

KEYSTONE

SPRING-SUMMER 2015

252nd Engineers return home

213th RSG supports Operation Atlantic Resolve

Korea training provides chance for siblings to bond



A SUPPLEMENT PRODUCED BY

THE 109TH MPAD FOR THE 213TH RSG

HIGHLIGHT REEL

252ND ENGINEER COMPANY RETURNS HOME



U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Dan Carroll, 213th Regional Support Group

Members of the 252nd Engineer Company, 213th Regional Support Group, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, returned to a patriotic welcoming crowd at their armory in Johnstown, Pennsylvania in December 2014. Prior to their deployment to Afghanistan where they supported decommissioning of forward operating bases, the Soldiers spent two weeks training at Fort Indiantown Gap, refreshing skills including, first aid, squad movement and land-navigation techniques, in addition to their individual military occupational specialty tasks. Photos featured on pages 6-7.

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The KEYSTONE

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PENNSYLVANIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

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213th RSG trains in South Korea

Sgt. Zane Craig
109th MPAD

YONGSAN GARRISON, South Korea – Nearly two dozen Soldiers from the 213th Regional Support Group supported Key Resolve 2015 from March 2-14 at several locations in the Republic of Korea.

Key Resolve is a scenario-driven command post exercise that promotes and tests interoperability among the Eighth Army, ROK Army and U.S. Forces Korea staffs, said Sgt. Maj. Shaun Herron, Eighth Army public affairs sergeant major and a Fort Bragg, North Carolina native.

Two main groups of 213th Soldiers provided support to Eighth Army during the exercise. The 109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, 213th RSG, supported Eighth Army's public affairs' simulation of a media operations center at Yongsan Garrison in Seoul.

A smaller group of 213th Headquarters, Headquarters Company transportation staff officers and noncommissioned officers participated in Eighth Army's Non-combatant Evacuation Operations and Reception, Staging, Onward-

Movement and Integration exercise. The exercise tested the Soldiers' flexibility upon arrival when they discovered they'd be parceled out as individuals rather than training as a collective staff.

"We've been very flexible working with these guys, because in some cases, they weren't sure what their needs were, and because we showed up with a variety of skill sets, they were able to plug us into different positions," said Maj. Eric Turner, Commander of the 28th Finance Battalion and chief of supply and services at United States Property and Fiscal Office.

"We looked at the different augmentee positions, and we had to self-select where we would go based on our skill sets," said the Eagleville, Pennsylvania native.

As the only 213th augmentee experienced with all the modes of transport: sea, air, road and rail, Turner stayed in Seoul at the Combined Transportation Movement Center while eight other Soldiers moved south to Daegu and various other positions.

"I got really lucky

working with Maj. Turner because of his merchant marine background. Basically, it only took me a few minutes to explain to him what our duties were, and we spoke the same language, being mariners, and he was able to fall into the role automatically," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 John Razon, Turner's day shift counterpart from Eighth Army, and a Fort Eustis, Virginia native.

In contrast to the transport Soldiers, MPAD Soldiers are used to being split into smaller teams to record, photograph and write about a wide range of missions during a training event or deployment. For KR15 the roles switched and the MPAD stayed together at Yongsan Garrison.

"MPADs have a dual mission. The first part is to produce command information products and the second part is to augment media operations centers. In this mission, we were able to do both," said Maj. Angela King-Sweigart, commander of the 109th Public Affairs Detachment and a Rochester, New York native.

Despite working at the same garrison, the MPAD Soldiers split into small teams to augment

the MOC, both day and night shift, and command information center with Eighth Army's public affairs team. According to Herron, augmentees are a necessity for exercises like Key Resolve because of the 24-hour operations and the fact that the training is designed to be more rigorous than an actual incident.

Both groups of Soldiers faced the challenge of adapting to a reality on the ground that differed from what their expectation of this training would be, and both groups overcame the challenge and learned valuable lessons for their military careers.

