



DMAVA HIGHLIGHTS



NOVEMBER 15, 2012

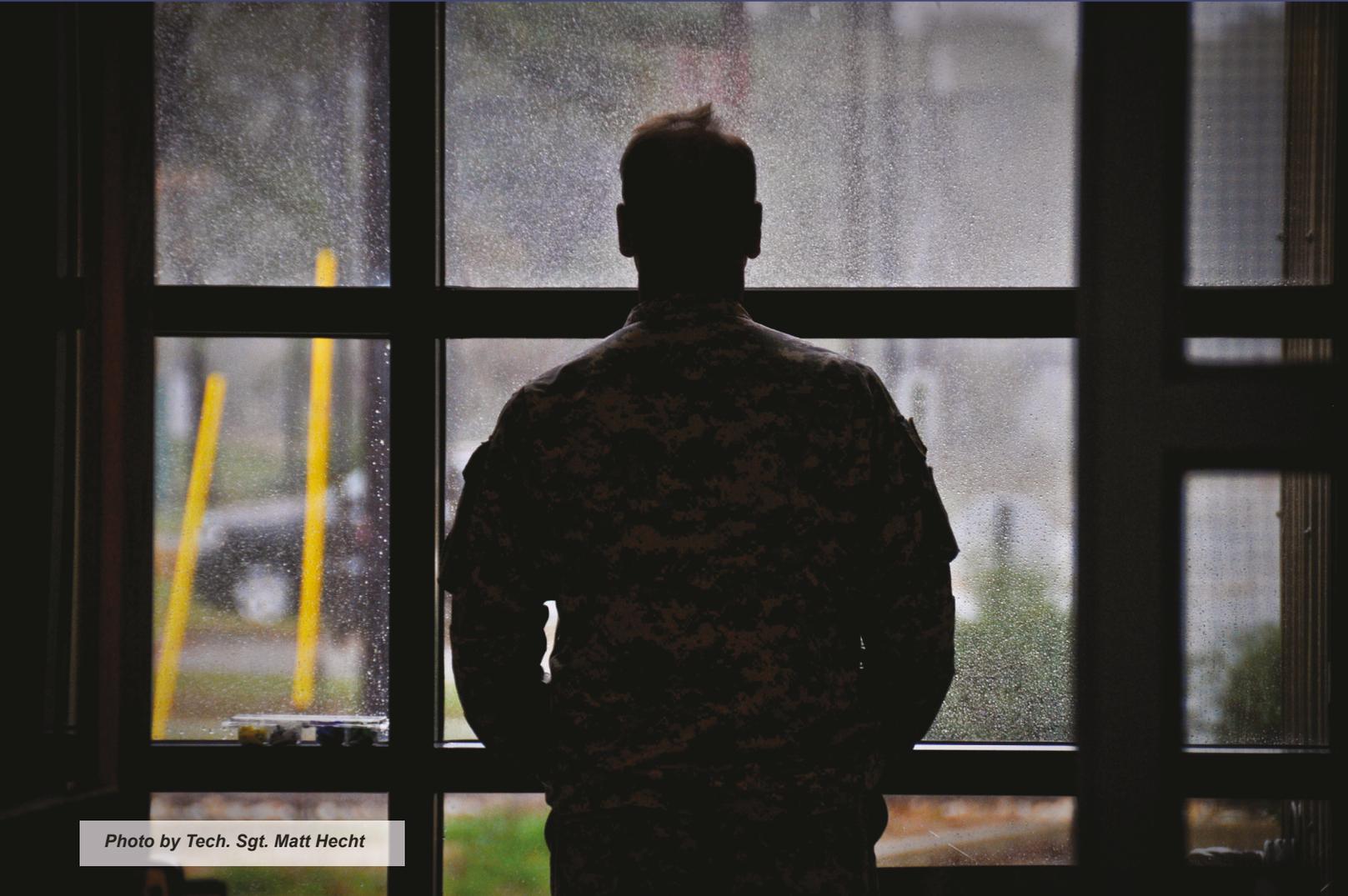


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Matt Hecht



Photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen



Courtesy photo by Jeffrey Bruno

NEW JERSEY NATIONAL GUARD'S RESPONSE TO HURRICANE SANDY

“Hometown Team” helps neighbors in wake of Hurricane Sandy

Story and photo by Army Staff Sgt. Wayne Woolley, 444th MPAD

The full fury of Hurricane Sandy was bearing down on the New Jersey National Guard armory in Teaneck just after 4 a.m. Tuesday when the call came in. A levee had burst 10 miles away, sending a torrent from the Hackensack River into the towns of Moonachie and Little Ferry. Lives were in danger.

