

- FEATURING -

A RESOURCE FOR THE SOLDIERS AND FAMILIES OF THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

#3

CYBER  
TASK  
FORCE  
ECHO

# CITIZEN-SOLDIER

Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com

ISSUE 3 // VOL 1

★ **CYBER  
MISSIONS!** ★  
ANSWER  
THE CALL

**THREAT  
IDENTIFIED!**

**...THREAT  
NEUTRALIZED!**

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2018

# ***PAY CHARTS ARE HERE***

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2.4 PERCENT MILITARY PAY  
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SEE THE MOST CURRENT RESERVE COMPONENT PAY CHARTS.

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**Mission:** To celebrate and support the Soldiers and Families of the National Guard. To provide today's Army National Guard members with information on becoming a better Soldier and better citizen. To encourage and assist Guard Soldiers in maximizing the benefits of their military career, as well as their personal and Family goals.

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## EXTEND TO DEFEND

Continue to serve and protect your Nation and retain a myriad of benefits for you and your Family including:

- Re-enlistment Extension Bonus Opportunities
- Access to Federally Funded Retirement Plans
- Money to Earn Your Degree or Continue Your Education
- Low-Cost Health Insurance
- VA Home Loan Eligibility



Soldiers who extend to serve between two and five years receive appreciation rewards of a commemorative coin and a stainless steel coffee tumbler. Soldiers who extend for six years receive a high quality gym bag along with the coin and tumbler.





# REMEMBERING 1SG CHARLESTON HARTFIELD

## *The Epitome of a Citizen-Soldier*

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

1SG Charleston Hartfield gave his life in the same way he lived it — helping and protecting others.

When bullets rained down on the Route 91 Harvest Festival country music concert, 1SG Hartfield was not on official duty for his Nevada Army National Guard unit, the 100th Quartermaster Company, nor for his job as a Las Vegas Metro Police Officer. He was at the festival simply as a concertgoer. But it would seem that, in his heart and mind, 1SG Hartfield was always on duty.

As the volleys of automatic rifle fire began to pummel the crowd of more than 22,000 people gathered at the Las Vegas Village on Oct. 1, 2017, 1SG Hartfield went into action and began helping people out of the danger area. According to reports from Clark County Sheriff's Department representatives, amid the chaos, 1SG Hartfield used his years of training to attempt to

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1SG Charleston Hartfield, Nevada Army National Guard

Nevada Army National Guard photo by SGT Walter H. Lowell.



locate the shooter. He scanned the horizon to try to find the perpetrator and began relaying information to responding officers. But ultimately, he was shot before he was able to render more assistance.

“He immediately took action to save lives,” Clark County Undersheriff Kevin McMahon told reporters at a press conference following the massacre. “He gave his life protecting others,” McMahon said.

“If there was an opportunity to help someone, he would do it,” said CPT Randon Lessing of the 145th Brigade Support Battalion, Idaho Army National Guard, and former commander of the 100th Quartermaster Company. “Any time, it didn’t matter what was going on, he would try to help.”

1SG Charleston Hartfield, also known as “Chuck Hart,” served 11 years in law enforcement and 16 years in the U.S. Army – 12 in the Nevada Army National Guard. He served one, year-long deployment to Iraq in 2003.

CPT Lessing said his first impression of 1SG Hartfield was as ‘a man in charge.’

“At about [6 foot 4 inches tall], he was a big guy,” CPT Lessing commented. “His presence alone commanded strong leadership. When you shook his hand, he looked you straight in the eye and you got the impression that he was a no-nonsense fellow.”

CPT Lessing added that as he got to know the first sergeant over the next few years, his respect for the Soldier grew.

“He was most definitely a family man,” CPT Lessing said. “And as I got to know him, I realized that he was in tune with most anything you wanted to have a conversation

about — current events, law enforcement, Army, politics, music, pop culture. The guy was fast-witted and highly intellectual.”

CPT Lessing went on to say that he thought 1SG Hartfield might have most wanted to be remembered for a lighter side and his sense of humor.

“That [light-hearted] part of his personality was probably what he loved about himself the most,” CPT Lessing reflected. “He always had a way of making intense situations a little bit lighter. That was such an awesome part of who he was.”

Personifying traits typical of quality military leaders, 1SG Hartfield was a mentor to several younger Soldiers in his unit.

“He really took the time to get to know every single Soldier in our unit,” said CPT Elizabeth Ochoae-Ellis, current commander of the 100th Quartermaster Company. “He could tell me every single Soldier’s story. We have 125 Soldiers and he knew who they all were. He knew their names, their backgrounds. That’s what [I remember] when I think of 1SG Hartfield – how much he was involved in the Soldiers’ lives and just the exceptional senior leader he was.”

“He helped a handful of his fellow Soldiers get jobs with the Las Vegas Metro [Police],” CPT Lessing said. “That mentorship he provided will have long-lasting effects on the lives of dozens of Soldiers within the unit.”

1SG Hartfield was officially promoted from SFC to 1SG posthumously. Though, according to CPT Ochoae-Ellis, his role in the 100th surpassed that of a typical first sergeant.

“When I came into the command, I really relied on him a lot. He was my partner. He was my teammate. I did not

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A Soldier pays her final respects to 1SG Charleston Hartfield after his memorial service held at the North Las Vegas Readiness Center on Oct. 21, 2017.

Nevada Army National Guard photo by SSG Victor Joecks.





make any decision without going through him.”

Outside of the military and police force, 1SG Hartfield was a devoted husband and father of two, a youth football coach and an author.

Just three months before his death, 1SG Hartfield published his first and only book. Titled *Memoirs of a Public Servant*, the book is a self-reflection on 1SG Hartfield’s life as a Las Vegas Metro Police Officer.

“If you want to get in the mind of 1SG Hartfield, read his book,” said CPT Lessing.

In the book, he called Las Vegas the “busiest and brightest city in the world.” With his passing, it seemed many of his colleagues, friends and Family members recognized 1SG Hartfield as one of his city’s “busiest and brightest.” On the day of his funeral, a 100-plus vehicle motorcade escorted his flag-draped coffin to Central Christian Church in Henderson, Nev.

As the motorcade made its way through the streets of Las Vegas and down the famous Las Vegas Strip where 1SG Hartfield spent his last hours, thousands of civilians lined the streets to pay respect as his casket passed by. Upon arrival at the church that was filled with approximately 3,000 mourners, hundreds

of National Guard and law enforcement officers saluted as 1SG Hartfield was carried in by an honor guard made up of both National Guard and Metro Police personnel.

**“On that fateful October day, life certainly left Charleston Hartfield before honor did.”**

— BG Zachary Doser

“On that fateful October day, life certainly left Charleston Hartfield before honor did,” said BG Zachary Doser, commander of the Nevada Army National Guard. “1SG Hartfield epitomizes everything good about America.”

“Charleston Hartfield lived to serve the public and protect his Family,” said Air Force Brig Gen William Burks, adjutant general of the Nevada National Guard. In a statement, the general called 1SG Hartfield “the epitome of a Citizen-Soldier.”

Aware of the supreme sacrifice his duty might one day require, 1SG Hartfield had written directives for his funeral. He also left some parting words that were read at the memorial for those who would take time to remember his contribution to his community and his country.

“No person was ever honored for what he received,” he wrote. “Honor has been the reward for what he gave.”

Honor is an integral part of 1SG Hartfield’s lasting legacy. His honor continues to serve as a beacon for his Family and friends, his fellow Soldiers and law enforcement officers, and the citizens of the city for which he gave his life. ●



SGT Abdiel Roman, 100th Quartermaster Company, speaks at the memorial service for 1SG Charleston Hartfield on Oct. 20, 2017.

Nevada Army National Guard photo by SSG Victor Joecks.



# NO ONE LEFT BEHIND

## Remembering PFC Emmanuel Mensah

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

PFC Emmanuel Mensah

Charred items sit on the burnt-out fire escape of the New York City apartment building where PFC Emmanuel Mensah saved the lives of four people during a deadly fire that broke out in the building on Friday, Dec. 29, 2017.

AP Photo by Julio Cortez

One of the tenets of being in the American military is that no one gets left behind on the battlefield. PFC Emmanuel Mensah brought that commitment into his civilian life when he died while saving others from what has been reported as the deadliest fire in New York City since 9/11.

PFC Mensah was enjoying the holiday season prior to reporting for his first drill duty with the 107th Military Police (MP) Company, New York Army National Guard. Up to that point, he had been assigned to Alpha Company of the New York Army National Guard's Recruiting and Retention Battalion. He had just finished basic training and was preparing to become one of the 107th's newest wheeled vehicle mechanics.

On Dec. 28, 2017, PFC Mensah was suddenly confronted with a terrible choice. He could save his own life and a chance at the future he had worked so hard for; or put it all at risk to help those left behind in the raging fire that was enveloping his apartment building.

He chose the latter. At least four people are alive today in the Bronx, N.Y., because of PFC Mensah's decision. Detectives of the New York City 48th Police Precinct said the Soldier re-entered the fire at least three times to pull people from the inferno. The firefighters who found PFC Mensah on a neighbor's floor presumed he had gone into the fire one last time to try to rescue more victims.

The fire was started by an accident involving a gas stove in the kitchen of one of the building's apartments. The family living in the apartment where the fire ignited escaped, but the door was not shut behind them. That may be why the flames spread with such speed, investigators believe.

"It's a sad thing to see happen. He only had a brief time in his [military] career," said PFC Mensah's recruiter, SSG Ruben Martinez-Ortiz, Alpha Company, Recruiting and Retention Battalion. "It's hard when it's somebody that barely had any time in service, and yet they [still] go out in such a heroic way."



The staff sergeant recalled noticing that PFC Mensah stood out among other recruits from his first day in basic training. PFC Mensah addressed him as Sir from the beginning and usually did it from a position of parade rest, he recalled.

“He was professional with me at all times,” SSG Martinez-Ortiz remembered. He always had the discipline from the very beginning. One could say he was a natural fit. He wanted to serve.”

According to his friend and co-worker, retired SSG William Torres, PFC Mensah was already a hard worker even before joining the Army National Guard, and would work early shifts at La Guardia Airport in New York City.

“His job was to – at 4:00 in the morning – give out the radios and [other] equipment to the crew chiefs going out on the field,” Torres said of his friend. “He was like a supply clerk. He ran the supply room.”

Torres, who retired after 28 years of service in the Army National Guard, has been with American Airlines at La Guardia Airport for 22 years. He recognized the potential he saw in the hardworking younger man and encouraged PFC Mensah to look into the Army National Guard for opportunities.

“When I first met him, he was wearing a coat that had Marines on it,” Torres recalled “I asked, ‘You’re in the Marines?’ He said, ‘No, no. I bought this jacket at a military surplus store.’ That’s how we started talking. I convinced him to join the Army National Guard instead of the Marines because they have more units here in New York.”

PFC Mensah was an immigrant from Ghana. According to Torres, he truly valued the opportunities his new home offered, and when he learned more about the opportunities the Army National Guard could offer, he saw a real path to success.

“He was very excited when I got him the position in the 107th MP,” SSG Martinez-Ortiz said. “He was so motivated. I remember the day he took the oath. He was excited. His life was about to change and he was ready to [embrace] the changes.”

As a recruit, PFC Mensah did well in the Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP). SSG Martinez-Ortiz noted that he was a quick learner who was often a little ahead of the others in his group. Displaying traits that may have blossomed into the makings of a future leader, PFC Mensah did his best to help fellow recruits keep from falling behind.

“He was already a person that was willing to help people out,” SSG Martinez-Ortiz said of PFC Mensah. “He already had the mindset that he wanted to help people.” The staff sergeant said that PFC Mensah had helped fellow recruits with their workouts, and later had helped a Soldier with the same MOS.

**“It’s hard when it’s somebody that barely had any time in service, and yet they [still] go out in such a heroic way.”**

**– SSG Ruben Martinez-Ortiz**

91B was just a first step for PFC Mensah. He wanted to be in law enforcement, his recruiter said. However, the immigrant Soldier could not get clearance to become an MP until he obtained his U.S. citizenship. With his enlistment,

he was on track for making that happen. SSG Martinez-Ortiz noted that with his placement in the MP unit, PFC Mensah would have been well positioned to pursue law enforcement once he obtained citizenship here in the United States.

The life of a Soldier looked to be a good fit for this driven and dedicated young man. He was already regimented, respectful and in great physical shape, according to friends. With all the Army National Guard

has to offer – education, on-the-job training and potential citizenship – the future looked bright for PFC Mensah. He seemed to have found his path.

“It was in his heart,” SSG Torres recalled. “He really wanted to do better for himself – do bigger and better things.”

But on a cold December evening late last year, life intervened. PFC Mensah put all his hopes and dreams aside to help his neighbors one last time. As best he could, he would make sure no one was left behind. Those of us who take time to remember him are living testimony to the truth that his sacrifice was not in vain.

On Thanksgiving of 2017, PFC Emmanuel Mensah sent one last text to his recruiter. He wrote a simple thank you to SSG Martinez-Ortiz: “Thank you for changing my life and making me who I am today ... a Soldier.”

“I keep reading that text,” SSG Martinez-Ortiz said. “That’s the thing that keeps running in my mind since the incident happened. He was a really good Soldier.”

PFC Emmanuel Mensah was posthumously awarded the Soldier’s Medal by Army Secretary Mark T. Esper. It is the Army’s highest award for heroism outside of combat. He was also posthumously awarded the New York State Medal for Valor – the highest New York State military award for heroism.

Alpha Company recognized their fallen brother during the RSP drill that followed PFC Mensah’s passing.

SSG Martinez-Ortiz reflected that, “He’ll live on through us.” ●



PFC Mensah shown in formation during a Battle Hand off Ceremony at a Recruit Sustainment Program site in the Bronx, N.Y.

Photo courtesy of the New York Army National Guard.



# HOW DO I...?

**Dear *Citizen-Soldier* magazine,**  
***What happens if I get deployed while in school?***

*Federal law, and regulations in most States, protects Soldiers who attend college or university level schools if they must miss school due to military orders. Law states that students whose education was interrupted by voluntary or involuntary military service have the right to re-enroll in their respective programs, most often without penalty. These requirements apply to any educational institution that participates in Title IV federal student financial aid programs, including Pell Grants, Stafford Loans, and the Federal Work-Study Program.*

*Many States also have regulations that require participating schools to grant full or partial credit for courses started by students before receiving military orders. This is dependent upon the number of hours or weeks completed in the course by the time military orders take effect.*

*Talk to your university administrators for information specific to your school. The important thing is to ask and not assume your time and money in class are lost if you are deployed.*

Send in your questions and get answers from Army National Guard subject matter experts.

Submit questions to

**Editor@Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com**

Or online at

**Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com**





# WHAT'S TRENDING

## CSF2 COMPREHENSIVE SOLDIER AND FAMILY FITNESS

BY STAFF WRITER Ruth Ann Repogle



### What is Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness?

**A**rmy Families are a cornerstone in the foundational strength of the Army. They stand strong behind the Soldiers who are serving their State and our Nation. The health and happiness of the military spouse, who keeps on keeping on while their significant other is drilling, activated or deployed, is vital to the health and happiness of the Soldier connected to them. Even the strongest of Family members can get worn down by the day-to-day trails that are unique to military Families. Childcare, finances, household repairs and the emotional struggle of missing a deployed loved one – these are all very real challenges faced by military Families.

In an effort to address these challenges, Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (CSF) was established in 2008 by then-Army Chief of Staff GEN George W. Casey Jr. Rather than taking a reactive approach to providing care, he proposed that a proactive path was best. Instead of focusing only on treatment after the issues arose, GEN Casey's program would also provide preventative measures to make Soldiers stronger on the front end, before treatment was ever required. Resilience training, as it was called, was created to teach service members the life skills needed to bounce back stronger from challenges. The program was renamed Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness (CSF2) in October 2012.

Designed to build resilience and enhance the performance of the Army Family, CSF2 is an Army-wide program that includes Soldiers, their Families and Army Civilians. The program equips the Army Family with self-development tools and training so they may cope with adversity, perform better in stressful situations and thrive in life.

By helping Soldiers stay healthy, CSF2 maximizes their potential to confront and rise to challenges common in Army life. It teaches skills to support emotional success, both during times of conflict and in times of peace.

CSF2's instructors and facilitators use individual assessments, tailored virtual training, classroom training and embedded resilience experts to provide the teaching and principles that undergird the program. Soldiers and their spouses may build resilience at their own pace, and even form their own social networks within the program – all based on individual needs and preferences.

Online CSF2 tools include the Global Assessment Tool (GAT) 2.0, which allows users to take a confidential survey that assesses their physical and psychological health; and ArmyFit, which provides tailored information and resources on up-to-date health and fitness information.



BALANCE



LIFE

See the article on page 12  
for more information on GAT.

Localized coaching is also offered through CSF2 Training Centers and mobile training teams. This brings Soldiers together – separate from their units – for peer learning and instruction. Guard members at every level, from every walk of life may weigh in.

Training options for Soldiers and/or their spouses include:

- Resiliency training classes through a Master Resilience Trainer (MRT)
- Performance enhancement through their unit
- Resiliency training through the Army's education system

As an integral part of the Army's Ready and Resilient (R2) campaign, CSF2 promotes physical and psychological fitness, and encourages personal and professional growth. Its tenets support the R2 vision of building and sustaining a culture of trust, and developing personal and unit readiness to meet demanding current and emerging Army requirements. The prevailing philosophy is that a resilient Soldier performs better. This, in turn, results in improved unit readiness and a better quality of life for the Soldier

#### Duty Stations and Installations with CSF2 Training Centers

Fort Benning, Ga.	Fort Shafter, Hawaii/ Schofield Barracks
Fort Bliss, Texas	Fort Stewart, Ga.
Fort Bragg, N.C.	Joint Base Elmendorf- Richardson, Alaska
Fort Campbell, Ky.	Joint Base Lewis- McChord, Wash.
Fort Carson, Colo.	Joint Base Myer- Henderson Hall, Va.
Fort Drum, N.Y.	Joint Force Headquarters- National Capital Region, Washington, D.C.
Fort Gordon, Ga.	
Fort Hood, Texas	
Fort Jackson, S.C.	
Fort Knox, Ky.	
Fort Riley, Kan.	
Fort Sam Houston, Texas	

and their Family. As a result, the Army's Total Force and American society at large benefit greatly from more resilient Army units.

For more information about CFS2 contact the Family Services department at your nearest military installation, or go to [ArmyFit.Army.mil/Protected](http://ArmyFit.Army.mil/Protected) and log in. ●



# Live in Your Dimensions of **STRENGTH** with GAT 2.0

BY STAFF WRITER Ruth Ann Repogle

**T**he Global Assessment Tool (GAT) 2.0 is one of the main components of the Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness (CSF2) program. By using this confidential online survey tool, Soldiers and their spouses may assess their physical and psychological health conveniently from the privacy of their own homes. After completing the assessment, individuals receive a list of customized recommendations and accessible resources to boost resiliency and performance.

GAT is based on the Five Dimensions of Strength: social, emotional, family, spiritual and physical. These five dimensions have been identified by the DoD as key to overall Total Force Fitness.

For more information on  
CSF2, see page 10.

## 1. Social Fitness



Social fitness involves one's trust in their co-workers, family and friends. More importantly, it speaks to the level of trust others have in a person and that person's value as a team member. Mutual trust and valued relationships and friendships offer opportunities to share ideas, views and experiences, often in non-judgmental environments. This type of open communication is crucial to maintaining a healthy state of mind.

## 2. Emotional Fitness



Emotional Fitness deals with approaching life's challenges in a positive and optimistic manner. This may be done by demonstrating self-control, stamina and good character in one's choices and actions. Strong emotional control enables one to calmly think through stressful situations, which may lead to better decision making. The ability to use good judgment and properly discern circumstances may lead to profound benefits for both a Soldier's Family and unit.



### 3. Family Fitness



Family Fitness is extremely important to overall mental fitness. A safe and caring family network may provide a positive support system which one may rely on during difficult or trying times. When thinking of family, it is important to remember that a family network is not limited to biological families. For some, a group of trusted friends may function as the family network. For others, it may be members of a support group. Members of the Army National Guard have the benefit of a military Family. In times of trouble, Soldiers may lean on their fellow brothers and sisters in arms for support and advice. Whether the family is made up of biological family members, close friends or fellow service members, being part of a positive family network is fundamental to overall wellness.

### 4. Spiritual Fitness



Spiritual Fitness pertains to having and building upon a set of beliefs, principles or values that sustain a person beyond family, institutions and social groups. It represents a moral code that helps shape how well one interacts with others. Spiritual fitness often results in a higher sense of purpose that enables one to build inner strength, find meaning in life's many and varied experiences, behave ethically and persevere through challenges and adversity.

### 5. Physical Fitness



Physical Fitness is a concept with which Soldiers are all too familiar. For many, the first thing that comes to mind at the mention of physical fitness is how toned and muscular a person is. After completing just one two-mile run during the annual Army Physical Fitness Test, any Soldier may attest to the fact that physical fitness is also about how well one performs in stressful activities requiring aerobic fitness, endurance and strength. This requires a strong body maintained through regular aerobic and strength-training exercise, coupled with healthy eating habits based on nutritious, heart-healthy foods. Developing good physical fitness habits will not only help to improve Soldiers' performance in the Army National Guard, but also their overall quality of life.

In addition to the Five Dimensions of Strength, the GAT provides users with their RealAge® – a calculation of the age of one's body based on health factors versus the person's actual chronological age. The tool also scores users on the Performance Triad (sleep, activity and nutrition).

Soldiers and spouses may take the GAT on ArmyFit at [ArmyFit.army.mil/Protected](https://armyfit.army.mil/Protected). Note that spouses must be registered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) to create an account on ArmyFit. ●





# BUILDING TRUST, BOOSTING CAPABILITIES

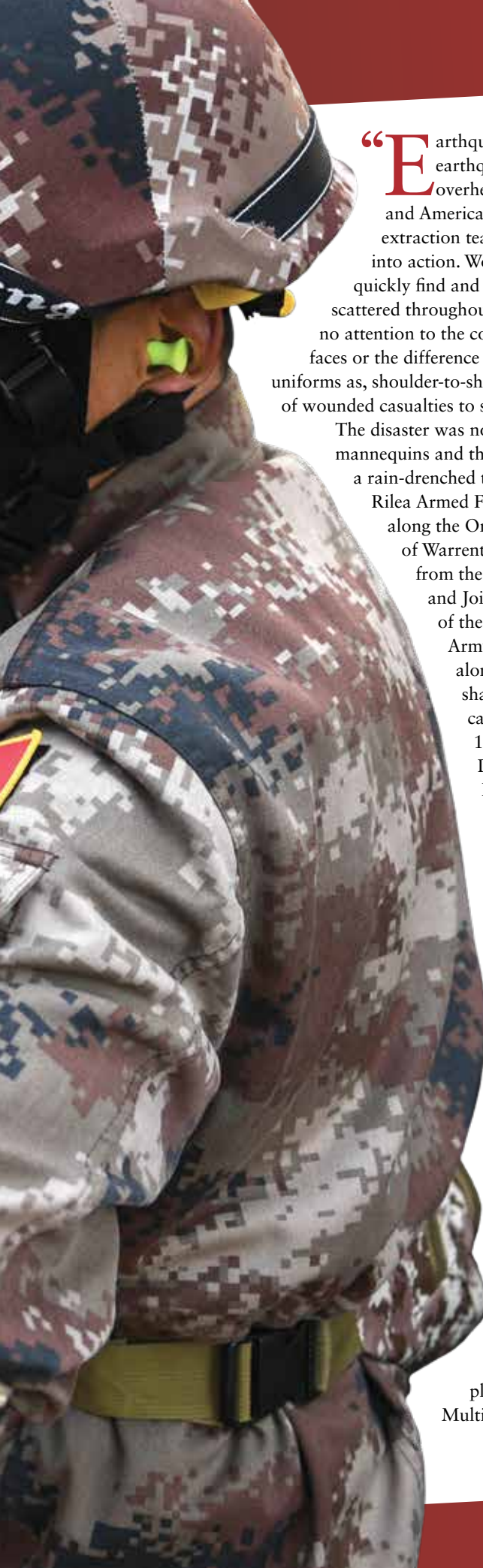
*Oregon National Guard partners  
with Chinese for Disaster  
Management Exchange*

STORY PROVIDED BY SFC April Davis,  
Oregon National Guard

An Oregon Army National Guard Soldier drills into concrete with the help of a People's Liberation Army soldier during the 2017 U.S.-China Disaster Management Exchange.

Department of Defense photo by A1C Nathan Barbour.





**“E**arthquake, earthquake, earthquake!” is shouted overhead, prompting Chinese and American military search and extraction teams to immediately sprint into action. Working together, they must quickly find and rescue disaster victims scattered throughout the village. They pay no attention to the cold, hard rain hitting their faces or the difference of flags worn on their uniforms as, shoulder-to-shoulder, they carry masses of wounded casualties to safety.

The disaster was notional, the casualties were mannequins and the endangered village was a rain-drenched training area at Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center along the Oregon coast near the city of Warrenton. Engineers and medics from the Oregon National Guard and Joint Logistics Force Soldiers of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) worked alongside each other to share disaster response capabilities during the 13th annual U.S.-China Disaster Management Exchange (DME) held Nov. 16-19, 2017.

U.S. Army Pacific hosts the annual U.S.-China DME to foster mutual trust and understanding between the forces, while sharing lessons learned to increase disaster response capabilities in the Pacific region.

“You don’t want to wait until a crisis to form relationships,” said GEN Robert B. Brown, U.S. Army Pacific commanding general. “You must do it beforehand, and that’s why this [exercise] is so important.”

The 2017 DME consisted of events planned through a Multinational Coordination

Center, including an expert academic discussion and a tabletop exchange where leaders discussed the logistics and roles of the simulated emergency. Perhaps the most compelling piece of the exercise was the practical field exchange (PFE), which enabled hands-on and side-by-side interaction between U.S. and PLA soldiers. The DME simulated a response to a third country that was suffering from severe flooding. While the scenario itself was fictional, it was based on real-world damage assessments gathered from flooding that occurred in Peru last spring.

“By sharing our experiences, techniques and best practices, we all improve our ability to respond quickly and effectively,” GEN Brown said. “Because, ultimately, this is about saving lives and minimizing human suffering in disaster zones.”

More than 20 Oregon National Guard Soldiers and Airmen participated in the PFE, including vertical engineers of the 442nd Engineer Utility Detachment (EUD) and medics of Detachment 1,

**“The cohesion has just been incredible. This is the first time in my military career that I’ve worked in this fashion with a foreign country, and it’s been a great experience. I’m glad that we are getting this opportunity.”**

— SPC Philip Costa

142nd Medical Group. They are part of the search and extraction team for the CBRNE Enhance Response Force Package (CERFP), which is trained to respond to large-scale disasters in the Pacific Northwest region.

“We all have emergencies, and we’re responsible for taking care of our communities and our citizens,” said COL Leah Sundquist, chief of staff for the Oregon Army National Guard. “[DME] allows for a military-to-military engagement where both countries can show expertise in how they conduct rescue activities.”

Oregon Army National Guard 1LT Caleb Tomulty, training and operations officer for the CERFP, led the Oregon Guard search and extraction team during the DME. He said his team was excited to work with the Chinese team.

“Overall, the experience of working with another country is a huge opportunity,” 1LT Tomulty said.

The first day of the PFE focused on urban searches that included locating and extracting casualties in



different scenarios. The second day focused on shoring – a technique used to build walled structures to temporarily support weak buildings in danger of collapse. The third day consisted of breaching and breaking techniques using drills, power saws and jackhammers to access confined spaces where casualties were trapped.

“I think this DME is very good for my team because we learn new ways to save people,” said PLA Cpl Wang RunZe. “[The] U.S. Soldier is very friendly. We can study each other and learn many new ways from each other. We have different ways to do search and rescues. We are both students.”

SSG Jonathan Nason of the 442nd EUD agreed that the event provided mutual learning benefits. “They’ve been eager to learn from us and to show us their techniques,” he said. “They have impressed us at every turn, and we’ve learned some great techniques from them that we can incorporate on our end.”

One such technique learned by the Oregon Guard troops was a

new method to locate survivors trapped underneath rubble. Some Soldiers said they were impressed by how patient and disciplined the PLA soldiers were in conducting methodical and synchronized searches.

“It was really cool getting to see what they do,” said SSG Virgil Newberry, detachment sergeant for the 442nd EUD. “They had no wasted movement. Every movement had purpose.”

Meanwhile, the PLA soldiers said they admired the Americans’ efficiency and adaptability.

“Even in the most emergent situation, we do the job step by step according to our rules and training,” said PLA Lt Mo SiHua. “The American side does their job very flexible. They can make the plan according to the situation and can change the plan any time the situation is changed.”

