



**DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY AND AIR FORCE**  
**ILLINOIS ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD**  
1301 North MacArthur Boulevard, Springfield, Illinois 62702-2399

January 2, 2014

National Guard Bureau  
1411 Jefferson Davis Highway  
Arlington, VA 22202-3231

Dear National Guard Bureau:

On behalf of the more than 13,000 men and women serving in the Illinois Army and Air National Guard, I commend the Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office for its tireless effort to foster great relationships with our communities.

The Public Affairs Office's work during the Sgt. Shawna Morrison dedication ceremony in September is a great example of detailed planning and flawless execution of a community relations plan. Planning of the Shawna Morrison dedication showed our local citizens that our fallen comrades will never be forgotten. The PAO involved Morrison's command team, the Morrison family, the University of Illinois, the Reserve Officer Training Corps and the current unit in a remarkable ceremony attended by nearly 1,000 people across Illinois.

The office was also directly responsible for coordinating nearly 700 community events despite tough fiscal constraints and sequestration restrictions. This equates to nearly two events per day throughout the year showcasing the great Soldiers in the Illinois National Guard.

I would highly recommend JFHQ-IL PAO for this award. Their community relations program is by far the best in the country and has continued to improve over the last few years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Daniel M. Krumrei", is positioned above the typed name.

DANIEL M. KRUMREI  
Brigadier General  
The Adjutant General



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Page 3/4/5-Research/Planning/Implementation

In developing our community relations program this year, we researched and developed a strategic communications calendar. This Microsoft Outlook calendar includes all holidays, dedicated months (African-American History Month, Women's History Month, etc.), key dates in the history of the Illinois National Guard (ILNG) and key military history anniversaries.

The dates in this calendar, set to alert the office two weeks in advance, helps us target these key dates with community relations and public information resources. For example, Polish Constitution Day is significant to the ILNG because Poland is our State Partner. Polish is also the largest European American ethnic group in Chicago, accounting for 7.3 percent of the city's population. It was only fitting the ILNG be involved in Chicago's Polish Constitution Day May 3, 2013. During that event, the ILNG assisted with a color guard, the 144<sup>th</sup> Army Band, an Adjutant General speech and attendance by other state leadership.

Each significant event such as Veterans Day and Memorial Day included a wide community outreach to target large and small communities across the state with speakers, color guards and vehicle static displays. Other significant dates like the U.S. Army birthday, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and 9-11 anniversaries were aggressively targeted to inform the community about the ILNG mission.

The focus of our community outreach efforts is on enhancing and strengthening existing community events, rather than creating events that could compete with existing community efforts. Working with community groups throughout the state, the Illinois National Guard was able to get involved with pre-planned events throughout the state, showing we are truly a community organization.

Our community relations events are coupled with public information efforts. This includes press releases and social media engagement.

We pride ourselves as being the "go to" agency for communities seeking military community relations support. Our office had a record year in 2012, supporting more requests than any other in recent history. Due to sequestration constraints, 2013 numbers were down slightly, but still much better than anticipated when community support limitations were implemented in March. This was because the community relations initiatives streamlined the process, creating a proactive customer service approach. Although it may have been easy to tell a community group "no" due to sequestration, our office looked at other possible ways the Illinois National Guard could support an event. If a request was made for vehicles in a parade, we offered a color guard or troops marching in the festivity. If a vehicle or aviation static display was requested, we offered a color guard or speaker for the event or explored other ways to get the Illinois National Guard involved, such as having recruiting set up a table at the event. Continuous updates to the Speakers Bureau program was also instrumental for ILNG Soldiers and Airmen to speak at almost 300 events during 2013.

Statistics speak for themselves. In 2008, the ILNG supported 232 of 546 requests (42 percent). In 2009, the ILNG supported 295 of 363 requests (81 percent). The Public Affairs Office received approximately 200 fewer requests in 2009 because communities knew a lot of their National Guard units were deployed. In 2010, the ILNG supported 512 of 622 requests (82 percent). In 2011, the ILNG

supported 665 of 766 requests (87 percent). In 2012, 1,036 of 1,182 requests (88 percent) were supported. 2013 was full of unique challenges, but we were still able to support 679 of 912 requests (74 percent).

