



Helping TRAIN the TROOPS

BY KRIS CASH, APR

New Jersey Water Association Teams Up with the 154th Water Company in a Water Purification Operation

IN A SPECIAL TRAINING OPERATION for the Army National Guard, the New Jersey Water Association joined forces with the 154th Water Company to train guard members in securing and protecting water sources. While the nature of the Water Company's deployment remains undisclosed, NJWA's instructors were delighted to step up to the plate and lend a hand in training these men and women.

Seven highly experienced water instructors from New Jersey Water Association volunteered their time over a cold winter weekend in Sea Girt, N.J. to train 30 guardsmen from the 154th.

During the course, the soldiers studied Water Source Selection, Pretreatment, Operator Mathematics, Reverse Osmosis, Disinfection, Water Quality Field Testing and Chemical Safety, among other topics.

One soldier stated how much he appreciated the training. He indicated that he and his classmates walked away from the Sea Girt weekend with increased knowledge and appreciation of what their future roles will be in protecting water and the environment.

The individuals who joined the 154th said they gained a new perspective on what it means to be a water purification specialist.

New Jersey Water Association Executive Director Rick Howlett had much to say about the training operation.

"We believe that we're obliged to support the New Jersey National Guard in whatever way we can, and we're happy to do it. These soldiers have all committed themselves to protecting us. We're grateful for their service. There's no way we can really return that favor, so we're going to do what we can."

The soldiers really impressed the instructors. Math is not ordinarily the most popular topic during training, but the class really seemed to eat it up! The members of the 154th Water Company are smart, well motivated people.

"The 154th has an important job to do. They'll be overseas providing water for our troops. The water they treat will be used for just about everything: cooking, hygiene, sanitation and field hospitals – you name it" Howlett said.

"We intend to work with the 154th again this summer. In a way, it'll be part two of the training program. By then, there will be many more people to train," stated Howlett.

To design the training course, New Jersey Water Association worked with Captain Malinda Dake, and Command Sergeant Major Howard Wright. The course allowed rural water instructors to relate their civilian expertise and experience to the tasks that the 154th will be accomplishing. The association focused on the key areas of water purification.

Howlett said, "Our trainers brought in a lot of equipment: pumps, portable water testing devices, reverse osmosis membranes, sampling equipment, etc. It was all stuff similar to what the troops will be using. Demonstrations and hands-on training are always helpful. The New Jersey Water Association is really grateful to our members who instructed. These folks prepared great presentations, and donated their time to this effort. When we asked them if they'd be interested in participating, every one of them committed to it right away. They felt honored to do it."

The New Jersey Water Association is the state affiliate of the National Rural Water Association. The NJWA provides training and technical assistance for most water and wastewater operators, managers and utilities in New Jersey. ○



New Jersey Water Association Executive Director Rick Howlett welcomes the 154th Water Company to the Sea Girt, New Jersey training session. The 154th has an important job to do –they'll be overseas providing water for our troops.



Instructor Bill Packer answers questions for the 154th Water Company soldiers.



NJWA Instructor Pat laRosa works with the 154th.



Seasoned instructor Bill Packer provides detailed instruction with a chemical pump system.



Michael Furrey, NJWA instructor, teaches in group format to develop top communication skills which are vital in the water industry.