Lt SiHua said another takeaway for the PLA team was the concept of using a casualty collection point (CCP) to gather the injured in one location for triage and evacuation.

“The casualties who can walk on their own to the CCP save resources and improve the rescue efficiency,”

Lt SiHua said.

During the PFE, the Oregon Guard and PLA teams took turns displaying their techniques, then worked together in mixed teams.

“We mixed our groups and had to do the job together. That was the most difficult for both sides,” said Lt SiHua. “[It was] difficult because we had to communicate with gestures and eye contact.”

SPC Philip Costa of the 442nd EUD said the two sides were initially reserved in interactions, but by the end of the exchange, they were laughing together.



SSG Jason Cushman, 442nd Engineer Utility Detachment, Oregon Army National Guard, assists Joint Logistics Force soldiers from the People's Liberation Army as he uses a saw to cut wood for shoring structures.

Oregon Army National Guard photo by SFC April Davis.





Soldiers of the Oregon Army National Guard work with soldiers of the People's Liberation Army to assess and extract a simulated casualty.

Oregon Army National Guard photo by SFC April Davis.

"The cohesion has just been incredible," SPC Costa said. "This is the first time in my military career that I've worked in this fashion with a foreign country, and it's been a great experience. I'm glad that we are getting this opportunity."

Despite the cold, rainy weather and the language barrier, participants of DME 2017 remained positive and, in the end, gained more than just search and rescue knowledge.

"Americans are very friendly, warm and considerate," said Lt SiHua. "They made us feel very welcome."

SSG Nason said he appreciated the chance to learn about Chinese culture from their perspective.

"Everybody just wants to get to know each other, and they are really open and friendly," he said. "We are all literally the same. We are all Soldiers; only the nation is different."

Both sides were curious about their differences, but bonded over the things they have in common.

"It really opens your eyes to who they are versus what your expectations might be," said 1LT Tomulty. "They're

wonderful people, and just like us, they've got families back at home that are missing them."

Since 2005, the DME has been held in Hawaii, Washington, D.C., New York, Washington State and multiple areas in China. This was the first time the exchange was held in Oregon.

In addition to providing a learning opportunity for the U.S. Army and PLA participants, the DME included military and government observers from Bangladesh, Canada, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore and the People's Republic of China.

Other U.S. participants included U.S. Army Pacific; the 8th Theater Sustainment Command; the U.S. Military Academy (USMA); the 351st Civil Affairs Command; the 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (CSSB); the 571st Sapper Company; the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Columbia River; the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Northwestern Division; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Portland District; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS); and the Pacific Disaster Center, an applied research center managed by the University of Hawaii. ●

Soldiers of the 442nd Engineer Utility Detachment and soldiers from the People's Liberation Army pause for a team photo after training on breaching and breaking techniques during the 13th annual U.S.-China Disaster Management Exchange.

Oregon Army National Guard, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by SPC Alisha Grezlik.







# MORTAL COMBAT

## ***The New Jersey Army National Guard Lands a Punch in the Nation's Fight Against the Opioid Epidemic***

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

National Guard photos by MSgt Matt Hecht

“The opioid epidemic that is occurring in our back yard is not a problem that can be addressed by a single agency – it will take cooperation throughout all levels of law enforcement.” This was the concern expressed by New Jersey Congressman Chris Smith in response to his State’s snowballing drug epidemic.

Natural disasters and homegrown terrorism are not the only domestic threats facing the United States today. An insidious epidemic is taking the lives of tens of thousands of Americans each year, and has the potential to kill thousands more.

In 2016, more Americans died from opioid overdoses (64,070) than those that died in the Vietnam War (58,200), according to a report from the Police

Executive Research Forum, an independent research organization that focuses on critical issues in the policing community. That death toll is more than double the number of overdose-related deaths from just 10 years ago.

The Department of Health and Human Services describes opioids as natural or synthetic chemicals that bind to receptors in the brain or body. Common opioids include heroin and prescription drugs such as oxycodone, hydrocodone and fentanyl. Drug overdose deaths are the leading cause of death by injury in the United States and, in recent years, rampant drug abuse has become a serious public health crisis that is affecting the entire Nation.

Drug-related deaths have been a

problem in this country for generations, but with the use of opioid drugs skyrocketing since the late 1990s, a sense of urgency is growing in the Nation to stop the spread of these highly addictive and deadly drugs.

In September of last year, Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health, spoke with the *Washington Post*.

“I think this has been an epidemic that has snuck up on us,” he said. “The number of addicted individuals, the number of overdose deaths has just been breathtaking. The medical system was not well prepared for that.”

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate





Soldiers of the New Jersey National Guard, along with agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration, dump prescription drugs for incineration at the Covanta Essex Resource Recovery Facility.

that, in the State of New Jersey, a staggering 2,153 drug-overdose deaths occurred between May of 2016 and May of 2017 – an increase of 31.4 percent compared to the 1,638 deaths the previous year.

The New Jersey National Guard is meeting the opioid epidemic head-on through its partnership with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) on National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. The DEA-led initiative is a partnership between the National Guard, the DEA, local State and county police departments and concerned residents.

Through the program, tons of excess and potentially dangerous prescription drugs are collected and destroyed each year.

As part of the collaboration, the New Jersey National Guard Counterdrug Task Force is charged with safely destroying the drugs collected by the DEA and local police in the Garden State each year. SFC Jennifer Sbarro liaisons with the DEA for the Counterdrug Task Force.

SFC Sbarro explained that the DEA reached out to the New Jersey Army National Guard to partner on, and potentially organize, a collection process to transport and burn the drugs collected on National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

“The DEA started [National Prescription Drug Take Back Day] as a means of trying to collect expired over-the-counter pills that were sitting in homes, collecting in medicine cabinets and were accessible to teenagers,” said SFC Sbarro. “These drugs could be abused by the teens or other family members, and potentially lead to a fatal overdose.”

As reported by Army.mil, the initiative began in New Jersey in 2009. It includes collection boxes at 185 locations throughout the State, mainly at police stations. Citizens are encouraged to drop off expired or unneeded prescription drugs at these locations on the bi-annual National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. From there, the drugs are gathered

at collection points and picked up by Soldiers of the New Jersey Army National Guard who transport the drugs in tactical vehicles capable of handling heavy loads. The Guard Soldiers then take the drugs to regional disposal sites where they are safely incinerated.

According to DEA Special Agent Timothy McMahon, last April, Operation Take Back New Jersey – as the State-level initiative has been dubbed – took in 15,929 pounds of prescription medication. On a second collection day in October of last year, 14,507 pounds were collected from neighborhood medicine cabinets. That’s a total of well over 30,000 pounds of drugs collected in just one year.

“The home medicine cabinet is the number one way that teenagers are getting their hands on the pills,” McMahon said. “The more residents that can get it out of the house, the better.”

Although the amount varies for each collection event, since 2009, the numbers add up to an impressive total. Working together, the New Jersey National Guard, the DEA, local police departments and responsible residents have removed over 217,000 pounds of dangerous pills from



SSG Roger Galvez pushes a cart full of prescription drugs during Operation Take Back New Jersey at the Bergen County Law and Public Safety Institute in Mahwah, N.J.



New Jersey homes.

“Because there is such an abuse of [prescription drugs], not just among teens, but among all ages, it has basically become a threat to our entire society,” commented SFC Sbarro. “It’s where the need for programs such as Take Back come about. We’re trying to fight the good fight and [remove] the availability of easily accessed pills.”

The reality is that the New Jersey

Counterdrug Task Force is working against staggering statistics concerning the opioid epidemic. According to the CDC, 91 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose; approximately 29 percent of

patients who are prescribed opioids for chronic pain, over time begin to misuse them; and 80 percent of heroin users first misused prescription opioids before trying heroin.

In Sussex County, New Jersey, in the

Ocean County New Jersey into the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program. HIDTA is a program enacted by Congress during the Reagan Administration that aids law enforcement agencies located in areas identified as high

drug-trafficking regions. Ocean County is one of the areas in the Nation hardest hit by drugs.

The facts are daunting. But there is a silver lining.

Because of the proven connection between prescription pain killers and

subsequent opioid addiction, programs like Operation Take Back New Jersey and National Prescription Drug Take Back Day can make a significant impact in the battle against opioids. Such efforts can promote a high likelihood of success in that efforts to reduce the availability of opioids in homes, hopefully, will prevent some potential first-time users from ever experimenting with the drugs at all.

“It’s just a massive, massive problem,” McMahon said. “Anything that can be done to reduce the supply is huge, not just here in New Jersey, but nationally.”

The New Jersey National Guard has joined this fight for the long haul and is doing its best to help take back the territory – its neighborhoods – lost to the scourge of opioid addiction.

Recognizing that decreasing the

## THE NEW JERSEY NATIONAL GUARD HAS JOINED THIS FIGHT FOR THE LONG HAUL AND IS DOING ITS BEST TO HELP TAKE BACK THE TERRITORY - ITS NEIGHBORHOODS - LOST TO THE SCOURGE OF OPIOID ADDICTION.

far northwest region of the State, the students of Sussex County Community College conducted a survey in late 2017, which revealed 48 percent of county residents knew someone who was addicted to opioids.

On the other side of the State, the federal government has enrolled







**ABOVE:** 127 pounds of prescription drugs turned in to the Cedar Grove Police Department during Operation Take Back New Jersey 2017.

Photo courtesy of the Cedar Grove Police Department.

**BELOW:** Soldiers of the New Jersey National Guard, along with agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration, dump prescription drugs for incineration at the Covanta Essex Resource Recovery Facility.



availability of prescription pills is just one step in the fight against this epidemic, the New Jersey Guard's Counterdrug Task Force also works through efforts like demand-reduction initiatives that educate the public on drug abuse prevention.

Air Guard MSgt Chris Wutsch is operations NCO for the task force. According to MSgt Wutsch, while all 54 States and Territories have similar counterdrug programs, the New Jersey Guard tries to make the most of its budget to combat the drug problem on multiple fronts.

"Besides doing Operation Take Back, we also have six personnel that are assigned to the DEA working as analysts," MSgt Wutsch noted. "We are basically [permanent] help to the DEA."

The Guard members assigned to the DEA conduct criminal analyst work, researching backgrounds of persons of interest and developing intel packets.

"[The Task Force] is just always readily available," McMahon said. "It's been a

great relationship that we've had. I believe the counterdrug task force is going to continue to flourish."

Despite the formidable challenge the opioid crisis poses, members of the New Jersey Army National Guard remain hopeful of saving lives and helping put an end to what has become a nationwide crisis. They heard their State's call for help and have answered.

"The good thing about this [initiative] is that at the end of the day, no matter if

we pick up 15 pounds of pills or 15,000 pounds of pills, there is always someone that could have [gotten hooked on those pills] had we not done that mission," SFC Sbarro said. "There's always someone that would have had those pills available to them – perhaps a child. At the end of the day, no matter how long it takes, no matter how many hours it takes in planning, you really do feel that you will make a difference. Even if you don't see it up front, you can make a difference." ●



# ROCKETING TO THE FIGHT

## Colorado Army National Guard Joins the Fight Against ISIS

BY STAFF WRITER Drew Lansbury

“Shoot and Scoot” was the mindset for the Soldiers of the Colorado Army National Guard’s 169th Field Artillery Brigade (FAB) while they were deployed for nine months of fighting against ISIS in the Middle East.

The 169th provided Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) fires for Operation Inherent Resolve from Dec. 13, 2016, until Sept. 11, 2017, under the command of U.S. Army Central Command (ARCENT) and the U.S. Army’s 29th Infantry Division. They were responsible for the full management of fires, as well as for airspace clearance for bilateral and multilateral exercises.

“It was complex,” said MAJ Jason Stuchlik of the 169th. “For Operation Inherent Resolve, we worked with nine countries as a Field Artillery Brigade.”

The 169th employed the High Mobility

Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) to support partnered maneuver elements in the region. HIMARS is a member of the MLRS family. It offers the firepower of MLRS, but on a wheeled chassis. HIMARS fires and then moves away at high speed before enemy forces are able to locate the launch site. According to its developer, Lockheed Martin, HIMARS is designed to engage and destroy artillery, air defense concentrations, trucks, light armored vehicles, armored personnel carriers, as well as support troop and supply concentrations.

“In the fight against ISIS, as an all-weather, always variable weapons system, it provided fast and responsive fires to the maneuver forces in Iraq and Syria,” explained COL Robert Davis, brigade commander of the 169th FAB.

Operation Inherent Resolve was established in 2014 by ARCENT. With a

motto of “One Mission, Many Nations,” the campaign encompasses efforts and contributions from over 60 coalition partners throughout the Combined Joint Operations Area (CJOA) of Iraq and Syria.

In connection with Operation Inherent Resolve, the 169th was also a part of Operation Spartan Shield – a subset of the larger campaign geared at building partner capacity in the Middle East to promote regional self-reliance and increased security.

“We were accruing readiness, building partner capacity and fighting ISIS,” said COL Davis. “The fight against ISIS has been the most consuming. We worked with nine different countries’ artilleries to accrue readiness across our forces at the artillery level. It’s what we trained to do our entire [military] careers.”

In order to establish efficient and effective mission processes, the 169th



U.S. and Jordanian Army artillery explode after impact during a training exercise outside of Amman, Jordan.

Army National Guard photo by SSG Jeremy Miller.



FAB focused much of its efforts on the digital integration of systems for the fire control element.

“Typically, the HIMARS firing points were in remote and somewhat isolated locations across the area of responsibility and required various satellite-based communications assets in order to support both fire control, as well as the Mission Command network,” said MAJ Dave Sonheim of the 169th.

It was MAJ Sonheim’s duty to help leverage all available means of communication to ensure reliability and redundancy of the links for both voice and digital communications. This was not a simple feat, as keeping the links continuously operational presented challenges.

“My biggest challenge centered on not only establishing these critical links,

but working to keep them operational 24/7 in order to support the ongoing fire missions in Iraq and Syria,” MAJ Sonheim explained. “My brigade NetOps section quickly developed a communications [COMM] status map that provided real time status for each communications terminal across the brigade. This provided both the commander and the operations center with the most up-to-date COMM status at each firing point.”

Thanks to the communications status map, communications links were kept stable. With reliable links, the 169th was able to leverage the network to pass digital fire missions from the brigade to battalions, then down to each of the firing points.

When campaigns to liberate Mosul and Raqqa from ISIS control were in the preparation phase, the brigade anticipated an increased demand for rapid and dynamic fire mission requests. Achieving full digital

system integration of all Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System (AFATDS) fire control terminals became a top priority.

“Through a team effort across the brigade, we were able to establish redundant digital links for all of our AFATDS fire control terminals,” said MAJ Sonheim. “This seamless digital integration drastically improved our fire mission processing redundancy and enabled the brigade to deliver timely and accurate fires to support [combat operations] during the liberation of both Mosul and Raqqa.”

Soldiers of the 169th FAB integrated the HIMARS into multilateral exercises that included an exercise in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and an air and missile defense exercise with Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

As part of Operation Spartan Shield, Soldiers from the 169th participated in Operation Spartan Thunder, a bilateral military-to-military training exercise held



HIMARS is shown during a military-to-military live fire training exercise held outside Amman, Jordan, in May of 2017.

Army National Guard photo by SFC Steven Queen.



at Kuwaiti Land Forces (KLF) Artillery Base, Jahra, Kuwait, that was geared toward strengthening interoperability and expanding joint capabilities. As part of the event, the Colorado Guard Soldiers worked with KLF counterparts to test the processes of their individual fire missions.

“It was a full multi-lateral rehearsal of the battle plan to deter Iranian aggression,” said LTC Seamus Doyle, deputy commander of the 169th. “We integrated the digital and field training exercise with the U.S., Kuwaiti and Emirates forces, and we simulated an engaging target up and down the Arabian Gulf. We were processing fire missions, conducting digital operations, communications operations and dry fire field training with the HIMARS in the field.”

Operation Spartan Thunder helped to further strengthen interoperability between the United States and KLF forces. By using the HIMARS and the KLF’s Soviet Heavy Multiple Rocket Launcher systems, U.S. Forces successfully communicated targets to the KLF for fire missions, while the KLF successfully passed targets back to the United States to process.

When speaking about Operation Spartan Thunder, LTC Doyle noted, “We did our first iteration of rehearsing the battle plan. It’s probably the most important exercise because of the integration with the air and missile defense exercise where we were finally

able to do the full battle plan with our Arab partners.”

He went on to explain, “These operations really serve a purpose to strengthen our partnership with the Arab military. We learn how to bridge the digital gaps, the communication gaps and the language gaps. We learn their techniques, tactics and

procedures in order to bridge those [breaks that occur] naturally from being from different militaries. In terms of operational training, it was important to work alongside our Arab partners because they are a critical part of planning. It is important to learn how to work alongside them before we have to do it for real.”

While the 169th successfully completed their assignments during Operation Inherent Resolve, the mission did not come without challenges.

Communication was an ongoing challenge throughout the brigade’s deployment in the Middle East.

“When you disperse your forces in such a decentralized manner [across multiple countries], it creates communications challenges. That was a day-to-day [struggle],” said COL Davis.

MAJ Herb Guerrero, brigade sustainment officer of the 169th FAB, agreed.

“We had so many locations throughout the area of responsibility. We had an array of forces, and it was challenging because you didn’t have just one unit in your immediate area –

“The fight against ISIS has been the most consuming. We worked with nine different countries’ artilleries to accrue readiness across our forces at the artillery level. It’s what we trained to do our entire [military] careers.”

– COL Robert Davis



As part of Operation Spartan Thunder 2017, Soldiers of the 169th Field Artillery Brigade receive a familiarization brief on the Kuwaiti Land Forces’ Soviet Heavy Multiple Rocket Launcher from Chief Warrant Officer 2 Meshal al-Mutairi, a master gunner with the 22nd Battalion, Kuwaiti Land Forces.

Army National Guard photo by SSG Jeremy Miller.



Soldiers of the 169th Field Artillery Brigade process a call-for-fire from Kuwaiti soldiers of the 22nd Battalion, Kuwaiti Land Forces, during Operation Spartan Thunder.

Army National Guard photo by SSG Jeremy Miller.



you had multiple countries so it had to be a team effort,” he said.

As MAJ Jason Stuchlik of the 169th reflected on the mission, he noted the coordination of airspace as one of the more complex tasks they had to tackle.

“The biggest lesson learned was the airspace approval process and the coordination with host nations,” MAJ Stuchlik said. “When firing in other countries, we had to really develop a good process for fires to happen in a timely manner. It was a very unique experience. It shows how important it is to work together and to help other countries deter threats, and support training in other countries so when we have to fight together, we are ready to protect our forces.”

According to MAJ Sonheim, key to the brigade’s overall successes was the leadership’s ability to very rapidly identify and utilize the strengths of individual team members.

“We collectively learned that you are only as strong as the team you are working with,” said MAJ Sonheim. “Generally, it takes a unit a while to learn how to leverage the collective intellectual energy of the team. But we were able to do this

instinctively to quickly overcome obstacles and constraints. I was very fortunate to be surrounded by an outstanding team who worked every day to improve their positions.”

The work the 169th provided – digitally integrating firing systems and setting standards, processes and procedures for fire missions and air clearance – had a significant effect in the war against ISIS. The resulting benefits of their contributions have carried on to the other units who continue to battle in the fight.

“We made an impact,” said LTC Doyle. “In support of Operation Inherent Resolve, we were really instrumental in supporting our maneuver with fires. In Operation Spartan Shield, we made some improvements there. Where I think we made the biggest impact was doing operational field-type training

with the Emirates and the Kuwaitis. We increased the amount of collective and combined training between ourselves and the Emirate artillery, and we advanced the training and operational integration with both the Emirates and the Kuwaitis.”

MAJ Sonheim added, “The U.S. role is significant and important. It demonstrates our willingness to work with regional partners to defeat terrorist threats and increase regional stability. Knowing that I was part of the U.S.-led coalition task force that helped rid the world of the Islamic State will be something that I will carry with me for [the] rest of my life.” ●

“These operations really serve a purpose to strengthen our partnership with the Arab military. We learn how to bridge the digital gaps, the communication gaps and the language gaps.”

– LTC Seamus Doyle



The High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) shown during a dry fire at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.

Army National Guard photo by SGT Bethany Fehringer.





Soldiers with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) prepare to exit a C-130 Hercules during a night training mission over Muscatatuck, Ind.

Indiana Army National Guard Photo by SSG Jeremiah A. Runser

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## A HISTORY OF WOMEN in the Army National Guard

BY STAFF WRITER  
Tatyana White-Jenkins

*For the past 60 years, women have been making their mark as service members in the Army National Guard. Highlighted below are milestone moments and trailblazing women who have helped shape the history of female Soldiers in the Army National Guard.*



### 1956

President Dwight D. Eisenhower signs a bill allowing women to join the National Guard as officers in the medical field.

### 1960

Four years after the Army National Guard opens the force to women, 56 female medical officers are serving as National Guard members.



### 1957

LT Sylvia Marie St. Charles joins the Alabama National Guard's 109th Evacuation Hospital, becoming the first woman to join the Army National Guard.



### 1967

Women are authorized to join the enlisted ranks of the National Guard. The Guard is now open to female officers and enlisted personnel. According to the National Guard Bureau, women find themselves in combat situations despite being classified as filling combat support positions.

### 1973

After the Army opens flight training school to women, CW3 Diane Dowd of the 143rd Aviation Company, Connecticut Army National Guard, becomes the first female Army National Guard aviator.



# 1978



# 1989

While on a training mission in Panama, PFC Charla Shull of the 1138th Military Police Company, Missouri Army National Guard, becomes the first female National Guard Soldier to come under enemy fire. She goes on to serve in Operation Desert Storm.

# 23,700%

Female membership in the Army National Guard has grown from 56 to 13,353 - that equates to a growth rate of approximately 23,700 percent.

# 1990

During the Gulf War, hundreds of female National Guard members are deployed to Saudi Arabia to support the allied effort to remove Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Of the 34 Guard members who make the ultimate sacrifice during that war, eight are women.

# 1991

Sharon Vander Zyl of the Wisconsin Army National Guard becomes the Army National Guard's first female flag officer when she is promoted to Brigadier General.



# 1997

MG Martha T. Rainville becomes the first woman in the 360-year existence of the National Guard to serve as a State Adjutant General. She commanded 3,800 members of the Vermont Army and Air National Guard.

# 2005

After performing heroic actions in Iraq, SGT Leigh Anne Hester of the 617th Military Police Company, Kentucky Army National Guard, becomes the first female Army National Guard Soldier to be cited for valor in close quarters combat.



# 2016

Following an announcement by Defense Secretary Ash Carter, all military occupations and positions are open to women. For the first time in history, female Soldiers serve with no restrictions on rank or MOS. 2LT Katrina Simpson of the New Hampshire Army National Guard becomes the first female National Guard officer to graduate from the Infantry Basic Officer Leader Course at Fort Benning, Ga.

# 2017

CPT Samantha Domingue of the Washington National Guard becomes the Army's first cavalry-qualified female commander to take charge of a troop.





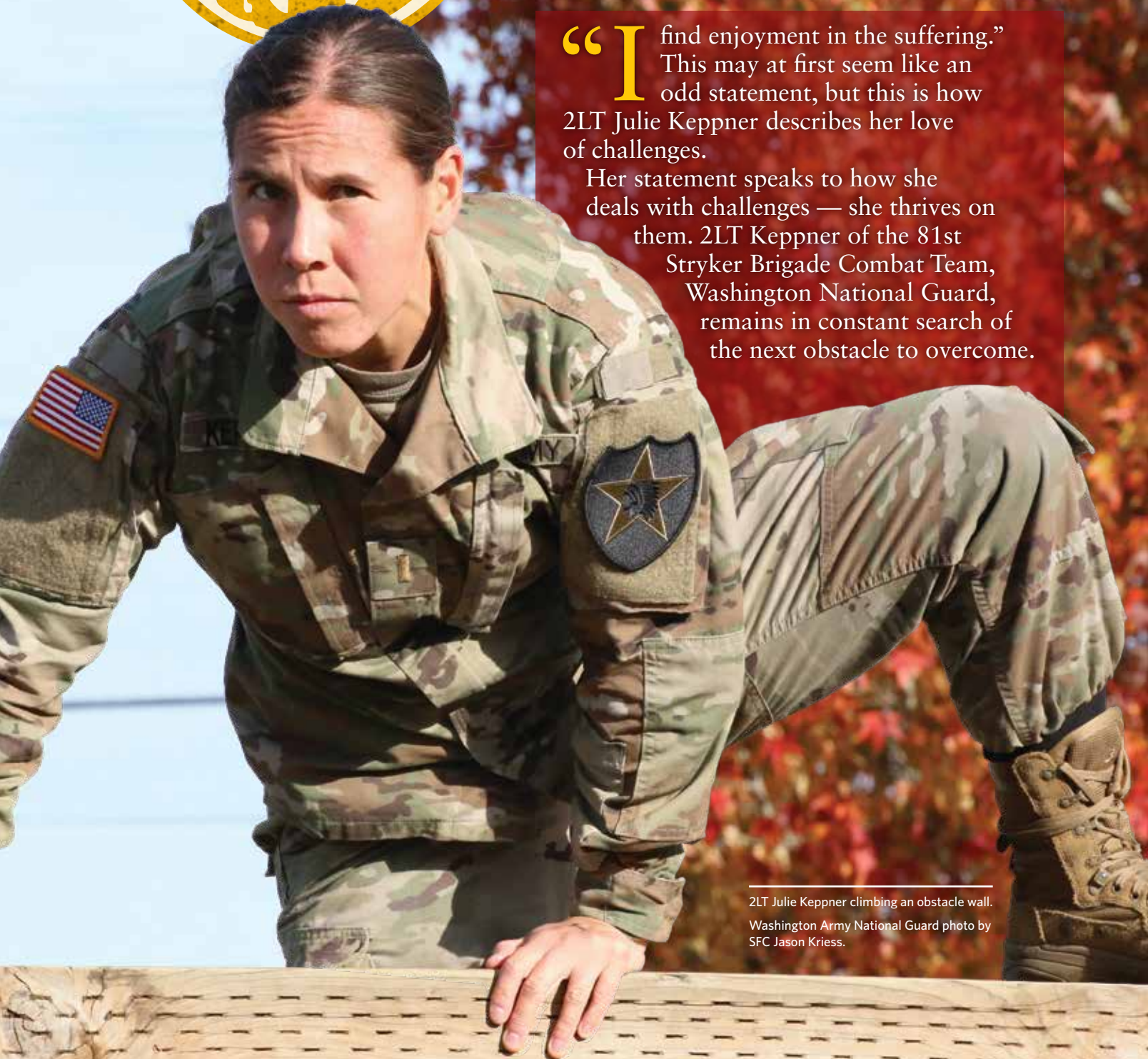


# WASHINGTON NATIONAL GUARD'S SPARTAN WARRIOR

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins


**“I** find enjoyment in the suffering.” This may at first seem like an odd statement, but this is how 2LT Julie Keppner describes her love of challenges.

Her statement speaks to how she deals with challenges — she thrives on them. 2LT Keppner of the 81st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Washington National Guard, remains in constant search of the next obstacle to overcome.



2LT Julie Keppner climbing an obstacle wall.  
Washington Army National Guard photo by  
SFC Jason Kriess.





2LT Keppner completing the Tyrolean Traverse during the Seattle Beast Spartan Race.

Photo courtesy of 2LT Julie Keppner.

Her need to constantly push herself propelled 2LT Keppner not only as she rose through the ranks of the Washington Army National Guard, but also as she completed an astonishing 100 racing competitions – including 50 Spartan Races, seven marathons and 21 half marathons.

Her “no quit” winner’s mindset has earned 2LT Keppner a reputation for being a warrior and a champion.

2LT Keppner’s passion for racing was first sparked before she joined the Army National Guard. It started after a series of actions that had far more to do with being a supportive friend than with being a great athlete. She ran her first half marathon in 2012, after going to California to visit a friend. While there, she learned that her friend was scheduled to run a race and was going to run the race alone. Wanting to support her friend, 2LT Keppner ran the 13.1-mile race without any training.



2LT Keppner jumps over a fire obstacle in the last leg of the Seattle Spartan Super Race.

Photo courtesy of 2LT Julie Keppner.

Her success in that race made her question whether she was capable of even more.

“If I can simply walk on and complete a half marathon without training, what else can I do,” 2LT Keppner said. “That first year I signed up for several half marathons and three obstacle races.”