Staff Sergeants Catie Cataldo and Bryan Schooley led a convoy of 10 trucks that raced through blinding rain and howling winds to reach a Bergen County Emergency Management command center in 28 minutes. In another five minutes, National Guard Soldiers began helping people onto trucks to escape the rising floodwaters.

“We were told we needed to hustle,” said Cataldo, 32, who works as an adoptions investigator for the New Jersey Department of Youth and Family Service in civilian life. “So we just hauled to get down there. We wanted to help.”

The New Jersey National Guard remains in Moonachie and a dozen other communities over a 150-mile swath of New Jersey stretching from Bergen County to Cape May where its Soldiers and Airmen have brought more than 3,000 people and 200 pets to safety over the past five days.

Brig. Gen. James J. Grant, the commander of the Joint Task Force responding to Hurricane Sandy, on Thursday told Soldiers and Airmen who had been on storm duty for six straight days that they were heroes.

“You encountered human beings who had lost everything,” Grant said. “And when they see you, and that uniform, you bring a sense of calmness.”

Schooley, the Soldier who directed the mission into Moonachie with Cataldo, said people were grateful when they saw the green National Guard trucks rolling through the floodwaters and into their neighborhoods.

“People just wanted help to get out of those places, they were filling with water,” he said. “We were helping older people, women with children, dogs, cats, anything we could fit on the trucks.”

Many of the people who were evacuated by the National Guard ended up at state-run shelters for displaced residents. The National Guard had a presence at five of those shelters in Middlesex and Monmouth counties from the first days of the storm. As the week went on, Soldiers and Airmen established a shelter for displaced residents at the Jersey City armory and then assisted with the creation of a shelter in Glen Gardner, Hunterdon County.

Many of the Soldiers and Airmen who responded to the storm had spent days away from their own homes, which were not spared the storm’s wrath.

Spc. Olivia Ospina of Patterson said her home had suffered some water damage because of the storm, but was convinced that helping her neighbors recover from the storm was her duty.

“I just want to get out there and get my feet wet to help these people,” Ospina said. “This is what I signed up for.”

Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Eugeneia Aikens grew up in Atlantic City and knows the ocean. But she never saw it quite like



Col. Kevin Hegarty, left, operations officer for the New Jersey National Guard Joint Task Force for Hurricane Sandy, gets a briefing from Staff Sgt. Catie Cataldo, who led a convoy to rescue residents of Moonachie, N.J., during the height of the hurricane Tuesday morning. Army National Guard Soldiers responded from their armory in Teaneck to the flooded area in 28 minutes.

it looked when her unit pulled up near the convention center to begin evacuating people whose homes were already full of five feet of water.

“Most people see the ocean as a very peaceful and calm place,” Aikens said. “That night, the oceans jumped up and wanted to take away everything. It was not a nice place.”

The mission that brought Aikens to Atlantic City from a National Guard command center in Pomona had begun as an assignment to deliver 1,500 cots to a shelter and changed into a mission to save lives.

One of the first people the Soldiers encountered when they rolled into Atlantic City in 5-ton trucks capable of fording 30-inches of water was Fire Capt. Thomas Joseph Culleney Jr.

“There were people trapped who were being forced to the roof of their homes because of rising waters,” Culleney said. “Without that five ton, without the National Guard and the fire department working as a team, we would have not gotten to those people.”

Scenes like that played out across that night and into Tuesday morning along the Jersey Shore and into the densely populated New York suburbs of Hudson and Bergen counties.

