military investigation of the incident that included testimony from more than 100 U.S. personnel. Vargas-Andrews said he was never interviewed as part of that inquiry as he underwent numerous surgeries.

Eby, who also was at Abbey Gate when the bomb exploded, said that there was a "known threat" in the area, but he was unaware of any service member identifying the bomber. "All that was ever said was, 'Look for a black bag,'" Eby said.

Shortly before the blast, Vargas-Andrews had climbed down from the tower to help people into the airport. He recalls seeing a flash. And then, "Boom - this massive wave of pressure just hit me," he said.

"The next time I opened my eyes, I'm on the ground," Vargas-Andrews recalled. To his left, a sea of people were down and lifeless.

The military investigation, released earlier this year, determined the loss of life from the bombing was from a single catastrophic explosion.

See EXIT T29



Marine Warrant Officer Sasha Savage wears a bracelet remembering Sgt. Nicole Gee at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina on July 18. Photo for The Washington Post by Allison Joyce

AMANDA MATTIMORE
Licensed R.E. Broker/Owner
amanda@
northernbeginningsrealty.com
O: 315-227-3227
C: 315-783-7936



BEVERLY SWIERNIK
Licensed R.E. Broker
bev@
northernbeginningsrealty.com
O: 315-227-3227
C: 315-765-1506



MARISA BENTELI FRAZIER
Licensed R.E. Salesperson
Mbfrazier27@yahoo.com
O: 315-227-3227
C: 315-408-5828

PETER KILCER
Licensed R.E. Salesperson
peter@
northernbeginningsrealty.com
O: 315-227-3227
C: 315-586-2030



Northern Beginnings Realty, LLC
10245 NY-812,
Castorland, NY 13620
northernbeginningsrealty.com

• **EDWARDS SENIOR COURT** 16 Trout Lake Rd., Edwards ..... ***Vacancy***
• **BAYVIEW MANOR** 11424 State Route 12E, Chaumont *(an accessible unit)* ..... ***Vacancy***
• **GORDON COURT** 1 Gordon Court, Alexandria Bay
• **HILL TOP MANOR** 40 Symond Sq. Colton ..... ***Vacancy***
• **MILLTOWN MEADOWS** 8130 Schell Ave., Evans Mills ..... ***Vacancy***
• **MILL SITE MANOR** 102 112 Mill St., Hammond
• **MEADOWVIEW APARTMENTS** 8 Lisbon St., Heuvelton
• **ST. PETERS SQUARE** 1320 Greene St., Ogdensburg
• **KILKARNEY COURT APARTMENTS** 2 Kilkarney Ct. Dr., Fowler
• **COLUMBIA HIGH MANOR** 158 High St., Morristown
• **CASTLE RIDGE MANOR** 72 Church St., Lisbon
• **LOUISVILLE HOUSING** 16 Arena Dr., Louisville
• **RUSSELL ATTWATER** 3606 CR 24, Russell ..... ***Vacancy***
• **CAMBRAY CT. APTS** 68 W. Main St., Gouverneur ..... ***Vacancy***
• **CAMBRAY TERRACE** 24 Mill St., Gouverneur (*55 and older or disabled*) ..... ***Vacancy***
• **MILL YARD ESTATES** 20 Barton St., Parishville
• **HAMILTON GARDENS** 80 LaGrasse St., Waddington ..... ***Vacancy***
• **GRASSE RIVER HOUSING** 1901 SH 345, Madrid ..... ***Vacancy***
• **WILLIAM DALTON ESTATES** 38-40 North Broad St., West Carthage ..... ***Vacancy***
• **SUNRISE VALLEY APARTMENTS** 26 Josephine St., Dekalb Junction ..... ***Vacancy***
• **McBRIER PARK MANOR** 103 Canton St., Hermon ..... ***Vacancy***
• **HARBOR HEIGHTS APARTMENTS** 211 Woolsey St., Sackets Harbor ..... ***Vacancy***

UNITED HELPERS
Always Caring
100 Ford St., Ogdensburg
Equal Housing Opportunity
315-714-3129

PETS WELCOME

Enjoy a relaxed **Lifestyle** in the privacy of your own **Apartment** combined with the warmth of your fellow **neighbors!**

Affordable Apartments

• *Subsidy may be available*
• *Flower/Vegetable Garden Areas*

For Persons 62 & older or persons with disabilities regardless of age

Brushton-Moira Post #939 American Legion
Thank You For Your Service!
Sayles Road, Moira NY | 518.529.7219



In Nov. 2005, Christopher J. Saenz and his new wife Amanda A. have been sweethearts since high school, and when Pfc. Saenz was posted to Fort Drum, Amanda followed. On Friday, they went to Watertown City Hall and were married, and then to Cam's New York Pizzeria on Public Square to celebrate their nuptials because they both 'really wanted pizza.' City Manager Mary M. Corriveau donated two cannolis to serve as an impromptu wedding cake. Pfc. Saenz, assigned to the 10th Mountain Division's 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, leaves with his unit for Afghanistan in January. Michael Fagans/ Watertown Daily Times

Exit

From T28

Some dispute that, though. Multiple personnel posted at Abbey Gate said they heard gunfire as well - and that they shot back.

Vargas-Andrews and others with him at the time remain convinced the bombing was part of a complex attack. As he lay in the dirt, his arm and leg shredded, the sound of gunfire crackling overhead urged him to seek cover, he said. There was a hole in the fence line about 70 yards away, but his wounds made it impossible to drag himself there.

Investigators concluded that gunfire was sporadic, and that those believing otherwise may have been disorientated by the explosion.

Those unharmed - or not incapacitated - scrambled to save as many lives as possible.

Among them was Marine Sgt. Wyatt Wilson, who sustained grievous shrapnel wounds in the blast and was thrown off his feet by its force. Despite his injuries, he tried to drag another severely wounded Marine to safety, but he had lost too much blood. The woman Wilson tried to help, Cpl. Kelsee Lainhart, was left paralyzed by the explosion.