2LT Keppner ran her first Spartan Race that same year and she quickly gained a love for the taxing competition. The Spartan Race consists of a series of obstacle courses of various lengths. The courses are designed to test participants’ physical and mental toughness. There are a series of different races, including the Spartan Sprint, which ranges from three

to five miles with 20-23 obstacles; a Spartan Super, which is eight miles of rugged terrain with 25 or more obstacles; a Spartan Beast, which is at least 12 miles and includes more than 30 obstacles; and the Spartan Ultra Beast, which is more than 26 miles and has at least 60 obstacles.

Of the 50 Spartan races 2LT Keppner has completed, three have been Beasts and another three have been Ultra Beasts.

“After my first Spartan Race, I was hooked and wanted to continue racing harder and longer events,” 2LT Keppner said.

She kept looking for ways to challenge herself. She added a ruck sack when running half marathons, and completed multiple races a day. She began running back-to-back races in a single weekend, then increased that to running back-to-back races on back-to-back weekends. Eventually, she was running the equivalent of about 50 miles of course per weekend. 2LT Keppner has now traveled the country racing. She has competed in three Spartan Race World Championships.

“My favorite thing about the races is that they are all different and they are all challenging,” 2LT Keppner explained. “Each time I race an event, I learn something new about myself. I am motivated by self-improvement and personal development,” she went on to say. “I find that being willing to discover weaknesses and being open to making personal changes keep me motivated to test my abilities and gain new knowledge.”

Always inspired to share her uniquely strong drive with others, 2LT Keppner works as a fitness coach at her business, Believe Achieve Fitness.

“I find that I am motivated by helping others and [encouraging] them to try and do more,” 2LT Keppner noted. “As I started to believe that I was capable of doing more, I felt that I could achieve more. I wanted to help others discover their own abilities. I like seeing others succeed.”

It was because of her physical fitness business that 2LT Keppner began to consider a career in the military. Before joining the Washington Army National Guard, 2LT Keppner volunteered a portion of her professional time working with the Marine Corps. She worked as a fitness instructor preparing “poolees”—potential recruits who are fully signed up, but are awaiting being sent to boot camp for the grueling rigors of recruit training.

2LT Keppner said that she saw similarities between the military lifestyle and the way she wanted to live her own life. She saw that the military pushes people to be the best version of themselves and she wanted to be a part of that.

“Joining the military had been a long-time dream of mine, and I didn’t want to regret not joining,” 2LT Keppner said.

But with two young children at home and a business to



run, she had a lot to consider when deciding to join. “I looked at the Marines, but I was too old for them. I considered the Air Force and the Navy, but I chose the Washington National Guard because it is flexible. I can live in Washington with my kids, run my business, [have] the option of a civilian career, and have a military career at the same [time].”

2LT Keppner enlisted in the Washington Army National Guard in December of 2013. Wanting to continue on her path of helping and encouraging others, soon after enlisting she chose to apply for Officer Candidate School (OCS).

“I chose the officer route because as an officer, I could have a large base of people that I can inspire and influence,” 2LT Keppner explained.

Ironically, 2LT Keppner now has the potential to become Washington’s first female infantry officer, which was not an initial goal for her.

In 2014, while in OCS, 2LT Keppner completed the Temecula Spartan Race, held in Temecula, Calif. She ran the race to support one of her Believe Achieve Fitness clients. While the race is typically held in January, that year it was held in September when temperatures exceeded 100 degrees. The race was overwhelming to many participants who

were not prepared for the harsh temperatures.

“It was so hot that people started experiencing heat exhaustion and heat stroke. They didn’t have food, didn’t have water,” 2LT Keppner said.

For eight straight hours, 2LT Keppner treated racers by bringing them up and down the side of a mountain to safety, and to food and water. She posted about her experience on Facebook. The sergeant major of OCS read her post and reached out to her.

“He contacted me on Facebook and asked me if I wanted to go to Ranger School,” said 2LT Keppner. “He said that I demonstrated a lot of the qualities and abilities of what it takes to be a Ranger.”

When 2LT Keppner first enlisted, the DoD was still reviewing the initiative to open combat arms occupations to female service members. By this point, the DoD had come to a decision and had opened the occupations – which included infantry, special forces and Rangers – to women. 2LT Keppner set her sights on becoming a Ranger. Since an MOS is required before going to Ranger School, she left OCS to get an MOS as a Motor Transport

Operator. Unfortunately, due to an unforeseen funding problem, 2LT Keppner was unable to attend the first class of female Ranger School candidates. However, never settling for defeat, she pushed on to the next promising opportunity.

2LT Keppner had missed that year’s deadline to apply for OCS, which meant she’d have to wait until the next year to re-apply. Wanting to keep her options open, she attended a career fair while waiting to re-enter OCS. At the fair, 2LT Keppner learned that female infantry officers were in high demand. One of the stipulations for lower enlisted women to integrate into combat arms, however, is that before they can start filling the infantry ranks, a qualified female Soldier with a rank of sergeant or above must be appointed to a leadership position.

“The Guard was standing up a new infantry battalion and needed [female] infantry officers,” 2LT Keppner said. She agreed to join, but said she negotiated a stipulation, saying, “As long as you send me to Ranger School.”

**“I find that  
being willing to  
discover weaknesses  
and being open to making  
personal changes keep  
me motivated to test  
my abilities and gain  
new knowledge.”**

**– 2LT Julie Keppner**



2LT Keppner competes in the Seattle Spartan Super Race with her 14-year-old daughter Hannah.

Photo courtesy of 2LT Julie Keppner.



Once she completes the Infantry Basic Officer Leader Course (IBOLC) this April at Fort Benning, Ga. 2LT Keppner will go on to the Ranger Training Assessment Course. Following that, she hopes to attend Ranger School, also at Fort Benning. After she completes IBOLC and is fully branch-qualified, 2LT Keppner will become Washington's first female Infantry Officer, a potential honor that 2LT Keppner affirms she does not take lightly.

"It's a large responsibility having people look to you to pave the way," said 2LT Keppner. "Learning what it means to be an Infantry Officer comes first, as I will lead men into combat. I take it seriously. I know when I graduate, I will have people looking to me to get them ready for IBOLC and Ranger School. I am looking forward to helping others achieve their own goals and aspirations."

2LT Keppner attributes her success in the Army National Guard, and in racing, to her focus and her ability to attack any challenge that is placed in front of her.

"Obstacle racing and the military have helped with always looking forward and [keeping a] vision of where I want to go," 2LT Keppner said. "I attack my military career just like I attack a Spartan Race – I focus on the next immediate task, get past it, and then it's on to the next one." ●



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2LT Keppner trains on a ropes obstacle.

Washington Army National Guard photo by  
SFC Jason Kriess.



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# A March in Memoriam

*Kentucky Soldiers Hold Inaugural Memorial Event with Mountain Warrior Ruck March*

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

Soldiers of the Kentucky Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry, held the Inaugural Mountain Warrior Memorial Ruck March this past December. It was a three-day, 202-mile cumulative ruck march that brought together over 250 Soldiers from the 1/149th to honor the battalion's former commander.

"It's one of those things that is part of

our identity," said MAJ Jason Mendez, Operations Officer of the 1/149th Infantry. "Infantry Soldiers ruck a lot. They road march. We were looking for an opportunity, as a team-building event, to do an armory-to-armory ruck march. It gained a lot of traction when we recognized that this could be a memorial event."

The unit, known as the Mountain

Warriors, put together the ruck march in honor of LTC Jeff Cole, the former commander of the infantry battalion who passed away from cancer in 2015. The march allowed Soldiers to turn their December drill into an exciting community event that paid tribute to LTC Cole.

"We are really proud about not only who he was in uniform, but also how he fought the fight of battling cancer,"





Kentucky Army National Guard Soldiers finish up the last leg of the Mountain Warrior Memorial Ruck March in Middlesboro, Ky.

Kentucky Army National Guard photo by Stacy Floden.

MAJ Mendez explained. “It can be [inspiring] to find leaders who show that level of character, integrity and personal courage.”

The traits described by MAJ Mendez were apparent to those who knew LTC Cole. In LTC Cole’s blog, *These Are the Good Old Days*, he documented his journey through his battle with cancer. His explanation for his choice of blog title gave

insight to his character and positive outlook on his diagnosis.

“Why would someone who just found out that he has leukemia think these are the good ol’ days? Easy answer: It’s a matter of choice,” LTC Cole explained in his first blog post. “No matter what a disease does to one’s body, it cannot take away the power to choose.

Despite the cancer, I am a blessed man with an incredible Family.”

When plans began moving forward to honor the lieutenant colonel with the ruck march, interest in the event swelled among Soldiers.

“I think for those who knew LTC Cole, it was a no brainer,” said MAJ Mendez. “It’s one of those things that you can absolutely get behind. It’s really easy after knowing his service to this battalion and what he meant to other Soldiers, both

officers and enlisted. [The march] was a memorial for a very special Soldier and his Family.”

Christi Cole, LTC Cole’s widow, attended several segments of the march throughout the weekend. She believes LTC Cole would have been extremely pleased and grateful to know his battalion was conducting the march in his honor.

“Jeff would be honored, and completely blown away that [the Guard] would want to do something this huge,” she said.

Planning for the march began last summer after the idea for the event was spurred by MAJ Mendez and 1/149th Battalion Commander LTC Eddie Simpson. The planning process

fostered collaboration amongst Soldiers who knew LTC Cole and those who had only recently learned about his impact on the battalion.



The Huron, Apache and Dakota Companies, Kentucky Army National Guard, complete the flag casing ceremony in Pineville State Park as part of the Mountain Warrior Memorial Ruck March.

Photo courtesy of Kentucky Army National Guard.







Kentucky Army National Guard Soldiers await the commencement of the Mountain Warrior Memorial Ruck March.

Kentucky Army National Guard photo by Stacy Floden.

“I’ve had great opportunities to talk with and receive feedback from Soldiers,” MAJ Mendez said. “When we were in the planning phase, there was a young Soldier who never knew LTC Cole, but when he realized what we were trying to accomplish, he wanted to be a part of the conversation. He wanted to contribute and share ideas on how we could elevate this opportunity.”

SGT Jordy Brewer said that despite not knowing LTC Cole personally, it was important for him to contribute to the march.

“I have always heard people say how great of a man he was. It is always an honor to [give tribute to] a veteran,” said SGT Brewer.

The march began on Friday, Dec. 1, 2017, with an opening ceremony that included a flag folding presentation by the color guard.

“We attached the flag to a ruck sack and that ruck went the full 202 miles hitting every armory in our battalion,” said CPT Michael Moynahan, who was part of the ruck march planning committee.

On Sunday, Dec. 3, the flag was presented to LTC Cole’s Family during the closing ceremony.

“The holiday season has been especially hard for me and this weekend has been a really bright spot,” said Christi Cole. “The idea that the Guard would conceive of something like this was amazing to me. Just seeing these guys remember Jeff and his legacy – it’s just really powerful.”

In addition to honoring LTC Cole, the battalion also wanted to use the march as an opportunity to engage with the local community.

“Our goal with this event, in addition to giving back to a fallen Soldier, was to provide the communities our armories reside in with the opportunity to see our Soldiers performing military tasks,” said LTC Simpson.

“Instead of marching directly to our training areas and military installations, we wanted a community-oriented event,” explained CPT Moynahan. “What better way than to do the ruck march out in the community, walking through the different cities. Our battalion is based out of eastern Kentucky, and we have six armories that we connected by the ruck march.”

Seven companies, consisting of over 250 Soldiers, participated in the event.



Soldiers ruck their way through downtown London, Ky., as they make their way to Middlesboro, Ky., where the memorial march would conclude.

Photo courtesy of Kentucky Army National Guard.





COL Bryan Howay of the Kentucky Army National Guard presents Christi Cole with the memorial flag that was carried throughout the 202-mile Mountain Warrior Memorial Ruck March.

Kentucky Army National Guard photo by Stacy Floden.

The ruck sack march was separated into six segments with each company marching a different segment. Charlie Company marched from Ravenna to Mt. Vernon. Bravo Company marched from Mt. Vernon to Somerset to London. The Forward Support Company marched from London to Barbourville. Headquarters and Headquarters Company marched from Barbourville to Pineville. Alpha Company marched from Harlan to Pineville. And Delta Company marched from Pineville to Middlesboro.

The companies marched in teams of five to 12 Soldiers at a time, and swapped out marchers every four miles. Throughout the march, which took approximately 51 hours to complete, community residents lined the streets to show their support for the marching Soldiers. Local citizens and Family members participated in the last 1.5 miles of the march, going into Middlesboro.

“We want to be visible and be involved [with residents] because we ultimately work for the community and the citizens,” CPT Moynahan said. “I think the community engagement has been really great and we’re appreciative of any opportunity we can use to expand on the public’s awareness of what we do.”

MAJ Mendez shared that being a part of the march was, on a personal level, especially meaningful to him.

“It’s been great and very rewarding,” said MAJ Mendez. “I had a personal relationship with LTC Cole, having deployed with him twice. It had a very special meaning for me. But aside from that, it

was neat to see our Soldiers come together and pull off this event, going over 202 miles for 51 straight hours. I’m very thankful for it.”

While most Soldiers involved in the event participated by marching, there was also a great number of Soldiers who took part in other ways, like helping with logistical support or driving the buses that took Soldiers to and from the march start and finish points. It was an event that many wanted to participate in, whether they were an active part of the battalion or not.

“We had one Soldier who came out who had previously been with the unit and recently retired,” MAJ Mendez said. “He came back, joined his company and he rucked alongside them for almost 50 miles just to get out there with his old unit [in support of] a great cause.”

The march also required support from the Kentucky State Police and the State Department of Transportation. Both organizations assisted with city permits and traffic control as the Soldiers marched through the city streets.

Reflecting on the success of the ruck march and the level of support it garnered, the leaders of the 1/149th have plans of holding similar events in the future.

“I think we will continue with memorial-style events that connect us with Soldiers who have passed and the contributions of their Families,” MAJ Mendez said. “We want to carry on with not only honoring Soldiers that have served, but also with connecting with our local communities as Guard Soldiers.” ●

**“Jeff would be honored, and completely blown away that [the Guard] would want to do something this huge.”**

– Christi Cole





# A UKRAINIAN RHAPSODY

## ***Oklahoma Army National Guard Helps Ukrainian Soldiers Become a Lethal Fighting Force***

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

Oklahoma Army National Guard photos by SGT Anthony Jones

**T**he recent deployment of the 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), Oklahoma Army National Guard, was a little like a plot from the popular HBO series “Game of Thrones”: ample amounts of fire and ice. There was fire – not dragon fire, but instead brave Oklahoma Soldiers saving Ukrainians from an apartment fire. And there was ice – not from the dreaded White Walker characters that have gained huge notoriety on the show, but from an epic spontaneous snowball fight that helped forge a bond between the members of two armies.

Ironically, neither of these two unexpected events was a part of the 45th IBCT’s main mission in Ukraine.

The U.S. Soldiers were there to train Ukrainian soldiers in combat defense. The 45th was deployed to Western Ukraine as part of Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine (JMTG-U). The goal of JMTG-U, which falls under the 7th Army Training Command and U.S. Army Europe, is to help build the Ukrainian military into a modern and capable fighting force that can bring – and sustain – stability in the region.

The 11-month Oklahoma Army National Guard deployment was made up of two rotations. The first rotation was manned by Soldiers from the 179th Infantry Regiment, and took place between January and June of 2017. The second rotation sent the Soldiers of the 279th Infantry Regiment between June and

November of 2017. All totaled, the mission included 500 Oklahoma Army National Guard Soldiers – with 250 Soldiers in each rotation.

Slated to run through 2020, JMTG-U is a U.S.-led partnership between the United States, Ukraine, Canada, Lithuania, Poland, Denmark and the United Kingdom. The active duty Soldiers of the 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd IBCT based out of Fort Stewart, Ga., preceded the Oklahoma Army National Guard in support of the mission. They helped start development of the then-new Yavoriv Combat Training Center (CTC).

The 45th IBCT took over where the 2nd IBCT left off, and the Guard took things to the next level. In an interview with the Oklahoma-based news outlet



NewsOK, LTG Ben Hodges, commanding general of U.S. Army Europe, said that although the training center has been in development for three years, the largest gains came under the leadership of the Oklahoma National Guard.

The intent of JMTG-U is to model the Yavoriv CTC after three top U.S. Army training facilities – the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La.; the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.; and the Seventh Army Training Center in Grafenwoehr, Germany – bringing similar training capabilities to the Ukrainian military.

“Eventually, we’ll work ourselves out of a job and Ukrainians will be able to train themselves and prepare their own units,” LTG Hodges said.

Working with Ukrainian soldiers in 55-day rotations during their year at the Yavoriv CTC, the 45th IBCT trained four battalions – each comprised of approximately 500 Ukrainian soldiers.

MSG Michael Slocter, the 45th’s operations NCO, said that while this was his fourth deployment, the Ukraine mission presented him with challenges that were unique from his other deployments.

“In October of 2016 they told me I was going to Ukraine,” MSG Slocter recalled. “I did a lot more research into the background of where Ukraine came from and how they’ve created their army from the old Soviet mindset.

“It was an eye-opening experience because we were essentially learning how to establish a training center for an entire military – [something] that we take for granted over here all the time with our combat training centers.”

Unlike MSG Slocter, for many Guard Soldiers in the 45th, the mission to Ukraine was their first deployment. That included CPT Kayla Christopher, the Oklahoma Army National Guard Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment commander on the mission.

“I was very nervous before I went, but I would say it was maybe one of the most rewarding years of my life,” said CPT Christopher. “It was a great experience and it was wonderful to see that the soldiers were really motivated to learn and [genuinely] happy that we were there.

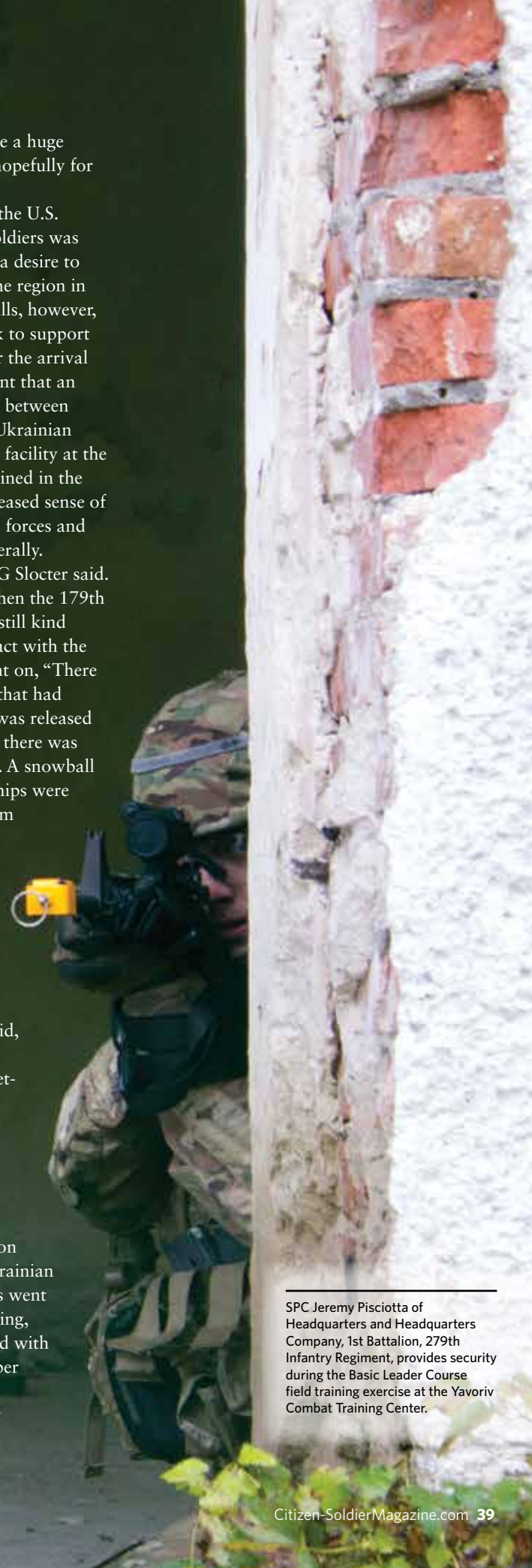
I really do think that we made a huge difference in their lives, and hopefully for their country.”

The relationship between the U.S. Soldiers and the Ukrainian soldiers was based on mutual respect and a desire to support the stabilization of the region in and around Ukraine. Snowballs, however, respect no one and only work to support snowmen. It was shortly after the arrival of the 179th Infantry Regiment that an epic snowball fight broke out between American Soldiers and their Ukrainian counterparts outside a dining facility at the CTC. Around 200 Soldiers joined in the melee that resulted in an increased sense of camaraderie between the two forces and helped break the ice, quite literally.

“I heard all about it,” MSG Slocter said. “It was in the early phases when the 179th was on the ground. We were still kind of on edge with how to interact with the Ukrainians. MSG Slocter went on, “There was a large amount of snow that had fallen. Somehow a snowball was released and the next thing you knew, there was another one and another one. A snowball firefight happened. Relationships were built that day and it went from there.”

But the mission was not all fun and games. On the contrary, much work remained to be done and the 45th got to it. The U.S. Soldiers trained the Ukrainians on everything from trench cutting, to first-aid, to marksmanship, to proper techniques for handling rocket-propelled grenades. The majority of the training was for the Ukrainian soldiers who would eventually serve as training instructors. The Soldiers of the 45th IBCT mentored the future trainers on best practices for training Ukrainian troops. When Ukrainian units went out for field maneuvers’ training, the U.S. Soldiers would embed with the units to demonstrate proper techniques and processes.

“I think one of the biggest challenges was building a



SPC Jeremy Pisciotta of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry Regiment, provides security during the Basic Leader Course field training exercise at the Yavoriv Combat Training Center.





professional opposing force,” CPT Christopher said. “When we got there, there was little more than a company-sized element of Ukrainian soldiers and they weren’t really being utilized to their fullest extent. We built them up to a battalion-sized element complete with a tank company, two different mechanized companies and a medical platoon. We got them to a point where they were capable of fighting their brigade-sized training element.”

For the Soldiers of the 45th, underlying every training event was the knowledge that the quality of the training they provided would have an immediate and very real impact on the lives of the Ukrainian soldiers and thus, on the safety of the Ukrainian nation. Once the Ukrainian troops completed their training with the Oklahoma

Army National Guard, many of them immediately returned to fight the Ukrainian conflict at the Eastern front of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO). The Ukrainian government has been combating a Russian-backed separatist movement on its Eastern border for several years.

“Once they were finished with our 55-day rotation, they basically had 15 days and then they were back in the ATO,” MSG Slocter said.

“It was a [huge responsibility],” noted CPT Christopher. “I knew that some of [the soldiers] would end up going to the front line.”

CPT Christopher said she found solace in one fact. “I felt like the training that we provided served them well. If they did have to go and fight on the border, they were well prepared,” she said.

While Ukrainian soldiers were very aware of how diligently the U.S. combat team was working in support of the effort to defend and protect Ukraine, local Ukrainian citizens did not have much opportunity to see the commitment of the Oklahoma Guard Soldiers in action.

That all changed after citizens saw

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**LEFT:** SPC Aaron Moore 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, demonstrates how to properly check a patient’s breathing during a combat lifesaver course at the Yavoriv Combat Training Center.

**BELOW:** Soldiers of the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team stack and enter a building during the field training portion of a basic leader course at the Yavoriv Combat Training Center.





the brave actions of a small group of Oklahoma Guard Soldiers.

While out on leave one weekend, six 45th IBCT Soldiers demonstrated to all of Ukraine what it means to be always ready, always there. SGT Matthew Odom, SGT Nelson Deese, SPC Vincent Humerickhouse, SPC Kellar Jackson, SPC Aaron Moore and PFC Kevin Polk were visiting Lviv, Ukraine, on July 16, 2017. Known as the “Little Paris of Ukraine,” Lviv is one of the country’s main cultural centers. The group of U.S. Soldiers was there sightseeing and souvenir shopping when they saw smoke coming from a nearby street. Their Guard training instinctively sent them into immediate action. They ran to check things out and, upon arriving, saw an apartment building was on fire. The Soldiers immediately questioned the crowd to make certain no one was still inside the burning building. Most there only spoke Ukrainian, but the Soldiers kept asking until, finally, they found someone who spoke English and informed them that there were in fact people trapped in the building.

The six ran in and began banging on doors and pulling people out. As the building lacked fire alarms, many of the residents were unaware the building was on fire.

“Those six Soldiers were presented a medal by the Ukrainian president,” CPT Christopher said.

“It actually was one of my Soldiers, SGT Odom, who ran into the fire with five others,” MSG Slocter said. “[It’s the] way we are – the way the National Guard is geared. We see something and we react.”

Widespread press coverage resulted from the incident, and the heroic six Soldiers found themselves in the national spotlight. “As the

deployment carried on, a general or a senator, an ambassador – whoever it was – would come up and say, ‘Where are your firefighters?’” recalled MSG Slocter. “They were our team of celebrities.”

***“He said that the only reason he was alive was because he learned how to apply self-aid ... during their training. He said if he had not gone through the training, he didn’t think he would be alive.”***

– CPT Kayla Christopher

The media commotion eventually subsided, but the mission was always fully in focus for the members of the 45th IBCT. The duties of their work remained front and center. According to CPT Christopher, they knew firsthand just how important this mission really was.

“One of the very first things that we did [when we arrived in Ukraine] was visit a local hospital,” CPT Christopher recalled. “While we were there, we ran

into a soldier who had been wounded in the ATO. He told us he had come to our training [while the 179th Infantry Regiment was on the ground]. He said that the only reason he was alive was because

he learned how to apply self-aid, and the soldiers in his unit learned how to apply buddy-aid during their training. He said if he had not gone through the training, he didn’t think he would be alive. He credited us for doing that. It felt like we were really making a difference in the army and in the lives of their citizens.”

The Army National Guard’s mission in Ukraine continues, although the 45th’s deployment has ended. The New York Army National Guard’s 27th IBCT has taken over where the

Oklahoma Guard Soldiers left off.

As for the Oklahoma Army National Guard, perhaps MSG Slocter puts it best.

“For the 45th – definitely mission accomplished,” he said. “We were brought over to mentor and establish the combat training center – to make their instructors better and give them confidence. By the time that we left, I could definitely see the change [we influenced].” ●



Observer Coach Trainers from the Yavoriv Combat Training Center, along with mentors from the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, lead a live fire training exercise for soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 95th Separate Airmobile Brigade during the battalion’s rotation through the Yavoriv CTC.

Oklahoma Army National Guard, photo by SSG Eric McDonough.



## VIRTUAL WARFARE MADE REAL

# OPERATION OVERMATCH

### *Takes Prototype Testing in a New Direction*

BY STAFF WRITER Liam Griffin

Images courtesy of U.S. Army Capabilities  
Integration Center (ARCIC) and  
the Army Game Studio.

**T**he world is moving into the future, and the U.S. Army is on the cutting edge of that transition. In this modern world of unmanned aircraft, virtual reality and self-sustaining diagnostics, the practical implementations of new technologies have already begun to change our world – and our military – for the better. A fine example of one such modern technology is Operation Overmatch. Designed to provide a safer environment for U.S. Soldiers to test new equipment, techniques and strategies, Operation Overmatch offers the benefits of in-field testing, but in a low-risk, low-cost environment.

The video games of 2018 are a far cry from the pixelated screens of the past. Gaming is now a valuable medium for both creators and consumers to test the limits of their imaginations. From the high-definition graphics of the stereotypical video game console, to the next-level immersion of virtual reality gaming, video games are no longer just a form of entertainment. Gaming is now a way for companies to train employees, and for educators to teach children.



Operation Overmatch is an embodiment of this vanguard application of video games. It is a video game, but that label alone is somewhat reductive. It is more than a game – it is a tool.

Developed by the U.S. Army Capabilities Integration Center (ARCIC) and the Army Game Studio, the Overmatch gaming system uses Early Synthetic Prototyping (ESP) – the process of utilizing game environments to gauge new designs and concepts early in the acquisition cycle. Overmatch could be used to test anything from vehicles, to equipment, to mission strategies.

From a safety standpoint, testing in a gaming environment is a vast improvement over in-the-field testing sessions. While uncommon, testing casualties sometimes occur. By testing in the Operation Overmatch environment, Soldiers are safer than ever before, and preventable casualties are avoided entirely. Since safety is not a concern, players have the opportunity to take in-game risks, and experiment with new techniques and approaches that they may not otherwise be willing – or allowed – to take.

The inherent cost associated with developing new technologies and equipment could be dramatically impacted thanks to these virtual environments. Now, when a prototype is designed, it can be tested in a video game before huge resources are spent on what may be an impractical and hence, quickly outmoded prototype.

Soldiers can test prototypes in Operation Overmatch, and instantaneously communicate their questions, comments and concerns.

