

# CITIZEN-SOLDIER

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ISSUE 6 // VOL 1

## THE DAY WE DREAD

Guard Soldiers train for our Nation's worst day as they conduct a CBRN response training that mimics a nuclear attack on U.S. soil.

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## RANGER QUALIFIED

1LT Emily Lilly becomes a trailblazer as the Army National Guard's first female Ranger Qualified Soldier.

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## JOINT TRAINING AT ITS BEST

Soldiers from across the southern regions of the country come together with federal first responders to prepare for the inevitability of their next disaster response.

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# STAND-TO!

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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.

Published by Schatz Strategy Group

©2018 *Citizen-Soldier* magazine

ON THE COVER: SSG Ashley Taylor of the 267th Engineer Detachment, South Carolina Army National Guard and a Soldier of the 166th Engineering Company, Alabama Army National Guard prepare to conduct search and rescue efforts after a notional nuclear attack during Guardian Response – a CBRN response training held at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center near Butlerville, Indiana, April 13, 2018.

National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohl

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Photo courtesy Ohio Army National Guard



## Employer Support Freedom Award

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

**E**mployer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) has announced the nominees for the 2018 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

ESGR is a DoD program that exists to encourage cooperation and understanding between reserve component service members and their civilian employers. The program grants a series of awards that recognize exemplary employers of National Guard and Reserve employees. ESGR's Freedom Award is the highest recognition given by the U.S.

Government to civilian employers.

Instituted in 1996, the Freedom Award is presented to employers who have shown unwavering support for their employees serving in the National Guard or Reserve. Since its inception, 250 employers have been honored in award ceremonies held at the Pentagon. Awards are presented to employers by either the Secretary of Defense or the Deputy Secretary of Defense.

This year, reserve component employees from all 54 U.S. States and Territories – or a Family member acting on their behalf – nominated nearly 2,000 civilian employers for the prestigious Freedom Award.

Each nomination is reviewed by ESGR State Committee members, who submit their

State's list of exemplary, supportive employers to the ESGR National Selection Board. The National Selection Board – which is comprised of senior DoD officials, business leaders and prior awardees – then selects 30 finalists from the State lists and ultimately honors 15 of those finalists with the award.

The 2018 Army National Guard Soldier Employer Finalists are:

Crystal Group Inc., IOWA  
LG&E and KU Energy, KENTUCKY  
Wicomico County Sheriff's Office, MARYLAND  
Worcester Police Department, MASSACHUSETTS  
Ecolab, Inc., MINNESOTA  
Minnesota Department of Transportation, MINNESOTA  
Barclays, NEW YORK  
Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, OHIO  
Greencastle Associates Consulting Company, PENNSYLVANIA  
National Grid, RHODE ISLAND  
Dunlap Police Department, TENNESSEE  
Central Washington University, WASHINGTON

Congratulations to all finalists, the ultimate award winners and to the Soldiers who benefit from the continued support of these noteworthy employers. ●

To nominate your employer for the **2019 Freedom Award**, go to [FreedomAward.mil](http://FreedomAward.mil) from Oct. 1-Dec. 31, 2018, and click on "Nominate Employer" in the main menu or email [osd.esgr-pa@mail.mil](mailto:osd.esgr-pa@mail.mil).





# Pizza MRE

## Mission Accomplished

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins  
U.S. Army photo by Michael Stepien



**A** long-awaited addition to the field ration menu is finally on its way!

Since the MRE version of combat meals first entered the field in 1983, Soldiers have longed for a way to satisfy their pizza cravings while in the field. However, creating the perfect slice that could meet standard MRE requirements stumped researchers and scientists for years.

“Pizza is the holy grail of MREs because for decades [Soldiers] have been asking for this,” Program Integrator at the DoD Combat Feeding Directorate (CFD), Paul DellaRocca told *Stars and Stripes* in February of this year.

The CFD, located at the U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center (NSRDEC), develops everything troops eat or cook in the field. They are dedicated to researching and testing the food processing and packaging technology that goes into producing MREs – making them the primary investigators behind finding the right formula to develop the pizza MRE.

The ongoing problem with crafting the pizza MRE was keeping the ingredients together in one package for the standard three years at 80 degrees without spoilage. A quick fix would have been to add chemicals and additional preservatives. However, researchers wanted to develop

the pizza using natural alternatives to ensure a fresh pizza-like taste.

“We had to look at formulations that maintain texture, flavor, appearance and odor, so that after three years, when [Soldiers] open it up, it has the same qualities as it did on Day 1,” DellaRocca said.

Three large-scale tests were conducted at two different food processing plants to confirm the pizza was producible. To simulate a three-year time span, the pizza MRE was placed in a 100-degree box for six months.

However, once it was clear that a viable formula for the pizza MRE had finally been achieved, and that Soldiers would soon have their hands on the long-awaited meal, a setback arose.

When the pizza went into mass production in March of last year, manufacturers noticed something odd. The pizza’s tomato sauce had turned brown. After close inspection, they found that while the sauce was still nutritionally sound, oxidation was causing the color to change. Since no one wants to eat brown pizza, production was put on an indefinite delay until a remedy was found. But have no fear, pizza connoisseurs! After tweaking the recipe with rosemary extract, which prevents the sauce from losing its red color, the pizza MRE is back in production and

slated to be fielded in 2019.

“Because the pizza is so widely requested, we tried to accelerate the timeline,” said Julie Smith, a senior food technologist at the CFD. “People got excited about it, but in the end, we wanted to make sure we got it right.”

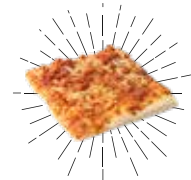
The initial release of the pizza MRE will only feature pepperoni as a topping, though it is expected that a variety of topping options will become available after CFD conducts a round of user feedback evaluations with Soldiers.

As far as taste goes, the new MRE has been given a thumbs-up by those who have been lucky enough to try a slice.

David Accetta, spokesman for the NSRDEC, noted, “I think it’s better than frozen pizza.”

With the pizza MRE on its way to the field, predictions are that it will also deliver a morale boost for Soldiers.

COL Bill Bigelow, Army Materiel Command director of public and congressional affairs, commented that, “When [you are deployed] and you get something to look forward to like a slice of pizza after you’ve been out all day on patrol ... it’s a taste of home.” ●





# **RANGER** **QUALIFIED**

## **1LT EMILY LILLY** — **First Female National Guard Ranger School Graduate**

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

1LT Emily Lilly, a platoon leader with Charlie Troop, 1st Squadron, 150th Cavalry Regiment and the first female Soldier in the Army National Guard to graduate from the U.S. Army Ranger School aims her weapon on a trail at Yeager Air National Guard Base in Charleston, W.Va.

National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohl



“My mantra was, ‘I’m not leaving here until they kick me out.’”

This mindset helped push 1LT Emily Lilly, platoon leader with Charlie Troop, 1st Squadron, 150th Cavalry Regiment, West Virginia Army National Guard, to become the first female National Guard graduate of the U.S. Army Ranger School at Fort Benning, Georgia.

No stranger to historic firsts, 1LT Lilly was also the first female in the Army National Guard to enter into a combat MOS as an armor officer. When she joined the West Virginia Army National Guard in 2013, 1LT Lilly had not an inkling of the history-making achievements she would accomplish in just a few short years.

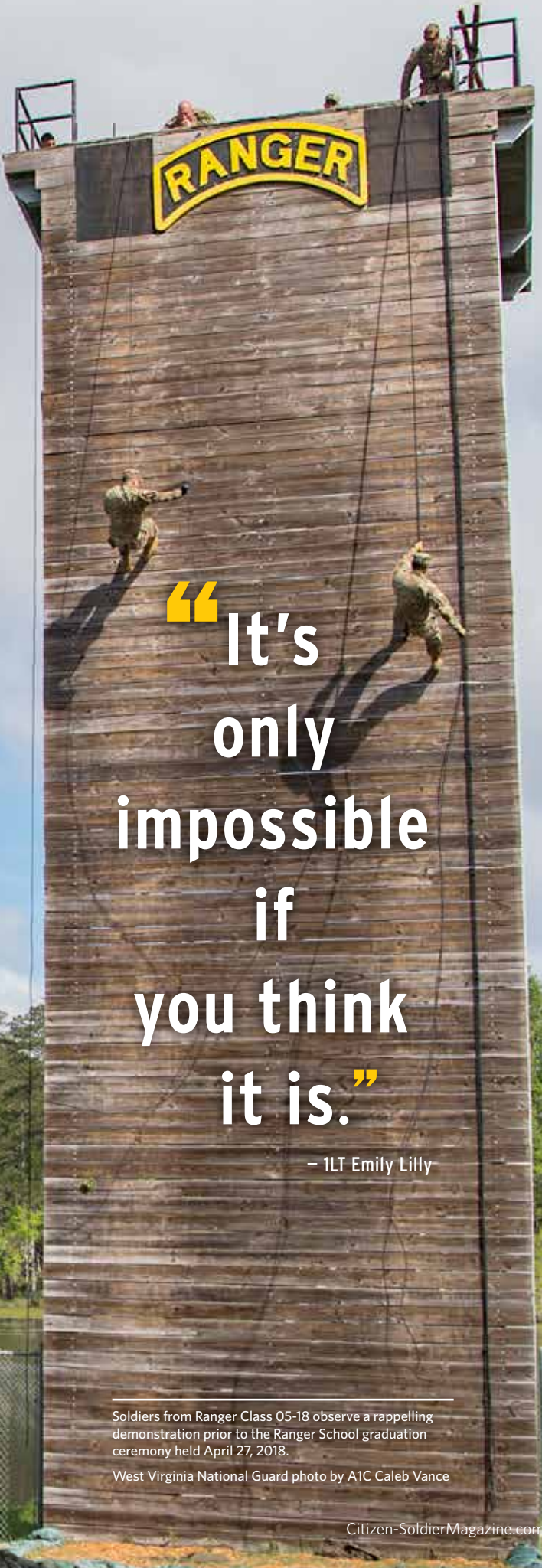
She joined the Guard at 33 years old after working 10 years in retail – all the while wanting a more rewarding career.

“With two small children at home, I wanted something that would make them a bit prouder of what I was doing,” explained 1LT Lilly. “I started looking at other options that were more community service-oriented. I saw that the National Guard had some postings out there, and I thought I’d like to go out on disaster relief efforts so that sparked my interest.”

Joining the Army National Guard in her 30s, 1LT Lilly expected the transition to be tough on her physically. However, she quickly realized that she was more capable than she had imagined.

“Initially when I joined, I thought that everything in the military was going to be very tough for me because I was older,” said 1LT Lilly. “I was 33 when I joined and 34 at Basic Training. Once I went through my training I was like, ‘wow – I’m doing things I never thought I’d be able to do and I’m doing them well.’”

Her journey to Ranger School began in August 2014, when the pilot program allowing women to join Ranger School was launched. She was fascinated by the new opportunity, but initially wasn’t sure if she was the right fit for the program.



“It’s  
only  
impossible  
if  
you think  
it is.”

– 1LT Emily Lilly

Soldiers from Ranger Class 05-18 observe a rappelling demonstration prior to the Ranger School graduation ceremony held April 27, 2018.

West Virginia National Guard photo by A1C Caleb Vance



“At the time I thought, ‘that’s really cool, but that’s way above my level,’” she recalled.

Still – always willing to take on a new challenge – 1LT Lilly joined the Ranger PT program and soon found that, contrary to her original thought, it was not at all above her level.

“I got in their PT program and the instructors said, ‘you know, you could probably do this,’” said 1LT Lilly. “They wanted me to go [to Ranger School] at that time, but due to funding requirements through the State, there was no way for me to go during the test program.”

Missing out on the pilot program did not stop 1LT Lilly from continuing to physically and mentally prepare herself for possibly attending Ranger School in the future. She followed the Ranger School trail program closely and sought out as much information as possible. Wanting to ensure she would meet the minimum physical standards for the Ranger course, over a span of three years, 1LT Lilly completely changed her training regimen. 1LT Lilly trained six days a week for a total of 20 hours each week to prepare herself for Ranger School.

Three days a week included an hour and a half of upper body-focused strength training, followed by a 5–8 mile run. Two days out of the week she would ruck for about 6 miles carrying 45–60 pounds. On the last training day of the week she would complete a longer ruck of 10–12 miles and would focus on changing elevations. 1LT Lilly also took time to go to the Arms Room in the Glen Jean Armory to practice the proper assembling and disassembling of weapons and radios – repeatedly watching tutorial videos to ensure she got it right. On the tactical level, she tirelessly studied the Ranger School 20 Boards, which spell out what is expected of a Ranger patrol.

She kept a close eye on the progress of those in the program and found herself excited for the women who made it through.

“When two women finally made it through, they were in their mid-20s and I thought, ‘that’s awesome that these younger women are doing this,’ but I didn’t know if physically I could do it,” 1LT Lilly commented.



**“I thought I had just as much a shot as anyone who was prepared going into the course.”**

– 1LT Emily Lilly

It wasn’t until 1LT Lilly saw a graduate with attributes that resembled her own that she could fully picture herself succeeding in the program.

“I heard about this 37-year-old major who had two children and who was still in there fighting through and getting re-cycled,” said 1LT Lilly. “When she graduated I said, ‘you know what – maybe I can do this too.’”

After three years of training, 1LT Lilly entered Ranger School at 38 years old. In 2017, Ranger School had a 67 percent failure rate among its participants, but that did not intimidate 1LT Lilly who said she felt prepared and capable when finally entering Ranger School.

“I won’t say that I thought I’d make it through, but I thought I had just as much a shot as anyone who was prepared going into the course,” she

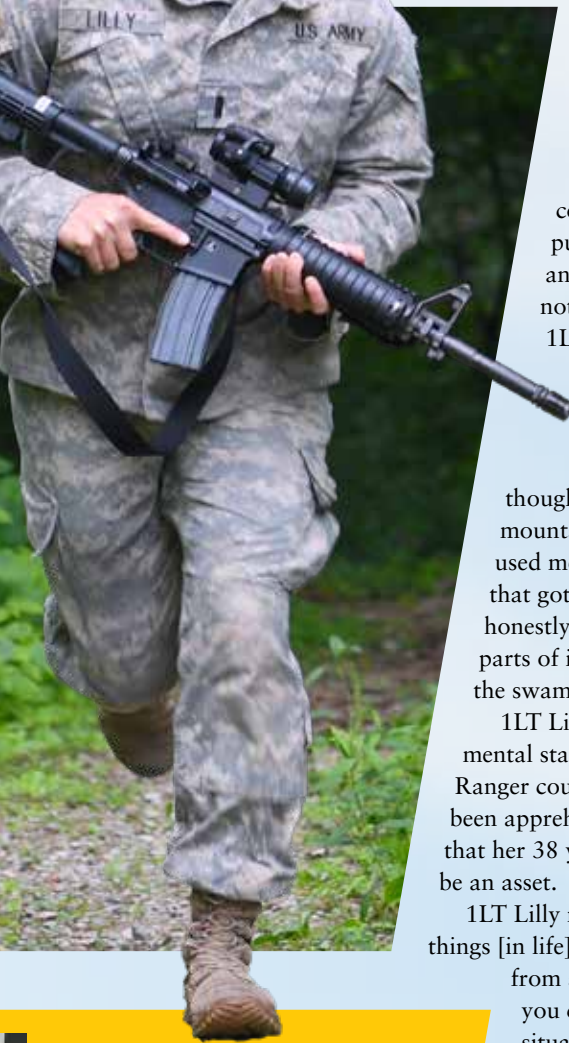
said. “A lot of schools get built up as being incredibly difficult – which they are – but a lot [of] times, if you break it down to one day at a time, it’s doable.”

Ranger School is renown as one of the toughest training courses a Soldier can experience. The 62-day course includes three phases: Benning, Mountain and Swamp, which focus on squad operations, platoon operations and advanced development of small unit tactics, respectively. Each phase tests a Soldier’s

1LT Emily Lilly kneels down to allow her children to pin the coveted Ranger Tab to her uniform following the Ranger School graduation ceremony April 27, 2018, at Fort Benning, Ga. West Virginia National Guard photo by A1C Caleb Vance







ABOVE LEFT: 1LT Emily Lilly helps fellow Soldiers prepare a helo landing zone as a Pathfinder student during a VIRS (verbally initiated release system) exam at Camp Dawson, W.Va., on Sept. 20, 2017.