Teammates of Vargas-Andrews knew he was in trouble after the blast. Sgt. Charles Schilling, a close friend, raced to him, screaming Vargas-Andrews's name repeatedly. Using the bolt cutters his friend had commandeered, Schilling ripped open a hole in the fence to shorten the distance they'd need to traverse for medical care. The injured were whisked away on any vehicle available.

"Patients kept coming in five, six at a time," said Capt. Carlos Mendoza, an Air Force flight nurse who was working at the airport's hospital a few miles from the blast site. "It just didn't stop."

The wounded were splayed out on the floor waiting for care as doctors triaged them. Mendoza recalled encountering one service member who had died and another who was mortally wounded. Chaplains arrived and administered last rites.

A doctor split open the chest of one Marine using a pair of scissors as they searched for interior bleeding and then rushed him to surgery, Mendoza said.

"I heard that he survived," he added, though he is unsure.

Thirty-seven Marines were awarded Purple Hearts for injuries sustained in the attack, said Maj. Jordan Cochran, a spokesman. More than 300 received ribbons stipulating that they engaged in direct combat over the course of the evacuation.

In the Army, at least four soldiers have received Purple Hearts for injuries suffered in the evacuation, said Maj. Jackie Wren, a service spokeswoman. Nearly 330 soldiers were recognized for experiencing combat during those weeks.

About 45 U.S. troops were wounded in the bombing and survived, the Pentagon said. The Americans killed:

Marine Lance Cpl. David Espinoza, 20.

Marine Sgt. Nicole Gee, 23.

Marine Staff Sgt. Darin Taylor Hoover, 31.

Army Staff Sgt. Ryan

See EXIT T30

Exit

From T29

Knauss, 23.

Marine Cpl. Hunter Lopez, 22.

Marine Lance Cpl. Dylan Merola, 20.

Marine Lance Cpl. Rylee McCollum, 20.

Marine Lance Cpl. Kareem Nikoui, 20.

Marine Cpl. Daegan Page, 23.

Marine Sgt. Johanny Rosario Pichardo, 25.

Marine Cpl. Humberto Sanchez, 22.

Marine Lance Cpl. Jared Schmitz, 20.

Navy Hospitalman Maxton Soviak, 22.

- - -

THE RECOVERY

McKenzie, the commanding general, retired in April. He marvels at the courage and professionalism rank-and-file troops showed during the evacuation, and said his greatest fear was a bomber sneaking onto a plane and detonating in the air, killing hundreds of people.

Service members reflecting on the operation should "decouple their actions and their enormous courage on the ground" from decisions made by more senior U.S. officials that put them there, he said.

"If you're going to bring people in, you have to search them," he said. "You've got to be confident that you're not going to let someone with an explosive device get on an airplane because that is the point of greatest vulnerability."

Eby, the platoon sergeant, lost nine men in his unit, all 23 or younger. During an interview last month at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, he paused several times to regain composure while recounting stories about the fallen. He considers the surviving members of the platoon to be family.

"We are inseparable," he said. "I still get called 'Dad' by most of them."

Savage, who led a female search team, wears a black metal bracelet engraved with Gee's name. The weightlifting enthusiast had been meritoriously promoted, and was among the Marines pictured caring for Afghan children.

"She had a certain light and happiness about her that would make things positive no matter the situation," Savage said.

Vargas-Andrews said he hopes the military enhances its recognition of those who saved his life and the lives of others. He singled out Schilling, who tore open the fence, and Hospitalman 3rd Class Jorge Mayo, who raced among the blast victims and treated Vargas-Andrews.

A memory from a few days before the explosion sticks with the Marine, as he continues physical therapy at Walter Reed National Military Medical outside Washington. In the crowd at Abbey Gate, he spotted a sobbing girl in tattered clothes, maybe 8 years old. She held an infant in one arm and the hand of a boy about 4 in her other hand. The baby wasn't breathing.

Vargas-Andrews said he hustled the infant, who was turning blue, to an Air Force medic, and they resuscitated the baby. But the girl continued to cry.

He scrambled to a higher perch on top of a vehicle, and spotted a man with his head in his hands. It was the children's father. The man had paperwork needed to evacuate but had been separated from his children in the melee. Their family was reunited moments later.

Vargas-Andrews said the moment was "huge for me," his voice thickening with emotion as he recalled it.

"I look at my injuries every day," he said. "And that one family, they have a life now. And that's something that won't be taken away from them."

He shifted his weight in his chair, a prosthetic leg beneath him.

"You know," he said, "there were a lot of moments like that out there, and it makes it worth it. It makes all this worth it."





Fort Drum named Best Garrison for IMCOM-Western Hemisphere

By Michael Strasser
Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs

FORT DRUM — Fort Drum was recently named 2026 Best Garrison for U.S. Army Installation Management Command-Western Hemisphere, recognizing its exceptional operational readiness, transformative energy resilience, and commitment to Soldiers and their families.

The award evaluated garrison performance across a dozen functional categories – ranging from mission support and quality of life to real property management, safety, health and security and communications.

"There is an incredible amount of work that goes into being selected for Best Garrison, but what stands out most to me every day is a team that cares deeply about the mission and the Fort Drum community," said Col. Jason Adler, Fort Drum garrison commander. "This award is a direct reflection of their quiet professionalism, their pride, and their unwavering commitment to ensuring that the 10th Mountain Division is ready to answer the nation's call."

Home to the 10th Mountain Division (LI), Fort Drum serves as the premier Northeast Power Projection Platform. In fiscal year 2026, the garrison sustained 53 live-fire ranges and 69 training areas to support more than 251,000 multi-component personnel across 1,000 unit training events. This robust capability supported three Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotations, three overseas combat deployments, and major joint training exercises including Jaded Thunder and Summit Strike.

To accelerate warfighter training, garrison personnel leveraged a zero-cost "design-build-refine" model. Using internal labor and existing assets, the team converted an underutilized shoot house into dedicated live-fire

See GARRISON T32





Samaritan
Medical Center

Proudly serving our military patients and their families.