Many had been like Judy Litwinowicz of Brant Beach, N.J. on Long Beach Island, who had been stranded in the cold and was wet with her cat for two days before the New Jersey National Guard arrived.

She felt powerless when the tidal surge swept across her narrow barrier island.

“We had lived here for 25 years and lived through plenty of storms, but nobody expected anything like this,” she said. “The National Guard guys were right on target and they found me and helped get me out. I can’t thank them enough.”

FUELING UP FIRST RESPONDERS

Story by Army Sgt. 1st Class Jerome Grant, 444th MPAD and photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen, 108th Wing

WEST ORANGE, N.J. -- The New Jersey Army National Guard is working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and New Jersey State Police to provide fuel to vehicles supporting first responders, critical infrastructure workers such as gas and electrical crews, and personnel who are critical to the recovery and aid for the state of New Jersey.

From National Guard armories in West Orange and Freehold and from an Atlantic County Office of Emergency Management in Egg Harbor Township, a fleet of 17 Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Trucks (HEMTT) filled with fuel are making deliveries to agencies across the state in an operation that launched Thursday using seven New Jersey Army National Guard trucks. The fleet expanded on Saturday evening with the arrival of 10 Pennsylvania Army National Guard trucks and their crews.

At the West Orange armory, where a small fleet of commercial tanker trucks were operating as part of a broader FEMA effort and National Guard Soldiers were filling their HEMTTs and planning routes, 1st Lt. Zhao Chen described the operation.

“We are currently managing eight vehicles which contain either or both unleaded gasoline and diesel fuel” said Chen, the Officer in Charge, Task Force North Emergency Re-fueling Mission. “Six of the eight vehicles are dual containers meaning they carry both types of fuel. The other two only contain diesel.”

“There are also 7 FEMA contractors working the distribution activities” said Chen.

“The FEMA sponsored refueling mission is two refuel missions happening simultaneously,” explained Maj. Andrew Hague, 50th Brigade Special Troops Battalion Executive Officer. “There is stationary or static refueling that is happening for first responders and other folks that are critical to state recovery. There is also a mobile refueling operation which is a convoy style mission.”

Both missions which began Nov. 1, are driven and sustained by FEMA contracted fuel trucks which deliver bulk fuel drops and fuel truck swaps.

“Over 400 vehicles came through the facility on Nov. 2,” said Hague. “The day before that we were only open half the day and took care of over 200 vehicles. So we are expecting to take care of between 400 to 450 vehicles each day.”

The static refueling mission relies on National Guard military

police to man entry control points 24 hours following vehicle criteria guidance directed by FEMA.

Hague explains that the criteria are first responders in their official vehicles, vehicles that support the servicing, repairing, or rebuilding of the infrastructure through public services such as electric and gas, and State Police, ambulances, fire trucks, and contractors who have been hired by those agencies who need fuel to work on recovery from Hurricane Sandy.

Personnel from hospitals are able to get refueled as well so they can get back and forth to the hospital to do their missions.

People who think they can sneak into line are out of luck.

“There is 100 percent ID check” Hague said “Medical personnel are pre-screened and must have identification showing which hospital they work for with a badge or some form of ID issued by the hospital. If there is a question or grey area, like if a pharmacist meets the criteria during the screening, there is a FEMA rep who will make the ultimate decision on whether a person is considered critical personnel.”

The convoy style mobile refueling missions are assigned from the Regional Operations Center through the NJ State Police, who are consolidating the bulk fuel requests.

The mobile mission takes care of assignments such as the refueling of a generator bank at a waste treatment facility. Soldiers take HEMTTs filled with diesel from the FEMA tankers and drop it where it needs to go.

“So far we have accomplished 16 of those types of missions” said Hague “We contact the civilian authority and come up with the route to get there and ensure we are able to link up to do drops. We have been doing that 24 hours a day as well with sleep plans in place.”

The leadership of the missions have nothing but praise for the personnel carrying out these very im-

portant missions.