West Virginia Army National Guard photo by SGT Mickey Miller

ABOVE RIGHT: 1LT Emily Lilly climbs the Weaver on an obstacle course near Yeager Air National Guard Base.

National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohl

combat arms-related skills and pushes their limits – both physically and mentally. Ranger School was not without its challenges for 1LT Lilly, but she said overall she enjoyed the experience.

“Mountains was absolutely horrible for me.

There were times when I thought I was going to die up on those mountains,” 1LT Lilly laughed. “But I used mental strength and willpower, and that got me through. Other than that, I honestly had a lot of fun doing certain parts of it. I loved the swamps. I would do the swamps all year.”

1LT Lilly emphasized the importance of mental stamina in succeeding in the grueling Ranger course. While she previously had been apprehensive about her age, she learned that her 38 years of life experience proved to be an asset.

1LT Lilly noted, “I’ve been through tough things [in life]. I’ve been through being fired from a job. I know that life goes on and you can bounce back from difficult situations. The things that they do to try to mentally mess with you didn’t faze me. I just said, ‘I’m going to keep going until I graduate or they tell me that I’m not welcome here anymore.’”

After five demanding months, 1LT Lilly graduated from the program and earned the coveted Ranger tab on April 27, 2018.

“I feel fulfillment in knowing that I was

able to complete the course, and relief in knowing that I never have to go back,” she said jokingly.

While she is the first female National Guard Soldier to graduate from the Ranger School, 1LT Lilly said she is humbled to be an addition to a list of strong women from all branches of military service who have also accomplished the feat.

“I know almost all of the women who are Ranger tabbed, so I’m just another woman who was able to successfully make it through,” she reflected. “[Like them,] I learned that I’m capable of a lot more than I ever thought possible. If someone told me that I was going to carry 100 pounds over a mountain, I would have said, ‘no way!’ But I did it. And I survived to live to tell about it.”

After the years of training and mental endurance it took to accomplish her goal, 1LT Lilly encourages others to strive to achieve their goals, no matter how difficult they may appear.

“It’s only impossible if you think it is,” said 1LT Lilly. “If a goal or a dream is important to you – whether it’s Ranger School, commissioning or [making a] 300 on the APFT – whatever it is, it’s just a matter of how serious you are going to be about your training and you have to be committed to that preparation.”

1LT Lilly has become a trailblazer in a rewarding career. She has achieved her goal not only of completing Ranger School, but more importantly, of being part of a profession that would make her children proud.

“My kids motivate me,” 1LT Lilly said. “I’m motivated by wanting to create a better world for them. I want them to grow up feeling like they can achieve anything. I want them to see that no dream is too big and that hard work will take them to where they want to go.” ●

ABOVE: 1LT Emily Lilly

National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohl

FAR LEFT: 1LT Emily Lilly works as the gunner on a Bradley Fighting Vehicle during crew validation at Fort Picket, Va. May 2017.

LEFT: 1LT Emily Lilly (center) pictured during the West Virginia Army National Guard 2017 AT with SPC Pauline Cole (left) and SPC Rashanda Blake (right), the first and third, respectively, female 91M (Bradley Fighting Vehicle system maintainers) in the National Guard.

Photos courtesy 1LT Emily Lilly





# Honoring the Sons and Daughters of our Military Heroes

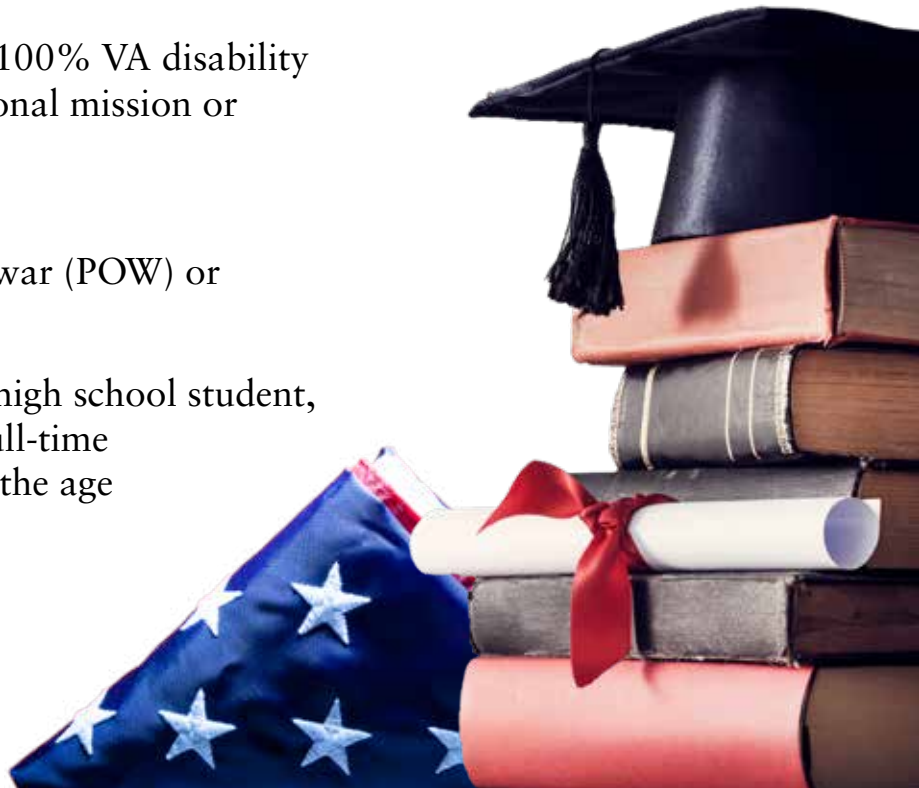
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# Toxic Lance

## A CBRN DEFENSE PARTNERSHIP

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins


Army National Guard photos by SSG Steven Smith

**Thirty-four Soldiers from the Indiana and Texas Army National Guard took to Slovakia this past spring to participate in an international CBRN exercise.**

The annual exercise called Toxic Lance is a two-week training event held by the Slovakian CBRNE Battalion with participation from the Czech Republic's CBRN Regiment. From March 10–25, 2018, Soldiers trained at Lest Training Area in Slovakia to build interoperability and strengthen their skills in chemical warfare.

“We were cross-training with the Czechs and Slovaks,” explained SSG James Cooper of the 438th Chemical Company, Indiana Army National Guard. “We trained on operations of decontamination and reconnaissance of CBRN.”

The first week of Toxic Lance not only consisted of scenario-based training on CBRN decontamination, reconnaissance and surveillance, but also on space tunnel entry, clandestine lab sampling, outdoor soil and water sampling, and search and rescue. At the end of the week, Soldiers demonstrated their new learning in a simulated response that required the detection of live Chemical Warfare Agents including Lewisite, Di-Phosgene, Mustard and Sarin.



Soldiers of the Texas Army National Guard and Indiana Army National Guard take a team photo while deployed to work with members of the Czech Republic and Slovakian military forces during Operation Toxic Lance held in March 2018, at Training Area Lest in central Slovakia.





TOP: Donned in Mission Oriented Protective Posture (MOPP) suits, Indiana and Texas National Guard Soldiers work with members of the Czech Republic's CBRN Regiment during Operation Toxic Lance held in March 2018 at Training Area Lest in central Slovakia.

BOTTOM: Soldiers of Texas Army National Guard's 836th Engineer Company work alongside their fellow Soldiers from Indiana Army National Guard's 438th Chemical Company during Operation Toxic Lance – a chemical warfare training exercise hosted by the Slovakian CBRN Battalion, in March 2018.

RIGHT: A joint team of Indiana Army National Guard, Texas Army National Guard, Czech and Slovakian Soldiers carry out space tunnel entry procedures as part of a fictional scenario during Operation Toxic Lance held in March 2018 at Training Area Lest in central Slovakia.

Week two of the exercise covered many of the same training topics as week one, but with one significant adaptation. Instead of operating in a classroom as they did in the first half of the course, they were responding to the fictional threat in both a large tactical maneuver space and in actual urban terrain. In the second week of training, Soldiers of the three CBRN platoons from the United States, Slovakia and Czech Republic worked together to establish search and rescue elements, medical triage of contaminated victims and emergency decontamination stations.

The Indiana Army National Guard's 438th Chemical Company participated in Toxic Lance through the Indiana National Guard's 24-year State Partnership with Slovakia. Working with their Slovakian counterparts for well over two decades, members of the Indiana Guard have

been able to foster a positive relationship with the Slovakian army that grows with each exercise.

"Every time we go [to Slovakia], we try to man half of the group with those who have never been and half of the group with those who have; that way, the Slovakian army sees familiar faces [from the U.S.]," explained MSG Jeffery Jackson, observer-controller-trainer for the 438th.

"We have an excellent working relationship with the Soldiers from Slovakia and the Czech Republic," said 1SG Craig Davis of the 438th. "It's really a great feeling when you go to another country and Soldiers [there] are happy to see you. They welcome us back."

Also participating in Toxic Lance were Soldiers of the Texas Army National Guard's 836th Engineer Company, 136th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. The Texas Guard Soldiers are search and rescue-qualified, and tasked with providing real-world response to FEMA Region VI as part of the 136th's Homeland Response Force.

Seeking to increase its capabilities in protecting its citizens from the threats presented by extremist and terrorist organizations, the Slovakian army is currently focused on improving its rapid mobilization response operations and enhancing its rescue techniques that would be used during a chemical attack. Soldiers from the 836th participated in the Toxic Lance training to provide search and rescue guidance to the Slovakian soldiers.

"We do not have any type of search and rescue units, or soldiers trained in that discipline here in the Slovak army," said Lt. Col. Oliver Toderiska, CBRNE Battalion commander for the Slovakian army. "Seeing the Texas Soldiers integrated with our chemical response teams, working hand in hand with our own soldiers, shows us how we could also use search and rescue."

During Toxic Lance, U.S. Soldiers were merged into Slovakian and Czech platoons. The initial transition into the platoons presented a few challenges, including communication barriers, which slowed effective integration.

"At first, [soldiers of] all three nations struggled with the language barrier, but they



immediately began working on different methods of communication to overcome this struggle,” MSG Jackson said.

MSG Jackson went on to note the learning opportunity present in the struggle.

“The language barrier allowed the opportunity for U.S. Soldiers to refresh their CBRN and S&E [science and engineering] knowledge,” he said. “The language barrier forced the U.S. soldiers to break each step down to the simplest form to share the knowledge.”

Toxic Lance incorporated situations where Soldiers were exposed to live chemical agents. Each day, the exercise presented a new scenario where Soldiers needed to respond to a fictional threat. One scenario simulated a lab run by a terrorist organization that had manufactured and released a chemical weapon.

Though the Soldiers of the 836th were participating in the training to impart knowledge concerning search and rescue, they had little experience with CBRN. When the Texas Guard Soldiers integrated with the Slovakian army – one of the

“

*The language barrier allowed the opportunity for U.S. Soldiers to refresh their CBRN and S&E ... The language barrier forced the U.S. soldiers to break each step down to the simplest form to share the knowledge.*

”

– MSG Jeffery Jackson

world leaders in CBRN defense – during the CBRN exercises, the tables were turned and the teachers became the students.

“The 836th had never experienced working in a CBRN environment and therefore had [trouble] adjusting their SOPs,” explained MSG Jackson. “Towards the end of the exercise, the 836th Engineer Company showed great improvement and had adjusted their SOPs accordingly.”

For some of the Texas Soldiers, Toxic Lance represented their first time being exposed to a live chemical agent.

“We’ve worked a lot with performing in and mitigating radiation threats, but we have not spent a lot of time on weaponized chemical agents,” said SGT Myles Merriweather of the 836th. “We can take what we’ve learned here and use it to establish our own [processes] back home.”

The training with the Slovakian and Czech forces gave many of the U.S. Soldiers unexpected insight on how specific areas of their own training – areas that they previously did not realize were lacking – could be broadened to





encompass more.

“The training gave me a new perspective on how search and rescue operations can integrate into chemical reconnaissance,” said SPC Katty Gracia of the 836th. “Even with a language barrier, it’s amazing what you can accomplish when you have a common goal and the right motivation.”

MSG Jackson said he was impressed by the improvements Soldiers made throughout the entire exercise.

“Every day, the integration of the U.S. Soldiers into their respective [Czech and Slovakian] platoons improved to the point where they were working together effectively and efficiently,” remarked MSG Jackson. “Throughout the first week, both platoons were given different suggestions of how to improve each country’s SOP. During the second week, each platoon took those suggestions under consideration. Some of the suggestions worked out really well and were adapted by each platoon. By the end of Toxic Lance, each nation was able to take the lessons learned from the others, adjust their own SOPs and collaborate with

all three groups to form a smooth and effective unit.”

The exercise served as a challenging hands-on experience that encouraged the sharing of different techniques and procedures.

“My favorite aspect was learning other countries’ decontamination methods,” said 1SG Davis. “The Slovaks used different equipment for chemical biological decontamination, which is educational for U.S. troops.”

“It is live agent training, so it is dangerous,” said MSG Jackson. “[The Slovaks and Czechs] have safety procedures they use that we don’t use. We learned about their work ethic, their methods of decontamination versus ours and about their culture.”

Along with learning the CBRN procedures of the Slovak army, the time in Slovakia also gave the U.S. troops the opportunity to learn about their Eastern European counterparts from a cultural perspective. The final two days of Toxic Lance were designated “Diversity Days,” where U.S. Soldiers were given the chance to experience the Slovakian culture outside

of the military training area.

“The Slovak soldiers and American Soldiers got together and [the Slovaks] took us out to eat their traditional meals and tour some of the castles,” said SFC Doug Davies of the 438th. “We were able to hang out with them and get to know them personally.”

After participating in Toxic Lance, these Indiana and Texas Army National Guard Soldiers can feel confident in their ability to work with their partners from Slovakia and the Czech Republic to capably respond to a chemical attack anywhere in the world.

“The biggest takeaway from this is if we actually had to go to Slovakia or the Czech Republic, or somewhere in Europe, we could work side by side with [their forces] because we’ve been training with them,” 1SG Davis said. “In the event that we ever have to do a joint exercise in a real-world mission, they know our procedures and we know their procedures.”

MSG Jackson said, “In a real-world chemical biological attack, we would be well-prepared.” ●

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Indiana and Texas Army National Guard Soldiers load a fictional rescue victim onto a Slovakian military chopper during the scenario-based, chemical warfare training Operation Toxic Lance held in March 2018 at Training Area Lest in central Slovakia.







# **DON'T GO IT ALONE**

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# Defiant

## Where Did the Shoulder Sleeve Insignia Come From?

BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER MAJ Darrin Haas

ABOVE: MG Charles J. Bailey

Photo courtesy Library of Congress

One of the most distinctive parts of a Soldier's uniform is the shoulder patch. The Shoulder Sleeve Insignia (SSI) not only functions as a means of identifying a Soldier's unit, but is also a key element to building unit morale and esprit de corps. The unit patch often tells the story of a unit's history and culture. It is proudly worn as a symbol of unit esteem. Ironically, this small item that now serves as an expression of Soldier unity was born out of an act of insubordination.

In April of 1917, the United States joined the international battles of World War I (WWI), declaring war on Germany and allying with France and England. Unfortunately, the United States was wholly unprepared. The U.S. Army had less than 200,000 Soldiers serving, including both the Army National Guard and active duty – it needed millions.

Within 18 months, the U.S. Army would grow to a force of over four million troops with two million serving in France by the war's end on Nov. 11, 1918. These massive numbers made it difficult for commanders to identify their troops and identify unit equipment and baggage when traveling overseas. With the expansion of

the Army's size, most units were also built from scratch, having no history or bond to foster esprit de corps. To fix these issues, division commanders were inspired to give their units distinctive names and insignias to classify their troops and to bring their units together under a common point of pride.