Serving soldiers, veterans, and military families is something we take very seriously at Samaritan. We are proud of our long-standing partnership with Fort Drum, which has improved healthcare access for thousands of military families and allowed our staff to collaborate with men and women in uniform.

Samaritan Salutes our Troops!

830 Washington Street • Watertown, NY 13601 | samaritanhealth.com

Garrison

From T31

firing lanes for the Next Generation Squad Weapon (NGSW) – slashing the traditional delivery timeline by 180 days at zero military construction (MILCON) cost.

Simultaneously, Fort Drum positioned itself at the cutting edge of the Chief of Staff of the Army's transformation priorities. In partnership with the 10th Mountain Division, the garrison executed an innovative training curriculum for MAVEN Smart Systems (Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Command and Control). The program trained more than 300 Soldiers in Vantage-based AI platforms, reducing Command and Control product generation timelines tenfold and directly influencing the institutional curriculum at the Mission Command Center of Excellence.

While the 10th Mountain Division locked in on combat readiness, the garrison focused heavily on enhancing the everyday lives of the service members and families.

Fort Drum modernized its 55 permanent-party barracks, fully renovated eight barracks to restore maximum capacity and secured funding to refit furnishings in 13 buildings that supports 2,200 Soldiers.

Monthly hands-on barracks inspections led by newly certified company commanders and noncommissioned officers in charge resolved maintenance issues before room degradation could occur.

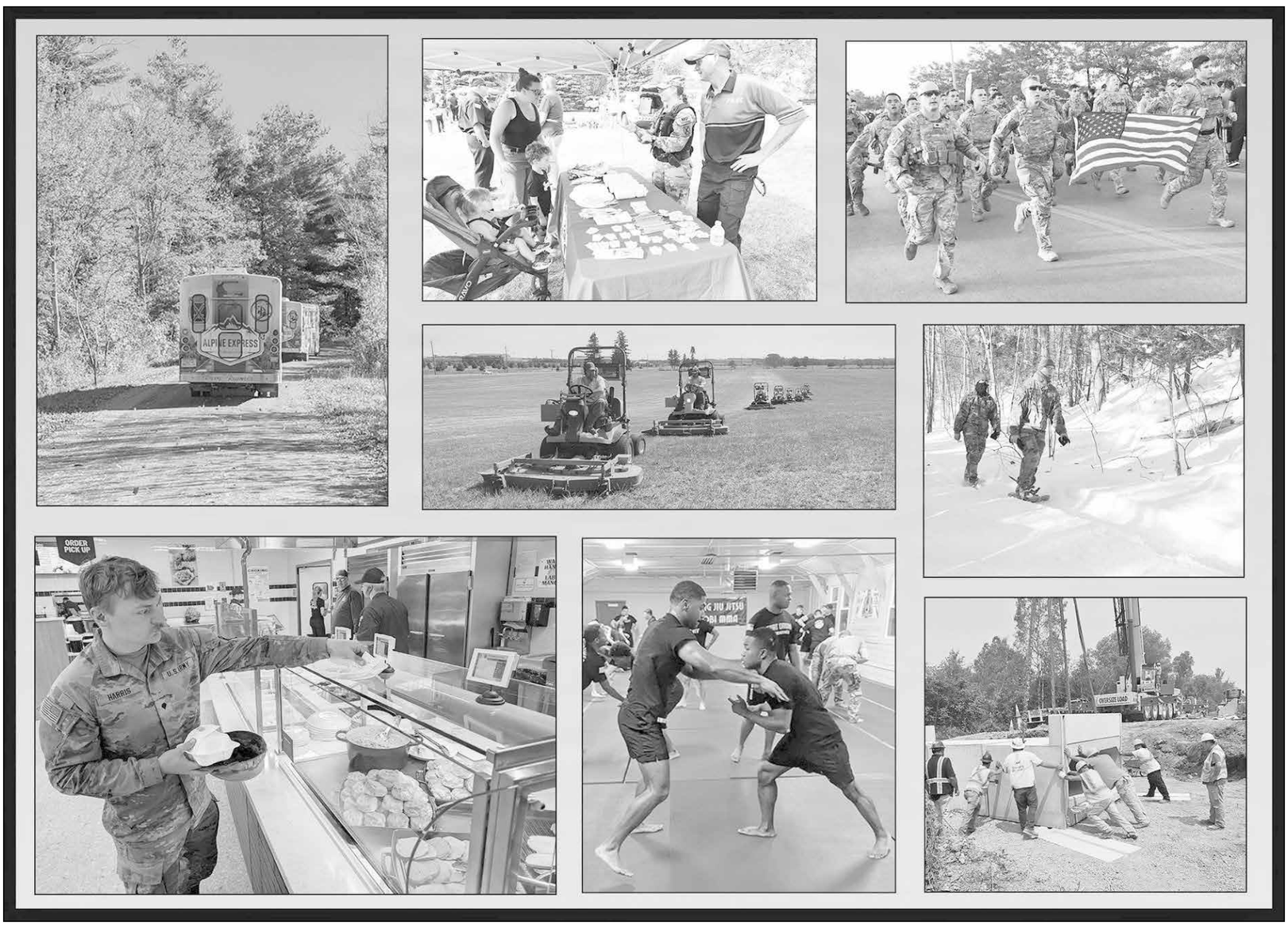
Last fall, the Fort Drum garrison launched the Alpine Express through an Intergovernmental Support Agreement (IGSA) with Lewis County. The fare-free, installation-wide shuttle expands on-post mobility for Soldiers, civilians and family members with three separate routes across the cantonment and Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield. It also features connection points into neighboring Jefferson County.

Childcare and spouse employment also reached enterprise benchmarks. Maintaining 100-percent National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation, the garrison recruited and retained roughly 25 Family Child Care (FCC) providers, adding more than 140 childcare slots and fulfilling one-tenth of IMCOM's enterprise-wide campaign plan target.

