

Dept. of Military Affairs: 107th continues to perform well during NATO deployment for Operation Atlantic Resolve

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Approximately 150 Soldiers from the 107th Maintenance Company are representing the Wisconsin Army National Guard proudly at the midway point of their mobilization to Eastern Europe.

The 107th, which is headquartered in Sparta, Wisconsin, with detachments in Viroqua, Wisconsin and Camp Ripley, Minnesota, is performing optimally, according to Capt. Shawn Smith, the unit's commander.

After mobilizing in May, the unit was dispersed across Poland, Romania, and Lithuania as a part of Operation Atlantic Resolve. The Soldiers have developed a well-balanced work day that revolves around operating maintenance shops. Every day, the Soldiers conduct services on cars, computers, air conditioning and refrigeration units, heating units, communications equipment, and more. So far, the 107th has completed 34 external missions, closed out 982 work orders, and accounted for 6,662 labor hours.

Cpl. Noah Olsen is a utilities equipment repairer. He said that what makes his job most enjoyable is working with the other Soldiers in the unit and the comradery that they've developed. He also said that he's surprised about how much he has learned outside of his occupation.

"Not only have I learned more about my job, but I have learned how the full-time Army works, in our unit and others," Olsen said. "Off-duty I spend time interacting

with the other units stationed here with us. Their mission and jobs are different than ours, and I try to learn all I can from them.”

For Staff Sgt. Katlynn Rhyner, it means a lot to her to be a part of something that not only makes a difference now, but also in the coming years.

“The mission is all about the future relationships we have in Eastern Europe,” she said. “To be the ones here building these future relationships that will be crucial in the coming years is an overall great opportunity.”

Rhyner was put in a unique position since there wasn’t a strong need for the job that she holds within the Army. Instead of performing her job as a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Specialist, she took on several other duties and plans and coordinates activities for her unit as well as her higher unit while and also conducting CBRN maintenance. While it was challenging to be given new jobs in a new country, Rhyner has handled the responsibility very well and has developed a plethora of new skills.

“Being in a leadership position within Headquarters, I’ve been able to form stronger leadership characteristics, and the ability to work with various units and battalion for missions, building morale and having a more overall diverse skill set.”

Rhyner’s impact is definitely felt among her peers as most responded that her multi-day trips around the country have been the highlight of their deployment.

“The best parts have been when we’ve been allowed to participate in Morale, Welfare, and Recreation trips throughout Eastern and Central Europe. A couple of the best were the trips to Auschwitz and Berlin,” said Smith.

Olson agreed.

“We can embrace their culture, taste their cuisine, and have experiences that we could never get at home,” he said.

The 107th is slated to return stateside in the spring of 2022.