A WWI hand-embroidered SSI from the 81st  
Image courtesy Roads to the Great War blog

One of the first U.S. divisions to do this was the 81st, a "National Division" formed at Camp Jackson, South Carolina, in August 1917. It was predominantly comprised of draftees from the southeastern part of the country. MG Charles J. Bailey, the division commander, noticed that a few other units were developing logos, slogans and mottos to

put on buildings, gear and equipment. He liked the idea and challenged his Soldiers to develop a name for the division. Originally, the division adopted the nickname "Stonewall Division" in honor of Confederate Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson – mainly because of the unit's large number of southern inductees. That name, however, did not last long. Soon after the adoption of Stonewall Division, one of the Soldiers made a logo modeled after a Carolina wildcat they had captured near Wildcat Creek during division training. The wildcat was so popular among the troops that the Stonewall nickname was dropped and changed to the Wildcat Division. The cat became the division mascot and the logo was approved.

MG Bailey then took things a step further than any other division. He tasked his command with developing a distinctive shoulder patch to be worn on the Soldiers' uniforms. They designed a circular patch with the wildcat image in the center. After approving the design, MG Bailey assigned different colored patches to his subordinate units. He then – on his own authority – authorized his Soldiers to wear





# Origins

the patches on their left sleeve, and later, on their overseas cap.

That decision quickly drew criticism from higher command due to the clear violation of Army uniform regulation. MG Bailey was ordered to remove the patches from his Soldiers' uniforms, but he defied that order and the Wildcat Division continued to wear their patches. For months, MG Bailey fought the order through official channels. Finally, GEN John Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, relented and not only allowed the 81st Division patch, but also authorized every other U.S. Army division to submit a patch design for review, approval and wear.

On October 19, 1918, MG Bailey's 81st Division was the first to submit their design, which received official approval the same day. It would become the first U.S. Army division to receive authorization for its Soldiers to wear an SSI on their uniforms.

Many other Army divisions followed the lead of the 81st, including National Guard Divisions. Here are just a few examples of the current National Guard SSIs that originated in WWI:

## 29TH DIVISION

**SSI APPROVED DECEMBER 14, 1918**

Comprised of Guard units from Maryland, Virginia and New Jersey

Nicknamed "The Blue and the Grey" because the Division was made up of men that fought on both sides of the Civil War



## 30TH DIVISION

(now 30th Brigade Combat Team)

**SSI APPROVED OCTOBER 23, 1918**

Comprised of Guard units from Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina

Nicknamed the "Old Hickory Division" in honor of Andrew Jackson, the first bearer of the Old Hickory nickname



## 35TH DIVISION

**SSI APPROVED OCTOBER 29, 1918**

Comprised of Guard units from Kansas and Missouri

Nicknamed the "Santa Fe Division" in remembrance of the Santa Fe Trail, where the unit trained





# WHEN DISASTER STRIKES... AND STRIKES AGAIN

## VIGILANT GUARD 2018 PREPARES SOLDIERS WITH DISASTER RESPONSE TRAINING IN REAL TIME

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

Montana is Big Sky Country and a lot can happen there, especially when the Army National Guard plans a major training exercise before the onset of spring. In March of this year, the Montana Army National Guard was confronted with the possible cancellation of a major natural disaster response training when it was interrupted by an actual natural disaster. Always ready to face any problem, the Montana Guard and its partnering States confronted the challenge head on and simultaneously mitigated both the fictional and real-life disasters.

Vigilant Guard is a National Guard Bureau and U.S. Northern Command civil support exercise that partners with FEMA each year to provide

natural disaster response training to local and federal agencies in each of the 10 FEMA regions. The 2018 Vigilant Guard training for FEMA Region VIII took place March 3–7 in Helena, Montana. It simulated a 7.5 magnitude earthquake with an epicenter near Hebgen Dam located in the southern region of the State.

“Exercises like these are extremely helpful; it helps us to establish a good working relationship with all of the different agencies involved from the local, state and federal level,” said COL David Chase, the region VIII Defense Coordinating Officer for U.S. Army North (Fifth Army), U.S. Northern Command.

Montana National Guard members check readings from a mock chemical spill resulting from a notional earthquake during the joint disaster response training, Exercise Vigilant Guard, March 5, 2018, at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont.

Montana Army National Guard photo by SGT David M. Miller







CERFP Soldiers of the Oregon Army National Guard assess and treat a contaminated patient (acted by a role-player) in response to a fictional chemical spill during Exercise Vigilant Guard 2018, held at Great Falls, Mont.  
Oregon Army National Guard photo by SGT Tyler Meister

“The exercise also gives us a chance to work out our operating procedures in the event of a real-world mission.”

The Region VIII exercise was comprised of 57 local, State and federal government agencies. Army National Guard participants included the Montana Army National Guard’s 1049th Fire Fighting Technology Group (FFTG) and 83rd Civil Support Team (CST), the Idaho Army National Guard’s 101st CST, the Oregon Army National Guard’s CBRN Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP), the Utah Army National Guard’s Homeland Response Force (HRF) and the Wyoming Army National Guard’s 84th CST and Joint Operations Center support staff.

Vigilant Guard is similar to other training exercises in that it gives Soldiers an opportunity to work with the same neighboring States and civilian agencies they would partner with in an actual emergency. That type of practiced

teamwork will always prove beneficial when executing tasks in the wake of an actual disaster with real lives and property at stake.

“This exercise was a fantastic opportunity to get our new guys trained and up to the level they need to be.”

— LTC Cary Gilman

## MITIGATING THE DISASTER

During the training, the 83rd CST was tasked with responding to fictional flooding in the community of Great Falls. Once on site, the unit worked to set up a chemical lane, conduct search and rescue and contain simulated radiation that had washed ashore from a nearby river.

As part of the scenario, the Montana Guard Soldiers responded to an incident where civilians – acting as role players – sustained injuries from chemical fumes. Given no advance information about the chemical, the members of the 83rd had to figure out the source and composition of the threat before moving forward. Having connected with an emergency management team from Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls, the joint teams surveyed the building where the civilians had been injured.

The ad hoc squad went into the building and searched the area, discovering a 55-gallon drum that had been tipped



over by the earthquake. At that point, they then conducted joint entries into the contaminated area, sending in two CST Soldiers and two first responders from the emergency management team.

“The squads would go in, scan the area, get samples, come out and bring it back to the laboratory,” said SGT Luke Hronek with the 83rd. “At the lab, they figured out the protocol to mitigate the chemical. Finally, they reentered to clean up and evacuate the victims.”

“That was pretty much the wrap for the first day,” he said.

Each day of the five-day training presented a new challenge. On the third day, the 83rd was faced with another complicated scenario.

“We responded to a radiation source that had washed up on the shore from the flooding,” SGT Hronek said. “We scanned the area and worked from a safe distance, using our equipment to figure out what it was.”

The CST Soldiers searched intensely and eventually identified four radiation sources floating amongst a lost shipment of medical waste.

“Once we were able to identify it, we went in and supported a hot zone. From there, we created a safe distance, which you do with radiation,” SGT Hronek said.

The Oregon CERFP team specializes in disaster response. The unit’s capabilities include decontamination, search and extraction, mass casualty triage, medical response, and overall command and control. The Oregon National Guard brought

“It’s pretty similar to how we normally work, but with Vigilant Guard there was a new scenario each day. We were definitely busy.”

— SGT Luke Hronek

a total of 187 personnel to Toxic Lance, including CPT Tony Bagnall, the exercise battle captain for the tactical operations center who said the integration and facilitation with the Montana Army National Guard Soldiers was practically seamless.

“Some of our new [CERFP] personnel were not fully trained yet, so this exercise was a fantastic opportunity to get our new guys trained and up to the level they need to be,” said LTC Cary Gilman, battalion commander of 821st Troop Command.

SGT Hronek noted his satisfaction with his team’s work during the exercises. He said they collaborated well with their new teammates and that he

observed the Soldiers readily sharing their chemical-mitigation expertise with the Air Force EMT members, who were less experienced in that particular skillset.

According to SGT Hronek, he and his unit are very familiar with these types of challenging scenario-based events. He said the 83rd travels to various locations throughout Montana each month during drills and confronts some type of CBRNE lane challenge. The Montana Soldiers were also participants at Vigilant Guard 2016 in Tacoma, Washington. That year’s event responded to a notional tsunami that threatened the State of Washington.

“It’s pretty similar to how we normally work, but with Vigilant Guard there was a new scenario each day,” he noted. “We were definitely busy.”



Members of Oregon National Guard's CERFP work a decontaminate lane during FEMA Region VIII - Exercise Vigilant Guard, a disaster response training held March 6, 2018, at Helena, Mont. Oregon Army National Guard photo by SGT Tyler Meister



## MITIGATING NATURE

There was no planning for the adverse winter conditions that struck Montana in late February of this year. Montana Governor Steve Bullock declared a winter storm emergency in Glacier and Golden Valley counties and on three Native American reservations.

Extreme cold and blizzards with drifting snow blanketed Northwestern and Southeastern Montana. The frigid temperatures proved fatal for much of the area's cattle – a harsh reality for the bottom line of the region's many ranchers.

It was amidst these same icy conditions and brutal cold that Army National Guard Soldiers completed their training tasks as part of Vigilant Guard.

“About a third of the way through our exercise, the State



ABOVE: SPC Isabella Williams and a fellow Soldier, both of Oregon's CERFP, prepare to enter a simulated contamination zone during Exercise Vigilant Guard 2018 in Helena, Mont.

Oregon Army National Guard photo by SSG Zachary Holden

LEFT: Aerial view of mass casualty decontamination stations used during Exercise Vigilant Guard 2018.

Oregon Army National Guard photo by SGT Tyler Meister



ended up in a real disaster,” said COL Lonnie Cook, Vigilant Guard exercise planner for the Montana Army National Guard. “The Department of Emergency Services had to pull out of the event. The Simulation Center and my folks had to take over their role. It's a fluid element. You've got be able to flow and adapt. That was a major challenge, but we just had to flex, take care of the real-world and respond.”

SGT Joseph Johnson, ambulatory decontamination team leader with Oregon's CERFP noted at least one silver lining in the presence of the extreme winter weather. “We do not get a lot of opportunities to train in cold climates like this, so this opportunity has allowed our team to develop and broaden their skillsets.”

In spite of the real-world emergency coinciding with the exercise, the Guard troops and leadership were able to adapt and

remain focused on the requirements of the training exercise. No Soldiers were activated, but there were complications.

“North Dakota's CST had to cancel due to weather conditions. The other States redirected teams to cover down on the loss of [the North Dakota] element,” COL Cook said. “The Oregon CERFP had to cancel a rubble pile event in Helena due to bad road conditions, and there was a vehicle accident during the exercise that caused damage to a trailer.”

Reflecting back over the year of planning and the end result of Vigilant Guard 2018 for Region VIII, COL Cook said, “I don't think you ever get it to work as smooth as you want it. If I had to do it again, I would do it when we didn't have another disaster. But [no matter what] you definitely keep the mass moving in the right direction. You always learn every time you do something. The nice thing about that [is] you can apply it back to your SOPs and multi-hazardous response plan.”

By working together and remaining steadfast in their focus, the National Guard Soldiers and their State, federal and local partners dealt well with the unexpected emergency and still completed a successful training exercise. They were forced to cope real-time with the same variable to which they were training to respond – *nature*. ●





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# THE DAY WE DREAD:

## PREPARING FOR "AMERICA'S WORST DAY"

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

**M**G Michael Stone painted a grim picture to the assembled press at Camp Atterbury on April 13 of this year. The 31-year veteran of the Michigan Army National Guard and commander of the 46th Military Police (MP) Command, announced a 20-kiloton nuclear device had gone off in a West Coast suburb. Upwards of 20,000 people had been killed, 50,000 injured and 800,000 impacted. It was indeed what he called "America's worst day."

But in truth, it was all a drill. The mock press conference was part of Vibrant/Guardian Response, an annual (CBRN) response training exercise. Held April 4–18, this year's event tested

Soldiers' ability to respond to a nuclear event in a major American city.

Vibrant Response 2018 – led by U.S. Army North and held at Camp Atterbury in Edinburgh, Indiana – was held in conjunction with U.S. Northern Command-sponsored Guardian Response, which was held simultaneously at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center in Butlerville, Indiana. The exercises represented two sides of the same coin.

Vibrant Response evaluated command personnel – in this instance, the 46th MP Command – on their ability to organize and direct forces in the field from outside the simulated fallout zone. Guardian Response examined the ability of Soldiers

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Soldiers with the 166th Engineering Company, Alabama Army National Guard, sweep the area for radiation hot spots before beginning search and rescue efforts after a notional nuclear attack during the Guardian Response CBRN response training at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center near Butlerville, Ind., April 13, 2018.

National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohl

entering ground zero to carry out the assignments originating from command.

The two exercises together represent one of the largest DoD confirmation exercises conducted for specialized response forces. Roughly 5,000 military personnel participated in the exercises, representing Army National Guard, active duty and Reserves.





An officer of the 46th Military Police Command, Michigan Army National Guard, relays updates regarding a fictional nuclear attack to the staff of the command center at Camp Atterbury, Ind., during the Vibrant Response training exercise, April 12, 2018.

National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohl



As part of Vibrant Response 2018, Soldiers of the 46th Military Police Command, Michigan Army National Guard, participated in fictional local news interviews while training to interact with the media and relay vital information to the community at large.

Image courtesy Michigan Army National Guard

## VIBRANT RESPONSE

“Task Force 46 serves as the command and control of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Element Bravo, coordinating efforts in case of a catastrophic event in the United States,” said MG Stone. “Most of the members of the task force are [Guard] Soldiers, ready to help their neighbors recover and get back to a sense of normalcy as soon as possible.”

In the scenario, intelligence data point to a second device that might go off on the East Coast. “We have to – as a command – not only respond, but be looking and anticipating [whether] we are going to have to respond to a second device,” he added.

A bustling operations center, positioned in a building near the back of Camp Atterbury, was populated with tables, monitors, computers and Soldiers of the

46th busily attending to their roles in the exercise – conferring with each other or making their way in pursuit of a vital task. The Soldiers worked at tables grouped into separate areas that included intel, operations, logistics, IT, financial and contracts, public affairs, JAG and medical. Every area that would be needed in a real attack was represented in the scenario.

MSG Bill Beliew stood up from behind a computer at the CBRN table after collecting critical data to present to his superior.

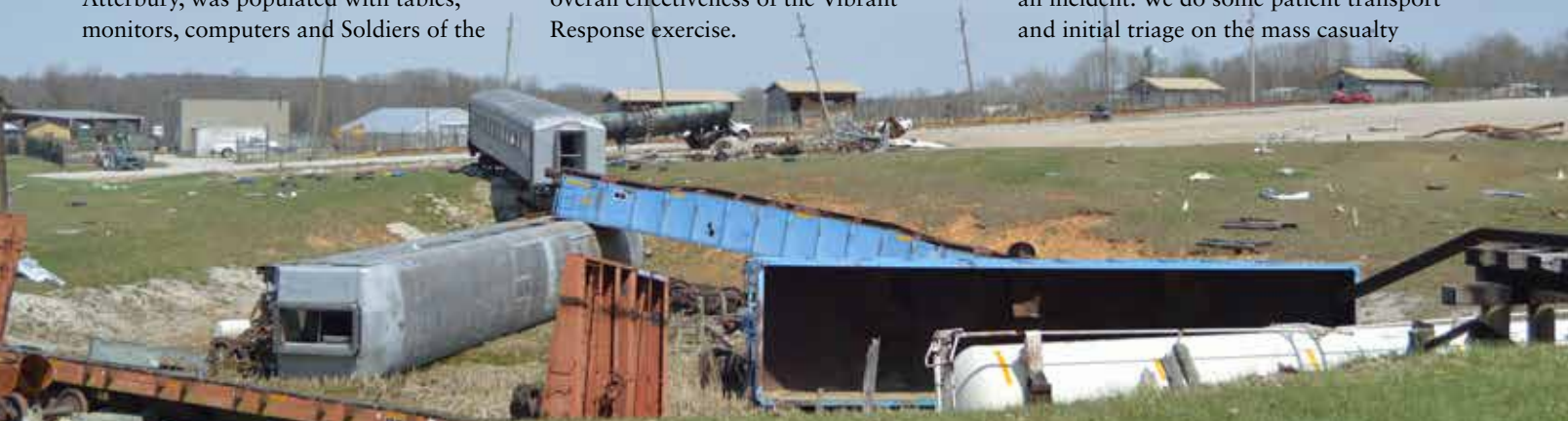
“We’re training on how to give our commander the best information in the event there was a CBRN mission,” he explained. “He makes the best possible decision by populating the information on a map so he can see the affected areas. He makes decisions off of that.”