The Career Skills Program provided training, internships and apprenticeships to more than 500 Soldiers within 180 days of separation and provided military spouse career coaching and training scholarships through SpouseWorks. Fort Drum approved 100 percent of Home-Based Business (HBB) packets within 30 days, expanding the footprint to 23 approved business to secure spouse entrepreneurship.

Fort Drum's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (FMWR) organized signature events that drew more than 20,000 participants—including the 5.5-mile Mountain Mudder obstacle course, Riverfest, and Mountainfest. Grassroots initiatives such as the Sip of Glory

See GARRISON T33



Fort Drum was recently named 2026 Best Garrison for U.S. Army Installation Management Command-Western Hemisphere, recognizing its exceptional operational readiness, transformative energy resilience, and commitment to Soldiers and their families. The award evaluated garrison performance across a dozen functional categories – ranging from mission support and quality of life to real property management, safety, health and security and communications. (Graphic by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

Garrison

From T32

(HBB) packets within 30 days, expanding the footprint to 23 approved business to secure spouse entrepreneurship.

Fort Drum's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (FMWR) organized signature events that drew more than 20,000 participants—including the 5.5-mile Mountain Mudder obstacle course, Riverfest, and Mountainfest. Grassroots initiatives such as the Sip of Glory coffeehouse, Mountain Peak Ice Cream, and the outdoor dining "Igloo Experience" expanded services while generating reinvestment revenue for community programs.

Through the values-based "Keys to Connection" curriculum and the "Mountain CARES" suicide prevention framework, Fort Drum operationalized frontline leader intervention. These efforts directly contributed to a 28-percent reduction in harmful behavior Serious Incident Reports and zero garrison suicides over a 12-month period, earning Best Practice endorsements from the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Army G-1.

Following a joint feasibility study with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Drum secured placement to host an advanced nuclear microreactor under the Janus program. This clean baseload power generation will allow mission-critical operations to run independently of the commercial grid during emergencies.

Complementing this energy initiative, Fort Drum deployed four on-post photovoltaic solar arrays delivering 580 kW of capacity and generating 400,000 kWh of clean power annually, with 70 percent of purchased energy certified carbon-free.

Leveraging utility partnerships, 70 percent of all Fort Drum's purchased energy is carbon-free electricity, exceeding annual energy resilience targets.

Additionally, Fort Drum was the first installation to complete a Deep Energy Retrofit Assessment. This milestone established a roadmap of 28 targeted measures designed to reduce energy use intensity by 14 percent across 182 facilities, encompassing 76 percent of the post's total energy footprint.

Also:

Passive solar-wall systems across 53 buildings were installed to preheat ventilation air and cut natural gas consumption.

A major potable water wellfield expansion project was completed that doubled local water production and guaranteed a 14-day emergency sustainment capability.

Recovered $8.67 million in Defense Support reimbursements and secured $8.1 million in competitive Other Procurement, Army (OPA) funding to modernize public safety dispatch systems and address vital equipment needs.

Behind Fort Drum's high operational readiness is a proactive force protection and security network. Following an external assessment, the installation received top marks across all defense pillars, including its Random Antiterrorism Measure (RAM) program, access-control vetting, and emergency management execution.

The garrison's Threat Working Group synchronized military law enforcement, counterintelligence, and the local Joint Terrorism Task Force to evaluate crime trends using tactical data analysis reviews. This targeted patrol strategy yielded a 21 percent overall reduction in total crime – highlighted by a 52 percent drop in sexual assaults, a 41 percent decrease in larcenies, and double-digit reductions in crimes against persons and property.

The Visitor Control Center processed over 14,500 inspections and executed 6,065 RAMs, intercepting contraband and weapons while denying installation access to more than 165 high-risk individuals, including 32 registered sex offenders. Streamlined vetting workflows cut access-pass turnaround times, while a 100 percent credentialed emergency dispatch and security team maintained rapid response standards.

Fort Drum's sustained success is deeply intertwined with its surrounding civilian communities. With approximately 40 percent of Soldiers residing off post and nearly all school-aged military children attending local public schools, the garrison actively collaborates with municipal partners across Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence counties.

Through cost-saving IGSAs – including partnerships with Cornell Cooperative Extension for family life educators (with a $484,000 annual cost avoidance), the State University of New York for carbon forest baseline research, and regional public safety agencies for synchronized mutual-aid response—the garrison prides itself on civic integration.

"An installation cannot achieve this level of excellence in isolation," Adler said. "We work with our North Country partners every day to support our Soldiers and their families. Together, we ensure that our warfighters are supported at home so they can succeed on any battlefield in the world. To our garrison team: Be proud of what you and your teammates have accomplished – this is a job well done."

The IMCOM-WH Best Garrison competition is the first step toward vying for the annual Commander in Chief's Award for Installation Excellence.

Previously, Fort Drum was awarded the 2020 Commander in Chief's Award for Installation Excellence and was named IMCOM Best Garrison Award recipient in 2019.

Fighting, Enduring, Surviving: Inside Mountain Peak

Story by Spc. Isaiah Mount

Fort Drum, NY. – Soldiers assigned to 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), validated their readiness during Mountain Peak, Oct. 20-29, at Fort Drum, N.Y. Mountain Peak trains and validates soldiers to fight and win against America's adversaries while also leveraging constantly evolving tactics to better sustain units on the battlefield.

Throughout Mountain Peak, Soldiers maneuvered through rugged terrain, conducted coordinated assaults, and worked together to secure key objectives. The exercise tested more than tactical proficiency, requiring units to ensure they are ready to fight, endure, and survive on the modern battlefield.

Throughout the training exercise, observer controller trainers, who observe, evaluate, and coach units on their performance, were present to ensure participating units are trained to standard.