Besides the 146 vehicle requests that couldn't be supported in 2013, the statistics could have been much higher. Lack of funding for the 144th Army Band and sequestration created several requests the Illinois National Guard was unable to support. Of the 233 requests that could not be supported, 35 of them were for the 144th Army Band and 144 were sequestration related. That means 77 percent of the non-supported requests fell into one of those two categories. 62% of the unsupported requests were sequestration related.

It was a goal to find a way to say "yes." When the ILNG cannot support a request, the community relations manager worked with local veterans organizations such as the local VFW or American Legion or other military or civilian agencies to try and find the organization support. The end result is a happy customer.

Over the last six years, the community relations manager developed a lot of relationships that have helped him get support for an event, even when the brigades and wings were unable to support. Full-time personnel at FMS shops in North Riverside, Springfield and Marseilles assisted with vehicle support for short suspense events. Recruiters and other full-time Soldiers supported speaking events or vehicle static displays when it appeared the ILNG was unable to support an event.

Since 2008, the Speakers Bureau program has improved every year. A new database was created to allow units to view upcoming community relations events. There was an increase in the support from the Illinois Air National Guard that ultimately made the program more joint, relationships were improved between PAO and MACOMs and internal community relations regulations were revised. These have all helped create one of the best programs in the nation.

After revitalizing the Speakers Bureau program in 2009, it was also a goal of the community relations manager to support 95 percent of all speaker-related requests and have ILNG speakers at each key event throughout the year. For every key event such as the anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the anniversary of Operation Enduring Freedom, Patriots Day, Memorial Day and Veterans Day, the community relations manager got speakers engaged in community events throughout the state. He also coordinated support for 96 percent of all speaker requests. This includes 59 speakers for Memorial Day events and 101 speakers for Veterans Day events.

The overall objective of the JFHQ-IL PAO community relations program is to make the ILNG more visible in the community and to highlight the ILNG to local citizens. By updating the Speakers Bureau program in 2009 and marketing well-spoken Soldiers and Airmen to the community, JFHQ-IL PAO accomplished that goal. In 2013, the ILNG supported a total of 273 speaker requests throughout the state. Speakers were engaged in activities from school events and celebrations to supporting Chicago Memorial Day and more than 180 Veterans Day activities. Not only did JFHQ-IL PAO market the ILNG to the community, but it also brought together the Army and Air Guard assets as one team.

The ILNG made it a priority to reach out and be involved with groups and individuals that make the organization a strong, vital part of the community. Examples of this from 2013 include:

- LTC Tammy Duckworth, an Illinois Army National Guard member and Congressman, was requested for multiple community events. LTC Duckworth assisted with the events while traveling back to Illinois for her monthly weekend drills.
- Three General Officers and dozens of Illinois National Guard Soldiers and Airmen participated in Polish Constitution Day and Polish Independence Day activities in Chicago. Polish Americans make up 7.3 percent of the Chicago population. Chicago is the second largest Polish population in the world. This event is important because of the

Illinois National Guard's State Partnership Program with Poland and showed the unity between the two nations.

- The Illinois National Guard also received a lot of national publicity by providing color guards at six Chicago Bulls games and three Chicago Bears football games. They also provided support for a Veterans Day game for the St.Louis Blues hockey team.
- The Illinois National Guard helped plan and support a dedication event for a fallen Soldier. Sgt. Shawna Morrison was killed in September 2004. She was the first female from the Illinois National Guard killed while serving in Iraq and the first Illinois student actively enrolled in college to die in combat operations. The Illinois National Guard started the planning process in April and collaborated with the University of Illinois to assist in planning the event. The Illinois National Guard worked with General Officers in Kuwait to involve Morrison's commander in the ceremony. Maj. Brandon Tackett was the commander of the 1544<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company in 2004 and was deployed to Kuwait this year. Tackett flew back and spoke during the ceremony. The event was attended by the Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. Patricia Horoho and Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Tom Lamont. The Illinois National Guard also played a significant role in the event, with participation from the 144<sup>th</sup> Army Band and approximately 100 members of the 1544<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company participating in a parade to the event location. At the event, an Illinois National Guard Soldier sang the National Anthem and Morrison's commander and first sergeant, as well as the Illinois National Guard Adjutant General played an active role in the ceremony.

