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## **New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs**

### **The New York National Guard and the War in Iraq**

The New York Army National Guard deployed some 4,870 Soldiers to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn, with another 1,475 deployed to Kuwait since 2001 to support forces operating in Iraq. Approximately 475 of those Soldiers were women.

About 3,550 Airmen of the New York Air National Guard served in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, with the greatest number, 673 during the liberation of Iraq in 2003. The 174th Attack Wing, operating F16 fighters, provided the largest deployment to the Iraq Theater of operations in 2008, with 303 Airmen deploying during the peak of the surge.

23 Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard, including one female Soldier, died during deployment overseas. During operations in Iraq, an estimated 119 Soldiers received the Purple Heart for wounds sustained in combat.

Nearly 80 awards for valor were presented to New York Army National Guard Soldiers, including 15 Bronze Stars and 64 Army Commendation Medals, both with devices for Valor. 771 Soldiers received the Combat Infantryman Badge for deployment to Iraq with an infantry battalion or brigade element while another 504 Soldiers received the Combat Action Badge.

In today's New York Army National Guard of more than 10,500 Soldiers, some 802 are Iraq War Veterans. Of those, 779 have one campaign star denoting their support to a major phase of the Iraq War, another 18 with two campaign stars and three with three campaign stars and one Soldier has four campaign stars.

Significant contributions by New York National Guard or events related to New York forces during the war in Iraq include:

- Every major element of the New York Army National Guard deployed forces to Iraq, including a division headquarters, brigade headquarters, infantry battalions, aviation and aviation maintenance battalions, artillery batteries, military police companies, transportation and supply companies, maintenance and medical companies, engineer companies and finance detachments.
- The New York Army National Guard has the distinction of deploying one of the few units that served in Iraq both at the beginning and end of the Iraq War. Soldiers of the 105th Military Police Company from Buffalo and Rochester, N.Y. were deployed in 2003 for the invasion phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom and returned to Kirkuk and Mosul, Iraq for Operation New Dawn and the final withdrawal of U.S. forces in 2011.
- The peak of New York Army National Guard troop strength in Iraq was in 2005, with more than 3,500 Soldiers in theater.
- Air National Guard deployments served in every part of Iraq, supporting U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Wings to provide a wide range of support to the combatant commander.
- Prior to conversion to their current C-130 Airlift mission, Airmen of the 107th Airlift Wing from Niagara Falls, N.Y., deployed KC-135 Air Refuelers to Incirlik Air Base in Turkey in 2003, supporting Air Force aircraft for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

## **DMNA Fact Sheet: The New York National Guard and the War in Iraq**

- Security Forces Airmen from every component of the New York Air National Guard deployed both to air bases in Iraq and the theater of operations throughout the Iraq War, securing facilities for Air Expeditionary Forces.
- Airmen from the 106th Rescue Wing based at Westhampton Beach, N.Y., deployed to Baghdad, saved the lives of two Americans in November 2003 following the deadly insurgent attack on a CH-47 helicopter near Fallujah. The attack, which took the lives of 16 other Soldiers, required the Guardian Angels to use a “jaws of life” extraction to evacuate the wounded Soldiers. The wing would support rotations of rescue personnel throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom for such missions.
- While providing security for a pipeline repair crew west of Balad, Iraq, Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry rescued U.S. contractor truck driver Thomas Hamill on May 1, 2004. Hamill had been held hostage by insurgent forces since April 9.
- Soldiers of the 2-108th Infantry from Utica also played an instrumental role in the battle of Samarra in October 2004. Patrol Base Uvanni, located in the center of Samarra, was named in honor of Sgt. Michael Uvanni, a 108th Infantry Soldier from Rome, N.Y. killed in action Oct. 1, 2004.
- Members of the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters from Troy, N.Y., led the first National Guard division headquarters element to a combat theater since the Korean War in January 2005. The division led Task Force Liberty, the Multinational Division for North Central Iraq, based in Tikrit.
- Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry from New York City secured the infamous Route Irish Airport Road in Baghdad in the summer of 2005. The battalion was deployed to Iraq with the Louisiana National Guard’s 256th Infantry Brigade, partnering up two military units that had once been Civil War enemies.
- The 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters helped to establish the conditions for the successful Iraqi-led constitutional referendum vote in October 2005.
- Throughout the summer and fall of 2005, Task Force Liberty Soldiers of the 42nd Infantry Division and 42nd Engineer Brigade initiated the process of base closures in North Central Iraq, beginning the transfer of bases to Iraqi control. By November 2005, nine Forward Operating Bases in North Central Iraq closed or transferred to Iraqi army control. The tenth facility, Forward Operating Base Danger, the former presidential compound in Tikrit, transferred to Iraqi control on November 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Medical specialists of the 466th Area Support Medical Company from Glens Falls, N.Y. deployed in 2006 and provided 30,000 medical visits across four separate treatment facilities in Southeastern Iraq, South Central Iraq and in Baghdad. The medical providers treated U.S., Iraqi and even insurgent casualties.
- Members of the 53rd Army Forces Liaison Team from New York City deployed twice to Iraq, in 2004 and again in 2008, providing training and mentoring to Iraqi Ministry of Defense senior officials.
- As part of its final operations deployment of F-16C Fighters to a combat theater before reorganization and fielding of the MQ-9 Remotely Piloted Vehicles, the 174th Attack Wing out of Syracuse deployed more than 190 personnel in 2008 as part of an Air Expeditionary Force package.
- Aircrews of the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation with about 320 Soldiers from both Ronkonkoma and Latham, N.Y. deployed to Iraq in 2009 and supported combat forces of the New York based 10th Mountain Division south of Baghdad. The task force flew more than 15,000 flight hours, moving more than 50,000 personnel and 1,000,000 lbs. of cargo.
- Another New York unit to repeat its deployment to Iraq was the 442nd Military Police Company from Jamaica, N.Y. First deployed in 2003, the unit helped reestablish an Iraqi police academy with the expertise of its law enforcement members. Returning in April 2010, the company served in Ramadi, Iraq as part of an Advise and Assist Brigade with the 3rd Infantry Division for Operation New Dawn, the transition to full Iraqi security control. The company operated throughout Anbar Province.
- Many Soldiers from the New York Army National Guard served more than one tour in Iraq. One example is Capt. Tara Dawe, commander of the 442nd Military Police Company. Dawe initially deployed with the unit as an enlisted Soldier in 2003 before receiving her officer’s commission in 2006 and returning to Iraq as the unit commander in 2010.