"Mountain Peak is an opportunity for Soldiers to refine their techniques and put into place all the different systems they've been training," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Ranger, an observer controller trainer assigned to 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment. "It gives them opportunities outside of their normal routine for them to work together, war-game, and execute. We shadow and coach them so they can be effective in their mission set."

The exercise followed a progression of tactical operations designed to replicate the demands of large-scale combat, beginning with a forcible entry before transitioning into offensive operations and ultimately defensive operations.

As the scenario evolves, Soldiers must seize and secure key terrain, maneuver against a live opposing force and establish defensive positions to protect their gains. This progression challenges the brigade in a multi-domain environment to adapt to changing battlefield conditions, synchronize its capabilities and

See PEAK T34



Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Mobile Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (LI), perform a security duty during Mountain Peak Oct. 28, 2026, at Fort Drum, New York. Mountain Peak is a force-on-force exercise that stresses a unit's ability to fight, survive, and endure in a realistic large-scale combat operations scenario. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Isaiah Mount)

From T33

refine its tactics while preparing to fight and win against a near-peer adversary.

In addition to testing the unit's ability to conduct near-peer warfare, Mountain Peak provides an opportunity for medical personnel to practice prolonged field care, strengthening their ability to sustain casualties when evacuation is delayed or timely access to higher levels of treatment is limited.

The challenges they faced during Mountain Peak required medical teams to manage patients over extended periods while working with available personnel, equipment and supplies in austere field conditions.

One such capability that is being tested is Project Valkyrie; a way for medics to use compatible donors at the site for whole blood transfers for the patient.

"Project Valkyrie is setting the standard across all branches of service," said Staff

See PEAK T36



Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), conduct an attack to seize an objective Oct. 26, 2026, at Fort Drum, New York. Mountain Peak is a force-on-force exercise that stresses a unit's ability to fight, survive, and endure in a realistic large-scale combat operations scenario. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Isaiah Mount)



Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), conduct an attack to seize an objective Oct. 26, 2026, at Fort Drum, New York. Mountain Peak is a force-on-force exercise that stresses a unit's ability to fight, survive, and endure in a realistic large-scale combat operations scenario. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Isaiah Mount)

Thank you to our Veterans
& those who continue to serve!

Your Local Destination for Bone & Joint Care!

Choose Lewis County
ORTHOPEDICS
& SPORTS MEDICINE

Expert Care. Less Pain & Discomfort. Faster Recovery.

WELCOMING NEW PATIENTS
315-376-4505

7785 N. State St., Lowville, NY ★ www.lcgh.net



St. Lawrence
Federal Credit Union
Honoring those who have served.
800 Commerce Park Drive, Ogdensburg, NY 13669
stlawrfcu.com 315.393.3530

IMAGINE OUR REGION WITHOUT FORT DRUM

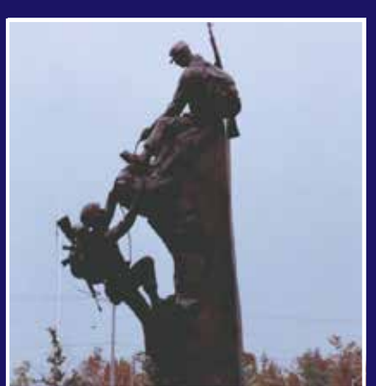
For nearly 40 years—through leadership, advocacy, and partnership—Advocate Drum has worked to secure the future of Fort Drum while strengthening the economic vitality and quality of life of the entire region by:

ADVOCATE DRUM
Strengthening Fort Drum. Strengthening Our Region.

- Advancing policies and investments that enhance Fort Drum's long-term military value and mission capabilities.
- Building collaborative solutions to challenges affecting service members, military families, veterans, employers, and communities.
- Promoting awareness of Fort Drum's economic and strategic importance at the local, state, and federal levels.
- Connecting stakeholders to create a stronger, more resilient defense community.
- Ensuring the North Country remains one of the nation's premier communities for military service, military families, and defense-related growth.

ADVOCATE DRUM
Strengthening Fort Drum. Strengthening Our Region.

JOIN TODAY! YOUR SUPPORT STRENGTHENS OUR VOICE.
Learn more and become a member at
AdvocateDrum.org
131 Washington St., Suite 300
Watertown, NY





A veteran's anniversary for the ages

A MARINE AND FORMER UNDERSHERIFF NOTES A MILESTONE AT 93



MORE THAN INVESTIGATING, ADMINISTRATING

Griffith recalled meeting celebrities in and around Alexandria Bay where they performed benefit concerts for the Disabled Persons Action Organization.

"I met Willie Nelson for a week. We were building a stage for him out at LaFargeville speedway. He came up about a week early and kept coming every day to see and advise what he needed. He was a very nice guy."

He also recalled the time he met Cathy Crawford, Joan Crawford's youngest daughter, when Cathy had her wedding at Alexandria Bay United Methodist in August 1968. She wed Clayton resident Jerome J. LaLonde, a Navy petty officer. Griffith was tasked with escorting Cathy at one point during the weekend. "She gave me a big bottle of champagne."

In addition to official police work, Griffith was on the department's bowling team, which took first place at a tournament in South Bend, Indiana. Griffith, who in 1971, was elected to the board of directors of the International Police Bowling Classic Association, displayed a photograph of the team from 1971 with the award. He then pointed out a photo of him marching in a parade with other officers from the sheriff's office.

"I formed that marching unit," Griffith said as he recalled traveling to parades in the area. "They had never had one."

Griffith retired from the

See VET T37

Peak

From T34



Soldiers assigned to 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Mobile Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (LI), man their dismounted M2 Browning heavy machine gun during Mountain Peak 2026 at Fort Drum, New York, on Oct. 28, 2026. Mountain Peak is a force-on-force exercise that stresses a unit's ability to fight, survive and endure in a realistic large scale combat operations scenario. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Sam Shomento)

compatible donors at the site for whole blood transfers for the patient.

"Project Valkyrie is setting the standard across all branches of service," said Staff Sgt. Dominic Vigar, a combat medic specialist assigned to 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (LI). "Project Valkyrie will help a lot with prolonged field medical care...if we have those donors available to us, I can start pulling from those donors, keeping the casualty alive for an extended amount of time."