A level of speed is also to be gained through the use of virtual testing environments. As an ESP is created, it can be fielded to Soldiers for testing in Operation Overmatch in a matter of days versus the months or even years required for traditional prototyping. Then, as Soldiers test the ESP, feedback is provided in real time, allowing changes and adaptations to be made by developers almost immediately. The time it takes for prototypes to get from the development stage to Soldiers for testing, and the time it takes for testing feedback to get from Soldiers to the prototype developer, is decreased exponentially. This new technology allows communications to flow back and forth faster than ever.

In his speech at the Association of the U.S. Army's annual conference last October, MG Bo Dyess, acting director of ARCIC, said that the Army wanted



to leverage the time Soldiers already spend playing games like *World of Warcraft* and *Call of Duty*. Since gaming is already regularly used in Soldier training, the Army decided to create a gaming environment where Soldiers could test equipment on a complex virtual battlefield and provide real-time feedback on the experience, he said.

Operation Overmatch went into beta testing in October of 2017, and Soldiers are encouraged to sign up as beta users on the system's website at [www.OperationOvermatch.com](http://www.OperationOvermatch.com).

The game is formatted for two teams of eight Soldiers each to compete against each other. "Soldiers want to win, and they will inherently innovate to gain an advantage over other players," said LTC Brian Vogt, ARCIC's early synthetic prototyping project lead, when explaining the game's competitive design in an interview held last year. "Competition raises the level of participation and engagement in game environments," he said.

The beta version of the system currently offers a limited number of offensive and defensive scenarios that are set in urban environments. According to LTC Vogt, the game's developers plan to expand the number of offered scenarios, and additional settings including deserts and wooded areas will be added. LTC Vogt also said that the vehicles and equipment featured in the system – which include an unmanned ground combat vehicle, miniature unmanned aerial vehicles and a mobile protected firepower vehicle – are near-term emerging capabilities.

As stated on the Operation Overmatch website, "Innovation comes by experimentation." Truly, no system or tool has been better suited to diverse experimentation than this gaming system. Soldiers could have more involvement and influence with new technologies than ever before. Every day, the U.S. Army is improving and refining, and Operation Overmatch could be a tool that will help set the Army's accelerated pace into the future of prototyping. ●



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\*Soldiers joining the Chaplain Corps as ordained ministers can earn a commission within weeks. Those who join prior to ordination will enter as chaplain candidates.

CPT Ronaldo Pascua (center), chaplain for Task Force Guam, prays with deployed Soldiers at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Army National Guard photo by SGT Eddie Siguenza.



# Beating the Enemy to the Punch

**New Targeting System Gives Forward Observers a Decided In-Field Advantage**

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

Program Executive Officer Soldier photos by Kyle Olson

**T**he Army's newest laser targeting system promises to change the landscape of field artillery missions for the better. Offering greater precision and increased response times over previous targeting systems, the new Joint Effects Targeting System, or JETS, will enable field artillery Soldiers to engage the enemy with a new level of speed and agility.

According to the Army Acquisition Support Center, JETS is a one-man-portable, hand-held targeting system that is designed to rapidly acquire, accurately locate and engage targets using precision-guided munitions, and improve the effectiveness of engagement with unguided munitions. It is comprised of a modular advanced sensor suite consisting of a hand-held target location module, a precision angle module and a laser marker module. Collectively, these elements provide the forward observer with capabilities not available through any currently fielded targeting system.

"Its brand new, cutting-edge technology that is a paradigm shift in how Field Artillery is employed across the battlespace," said LTC Michael Frank, Product Manager of Soldier Precision Targeting Devices at Program Executive Office (PEO) Soldier, the Army's equipment development management group. "With JETS, I turn [an M777A2] howitzer or a Paladin into a giant sniper rifle. I'm dropping that round, with first-round effects, on target."

According to JETS developers at PEO Soldier, JETS promises to cut the field artillery targeting time by up to 20 minutes.

"Standoff doesn't just mean range anymore," LTC Frank said. "It means time. We can get kinetic effects on a target, and we don't have to take anywhere from 15 to 20 minutes to go through

[calculations]. We can get that target data to the guns and rounds out of the tube faster with JETS."

Expectations are set high for JETS. According to CPT Eric Munn, JETS assistant product manager, "JETS will revolutionize how the Field Artillery conducts precision fire missions. A hand-held, stand-alone, true precision targeting device that is fielded to every Forward Observer team will increase the agility and lethality of Field Artillery as a whole."

To ensure the Army's self-imposed set of high expectations are being met, PEO Soldier, along with the U.S. Army Operational Test Command (USAOTC) – the Army's only independent operational tester – took JETS through a battery of meticulous in-field testing.

For nearly two weeks in August of 2017, JETS underwent a limited user test with six teams of forward observers and data collectors from the 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade, based out of Fort Wainwright, Alaska. The testing took place atop mountains in the rugged landscape near

Soldiers from the 1st Stryker Brigade's 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment, test the Joint Effects Targeting System at the Cold Region Test Center, Fort Greely, Alaska.





A forward observer from the 8th Field Artillery Regiment puts the Joint Effects Targeting System through its paces during a limited user field test.

Fort Greely, Alaska. Here, Soldiers picked out targets and called in data acquired through JETS.

During the testing, Soldiers have ample opportunity to experiment with all of the functions on the new targeting system. “We’d take it up there and use it all day long,” said SPC Israel Wallace, FO, Delta Battery, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment. “We’d shoot grids, see if we could find anything wrong with it — see how long the batteries lasted, you name it.” SPC Wallace went on to add, “If I was running around up in the mountains, constantly moving, setting up hasty [observation posts], I would take the JETS over the LLDR [Lightweight Laser Designator Rangefinder] any day.”

JETS is noted to be significantly improved over previous targeting systems. It has a reduced weight when compared to the LLDR and increased capability when compared to the Vector 21 Laser Target Locator (LTL).

The new system is built by BAE Systems and DRS Technologies and comes in just over five pounds. That’s pretty impressive when compared to the LLDR, which is crew-served and weighs just under 35 pounds. The LTL compares a little better to the JETS. It too is around

five pounds, and its target identification range is 4.2 kilometers in the daytime and up to five kilometers at night, while JETS is just 2.5 kilometers during the day and one at night.

But JETS has other advantages. It allows target engagement with precision munitions and allows digital connectivity to request and control indirect fires and close air support from all Joint assets, thereby allowing small units that are supported by forward observers to have access to precision targeting in any operational situation.

While the user test was designed to measure the system’s consistency, reliability and ease of use, it wasn’t designed to test JETS’ in-field durability. That will become more apparent when the system undergoes its initial operational test and evaluation (IOT&E) scheduled for early February 2018.

The IOT&E will place JETS in the hands of Soldiers once again as they put it through its paces, ensuring its readiness for full use before deployment and subsequent live fire.

Repeat testing may seem tedious, but it is critical to discovering a new system’s notable attributes, as well as those that may still require tweaking. Ultimately, any piece of equipment is only as good as its practicality when used by Soldiers on the ground.

“One of the most important parts of these tests is determining how suitable JETS is for the Soldier and what we need to fix prior to fielding these systems to the Army,” explained CPT Munn. “The Soldier is the ultimate customer and we have to ensure that they can employ the system effectively and reliably.”

Though the IOT&E has yet to be completed, CPT Munn noted his already-firm confidence in the overall ability of JETS. “Our goal in the acquisition community is to increase our Soldiers’ survivability and ability to win on the battlefield,” he said. “The JETS system accomplishes both tasks by giving the forward observer time and space to defeat enemies on the battlefield.”

JETS is expected to be fielded to Soldiers between July and September of this year. ●



The Joint Effects Targeting System (JETS), at less than 5.5 pounds, weighs less than half of the Lightweight Laser Designator Rangefinder and offers greater precision than the Vector 21 Laser Target Locator.





# SHINING A LIGHT ON SAFETY

## Michigan Army National Guard Conducts Emergency Management Exercise

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins  
Michigan National Guard photos by Scott Martzke

Life safety, incident stabilization and property conservation. According to Scott Martzke, the Michigan National Guard emergency management program coordinator, these are the core rules of on-the-water emergency management. They were rules that Michigan Army National Guard's 51st Civil Support Team, along with partner organizations, would put into action during the 2017 Operation Shining Star (OSS) emergency operations training exercise.

OSS was coordinated by the 51st Civil Support Team and held in the Straits of Mackinac – a series of narrow waterways and a major shipping lane – located between Michigan's Upper and Lower Peninsulas that connect Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. Each year, there are roughly 4.5 million crossings of the Straits of Mackinac, either by ferry or over the Mackinac Bridge.

OSS simulated a fictional scenario of a suspected radiological contamination on a ferry traveling across the Straits.

"If you have an emergency on a boat, the worst thing you can do is bring that into a populated area," said Martzke. "If you can keep



Soldiers from the 1437th Multi-Role Bridge Company guide an ambulance and crew from the 51st Civil Support Team to a designated area before maneuvering the 130-foot ribbon bridge into the waters of the Straits of Mackinac.



“The thousands of people that come to Mackinac Island every year depend upon us being ready in case of an emergency, and the only way that we are ready is if we work together.”

— Sheriff Scott Strait

that [emergency] out on the water, you are minimizing the impact on local communities.”

To ensure the training encompassed all elements that would likely be involved in an emergency of this type, the 51st partnered with Michigan Army National Guard's 1437th Multi-Role Bridge Company, Ohio National Guard's 52nd Civil Support Team, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Department of Energy. Including the necessary State and local government agencies in the training, the 51st also partnered with the Mackinac County Sheriff's Department, the Mackinac

County Emergency Management Department, the Mackinac Marine Response Team, the Michigan State Police Marine Services Team (formerly the Underwater Recovery Unit), the Chippewa

Central Dispatch and several other State emergency management officers. Shepler's Mackinac Island Ferry, a civilian-operated ferry service, provided the ferry boat upon which the mock emergency occurred.

“We had a lot of great partners,” said CPT Andrea Kennedy of the 51st Civil Support Team. “[The exercise] was a great representation of who would actually be on that type of team and incident.”

Martzke agreed. “Multiple organizations worked together to achieve a common goal,” Martzke said. “We had several agencies and it was a very short planning period for this to happen. I was

overly impressed by the interoperability and the cooperation with all of the agencies.”

CPT Kennedy went on to describe the function of the 51st during the operation. “As the 51st Civil Support Team, our focus is HAZMAT, weapons of destruction and anything in that range,” CPT Kennedy explained. “Our specific role was to conduct an entry onto the contaminated vessel to determine what the source of the contamination was and to determine what type of options existed for mitigating that contamination.”

The 52nd Civil Support Team worked directly with the 51st during the exercise. As the two units are based in neighboring states, they would likely be activated for a live response mission together.

The 1437th Multi-Role Bridge Company joined with the construction of a ribbon bridge that they launched from St. Ignace, Mich., and established in the waters of the Straits. The 130-foot floating ribbon bridge, also known as the Improved Ribbon Bridge (IRB), provided a platform large enough to accommodate the





Civil Support Team's ambulance, set up a decontamination corridor, support a survey entry team and their equipment, and hold the weight of a mobile operations section.

"The 1437th sets up the floating bridge wherever we can," said SFC Ann Dailey of the 1437th. "[The IRB] and our other bridges have been erected all over the world, and our crews are the best in the Nation. We draw curious crowds wherever we go and people are impressed when they see and learn about the many ways [the bridges] can be used."

The U.S. Coast Guard, Michigan State Police Marine Services Team and Mackinac Marine Response Team provided security and support on the water. The Coast Guard also provided safety training to Soldiers before the start of OSS. As a result, participating Soldiers became certified in small vessel boarding.

"Before the exercise, we were able to work very closely with the Coast Guard who trained us on safe vessel boarding procedures as well as safety swimming," said CPT Matthew Guerin of the 51st Civil Support Team. "Everybody working



The ribbon bridge, assembled by the 1437th Multi-Role Bridge Company, is shown floating in the waters of the Straits of Mackinac.

together as a cohesive team was amazing. I don't think there was anybody who didn't give it a ten out of ten as far as how they thought the exercise was organized and conducted."

The Mackinac County Emergency Management department managed the land portion of the exercise at the public boat launch in St. Ignace, Mich., which is on the southern tip of the Upper Peninsula.

"OSS is definitely a preparedness win for everyone involved," said CPT Kennedy. "Civil Support Team Soldiers appreciate these training opportunities. Not only do these exercises give them additional experience using their equipment [as opposed to simulation settings], but they also give our team interaction time with other teams who would likely be called upon during emergencies. The familiarity and friendships formed during these exercises translate into a faster, more effective response when it really counts. Then add all the cross-training benefits from working with members of the Ohio Civil Support Team [and the Coast Guard], and readiness improves even more."

Highlighting the dos and don'ts of

effectively handling an on-the-water emergency of this type, the exercise required participants to push the limits of their prior training in order to determine the source and extent of the contamination.

"Everyone had to solve a problem that they had not thought about before," said CPT Guerin. "This exercise was unique because it was not us going through similar motions that we always do. Everyone had to think critically about how they were going to meet the objectives."

The exercise fostered the successful coordination of Soldiers and community resources. It showcased the importance of preparing in advance of an emergency and knowing who needs to be involved when and where.

"The thousands of people that come to Mackinac Island every year depend upon us being ready in case of an emergency, and the only way that we are ready is if we work together," said Mackinac County Sheriff Scott Strait.



**LEFT:** A Michigan State Police Marine Services Team SAFE boat provides security and support during Operation Shining Star 2017.

**RIGHT:** Soldiers of the Michigan Army National Guard communicate with staff aboard the Shepler's Ferry® boat during Operation Shining Star 2017.





Those same citizens that Strait noted as relying on emergency responders to stay prepared, played their own role in OSS. According to Martzke, the show of support from residents and members of the local community served as a source of encouragement to the Soldiers.

“The community was extremely supportive,” said Martzke. “You never know what it’s going to look like when you take over a dozen Army vehicles into a small community like St. Ignace. But the reception and comments from the public were astonishingly positive. It was very encouraging.”

“[OSS] showed us that the community is willing to support and help in times of need,” said CPT Kennedy. “It brought to light that when an emergency happens, people will come to the table, the coordination will happen and the team will problem-solve.”

In addition to providing

valuable training, OSS illuminated the many challenges involved in managing a collaborative response with multiple organizations. CPT Kennedy praised the participants and leaders for their efforts in creating a successful exercise.

“The exercise showed that there are a lot of challenges when it comes to utilizing resources in the area. When you have that many agencies with different assets and different capabilities, how do you fit all of those pieces together? It’s a [good] problem to have. We have a lot of great partners,” CPT Kennedy noted. “It’s a really good example of the partnerships that come out of the National Guard and that come out of units; organizations and people who really care about their communities.”

With the success of OSS 2017 still fresh in the minds of participants and leaders, CPT Kennedy reflected on the overall

benefits of the event.

“The benefits here were huge,” CPT Kennedy said. “It gave us the opportunity to train in a unique environment that provided us with new and different operational variables and challenges. It was the first time we worked with the 1437th and it’s always an amazing opportunity when you can work with sister units and organizations that have a different capability.”

Looking to the future, Martzke noted that plans are afoot for more emergency management exercises like OSS. The Michigan Army National Guard is already coordinating several exercises slated for 2018 and beyond in the Upper Peninsula and waters of the Great Lakes. ●

Seated aboard a Shepler’s Ferry® boat, SGT JaBerry Smith (left), survey team member, Michigan National Guard, and SGT Riley Turner, survey team member, 52nd Civil Support Team, Ohio National Guard, prepare for entry into a simulated hot zone.





# LEARNING THE ROPES

## **Warrior Training Center Turns Guard Soldiers into High-Performance Ranger Candidates**

BY STAFF WRITER  
Matthew Liptak

U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence  
photos by Ashley Cross

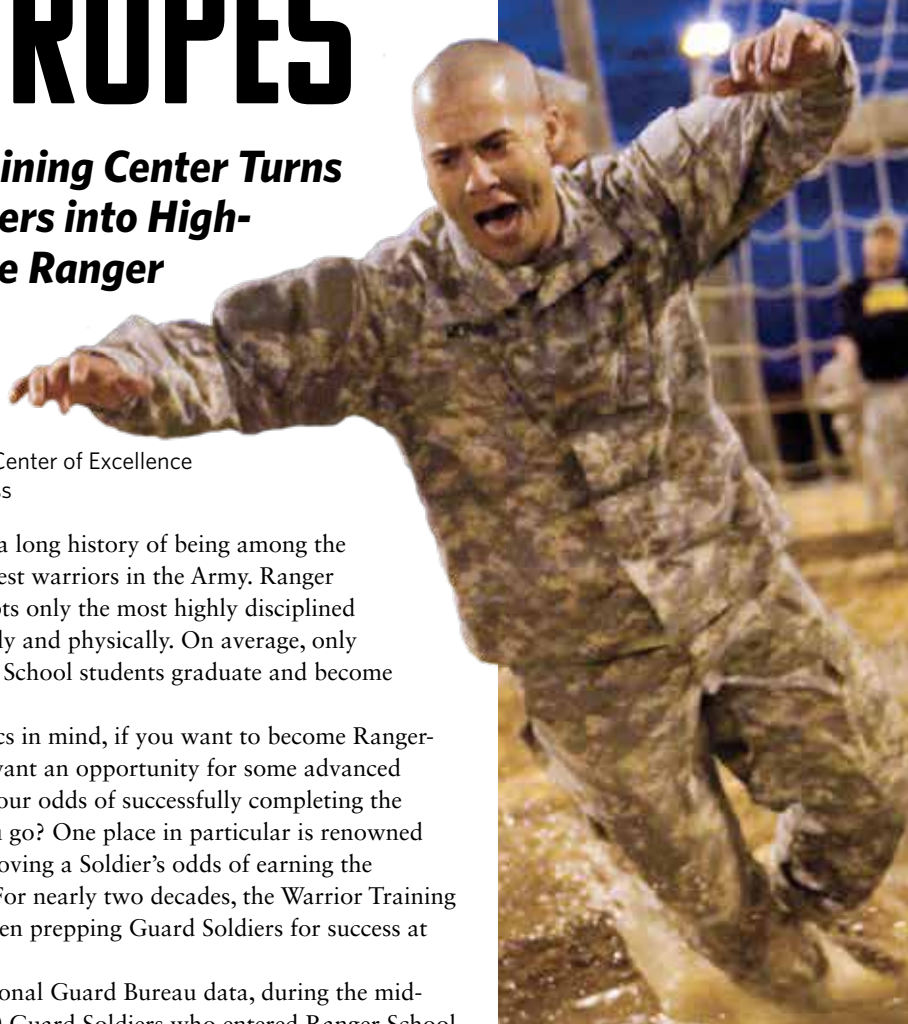
**R**angers have a long history of being among the best of the best warriors in the Army. Ranger School accepts only the most highly disciplined Soldiers, both mentally and physically. On average, only 50 percent of Ranger School students graduate and become Ranger-certified.

With these statistics in mind, if you want to become Ranger-certified, you might want an opportunity for some advanced training to increase your odds of successfully completing the course. Where do you go? One place in particular is renowned for its record of improving a Soldier's odds of earning the coveted Ranger tab. For nearly two decades, the Warrior Training Center (WTC) has been prepping Guard Soldiers for success at Ranger School.

According to National Guard Bureau data, during the mid-1990s, only one in 10 Guard Soldiers who entered Ranger School graduated. To remedy these low numbers, and to boost Guard participation in Ranger School, the Army National Guard began developing an informal course designed to prepare Guard Soldiers for what to expect at Ranger School, potentially increasing their odds of graduating to become Rangers.

This course gave Guard Soldiers two weeks of full-time training to perfect their skills before entering Ranger School. With 1LT Jamison Kirby and SFC Thomas Siter leading the way at the then-new prep course, Guard pass rates at Ranger School quickly improved.

To properly design the prep course, 1LT Kirby and SFC Siter kept in close contact with the active duty personnel at Ranger School to learn about the events and tasks required to graduate. They needed to know how to best prepare their candidates. 1LT Kirby and SFC Siter also stayed in contact with Guard Soldiers who were in the final stages of Ranger School. They would



SSG Aaron Morris, 199th Infantry Brigade, Georgia Army National Guard, plunges into the water obstacle while yelling "Ranger!" at Kirby Field during the Ranger Training Assessment Course.





sometimes give rides to Soldiers out on leave and use the time in the car to get feedback and delve into any insight the Soldiers might share on how the prep course could be improved to more accurately represent Ranger School.

No written records of those early days exist, as the course was still informal and considered unofficial. But the value in the effort became readily apparent to those higher up the chain of command. The course turned out successful candidates for years and gained a reputation for success. The tide had been turned.

In 2004, the program found an official home at Camp Butler in Fort Benning, Ga. 1LT Kirby was promoted to captain and became the officer-in-charge of the unit. Soon after, SFC Siter was named

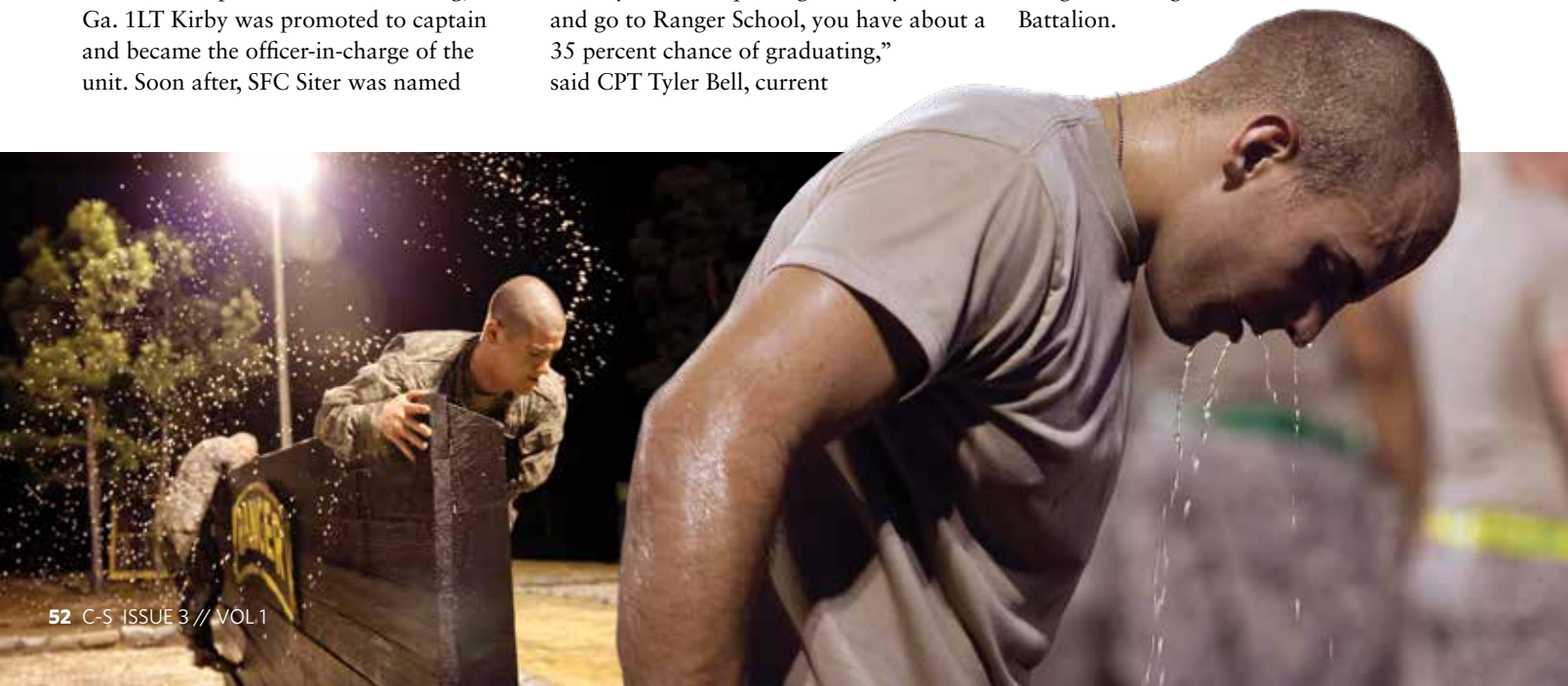
commandant of the facility; and in 2006, when MAJ Carlton B. Paris took command of the program, the National Guard Bureau designated the unit the Warrior Training Center.

Today at the WTC, what has become known as the Ranger Training Assessment Course (RTAC) offers both Guard and active duty Soldiers the opportunity for one-on-one instruction from certified Ranger Instructors. Over the course of the two-week training, the instructors take pains to coach each Soldier on what it takes to prepare for the rigors of Ranger School.

“If you show up straight from your unit and go to Ranger School, you have about a 35 percent chance of graduating,” said CPT Tyler Bell, current

Alpha Company Commander of the WTC. “If you come here and go through RTAC first, graduate the course, and then go [to Ranger School], you have about a 50 percent chance of graduating.”

Still key to the success of the RTAC is ensuring the preparatory training remains in line with current requirements at Ranger School. Every instructor at RTAC is Ranger Instructor Training Education Program (RITEP)-certified, and they have a continuing relationship with the instructors at Ranger School. In fact, up until December of 2016, CPT Bell was assigned to the 6th Ranger Training Battalion.





**“These are the things we work on so that when Soldiers get to Ranger School, they are that much more prepared.”**

– CPT Tyler Bell

“We’re putting out the right information. We have such a close relationship with [the instructors at Ranger School] that we know exactly what to do,” noted CPT Bell. “Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade Headquarters is only about a mile down the road from us. Proximity-wise they’re close, but we’re close in relationships too. We’re pretty well integrated with the course in general and are mutually supportive.”

RTAC includes full days of both physical and classroom training. It’s an education Guard Soldiers would be hard pressed to find elsewhere.

“We help get Soldiers ready who might not have had the opportunity or the time available at their Guard unit to do things like land navigation, troop

leading procedures or putting radios into operation,” said CPT Bell. “There are Soldiers who show up who haven’t touched a 240 Bravo in a year, or they may never have touched a radio.”

CPT Bell went on to say that, “A lot of it is about repetition and time spent training. It’s tough to get in-depth, immersive training at your unit down to the man. We give personal counseling and personal feedback from a certified Ranger Instructor who knows exactly how to be successful at the school.”

Though RTAC is an assessment and not actual Ranger School, it mimics in many ways the same events Soldiers will need to master to become Rangers. For instance, land navigation is emphasized heavily at Ranger School so ample training time is

allocated to it during RTAC.

“They’re up significantly early so that we can get out through land-nav sites with half the time during darkness, half of the time during light – hours of limited visibility and hours of good visibility,” CPT Bell said.

Two land navigation test days are designated where Soldiers are required to find four points in one day. Failure to locate all four points could result in being dropped from the course.

Soldiers must also tackle the Ranger Physical Assessment, formerly called the Ranger Physical Fitness Test, during the RTAC. They must complete 49 sit-ups and 59 pushups in two minutes, then complete a five-mile run in 40 minutes or less. Failure to pass the Ranger physical



**TOP:** Students in the Ranger Training Assessment Course move through the ‘Weaver’ obstacle.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** ILT Ryan King, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, moves over a six-foot wall following a water obstacle at Kirby Field.

**BOTTOM CENTER:** An ROTC Soldier cools off after a run during the Air Assault Course taught at the Warrior Training Center.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Texas National Soldier SGT Jay-Jay Janabajal moves through the water obstacle at Kirby Field during the Ranger Training Assessment Course. Kirby Field is similar to the U.S. Army Ranger School’s Malvesti Course.



fitness assessment could also result in being dropped from the course.

“We also have what’s called a combat water swim assessment,” CPT Bell went on to explain. “It’s meant to closely simulate the combat water swim assessment they do at Ranger School, which is to stress you out in the water.”

When prepping to become a Ranger, there truly is no rest for the weary. The very next morning after the swim assessment, Soldiers face a nine-mile foot march. They must maintain a 15-minute per mile pace for nine miles.

It’s likely that if a Soldier excels at the events in the RTAC, they will do well in Ranger School.

“These are the things we work on so that when Soldiers get to Ranger School they are that much more prepared,” noted CPT Bell.

The bar on the prerequisite road to becoming a Ranger is set high, and while it is known that not everyone will pass, it is nevertheless the goal of the leaders and instructors in Alpha Company to push

every student to graduate the RTAC.

“We [don’t] focus on weeding out,” CPT Bell said. “We focus on training, not attrition. Attrition will happen naturally with people that miss standards and people that miss dates.”

Prior to the WTC, Guard Soldiers struggled through Ranger School with no formal preparation, and little chance of actually becoming Rangers. The Army National Guard recognized this problem and took action. With direction from motivated and creative leadership, the WTC grew in size and reputation, and today includes students from active duty, sister service branches and even some international students.