"The mission here has been a success and my Soldiers have done very well and illustrated the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's interoperability with the active duty component," said King-Sweigart.

The nearly two dozen 213th Soldiers who came to South Korea found an authentic, strong alliance and participated in Key Resolve with a real spirit of teamwork. They returned to Pennsylvania having strengthened that alliance even more. ▀

THE 52ND ADJUTANT GENERAL PENNSYLVANIA NATIONAL GUARD MAJ. GEN. JAMES R. JOSEPH



Major General James R. Joseph assumed the duties as the 52nd Adjutant General of Pennsylvania and Commander, Pennsylvania Army National Guard on Jan. 20, 2015. In his cabinet-level position headquartered at Fort Indiantown Gap, Maj. Gen. Joseph is responsible for command, control and supervision of Army and Air National Guard units allocated to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and six state-owned veterans' homes and programs for Pennsylvania's nearly one million veterans.

Maj. Gen. Joseph began his military career as an enlisted Soldier in 1971. He completed basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey; advanced individual training as a military policeman at Fort Gordon, Georgia, and completed a tour of duty in Vietnam, where he was assigned to the 716th Military Police Battalion. He completed his active duty tour at Fort Polk Louisiana with the 258th Military Police Company. Maj. Gen. Joseph joined the Pennsylvania Army National Guard in 1974, assigned as a combat engineer with Company C, 867th Engineer Battalion.

Maj. Gen. Joseph completed officer candidate school in 1978 at Fort Benning, Georgia, and was commissioned as a second lieutenant. He has held numerous key staff positions. He served as commander of the 213th Area Support Group until his selection as deputy chief, and as chief of the counter drug, National Guard Bureau. Maj. Gen. Joseph has also served as assistant division commander of the 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania Army National Guard. He served as Assistant Adjutant General, also serving as Commander of Joint Force Headquarters, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, Annville, Pennsylvania. Prior to his present assignment, he served as special assistant to the combatant commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command, United States Northern Command for National Guard matters and liaison to the Chief, National Guard Bureau.

Maj. Gen. Joseph served as the chairman of the National Guard Bureau Joint Advisory Council, a senior facilitator at United States Northern Command for the Joint Task Force Commanders Training Course, served as acting deputy director, J5, United States Northern Command, and is qualified as a dual-status commander.

Training Offers Chance for Siblings to Bond

Staff Sgt. Hollyann Nicom
109th MPAD

YONGSAN GARRISON, SEOUL, South Korea – Samantha (Sam) Anna Keeler's bright red lipstick screamed "look at me!" contrasting with the thick, light brown bangs she modestly hid behind. She wore a light purple, crocheted hat and a small, cloth owl-shaped pin. Her energy buzzed in a playful, Mary Poppins way. She quietly appeared on the subway platform near Gwanghwamun Square, Seoul, South Korea, seemingly out of nowhere, and smiled widely as she touched her brother Matthew's shoulder.

Staff Sgt. Matthew Keeler, a public affairs specialist assigned to the 109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, was elated to see his younger sister.

"As a big brother, I trust Sam to take good care of herself, but there is nothing like seeing her and knowing she's alright," said Matthew.

The siblings, who have always been very close, spent months planning this overseas encounter, hoping for a chance to meet in Seoul. After learning that her brother would have a day off, Sam bought her ticket for the three-hour train ride from Busan to Seoul.

Matthew's unit resided in Yongsan Garrison, Seoul, for its two-week annual training, augmenting the public

affairs office of the Eighth Army, during exercise Key Resolve 2015.

Key Resolve allows the U.S. military force to demonstrate its commitment to South Korea through coordinated training efforts. The exercise ensures that the joint forces will have the operational experience to deal with any conflict or crisis that might arise on the Korean peninsula. The 109th MPAD had a break during the training exercise, which allowed the Keelers to get together.