Mountain Peak serves as a proving ground for the brigade to test its tactics, evaluate its capabilities and refine how it fights against a near-peer adversary.

Along with validating readiness, the unit used Mountain Peak as an opportunity to assess developing best practices for how to employ the Multi-Functional Reconnaissance Company and integrate intelligence and coordinate fires to support maneuver operations. By identifying gaps, adjusting their approach and applying lessons in real time, units can refine their techniques and develop more effective ways to operate on the modern battlefield.

The exercise also incorporated modern battlefield technologies, including unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and counter-UAS capabilities, allowing units to evaluate emerging threats, improve battlefield awareness and adapt to an evolving operational environment.

Mountain Peak provides the brigade with a critical opportunity to assess its overall effectiveness before its upcoming Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation in January 2027 and for future operational requirements.

"Mountain Peak certifies us as ready to deploy whenever the nation calls," said Capt. Connor Bryan, the commander of Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (LI). "We train here hard working on our techniques, tactics and procedures to ensure that when we go down-range, we're a well-oiled and rehearsed fighting machine.

Vet

From T36

veteran who answered the call from a small dairy farm in Adams Center, and afterward, had an esteemed career in the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office.

'ANYTHING ELSE, BUT THE MARINES'

Griffith is a 1951 graduate of Adams Center Central School. On the morning of Sept. 29, 1952, Griffith, 19, and Gerald E. Harrington, 18, both of Adams Center, hopped on a train in Watertown bound for Syracuse and beyond. The destination was Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina.

"I had never traveled before," Griffith said.

His mother, Musetta, didn't want him to join the Marines, especially during the Korean War – 1950 to 1953.

"Anything else, but the Marines," Griffith recalled his mom saying. "It's a pretty tough outfit."

He immediately discovered that fact.

"The drill instructors came out and met us with batons/ billy clubs. They beat the hell out of us. They wanted us to know that they were bosses. This went on for two or three days, and then things settled down."

Griffith briefly mused, and then laughed as he added, "That's why my mother didn't want me to join the Marines. But I knew what was coming, because I had a buddy, John Dixon, who was there before me."

Dixon, a 1951 graduate of Adams Center Central, joined the Marine Corps in 1951 and served until 1954, mainly in Korea with the 1st Marine Division. Griffith attended his memorial service in Copenhagen in 2018.

Griffith picked up a photograph that was on his daughter's kitchen table. The photo was part of a wide selection of images, honors, and documents that Jonda had assembled.



Marine Crops veteran and former Jefferson County Undersheriff John J. Griffith poses with his milestone cake at the 10th Mountain Division monument at Thompson Park. Photo courtesy of Jonda Ratigliano

"This is my pride right here," he said, displaying the photograph of his graduating Platoon 536 Fourth Recruit Battalion regiment, taken Dec. 17, 1952.

Following boot camp, Griffith was assigned to Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida for ordnance training. He received more of that training when he accompanied Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron 214 to the Mojave Desert in California. In February 1954, Griffith was promoted to corporal. He would eventually end up serving in Hawaii.

"I was a bomb expert," he said. Among his duties was attaching bombs to aircraft. He recalled the time he had to disarm a bomb from a propeller-driven plane in Hawaii.

"He (A pilot) came in with what I think was a 500-pounder, and the bomb wasn't fully released. It had released up front, but the rest of it dragged. When the plane stopped, the pilot got out and took off. I went in with another guy and disarmed the bomb. It was comical though, to watch him run away from that plane."

Some of Griffith's duties during his last year as a Marine in 1955 were labeled top secret, he said. Mock bombing runs from Hawaii during that time included simulations tied to the potential deployment of tactical nuclear weapons.

Griffith left the military as a sergeant. Afterward, he got a job at the Black Clawson Company in Watertown as a traffic manager. "Not too long, because they laid 80-something of us off at one time," he said.

He then worked with his father-in-law (Jonda's grandfather, Gordon Fassett) in the construction field. (In 1953, Griffith married Linda Joan Fassett. They are divorced. They had two other children, Valerie and William).

A RECOMMENDATION

In 1962, Griffith joined the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office. He explained that he was basically recruited. It began, he said, when he received a call from Charles E. Kellogg, justice of the peace in Adams Center, who died in 1993 at the age of 76.

"He recommended me to the sheriff, and the sheriff had an opening for a road patrol man," Griffith said. The sheriff at the time was Robert B. Chaufty, who was first elected to the role in 1956. Chaufty, who served as sheriff through 1971, died in 2005 at the age of 98. Like Griffith, when elected, Chaufty had no experience in law enforcement.

Griffith recalled the day of his interview with the sheriff. "I was in there for about 10-15 minutes, and he said, 'You're hired!'"

But there was a catch. He had to go see Jefferson County GOP chairman Clinton W. Marsh.

"I was a registered Democrat," Griffith said. "He

See VET T38

Vet

From T37

them for speeding. I stopped one guy doing 80-something on I-81, which had been newly built. He was a big shot attorney. He said, 'You can't stop me, I got an appointment in Watertown!' I said, 'You can forget the appointment. You are going to the judge with me.'"

After two-and-a-half years on road patrol, Griffith was appointed to the detective division by Chaufty.

A STAR FOR BRAVERY

In May of 1972, Griffith was awarded the Silver Star for Bravery by the American Federation of Police. It was in relation to an incident that occurred on Sept. 19, 1969.

Griffith was near the Oswego and Jefferson County border at the time when a call came in about an overturned boat near shore on Lake Ontario, three-quarters of a mile from Jefferson Park, Ellisburg.

"They said there was a man in distress who had been in the water for an hour or two."

That man was Garfield Douglas, 57, of Woodville. According to Times' files, his 12-foot boat overturned in rough seas after the vessel's motor quit and when he stood up to restart it while it was still in gear.