“Two courses ago, we had two Marines and before that we had four Air Force combat controllers,” CPT Bell recalled.

Though the RTAC’s primary focus has remained helping Guard Soldiers achieve a higher success rate at Ranger School, as the RTAC grew so did demand for preparatory courses for more of the Army’s advanced schools. In response, the WTC

began to offer a host of courses including the Master Fitness Training Course where a Soldier can earn a master fitness training certification, an Air Assault course as well as Rappel Master and Pathfinder courses.

Charlie Company at the WTC offers heavy weapons training for the M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank and the Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

The WTC also offers preparation for military skills competitions, like the Gainey Cup’s Best Scout and even the Best Ranger competition. The horizon for the WTC seems to be ever-expanding.

As for the RTAC, CPT Bell said he is always on the lookout not only for new students, but for qualified Soldiers who might be interested in an MOS at the WTC.

“We’re always looking for Ranger-qualified National Guard Soldiers to come here and be part of the team,” he said. “We’re always on the lookout for good Soldiers from all places.” ●

**“We’re putting out the right information. We have such a close relationship with [the instructors at Ranger School] that we know exactly what to do...”**

- CPT Tyler Bell

Soldiers move through the woods of the Echo Training Area during the final training exercise of the Ranger Training Assessment Course.



## Caring for Your Health TRICARE Reserve Select

BY STAFF WRITER Ruth Ann Replogle

**D**id you know that TRICARE offers affordable health insurance plans to members of the Army National Guard? TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) is available to eligible reserve component service members as part of TRICARE's standard benefits under the Defense Health Agency's health care program for uniformed service members and their families. Monthly premiums are as little as about \$46 per month.

TRS includes coverage for:

- In-Patient and Out-Patient Services
- Emergency and Urgent Care
- Preventative Care
- Home and Hospice Care
- Maternity and Newborn Care
- Mental Health Services
- Prescription Drugs
- Laboratory and X-Ray Services
- Medical Supplies (Including Prosthetic Devices)

To qualify for TRS, a Soldier must not be:

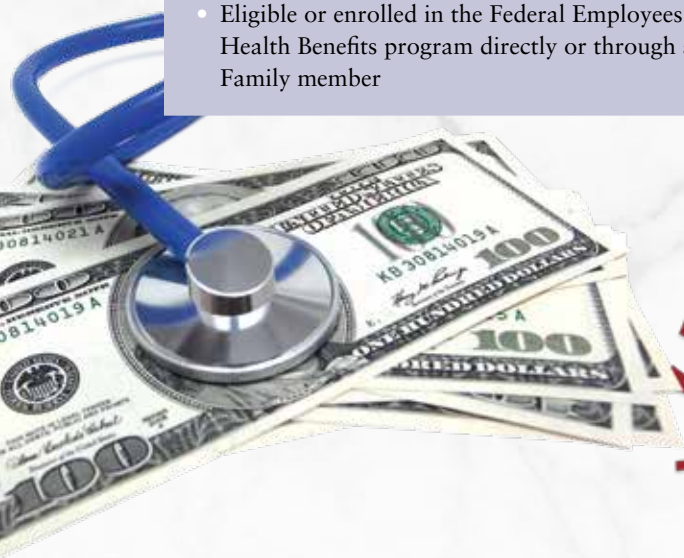
- On active duty orders
- Covered under the Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP)
- Eligible or enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits program directly or through a family member

For Soldiers who are eligible for TRS, enrollment involves three steps:

**Step 1—Check DEERS.** Check to be sure all personal information for oneself and dependents is registered and current in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).

**Step 2—Get signed up.** Log onto the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) Beneficiary Web Enrollment (BWE) using a CAC, Defense Finance Accounting Service (DFAS) account or DoD Self-Service (DS) Login. Click on Purchase Coverage. Fill out the Reserve Component Health Coverage Request (Form DD 2896-1), then print and sign it.

**Step 3—Purchase the plan.** Mail or fax the DD 2896-1 and an initial payment to the TRICARE regional office. Soldiers are required to make the initial two-month premium payment by personal or cashier's check, money order or debit/credit card. Subsequent premiums are paid by electronic funds transfer or by recurring debit/credit card charge.







Under TRS, Soldiers pay a monthly premium, annual deductible, cost share and co-payments.

A **monthly premium** is the amount of money paid each month by a policyholder to a health insurance provider, such as TRICARE. The current TRS monthly premium is \$46.09 per month for a single Soldier plan or \$221.38 per month for a Soldier plus family plan.

The **annual deductible** is the amount of money a policyholder will pay each year before a health insurance provider will begin to cover the cost of health care services. For example, if a Soldier has a \$150 deductible, that Soldier will pay out-of-pocket for the first \$150 worth of health care services. After a policyholder meets the deductible amount, the health insurance provider will begin to pay the costs on covered services.

A **cost share** – also known as co-insurance – is the percentage of the cost of health care service that is paid by the policyholder. Most health insurance policies will cover a higher percentage of the cost of services performed by an in-network provider (health care provider who is part of the TRICARE system) versus an out-

of-network provider (health care provider who is independent of the TRICARE system). TRICARE currently requires Soldiers to pay between 15 and 25 percent of the cost of services, depending on whether the service is performed by an in-network provider or an out-of-network provider. Preventative care, such as physicals, screenings and immunizations, is covered 100 percent by TRICARE, regardless of the deductible status or whether a provider is in-network or out-of-network.

A **co-payment** is a flat dollar amount paid by a policyholder after every visit to a health care provider. For example, under TRS, a \$15 co-payment is required with each visit to a primary care physician and a \$40 co-payment is required after a visit to an emergency room. Co-payments are generally collected by the health care provider at the time of the visit.

There is no open enrollment period for TRS. Qualifying Soldiers may enroll at any time. More information is available online, including breakdowns of required deductibles, cost shares and co-payments at [www.Tricare.mil/Plans/HealthPlans/TRS](http://www.Tricare.mil/Plans/HealthPlans/TRS). ●

## TRICARE 2018 Changes

On Jan. 1, 2018, the former three U.S. TRICARE regions (North, South and West) were consolidated into two (East and West). TRICARE East (made up of the former North and South regions) is operated by Humana Military and TRICARE West is now operated by Health Net Federal Services, LLC. Due to this consolidation, providers who were formerly in-network may now be out-of-network.

If you are currently enrolled in TRS, be sure to check the status of your primary care managers and specialty care providers at <https://Tricare.mil/FindDoctor>.



On Feb. 1, 2018, co-payments for prescription drugs at TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery and at retail pharmacies will be increasing. These changes will affect TRS beneficiaries. Prescriptions filled at military pharmacies will continue to be available at no cost. Using home delivery, co-payments for a 90-day supply of generic prescription drugs will increase from \$0 to \$7. Co-payments for brand-name prescriptions will rise from \$20 to \$24.

A full list of the 2018 TRICARE pharmacy co-payments is available online at <https://Tricare.mil/PharmacyCosts>. For more information on the TRICARE Pharmacy Program visit <https://Tricare.mil/CoveredServices/Pharmacy/FillPrescriptions>.



## Guard Your SMILE

BY STAFF WRITER Ruth Ann Replogle

**A**s Soldiers focus on their medical readiness, it's important to remember this includes dental readiness. Many Soldiers do not realize how their dental health impacts their overall readiness for duty until it's too late.

At present, about one in ten Soldiers is medically non-deployable because of an overdue dental exam or missed dental treatment. That's roughly 22,000 Soldiers who are deficient in their annual dental exams or have neglected dental care that was identified and recommended in a previous dental exam.

Soldiers are required to have an annual Periodic Health Assessment (PHA) that provides not only a comprehensive medical review, but also a dental review. However, if Soldiers miss their PHA event or at least the dental portion, they rarely attempt to get their dental exam that year through other means.

As a Soldier, when you miss or skip your annual dental exam, and/or follow-up dental treatment and care, you risk becoming non-deployable and unable to support your unit's mission. You also risk loss of pay for drill attendance. Moreover, by not getting regular checkups, you jeopardize your oral health – potentially missing warning signs of dental problems that could lead to more serious dental issues like periodontitis, a severe form of gum disease.

According to the Mayo Clinic, research suggests that periodontitis is associated with an increased risk of developing heart disease. This same research also suggests that people

with chronic gum disease have increased thickness of the blood vessels in the neck, which could be a sign of cardiovascular disease. Also evidenced in the Mayo Clinic research is a strong correlation between cardiovascular disease and diabetes, as well as evidence that people with diabetes benefit from professional teeth cleanings.

Like Soldiers operating in support of one another in an Army unit, your body is a single unit that requires all of its parts effectively performing their specified roles in order for the body to achieve optimal performance. Neglecting one part of the body is essentially neglecting the entire body. Failure in one part, left unchecked, will eventually lead to failure of the entire unit.

So why should Soldiers guard their smiles?

- Getting an annual dental exam and related treatment not only makes you compliant with Army National Guard regulations, but also keeps you fit for duty.
- Dental exams help prevent oral disease and emergency dental work (which can cost money out of your wallet and affect your dental readiness classification).
- Healthy gums may help to prevent other possibly related health problems such as heart disease and cardiovascular disease.

If you miss your PHA event at your designated military installation, you can schedule an appointment with a military or civilian dentist on your own time. When visiting a civilian dentist, a form DD 2813 should be completed by the dental office for submission to your unit. The form can be downloaded at [www.GYH.Tips/DD2813](http://www.GYH.Tips/DD2813) or you can request a form through your chain of command. ●



**To help Soldiers improve their oral fitness, the National Guard Bureau has launched the Guard Your Smile initiative through its Guard Your Health campaign. Soldiers can learn more about dental readiness, affordable dental care and other dental health topics at <http://GYH.Tips/DentalHealth>.**



# #GuardYourSMILE: Why Dental Readiness is Key

**Did you know your dental health impacts your overall readiness for duty?**



**About 1 in 10** Soldiers is medically **non-deployable** because of an overdue dental exam or missed dental treatment.

As a Soldier, you are required to get a dental exam **each year**.



## What's in it for me?

Getting your annual dental exam means you:

- Are compliant with Army regulations
- Identify developing tooth or mouth problems early
- Help prevent oral disease or other health problems
- Keep yourself fit for duty

## What happens when I miss or skip my dental exam?

It may cause you to:

- Become non-deployable
- Not be paid for drill attendance
- Be unable to support your unit's mission
- Develop a dental condition or pain that can hinder your performance



## Ready to see a dentist?



Get a dental exam at your next **Periodic Health Assessment** or group event.

OR

Get a dental exam with a **civilian dentist**. Ask them to complete form DD 2813. Then, return it to your unit.



No follow-up treatment needed?  
**You're good to go until next year!**

## Need treatment?

Ask your unit to schedule an appointment for follow-up treatment with a local dentist at **NO COST TO YOU.**

OR

Schedule follow-up treatment with your civilian dentist.



Have the dentist complete form DD 2813. Return the form to your unit.

**Getting your annual dental exam will keep you (and your unit) smiling!**

## Helpful Dental Resources



Find a dentist through TRICARE  
<http://gyh.tips/TricareDentist>



Download dental form DD 2813  
<http://gyh.tips/DD2813>



Find low-cost dental care options in your area  
<http://gyh.tips/DentalCare>







An Army National Guard motor transport operator performs maintenance on his vehicle while participating in Operation Patriot Bandoleer in early 2017.  
Army National Guard photo by SGT Jason Lay



# ***MOVE YOUR CAREER FORWARD***

To support Soldiers in developing both their military and civilian careers, the Army National Guard offers assistance with the cost of obtaining licensures and certifications. Soldiers may use ***Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL)*** to find information on licenses and certifications related to their MOS.

Contact your State education services officer (ESO) for information about the ***cost reimbursement process associated with COOL.***

***For a list of certifications and licenses related to your MOS, visit  
[www.cool.army.mil/index.htm](http://www.cool.army.mil/index.htm)***



# FAMILY



Oregon National Guard Youth Symposium participants run during a 4-H Zombie Skills Challenge game.

Oregon Army National Guard photo by CPT Leslie Reed.

## Guard Youth – Proud, Ready and Resilient!

BY STAFF WRITER Liam Griffin



**B**eing the child of an Army National Guard Soldier is a unique experience. It presents both benefits and challenges that are exclusive to Guard Family children. Things that are commonplace for Guard Families, like living with National Guard deployments, mobilizations and trainings, are completely foreign to civilian families, and somewhat different from the experience of active duty Families. To support Guard children as they grow and mature in an environment that is wholly different from that of both civilian and active duty youth, the National Guard Child & Youth Services (CYS) program offers a range of positive activities

designed to promote resiliency and healthy development in Guard children.

Across the country, 104 Child and Youth Program Coordinators (CYPC) plan, develop and execute the CYS program at the State level. Using the national program goals of education, access, opportunity, communication and outreach, CYPCs diligently work to mitigate risky behaviors, enhance resilience, develop positive coping strategies and assist National Guard youth as they grow to become the next generation of leaders.

CYS programs span four delivery areas:

- Art, Recreation & Leisure
- Sports, Fitness & Health
- Life Skills, Citizenship, Character Development & Leadership
- Academic Support, Career Development, Mentoring & Intervention

CYS is open to Guard children ages six to 18, and events are tailored with activities that speak directly to the particular needs of each age group. For example, programs designed for younger children offer

activities that encourage healthy social behaviors and intellectual development. Meanwhile, programs for older children and teenagers focus on personal development by teaching life skills and resiliency, and promoting the importance of leadership and civic responsibility.

Programs include:

- Educational and youth development programs – including teen panels, youth symposiums and Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program support – are focused on citizenship, character building, public speaking, leadership and resiliency.
- Instructional programs cover a wide range of subject matters including photography, woodworking, science and technology, gardening and health and safety.
- Recreation programs are geared toward individual activities such as golf, bowling and adventure camps. These programs are offered through a variety of Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities, such as golf courses, bowling centers and youth centers.
- Recreation sports programs – typically offered at an installation youth center – provide year-round team sports that physically challenge youth while teaching them concepts like good sportsmanship and teamwork.

To learn about upcoming State-level CYS events, activities and resources, contact a local CYPC at a Family Assistance Center located at the nearest Joint Force Headquarters. Contact information for Family Assistance Centers nationwide can be found at [www.JointServicesSupport.org/SPN](http://www.JointServicesSupport.org/SPN).

For information about National-level CYP events and programs, including the Guard Teen Panel and the National Youth Symposium, contact the Child & Youth Services Program Manager at 703-607-5409. ●

**Though child-care services are not offered directly through CYS, the program does offer assistance resources. For information on child-care assistance, or for verification of eligibility, contact Child Care Aware of America at 1-800-424-2246 or [ProviderServiceAdmin@naccrra.org](mailto:ProviderServiceAdmin@naccrra.org).**





Shoppers mill about the on-site sale at the Ellington Joint Reserve Base hangar outside Houston, Texas.

Photo courtesy of Defense Commissary Agency.

## BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOUR LOCAL COMMISSARY ...

BY STAFF WRITER Liam Griffin

**F**or Soldiers and their Families, the on-post commissary is a valuable resource. Offerings of Commissary goods are expansive, and since they are sold at cost, Families can save a small fortune. On average, goods at commissaries are sold 30 percent cheaper than goods sold through civilian retailers.

But what if the nearest commissary is on a post that is more than 50 miles away? Does this mean Soldiers and Families – particularly Guard Soldiers and Families – not living near a military installation must be forced to miss out on the substantial savings commissaries offer? Absolutely not.

To ensure Guard Families have opportunities to partake in the benefits of commissary shopping, the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) offers the Guard/Reserve On-Site Sales program. On-site sales consist of what is essentially a traveling commissary that brings the

entire store to the members and Families of reserve component units.

### HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

- A host commissary coordinates with a National Guard unit of at least 150 local members for an on-site sale.
- The host-commissary and Guard-unit teams, together, set the sale's location, date and the items for sale. Sale items may include grocery and dry goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, selections of fresh meat, frozen items, chilled items and even deli and bakery items.
- The goods are delivered directly to the site and staged for sale.
- Consumers shop and pay for purchases much like they would at a commissary.
- The on-site sale targets National Guard members, but any authorized personnel may enjoy the sale – and the savings that come with it.

On-site sales average two to three days and offer the same discounted prices available at brick-and-mortar commissaries.

To make the on-site sale experience even more convenient, DeCA also offers a preorder and prepay option where customers order and pay for their groceries online prior to pickup at the designated sales location. On-site sales

can be structured as preorder/prepay only, conventional purchasing only or as a hybrid that offers both conventional and preorder/prepay purchases.

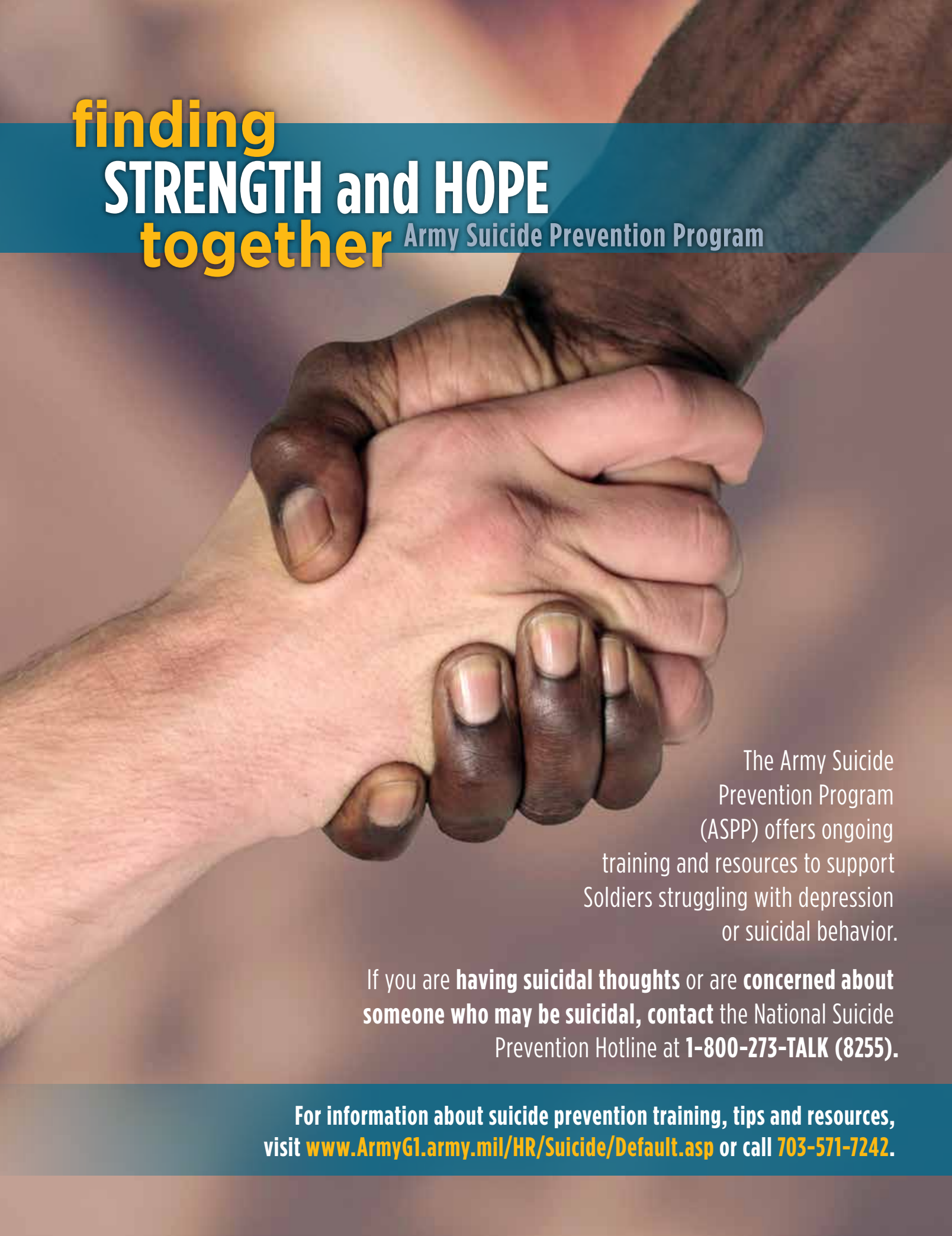
Servicemembers are encouraged to take advantage of the low prices available through the commissary, whether at a brick-and-mortar location or at an on-site sale. Commissaries are not designed to net a profit so their base prices will always be notably cheaper than other vendors. Additionally, since commissaries are an agency of the DoD, they do not charge sales tax. With these added benefits, the commissary is irrefutably much more beneficial than the average grocery store.

Request an on-site sale through your unit or review a list of already-scheduled sales at [www.commissaries.com/shopping/guard-reserve-sales](http://www.commissaries.com/shopping/guard-reserve-sales). ●

### FOR SOLDIERS LOOKING FOR EASY RECIPES OR TIPS ON HEALTHY EATING,

DeCA also offers a healthy living section on the commissary website at [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com). Here, Soldiers can find healthy recipes crafted by DeCA dietitians, information on the DeCA Nutrition Guide Program and links to other resources for healthy eating and living.





# finding STRENGTH and HOPE together

Army Suicide Prevention Program

The Army Suicide Prevention Program (ASPP) offers ongoing training and resources to support Soldiers struggling with depression or suicidal behavior.

If you are **having suicidal thoughts** or are **concerned about someone who may be suicidal**, **contact** the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.

For information about suicide prevention training, tips and resources, visit [www.ArmyG1.army.mil/HR/Suicide/Default.asp](http://www.ArmyG1.army.mil/HR/Suicide/Default.asp) or call **703-571-7242**.





Captions omitted in article for security reasons.

## FORTIFYING OUR CYBER DEFENSE

STORY PROVIDED BY Steve Stover, 780th Military Intelligence Brigade (Cyber) and Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard  
National Guard Bureau photos by Schatz Strategy Group.

**T**he transition of authority from the 169th Cyber Protection Team (CPT) to Task Force Echo (TFE) that took place on Aug. 15, 2017, at Fort Meade, Md., was more than just a ceremony. It was a historic event for the Army cyber enterprise and the entire Nation.

While Army National Guard and active duty units frequently train, deploy and serve side-by-side, this event marked the largest reserve component federal active duty mobilization in support of U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) in DoD history. The transition reflects the Army's commitment to the Total Force policy in defense of networks against the Nation's adversaries.

TFE is comprised of more than 140

Army National Guard cyber Soldiers representing seven states – California, Georgia, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Utah and Virginia. It will operate under the 780th Military Intelligence Brigade (MIB) to train and conduct cyberspace operations in support of USCYBERCOM and the Cyber Mission Force.

LTG Paul Nakasone, commander of U.S. Army Cyber Command (ARCYBER), hosted the ceremony. Guests included Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe and LTG Timothy Kadavy, director of the Army National Guard, as well as numerous State adjutants general, fellow Soldiers and Family members.

"The strength of our Total Force is as evident in cyber protection as it is in any other Army mission. Across all three

components, the Army is training these cyber mission force teams to one joint standard as defined by the U.S. Cyber Command," LTG Kadavy said.

LTG Nakasone emphasized that the U.S. Army has been at war for 16 years, the longest period of conflict in the country's history. He explained that the Army recognizes the future of cybersecurity will require an all-force approach with each component contributing significant efforts.

"Our Total Force Army – our Army National Guard, our Army Reserve, all of these Soldiers, including the active component – will play a significant role in the future of securing cyberspace defense for our Nation," said LTG Nakasone. "Today represents a very





important milestone in the history of Army cyberspace operations. It marks not only the great progress the Army has made, but also highlights the important contributions the reserve component brings to the cyber mission force.”

The 169th has operated under the 780th MIB, an active duty organization, since 2015. Currently, the 169th CPT and its 21 Army National Guard Soldiers hail from 13 States. At the unit’s largest formation, it had more than 60 Soldiers who represented 24 States and two U.S. territories.

According to LTC Martine Whitaker, chief of the 169th CPT, the team was the first Army National Guard cyber unit to reach initial operational capability – and it did so in concert with its active duty counterparts. More importantly, when team members leave Fort Meade, they leave with greatly increased cyberspace operational knowledge, skills and abilities that will also benefit their home States.

“Today, we proudly recognize the Army National Guard’s absolute, indisputable relevance within the Total Army,” LTC Whitaker said. “In the case of the 169th Cyber Protection Team – the first Army National Guard cyber team to serve alongside our active duty comrades – [it] will always be the first, the original, the mold from which all other teams follow.”

“The performance of the 169th Cyber Protection Team, and assumption of mission by Task Force Echo, demonstrates the Total Force employed in the Army and USCYBERCOM,” said COL Adam Volant, the TFE commander. “Together, we integrate with ARCYBER and USCYBERCOM to perform missions that defend the Nation and represent the quality force effectively aimed against our adversaries.”

COL Volant said both TFE and 169th CPT Soldiers have strong academic, interagency and corporate relationships.

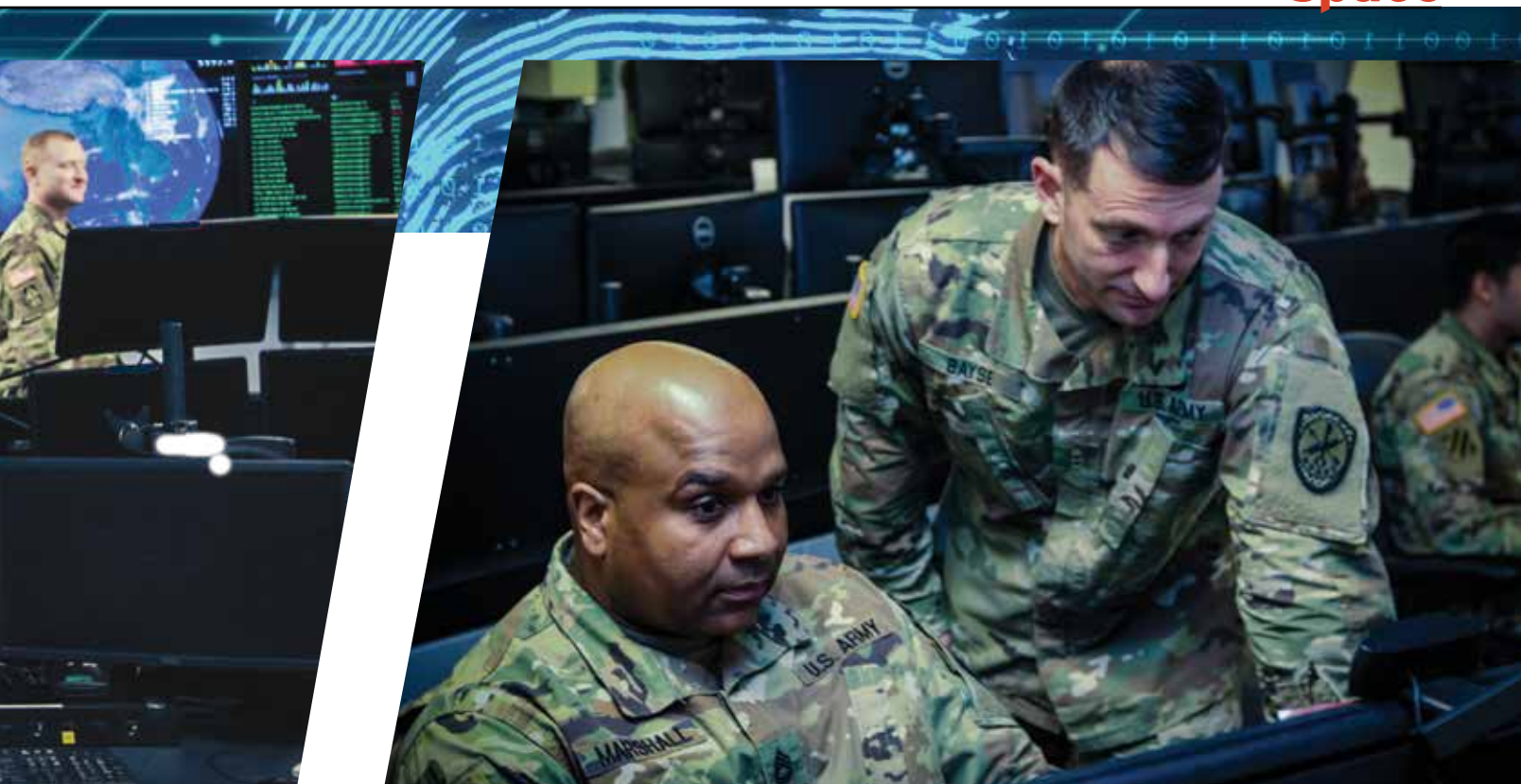
“The truly unique part of these Soldiers

is that the blend of their experience, military training and civilian credentialing – cybersecurity certifications and clearance – make them well qualified to immediately perform missions of importance at the State and federal level,” COL Volant said.