Sam teaches English at Hwajeong Elementary School. She has been back to the United States just twice since moving to South Korea two years ago.

Being able to meet up with his sister was an incredible situation for Matthew and not something most people get to do while supporting military operations in other countries. He has been to Iraq, Kuwait, Canada, Lithuania and Latvia on military

assignments.

"It's a lot of fun going to different places with the military," he said. "So going somewhere like this, to Korea, and having the rare opportunity to see my sister has really been amazing."

The brother and sister spent 10 hours together, beginning with their walking tour in Gwanghwamun Square, an open plaza that boasts a large statue of King Sejong. Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Kosterman, a public affairs noncommissioned officer with Eighth Army, led the informal tour for Soldiers from the 109th MPAD, through traditional market areas including Insa-dong and Nam Dae Mun before ending in Itaewon, near Yongsan Garrison.

One of the places they visited was the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History. The top of the museum provided an excellent

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Staff Sgt. Matthew Keeler, a public affairs specialist with the 109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, strolls through the Nam Dae Mun market area of Seoul, South Korea, with his sister, Samantha Keeler, on March 6, 2015. Keeler had the opportunity to spend a day with his sister, who teaches English at a Korean secondary school, during a break in his annual training in support of exercise Key Resolve 2015, part of which took place in Yongsan Garrison.



U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Askew, 109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

252ND ENGINEER COMPANY TRAINS AT FORT INDIANTOWN GAP



2014 - 2015



U.S. Army National Guard photos by Staff Sgt. Coltin Heller, 109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



PA Guard Soldiers win Best Medic Competition

Maj. Angela King-Sweigart
109th MPAD

FORT INDIANTOWN GAP, Pa. – Two Soldiers assigned to the Pennsylvania National Guard's Medical Battalion Training Site located here placed first in the Army-wide 2014 Command Sgt. Maj. Jack L. Clark Jr. Best Medic Competition held Nov. 3–7 at Camp Bullis, Texas.

Sgt. 1st Class Vinicios Occhiena, of Jonestown, and Staff Sgt. Melvyn Mayo, of Reading, beat 32 other teams from around the world. Active-duty medics

made up 30 of the teams while reserve components brought one. The teams were from installations around the world including Germany and Korea. Soldiers represented a variety of commands including special forces, infantry and airborne.

The competition is a two-Soldier team, 72-hour grueling challenge that places medics in a simulated operational environment. Events included in the competition include a physical fitness challenge, an urban assault course, a mass casualty lane, an advanced land navigation



Staff Sgt. Melvyn Mayo and Sgt. 1st Class Vinicios Occhiena placed first at the 2014 Best Medic Competition.

exercise, a buddy run, an obstacle course, a litter obstacle course, and an M4 and M9 stress shoot.

Both Soldiers said it was an honor to be selected to the competition and represent the National Guard.

"It was an opportunity to exhibit our own personal abilities while enduring and overcoming a multitude of physical and mental stresses, but it also provided a venue to perhaps display the capabilities and ever vigilance of the many outstanding medics and Soldiers who serve in the Army National Guard," said Mayo.

"Our goal was to do our best and have fun regardless

of the stresses we faced," added Occhiena. "I am extremely happy with our performance."

Medics are trained to operate under stress in combat situations including the air, on land or at sea and trained to meet the medical needs of Soldiers and to never leave a fallen comrade behind.

The two Soldiers will return to the Medical Battalion Training site as instructors and both acknowledged their command's support in the competition. The Pennsylvania National Guard's Medical Battalion Training Site provides real-life battlefield simulated training on medical tasks and offers training for Soldiers from all components. ▼



Sgt. 1st Class Vinicios Occhiena and Staff Sgt. Melvyn Mayo treat a simulated casualty during the 2014 Best Medic Competition.