MSG Beliew commented on the overall effectiveness of the Vibrant Response exercise.

“It brings realism and an understanding of the importance of the mission in the event it ever had to actually be done,” he said.

LTC Tiffaney Laurin sat working at the logistics table. She juggled a mesmerizing number of moving parts to keep her assigned areas running smoothly. She commented on one area of responsibility in particular for an event of this magnitude – the logisticians’ role in partnering with agencies like Homeland Security and FEMA.

“We are really engaged with them [Homeland Security and FEMA]. We work to support them with commodities. We do a lot of logistical transport of things like food and infant supplies for civilians,” said LTC Laurin. We work with the civilian response centers so that they have food and water for displaced civilians during an incident. We do some patient transport and initial triage on the mass casualty





decontamination lane [before patients] get transported to the local hospitals.”

She went on to note the importance of the logistician’s role in any mission. “If you do not have a good logistics plan, you’re not going to be able to operate. You cannot sustain your operations if you don’t have your logistics officer. They are critical.”

Along with logistics, communication is a critical link in any planned response.

SGT Brandon Garcia said he is one of a few Soldiers in the Michigan Guard licensed to operate what was the communications node of the exercise. Housed in a small unassuming van, the Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) was parked outside the command center and plugged into the building.

“We can use the [ERV] anywhere we can get a satellite shot and connect internet and phones. It’s got 10 phones and enough data for about 20 people or so to work,” he said. “In Vibrant Response, we have the ERV on loan from Army North; it is our direct link to their network. We’re able to use it to do video conferencing and VOIP [Voice Over Internet Protocol] calls with them.”

In the wake of a real nuclear event, SGT Garcia would immediately report to his home station, prep a few vehicles, obtain situational awareness and travel to a point near the blast vicinity.

“The ERV is part of that initial push,” he explained. “We call it the torch. We would be some of the first Soldiers from the 46th MP Command on the ground.”

Reflecting on the takeaways of Vibrant Response, SGT Garcia noted, “What we get out of Vibrant Response is similar to what we get out of the different exercises building up to Vibrant Response – that’s to test ourselves. We want to find what we’re not doing well. We want to find the weak spots – the things that don’t work quite the way that we thought they would work. That way we can develop ways around that.”

## GUARDIAN RESPONSE

At a simulated ground zero at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, Soldiers worked to mitigate the mayhem caused by the mock detonation. The site was a hellish vision – scattered debris; burning vehicles; smoking and collapsed buildings; lifeless bodies, represented by mannequins lying in the streets; and plenty of walking wounded, played by local residents who had come out in support of the training.

Muscatatuck is one of DoD’s largest training facilities. Located on the campus of what was one of Indiana’s largest mental institutions, it includes paved roads, several large, fully constructed buildings and an integrated electromagnetic effects system that can cause malfunctions and performance degradation in the buildings.

“Muscatatuck is a fantastic training center,” said LTC Scotty Lene, U.S. Army North exercise chief for Vibrant Response. “You can flood houses to do rescue missions. It has real buildings that are demolished. The units actually go in and set up, then remove rubble piles. They clear roads. They set up decontamination lines. They are able to set up all the actual equipment to decontaminate, which in a real situation would hopefully prolong life and prevent people from being overexposed to radiation.”

Army National Guard units arrived on the scene at Muscatatuck ready with Mission Oriented Protective Posture

(MOPP) suits, decon tents, radiation detectors, and search and extraction gear. Evaluators were scattered about, intently watching the exercise play out.

The scenario was life and death and the Soldiers were all business.

SSG John Smith with the 166th Engineering Company, Alabama Army National Guard, considered the mission ahead of him as he put on his MOPP suit. He said a good mission was one where everyone comes home safe. His squad was being evaluated on their urban search and rescue techniques.

“Today, I don’t know what we’re going to get thrown at us. It could include trench rescue, structural collapse, confined space or rope rescue,” he said. “That’s just the way the Army does it. You never know what you’re going to get into. You’ve got to be prepared for everything. We have [evaluators] out here and if there are any areas where we seem somewhat weak, we’ll find out from the instructors and actually become a better unit.”

SSG Ashley Taylor, a 12-year member of the 267th Engineer Detachment (Firefighters), South Carolina Army National Guard, was nearby, also prepping her MOPP suit. She was going out to perform search and rescue along with the squad from the 166th.

“All units come together and make this happen,” SSG Taylor commented. “It’s about mitigating the situation – getting downrange, rescuing, keeping ourselves safe, keeping everybody else safe. That’s the main thing to always learn from this mission.”

LEFT: Muscatatuck Urban Training Center includes a 1,000-acre urban and rural landscape with more than 200 brick and mortar structures, including collapsed apartment buildings, a collapsed parking garage and a floodable, collapsed rail trestle (shown in photo).

RIGHT: Muscatatuck’s five-story hospital was used by Army National Guard Soldiers to triage and treat role-player survivors after a notional nuclear attack, as part of the Guardian Response 2018 disaster response training.

National Guard Bureau photos by Luke Sohl





## U.S. ARMY NORTH

Back at Camp Atterbury, all activity – both at the command center with the 46th and at Muscatatuck – was being monitored by the exercises' lead organization, U.S. Army North.

“We plan the entire exercise,” said LTC Lene. “We develop the scenario. We do all the order processing. Then we actually facilitate the exercise here from the exercise control. We’re tracking all missions. We’re tracking all of the injects – which are fictional events that we randomly add to the active scenario to stimulate Soldiers to react in real time.”

LTC Lene explained that it was Army North Soldiers who were performing the evaluations of the Guard Soldiers (in the coming weeks, roles would switch and Army National Guard leaders would be evaluating active duty Soldiers on the same tasks). The units' ability to accurately respond to the real-time injects would weigh heavily in their overall evaluation scores.

## ALWAYS READY

In an actual nuclear event, the attack would last mere seconds, but recovery would go on for quite a long time. This is a reality that comes with its own set of challenges. During the press conference, MG Stone identified one such challenge. In the scenario, an estimated 6,000 hospital beds were available near the hypothetical blast zone, yet at least 50,000 people were injured. Figuring out how to deal with this type of seemingly impossible situation would be the ongoing job of the Army and partnering emergency response agencies.

It's not an easy situation to think about – not even for the Soldiers on the ground – but pushing fear and reservation aside in order to do what needs to be done is part of the job.

SPC Jason Justus had just reenlisted with the 118th Infantry Regiment, South Carolina Army National Guard, before he came to Atterbury to support the 46th in its Vibrant Response mission. His thoughts may be typical of many Soldiers.

“I hope a nuclear bomb doesn’t go off,” he said. “I actually try not to think about it too much. But these days you never know, so you’ve got to be prepared ... especially with the threats we’re facing [today].”

This year's Vibrant/Guardian Response exercises have indeed better prepared Guard Soldiers to respond to America's worst day.

MG Stone announced that next year's exercise might take place – in part – in the Detroit area. Guard leadership anticipates that holding the event in an actual urban city will increase its already high level of realism.

LTC Lene noted that in the wake of a real attack, the active duty component would need to rely on the steadfastness of the Army National Guard.

“Active duty Soldiers do the original footprint and then they'll be replaced by the National Guard,” LTC Lene said. “They all do the enduring.” ●



ABOVE: An Engineering Company Soldier with the Alabama Army National Guard calls out to fictional survivors while conducting search and rescue operations during Guardian Response 2018, a CBRN response training at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, April 13, 2018.

National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohli

RIGHT TOP: An aerial view of the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center during emergency response training.

Photo courtesy Indiana National Guard

RIGHT BOTTOM: Soldiers from the 251st Area Support Medical Company, South Carolina Army National Guard, and the 231st Chemical Company, Maryland Army National Guard, are evaluated by U.S. Army North on their equipment set-up time and proper decontamination and triaging during Guardian Response 2018 on April 12, 2018.

Maryland Army National Guard photo by SGT Devon Bistarkey





# The “COVENANT BADGE”

## Texas Guard Soldiers Earn EIB in Africa

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak



A Texas Guard Soldier of the 3rd Battalion, 144th Infantry Regiment assigned to Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa practices the Objective Bull – a task that requires the evacuation and treatment of a casualty – in preparation for the EIB evaluation at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Jan. 22, 2018.

Texas National Guard photo by SSgt Timothy Moore



LT Ross Walker referred to the badge as the mark of an expert in the profession. SGT Kyle Parrin said the badge in the infantry world is a statement – one that denotes proficiency. MSG Donnie Bosley simply called it the “covenant badge.”

These Texas Army National Guard Soldiers of the Third Battalion, 144th Infantry Regiment, were assigned to the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. In January and February of this year, while still deployed to Djibouti, the battalion tested its Soldiers for the Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB) – an infrequent opportunity for Army National Guard Soldiers.

The EIB was developed in 1944 to promote esprit de corps within U.S. infantry troops. It recognizes infantry and Special Forces Soldiers who demonstrate a mastery of core infantry skills.

“Earning the EIB is what every Infantryman should [strive for],” said CSM Clinton Petty. CSM Petty is assigned to Task Force Bayonet and is the unit’s senior enlisted leader and EIB board president.

“It indicates you are an expert in your MOS’ individual tasks,” he said. “When you are a leader of Soldiers, they must have confidence in your abilities, and having an EIB shows them you have mastered the basic skills.”

1LT Wesley Hall, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, was even more emphatic about the meaning of the badge.

“This individual award raises pride and esprit de corps within the branch and for every individual who earns it. The training value, even for those who do not make it through testing to earn EIB, is intangible. Our Infantrymen will be better at individual tasks required of them in training and resilient during collective



Texas Army National Guard Soldier 1LT Joshua York of the 3rd Battalion, 144th Infantry Regiment is pinned with the EIB by active duty Soldier 1SG Abraham Lewis Bravo Company, 1st Battalion 32nd Infantry Regiment at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, January 15-27, 2018.

Texas Army National Guard photo by SGT Jason Robertson

training events. That is the most important factor to me – increasing the lethality and proficiency of our force.”

Earning the EIB requires Infantrymen to successfully complete four phases.

The first phase calls for the passing of the APFT with a score of at least 80 points



## **Earning the EIB is what every Infantryman should [strive for].**

— CSM Clinton Petty

A Texas Army National Guard Soldier assigned to Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa plots a grid point during land navigation training in preparation for the EIB evaluation at Arta Range, Djibouti, Jan. 25, 2018.

Texas National Guard photo by  
SSgt Timothy Moore



in each event. The score of 80 must be achieved the first time, as the test cannot be retaken for the EIB. The next phase is land navigation. In this phase, three-out-of-four points must be earned through completion of both day and night exercises. A "GO" means moving on to the next phase of the examination.

The third phase is made up of testing stations – 30 testing stations to be exact. One Texas Army National Guard participant noted this phase as the most difficult part of the challenge.

"It is difficult to describe the level of focus and determination necessary to successfully execute these tasks to standard," said 1SG Jonathan Hendrix of the 3-144th's D Company. "While the road march is grueling, especially in Djibouti, most Infantrymen can fight through the physical adversity. But the mental strain that comes with executing 30 tasks without deficiency is incredible."

SPC Joshua Geesling, also of D Company, noted that he overcame the mental stress presented by the testing stations by identifying the tasks in which he was weakest and practicing them repeatedly until he discovered,

and corrected, his points of failure. In that way, he could mitigate surprises during actual testing, he said.

"I made sure to stay humble and realize I very well might not make it through test week," he explained. "Staying humble pushed me to work even harder to further the possibility of earning the badge."

The 30 testing stations included 10 medical stations, 10 weapons stations and 10 patrol procedures stations. The station types are chosen by the unit's leadership from 45 possibilities, with multiple tasks expected for each station. Tasks are required to be performed flawlessly, without misstep or error. If not, the testing Soldier receives a "NO-GO." One double "NO-GO" on a single task, or three total "NO-GOs," eliminates the EIB candidate from completing the course.

While some felt the testing stations were the most challenging segment of the evaluation, others noted the fourth and final phase as the most trying.

"No matter how much you train, a 12-mile road march will always be a feat of strength that requires a tremendous amount of grit," said 1LT Kevin Gillespie.





A Soldier with the Texas Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 144th Infantry Regiment uses a compass to locate a grid point during land navigation training in preparation for the EIB evaluation at Arta Range, Djibouti, Jan. 25, 2018.

Texas National Guard photo by SSgt Timothy Moore

MSG Bosley commented on the heightened planning that went into ensuring Soldiers' safety during the strenuous march through the desert.

"Djibouti in May – it is very humid and hot," he said. "The road march was not only extremely challenging for the 24 candidates that made it that far, but it had a lot of risks that took the medical platoon, EIB cadre and command getting into meticulous details to mitigate as much risk as possible. All together, we had 45 EIB cadre at the event – all of the company and task force leadership, 16 medics, two doctors, two field litter ambulances, the medical platoon sergeant on a roving bicycle, six immersion troughs, 12 manned checkpoints and a fruit stand lining the 3-mile route the candidates had to complete four times at 0300 in the morning."

LTC Walker, commander of Task Force Bayonet, said 144th leadership decided well before arriving in Djibouti that they would execute an EIB event while deployed. The decision was based on two main factors. The first and foremost being that it would provide a level of increased readiness to the individual Soldiers, and by extension,

to the entire organization. The second determining factor had to do with taking advantage of the timing and environment available to the battalion while at Camp Lemonnier. Finding the consecutive training days to conduct a two-week train-up and one-week test in the Army National Guard is rare and costly.

"We have a captive audience here with minimal distractors," he noted.

Planning, constructing and grading the EIB course was a massive undertaking. The over four weeks of prep time that went into the five-day event required participation from all available personnel – including some from other components and military services. The 3-144th had help from both the active duty Soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division, and the seamen of the Navy Seabees (Naval

construction battalions), who played a vital role in construction.

"As is normally the case in any joint environment, successful execution of an operation depends on the ability and willingness of the different services to work together toward a common goal," commented 1SG Hendrix of D Company. "The Seabees were an excellent partner in helping to achieve our goals during the EIB competition. No matter how large or small the request, they came through for us and really allowed us to transform our patch of desert into a training site that is on par with many CONUS EIB sites. Our attached 10th Mountain Division companies were decisive to our ability to conduct the competition. Without both their EIB cadre members as well as their sheer manpower, we would have been hard-pressed to put together this event."

1SG Hendrix recalled a few specifics of creating the EIB course.

"As soon as we landed in country and completed our RIP [Relief in Place/Transfer of Authority], just before Thanksgiving, we began focusing our efforts toward building the EIB site and compiling all of the supplies necessary





Texas Army National Guard and active duty Soldiers assigned to Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa pose for a group photo after receiving their EIB during a ceremony at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Feb. 2, 2018.

Texas National Guard photo by SSgt Timothy Moore

to effectively train [several hundred] candidates. We moved our operation out to the EIB site, commonly known as the French Notch, during the last week in December. We spent roughly four weeks setting up the lanes. We filled and placed around 3,000 sand bags, erected close to 40 camo nets and built 30 benches, five sand tables and 15 weapons/casualty platforms.”

Over two iterations of evaluations, approximately 300 Soldiers went through the EIB course – 68 successfully overcame the challenges of each phase and gained their EIB. Those who earned the covenant badge have attained a distinction held in high regard amongst both Infantrymen and other Army personnel alike. More importantly, the experience of testing for the EIB has helped all of the participating Soldiers to increase their knowledge base and refine their skills.

1LT Hall noted, “As a leader, it is important to demonstrate tactical and technical proficiency. [Because of the EIB

course,] these skills are so well rehearsed and proven that when the time comes for company command weapons qualification and maneuver training, I am fully capable of carrying my own and leading from the front.”

Reflecting back over the earning of his EIB, 1LT Hall summarized the experience by saying, “This is absolutely the pinnacle of achievements I have had in the National Guard. Other training events I have completed did not require the amount of physical grit and intestinal fortitude required to earn EIB. It was truly earned through hard work. It is special as a National Guard Soldier because the opportunity is so rare.” ●



MIDDLE RIGHT: SPC Matthew Guterrez, a Texas Army National Guard infantryman, practices reloading a .50-caliber rifle in preparation for the EIB course on Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, April 23, 2018.