Recently, the Army National Guard also established a mission-ready cyber unit – the 91st Cyber Brigade, comprised of five cyber battalions. As the 169th CPT moves to a new chapter under the Maryland Army National Guard, it will assist the 91st Cyber Brigade in ensuring the readiness of future teams. (Read the full story on the 91st Cyber Brigade under the Cyberspace section of Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com.)

“Today is truly a great day – not just for the Total Army and the Department of Defense, but for our entire country,” LTG Kadavy said. “As Task Force Echo assumes the mission from the 169th Cyber Protection Team, they represent the precursor to the reserve component





mission-ready cyber units of today and the future.”

LTG Kadavy said that whether the mission is responding to hazardous weather in the United States, helping fight our Nation’s wars overseas or defending against highly skilled and hostile attackers in cyberspace, the most crucial element to success has been and always will be our Soldiers.

“While this ceremony features one commander passing authority to another, it’s all about the individuals,” LTG Kadavy said at the unit’s transition of authority ceremony. “Today, we

recognize and honor the great work performed by the Soldiers in the 169th Cyber Protection Team throughout its four-year history. We also recognize that these same Soldiers, who helped establish the Army’s modern-day cyber protection mission, will continue to increase the Army’s ability to protect our country from cyberattacks.

“In reality, this mission is just beginning, and it will continue to grow with the lightning speed of technology. And we know that because this mission is in your hands, it is in the best hands.” ●







**ALWAYS  
READY**

SPC Danae Dostie, Maine Army National Guard, 488th Military Police Company, after her first mixed martial arts contest.

# DISCIPLINE DEFINES SUCCESS

## **Maine Army National Guard Specialist Makes MMA Debut**

STORY AND PHOTOS PROVIDED BY SGT Sarah Myrick,  
Maine National Guard

**T**he fighter stares across the cage. Lights stream down from overhead. Sweat is building on her forehead. The mat is soft under her bare feet. Her cornrows are pulled tightly against her scalp. Her opponent is young and muscular, with fierce eyes staring back over the top of her gloves. The crowd roars around them as the referee steps back, the bell dings and the fighters move toward each other, fists raised.

She trained intensely for this. Grueling hours at the gym left her sweaty, bruised and beyond muscle fatigue. But now she's ready.

In the ring, like in the Army National Guard, discipline defines success for Danae Dostie, a specialist in the Maine Army National Guard, 488th Military Police Company. SPC Dostie fought her debut mixed martial arts (MMA) competition in an amateur bantamweight (135 pounds) contest held in Portland, Maine, on Nov. 3, 2017.

"I have always loved watching fights and sparring with friends," said SPC Dostie, a native of Fryeburg, Maine. "Now, it's my turn to be in the ring."

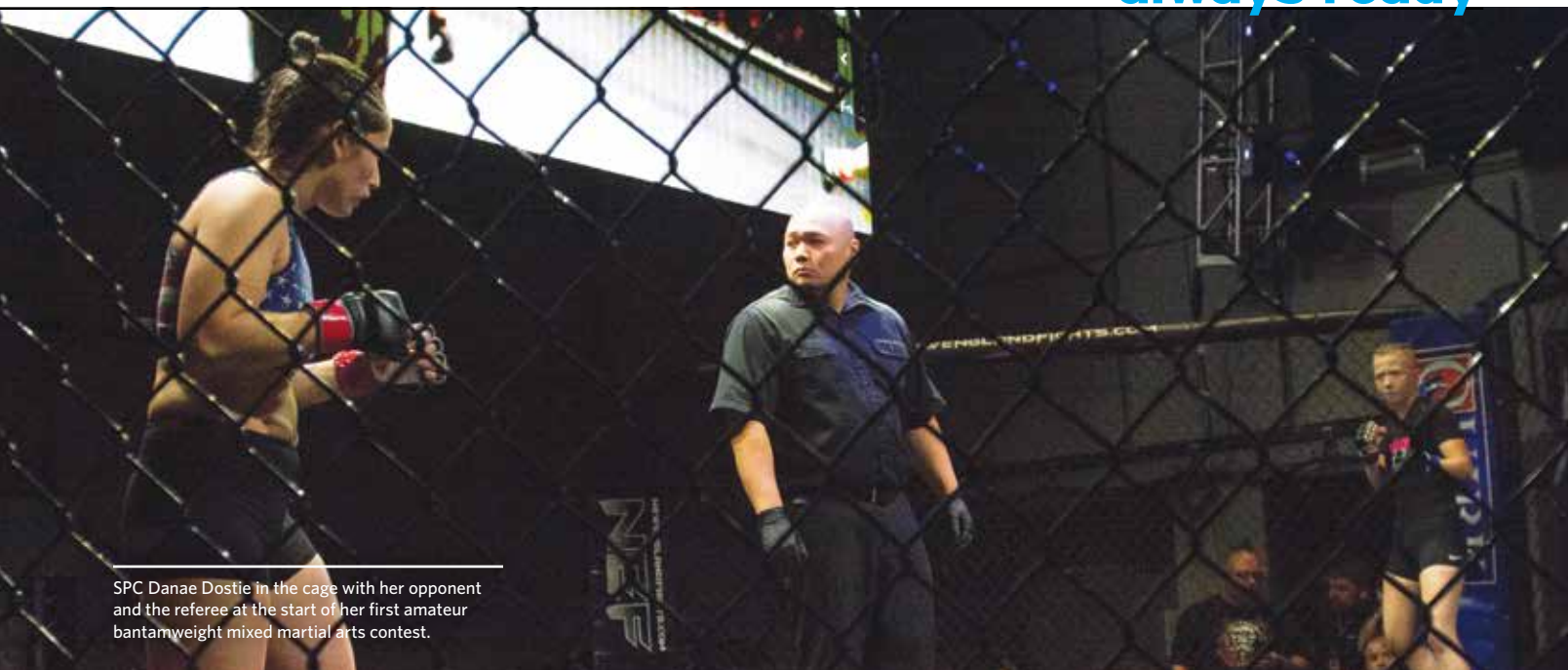
MMA is a full-contact combat sport that allows striking and grappling while both combatants are standing upright on the ground. MMA allows for the incorporation of techniques from other combat sports and martial arts such as boxing, wrestling, karate, jiu-jitsu and judo.

Although she had just three months of training under her belt, SPC Dostie felt confident before her first fight. She said the goal, for now, was to learn.

"My main focus, especially for this fight, has been boxing techniques, with a focus on standing and low kicks," SPC Dostie noted.

SPC Dostie trains at Kenney's MMA gym in Lisbon, Maine. In preparation for her first fight, she studied techniques from boxing, kickboxing, jiu-jitsu, wrestling and MMA grappling. She also worked on her endurance and stamina through sprinting,





SPC Danae Dostie in the cage with her opponent and the referee at the start of her first amateur bantamweight mixed martial arts contest.

***"It takes a lot of discipline and willpower to train to be a fighter... Discipline is what a Soldier should be about. This [training] is helping me become the best Soldier I can be. It is helping me to stay in shape and to be more equipped to fight for this country when I am needed."***

- SPC Danae Dostie

stair climbing, biking and circuits that focused on push-ups and sit-ups.

"I trained four to six days a week for at least two hours to four hours," she said. "The hardest part was training even when I'd worked a long week. I really enjoy learning MMA, so it was easy for me to want to train. But it can be hard balancing my civilian job, my military job and training. There were times when I didn't get a day off for a couple weeks straight."

SPC Dostie went on to explain what kept her going even when fatigue was setting in.

"It takes a lot of discipline and willpower to train to be a fighter," she said. "Discipline is what a Soldier should be about. This [training] is helping me become the best Soldier I can be. It is helping me to stay in shape and to be more equipped to fight for this country when I am needed."

SPC Dostie also noted that her MMA

fight training works to reinforce the combatives training she uses in the Army National Guard.

"As an MP, you need to know how to defend yourself and others," she said. "Training for the fight [keeps] me ready for those moments."

SGT Daniel Ojeda, a fellow Soldier of the 488th MP Company, has served with SPC Dostie for the past four years. SGT Ojeda commented on SPC Dostie's work ethic and dedication as a Soldier.

"She's the type you can always count on to be where she needs to be, when she needs to be there," he said. "She's someone that I would trust my life with in a battlefield and I know that she would always try to watch out for me."

SGT Ojeda went on to speak about SPC Dostie as a major contributor to the 488th MP Company.

"She has the ability to retain knowledge and perform tasks or duties

that correspond with what was taught to her, and is able to teach others what she has learned," SGT Ojeda said. "She has always been a helping hand, not just [at the platoon level], but in the company as a whole."

SPC Dostie's unit, Family and friends are supportive of her MMA training and goal to have more fights. She said she plans to get back in the cage right away.

"If I can get more training under my belt, I know I'll be a lot more experienced and have a little better head on my shoulders going into the ring," she said.

SPC Dostie emphasized the importance of commitment for those who want to become MMA combatants. It's the same type of commitment required for those who want to be great Soldiers.

"If you want it, you have to go out and get it," she said. "It's definitely not a walk in the park. You will need drive and motivation." ●



SPC Carson Shelton, 129th Area Support Medical  
Company, Alabama Army National Guard  
Army National Guard photo by SSG Tracci Dorgan



# HELPING YOU *FURTHER* YOUR EDUCATION

The Army National Guard encourages all Soldiers to advance their education as they advance their career in the Guard and in civilian life. This may be done with an undergraduate degree, a graduate degree or through vocational opportunities.

**FOR SOLDIERS PREPARING TO ATTEND GRADUATE OR BUSINESS SCHOOL**, the Army National Guard will fund the cost of required qualifying exams.

## **The Guard will reimburse for:**

- One test session of the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) general computer-based test (CBT)
- One test session of a GRE subject paper-based test
- One test session of the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT)

**FOR SOLDIERS TESTING TO BECOME CERTIFIED AS K-12 SCHOOL TEACHERS**, the National Guard will also fund one test session of the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators (Core) test, and one test session of the Praxis Subject Assessments test.

For information on how to process a reimbursement, email the Guard Support Center at

**[gsc@ng.army.com](mailto:gsc@ng.army.com) or call 866-628-5999.**





# MILES OF MUNITIONS

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

**ARMY NATIONAL GUARD CONVOYS** pounded back and forth across the roads of our Nation's highways and byways last year. They traveled over 2,000,000 miles, carrying hundreds of containers filled with their precious cargo – the U.S. Army's war reserve munitions.

The Guard Soldiers operating in these convoys were working in support of Operation Patriot Bandoleer (OPB), an ongoing joint mission that calls on Soldiers from all components of the Army – National Guard, Reserves and active duty.

OPB began in 2015 and is a collaborative initiative between the National Guard Bureau, Army Materiel Command, Army Sustainment Command, Joint Munitions Command, and the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command. It involves the movement and life-cycle management of thousands of tons of munitions and war reserve materiel in support of the U.S. Army Sustainment Command (ASC)'s Army Prepositioned Stock (APS).

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Vehicles from the Arizona Army National Guard's 1120th Transportation Battalion are staged for a convoy during Operation Patriot Bandoleer in Concord, Calif.

Army National Guard photo by SSG Adrian Borunda.





Soldiers from the 1113th Transportation Company, California Army National Guard, check their vehicle's snow chains as they drive through inclement weather during Operation Patriot Bandoleer 2017.

Army National Guard photo by CPT Howard Knapp.

Military prepositioned stocks consist of warehouses filled with equipment and supplies in strategic locations around the world. Keeping these stocks readily available and poised for use not only deters aggressive behavior by foreign adversaries, but also works to increase mobilization speeds.

In a 2016 interview, Timothy Fore, director, Sustainment Operations and Army Prepositioned Stocks Directorate, said, "Linking Reserve component Soldiers to APS redistribution not only supports the Total Force Development concept of the Army, but [also] gives the Soldiers exposure to real-world mission experiences they will need to support humanitarian assistance and contingency operations in the future."

OPB is spearheaded by Fore on the ASC side and, on the Guard side by Anthony Skivo, OPB Program Manager and Senior Logistics Analyst for National

Guard Bureau.

"When Tim and I got together, [the operation] became much larger and more productive than anything I could have ever thought," said Skivo.

OPB has become one of the largest multi-component logistics events supporting the APS program.

Missouri Army National Guard BG David Boyle has been an integral part of OPB since its inception in 2015. With Missouri participating each year and taking the lead in OPB 2016, BG Boyle understands firsthand the significance of the operation.

"It's the ultimate support operation planning and execution exercise short of theater," he said. "The training benefit we receive is absolutely tremendous. Soldiers can say they are doing an actual mission for the Army. That's incredible for a Soldier," noted BG Boyle.

OPB is set up in iterations throughout

the year, with each iteration requiring approximately six months to a year of planning.

"It's basically a miniature deployment," said CPT Derek Ellyson, commander of the Georgia Army National Guard's 1148th Transportation Company. "You've got all hands on deck. So, think of all the things that go into a deployment and we do that here. When one mission ends, we start planning for the next year, pretty much the very next day. It takes that much planning."

When planning the operation, ASC first identifies the requirements of that year's operation. National Guard Bureau then assigns a task force of motor transport operators, maintenance personnel and administrative

Letterkenny Munitions Center employees unload shipping containers from the 1148th Transportation Company, Georgia Army National Guard's flatbed trailers in support of Operation Patriot Bandoleer.

Letterkenny Munitions Center photo by Natasia Kenosky.





personnel from Army National Guard transportation units. For each iteration, one State is chosen to lead the task force. Once chosen, the lead State coordinates with other States to help move munitions to a final destination.

As lead planner for OPB on the Army National Guard side, Skivo works in a collaborative effort between Army National Guard Operations and Logistics and the States that have the capacity to partner in OPB – and are standing in the Readiness Cycle – to determine which State will lead the task forces each year.

“We sit down and figure out who has the capacity to lead and execute this,” said Skivo. “They must have the right logistics-type planning headquarters and the right type of transportation unit.”

States that participated in 2017’s operation included Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma and South Carolina. While States participated during different times throughout the year, all units received the benefit of executing a real-world mission.

“OPB utilizes the National Guard Transportation Company at every level, from individual Soldier tasks to company-level command and control,” said CPT Ellyson. “We have the unique opportunity to use our annual training to execute a real-world mission stateside, which directly impacts the Nation’s ability to conduct operations overseas. We are proud to be part of such an important and rewarding mission.”

On Jan. 14, 2017, OPB 2017 commenced with Task Force Golden Patriot. The Task Force was led by the California Army National

Guard’s 224th Sustainment Brigade and included Army National Guard units from Arizona, Missouri, Nevada and Oklahoma.

During this first leg of the OPB mission, 732 Soldiers successfully logged 645,000 miles and moved 375 containers of munitions from the Military Ocean Terminal in Concord, Calif., to McAlester Army Ammunition Plant in McAlester, Okla., and Hawthorne Army Depot in Hawthorne, Nev.

“Missions like these allow the Army National Guard to flex our muscle a bit and show what we are able to accomplish,” said 1LT Gabriel McDonald of the Arizona Army National Guard’s 1120th Transportation Battalion. “What we bring to the table is phenomenal. A lot of Soldiers are also commercial truck drivers and they bring that experience of working with our civilian counterparts. Others are in law enforcement and know certain road regulations that have helped with traffic situations. [Those] various pools of talent to draw on are the inherent strength of the Guard.”

The second leg of OPB took place in August of 2017. Army National Guard units from Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, North Carolina and Ohio participated as Task Force Hauling Freedom. Led by the South Carolina Army National Guard, the month-long operation included 859 Soldiers collectively driving more than 1,750,000 miles to transport 659 containers of munitions.

“You can’t beat this,” said SGT Michael Davis, a motor transport operator with the Georgia Army National Guard’s 1148th Transportation Company. “I think it’s a pretty cool mission. You get to see different things, different places. It gives some of the younger Soldiers the experience of

driving on the open road and handling the various materiel that we’re hauling.”

Task Force Hauling Freedom worked with the Letterkenny Munitions Center (LEMC) in Chambersburg, Pa. The LEMC is a government-owned and -operated installation that conducts regional and global distribution of munitions. It also provides missile maintenance and conducts demilitarization of munitions for Joint Forces and international partner nations.

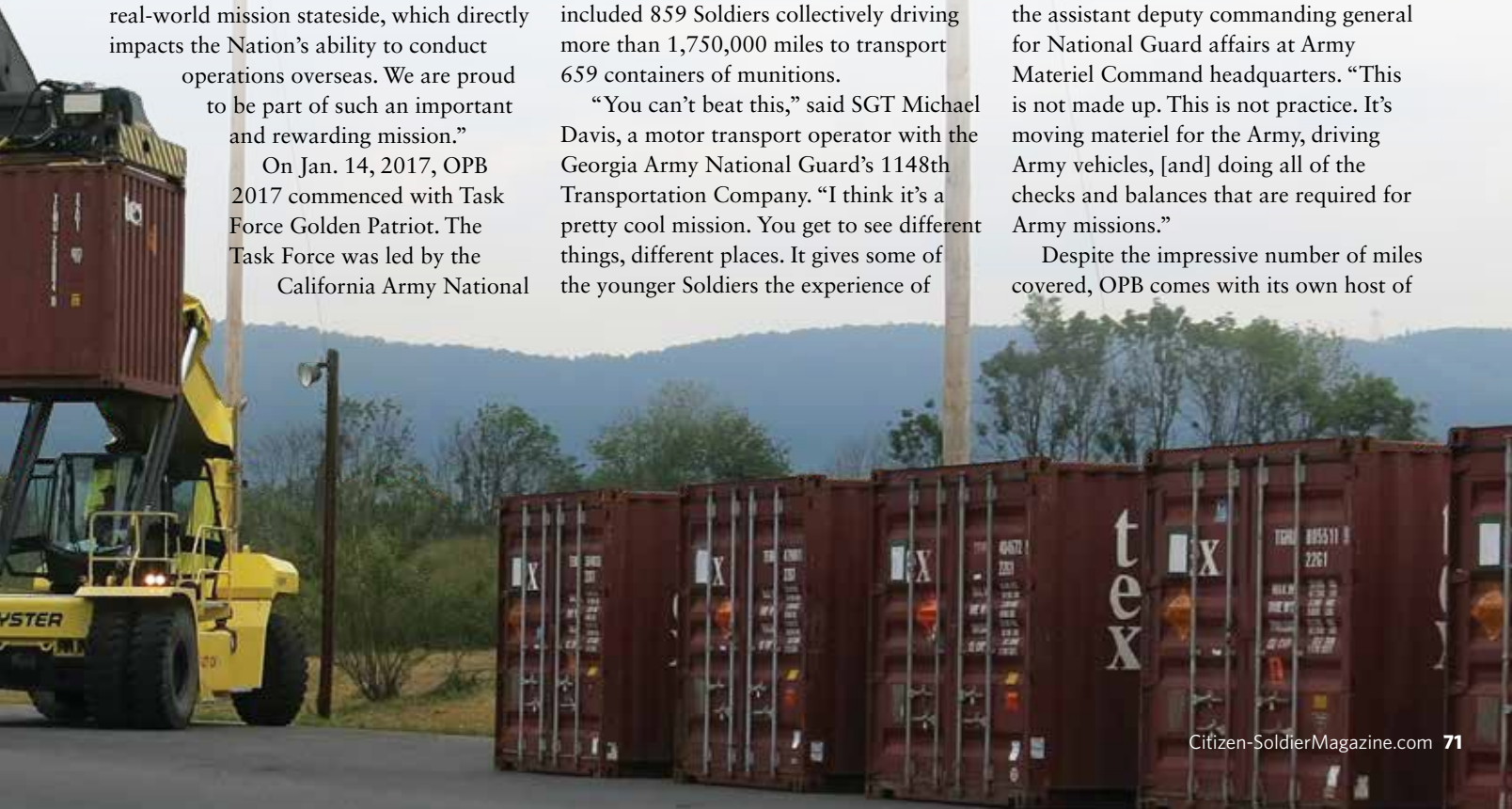
Upon arrival at LEMC, Soldiers lined their trucks along the road near one of LEMC’s containerization docks, where LEMC employees then worked to unload the containers from the trucks. Once the containers were unloaded, Soldiers continued on their journey, and the LEMC Logistics Operations team worked to inventory and store the items from the containers.

LEMC often partners with the National Guard and the U.S. Army Reserves to foster joint opportunities to develop Soldier, NCO and Officer proficiency.

“Not only are we delivering strategic munitions readiness but, tactically, these units get valuable on-the-job training, ensuring execution readiness on missions overseas if called upon,” said LTC Jeffrey Ignatowski, commander of the LEMC.

“This is real-world stuff,” said COL Larry Vaughn, executive officer for the assistant deputy commanding general for National Guard affairs at Army Materiel Command headquarters. “This is not made up. This is not practice. It’s moving materiel for the Army, driving Army vehicles, [and] doing all of the checks and balances that are required for Army missions.”

Despite the impressive number of miles covered, OPB comes with its own host of





North Carolina National Guard 1450th Transportation Company Soldier, PVT Shaun Wilkins, conducts diesel engine maintenance during convoy operations at Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point for Patriot Bandoleer 2017.

Army National Guard photo by SFC Robert Jordan.



Soldiers offload shipping containers in McAlester, Okla., during Operation Golden Patriot - the California Army National Guard-led portion of Patriot Bandoleer 2017.

Army National Guard photo by SSG Eric McDonough.

challenges each year. Weather often poses a challenge, with Soldiers frequently called upon to conduct line-haul operations in intense weather conditions. Heavy rain, snow storms and black ice are all serious concerns for which Soldiers must plan when traveling with several tons of munitions strapped to the back of a truck. According to COL Julian Bond, brigade commander of the 224th Sustainment Brigade, California Army National Guard, approximately 68 percent of the Soldiers with Task Force Golden Patriot had never operated tactical vehicles in the snow, or used snow chains, before the 2017 operation.

"It gave [Soldiers] an experience that they don't have very often – with stopping convoys, applying the snow chains to the unit equipment as they went through paths in California that had about six feet of snow during the operation," said Fore. "It increases unit readiness for what could happen in the near future."

Along with intense weather conditions, Soldiers experienced long hours, extended driving distances and heavy traffic.

"You have to pay attention to what you're doing," said SSG Steven Allen of the 1148th Transportation Company. "You have civilian vehicles out there. Our trucks don't go as fast and you've got people in some vehicles that want to get ahead; and that's when your accident avoidance comes into play. Sometimes they forget that we can't stop as fast as they can."

While OPB requires an immense amount of planning, for this unique

mission, Soldiers must be ready for those well-laid plans to change mid-operation.

As part of Task Force Hauling Freedom, Iowa Army National Guard's 1133rd Transportation Company hauled munitions from ships docking at the Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point (MOTSU) in Southport, N.C., to the Hawthorne Army Depot in Hawthorne, Nev. SFC Charles Jarvis of the 1133rd recalls how the need to rearrange plans was just a normal part of working in OPB.

"You are working with the point of origin, which comes from Sunny Point," SFC Jarvis explained. "When a ship comes in, you have to plan everything around that ship. But, [the ships] can have delays. You are planning to be there one day but they could need to reschedule to a different day. There's a lot of challenges [involved] to get everything changed around logistically in a matter of a week."

Despite the many challenges, both task forces successfully completed their assigned segment of OPB.

"We put in more than 6,500 miles in an 18-day period. And we drove through 21 States," SFC Jarvis said. "It was a big accomplishment for the unit to complete the task with no injuries or accidents. Everyone was motivated to complete the mission and they were all satisfied."

"These folks get really excited to be able to do this," COL Vaughn remarked. "This is what they are supposed to do. [On a mission], mishaps sometimes happen. Something will break down, you realize your equipment is not as good as you

thought, or some people need re-training in skilled driving. But [for Operation Patriot Bandoleer 2017], we heard nothing but good things."

The hands-on training and real-world challenges OPB provided helped increase the readiness and confidence of the Soldiers involved.

"The real-world mission adds a certain amount of value to our experiences that we just don't get in training missions," 1LT McDonald explained. "There's nothing notional about what we are doing here. There's a certain amount of weight to it, in both a literal and figurative sense."

With the continued success of operations, plans are actively in motion for Operation Patriot Bandoleer 2018, and Skivo hopes to continue growing the campaign.

"It's a great exercise for the drivers, NCOs, company commanders and the headquarters," said Skivo. "It teaches them how to coordinate across State lines and across component lines. The average unit does not get to deal with Army Materiel Command or Army Sustainment Command – that's done by their State headquarters. These Soldiers get to see an aspect of the Army and how the Army operates at a level they may never see again in their career. That's truly what the Chief of Staff of the Army wants to see – multi-component training and the components working together just as they would be if they are deployed." ●





FOSTERING A  
**NO TOLERANCE**  
ENVIRONMENT  
IN THE NATIONAL GUARD

**The National Guard Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program** works to educate, assist and empower Guard Soldiers to protect and defend against unwanted sexual contact.

To find your State/Territory Joint Force Headquarters Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, go to [www.JointServicesSupport.org/spn](http://www.JointServicesSupport.org/spn)

To report a sexual assault incident, go to  
**[www.JointServicesSupport.org/SAPR](http://www.JointServicesSupport.org/SAPR)**



**GUTS + GLORY**

# BATTLE BORN CHAMPIONS

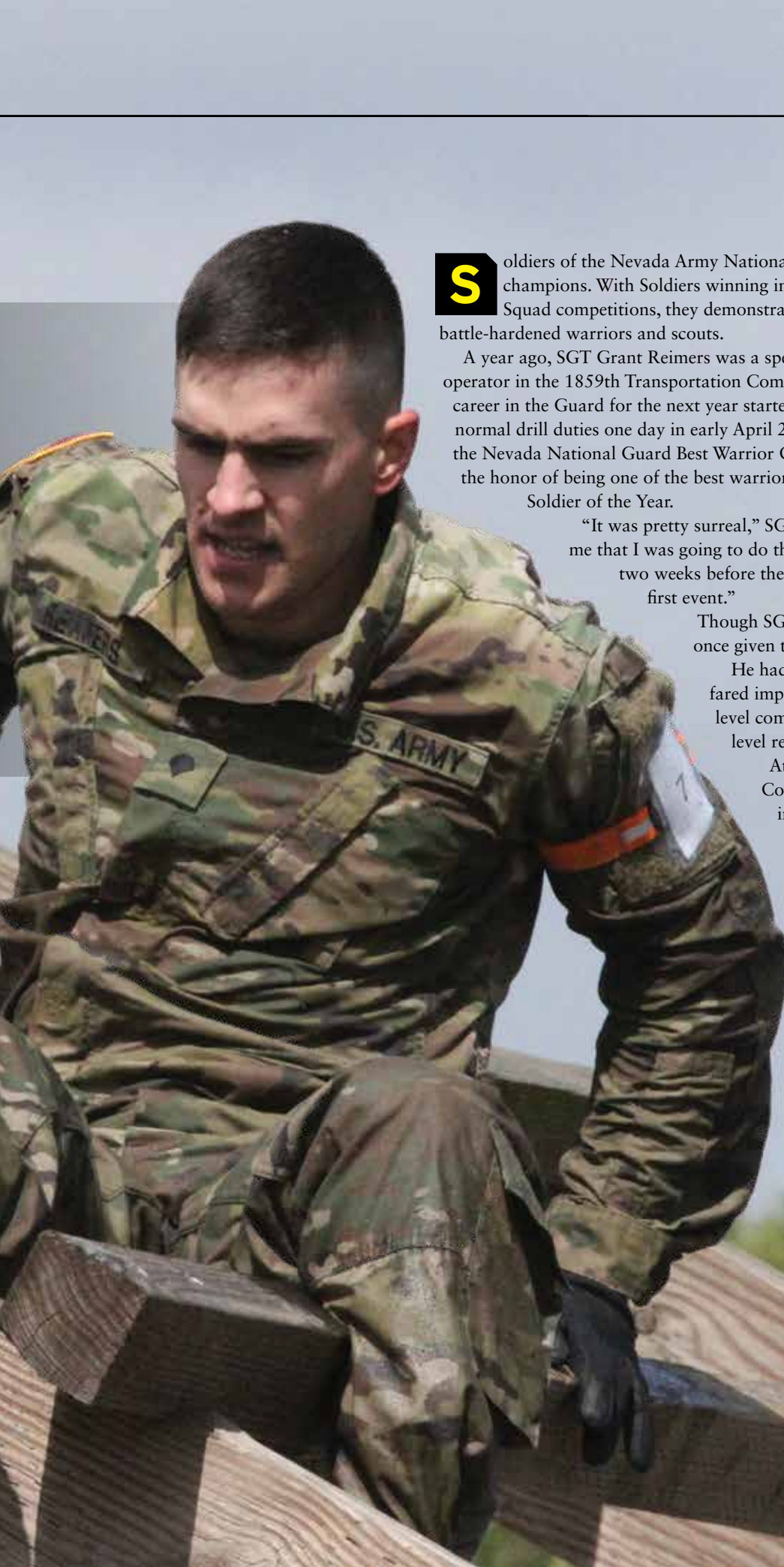
*Nevada Guard Soldiers Win Big in 2017*

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

SGT Grant Reimers of the Nevada Army National Guard maneuvers through "The Weave," an overhead challenge in the obstacle course event of the 2017 Army National Guard Region VII Best Warrior Competition.