"I quickly drove to the scene and right up onto shore," Griffith said. "A crowd was watching. Nobody was doing anything."

Griffith said he found an old 12-foot wood boat nearby with oars in it.

"I was familiar with water because I was in Hawaii and loved the water. I was also a good swimmer, and I wasn't concerned with any of that."

When Griffith reached Douglas, he found that one of his legs was tangled up in a gas line attached to the boat's motor.

"I broke the gas line and got him free. He started to get in my boat, but he was big man, 200-and-some-odd pounds. I told him the boat won't take both of us and to hang on to the back of it. He was a strong man, but pretty weak by that point. But he hung on, and I kept rowing."

Griffith was able to wade to shore once shallow water was reached. Sheriff Chaufty was on shore to greet them. Douglas, who died in 1978, declined medical attention.

"Chaufty said, 'I think you deserve a drink!'" Griffith said. "We all went to the closest restaurant in Henderson Harbor. The other guy and I were saturated with water. It didn't matter."

In May of 1972, Griffith was appointed undersheriff by county Sheriff Irving P. Angel, replacing Kenneth E. Carr, who retired as undersheriff. By that time, Griffith was a graduate of the Municipal Police Training School and also an instructor for it.

See VET T39



Thank You

The American Legion Auxiliary Units in Jefferson County would love to thank the Veterans, Active Duty, and Families for all they sacrifice for our Freedoms.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

Mission: *In the Spirit of service, not-self, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support the American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad. For God and Country, we advocate for veterans, our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security.*

Purposes: *In fulfillment of our Mission, the American Legion Auxiliary adheres to the following purposes:*

To support and advocate for veterans, active military and their families
To support the initiatives and programs of The American Legion
To foster patriotism and responsible citizenship
To award scholarships and promote quality education and literacy
To provide educational and leadership opportunities that uphold the ideals of freedom and democracy and encourage good citizenship and patriotism in government
To increase our capacity to deliver our Mission by providing meaningful volunteer opportunities within our communities
To empower our membership to achieve personal fulfillment through "service not self"

There are 13 American Legion Auxiliaries in Jefferson County:
Adams | Alexandria Bay | Antwerp | Black River | Brownville | Cape Vincent | Carthage | Clayton | Dexter | Lafargeville | Philadelphia | Sackets Harbor | Watertown

For More information about our Legion Family email: jeffersonconyala@gmail.com

Vet

From T38

MORE THAN INVESTIGATING, ADMINISTRATING

Griffith recalled meeting celebrities in and around Alexandria Bay where they performed benefit concerts for the Disabled Persons Action Organization.

"I met Willie Nelson for a week. We were building a stage for him out at LaFargeville speedway. He came up about a week early and kept coming every day to see and advise what he needed. He was a very nice guy."

He also recalled the time he met Cathy Crawford, Joan Crawford's youngest daughter, when Cathy had her wedding at Alexandria Bay United Methodist in August 1968. She wed Clayton resident Jerome J. LaLonde, a Navy petty officer. Griffith was tasked with escorting Cathy at one point during the weekend. "She gave me a big bottle of champagne."

In addition to official police work, Griffith was on the department's bowling team, which took first place at a tournament in South Bend, Indiana. Griffith, who in 1971, was elected to the board of directors of the International Police Bowling Classic Association, displayed a photograph of the team from 1971 with the award. He then pointed out a photo of him marching in a parade with other officers from the sheriff's office.

"I formed that marching unit," Griffith said as he recalled traveling to parades in the area. "They had never had one."

Griffith retired from the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office and as undersheriff in 1977. He then returned to working as a self-employed contractor, mainly doing roofing, siding and masonry. He had a crew of five workers. "I worked for the city of Watertown, putting in sidewalks like I used to do with my father-in-law."

"When we drive around town, he goes, 'Oh! I did that one, and this one,'" Jonda said.

"I worked in construction from the time I retired until I was 75," Griffith said. "I carried my last bundle of shingles onto a roof and said to the guys, 'That's it!'"

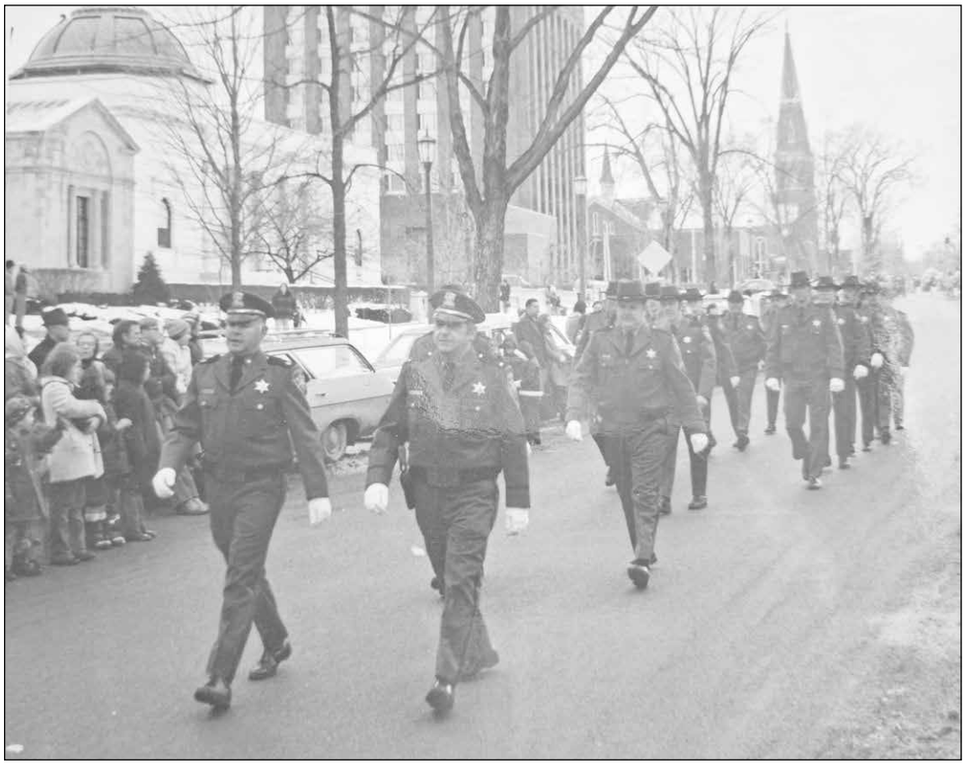
Jonda reminded her dad about the time he fell 20 feet off a roof, which shattered his arm. She displayed an X-ray photo of the patched appendage.