Five countries, two National Guard units, one mission: Operation Atlantic Resolve



U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Zane Craig, 109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Pennsylvania Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Matthew Keeler of the 109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment records an interview with forward observer Pfc. Tyler Hanna and gunner Pfc. Tristten Wagner of Able Company, 173rd Airborne Brigade, at Lithuania's Brig. Gen. Kazys Vievskis Kazlu Rudos Poligonas Center, Sept. 18.

Courtesy Story

WEISBADEN, Germany - National Guard public affairs Soldiers from Illinois and Pennsylvania joined forces to augment U.S. Army Europe's support of Operation Atlantic Resolve, a series of exercises designed to demonstrate U.S. commitment to its NATO commitments and the collective security of America's allies and partners in Europe.

Public affairs Soldiers help tell

the armed forces story through print, photographic and video coverage of U.S. military exercises, programs, people and events, and by facilitating members of the commercial media in their military coverage. The Guard Soldiers who deployed to Europe in mid-September were formed into teams that immediately spread out across five countries. Soldiers in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Poland supported companies from USAREUR's 173rd Airborne Brigade,

while the Soldiers in Germany split into two teams: a command cell supporting the USAREUR headquarters here, and a team at the Joint Multinational Training Command's Grafenwoehr Training Area.

Guard Soldiers quickly began creating print and broadcast stories featuring their active-duty counterparts training with European partner forces and service members and citizens from the NATO and partner nations taking

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part in Atlantic Resolve. Additionally many of the public affairs troops were able to take part in cultural and community events in the regions where they deployed.

Illinois' 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment took on missions in Poland and Estonia. Their support to training in Poland is a natural offshoot of the Illinois National Guard's State Partnership Program relationship with the country. Based at Poland's Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area, the Illinois team's mission wasn't all about military training, but focused on community relations as well.

"A large piece of our public affairs

mission here in Poland is community relations. The Drawsko Pomorskie community leaders have made this part of our job an absolute pleasure. I have never felt as welcomed to a community as I have here in Drawsko Pomorskie," said Capt. Darrell Melrose of the 139th, the team leader for Poland.

The Pennsylvania Guard's state partnership is with Lithuania, so Soldiers from the Keystone State's 109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, 213th Regional Support Group were on hand to cover combined exercises involving Lithuanian Soldiers and the paratroopers of the 173rd.

"It's been a great experience working with both the 173rd Airborne Brigade and the Lithuanian 'Iron Wolf' Mechanized Infantry Brigade. It's been a lot of fun to see how they operate in their own country, compared to training at Fort Indiantown Gap (in) Pennsylvania," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Keeler, the 109th's team leader for Lithuania.

The Illinois and Pennsylvania units are the second rotation of Guard Soldiers providing support to USAREUR's public affairs efforts. While their turn in Europe was brief, the overall mission is expected to last at least through the end of the year and will ultimately involve more than 10 rotations involving Guard and Reserve units from multiple states.

Maj. Angela King-Sweigart, commander of the 109th, said her unit's experience proved beneficial for both the Guard members and their active-duty counterparts.

"The Soldiers did an outstanding job producing dozens of stories and videos about the NATO troops and the U.S. Soldiers. We were fortunate to have this experience supporting U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs, the 173rd Airborne Brigade and Joint Multinational Training Command, and hopefully we've given something back," she said.

"Telling the Operation Atlantic Resolve story is critical to the mission's success," said Lt. Col. Craig S. Childs, U.S. Army Europe's Public Affairs Chief of Operations. "Without the outstanding support of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard public affairs Soldiers we would have been unable to capture the images and storylines about this important mission in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland." ▼



U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Charlie Helmholtz, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

From left to right: Grzegorz Skurczyński; Illinois National Guard Capt. Darrell Melrose, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment public affairs officer and team leader for Poland; Capt. Dave Hansen, operations officer for Fort Hood, Texas's 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division; 1st Sgt Glen Chrisman of the 139th MPAD; Drawsko Pomorskie Mayor Zbigniew Ptak; and Jolanta Prądyńska, director of the Drawsko Pomorskie Cultural Center, discuss U.S. Army community relations support to the Drawsko Pomorskie area during a meeting Sept. 17.