Texas National Guard photo by SrA Scott Jackson

RIGHT: Texas Army National Guard Soldiers SPC Jonathan Martinez and SSG Jimmy Flores of the 3rd Battalion, 144th Infantry Regiment discuss land navigation training as part of the EIB evaluation they participated in while deployed to the Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, Jan. 25, 2018.

Texas National Guard photo by SSgt Timothy Moore





# AMERICA'S ARMY GOES UPTOWN

A NEW RELEASE OF THE OFFICIAL U.S. ARMY VIDEO GAME



BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak  
Images courtesy Army Game Studio

**A** quiet, provincial town square sits abandoned with a light dusting of snow covering the buildings and grounds. There are taverns, an open-air market, even a desolate laundromat that is complete with vending machines offering items like fresh sparkling “Fizzoline” and crunchy “Cortees.” The side of one building is plastered with political posters from imposing strong-arm politicians. This is one of the scenes from Uptown, the latest release from America’s Army video game.

America’s Army is an action-packed, authentically scripted, first-person shooter game and the official video game of

the United States Army. It is available for free to Soldiers and civilians alike. America’s Army is produced by the Army Game Studio, which is part of the Army’s Aviation and Missile Research, Development and Engineering Center (AMRDEC) Software Engineering Directorate at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. The new Uptown scenario was released just this past April.

“We had several maps that were set as training environments and we wanted to bring those environments to life,” said Daniel Kolenich, executive producer for America’s Army. “Uptown is the same layout as Downtown [the original training version of the game, created in 2002], but it is not just for training. [Uptown can be played] as the actual mission location that

the Downtown training area was built to rehearse.”

Though the game is primarily a combat mission, it still includes several training options. The trainings are short, multi-player game scenes that use fast-paced maps designed to sharpen small-unit maneuvering skills.

A virtual walk of Uptown’s urban streets reveals plenty of good fighting positions – sandbags, abandoned armored vehicles, dead-end alleys – to make this scenario an excellent addition to the world of America’s Army. Alpha and Bravo teams, the game’s designated opposing forces, have a good field of play to battle over during realistic squad engagements that feature authentic Army gear and tactics.

Uptown includes a new map plus head and voice customization and enemy weapon support that have been added to the MySoldier menu. Players can opt for multiple mission objectives, including extracting intel and escorting a VIP to safety. Between rematches and game screens, players can view short videos featuring real Army experts sharing



## "SINCE IT IS THE OFFICIAL U.S. ARMY GAME, IT OFFERS AN AUTHENTICITY THAT PLAYERS CAN'T GET ANYWHERE ELSE."

– Daniel Kolenich, Executive Producer, America's Army



everything from tips on PT, to clips of actual past joint training exercises.

The game allows players to team with other users who are online at the same time, and it is generally easy, once in the game, to find a welcoming band of brothers and sisters in arms to virtually fight alongside. According to Kolenich, players have been coming to the game in droves. Perhaps this is because of the unique perspective it offers.

"We are seeing several thousand new accounts created every day with 30,000 unique players daily," Kolenich stated. "Since it is the official U.S. Army game, it offers an authenticity that players can't get anywhere else. It's based in reality – players can imagine Soldiers performing the missions they are playing and use the weapons that are in use by Soldiers today."

In America's Army, players are in the role of an 11B Infantryman as part of a Long Range Combined Arms-Recon unit. Throughout the series, U.S. Army Soldiers are deployed to a tiny fictional foreign nation in the middle of a desperate conflict. What starts as a humanitarian relief effort quickly escalates into active combat.

The game offers unique game play that mirrors the training, skills and technology used by U.S. Army Soldiers. It even requires users to employ teamwork and leadership skills to accomplish the unit's mission. When playing the game, choosing actions that make the game characters display values such as honor, integrity, a sense of duty and selfless service influences player success within the game. Players can experience just a tiny bit of being a Soldier – in a virtual world.

When creating the America's Army video game, AMRDEC incorporated Soldiers and Army subject matter experts in every step of the design, development and testing. They went so far as to ensure the games' characters were authentic in nature by modeling the movements of the characters after real Soldiers. Their

movements were recorded at AMRDEC's motion capture studio and then integrated into the game.

Equipment and military hardware in the game include the M9A1 and M1911 Pistol, 870 MCS shotgun, M14EBR-RI sniper rifle, M24 sniper rifle, M4A1 assault rifle and the M249 SAW. Also included are the M67 fragmentation grenade, M106 Fast Obscurant Grenade and the M84 Stun Grenade, as well as optics like the M68 Close Combat Optic, M553 Holographic Weapon Sight, M150 ACOG 4x Optic, Elcan M145 and Ghost Ring Sight.

In the game, players can apply self-care to treat any injuries their characters may receive. This keeps them from losing a life, which allows them to remain in the game until mission completion. They can also offer buddy-aid to wounded squad members and bring those players back into the contest.

The game supplies integrated Voice Over Internet Protocol, or VOIP, for efficient team communication. Other customization options are the camo pattern of the team, the gear load-out to the Soldier, the ability to unlock weapon skins on weapons and ability to obtain new optics.

The popularity of America's Army has grown over the years, and dozens of new version releases have been provided. Its brand has expanded to showcase the Army through a variety of products, including a comics series that can be downloaded from the game's website AmericasArmy.com.

America's Army is rated "T" for Teen by the Entertainment Software Rating Board and can be downloaded for free from the PlayStation Store.

Kolenich encourages Soldiers and civilians alike to visit AmericasArmy.com often. "We are working on new weapons and maps, so stay tuned to our website and our trello board at [Trello.com/b/NzgMh61m/aapg-roadmap](https://trello.com/b/NzgMh61m/aapg-roadmap)." ●





## THE LONG ARM HOWITZER

BY STAFF WRITER Keegan Rammel

**E**ngineers at Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey have successfully expanded the range of the Howitzer with the modified M777A2 Howitzer.

Through a joint initiative between the U.S. Army Armament Research, Development and Engineering Center (ARDEC), Program Executive Office Ammunition and Project Manager Towed Artillery Systems (PM TAS) – a joint project management office between the Army and the Marine Corps – Army engineers are working toward an ultimate goal of producing from the M777A2 a maximum range of 70 km. Also included in the initiative are plans to minimize cost and modify to the weapon platform.

While PM TAS is the official program lead, ARDEC is providing the engineering that will advance the system to achieve its maximum range. PM TAS has the responsibility of working with the Soldiers, Marines and ARDEC to refine the systems requirement to ensure user expectations are met.

“We put together an integration test bed for the M777A2 Extended Range [M777ER] Howitzer program, incorporating a 55-caliber cannon tube on the M777A2 towed Howitzer,”

said Andy McFadzean, an ARDEC special project officer in an interview with Army.mil. “We shot a total of 70 rounds using the MACS [Modular Artillery Charge System], zone two through zone six, propelling charge. This test marked the first time a MACS zone six was fired from the M777 howitzer. Previously, the top charge fired was a MACS zone five.”

**“Think of it like a guy with a really long arm. He can hold a ball longer and throw it faster than a guy with a really short arm. We just integrated that longer ‘arm’ onto the Howitzer so that the same bullet is acted on longer and quicker.”**

— David Bound

ARDEC engineering staff members conduct pre-fire checks and daily preventative maintenance in advance of a live-fire test of the Extended Range M777A2 held at Picatinny Arsenal.

Photo courtesy U.S. Army

The new modification adds 6 feet to the cannon while increasing the system’s weight by less than 1,000 pounds, which is light by Howitzer standards. The extra length allows for an increase in chamber volume and rifling length in the barrel, thus increasing the Howitzer’s accuracy and range.

“We were able to push the round harder for longer, so it goes faster and farther,” said David Bound, M777ER team lead in the same Army.mil interview.

“Think of it like a guy with a really long arm. He can hold a ball longer and throw it faster than a guy with a really short arm. We just integrated that longer ‘arm’ onto the Howitzer so that the same bullet is acted on longer and quicker. That in turn means more range,” Bound said.

As part of the M777ER program, ARDEC is also partnering with the Army’s Extended Range Cannon Artillery (ERCA) program. ERCA’s program team is developing technology to extend the range of the 155 mm self-propelled Howitzer, and ARDEC has





The modified 155 mm M777A2 Howitzer, front, will have a range more than double that of the current version, which can be seen in the background of the Extended Range M777A2.

Illustration courtesy U.S. Army

incorporated that technology onto the towed Howitzer platform for the M777ER.

The team developed a non-firing platform to see if the extended range cannon tube would be capable of being towed. Mobility trials conducted last year successfully demonstrated that the platform could be towed with little modification, moving the program on to firing trials.

The M777ER was equipped with a .39-caliber cannon without a muzzle brake, which would put similar stress onto the platform as the .55-caliber cannon with a muzzle brake. The test results validated the engineering design models for the weapon, once again moving the project further along.

The next configuration of the M777ER integrated a .55-caliber cannon tube onto the weapon platform. The Army plans to incrementally improve the M777ER over the next few

years with several similar demonstrations proving the weapon's ability.

"We're not going to do all of our design work in a vacuum and show up in five years with a system the user hasn't seen before," Bound said. "Too many times we do a project like this and we think we know what they [the users] want. If we have them involved throughout the process, it allows us to make the system more suitable to fit their needs."

"We are taking a crawl, walk, run approach to keep the user involved through the whole process," McFadzean agreed.

So far, the crawl, walk, run approach has proved useful as each time the weapon is fired, the team learns something new that can be dealt with incrementally.

"We saw a few different outcomes than we expected to see. One thing we expected to see and did not was an increase in tube whip – the bouncing of the cannon tube after firing – but it appears the elevation system can lift all that additional weight and still hold the tube steady," Bound noted.

One of the main concerns for the team was dealing with blast overpressure and keeping Soldiers safe while firing the weapon.

Bound explained that when the weapon is fired, a surge of energy or a "blast wave" of extra propellant gases comes out of the muzzle. A muzzle brake is used to take that energy and redirect it backward, which helps to slow down the tube during recoil. The

problem lies in the positioning of the muzzle brake. The brake is located at the end of the cannon tube. This means that the blast wave is redirected back in the direction of where the firing crew stands. If too much energy is directed back, the blast wave could potentially injure Soldiers. As a remedy, Army engineers have developed a redesigned muzzle brake that allows energy to be efficiently redirected while also keeping the crew safe.

Next in the testing lineup was assessing the M777ER platform's ability to work with next generation ammunition. According to Bound, ERCA has designed a new rocket-assisted projectile and a new super charge. As with the partnership using the technology from the 155 mm self-propelled Howitzer, the ARDEC integrated the ERCA technology into the M777ER program.

"Testing [was originally] done with legacy ammunition, which is what Soldiers and Marines currently use every day," Bound noted. "The next step was to see if the M777ER platform could take the force from the new ammunition since we were going from a 7 km increase in range to a 40 km increase in range."

Based on the outcomes of the ammunition testing, ARDEC and PM TAS will hold another round of user evaluations and feedback on all modifications will be solicited. The evaluations could begin as early as this July, according to Bound. ●



An ARDEC engineering staff member checks instrumentation on the Extended Range M777A2 between firing occasions during a live fire test at Picatinny Arsenal.

Photo courtesy U.S. Army



# Deployment Health Assessment Program

*Connecting Soldiers with the Right Care at the Right Time*



The Deployment Health Assessment Program (DHAP) allows Soldiers to take proactive steps to protect their health plus ensure their military readiness. DHAP provides early identification of deployment-related health conditions and serves as a gateway to care and treatment.

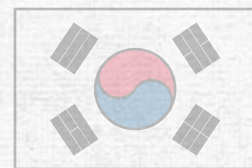
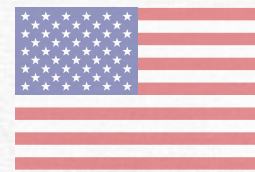
Using a sequence of health evaluations, Deployment Health Assessments monitor the health of Soldiers during the deployment cycle and, if needed, direct Soldiers to treatment and additional care resources, like Army Chaplains, TRICARE and counseling to ensure long-term wellness.

**For more information about DHAP, go to [ArmyG1.army.mil](http://ArmyG1.army.mil) or talk to your command or unit medical personnel.**





# NATIONAL GUARD IN SOUTH KOREA: 10 Things You Need to Know



BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER SFC Jim Greenhill

In the mid-1980s, Air Force Capt Joseph Lengyel was an F-16 Fighting Falcon pilot deployed to South Korea; in May of this year, Gen Lengyel returned for troop visits – and saw a transformed country protected by a transformed military.

His visit also illustrated the transformed National Guard: It was the first time a chief of the National Guard Bureau had visited the country. He was accompanied by his senior enlisted advisor, Army CSM Christopher Kepner. Their assignment was to assess the Guard's significant contribution to the Joint Force mission to provide security to South Korea.

Soldiers from the 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, South Dakota Army National Guard, and the U.S. Eighth Army pose for a photo with soldiers of the Republic of Korea's armed forces during the Key Resolve training exercise at Camp Humphreys, South Korea, March 22, 2017.

Army National Guard photo by SPC Carl A. Johnson





## TAKEAWAYS

**1. National Guard troops are contributing to the Joint Force mission.** Guard members are serving shoulder-to-shoulder with active duty and reserve Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard members. “Some are doing their annual training; honing their warrior skills, readiness and lethality; doing things they can’t do at home; and simultaneously providing a presence on the peninsula,” Gen Lengyel said. “Some are practicing potential wartime functions.”

**2. The National Guard is enhancing readiness.** Guard members serving in places like South Korea are increasing the organization’s overall readiness – a priority Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis has set for the Joint Force. “We are raising our readiness to give the president options if he needs them,” Gen Lengyel said. “It’s our job. Fundamentally, when you get down to why do we have a National Guard, it’s to help our nation fight our wars – and to do it we have to be credible, professional, skilled warriors.”

**3. Enhanced readiness takes increased time.** Guard members are investing more time in training in order to increase readiness. It’s paying off – and it means the old image of the Guard might no longer be true. “As I talk to deployed Guard members, many of them tell me we need to stop saying ‘one weekend a month and two weeks a year,’” Gen Lengyel said.

“It sends the wrong message and sets incorrect expectations for our members, Families and employers.”

But Guard members are making it happen: “No matter what we ask our Guard members to do, they balance Families, they balance work and they find a way to do it,” CSM Kepner said.

The senior enlisted advisor recalled what he found during a visit to a South Korean live fire range in driving rain: “Infantrymen standing in the rain, enjoying standing in the rain, because that’s just what they do – ‘we train in the rain.’ I can’t tell you how many of those Soldiers said, ‘If it ain’t raining, we ain’t training’ – and they embrace that, and that’s just the kind of warrior we have in both the Air National Guard and the Army National Guard.”

**4. Both the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard and multiple states are contributing.** Soldiers and Airmen from California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Puerto Rico, Utah and Washington were among those Gen Lengyel and CSM Kepner talked with during their four-day visit.

**5. National Guard members are contributing a wide variety of skills.** Gen Lengyel and CSM Kepner visited with Infantry Soldiers, battlefield planners and cooks; with chemical, intelligence and logistics specialists; with Guard members performing command and control, human resources, exercise planning and support, force protection and cyber functions, among other specialties: The National Guard is a full-spectrum operational force.



**6. Focused Readiness Units are working. Increased resources – money and manpower – targeted at selected Army National Guard units in recent months to increase readiness have paid off.**

Increased training days for some Army National Guard members have resulted in units that are ready to respond – and ready to respond faster than before. “We’re getting more readiness, we’re getting more focused,” Gen Lengyel said. “To see the work the Focused Readiness Units have done, resulting in them performing wartime tasks and doing wartime training [in South Korea], is a great thing.”

**7. Seamless interoperability between South Korean and U.S. Forces.**

Capt Lengyel served from 1986–87 in a country where little integration took place between South Korean and U.S. Armed Forces. Thirty years later, the two are seamlessly integrated.

**8. South Korea has transformed. Capt Lengyel served in a poor, emerging country lacking infrastructure, building an education system and having little industrial capacity.**

Thirty years and one Korean economic miracle later? “It’s a completely new picture,” Gen Lengyel said. “It’s a modern, health-conscious, science-based, highly educated, competitive, technology-rich, enhanced society that’s densely populated, strikingly clean, with robust infrastructure, that’s hosted two Olympics and a World Cup – it’s just a completely different country.”

