

NJDMAVA HIGHLIGHTS

AUGUST 28, 2015



Artillery doubles in size and firepower

By Spc. Devon Bistarkey, 444th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



The King of Battle just got a new jewel in its crown – the “triple seven” – the M777A2 lightweight howitzer.

It’s bigger, louder and has a new home with the New Jersey Army National Guard’s 3-112th Field Artillery.

The 3-112th artillerymen spent their two-week annual training at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst learning to use their new, more advanced weapon and getting used to the fact that their unit has nearly doubled in size recently as part of a new configuration.

The unit’s reorganization added a battery and a company-sized element of more than 100 Soldiers. The Soldiers in the new battery will fire the new M777A2 lightweight howitzer, a 155mm cannon. The battalion’s two existing batteries will continue to fire the older M119A3 105mm howitzer.

In either case, more Soldiers and greater firepower make the 3-112th a fiercer fighting force.

“We are more mission capable,” said Sgt. First Class Saadiq Shakir, artilleryman with the 3-112th. “These

upgrades make us a quicker and a more reactive light force.”

Lt. Col. Rob Hughes, the battalion commander, was pleased with the way the unit was integrating the additional Soldiers and new weapons.

“This is a very professional team,”

said Hughes “to be out here, you have to want this.”

The enhanced firepower of the triple seven is a physically demanding weapon. The rounds weigh about 100 pounds and require teams of eight to 12 Soldiers.



Cover photo

Soldiers with the 3-112th Field Artillery fire a M777A2 lightweight 155 mm howitzer during a live fire exercise at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Aug. 26, 2015. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen/Released)

Soldiers with the 3-112th Field Artillery, New Jersey Army National Guard, prepare to fire the M777A2 lightweight 155 mm howitzer during a live fire exercise at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Aug. 26, 2015. These are the first M777A2 howitzers the NJARNG has received. The M777A2 uses an advanced digital fire control system to precisely and accurately locate and aim the weapon, and can deliver long-range 155 mm artillery fire to support ground troops. (U.S. Air National Guard photos by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen/Released)

FIRST TO FIRE

Story by Spc. Devon Bistarkey, 444th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers are initiated into the military during basic combat training. They are galvanized as warriors and leaders through their training with the resolve that they can be all that they can be.

Second Lieutenant Jennifer Wain believed she could be a combat arms leader. And she realized her dream.

Wain, a fire direction officer with the 3-112th Field Artillery Battalion, is now the first female combat arms officer in the history of the New Jersey Army National Guard.

She is well aware that the contributions of tens of thousands of military women who came before her made that possible.

“Women have been in combat roles for years, and now we are able to recognize it,” said Wain.

For nearly two decades women have served as pilots, truck drivers and direct support personnel during war and in support of military efforts overseas.

Now, as the Department of Defense slowly begins opening nearly all of the combat specialties to women, female Soldiers are being given opportunities for even the most rigorous combat training. For example, last month, two female officers became the first women to graduate from the grueling nine-week Ranger School.

In New Jersey, Wain is not the only woman making history.

Capt. Sarah Bernal, who served for 17 years as a leader in a combat service support role, now serves as the first female



Staff Sgt. Bryan Young, right, and Sgt. Santiago Sanchez, left, show 2nd Lt. Jennifer Wain, all with the 3-112th Field Artillery, the sighting system on the all-digital M119A3 105 mm lightweight howitzer during a live fire exercise at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Aug. 26, 2015. The upgraded M119A3 is equipped with a digital fire control system that includes an inertial navigation unit, guided-precision system technology and other features that will give the weapon the ability to determine its precise geographical location on its own. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen/Released)

staff officer in a field artillery battalion.

Bernal said women helped pave their own way to combat leadership roles by performing combat support roles well.

“We haven’t gotten to this point over night,” said Bernal, who started her military career as an enlisted soldier knowing that there were certain things that she couldn’t do.

New Soldiers won’t know what it is

like not to have these opportunities, said Bernal.

Giving more opportunities to women also gives commanders to build stronger units.

“This gives me a wider pool of candidates,” said Lt. Col. Rob Hughes, Field Artillery battalion commander, “it’s about putting the best person in the job.”