“The soldiers have been doing a great job” said Hague “It’s all junior non commissioned officers that are out there. The teams are made up of enlisted people who are truck drivers and fuelers who are qualified to run the pumps.”

“We give them the mission, but it is the enlisted soldiers who roll out execute the job. In all their missions, the enlisted people are the National Guards direct liaison with the civilian authorities and they are doing an excellent job.”





A blur of rescues through a New Jersey Guardsman's eyes

Story by Army Staff Sgt. Wayne Woolley and photo by Spc. Joseph Davis, 444th MPAD

HOBOKEN, N.J. -- The Soldiers of Foxtrot Company of the New Jersey Army National Guard's 2/113 Infantry rolled into the small, densely populated Hudson County city of Hoboken in the early morning darkness of Oct. 31.

Working from a fleet of 17 high-wheeled trucks capable of passing through 30 inches of water, they immediately went to work evacuating residents who were hemmed in by waist-high water in this city of brownstones and high-rise apartment buildings.

Spc. Jesse de La Cruz, 26, a private security officer in civilian life, was aboard one of the first trucks in the city. He remains

among the 2,000 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen mobilized for response to Hurricane Sandy. He took a break in between missions this week to reflect on those first days in Hoboken.

"It's just a blur," said de La Cruz, who joined the National Guard three years ago. "We were just going, going and going, helping people get out and get to safety."

His first mission was at 3:30 a.m., when he and several fellow Soldiers helped a family with an infant escape an apartment in a building that had begun to fill with a toxic mix of floodwater, diesel and sewage.

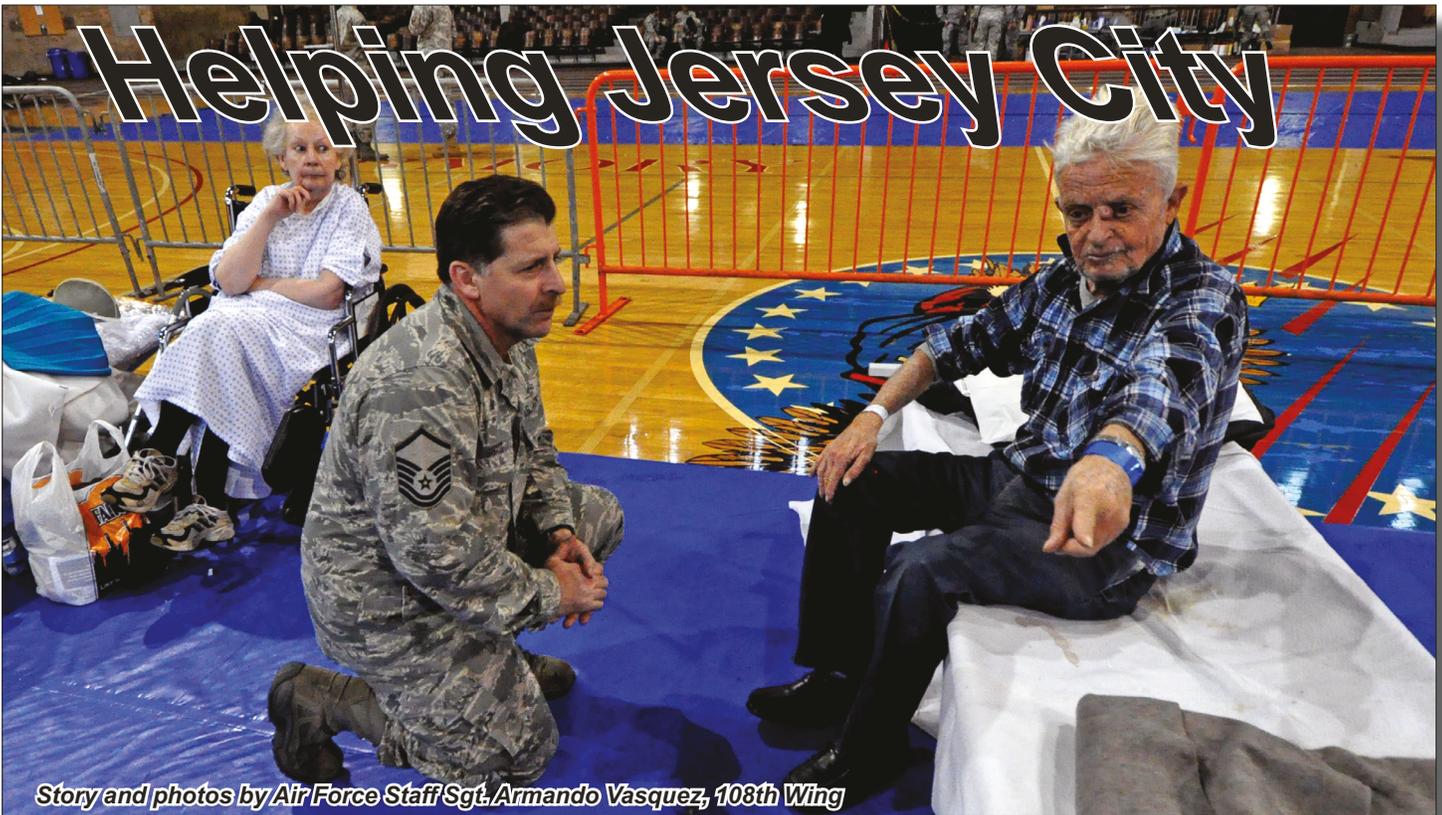
Over the next 14 hours, de La Cruz helped a Hoboken paramedic evacuate a woman who had gone into severe diabetic shock and needed to be strapped to a stretcher, a woman who had gone into labor and needed to be carried down six flights of stairs in a chair and an 86-year-old man who was related to a Hoboken fire fighter who had been desperately trying to reach him for more than a day.