**9. National Guard members are a national treasure.**

“It was inspiring for me to see them in action,” Gen Lengyel said, “to see them participating in a major exercise on the peninsula with our allies and partners. We have a National Guard now that thrives on building readiness, that thrives on being professional, that thrives on doing the hard things well. That is what we are now.”

**10. Partners respect the National Guard.** In meetings with South Korean peers, Gen Lengyel said they commented on the National Guard’s professionalism. “They understood how operational we are; they respect the National Guard as a full-up, fighting part of our force that’s ready to go; they know that – should a contingency happen on the peninsula or anywhere else – large portions of American force structure would be the National Guard.” ●



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LTC Jamey Barcomb, commander of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, New York Army National Guard, discusses the role of New York Guard Soldiers deployed in support of Operation Key Resolve with Maj. Seonghoon Hwang, operations planner with the Republic of Korea Armed Forces, at Camp Casey, March 15, 2017.

Army National Guard photo by MAJ AI Phillips



An Army National Guard air assault instructor from the Warrior Training Center explains rappelling techniques during phase three of an air assault course held July 24, 2015, at Camp Casey, South Korea.

Army National Guard photo by SPC Carl A. Johnson



# APFTScore.com

*Stay on Top of APFT Readiness and Results*

MSG Timothy C. Jones of Headquarters Company, 66th Troop Command prepares for the push-up event during the Army Physical Fitness Test on October 14, 2017.

Mississippi National Guard photo by SGT Connie Jones

apftscore.com

Quickly Score One Soldier

Push-ups:

Sit-ups:

Run time:

Age:

Gender: Male

Score

Score Multiple Soldiers

Number of soldiers: 10

Enable alternate events: ☐

Enable height/weight: ☐

Begin

The multiple soldier option also allows you to use additional scoring features, such as record/promotion mode, the extended scale, and 50% passing standard.

Tip: When scoring multiple soldiers, feel free to over-estimate the number of soldiers you think you need to score. The calculator will simply ignore empty entered rows.

APFTscore.com is a comprehensive online calculator that scores Soldier's Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) data in accordance with applicable U.S. Army regulations.

This **easy to use tool** quickly generates a score based on the numbers entered for a Soldier's **push-ups, sit-ups, run time, age and gender**.

The calculator also allows for scoring multiple Soldiers at one time and generates completed DA Forms 705 (APFT Scorecards). This makes it an **ideal tool** for both individual Soldiers wanting to gauge readiness in advance of taking the test and unit commanders conducting the test for groups of Soldiers.

**Access the calculator at APFTScore.com. For information about the specific details of the calculator's scoring modes and methodology, go to APFTScore.com/notes.php**



## Healthy Soldiers – Healthy Force

*West Virginia Army National Guard Welcomes First Dietician in the Guard*

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

**M**aintaining a fit and ready force is an ongoing priority for the Army National Guard. When looking to further advance this priority, the West Virginia Army National Guard saw a need to take things to the next level.

“There was a push for more subject matter experts in the field of exercise and nutrition within the State,” said 1LT Jeremy Mullins, the first official Army National Guard dietician.

Heretofore, the dietician MOS (65C) was only available in the active duty component. But West Virginia Army National Guard CSM James Allen saw a need for performance dieticians at the State level and lobbied through National Guard Bureau to get the position in West Virginia.

Part of the West Virginia Army National Guard Medical Detachment, 1LT Mullins has been working with the West Virginia National Guard since September 2015. He began his career with the Guard as a civilian contractor working as a health and wellness coach for the West Virginia National Guard Tactical Fitness and Nutrition Training (TFNT) program. 1LT Mullins said that he went back to school and obtained his clinical dietitian license because he wanted to be part of

bringing a more holistic program to the Soldiers of the West Virginia Guard.

His civilian job as owner of both a strength and conditioning facility, and a farm-to-table restaurant gives 1LT Mullins

**“My favorite  
aspect is being  
able to help  
someone make  
their life better.”**

— 1LT Jeremy Mullins

unique insight into health trends not just within the Guard, but also in the country’s overall society.

“Each Armed Force is struggling a bit with height and weight failures and that has slowly increased over the last two decades,” 1LT Mullins said.

“There’s an education piece that’s lacking. And that’s not just for Soldiers, it’s our

Nation overall. There has been little to no education on how to eat correctly or how to eat for performance. There hasn’t been education on how to train. There’s been ‘how to train for the APFT [Army Physical Fitness Test],’ but there hasn’t been ‘how to properly weight train’ or ‘how to properly do high-intensity training.’”

After receiving his clinical license, 1LT Mullins commissioned into the West Virginia Army National Guard in August of 2017 and now, as the National Guard’s first dietician, is using his expertise to help his fellow Soldiers become healthier individuals through a newly re-worked fitness program.

“I’m humbled and honored for the opportunity,” 1LT Mullins said. “I’ve always been interested in health and fitness. I struggled with my weight as an adolescent, so it was something I took an interest in for me. My career has always been around health and fitness, no matter what facet it may have been.”

The core responsibility of the dietician MOS is to improve the readiness of Soldiers through diet assessment and education. To do this, 1LT Mullins provides Soldiers, who may voluntarily opt into the program or may be assigned into the program depending on their fitness levels and APFT pass rates, with the information and resources needed to create realistic health and fitness goals.

“It’s very education-based,” said 1LT Mullins. “It’s about teaching Soldiers the foundations of nutrition and leading them in the correct direction versus them just [doing] the next great diet plan they see out there.”







Based on individual Soldier need, 1LT Mullins creates diet and exercise plans that coincide with requirements to meet height and weight standards.

“You have some Soldiers who need to drop body fat, but on the flip side, we also have Soldiers who may need to gain muscle tissue,” 1LT Mullins explained. “Or we’ll have a unit that is being deployed and needs to know how to eat while [away] or while training for deployment. It’s really dictated by the individual Soldier.”

1LT Mullins said he has seen marked progress from many of the Soldiers he has worked with through the TFNT program. Some have lost 50–80 pounds of weight, allowing them to meet Army standards and continue their service in the Guard.

1LT Mullins commented in particular on the progress from Soldiers in the West Virginia National Guard’s holistic tactical camp, which currently has a 60 percent success rate.

“[The camp] is a week-long session where we teach Soldiers the foundations of not only diet and nutrition, but also sleep, recovery and how to train,” he explained. “We measure the success rate by the Soldiers’ progress. Progress may be weight loss or increasing their pushups or sit-ups. Say a Soldier is 60 pounds overweight and has lost 40 and still has 20 to go – we still say that’s a success.”

1LT Mullins expressed his appreciation for the dietitian position that is allowing him to

provide Soldiers with the tools they need to live healthier lives.

“My favorite aspect is being able to help someone make their life better,” he said. “I’m currently helping Kentucky and Massachusetts develop holistic programs within their States, so that’s been great too. Two years ago, I would not have been able to do that as a civilian. As a Soldier, I can go on crossover orders and I can go help others. It just feels good to be able to help more people and more States in this part of my career.” ●

**Soldiers interested in learning more about the dietician MOS should reach out to their State medical recruiter or their Readiness NCO.**

West Virginia Army National Guard 1LT Jeremy Mullins, the first full-time National Guard dietitian, conducts a nutrition and fitness session with West Virginia Soldiers on drill duty.

West Virginia Army National Guard image by LTC Todd Harrell







# DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO DON THE GREEN BERET?

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

**W**earing the Green Beret as part of the Army National Guard Special Forces signifies membership in the United States military's premier unconventional warfare force. Special Forces Soldiers are mentally and physically fit, technically savvy and well-equipped to handle the most demanding and perilous situations.

Operating in self-sufficient teams of 12, Special Forces conduct missions that include counterterrorism, foreign internal defense, unconventional warfare, direct action and special reconnaissance. Special Forces Soldiers are taught to master individual skills in operations and intelligence, medical aid, weapons, communications and engineering.

While these Special Forces Soldiers operate globally alongside their active duty counterparts, like all Guard Soldiers, they must still carry out their dual mission and use their unique skillsets to support their States during natural disasters.

Also, like all Guard Soldiers, the members of the National Guard Special Forces started out as everyday

Soldiers working hard to support their units and fulfill their traditional MOSs. If you have a desire to join this top-tier team of Soldiers, do not let the elite title deter you. A simple – yet demanding – recipe of dedication, drive and an unwillingness to quit is what it takes to join their ranks.

To become a Green Beret, most States require that Soldiers attend the Special Forces Readiness Evaluation (SFRE). The SFRE is a three-day event that assesses a Soldier's potential as a candidate to attend Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS). SFRE counts as a Soldier's monthly drill and usually takes place Friday–Sunday.

Soldiers must complete the SFRE in order to attend the SFAS. The SFAS is a 19-day course designed to reliably predict successful completion of the





Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC).

After Soldiers have completed the SFAS, they are scheduled to attend the SFQC at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, for 52–94 weeks. The SFQC features six sequential phases of training that focus on the core Special Forces tactical competencies, MOS skills, survival, language and cultural skills. Once Soldiers complete the SFQC, they have earned the Special Forces tab and Green Beret.

Positions within the Special Forces include: Special Forces Detachment Commander (18A), Special Forces Weapons Sergeant (18B), Special Forces Engineer Sergeant (18C), Special Forces Medical Sergeant (18D), Special Forces Communications Sergeant (18E), Special Forces Team Sergeant (18Z), Special Forces Warrant Officer (180A) and Special Forces Intelligence Sergeant (18F).

The following are minimum requirements to apply to the Army National Guard Special Forces and are non-negotiable. Applicants must be a U.S. citizen, be eligible for a secret security clearance, be Airborne qualified – or willing to commit to volunteering for Airborne School – and have a minimum score of 240 on the APFT, or no less than 70 points on any event depending on the standards for their age group.

Soldiers must meet medical fitness standards for military, Airborne and Special Forces service as outlined in AR 40-501. They must complete a 50-meter swim assessment, conducted in uniform, to determine whether they have the aptitude to meet the Special Forces swim standards.

National Guard Special Forces Soldiers may serve in any of the 15 Army National Guard Special Forces Companies. They drill with the company they have chosen for assignment.

Army National Guard Special Forces companies are located in the following States: Alabama, California, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Washington and West Virginia.

For more information on joining the Army National Guard Special Forces, contact the Special Operations Recruiting Detachment (SORD) at: 205-808-3712 or [ALARNG20SFG@mail.mil](mailto:ALARNG20SFG@mail.mil) for the 20th Special Forces Group SORD and 385-202-4206 or [UTARNG19SFG@mail.mil](mailto:UTARNG19SFG@mail.mil) for the 19th Special Forces Group SORD. ●

#### ENLISTED REQUIREMENTS:

- Must be in the pay grade of E-3 to E-6 or E-7 with no more than 12 years' time in service and nine months' time in grade
- Successful completion of SFAS is a prerequisite to the SFQC
- Must have a general technical score of 110 or higher
- Soldiers recently completing an MOS-producing school must serve in that MOS for 1 year
- Must not have 30 days or more lost time under Title 10, United States Code, Section 972, within current or preceding enlistment
- Must not be barred to re-enlistment
- Have a minimum of 3 years' remaining service obligation upon completion of SFQC

#### OFFICER REQUIREMENTS:

- Must be branch-qualified and be in the grade of first lieutenant or captain (with less than two years' time in grade upon completion of SFAS)
- Have at least a SECRET security clearance prior to arrival at Fort Bragg and meet eligibility criteria for a TOP SECRET clearance
- Have completed the Officer Basic Course and have been successful in branch assignments prior to applying
- Have a Defense Language Aptitude Battery score of 85 or higher (or a minimum 1/1 reading and listening score on the Defense Language Proficiency Test)
- Have a minimum of 3 years' remaining service obligation upon completion of SFQC

A Soldier of the Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) combat dive team helo-casts from a CH-47 Chinook helicopter into Florida waters during re-qualifications.

Illinois Army National Guard photo by SSG Adam Fischman





# Jungle Ready

***Louisiana CPT is first Guard Soldier to Complete Rigorous Instructor Course***

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak



When then-1LT, now CPT Kenrick Cormier found out he was going to the jungles of Belize for the Belize Defense Force (BDF)'s Jungle Warfare Instructor Course, he knew he would need to prepare for the potentially hostile environment. The Louisiana Army National Guard Soldier and commander of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, had only been to the small Central American country once before, and that was to enjoy his honeymoon.

"The honeymoon varied drastically from the training," the officer reflected with a hint of humor.

On his second visit to the Central American nation, in December of last year, there was no wedded bliss or cocktails on the beach, just mountain ruck marches, obstacle courses and a bit of generator-driven night light.

In preparing for the training, CPT Cormier borrowed what would

become a cherished item from his training NCO, who had recently participated in the Jungle Operations Course conducted by the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii. The item was a machete.

"[My training NCO] is also a Ranger," said CPT Cormier. "He bought a brand-new machete for [his training] and brought it with him. He gave me the machete in almost perfect condition. When I gave him back that machete, it had chips in it from

cutting trees down. The blade, which I had to sharpen multiple times, was dull. The handle had come off, so I rigged a handle on with a cord."

CPT Cormier said his buddy just laughed at getting the knife back in less-than-pristine condition. It is a vivid indication, though, of how rigorous the Belize Jungle Course is in comparison to others. CPT Cormier is no stranger to strenuous environments. He has graduated from Air Assault, Airborne and Ranger School, giving him adequate expertise to gauge the quality of specialized military training. His reported critique? The BDF experience made a good impression.

"You had to be physically fit," he said. "You had to be capable of running missions continuously. You had to be able to communicate and give out orders. You ran on a lack of sleep and there was a lower calorie intake. With that being said, I don't think it was as difficult as Ranger School."

The Louisiana Guard and Belize have been State Partners for the past 20 years. In that time, they have partnered together on over 250 events, but partnering in this particular training was a first.

"This is the first any National Guard Soldier has ever graduated from this particular course," said LTC Keith Robinson, Joint Force Headquarters-State (JFHQ-State) Louisiana Army National Guard training officer. "We are very proud and excited about that."

Bringing the captain's jungle training to fruition was no easy feat. It required the meeting of a great number of mandatory support requirements – requirements that are mandated for any U.S. Soldier training OCONUS. Several coordination meetings took place to keep the planning on track.



LEFT: Then-1LT, now CPT Kenrick Cormier, commander of B Company, 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Louisiana Army National Guard, communicates with squad leaders during a training mission at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana.

Louisiana Army National Guard photo by SGT Noshoba Davis

ABOVE: 1LT Kenrick Cormier (right) teaches battle drills during the Belize Defense Force's 2017 Jungle Warfare Instructor Course held in Belize's Chiquibul rainforest.

Photo courtesy Belize Defense Force





Louisiana National Guard 1LT Kenrick Cormier (second from left, back row) stands with his fellow graduates from the Belize Defense Force's 2017 Jungle Warfare Instructor Course.

Photo courtesy Belize Defense Force

Logistics for medical planning were vital, as the Belizean jungle is full of poisonous and otherwise deadly species – and encounters do happen.

“We would want to have someone medevac’d out in the Golden Hour [the period of time during which there is the highest likelihood that medical treatment will prevent death]. We had to make sure that we had multiple, different means of medical support. [Though the BDF] had medical support on site, we also had to have backup ground medical support and backup air medical support,” LTC Robinson explained.

It was a bit complicated to set up, but a pair of Navy SEALs were also scheduled to attend the course, and some of the support mechanisms were set up through the Navy. With sufficient coordination, the requirements were met.

LTC Robinson noted that the United States is currently operating in numerous countries with jungle terrain. “That is why we want to gear our training during the

next couple of years toward jungle-type environments, [in case] we are deployed to a country that operates in the jungle,” he said. “[CPT Cormier] was an absolute best candidate to start that initiative.”

After CPT Cormier reached the BDF headquarters – based in Belize City, Belize – it was straight to the jungle. The Chiquibul Forest is in the Southwestern region of Belize. It is the country’s largest national park with over 423,000 acres of tropical forest. On day one, the class did a 9-mile ruck into that same rainforest. The training site included just a couple of fabricated buildings; everything else was constructed from the surrounding environment. At night, the only light was from a generator that gave illumination for a very short period of time.

