

HEADS UP!



E-NEWS FROM THE GEORGIA STATE DEFENSE FORCE

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Gen. Seymour honored by TAG; Gen. McGuinn takes command of GSDF

By Rich Elwell and Dean Young, HQ PAO

Brigadier General Joel W. Seymour, the outgoing Commanding General of the Georgia State Defense Force, received the prestigious Oglethorpe Distinguished Service Medal during a Change of Command ceremony at Fort Stewart, Georgia, on November 6th. In addition to the Oglethorpe Medal, Seymour was awarded the Legion of Merit for his service as Commanding General of the Georgia State Defense Force for the past 11 years. Georgia's Adjutant General, David Poythress, presented the awards.

"General Seymour has done more to partner with the Georgia National Guard than anyone could...and under his direction the Georgia State Defense Force stepped up with unparalleled quality in placing evacuees from Hurricane Katrina," Poythress said.

General Seymour turned over command of the GSDF to Brigadier General Michael McGuinn. Seymour had led the nearly 800 uniformed men and women of the Defense force since 1994. "I have been honored to serve Georgia's citizens through the State Defense Force and I encourage the men and women of the Force to continue to serve and wear the uniform with pride," said Seymour.



New GSDF CG Mike McGuinn (second from left) and BG Joel Seymour (center) confer before the Change of Command ceremony at Ft. Stewart, where the GSDF was holding its Annual Training exercise. Photo: Garry Moon, PAO

Annual Training for GSDF held at Ft. Stewart

By Garry Moon, HQ PAO

While the Change of Command ceremony was the highlight of the GSDF's Annual Training exercise at Ft. Stewart, training in security and HAZMAT were also a focus of the AT weekend that took place from Nov. 4th to the 6th. The security training covered crowd control (using Plexiglas riot shields from the Georgia State Patrol) and vehicle searches, with instruction on how to locate hidden contraband during role-playing exercises. The HAZMAT portion covered identifying hazardous materials, use of protective masks & clothing, proper evac procedures, and setting up exclusion zones.



Above: GSDF troopers march past the barracks areas where they enjoyed luxurious accommodations at Ft. Stewart. Below: Sgt. Cline with MEDDET gives a helpful pointer at the Change of Command ceremony. Photos: Garry Moon, PAO



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In Focus



In Focus this month: SSG Dieterich, 1BDE MEDDET

By Rich Elwell, GSDF HQ PAO

The Georgia State Defense Force (GSDF) has attracted many "doers", and one who epitomizes the doer is Staff Sergeant Ann Dieterich. Sergeant Dieterich enlisted in the GSDF in April 1999. She wanted to enter as a private, and said, "I knew nothing about military service, and hoped no one would expect me to know anything." But since she was a college graduate, the enlisting officer insisted she must enter at least as a corporal (E-4).

There is much evidence that Sgt. Dieterich likes to be involved with her "boots on the ground." She has volunteered and participated in an average of four missions and training experiences per month, which adds up to over 80 to date. "There is always some way to get involved, help out, and learn, if you actively seek it out," said Dieterich.

In September 2005 her unit, Medical Detachment (MEDDET) of 1st Brigade, responded when the medical evacuees from hurricanes Katrina and Rita arrived by plane at Dobbins Air Reserve Base. Sergeant Dieterich, along with several hundred other GSDF volunteers, helped the ill, the elderly and children off the planes and into the hangers. Although the MEDDET personnel have medical training, Dieterich said, "A lot involved just listening to their stories and trying to comfort them. I tried to reassure one young woman who had argued with her parents just before being separated from them, and was not sure she would ever see them again." Dieterich held 8-week old premature twins while others searched for the right formula to feed them.

She described such missions as very rewarding for her personally. "People come up to you when you are in uniform and thank you for what you are doing. They don't differentiate whether the name plates say 'U.S. Army' or 'Georgia,'" Dieterich said proudly.



SSG Ann Dieterich has her hands full at Dobbins ARB during the Hurricane Katrina airlift in September.

Photo: Bret LaBarre, 1BDE MEDDET

State Defense Force helps with 'Silent Santa'

The GSDF has joined several state agencies, non-profit organizations and area high schools to help with Operation Silent Santa, a Georgia Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS) project that brings gifts from "Santa Claus" to foster children in Bartow County. This is the second year the Georgia State Defense Force has participated in Silent Santa, but this year marks the first time that various state and volunteer entities have all collaborated to concentrate on children placed by the Bartow County office of DFACS. There are currently 187 children that need to be served and the number always increases as Thanksgiving and Christmas approach.

TOUCH Ministries, led by Pastor Gloria Gainor, Boy Scouts of America, the Civil Air Patrol (US Air Force Auxiliary) the North Metro Technical College (a division of the Department of Technical & Adult Education) and the Woodland, Cartersville and Adairsville high schools in Bartow and Etowah H.S. in Cherokee County round out this collaborative team with GSDF.

Through their combined efforts, these organizations will collect new and used toys and monetary donations to shop for toys, wrap them up beginning December 11, and deliver them by Christmas Eve.

GSDF troopers in Atlanta's Veterans Day Parade



The State Defense Force proudly marched in the annual Veterans Day Parade on Peachtree Street in downtown Atlanta on Nov. 11th. GSDF joined more than 70 floats and marching units that participated in the parade, led this year by Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb, Commanding General of the Third U.S. Army.

Photo: Roger Shaddick, SG UPAR

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