Before the week ended, Foxtrot Company had evacuated 900 Hoboken residents to safety before redeploying to their armory in Riverdale for more hurricane-response missions in other parts of Northern New Jersey. Alpha Company and the Headquarters Company of the 2/113 moved into Hoboken in their place and has since delivered more than 25,000 meals to residents who have not needed evacuation, but remain without power.

"I'm very proud of the work we did in Hoboken. I think we did a pretty good job," de La Cruz said that day. "Helping people who need help? That's what I signed up to do."



Photo by Chaplain (Cpt.) Andre Ascalon



Story and photos by Air Force Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez, 108th Wing

“What the heck was I thinking,” said Air Force Master Sgt. Steven Sabato. “My wife and kids are at home.”

Those were the words that kept repeating on Sabato’s mind Sunday, Oct. 28, as he rode on the bus from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J. towards the New Jersey Army National Guard’s Jersey City armory.

Sabato, an aircraft mechanic, along with more than 100 other Airmen from the 108th Wing had volunteered for the governor’s call up of the National Guard in support of civil authorities as Hurricane Sandy was approaching New Jersey.

“I was kicking myself in the butt,” said Sabato, as he realized that if the hurricane damaged his home, he would not be around to help his family.

Luckily, Sabato’s home was not impacted and his mind was at ease.

And being able to concentrate on his mission has been critical. Mainly, so that he and the other Guardsmen can effectively help the residents displaced by the hurricane. “Nobody was trained in any of this,” said Sabato. “My job as an aircraft mechanic has nothing to do with this. We learned as we did things.”

What the New Jersey National Guardsmen have been doing at the Jersey City armory has been providing sheltering to the hundreds of residents of Jersey City that were displaced when Hurricane Sandy hit the area.

“At the height of all of this, we had approximately 300 hundred residents seek shelter here,” said Senior Master Sgt. Michael Edmiston, also from the 108th Wing.

Edmiston said some were homeless before the hurricane and had nowhere to go when Hurricane Sandy made impact, so they came to the armory to seek shelter.

Since the hurricane hit Jersey City, these Guardsmen have pro-

vided sleeping cots, shower locations, fed and security for their guest at the armory. But they have also provided comfort and an ear to listen. They have showed compassion for anybody who needed someone to talk to during these difficult times.