Army National Guard photo by SSG Edward Siguenza.





**S**oldiers of the Nevada Army National Guard might call 2017 the year of champions. With Soldiers winning in both the Best Warrior and Best Scout Squad competitions, they demonstrated the strength and endurance of battle-hardened warriors and scouts.

A year ago, SGT Grant Reimers was a specialist working as a motor transport operator in the 1859th Transportation Company. The day that would change his career in the Guard for the next year started like any other. While performing his normal drill duties one day in early April 2017, SGT Reimers was “voluntold” for the Nevada National Guard Best Warrior Competition. By October, he would earn the honor of being one of the best warriors in the country and the National Guard Soldier of the Year.

“It was pretty surreal,” SGT Reimers said. “My squad leader told me that I was going to do this, and I came into the competitions two weeks before the battalion level [contest], which was my first event.”

Though SGT Reimers did not initially volunteer, once given the challenge of competing, he was all in.

He had little time to prepare, but SGT Reimers fared impressively well at the battalion- or State-level competition and progressed to the higher level regional events.

At the National Guard Best Warrior Competition for Region VII – which includes the States of Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah, plus the Territory of Guam – SGT Reimers continued to dominate and finished first in the Soldier Division. Another Nevada Guard Soldier took the top spot in the NCO Division.

That fellow Soldier was SGT Oswald Sanchez, a scout with Charlie Troop, 1-221st Cavalry.

The two Soldiers had tangled at the State-level Guard competition, where something of a friendly rivalry started between them. After four days and 11 events, they were locked in a dead heat for Nevada’s overall Best Warrior title.





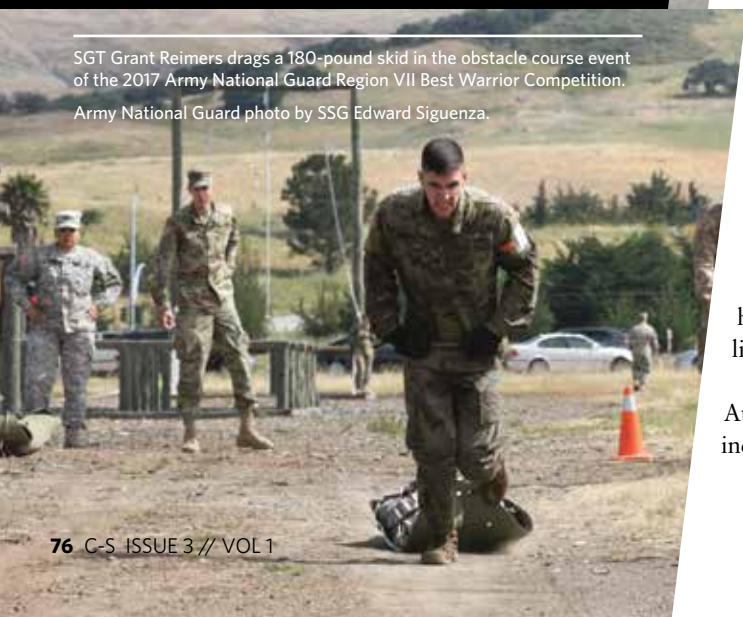
SGT Grant Reimers hurdles through side jumps in the obstacle course event during the 2017 Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition.

Army National Guard photo by SSG Edward Siguenza.



SGT Oswald Sanchez (left) and SGT Grant Reimers plot map coordinates during the land navigation phase of the Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition.

Army National Guard photo by SSG Edward Siguenza.



SGT Grant Reimers drags a 180-pound skid in the obstacle course event of the 2017 Army National Guard Region VII Best Warrior Competition.

Army National Guard photo by SSG Edward Siguenza.

“We didn’t know it at the time, but we actually were tied,” SGT Reimers said. “We did a shootout [as a tie breaker], but leadership didn’t tell us what it was for. [SGT Sanchez] edged me out [in that event] to win overall.”

Toughened by the State- and regional-level competitions, SGT Reimers continued to train hard as he prepared for the All-National Guard competition.

“It took over my life for the last year,” he said. “I mean even between the competitions, I was doing a lot of training in the State. I went to Fort Benning to train for a month. The fact that I made it so far made it a huge part of my life, because I had so much training to do.”

During the All-Guard competition, SGT Reimers estimated that, all events totaled, he rucked 35 miles in three days.

The Best Warrior competitions are not for the faint-hearted. The grueling events are designed to be as intense as possible, and are meant to stress the competitors’ physical and mental agility. Only the most fortified Soldiers emerge victorious.

SGT Reimers proved he was among that elite group of Soldiers as he was named National Guard Soldier of the Year after the All-National Guard Best Warrior competition. He went on to compete in the All-Army competition.

“It was pretty special to be representing Nevada because we never had anybody go to the All-Army competition,” SGT Reimers said. “It was cool to be the first one to go that far”.

At the All-Army Best Warrior Competition, SGT Reimers faced some new challenges.

“They ran the All-Army [competition] very differently,” SGT Reimers noted. “It was one big scenario where the events fit together within that scenario. It was actually pretty cool the way they did it.”

There were 22 Soldiers vying for the honors of being named the Army’s top Soldier and NCO of the year. At the start of the six-day competition, the 22 were briefed on the fictional mission to infiltrate an enemy territory.

When SGT Reimers learned of the weapons he was to use during the mission, he was pleased to find a sniper rifle, AK47, Glock handgun and shotgun. Shooting events had proven to be one of the Soldier’s strong suits throughout the qualifying contests.

By contrast, going before the appearance board had been a challenge for the sergeant in the past.

“For the appearance board, you go before a panel of senior NCOs,” he said. “They basically ask you questions from military publications like the Field Manual and Army Regulations.”

At the All-Army panel though, SGT Reimers was prepped and ready. At that level, the board consists of sergeants major of major commands, including Daniel A. Dailey, the sergeant major of the Army.



In the end, SGT Reimers finished second in the Soldiers division of the All-Army Best Warriors Competition. SPC Hazen Ham, U.S. Army Pacific, took home the title of Army Soldier of the Year.

SGT Reimers, standing firmly in the winners' circle, earned the honor of being one of the top Soldiers in the country.

"After having little preparation time and trying not to get lost in my first event, I was really surprised to have [won] second in the whole Army," reflected SGT Reimers. "Most of my friends are giving me grief over not getting first [place]. It's out of love though."

Joining SGT Reimers in the Nevada Army National Guard's 2017 winners' circle is the 1st Squad, 221st Cavalry, who also achieved excellence in competition last year.

The squad of six scouts finished the 2017 Gainey Cup as the second best National Guard scout team in the Nation.

The Gainey Cup is a four-day contest where scout teams are evaluated in events, including reconnaissance skills, call-for-fire, timed obstacle courses and land navigation. The bi-yearly competition – designed to test Soldiers' physical stamina and teamwork – is comprised of 24 teams from across the country, including three National Guard teams.

In January of 2017, the National Guard held its qualifying competition at Fort Benning, Ga., to select the teams that would represent the Guard at the Cup.

"We got a team together from the Soldiers in my troop," said SSG James O'Conner, squad leader for the 1st Squad. "We went out to the Warrior Training Center [at Fort Benning] and they kicked our

butts for about 24 hours. [They] took the top four teams out of eight, and we were selected. We came back in April to train for the Gainey Cup. Four teams went to the train-up; three went to represent the National Guard."

The two other Guard teams were made up of Soldiers from the West Virginia and Illinois National Guards. The West Virginia National Guard team took second place overall in the competition.

Once at the Cup, the squads competed in a battery of events meant to push the Soldiers to their limits and test the scout teams' prowess.

"It was 56 hours of continuous operations," said SSG O'Conner. "Everything had a

really clear timeline. We would do one event, hop on a [truck] and drive to another one."

He went on to list some of the included events, "We had an obstacle course; night land navigation; dismounted route recon; call-for-fire; night observation post; an

**"It was pretty special to be representing Nevada because we never had anybody go to the All-Army competition. It was cool to be the first one to go that far."**

– SGT Grant Reimers



Nevada Army National Guard Cavalry Scouts make their final sprint to the finish line in the pouring rain at the last event of the 2017 Gainey Cup.

Nevada Army National Guard photo by SGT Walter H. Lowell.



1-221st Cavalry Scouts look down a live fire range during the 2017 Gainey Cup.

Nevada Army National Guard photo by SGT Walter H. Lowell.



The Nevada Army National Guard Scout Team navigates an obstacle course during the 2017 Gainey Cup. Nevada Army National Guard photo by SGT Walter H. Lowell.

area reconnaissance lane; a stress shoot – where you do physical activities and then shoot at a target while you’re under duress; radios; putting on [CBRNE] gear; and first aid,” SSG O’Connor said.

“We didn’t really get any sleep,” said SPC Carlo Tinoco, one of the Nevada Guard Scout Team members. “Just straight-up activities, activities, activities.”

SSG O’Connor recalled how the training the team received at Fort Benning paid off in big dividends during the competition.

“We did well at the [events] that had a lot of dismounted and physical activities, because we came in good shape,” he said. “Establishing the night observation post – we did really well. The obstacle course, if I recall correctly, we finished in 30 minutes, while active Army was averaging about 45 minutes.”

The experience gained by the Soldiers of the 1st Squad, 221st Cavalry, at the 2017 Gainey Cup will serve them well beyond the days of the competition.

“The competition was good. It was a good experience for the whole team with an emphasis on basic scout tasks,” SSG O’Connor said.

“I learned that as a scout, you have to be a well-rounded Soldier. You need to be a master at everything like call-for-fire,

sending reports, patrolling and being stealthy and deliberate,” SPC Tinoco said.

SSG O’Connor said he plans to compete again

in the next Gainey Cup in 2019, but in more of a supervisory role. He encourages any Guard scout to give the Gainey Cup a try, and said that between the benefits of the excellent training received at Fort Benning and the possibility for career advancement, competing at the Gainey Cup is an easy choice.

“Do it just to see how you stack up against the rest of the Army,” SSG O’Connor advised.

“It gives you a good opportunity for four to six

weeks of training at the Warrior Training Center. The cadre there is outstanding. You really learn how to hone your craft as a Soldier, especially for a lot of units that are mechanized. We don’t do a lot of walking with packs anymore. We learned so much after six weeks.”

**“We went out to the Warrior Training Center [at Fort Benning] and they kicked our butts for about 24 hours.”**

– SSG James O’Connor

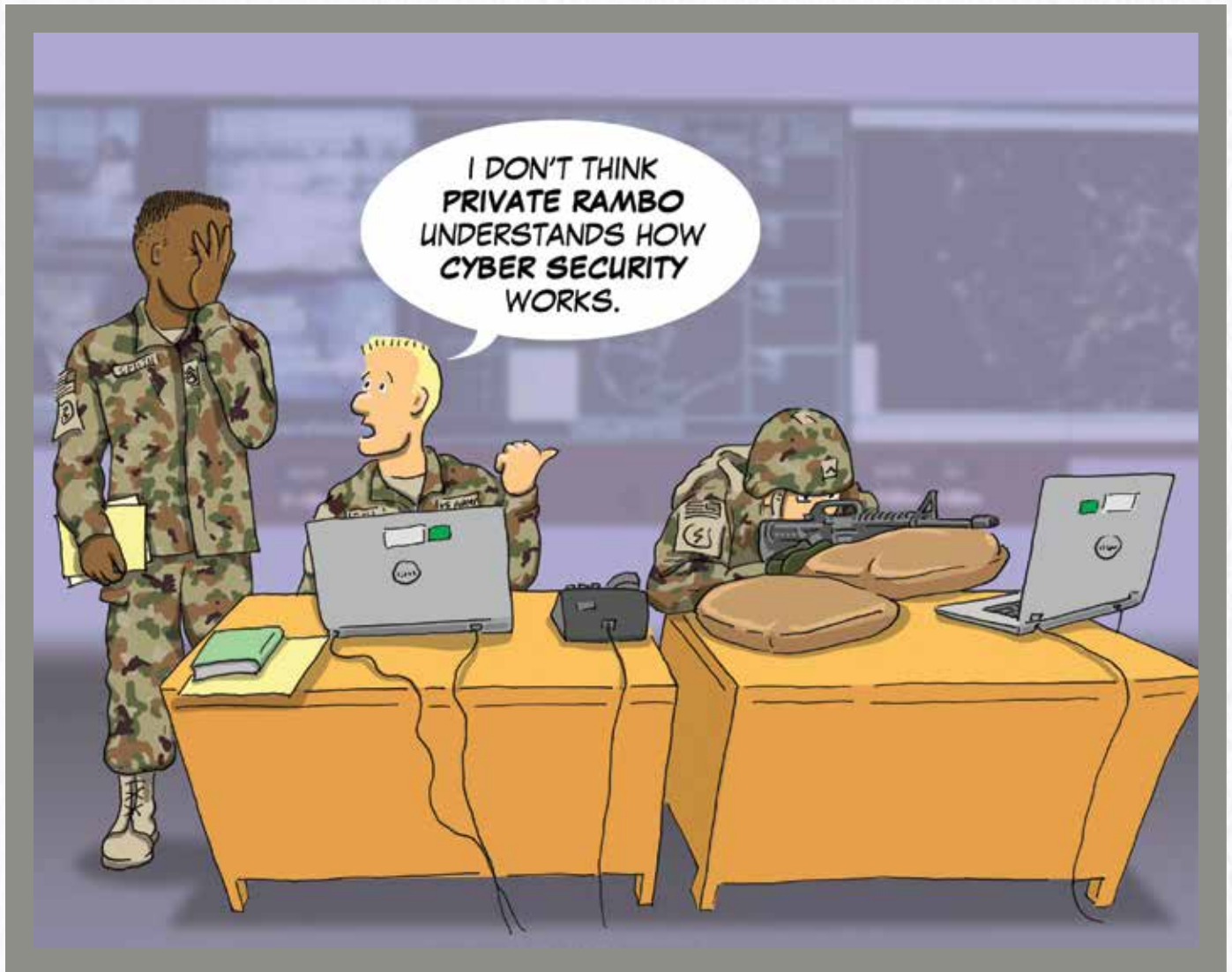
**Read the full article on the Warrior Training Center on page 51**

Two 1-221st Cavalry scouts simulate first aid on a training dummy during the medical lane event of the 2017 Gainey Cup.

Nevada Army National Guard photo by SGT Walter H. Lowell.







## HAVE A FUNNY CARTOON THAT YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE?

If you have a knack for drawing and would like to see your original cartoon or illustration published in *Citizen-Soldier* magazine, send your drawing to [Editor@Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com](mailto:Editor@Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com).







# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## **SGT Anthony Orduno,**

a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew chief for the California Army National Guard, takes stock of the Thomas Fire as he and the rest of the Black Hawk crew spend the day fighting the blaze on Dec. 9, 2017. At the time, 30 helicopters, 575 engines and 3,993 people from various organizations were fighting the flames. The Thomas Fire would go on to burn more acres than any fire in modern California history.

California National Guard photo by  
SrA Crystal Housman







# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## **Soldiers from the**

California National Guard's 1114th Composite Transportation Company help a 90-year-old woman climb up a ladder and into the back of their light medium tactical vehicle (LMTV) after evacuating the woman from her Montecito, Calif., neighborhood to a centralized drop-off point, Jan. 11, 2018. Massive mudslides left the community in ruins after soil-stabilizing vegetation was destroyed by the Thomas Fire. Heavy rains followed the blaze and caused mudslides that destroyed 73 buildings, damaged 466 buildings and killed at least 17 people.

California National Guard photo by  
SrA Crystal Housman







# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## **SGT Jose Paiz (right)**

and SSG Michael Aguilar both of the 1114th Composite Truck Company, California Army National Guard, guide a resident through thick, knee-deep mud from a Montecito, Calif., home to the Soldiers' HMMWV. The 1114th is credited with rescuing or evacuating more than 1,800 citizens in the Montecito area following the deadly mudslide that struck the city in the predawn hours of Jan. 9, 2018.

California National Guard photo by  
SrA Crystal Housman









# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## **SGT Jose Paiz of the**

1114th Composite Truck Company, California National Guard, walks back to a HMMWV, Jan. 12, 2018, after checking the depth of mud further down the street during a rescue mission in Montecito, Calif.

California National Guard photo by  
SrA Crystal Housman









# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## **New Jersey Army**

National Guard Soldiers prepare an M119A3 howitzer for a 19-gun salute as part of the inauguration ceremony for New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy at the War Memorial in Trenton, N.J., Jan. 16, 2018.

New Jersey National Guard photo by Mark C. Olsen









# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## **Soldiers in the 251st**

Engineer Company (Sapper), Maine Army National Guard train at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown, New Brunswick, Canada last August. Soldiers trained on various weapons systems, in diverse firing ranges, practicing mobility and countermobility tactics.

Maine Army National Guard Photo by  
SPC Jarod Dye









# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## **An AH-64D Apache**

Attack Helicopter, assigned to the 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, flies in front of a wall of fire during the South Carolina National Guard Air and Ground Expo at McEntire Joint National Guard Base, S.C., May 6, 2017. The expo is a combined arms demonstration that showcases the abilities of South Carolina National Guard members. It also offers opportunities for the South Carolina Guard to express its thanks for the support shown by fellow South Carolinians in the surrounding community.

South Carolina National Guard photo by  
Tech Sgt Jorge Intriago



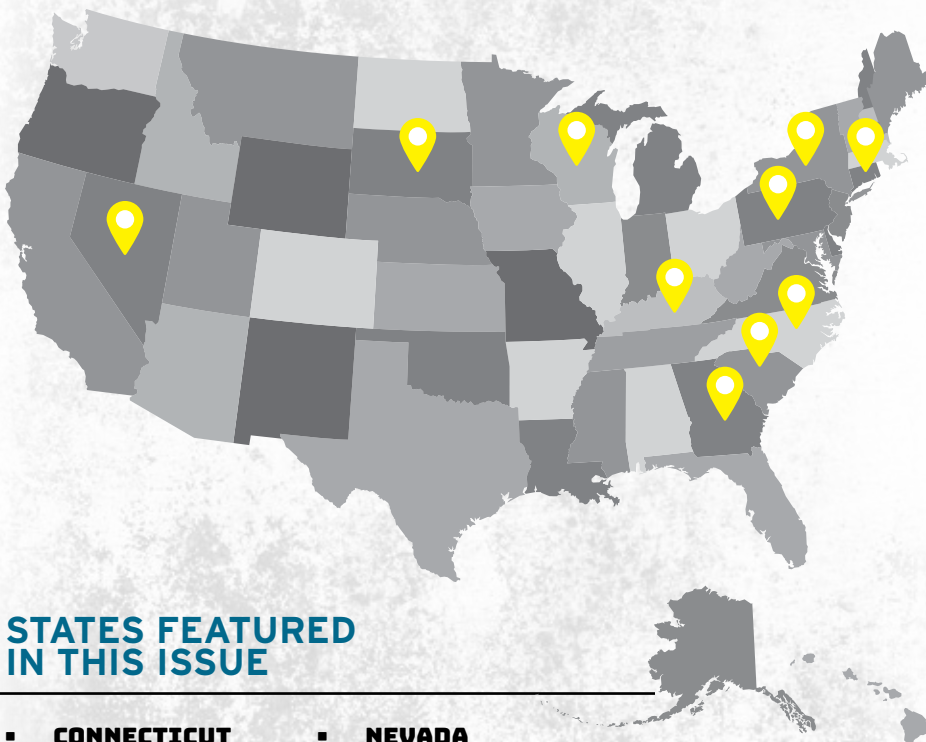
# ON YOUR RADAR

Army National Guard Spotlights  
from Around the Nation



PVT Joshua Weah accepts his certificate of naturalization to become a U.S. Citizen from U.S. Magistrate Judge William I. Garfinkel at a ceremony in Bridgeport, Conn.

Army National Guard photo by SFC Eduardo Coya.



## STATES FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

- **CONNECTICUT**
- **KENTUCKY**
- **LOUISIANA**
- **MICHIGAN**
- **NORTH CAROLINA**
- **NEW YORK**
- **NEVADA**
- **PENNSYLVANIA**
- **SOUTH CAROLINA**
- **UTAH**
- **WISCONSIN**

## CONNECTICUT

BY MAJ MICHAEL PETERSEN,  
CONNECTICUT NATIONAL GUARD

### New Connecticut Soldier from Senegal Becomes U.S. Citizen

**P**rivate Joshua Weah enlisted in the Connecticut Army National Guard in April 2017, looking forward to completing his training. He returned to Connecticut from AIT as a qualified wheeled vehicle mechanic assigned to A Company, 192nd Engineer Battalion, proudly serving his nation.

But for PVT Weah, the United States only recently became his nation.

On Dec. 14, 2017, at the Brien McMahon Federal Building in Bridgeport, Conn., PVT Weah, a native of Dakar, Senegal, who moved to America in 2013, raised his right hand for the second time this year and officially became a



U.S. citizen.

PVT Weah's story was uncovered in early December 2017, when he accepted an invitation to join State leadership in a ceremony honoring the National Guard's 381st birthday. To celebrate, CSM John Carragher, state command sergeant major of the Connecticut Army National Guard, found the Guard members with the longest and shortest service time available to take part in the traditional cake-cutting ceremony.

Before PVT Weah teamed up with 41-year service veteran MSG Davis Foster of the 143rd Regional Support Group for the cake-cutting event, he spoke with CSM Carragher, MG Thad Martin, adjutant general and commander of the Connecticut National Guard, and BG Francis Evon, assistant adjutant general.

"Every year, we invite one of our newest service members to take part [in the cake cutting] in order to introduce them to their leadership and give them another source of information to obtain advice from," CSM Carragher said. "PVT Weah embodies everything we look for in a Soldier. I was truly honored to meet him and wish him the best in his new career as a Connecticut National Guard Soldier."

It was during his talk with senior leadership that CSM Carragher learned about PVT Weah's upcoming citizenship ceremony.

Decked out in his OCPs, on Dec. 14 PVT Weah was joined by his aunt, nephew and niece to accept his certificate of naturalization. Also in attendance was SFC Eduardo Coya, his recruiter.

"As a recruiter, you have the privilege of seeing the newest generation of Guard members start their military journey," SFC Coya said after attending PVT Weah's ceremony. "When I learned that PVT Weah was finally obtaining something he has worked so hard for, I couldn't pass up the chance to be there and support a fellow Connecticut Guard member."

English is not PVT Weah's first language, although you would hardly know it in a conversation with him. French is his primary language, but he also speaks Creole and Wolof, the most widely spoken language in Senegal.

PVT Weah knows that his new life as an American citizen is a step on a much longer journey, but he advises anyone who takes the same path to never forget their roots.

"Becoming a citizen is an honor, but you always have to remember where you first began and where you first started," he said. "Appreciate everything that you go through, and once you're a citizen, don't forget to help those around you." ●

## KENTUCKY

BY SGT TOSHA COBLER,  
KENTUCKY NATIONAL GUARD

# Kentucky MPs Provide Support in Virgin Islands After Hurricanes

About 120 Soldiers from the Kentucky Army National Guard's 940th Military Police Company, 198th Military Police Battalion, deployed to St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands Oct. 1-27, 2017 to provide support to civil authorities in the wake of Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria.

The 940th MP Company's mission included presence patrols, critical site security, traffic control and curfew enforcement.

"We are so very proud of every Soldier of the 940th and the job they do," said LTC John Blackburn, commander of the 198th Military Police Battalion. "They are always there to answer the call, regardless of the mission. We're glad things came together for us to help the people of the Virgin Islands. Being a part of the team providing support is a proud moment for the 940th and the Kentucky National Guard."

Kentucky MPs worked with the Virgin Island Police Department (VIPD) to enforce curfews, performing an estimated 14,000 joint patrol hours. With extensive damage across the island, security was required at shelters and infrastructure sites. Soldiers also worked at traffic intersections across the island because nearly 80 percent of the island was without power, leaving few traffic lights operable.

"This was not only an MP mission, this was a National Guard mission and the 940th played a crucial role in support of local authorities," said CPT Jared Stakelin, commander of the 940th. "The relationship we built with the Virgin Islands Police Department will be a lasting one and a quality learning experience for this unit."

"Sure, we provided what assistance we could to help the Virgin Islands recover, but we are a better MP company because of this mission and the people we interacted with."

The 940th was augmented by members of Kentucky's 223rd, 438th and 617th Military Police Companies, and the 1103rd



PVT Hannah Highley with the 940th Military Police Company conducts routine traffic stops with the U.S. Virgin Islands Police Department in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands.

Army National Guard photo by SGT Tosha Cobler.



Military Police Detachment.

"It's missions like these that are the reason I joined the National Guard," said PVT Dean Gollar. "The people of the Virgin Islands were in need in a big way, and we were able to use our training to help them. Everyone there was so happy to have us around. I think we made them feel safe. It was a great experience, and I really feel like we made a positive difference."

Following Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria, the Kentucky National Guard also sent Soldiers from the 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade to serve in various roles in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Florida.

Overall, nearly 300 Kentucky Guard members have assisted with relief operations since Hurricane Harvey first hit last August. ●

## LOUISIANA

BY SGT. NOSHOBIA DAVIS,  
LOUISIANA NATIONAL GUARD

# Louisiana Guard Delivers Water to Senior Care Center in Tallulah

**T**he Louisiana Army National Guard's 199th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB), 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team delivered 4,000 gallons of water to the Olive Branch Senior Care Center in Tallulah on Jan. 24 at the request of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

The senior care center, which is home to 91 residents, lost water pressure due to the freezing temperatures in mid-January that caused a critical system

malfunction at the local water plant.

"Members of the 199th BSB are not strangers to supporting our communities and responding to emergency operations, whether it's a hurricane, flood or water delivery mission," said LTC Marc Prymek, commander of the 199th. "We are a community-based organization. Our Soldiers live and work in areas that our units serve."

The water provided by the Louisiana Army National Guard allowed residents to stay at the center instead of being relocated until repairs were completed.

Paige Grady, administrator of Olive Branch Senior Care Center, said the water was used for both cooking and drinking purposes.

"The town is under a boil advisory, and when we saw that our water pressure was going in and out, we put in the request for the water," Grady said. "We are extremely grateful for the timeliness of the Guard bringing the water to us and for the amount they brought."

For the Soldiers, it was a rewarding experience to help the center and its residents.