The focus of these events presented the ILNG to local, regional and national audience as an elite group of Soldiers and Airmen who can provide a wide-range of capabilities to the state and nation and has shown how integral the Illinois National Guard is in operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. During 2013, the Illinois National Guard's Public Affairs Program has gone above and beyond to reinforce the relations between the community and the ILNG. Through more of an outreach program, the community relations manager built a positive relationship with the community and strengthened a 377-year relationship between the community and the National Guard.



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Page 6-Planning

The overall objective of JFHQ-IL PAO's updated Community Relations program is to make the Illinois National Guard more visible in our community and to highlight the ILNG to the citizens of the state. By updating the Speakers Bureau program, the intent was to reach out to at least one community or organization for five key events throughout the year, such as OIF and OEF anniversaries, Patriots Day, Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Communities close to speaker's hometowns will be targeted along with large events that could reach out to many residents. The goal is for one Illinois National Guard speaker to be present for every key event and 95 percent of speaker requests filled. In 2013, JFHQ-IL PAO also coordinated support for 96 percent of all speaker requests (273 of 285). This includes 59 speakers for Memorial Day events and 101 speakers for Veterans Day events.

There is no budget for the Illinois National Guard's Community Relations program. Units support various requests through numerous capacities including: Soldiers or Airmen making up drill, paying a Soldier or Airmen through RMA funds or using full-time staff or Soldiers on ADOS orders to support such events. Special events may receive some non-appropriated funds or Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve funds where allowed by regulations.

Community relations events are planned in close coordination with our operations, fiscal and legal officers.

The results of supporting such events are informing the public about the missions, policies and people of the Illinois National Guard, thus growing support in the community and increasing recruiting and retention.



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Page 7-Implementation

Implementation of the program has already been stated in previous pages. This is a summary of the how the program has been executed.

JFHQ-IL PAO acts as the liaison between National Guard Brigades and Wings once a request is received from the public. Through the use of a new calendar and database, requests became less of a "push effort" from JFHQ-IL PAO, allowing units to see what requests have not been filled in their area.

An updated Speakers Bureau program became the backbone to the JFHQ-IL PAO Community Relations program, allowing well-spoken Soldiers and Airmen an opportunity to tell their story and the story of the Illinois National Guard to people across the state. Although five key dates are targeted to engage speakers in the community, more than 100 servicemembers who make up the Speakers Bureau are used for all speaking requests that are received by the Community Relations program throughout the year. It is our job as Soldiers and Airmen to help enlighten the public's perception of the conflicts overseas and let others know what a great job our military is doing. A strong Speakers Bureau program allows the Illinois National Guard to paint a complete picture of the current overseas conflicts.

Statistics speak for themselves:

- In 2008 the Illinois National Guard supported 232 of 546 requests (42 percent).
- In 2009 the Illinois National Guard supported 295 of 363 requests (81 percent). The Public Affairs Office received about 200 fewer requests because the communities knew many of our Soldiers and units were deployed, but doubled the percentage of requests we were able to support and actually supported more requests in 2009 than in 2008.
- In 2010, following redeployment of about 4,000 Soldiers and Airmen, JFHQ-IL PAO received 622 requests and supported 512 events (82 percent). This included support for 161 of 166 speaker requests.
- In 2011, the ILNG supported 665 of 766 requests (87 percent), which included support for 194 of 198 speaker requests. Of those requests, 136 of 152 Veterans Day requests were supported, including speakers at 67 Veterans Day-related events.
- In 2012, 1,036 of 1,182 requests (88 percent) were supported. That includes support for 109 events (47 speakers) for Memorial Day and 171 events (79 speakers) for Veterans Day.
- In 2013, 679 of 912 requests (74 percent) were supported, despite sequestration constraints and a government shutdown. Of those requests, 116 events were supported during Memorial Day weekend (59 speakers) and 185 events were supported Veterans Day weekend (101 speakers).
- Since the revised Speakers Bureau program was launched in October 2009, JFHQ-IL PAO has received 980 speaker requests, supporting 958 of those requests (97 percent).

Special events, such as Chicago Memorial Day parade, were planned and executed in conjunction with the Army, Air and Joint operations officers and were issued to the supporting units via operations orders.



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Page 8-Evaluation

The benefit to the Illinois National Guard and organizational impact of these events was substantial, resulting in increased awareness, understanding and support of the ILNG. Various events put the Illinois National Guard in the national and international spotlight and informed Illinoisans and others about historic deployments and accomplishments of Illinois service members overseas.