U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Askew, 109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Staff Sgt. Matthew Keeler, a Mechanicsburg, Pa. native with the 109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, takes a selfie on the upper level of the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History in Seoul, South Korea, with his sister, Samantha Keeler, an English teacher who calls Korea home, March 6, 2015. The siblings spent a day together when Matthew's unit traveled to Yongsan Garrison, Seoul, for annual training during exercise Key Resolve 2015.

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vantage point to see the "Blue House," South Korea's presidential residence. It also offered a great backdrop for Sam and Matthew to take selfies with school children performing traditional Korean dances in the square below.

This is the first time Matthew traveled to Korea and, throughout the day, he was continuously impressed by its beauty and culture.

"My sister said it was a luscious and exciting place to visit," said Matthew. "I think it's really pretty and it's been an eye-opening experience."

The Keeler siblings chatted about family, books and video games and caught up with news from each other's lives as they made their way through the crowded market streets adorned with people peddling everything from earthenware pots and handmade paper

to live octopi.

Matthew relished the chance to see some of the culture and try traditional foods suggested by his sister.

"Sam and I have similar food tastes," he said. "She was able to pick out things I'd really enjoy."

"I was happy to treat him to one of my favorite street foods, kwabaeki which are really chewy, twisted donuts, as well as having bingsoo, which is shaved ice topped with condensed milk with a multitude of different toppings," said Sam.

Letting his sister advise him through a foreign country was a unique experience for Matthew.

"Being the older brother, it's usually my job to teach her the ropes," he said. "So having her hold me by the hand and lead the way was great and I'm really proud to experience it with her."

The excursion alleviated some of the reservations Matthew had about his sister living abroad, and allowed him to have a glimpse into the life that is his sister's reality. Sam, in turn, welcomed her brother's presence and his unspoken approval of the direction her life has taken.

"Being out there in town with her and seeing how she intermingles and fits in so well, I see that she's having a great chance to live her life," said Matthew.

"Matthew has been one of the few people in my life who has supported and inspired me to do the things that I want to do and that make me a happier and better person and that's something that I'm incredibly thankful for," Sam said.

Sam is just as proud of her brother and all the things he has done in his military service as Matthew is of her work as a schoolteacher in Korea.

"I'm so lucky to be the younger sister of someone who's accomplished so much and yet still has an amazing amount of potential for the future," she said.

As a reminder of the unique time they were able to spend together, Sam bought Matthew a tan Korean phone case for his cell phone, which he proudly showed off to his unit members.

After taking multiple selfies around Seoul and creating irreplaceable memories with one another, the two will long remember their Korean encounter.

"It was surreal to have a family member with me here in Korea," said Sam. "Being able to spend time with my brother in a country I've come to love was such a rewarding experience and it was also nice to see other Americans enjoying it as well." ▼

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHT

Former Army Pvt. Bert Winzer, swaps stories with other World War II veterans during a recognition ceremony held at the 213th Regional Support Group Headquarters, Allentown, Pennsylvania. "I served for two years, 9 months and 13 days," said Winzer, who calls Allentown home. Winzer served in the 1st Special Service Force, "Devil's Brigade," the first special forces unit in the U.S. military comprised of U.S. and Canadian Soldiers, the only military members authorized to wear the red, white and blue shoulder cord and red arrowhead patch. "We went all over the place. The Aleutian Islands, Italy and southern France. We liberated Rome," said Winzer. At the age of 90, Winzer still retains a good sense of humor. "In '44 I was hit with German artillery while on the border of Italy and France. A Canadian Soldier gave me first aid, and a Russian-American did the surgery, pulling a piece [of shrapnel] out of my shoulder. It was an international incident," he said smiling and giving a fellow veteran a jab in the ribs.