"She takes good care of me," Griffith said. "It's never a day missed that she doesn't call me."

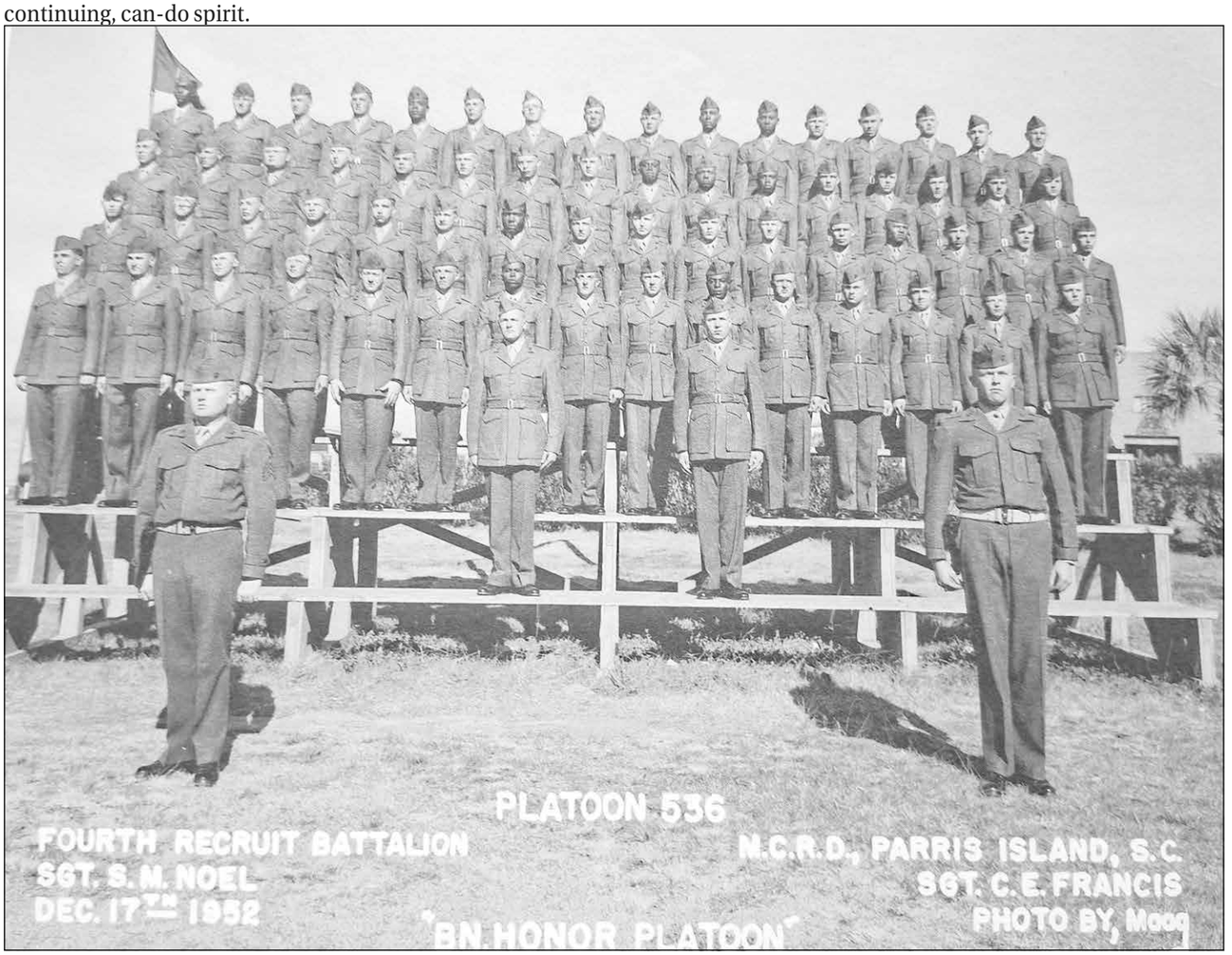
At the conclusion of his interview, Griffith asked his interviewer a question: if he hits the century mark, would he return to mark that milestone?

"Will there be cake?"

"Yes!" he said, with that continuing, can-do spirit.



John J. Griffith was instrumental in creating a Jefferson County Sheriffs Office marching unit. In this undated photo, taken on Washington Street, Watertown, he is on the far left, front row, proudly leading the procession.



"This is my pride right here," John J. Griffith said about his graduating Platoon 536 Fourth Recruit Battalion regiment, taken Dec. 17, 1952 at Parris Island. He is on the top row, the last one on the right.

The Leading Source for Grant Expertise

GRANT WRITING



LOBBYING



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



We are proud to have secured over $100 million in grant funding for local projects throughout the North Country.

Rely on us as a trusted partner who will help you realize your funding objectives and navigate the grant writing process from beginning to end. We also assist with access to key officials and decision makers in order to best position your project for success.

We specialize in grant writing, project and funding assessment, economic development consulting, business advancement strategies, incentive negotiations and grant administration.

NEW YORK STATE WBE CERTIFIED WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SPECIALISTS

Contact Leann West or Diane Wladis

6312 Fly Rd., East Syracuse, NY 13057 | 215 Washington St., Suite 107, Watertown, NY 13601
info@strategicdevelopmentspecialists.com | strategicdevelopmentspecialists.com
315.251.1314