Several methods were used in evaluating the results of our community relations efforts ranging from informal surveys of the organizations involved to after action reports from the Illinois National Guard units and individuals who took part in various efforts. Results improved annual events and updated standard operating procedures.

The objective of the Army's outreach program is to make community relations less of a pull from communities and more of an outreach effort from the National Guard. JFHQ-IL PAO accomplished this with the establishment of a new database and calendar for brigades to know what is or is not supported. The Speakers Bureau program has also established this goal by targeting area communities, during key events like the OIF and OEF anniversaries, Patriots Day, Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Reaching out to communities has been a great way to allow our Soldiers and Airmen a unique opportunity to tell others about the Illinois National Guard, while letting the community know how important they are to the success of the Illinois National Guard. Without support from our friends, family and community, the Illinois National Guard could not be as successful as we have been.

Statistics indicate the program has been a success, with more requests supported (1,036) in 2012 than JFHQ-IL PAO received in any one year dating back to 2008. While requests were down slightly in 2013, the program was still a huge success because of the hurdles associated with sequestration. Some 679 of 912 requests were supported. This was due to the customer service of our office, not turning organizations away when they requested assets that were unsupportable due to sequestration. Instead, we worked with the organization trying to offer other assets such as color guards, speakers or troops marching in a parade.



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January 3, 2014

National Guard Bureau  
1411 Jefferson Davis Highway  
Arlington, VA 22202-3231

Dear National Guard Bureau:

In the attached packet you will see a story unfold. It is the story of a National Guard community relations program that is proactive and well researched, planned, and executed. Of course, a central part of any good community relations program is how we respond to community requests. Despite sequestration constraints, we still provided support to all parts of Illinois.

In 2008, the program supported only 46 percent of the requests. In 2009, JFHQ-IL PAO supported 81 percent of the 363 requests. In 2010, it supported 512 of 622 requests (82 percent). In 2011, 87 percent of the 766 requests were supported with community support provided for 665 events. In 2012, 88 percent of the 1,182 requests were supported. In 2013, 679 of 912 requests (74 percent) were supported despite sequestration.

There may be times when requests are denied because of regulations governing the use of military assets or simply the lack of funding or assets. However, when we could, we found a way to "yes." In the last year, we supported 273 speaker requests with well-spoken Soldiers and Airmen in community who talked about the great things the Illinois National Guard is doing. During Veterans Day alone, Illinois Guard members spoke at 101 events. During Memorial Day, 59 speakers were engaged in community events.

In September, the Illinois National Guard helped plan and support a dedication event for a fallen Soldier. Sgt. Shawna Morrison was killed in September 2004. She was the first female from the Illinois National Guard killed while serving in Iraq and the first Illinois student actively enrolled in college to die in combat operations. The Illinois National Guard started the planning process in April and collaborated with the University of Illinois ROTC to assist in planning the event. The Illinois National Guard worked with General Officers in Kuwait to involve Morrison's commander in the ceremony. Maj. Brandon Tackett was the commander of the 1544<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company in 2004 and was deployed to Kuwait this year. Tackett flew back and spoke during the ceremony. The event was attended by the Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. Patricia Horoho and Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Tom Lamont. The Illinois National Guard also played a significant role in the event, with participation from the 144<sup>th</sup> Army Band and approximately 100 members of the 1544<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company participating in a parade to the event location. At the event, an Illinois National Guard Soldier sang the National Anthem and Morrison's commander and first sergeant, as well as the Illinois National Guard Adjutant General played an active role in the ceremony.

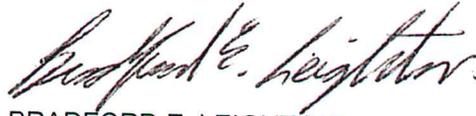
The Illinois National Guard also received a lot of national publicity by providing color guards at more than one-half dozen Chicago Bulls games and three Chicago Bears football games.

In building our community relations program, we have also built strong relationships with key partners in Illinois including the USO of Illinois, the Office of Chief of Public Affairs – Midwest, the

Pritzker Military Library, the City of Chicago, the Illinois Governor's Office and both the state and federal Veterans Administrations – just to name a few.

As you can tell, I am very proud of the program and hope you will give it strong consideration for the Keith L. Ware community relations award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bradford E. Leighton".

BRADFORD E. LEIGHTON  
Major, LG, ILARNG  
Public Affairs Director