The students made their own shelters out of tree logs, branches and leaves. They drove the logs into the ground, skinned the branches with a machete to make A-frames and laid the leaves on top to provide a roof. Soldiers primarily used the

Cohune Palm Tree. It’s considered the “tree of life” in the jungle, CPT Cormier said.

“Cut it down and you can eat the heart of the tree like a cabbage,” he explained. “The leaves on the top, when you lay them properly, make a perfect shelter for keeping water out. Then you basically use the vines for tying everything else.”

The Soldiers slept in cots and lived in the rainforest for the duration of the course, which was about six weeks.

While the BDF course, according to CPT Cormier, was not as tough as Ranger School, it certainly was not without its challenges. The course included a basic fitness test, a physical fitness test and an individual combat fitness test. Soldiers ran an obstacle course, and also did a jungle run and ruck marches. The 1.5-mile basic fitness test was done twice.

For CPT Cormier, the difficulty in the testing was not the heat or humidity, which he said was limited, but in the fact that much of the exercise required going up a mountain, which was unfamiliar territory.

“I’m from Louisiana – everything’s flat,” he said. “The jungle run was one of my more difficult things to do. It was a 1500-meter run up a mountain that increased 500 meters in elevation. The goal was to get up to the top and turn around and get back to the bottom in 20 minutes. It doesn’t sound hard, but when you feel your heart beating through your neck, it’s kind of an interesting situation.”

He went on to note, “The very top of the mountain is like a woodland. That’s not too bad, but once you get to that midway point and below, it’s all jungle,” CPT Cormier said. “It’s pretty much cutting through bush to get to any location.”

Chow was limited. Meals included beans and meat, or soup. It wasn’t as hearty as American MREs. Most of the students lost weight during the course, CPT Cormier said. They also got in better shape.

Jungle survival requires living off the land, so the training included instruction on laying traps for prey. At one point, the class harvested a fer-de-lance – the



second most poisonous snake in Belize – and dined on it. A few of the other areas covered in the course included jungle hazards, health and hygiene, jungle searching methods, booby traps, knots and ties, orienteering, river crossings, water survival, shelter survival and fire starting.

CPT Cormier noted that some lessons were particularly memorable because they illuminated the differences in techniques used to fight in the type of ecosystems found in the States versus those of the jungle.

The captain explained, “I actually learned quite a bit on the searching methods aspect because the jungle is so dense. Typically, we’re working in woodland operations [where you search by scanning left and right]. In the jungle, you don’t always scan left and right. You drop your hips and move your body up and down so your eyes are level. You can see a lot more. It brings the contrast out.”

CPT Cormier said he was impressed with the BDF instructors running the course. Each student had an instructor sponsor. CPT Cormier’s sponsor was Cpl. Lio Tzub. The BDF soldier was the go-to person for questions on jungle survival. CPT Cormier said Cpl. Tzub could live off the jungle without a single piece of modern technology.

Since Belize is an English-speaking country, there were no language barriers with which to contend. This meant the American students could tap the instructors for as much knowledge as possible without being inhibited by

communication gaps. “All the BDF instructors really knew their stuff,” CPT Cormier said.

The Louisiana Guard is looking forward to CPT Cormier sharing his new jungle knowledge with his troops back home. Serving as a skills multiplier, he will help increase his unit’s readiness.

“We’re trying to increase capacity and capabilities

within the Infantry Brigade Combat Team,” LTC Robinson said. “[CPT Cormier] learned the ability to live and operate in a jungle-type environment and he’s able to train subordinate leaders to [do the same].”

CPT Cormier was one of 13 Soldiers to graduate from the class early in 2018. Twenty-four Soldiers began the course. While he was the first

Guard Soldier to graduate, he is not likely to be the last. The Louisiana Army National Guard plans to send more Soldiers to the Jungle Warfare Instructor Course in the future.

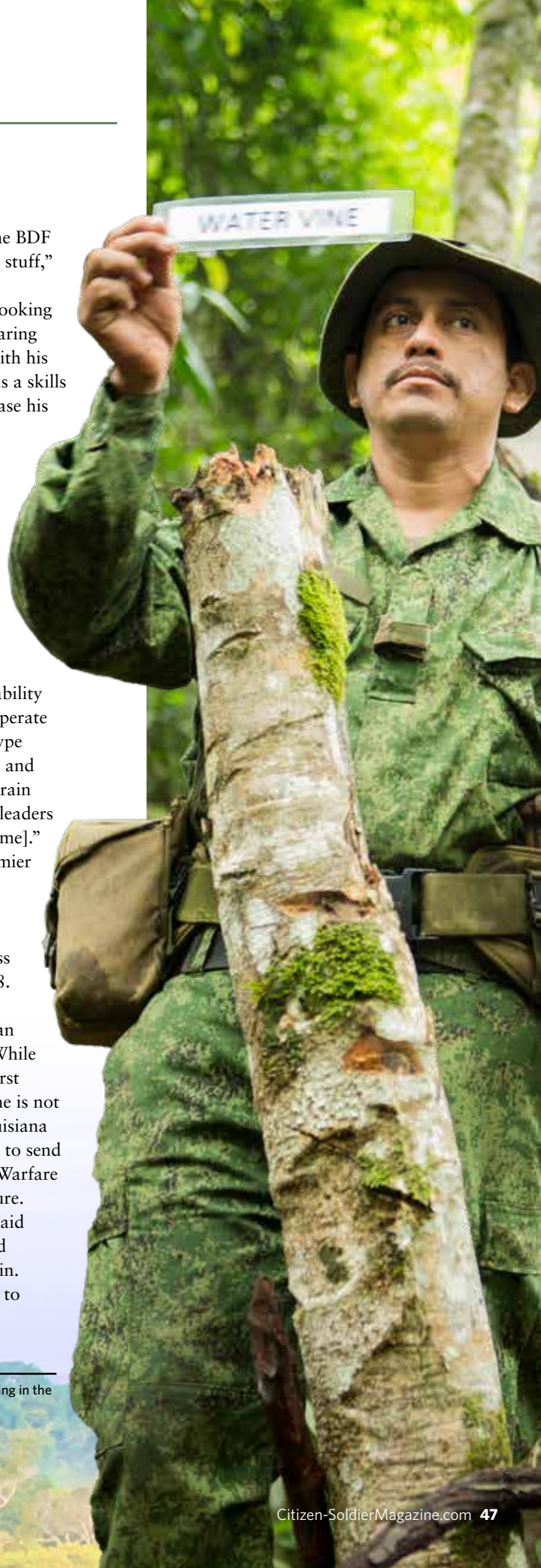
As for CPT Cormier, he said if given the chance, he would like to go back to Belize again. He might even find a reason to borrow his friend’s beat-up machete again. ●

“It doesn’t  
sound hard,  
but when you  
feel your heart  
beating through  
your neck,  
it’s kind of  
an interesting  
situation.”

– CPT Kenrick Cormier

A Belize Defense Force soldier demonstrates water-trapping techniques during jungle warfare training in the Belizean rainforest.

U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl Katelyn Hunter







## WHICH WAY DO I GO...?

Understanding the Difference Between  
the Montgomery-SR and Post 9/11 GI Bills

BY STAFF WRITER Keegan Rammel

**“There are *SIGNIFICANT* differences between the Post 9/11 and Montgomery-SR so it is important for Soldiers to understand the specifics.”**

**W**hile most Guard Soldiers may use the benefits of the Montgomery Select Reserve GI Bill (MGIB-SR), eligible members called to active duty service may also have the option of using the Post 9/11 GI Bill. Commonly referred to as the Forever GI Bill, the Post 9/11 GI Bill was recently granted by Congress a number of expansions that may broaden benefits to Guard Soldiers.

### **The new revisions to the Post 9/11 GI Bill include:**

- Removal of the 15-year delimiting date
- Full benefits to Purple Heart recipients
- Increased money for those pursuing a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) degree
- Broadened benefits eligibility for reserve component Soldiers
- Added protections for survivor Family members

National Guard members called to active duty – when a governor requests federal assistance in response to a major disaster or emergency, when the DoD mobilizes reserve components in support of a combatant command or, in some instances, when Soldiers serve full time on a Title 10 or Title 32 – may be eligible for Post 9/11 GI Bill.

There are significant differences between the Post 9/11 and MGIB-SR, so it is important for Soldiers to understand the specifics when determining which to use.

While the average Guard Soldier will receive a larger set of benefits from the Post 9/11 GI Bill, every Soldier's circumstance is different. The best way to decipher which bill is best, is to determine what percentage of the Post 9/11 GI Bill a Soldier is eligible for and, based on that information, calculate which bill will pay out the higher level of funding. A State Education Service Officer can help with this calculation.

The most significant difference between the two bills is the amount of money awarded each month and to whom that

money is paid. The Post 9/11 GI Bill pays tuition cost to the school, and a books-and-supplies stipend, plus a monthly housing allowance directly to the student. The MGIB-SR requires that payments be made only to the student.

Additionally, unlike the MGIB-SR, the Post 9/11 GI Bill is transferable to dependents (spouse or child) and offers the ability to move the entitlement to a secondary dependent should the first beneficiary pass away before using the entitlement.

For the Post 9/11 to be transferable, a service member must have completed certain tasks. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, service members must have at least six years of service in the armed forces (combining years of service in reserve component and active duty is allowed) on the date of approval and agree to serve four additional years from the date of election in order to be eligible.

The breakout on the following page offers further details on the benefits associated with the two bills. ●

Both the Montgomery Select Reserve and Post 9/11 GI Bills are excellent programs that help service members and their loved ones pursue their educational goals. For specific information on which program is best for you, talk to your State Education Service Officer. You may also visit [GIBill.va.gov/Apply-For-Benefits](http://GIBill.va.gov/Apply-For-Benefits) or call **1-888-GI Bill-1** (1-888-442-4551).



## TUITION

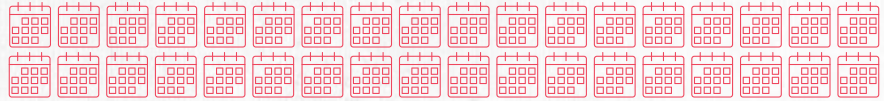
**\$375**

Per month for full-time students

**UP TO 100%**

Based on the amount of time served on qualifying active duty orders. 90 cumulative days for 40%; at least 6 cumulative months for 50%; at least 12 cumulative months for 60%; at least 18 cumulative months for 70%; at least 24 cumulative months for 80%; at least 30 cumulative months for 90%; at least 36 cumulative months for 100%

## PAYMENT TERMS

**36 MONTHS**

## PAYMENT RECIPIENTS



Student



School and Student

## EXPIRATION



While actively serving

**NEVER EXPIRES**

If the qualifying service ended on or after January 1, 2013

## HOUSING ALLOWANCE



No coverage



Available to Soldiers attending school more than half time. Based on the E-5 with dependents Basic Allowance for Housing Table. School ZIP code is used as location identifier for amount. Online-only students receive eligible percentage at a rate of half the national average.

## BOOKS



No coverage

**\$1000 / YEAR**

Up to \$1000 per year paid proportionately based on enrollment

## TUTORING

**\$100 / MONTH**

Up to \$100 reimbursed per month

## RELOCATION FOR SCHOOL



No coverage

**UP TO \$500**

Up to \$500 if the service member is traveling over 500 miles from an extremely remote location

## APPRENTICESHIP OR ON-THE-JOB TRAINING



First six months of training - \$281.25 per month;  
second six months of training - \$206.25 per month;  
remaining pursuit of training - \$131.25 per month



Equal to Monthly Housing Allowance of E-5 with dependents. School ZIP code is used as location identifier for amount. First 6 months - 100%; second 6 months - 80%

## ABILITY TO TRANSFER BENEFITS



No coverage



Service member must be in service when initiating transfer request. Must have served at least 6 years prior to transfer request and serve 4 additional years after request. Spouses may use benefits for lifetime. Children must use benefits before their 26th birthday.



# FINANCIAL READINESS = MISSION READINESS

## National Guard Financial Management Awareness Program

BY STAFF WRITER Keegan Rammel



**A** Texas Army National Guard mechanic incurs unexpected expenses and needs \$300 in advance of his next expected paycheck. The Soldier goes to a well-known local company for a short-term loan that will cover expenses until the next payday. On payday, however, the Soldier's paycheck is not enough to pay regular expenses plus pay back the cash advance. Believing no other option is available, the Soldier goes to another local payday loan company for an additional short-term loan. A few weeks later, the Soldier has paid \$390 in premiums and fees on the original \$300 advance – and the loan is still not paid off. Five months later, the Soldier has paid \$2,950 to cover the “floats” created by the \$300 loan.

This scenario may seem outlandish to some, but millions of Americans are caught in this type of vicious, predatory lending cycle every day – oftentimes, because they are unaware of alternative options available to them.

As with most people – when service members suffer from personal financial problems, it has the potential to have a negative effect on all facets of their lives, including their military performance and readiness. National Guard leadership understands this and has charged commanders with ensuring that service members and their Families are encouraged and supported in practicing sound money management techniques.

The resulting program is the National Guard Financial Management Awareness Program (FMAP), which exists to provide Guard members and Families with an awareness of financial management resources available within the National Guard community. Using a variety of resources, FMAP gives a

basic awareness of easily accessible resources to help manage financial health and ensure mission readiness.

FMAP assists Soldiers in making smart choices when dealing with areas such as monitoring financial and credit health, managing debt, making ends meet, and learning how to save and invest disability benefits for members who qualify.

Smart financial management starts with making sound choices. FMAP employs, among other things, a seven-step approach to help teach Guard members how to make the choices that will put them on the path to financial wellness. The steps are:

1. Create a spending plan
2. Calculate your net worth
3. Monitor your financial health
4. Track your spending
5. Manage your checking account
6. Read your leave and earnings statement
7. Talk to your spouse about your money, budget and spending priorities

Through FMAP, service members may also learn the basics for purchasing or leasing a car, renting or buying a home, managing personal risks through insurance products, and understanding the risk and return in investments.

To learn more about FMAP or to take advantage of their services, contact the FMAP national program manager at 703-607-5981. The program manager will connect interested parties with a local personal finance counselor. For the latest FMAP financial health-related web resources, feeds and videos, go to [JointServicesSupport.org/FMAP/Default.aspx](http://JointServicesSupport.org/FMAP/Default.aspx). ●



# KEEPING YOUR MOUTH FIT KEEPS YOU MEDICALLY READY

SUBMITTED BY GuardYourHealth.com



**M**

ost Guard Soldiers are very aware that physical fitness is key to maintaining medical and combat readiness. Perhaps less known, but no less true, is that a healthy mouth is equally important to maintaining Soldier readiness. Here are 10 things you can do to stay on top of your dental health.

**1** Get your annual dental exam. Soldiers are required to see a dentist at least once a year – and for good reason! Not only do regular dental exams keep Soldiers compliant with Army regulation, they also help to prevent oral disease and allow for early identification of potential problems and recommended treatments.

**2** Brush twice a day. Brushing your teeth regularly – at least twice a day – will guard against cavities and other dental problems.

**3** Floss every day. It can be hard to start a habit of daily flossing, but it is an important step in keeping your teeth and gums healthy as flossing helps remove the food debris and plaque that cause tooth decay and gum disease. Keep in mind that you do not need to wait until you are getting ready for bed to floss – getting your head to the pillow will win out over flossing almost every night! Try instead to keep floss in the kitchen and use it right after dinner. Or tape a pack of floss to the remote control and use it while you watch TV.

**4** Avoid all tobacco use. Tobacco not only puts your overall health and life at risk, but can have detrimental effects on your mouth as well. Smoking and chewing tobacco cause bad breath and stained teeth. It can also lead to gum disease and more serious health concerns like cancer.

**5** Use a mouth guard. A mouth guard will help keep your pearly whites intact. If needed, it can help you stop

grinding your teeth, may help reduce jaw problems and can protect your mouth during physical activity. Generic and semi-custom (boil and bite) mouth guards may be purchased over the counter at most pharmacies. Custom-fitted mouth guards are available through your dentist's office. Two different types of mouth guards are available.