“This facility is extremely incredible,” said Sabato. “When we first got here, there was the Army and Air Force sections, but as time went by and we continued working together to help these people, we didn’t see our different branches. We just worked as one team, with one goal: To help.”



Top photo, Master Sgt. Steven Sabato listens attentively to the request of one of the displaced residents at the shelter in Jersey City, Nov. 7, 2012. Top right photo, Sabato takes a small break from his duties at the shelter location in Jersey City to eat some breakfast. The New Jersey National Guard is providing shelter for displaced Jersey City residents at the Jersey City armory in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.

THE ELECTRICIAN

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

New Jersey Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Carl Hilpl is standing with the rest of the electric crew in the parking lot of the Ocean County Medical Center in Brick, N.J.

The temperature has fallen to 33 degrees and the rain is turning to snow. Nor'easter Athena will soon be dumping snow, rain, high winds and tidal surges on an area already hard hit by Hurricane Sandy.

It's day 10 of the New Jersey National Guard's mobilization for Hurricane Sandy.

Hilpl along with Tech. Sgt. Nate Worthy and Staff Sgts. Robert Jentsch and Pete Tomos, all aircraft electricians from the 108th Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard, have been called out to fix a generator at the hospital.

Normally, these Airmen work on the electrical systems of a KC-135R Stratotanker air refueling aircraft.

Yet, when the state of emergency came, they worked just as well fixing electrical systems in shelters, schools hospitals - wherever their skills were needed.

This is the nature of the National Guard.

When they arrive, the team of Citizen-Airmen find out that emergency personnel called them to take care of light pole are afraid it will fall on the surrounding tents during the upcoming Nor'easter.

Since Hilpl and his team have come on duty, they have been hooking up generators and making sure they were compatible with existing electrical systems.

At the Long Branch Middle School shelter, their work kept the lights on.

Before arriving at the hospital, Hilpl was able to get the gas-fired generator at Veterans Memorial Middle School in Brick working.

But it isn't just about generators. At one point, Hilpl went out to check on the power at the home of an elderly couple. The husband was suffering from leukemia and the wife has cancer. Hilpl discovered that the wife was running out of life-giving oxygen.



Staff Sgt. Carl Hilpl, 108th Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard, cuts the bolts holding a light pole at the Ocean County Medical Center in Brick, N.J., Nov. 7, 2012. More than 2,000 Airmen and Soldiers from the New Jersey National Guard have been mobilized in response to Hurricane Sandy.

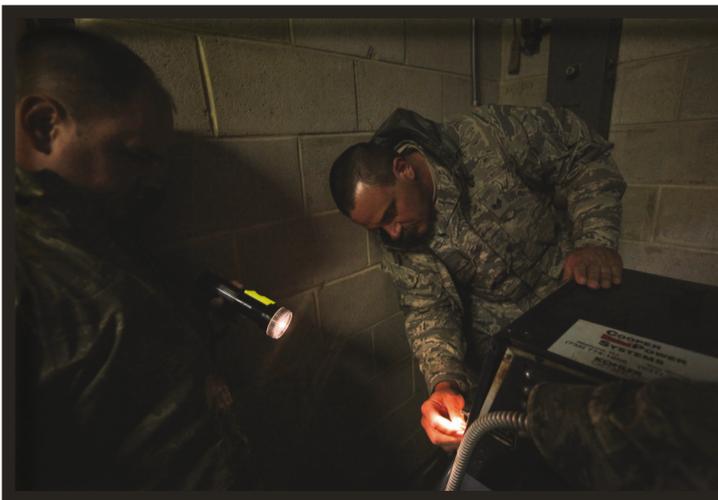
For the next several days, every 12 hours, Hilpl took new oxygen tanks to their home.

Not part of his training as an aircraft electrician, but certainly a duty as National Guardsman.

Back at the hospital a cutting torch is brought in. Hilpl and team have removed the cover at the base of the light pole and he begins to cut the bolts off.

After they finish, Hilpl, Worthy, Jentsch and Tomos will climb into their up-armored high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle and move on to the next generator.

Keeping New Jerseyans from going into the dark.