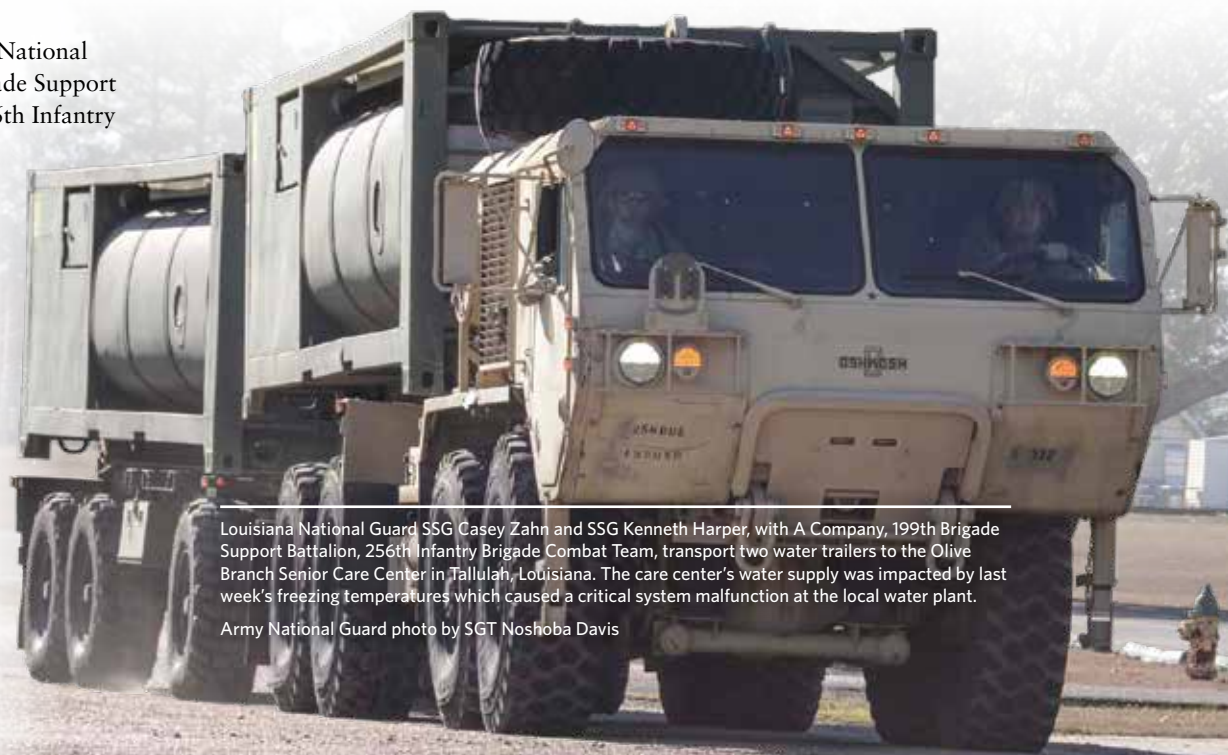
"We join the Guard to help people," said SSG Casey Zahn, supply sergeant for the 199th. "That's our job, and there's nothing more rewarding than being able to help our communities when they are in need." ●

## GEORGIA MICHIGAN

BY SFC JON SOUCY AND  
MARKEITH HORACE,  
NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

# Three Army Guard Teams Finish Among Top Six in Sniper Event

**A**n Army National Guard team took second place in the 2017 U.S. Army International Sniper Competition Oct. 15-20 at Fort Benning, Ga., while two other Army Guard teams placed in the top six. It was another strong performance for the Army National Guard, which fielded the winning sniper team in the 2016 competition. In the 2017 event, SSG Jaime Jimenez and SSG Joshua Cavalier, both of the Army National Guard's Warrior Training Center, took home the second-place award. SGT Daniel Rilett and CPL Trent Devos, both of the Michigan Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry Regiment, came in fourth place while the "All-Guard" Team, also of the Michigan Army



Louisiana National Guard SSG Casey Zahn and SSG Kenneth Harper, with A Company, 199th Brigade Support Battalion, 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, transport two water trailers to the Olive Branch Senior Care Center in Tallulah, Louisiana. The care center's water supply was impacted by last week's freezing temperatures which caused a critical system malfunction at the local water plant.

Army National Guard photo by SGT Noshoba Davis



National Guard, SGT Nicholas Mitchell and SGT Saykham Keophalychanh placed sixth.

SSG Jonathan Roque and SGT Brandon Kelley, a team from 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, won first place in the competition.

The event included 29 sniper teams from throughout the U.S. military, foreign militaries and civilian law enforcement agencies. Teams were tested on their physical fitness, target acquisition abilities, long- and short-range shooting skills, camouflage techniques and attention to detail. An aerial event assessed the snipers' ability to fire from a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter.

"The intent of most of the courses of fire is to put you in an uncomfortable position, under stress, and evaluate your problem-solving and marksmanship ability while [working] as a team," SGT Mitchell said.

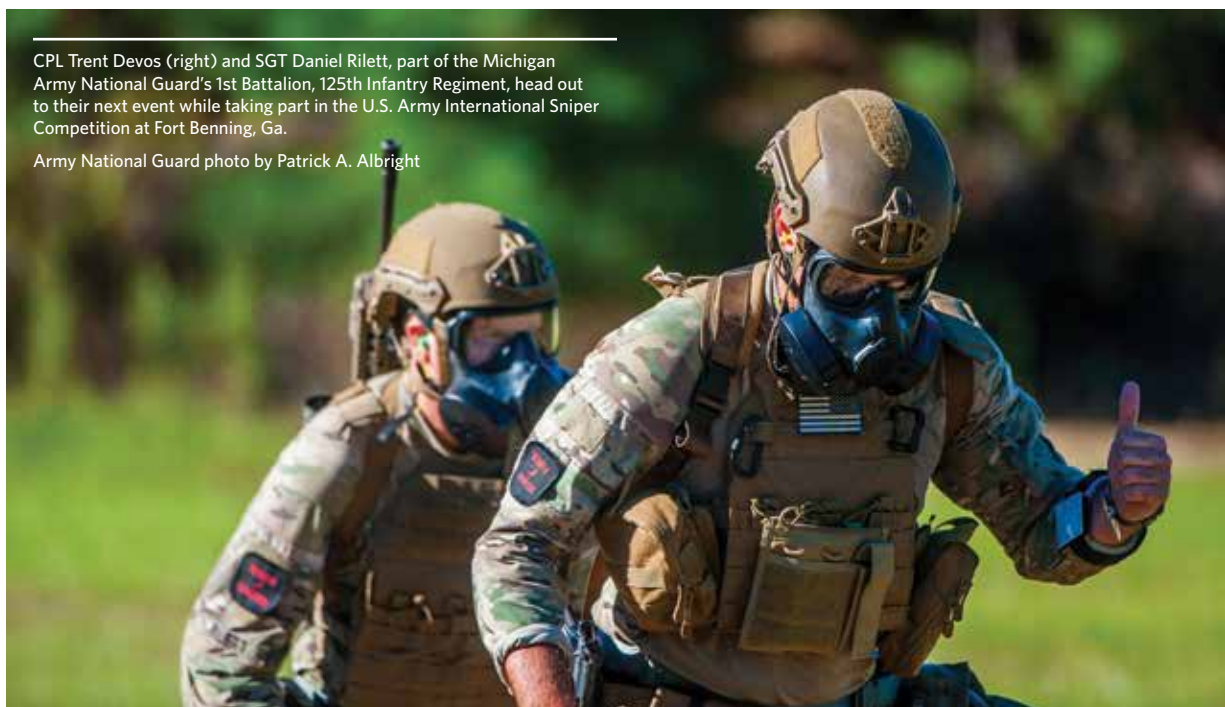
SGT Mitchell and SGT Keophalychanh won the 2016 International Sniper Competition while representing the Michigan Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 126th Infantry Regiment. The pair also won the 2017 sniper competition in the annual Winston P. Wilson Rifle and Pistol Championship, which tests the top marksmen from throughout the Army and Air National Guard.

For SGT Keophalychanh, the international competition allowed him to learn new approaches to putting rounds on target in a variety of situations. "Every team is going to approach it differently," he said. "It lets you compare and contrast different thought processes and mindsets in terms of approaching the problem [of engaging the target]."

SGT Mitchell added, "There's the

CPL Trent Devos (right) and SGT Daniel Rilett, part of the Michigan Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry Regiment, head out to their next event while taking part in the U.S. Army International Sniper Competition at Fort Benning, Ga.

Army National Guard photo by Patrick A. Albright



prizes, there's the spirit of competition. But in the end, it's always a learning event – learning different things from different people."

The competition also teaches participants about maintaining focus while testing their physical and mental endurance.

"These competitions stress your mind and your body a great degree while getting little to no sleep and very little to eat," SGT Mitchell said.

"Being able to stay mentally focused when you are stressing your body out to the max daily and getting very little sleep is one of the biggest challenges," said CPL Devos.

He emphasized that preparation and teammate support are vital ingredients to overcome those challenges.

"Keeping focused is a team task," CPL Devos said. "We try to stay vigilant with each other when one or the other starts to lose focus."

SGT Mitchell agreed that teamwork is of the utmost importance. "We have to work off of one another and constantly keep each other in check – whether it's reminding each other to eat or drink every so often, the constant equipment and ammo checks, or just reminding each other

to stay calm and keep putting one foot in front of the other until the job is done," he said.

SGT Mitchell said he was grateful for the chance to take part in the competition again.

"We are fortunate to get to compete against some of the most talented snipers in the world today," he said. "Just being able to share the misery and the bliss, the triumphs and the defeats, the honor, admiration and the respect of the man fighting valiantly to your left and to your right keeps me putting one foot in front of the other no matter the internal struggle I may be facing in the moment."

He emphasized that all of those factors help make him a better Soldier. "Pushing myself to my potential, eliminating my ego and understanding my individual strengths and weaknesses makes me a better Soldier, a better sniper and a better leader," SGT Mitchell said.

It also helps the Soldiers back in his unit.

"By realizing my weaknesses, I realize where the focus on my training needs to increase," said SGT Mitchell. "If, as a leader, I am weak in a specific area, chances are my lower enlisted Soldiers are also weak in that area. This gives

our training direction and increases our strength and combat readiness together as a team.”

That becomes especially important when deployed, SGT Mitchell added.

“These [Soldiers] are the ones who are going to be to my left and right when I or someone else needs them most,” he said.

With teams from Canada, Denmark, Germany and Norway in the competition, there was also an opportunity to learn different techniques from international competitors.

“Being able to share and collect information from the other [competitors] from around the nation, military and world allies – that’s what these competitions are all about,” CPL Devos said. “Competing is the obvious [focus], but being able to share and learn from one another is also a huge part of these competitions.”

As part of the “All-Guard” Team, SGT Mitchell said it was a special opportunity to represent the Army National Guard as a whole.

“For us, that was an incredible honor and responsibility, and kept us completely focused and driven to do our best to represent such an outstanding organization,” he said. ●

## NORTH CAROLINA

BY SSG MARY JUNELL,  
NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD

### Ongoing Training Takes North Carolina Civil Support Team to PNC Arena

**S**oldiers with the 42nd Civil Support Team (CST) sprang into action the morning of Sept. 26, 2017 in response to a call from Wake County Emergency Management that there were suspicious packages and a man caught with two bags of powder near the ventilation system at the PNC Arena in Raleigh, N.C.

Luckily, the call was part of a training scenario meant to keep the 42nd CST proficient in their skills, and give Wake County Emergency Management an opportunity to understand the capabilities of the North Carolina Army National Guard.

“Each of us on the team takes turns setting up a one or two day scenario for

the rest of the team as a proficiency test,” said SSG Jason Warrick, a health care NCO with the 42nd CST.

The 42nd has a federal evaluation once about every 18 months. Between those events, they create their own test scenarios, not only to prepare for federal evaluations, but also to ensure they stay ready for a real world event.

“Because we have the possibility of being called out with little or no notice, we have to make sure that we are constantly ready to perform at our highest level,” SSG Warrick said. “The more you train and the more realistic you train, the better you’re going to perform. We see ourselves getting better over time.”

To get the most realistic training possible, the Soldiers of the 42nd plan most of their scenarios to involve other security, law enforcement and emergency management services.

“It’s very important for us,” said Darshan Patel, an emergency management specialist with Wake County Emergency Management. “It helps us understand what capabilities there are outside of our local area, and it helps us to make sure we can work together, communicate together, and complete missions together before we have an actually event that happens



Soldiers with the North Carolina Army National Guard's 42nd Civil Support Team prepare to enter the PNC Arena in Raleigh, N.C. during a training exercise meant to keep the team proficient in their skills.

North Carolina National Guard photo by SSG Mary Junell.



Soldiers of the 42nd walk down the hallway of the PNC Arena during a fictional chemical emergency response scenario.

North Carolina National Guard photo by SSG Mary Junell.



in our area.”

Larry Perkins, the vice president and assistant general manager of PNC Arena said he hopes that by having the 42nd train at the large venue, both the Soldiers and Arena staff will be better prepared should a real incident occur.

“The more familiar [they] are with the facility, the better for us and for them,” Perkins said. “We know how to make decisions if something real happens. Our approach is to be proactive so the patrons don’t have to worry.” ●

## NEW YORK

BY ERIC DURR,  
NEW YORK NATIONAL GUARD

# Two Brothers Retire Together From New York Guard

**T**wo brothers who deployed to Iraq together in 2005 marked the end of their service in the New York Army National Guard during a joint retirement ceremony Dec. 2, 2017, at the New York National Guard Headquarters in Latham, N.Y.

LTC Joseph Claus, of Cropseyville, N.Y., ended his 30-year military career officially on Dec. 15, 2017. His brother, MSG Leonard Claus, of Grafton, N.Y., ended his military service on Nov. 15, 2017, after 33 years in uniform.

The brothers were both awarded the Meritorious Service Medal by COL David Martinez, the director of intelligence for the New York National Guard.

Both brothers started their careers in the Active Army and worked in Military Intelligence units during the Cold War before they joined the Army National Guard.

“We’ve been through a lot in 30 years,” LTC Claus said.

“And it’s good to know that no matter

what, you always have somebody who has your back,” MSG Claus added.

“This is pretty amazing that between the two of them, they have 63 years of service,” COL Martinez said.

MSG Claus enlisted in the Army as a signals intelligence specialist in 1984 and attended the Defense Language Institute, where he learned German. After completing his military education, he joined the 108th Military Intelligence Battalion in Wildflecken, then-West Germany, where he monitored East German communications.

After leaving the Active Army in 1989, MSG Claus joined the New York Army National Guard in 1991 and was assigned to the intelligence section of the 42nd Infantry Division in Troy. In 2001, he joined the 642nd Military Intelligence Battalion, which provided intelligence information to the 42nd Division.

During his career in the National Guard, MSG Claus deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. After returning from Afghanistan, he was assigned to the New York National Guard intelligence directorate, where he served as senior intelligence and security noncommissioned officer.

His awards include the Bronze Star, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Army Overseas Service Ribbon, the NCO

Professional Development Ribbon, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the National Defense Service Medal and the NATO Medal.

MSG Claus currently works as the emergency preparedness coordinator for the Rensselaer County Department of Public Health.

LTC Claus joined the Army in 1987 and, like his brother, served in military intelligence. He left active duty in 1991 and joined the New York Army National Guard’s 42nd Infantry Division in the intelligence section.

In 1995, LTC Claus decided to return to active duty. He served another three years in the Active Army, which included a deployment to Saudi Arabia in 1997-1998 as a military intelligence instructor for the Royal Saudi Land Forces.

After leaving active duty, he rejoined the New York Army National Guard and received a direct commission as a second lieutenant.

During his service in the 42nd Division, he traveled to Japan and Australia, and other missions took him to Germany, Kuwait and the United Kingdom. He was also part of the National Guard headquarters cell during the presidential inauguration in January 2017.

LTC Claus is a graduate of several military intelligence officers’ schools, as well as Army Command and General Staff College.

His awards include the Bronze Star,



Brothers LTC Joseph Claus and MSG Leonard Claus, both of the New York Army National Guard, stand together after their joint retirement ceremony in Latham, N.Y. The brothers were awarded Meritorious Service Medals during the ceremony.

New York Army National Guard photo by PFC Andrew Valenza

the Army Commendation Medal, the Joint Service Achievement Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the NCO Professional Development Medal and the Air Force Commendation Medal.

In civilian life, LTC Claus serves as emergency services chief for the police and fire departments at Watervliet Arsenal, the Army's cannon manufacturing plant just north of Albany, N.Y.

"The Army has been great to me," LTC Claus said. "It is pretty much everything I wanted. I walked straight out of high school into the military. It has given me opportunities you can't find anywhere else." ●

## NEVADA

BY JAMES BRABENEC,  
OKLAHOMA NATIONAL GUARD

# Nevada Soldier Uses Training to Help Others Survive Las Vegas Shooting

**W**hen the staccato sound of hundreds of rounds firing began, Nevada Army National Guard PVT Jacquelyn Trujillo ignored the comments of concertgoers around her who thought someone was shooting off fireworks or there was a problem with the speakers. Recognizing the sound of rifle fire, she quietly told her two younger sisters they would need to leave the outdoor concert.

"I didn't want them to freak out or panic. We did it calmly," she said. "As we were approaching the exit, that's when everyone else started to realize that this wasn't fireworks."

Las Vegas Metro Police identified Stephen Paddock, as the man who opened fire from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino on Oct. 1, 2017,



killing 58 and injuring hundreds at a country music festival before taking his own life. Among those killed was another Nevada Army National Guard Soldier, 1SG Charleston Hartfield, of the 100th Quartermaster Company (see article on page 4).

When the shooting started, PVT Trujillo saw people dropping to take cover, others falling from gunshot wounds or tripping and getting trampled. She and her sisters found safety behind a wall, where they met fellow concertgoer Tammy Dean.

"They saved me," Dean told a KTNV-TV reporter. "[PVT Trujillo] really took care of those of us hiding behind the wall. She kept us calm [while we hid], and kept me from doing something stupid like going inside looking for family."

PVT Trujillo credited her basic combat training as a Split Option Soldier at Fort Sill, Okla., for helping her lead others to safety.

"Probably what helped me to respond the best to what happened was being able to remain calm and recognize the noises [of rifle fire]," she said. "I remember hearing those sounds, or similar, when we had to low crawl or when we fired our weapons."

PVT Trujillo, who graduated Aug. 18 from B Battery, 1st Battalion, 19th Field Artillery, returned for her senior year of high school in Las Vegas. She is now a

PVT Jacquelyn Trujillo

Photo courtesy of the Nevada Army National Guard.

member of D Company, 3rd Battalion, 140th Security and Support Aviation Regiment. Looking back on her training at Fort Sill, she thanked all the drill sergeants who helped teach her the skills of a Soldier, though she singled out one in particular.

"SGT Aubrey Lonsberry was my drill sergeant," PVT Trujillo said. "It wasn't one specific thing she said that helped me the most, but just everything she taught us about the type of Soldier you want to be – how to remain in control, how to stay calm and be Soldiers."

SGT Lonsberry said Trujillo's actions didn't surprise her.

"PVT Trujillo consistently set herself apart from her fellow trainees by her high level of motivation and discipline," SGT Lonsberry said. "She brought good energy to our formation day in and day out. Her service was special to her, and it was clearly important to her that she learn and execute warrior tasks and battle drills correctly."

As people process the outcome of this horrific episode in their lives, Trujillo said some call her a hero for her actions that night. But she wants to be remembered in a different way: "I don't feel like a hero. I just feel like an American Soldier." ●

## PENNSYLVANIA

BY LTC ANGELA KING-SWEIGART,  
PENNSYLVANIA NATIONAL GUARD

# Pennsylvania Guard Helicopter Unit Rescues Injured Hunter

**M**embers of the Pennsylvania Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team (PA-HART) saved a hunter with life-threatening injuries in



Blair County, Pa., on Nov. 22, 2017.

First responders on the ground called for the team through the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, according to LTC Michael Girvin, commander of 2nd Battalion (General Support), 104th Aviation Regiment. The responders needed to move the victim quickly, and the remote, heavily wooded terrain made the extraction difficult for wheeled vehicles.

It was the first in-state PA-HART rescue mission, LTC Girvin said, although the team has been training for this type of mission since 2006. The Pennsylvania National Guard has completed other military-only hoist rescues during domestic emergencies.

The unique capabilities of the team's aircraft, a Pennsylvania National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk, was ideal for this scenario. Piloted by CW4 Keith Hogan and CW3 James Menoher, the UH-60 Black Hawk was configured with a medevac package, including a hoist.

"We launched from the Army Aviation Support Facility #2 in Johnstown, Pa., where the aircraft is located and [the] crew works," CW4 Hogan said. "It took

us about 20 minutes flying time until we reached the patient's location. We started to hover above the tree line and sent [civilian rescue technicians] Scott Grahn and Ricky Price down on the hoist to assist the patient and first responders on the ground, while SSG Benjamin Turgeon operated the hoist."

After the patient was loaded on the aircraft, the pilots and crew transported the hunter to a nearby field. There, the patient was moved to a civilian medevac aircraft and transported to a nearby hospital.

"The patient was relieved to see us, and we were happy to help," CW4 Hogan said. "This is exactly what we train for, and we're ready to be called upon for the next rescue mission."

According to news reports, the hunter injured his leg when he fell from a tree.

The PA-HART is a joint partnership among the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, along with credentialed civilian rescue technicians. ●

## SOUTH CAROLINA

BY SPC CHELSEA BAKER,  
SOUTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD

# South Carolina Soldier's Surprise Homecoming

Specialist Jarret Purvis, an all-wheeled vehicle mechanic for the 742nd Support Maintenance Company, South Carolina Army National Guard, was deployed for nearly 11 months for Operation Atlantic Resolve in support of U.S. Army Europe. On Dec. 16, 2017, he and his unit returned home.

Through some planning and a little help from relatives, it was a homecoming to remember for SPC Purvis and his family.

"It was my daughter's 4th birthday, and I wanted to surprise her," said SPC Purvis, who began preparations in November to surprise his wife Ashley and their two daughters, ages two and four.

Purvis said the planning was pretty easy because he didn't give his wife any firm dates on his return and led her to believe demobilization and outprocessing would take longer. When his unit arrived at the airport in Columbia, S.C., he was able to execute his plan with help from members of his family. He made his entrance during his daughter's party in a gymnasium in Lexington, S.C.

"I was completely shocked," Ashley Purvis said. "I had no idea he was coming home, and it was an overwhelmingly emotional surprise with lots of tears."

During his 10 years in the Army National Guard, SPC Purvis has deployed two times. During those times of separation, he said he missed a lot of milestones in his daughters' lives and many holidays. Through these tough times, he knew the sacrifices he made had purpose, and the benefits that come with military service were well worth it for him and his family.

"My first daughter was born during my first deployment to Afghanistan in 2013," SPC Purvis said. "It was challenging to



Pennsylvania Army National Guard CW3 James Menoher observes first responders transporting a patient that he and other members of the Pennsylvania Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team rescued moments before.

Photo courtesy of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard.

watch my daughters grow up through video chats and photos.

“The reason why I continue to serve my country is because I love my job. I love working on different types of vehicles that I normally don’t see, but the big determining factor is the long-term benefits for my wife and kids.”

For many service members to continue their mission, a strong support system is key. Knowing that the people they leave behind will be there for them and help them push on gives them purpose. A support system includes civilian employers as well as Family and friends.

For the last three years, SPC Purvis has worked for International Paper as a corrugator control room operator. He said his employer has always supported him and his military career.

“My management at International Paper is very supportive and understanding with my military career,” said SPC Purvis. “Without their support and understanding, I wouldn’t be able to pursue or continue my duties in the military – and it would make life so much harder.” ●



U.S. Army SPC Jarret Purvis, an all-wheeled mechanic for the 742nd Support Maintenance Company, South Carolina Army National Guard, hugs his Family after surprising them at his daughter's birthday party in Lexington, S.C.

Photo courtesy of the South Carolina Army National Guard.

## UTAH

BY SGT MATTHEW MAGRETA,  
CORPUS CHRISTI ARMY DEPOT

# Utah Guard Unit Prepares for Deployment at Texas Training Facility

**E**ighteen Soldiers from D Company, 2-211th General Support Aviation Battalion (GSAB), Utah Army National Guard, spent two weeks at the Corpus Christi Army Depot (CCAD), Texas, in November 2017 in preparation for mobilization.

The tight-knit group worked alongside hundreds of Army Civilians in a visit that was part of the Soldiers’ annual training. As they prepared for their June 2018 deployment to Iraq, the Soldiers received in-depth training from experienced aircraft mechanics and engineers.

“Our new Soldiers need to get their hands dirty and expand their knowledge of aircraft maintenance before our deployment,” said SFC Jesse Martinez, a component repair supervisor with the unit.

Soldiers of the 2-211th GSAB have experienced repair training through field exercises and weekend drills, but nothing as detailed as what is offered at CCAD.

CW2 Jon Creager said the continuous maintenance of aircraft components was a great training tool for the team.



PFC Randall Amayadias, of the Utah National Guard, puts a locking tab on a T55 at Corpus Christi Army Depot’s engine shop where he practices maintaining CH-47 engines.

Photo Courtesy of Utah Army National Guard

Joining National Guard units from five other states, the 2-211th GSAB will mobilize next spring at Fort Hood, Texas. Under the 35th Infantry Division, the unit will be stationed at Camp Taji, Iraq, in support of Operation Spartan Shield (see page 22 for the full story on Operation Spartan Shield). The 2-211th GSAB unit will be on the front lines in the continued global effort to defeat ISIS.

A majority of 2-211th GSAB Soldiers are junior enlisted who have limited experience with hands-on aircraft maintenance.

“The opportunity to replace broken parts, use new tools and utilize new techniques [is rare for us],” SPC Sean Dransfield said. “This work is very beneficial and more advanced than what we see on drill weekend.”

At the CCAD, most troops concentrated on engine assembly and composites, along with blade, structural and skid repair of the UH-60, AH-64 and CH-47 helicopters. The chance to work on wiring, soldering and installing was a good refresher for the aircraft electricians and avionics mechanics of the unit.

SFC Martinez noted that their upcoming deployment will be the first





SPC Ashtyn Zimmerman of the D Company, 2-211th General Support Aviation Battalion trims wire from a D-Ice Box to prevent frost on UH-60 rotor blades during avionics training at Corpus Christi Army Depot.

Photo Courtesy of Utah Army National Guard

for most members of the unit, and that additional training before mobilization was crucial.

“Last week, they replaced a 308 Mainframe, which supports a majority of the structure, and worked on hydraulics,” Army Civilian and lead mechanic Joseph Gonzales said. “CCAD personnel can [teach the Soldiers to accurately] troubleshoot once they are in the field if we can pinpoint the problems here first.” ●

## WISCONSIN

BY SGT KATIE EGGERS,  
WISCONSIN NATIONAL GUARD

# Wisconsin Guard Soldier Saves Choking Toddler

**A** Wisconsin National Guard Soldier traveling on military orders performed the Heimlich maneuver on a toddler, saving the girl’s life at O’Hare International Airport in Chicago on Dec. 7, 2017.

SPC Jasmyne Harris, a supply specialist with the Milwaukee-based 32nd Military Police Company, was waiting for a flight to Oklahoma City, where she was going to learn about new protective masks her unit would be receiving. She decided to grab some food before the flight.

“I was going to stop at one restaurant, but then something told me to just keep going, so I found another restaurant that was actually by the gate,” SPC Harris said.

Just as SPC Harris sat down, there was a commotion. A waitress yelled that a girl was choking. SPC Harris saw that the toddler wasn’t making a sound, and the girl’s mother was unsure how to properly help her child.

“I just went straight into reaction mode,” SPC Harris said.

She went straight to the family and began performing the Heimlich maneuver until the girl was able to breathe again and started crying.

SPC Harris said she felt relieved after she knew the girl was going to be all right.

SSG Brandon Grodsky, an automated logistics noncommissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 257th Brigade Support Battalion, was walking by and witnessed the entire incident. He said there were about 15 people in the area when the toddler began choking.

“They were all kind of frozen in place and not sure what to do, whereas [SPC Harris] just took that step up and actually acted more in a Soldier capacity, being able to handle a stressful situation and not freak out or freeze up,” SSG Grodsky said.

SPC Harris learned the different versions of the Heimlich maneuver for different ages while taking a lifeguard course in high school. This was the second time she performed the Heimlich maneuver on someone who was choking. SPC Harris said that years ago, she was able to save her younger brother, who was choking on a piece of candy.

The toddler didn’t require further medical attention following the incident. The girl’s family was grateful that SPC Harris intervened, she said. Harris’ training in the military and as a lifeguard helped her to remain calm and know what to do. That’s the mindset expected of Soldiers in the National Guard.

“If you’re in a situation where you have to act on it, don’t think twice,” SPC Harris said. “Just act, and everything will come like second nature.” ●



SPC Jasmyne Harris  
Photo Courtesy of the  
Wisconsin Army National Guard.

# DOWN THE PIKE

## Catch the Drift

### IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Drifting, the technique of burning rubber and sending your car down a racetrack sideways, has become a popular sport for many who feel the need for speed. The nuanced competition is judged on several aspects of driving including style, showmanship and crowd reaction.

Increasingly popular over the past decade, drifting attracts many extreme sport enthusiasts. CPT Ryan M. Quinn picked up his gift for the drift as a young amateur driver with a local driving club. Today he drives on the Pro-Am circuit, while serving his country and community in the Florida Army National Guard.

We'll rev up his story for you in the next issue of *Citizen-Soldier*.

CPT Ryan Quinn competes in the Gridlife South track event held at Road Atlanta in Braselton, Ga.

Photo courtesy of CPT Ryan Quinn.





# Recommended Podcast

**The Military Wallet** podcast is a weekly podcast providing the latest news and information about military and Veteran benefits.

The podcast provides up-to-date information on current benefit programs for members of the National Guard, Reserves, active duty, retirees, Veterans and Family members. Topics covered include pay, pensions, VA loans, GI Bill, Thrift Savings Plan and more.

Podcast recommendations are provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or an approval by the Army National Guard or Schatz Strategy Group of any products, services or opinions of any corporation, organization or individual. The Army National Guard and Schatz Strategy Group bear no responsibility for the accuracy, legality or content of the podcast. Contact the developers of the podcast for answers to questions regarding its content.

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