Soldiers with the 3-112th Field Artillery, watch as 2nd Lt. Jennifer Wain fires the all-digital M119A3 105 mm lightweight howitzer during a live fire exercise at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Aug. 26, 2015. Wain, a fire direction officer with the 3-112th, is the first female combat arms officer in the history of the New Jersey Army National Guard. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen/Released) (This image was cropped to focus on the subject of the image)



2nd Lt. Jennifer Wain, 3-112th Field Artillery, poses for a portrait as a 155 mm round from a M777A2 lightweight howitzer detonates in the background during a live fire exercise at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Aug. 26, 2015. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen/Released)

Justin Gielski: American Ninja Warrior

Story and photos by
Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen
108th Wing Public Affairs

Tech. Sgt. Justin B. Gielski maintains his balance while training to compete on the TV show "American Ninja Warrior" at a playground near his home in Medford, N.J., Aug. 21, 2015.

Tech. Sgt. Justin B. Gielski may be the next American Ninja Warrior.

Problem is, he can't tell you. At least, not yet.

In June, the New Jersey Air National Guard Airman competed in Las Vegas in the finals of the popular television show that requires strength, agility, endurance and more than a little grit. He's not allowed to talk about his performance until the show airs sometime before the end of the month.

To get to the finals, Gielski, a loadmaster with the 150th Special Operations Squadron of the 108th Wing, took part in an all-military preliminary competition and placed fifth. His performance in that competition was aired on the Aug. 17 episode. In all, 30 military members competed and the top 15 were invited to the finals.

"I think it reflects well on the New Jersey Guard and the Air Force because there are not that many Air Force or Guard members that made it through to this level," Gielski said.

Gielski also gives credit to the creators of "American Ninja Warrior" – for creating a diabolically difficult obstacle course.

"Lot of bizarre obstacles, the people who engineer these things have to be partially insane, but they're fun, they definitely test your



Gielski swings on a set of bars he built in the backyard of his home in Medford, N.J.



Gielski balances on a tire while training in his backyard.

abilities,” he said.

For Gielski, this is his first season with “American Ninja Warrior” but his interest started long before the American version of the show came out.

“I used to watch Japanese version of Ninja Warrior when I was younger and I thought to myself this looks really fun, I think I could do this,” said Gielski. “I found a parkour gym in Cherry Hill ... I actually really enjoyed it and I had a lot of fun and kinda saw the potential that I could be good at it.”

It is not an easy road; the training is intensive – an hour during lunch and then another one to three hours in the evening.

“I have definitely gotten a lot of support from the Wing in this adventure, which I thought has been really cool; it’s been neat that they’ve allowed me to do this,” said Gielski. “I’m glad I could represent them well in return for their sacrifices to help me with my dreams.”

There was also an unforeseen benefit from preparing for the competition, Gielski’s family got interested in working out.

“My kids kind of started taking an interest in it as well as they saw me doing it, so we started building some things in our backyard like bar setups and stuff and they really love it,” said Gielski. “We just have a blast and I’ve noticed it has actually brought our family a lot closer together.”

“Every day is different, we’re not just working out, we’re always striving to meet a new goal, to accomplish some new flip, hang longer, swing farther, things like that. We get really excited when someone in the family does something new that’s awesome; we take a lot of videos and post a lot of video.”

One of the show’s hash tags for Gielski is #MagicFingers.

“We’re a Seahawks family and when the Seahawks are close to the end zone, we’ll send magic to them [visual-



Gielski performs his human flag pose at a playground near his home in South Jersey.

ize hands extended and fingers wiggling toward the television screen] and we try to will them to score,” said Gielski. “So it just became something that we do. My son is having a hard time with this obstacle, [we’ll say] ‘you’re really close, let’s give him some magic’ and we give him magic and it kind of motivates you to do well.”

“I got up there the first night [of the show] and I saw my kids there [and I said] ‘alright kids give me magic, it’s going to be tough,’” said Gielski. “So it became a thing I talked about [on the show] and they gave me the hash tag #MagicFingers.”

“I hear stories of ‘hey, my kids were giving you magic through the TV rooting you on’ and it’s pretty cool to hear that. I’m glad our family could share something like that.”

When asked about the Vegas episodes, Gielski could say only one thing.

“It’s going to be exciting.”