New Jersey Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno; U.S. Rep. Jon Runyan, and Brig. Gen Michael L. Cunniff, the Adjutant General, along with state veteran's organizations, display the \$10.7 million check donated to the state of New Jersey by the Department of Veterans Affairs at the

Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Wrightstown, N.J., Nov. 11, 2012. The funds will allow New Jersey to continue to support the veterans residing in the state. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen/Released)



A New Jersey National Guard Soldier carries a small dog to safety in the waning hours after Hurricane Sandy had made landfall in New Jersey Oct. 29, 2012. To view more photos and videos of the NJNG Soldiers and Airmen in action during the hurricane, visit our Facebook page: [New Jersey National Guard](#). (Courtesy photo by Jeffrey Bruno)



Working together to help rebuild Sea Bright

Story and photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Jerome Grant, 444th MPAD

SEA BRIGHT - The aroma of Italian sausage and marinara sauce permeates the cold winter air near the Sea Bright Fire Department.

Army National Guard Sgt. Richard Preto from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 50th Brigade Special Troops Battalion (BSTB) and Onofrio Moscato, the executive chef at Woody's Ocean Grill, prepare dinner for first responders and construction crews who are working to restore this once pristine seaside community.

"There are hundreds of people working to restore the Sea Bright" explained Chris Wood, co-owner of Woody's Ocean Grill in Sea Bright. "We've got police from many different states, firemen from surrounding towns, construction crews and a few small business owners here all working to clean things up, and they gotta eat."

"It's not like they can just go across the street to pick up a burger and fries" Wood added.

The National Guard was called in to help with the operation which expects to be providing up to 800 meals three times a day once residents begin coming back to the island to retrieve personal items from what's left of their homes and businesses.

"We started setting up the Mobile Kitchen Trailer (MKT) and tents this morning" said 1st Lt. Jason Hawthorne, A-company 50th BSTB, from West Orange and Officer in Charge of the operation. "We are going to make sure that people can have hot meals while they are here. The National Guard is here to help in whatever way we can, these people are our neighbors."

DMAVA Highlights is published weekly by the Public Affairs Office of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense, the Army, the Air Force, the National Guard, Veterans Affairs or the state of New Jersey. Letters may be sent to: NJDMAVA, DMAVA Highlights, Public Affairs Office, PO Box 340, Trenton NJ 08625-0340. e-mail at pao@njdmava.state.nj.us.



2012 Hiring Our Heroes Veterans Rebuild New Jersey
November 27, 2012
George P. Vanderveer American Legion Post 129
2025 Church Road, Toms River, NJ
9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Join us Tuesday, November 27, 2012, from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., for a hiring fair for veteran job seekers, active duty military, members of the National Guard and reserve components, and military spouses at American Legion Post 129. This will be a FREE hiring fair for both employers and job seekers, and will focus specifically on quick-fill opportunities available in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. We are recruiting employers specializing in all aspects of building, construction, clean-up and hauling, inspection and demolition.

EMPLOYERS

Must register for FREE at HOH.GreatJob.net

JOB SEEKERS

Register for FREE at HOH.GreatJob.net to guarantee admission. Walk-ins welcome but space not guaranteed.

This American Legion-sponsored hiring event is being conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce; local Chambers of Commerce; New Jersey Committee, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR); Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL VETS); the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs; the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development; the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; NBC News; and other local partners.

For registration questions, please contact us at hiringourheroes@uschamber.com or call 202-463-8807.



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Army 1st Sgt. Danny Colon, 50th Financial Management Support Unit, receives a hug from his children at the Joint Military and Family Assistance Center in Bordentown, N.J., Nov. 10, 2012. The New Jersey National Guard welcomed home the 50th and Military Advisor Team #3 from overseas deployments. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kryn Westhoven/Released)

New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff – The Adjutant General
Brig. Gen. James J. Grant – Director, Joint Staff
Raymond Zawacki – Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Patrick Daugherty – Public Affairs Officer
Air Force Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez - Public Affairs Specialist
Army Staff Sgt. Wayne Woolley – Public Affairs Specialist