

HEADS UP!



E-NEWS FROM THE GEORGIA STATE DEFENSE FORCE

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SPECIAL EDITION: Katrina Mission

GSDF Mobilized to Medevac Katrina Evacuees

By Jerry Nosin, GSDF Headquarters Group

The Georgia State Defense Force not only caught the ball but "scored a touchdown" according to Major General David Poythress, Adjutant General talking about the recent GSDF effort to in process 1205 passengers from New Orleans. GSDF staff worked tirelessly for 5 days responding to the need to medevac evacuees. GSDF Medical Staff set up triage, in-processed arrivals, provided security, and offloaded military aircraft in record times during the crisis. They became an immediate reaction force.

Two years ago, GSDF troops were trained to medevac soldiers from military aircraft. That mission was generated by the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) and Pam Blackwell, Director of Emergency Preparedness for Cobb Co. They approached GSDF Command Surgeon John Harvey and, with the assistance of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA), the GSDF was integrated into the state operational response plan. That planning paid off in a big way after Katrina struck.

State Defense Force Doctors, EMTs, and troopers put in some 8000 man-hours, many working 15-20 hours for the five-day deployment. They downloaded some 18 aircraft including C17s, C130s, C141s, Navy C-9s, and Delta 757s as well as some smaller aircraft. According to Lt. Colonel Martie Soper of Hdq. 22nd Air Force at Dobbins ARB, and Msgt. Martha Mock of the 94th Aeromedical Evacuation group, the GSDF turned around aircraft if "record time".

"Offloading 68 liter and 23 ambulatory patients from a C-141 in 43 minutes is extraordinary", said Lt. Col. Soper. "You guys did this consistently in record time".

Captain Clark Howard, the Consumer Advocate and GSDF soldier, worked tirelessly during the week as well, moving litters and offloading the passengers from New Orleans, many of whom had not eaten in many days.

"This is why I joined the State Defense Force", said Capt. Howard. "People dug in and met the needs, nobody was standing around, and every performed well."

This Special Edition of Heads Up! is dedicated to the victims of Hurricane Katrina and their families.

Photo credits: WO2 Arnie Katz, PFC Pamela M. Conley, Officer Candidate Garry Moon

GSDF Capt. Clark Howard and GSDF EMT Derrick Eckroat board a Delta Air Lines jet to go to New Orleans where they will triage and help calm evacuees.



Delta generously donated six aircraft to transport evacuees from the disaster zone.



GSDF troopers prepare for litter-bearing work as another one of the many military transports from New Orleans arrives at Dobbins ARB. GSDF offloaded some 1205 people during the weekend.

BACK PAGE: More mission photos; 5th Brigade helps ready the Guard

More Mission Scenes



TOP: A double-handful of precious cargo greets a GSDF trooper. ABOVE: Evacuees who were ambulatory were transported to area Red Cross shelters. BELOW: Litter-bearers and gurney teams await their turn to assist patients from yet another military transport.



5th Brigade Helps Guard Mobilize to Disaster Zone

By Pamela M. Conley, 5BDE UPAR

The Georgia State Defense Force's 5TH BDE, under the Command of COL Dick Lockert, was tasked by the Army National Guard's 201st Supply & Service Battalion in Newnan, Georgia to assist in their deployment to the Gulf region on September 2 and 3, 2005. Georgia State Defense Force members loaded trucks with supplies for the guard, while the National Guard members readied their personal lives and gear for an extended stay in the Gulf.

The Officer in Charge for this mission was LTC Moellar of the MEDDET unit in Columbus. Training in litter-bearing was also conducted at Newnan and used to good effect later in the day at Dobbins Air Reserve Base in Marietta, GA, where troopers helped offload victims of Hurricane Katrina.



TOP: The triage center was constantly a busy place at Dobbins.

ABOVE: Command Surgeon Col. Harvey coordinates with civilian medical teams.

"We have to cry and we have to mourn and we have to feel terrible and awful...the tears have to make you stronger. And now we have to, from the loss and the crying, develop even more strength, even more courage."

New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani
September 28, 2001

*We welcome your comments! Please send letters, story ideas, etc to the Editor:
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