Interns update rare species survey

By Anjelica Sinigaglio, NJDMAVA Environmental Management Bureau

The New Jersey Army National Guard's Environmental Management Bureau has been updating its Rare Species Planning Level Survey.

The survey, which was originally completed in 1999 and 2006, is maintained to keep Agency facilities in compliance with the United States and New Jersey Endangered Species Acts and assist during analysis of a federal action under the National Environmental Policy Act.

In cooperation with Rowan University and an environmental internship program, the EMB assessed the habitats of 15 armories during 2014. These armories were chosen based on the presence of an extensive forest network and high probability of a thriving, onsite ecosystem. It was determined that 11 of these facilities boast prime habitat for various state and federally listed rare birds – 43 species total – along with the Indiana and northern long-eared bats.

In April, 2015, the EMB and Rowan interns began assessing these 11 facilities. The team has employed bird and bat recorders and conducted evening visual bird surveys at a new facility each week.

The combination of these recorded audio calls and data from the visual surveys reveals whether or not rare species are present.

As of mid-July, the team has recorded the presence of the great blue heron at both the Franklin Armory and at Joint Force




Anjelica Sinigaglio, left, Environmental Management Bureau, NJDMAVA with summer interns, left to right, Matt Bettin, Morgan Doherty and Hannah Jacobson. The group was responsible for updating the Rare Species Planning Level Survey. (NJDMAVA photo by Mark C. Olsen/Released)

Headquarters at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, the grasshopper sparrow at the Morristown Armory, the Glossy Ibis at the Cape May Armory and the wood thrush at the Princeton warehouse, the Dover armory and at Joint Force Headquarters. Each of these birds are listed as a state species of concern, except for the grasshopper sparrow which is listed as threatened. In addition, the preliminary audio call analy-

sis has revealed the potential for rare bat activity at multiple facilities.

This portion of the project is slated to continue into the early fall of 2015, in conjunction with initial desktop reviews and habitat assessments at 14 additional armories. In addition, the EMB will update the geographic information system data, specifically the land vegetation area feature, to reflect current conditions at each property.



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
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Please visit this website for the full The American Legion National Convention Schedule
 For registration questions, please email hiringourheroes@uschamber.com or call 202-463-5807.







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You Are Cordially Invited



1st Annual New Jersey National Guard Suicide Prevention Stand Down

- Suicide Prevention is the TAG's #1 priority. DMAVA and the NJ National Guard is proud to present Brian Fleming, Army Veteran and Purple Heart Recipient, for "Living Resilient" a training event on resilience & suicide prevention emphasizing the importance of positive decision making and perseverance.
- We have partnered with the Office of the Governor, the Department of Human Services and Veteran's Organizations for a proclamation signing in support of ongoing suicide prevention efforts for Service Members and their Families.
- The NJ National Guard remains committed to the prevention of suicide and will continue to train, educate, and raise awareness on this matter. We are working to foster a climate that encourages help-seeking behaviors while de-stigmatizing behavioral health ensuring a **ready** and **resilient** force.

Lawrenceville Drill Floor Sept 9, 2015 @ 0830

R3SP is the POC for this event: MAJ Amy Glatz & Ms. Amanda Brown

609-562-0832

New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

PO Box 340
Trenton, NJ 08625-0340

1-888-8NJ-VETS(8387) or www.state.nj.us/military



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Menlo's new bus

Bill O'Brien, left, president of the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Menlo Park Residents Council, watches as Mike Wilson, center, American Legion 2014-2015 state commander, cuts the ribbon to a new handicapped bus for the veterans with Raymond Zawacki, deputy commissioner, New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Aug. 21, 2015. The bus was the largest part of Wilson's state commanders project and replaces a bus the Legion donated more than a decade ago. (NJDMVA photo by Kryn Westhoven/Released)

Veterans Outreach Campaign

Sept. 8 & 9
DMAVA Veterans Outreach Campaign
10 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Brunswick Square Mall
755 Highway 18
East Brunswick, NJ 08816

Sept. 12
“Rockin Fest” to support student veterans
11 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Sussex County College
For details:
sussex.edu/rockinfest
1 College Road
Newton, NJ 07860

E-mail your Highlights submissions to: mark.olsen@dmava.nj.gov by close of business Wednesday



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