- Sleep mouth guards that prevent tooth wear and cracking caused by nighttime grinding
- Sports mouth guards that protect the teeth and mouth during physical activities

Choose the guard that is right for you based on your needs and activities.

**6** Drink water often. It's important to keep your mouth hydrated. Drinking water keeps your saliva glands healthy. Saliva helps wash away food from your teeth and gums, prevents cavities by neutralizing harmful acids and reducing bacteria, and keeps the surface of your teeth strong.

**7** Limit sugar intake. Treating yourself to a dessert or a sugary snack is not bad for you – as long as you do not overdo it. Eating sugary foods too often can cause many health problems, including tooth decay. If you chew gum, make sure it is sugar-free. If you have a sugary treat, be sure to rinse your mouth with water or mouthwash afterwards to remove any sticky residue.

**8** Use a straw when drinking sugary drinks. Who knew straws make for good oral hygiene? Drinking with a straw deposits juice at the back of the throat, which keeps it away from your teeth and avoids having them immersed in a sugar bath.

**9** Ask about side effects from your medicine. Some medications may have side effects that affect your teeth. For example, more than 500 over-the-counter and prescription medications are known to cause dry mouth, and a dry mouth may lead to cavities. Check with your pharmacist about your medication's potential side effects and tell your dentist if you are experiencing unusual changes in your mouth.

**10** Eat a healthy diet. A well-balanced diet is good for your health, head to toe. This includes your mouth. Minerals like calcium and fluoride help support healthy teeth, gums and bones. Calcium is found in milk, green leafy veggies, cheese and nuts. Fluoride is prevalent in most water systems, and is also found in fruits, veggies and tea. ●

**Guarding your mouth is easy once you know what to do. To find a dentist in your area, go to [GYH.Tips/DentalCare](https://www.gyh.tips/dentalcare) or talk to your medical readiness NCO.**



# DEVELOPING A FITNESS-BASED LIFESTYLE



## The Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Course

BY STAFF WRITER Ruth Ann Replogle

**D**o you find yourself falling behind on your fitness standards? Are you looking for ways to improve your overall fitness not only to ensure your readiness for the Army and your State, but also to ensure your personal wellness and longevity? Fear not. The Army National Guard wants to see you succeed and has a solution – the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Course and Fitness Camps.

Former Kansas Army National Guard Fitness Course Leader SFC Charles “Chip” Cunningham said the problem for most Soldiers is that after basic training and AIT, Guard Soldiers often do not continue with education and training on the

requirements to live a healthy and military-ready lifestyle. As a result, they fall behind in their physical fitness and many times risk failing the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), which in turn leads to a host of problems including becoming ineligible for re-enlistment.

To combat this problem, many States have initiated Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Courses or Fitness Camps. At their core, these fitness courses and camps are intended to help Soldiers improve their APFT results and thus continue their military careers. Additionally, and just as importantly, it empowers Soldiers to take back control of their physical health.

As an example, the Kansas Army National Guard has been holding its intensive two-week fitness course since January 2016. The program maintains a

primary objective of developing the skills and habits Soldiers need to consistently set and reach their personal fitness goals.

Kansas Soldiers take the APFT at the beginning of the course to gauge their initial level of fitness. In the days that follow, participants spend hours in the gym concentrating on strength training, “tactical” training – including kickboxing, kettlebell swinging and body-weight resistance – and Army Physical Readiness Training.

In the required classroom portion of the program, participants focus on mental strength, nutrition, resilience, goal setting and finances. Also included in the course is a cooking class where Soldiers learn to prepare basic recipes using healthy ingredients, and a trip to the grocery store where Soldiers learn to interpret nutrition fact labels and become familiar with the costs of healthy foods.

SFC Cunningham said, collectively, the 31 Soldiers who participated in the first



Original image by SGT Paul Porter

An illustrated rendition of Maryland Army National Guard Soldiers participating in a run as part of the two-week Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program held at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation in Reisterstown, Md.





course held in Kansas lost 136.5 pounds and averaged a 3 percent decrease in body fat. They also increased their cumulative APFT scores by an average of 40 points per person.

At the Wisconsin Army National Guard two-week Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Camp, Soldiers are given tools similar to those given by the Kansas Guard to help them improve their overall fitness. The Wisconsin course includes mental resilience training on controlling how one thinks about and approaches certain life situations, financial classes to help those struggling financially and instruction on proper techniques for calisthenics – exercises that are typically done with no or minimal gym equipment.

According to Wisconsin Camp Course Manager SSG Brooks Wangler, at the start of the August 2015 Wisconsin fitness camp, only four out of the 69 participating Soldiers passed the APFT on their first try, and the overall average score was 141 points. By the end of the course,

17 Soldiers passed and the overall average score increased to 169 points.

“They taught me how to take care of myself,” said Kansas Army National Guard PV2 Veronica Withee, who had previously struggled with portions of the APFT. The Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Course not only helped her to boost her confidence and motivation, it helped her boost her APFT score and ultimately remain eligible for re-enlistment.

PV2 Withee’s testimony mirrors that of other Soldiers who say their State’s Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Course helped guide them in finding a way to physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle.

If you are ready to take control of your health and fitness goals and want to find a Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Course or Camp near you, talk to your Medical Readiness NCO or unit commander. ●

**“They taught  
me how to take  
care of myself.”**

— PV2 Veronica Withee







# HOMEFRONT UNITED NETWORK

## Our Real-Life Stories – UNITED

Gain access to a network of support that celebrates the military Family.

Homefront United Network is an online resource that showcases stories and tips from real-life military spouses and Family members from all Service branches and walks of life. Founded by an Army National Guard spouse who did not have the benefit of living near a military installation – this grassroots website functions with a goal of encouraging a united sense of support between military Families.

The site features blogs on various topics, including personal experiences with deployment, relationships, childcare, finances and education. Links to resources including guides on military discounts, financial assistance and recommended books are also available through the website.

**GO TO [HomefrontUnited.com](http://HomefrontUnited.com)** to connect with other military Families and provide guidance together as a community.



## SELFLESS SUPPORT OF GUARD FAMILY READINESS

### National Guard Volunteer Program

BY STAFF WRITER Chase Whitlock

**V**olunteers are an invaluable resource in the National Guard community. They serve by generously giving of their time and talents. Volunteers share their skillsets and provide services and resources to benefit Guard members and their Families.

Officially, these diligent volunteers are supported and organized under the National Guard Volunteer Program. As part of the National Guard Family Program, the National Guard Volunteer Program exists to enhance Guard Family Readiness through an effective volunteer network. The program seeks to educate, assist and advocate for the readiness and well-being of Guard service members and their Families.

Through the program, volunteers contribute a broad range of State-level services. These services not only support the development and administration of new volunteer programs, but also enhance the capabilities of existing Guard programs by augmenting the efforts of paid staff.

Across all 54 U.S. States and Territories, at least 45,000 National Guard Volunteer Program volunteers are currently serving in National Guard units and wings. They serve in positions including Family Readiness Group (FRG) leader, FRG secretary and treasurer, Key Spouse and Key Spouse volunteers. On average, an additional two to three adjunct volunteers per unit or wing step forward to support Family-day, welcome-home, and holiday events and activities.

#### THE REGIONAL VOLUNTEER TEAM (RVT)

The RVT is comprised of 10 volunteer representatives from each of the 10 Federal Emergency Management Agency regions. The RVT uses the time in service, experience and expertise of its members to provide guidance to National Guard volunteers working in the various regions. The team administers the National Guard Volunteer Awards Program and members are often invited guest speakers at regional training conferences and meetings. The RVT is also responsible for providing the National Guard Bureau (NGB) with best practices gathered from the regional volunteer members.

#### THE VOLUNTEER TRAINING TEAM (VTT)

The VTT is the grass roots segment of the National Guard Volunteer Program. It provides opportunities for volunteers to

attend training courses, regardless of location, through an online conference-call platform. The training courses are designed not only for volunteers, but may also be attended by service members, Family members, paid staff and community resource members. In addition to training, the VTT manages networks that connect volunteers with each other as they work in their respective communities. It is also the gateway for State-level volunteers to move on to serving at the national level, should they so choose. The VTT has eight sub-teams: data, communications/marketing, education and curriculum, facilitator, graphic design/seminar enhancement, human resources, quality assurance and special projects.

#### VOLUNTEER SUPPORT STAFF (VSS)

The VSS assists NGB Family Program staff with the operation of the annual National Guard Volunteer Workshop and Youth Symposium. Selected volunteers are invited to fill VSS team lead and VSS assistant team lead positions. Additionally, the RVT is asked to send one representative from each U.S. State and Territory to serve on the VSS team. The VSS has 10 sub-teams; communications/media, preparation, greeter, guide, inventory control, technical support, data entry, runner, registration/conference support and facilitator.

If you are looking to expand your volunteer experience, the National Guard Volunteer Program is looking for you. Use the contact information below to connect with a National Guard Volunteer Program representative and receive detailed information about joining the Guard's team of volunteers.

#### THE REGIONAL VOLUNTEER TEAM (RVT)

Contact – Jenny Testerman, RVT chair  
JennyTesterman.VTT@gmail.com

#### THE VOLUNTEER TRAINING TEAM (VTT)

Contact – Tammy Chase, VTT coordinator  
TammyChase.VTT@gmail.com

#### VOLUNTEER SUPPORT STAFF (VSS)

Saundria J. Cardwood, volunteer program officer  
Saundria.J.Cardwood.civ@mail.mil ●





# ... And the Winner Is...

Kentucky Army National Guard Wife  
Wins National Guard Spouse of the Year

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

Shelia Brookins with husband SFC Darrell Brookins.

Military Spouse® photo by Nathan Cornetet/  
Fusion Photography





Shelia Brookins (2nd from left) poses for photos with Air Force Gen Joseph Lengyel (far left), chief of the National Guard Bureau, her husband SFC Darrell Brookins, and Sally Lengyel, wife of Gen Lengyel, at the USO of Metropolitan Washington-Baltimore's 36th Annual Awards Dinner in Washington, D.C., where she accepted the 2018 Armed Forces Insurance National Guard Spouse of the Year Award, May 10, 2018.

DoD photo by EJ Hersom

**W**hen asked to list the qualities that define his wife, SFC Darrell Brookins of the 198th Military Police Battalion, Kentucky Army National Guard, chose, “Extraordinary. Exciting. Loving. Selfless.”

This is how he sees his wife, Shelia Brookins, and he is not the only one. An entire panel of judges felt the same way, as the traits he described are essential to winning the title of Armed Forces Insurance National Guard Spouse of the Year – an honor Shelia Brookins recently earned.

The Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year (MSOY) award is presented by *Military Spouse* magazine and recognizes the contributions and commitment of military spouses to the military community and to the country.

A winning spouse is chosen from each branch and component of the U.S. military, and the selection process is rigorous to say the least. After Brookins was nominated for the award by both her husband and her coworker, she was entered into a pool of thousands of military spouses from all branches.

Once nominated, spouses go through a three-phase voting process – Installation Voting, Top 18 and Branch Voting. First, nominations are collected and organized by base, Coast Guard district or State – depending on the branch and component of service. The nominee with the highest popular vote at each base, district or State is named the respective winner and advances for consideration to be in the Top 18 Spouses. The Top 18 Spouses of the Year are determined based on the results of the popular vote from round 1 along with votes from the MSOY panel of judges. Winners of the Top 18 then move on to the branch round voting. Those with the highest combined score – derived from the popular vote from round 1, the MSOY judging panel vote from round 2 and round 3 votes from the MSOY Judge Advisory Panel – are awarded the six national branch-level titles.

“It’s an honor and a privilege to even be considered,” Brookins said. “It’s just awesome. The job that I do requires a lot of confidentiality, so the people that I help usually don’t come back to say thank you.

This is just a way of knowing that people have appreciated the things I’ve done over the years.”

Brookins works as a Family Assistance Center Specialist (FACS) contracted for the Kentucky National Guard. In that position, she connects service members and their Families with available resources, education and information that is needed before, during and after deployments. Brookins is a perfect fit for the position, as it allows her to use her passion for helping others to benefit a host of Families.

“I like being there for people,” Brookins said. “You get to meet a lot of people. Sometimes they are in dire situations and sometimes they just need a little assistance. I like having the opportunity to help them overcome whatever obstacle they [are facing].”

According to SFC Brookins, it was no surprise when his wife won the national title. “Just looking at her qualifications and the things that she’s done over the years, she definitely fits the mold of Military Spouse of the Year,” he said. “I felt confident as we were putting her bio



together and listing all the things that she's done. I felt very strongly that she would win, but when she actually won it was really exciting. My son and I were jumping up and down like we were going to the Final Four or the Super Bowl!"

Brookins' desire to help others doesn't stop with her position as an FACS. Her goodwill has led her to volunteer for multiple organizations. Brookins is heavily involved with her children's extracurricular activities. She serves at her children's schools, Westport Middle School and Ballard High School, as a Team Mom for the basketball team at Westport, and as a Parent Rep and volunteer for the football team at Ballard. She also serves as a parent representative on the school's School-Based Decision Making council – a parent-teacher leadership committee under the Kentucky Department of Education that is

responsible for setting school specific policy. In her local church, she serves as a praise leader, Vacation Bible School coordinator and the church conference coordinator. Brookins also serves as the Chaplain, Family Affairs Co-Chair and Area II Auxiliary Director of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States and the Auxiliary President of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard for Kentucky.

Brookins commented that receiving the National Guard Spouse of the Year Award has not only shown her how much others have appreciated her acts of service and volunteerism, but more importantly, it has given her the opportunity to encourage others to become more involved in their communities.

"It gives me an opportunity to have a platform, and for me [that platform is] volunteerism," Brookins explained. "It



Shelia Brookins (left) and Shelia Bandy, working as representatives of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of Kentucky (EANGKY), visit with Brett King, a military legislative assistant in the Office of Sen. Rand Paul and other Kentucky congressional representatives to discuss initiatives supporting Kentucky State military affairs, Feb. 9, 2018.

Photo courtesy Enlisted Association of the National Guard of Kentucky

Shelia Brookins (left), Libby Cox (center left) and Nancy Brewer work with a Soldier of the Kentucky Army National Guard handing out refreshments and Family Support Information at the Beuchel Armory, Louisville, Kentucky National Guard Center on Nov. 2, 2011.

Kentucky National Guard Yellow Ribbon Program photo by 1LT Mark Slaughter



seems that, over the years, people's efforts in volunteering have died down. You don't find as many people volunteering in their communities anymore, so it gives me a platform to try to encourage people to go out and volunteer."

Brookins traces her passion for volunteerism to her upbringing.

"I was raised by my grandmother," explained Brookins. "She was always helping somebody. If there was someone in the community that needed anything, she was there for them. I learned that there are people out there who need help and you have the ability to help them. That's always been a part of [who I am]."

Brookins and her husband share a core value of always lending a helpful hand. Brookins said their common desire to support and help those in need is part of what drew them to each other back when they first began dating. Now, after 18 years of marriage, it remains at the center of their family values.

"When I met my husband, he was always there for his family and trying to help people," Brookins recalled. "It seemed like we just clicked. Helping people is just what we do."





LEFT: Shelia Brookins, as EANGKY Auxiliary President, presents a check to Soldiers of C Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment, Kentucky Army National Guard, who are accepting the check on behalf of their company as the winners of EANGKY's Second Annual Membership Drive Contest, Dec. 7, 2016.

RIGHT: Shelia Brookins (far left) and SFC Darrell Brookins (far right) pose for a photo with 2016 USAA Scholarship winner Whitney O'Bryan and her parents as they present O'Bryan with her scholarship check, July 12, 2016.

Photos courtesy Enlisted Association of the National Guard of Kentucky

Because of their exuberant personalities and passion for volunteerism, Brookins and her husband are known in the Kentucky Army National Guard community as "Team Brookins." The team also includes their three sons, three daughters, Brookins' two younger sisters – whom she and SFC Brookins raised – and their eight foster children.

Brookins expressed gratefulness for both her supportive Family at home, and the supportive Family she has made in the Kentucky Guard.

"Although the National Guard Family is dispersed, it's still the most amazing Family I've ever had the privilege of being a part of," Brookins told *Military Spouse*. "The Family you are born in is chosen for you, but with the military, these individuals chose to be a part of this great Family. The support you get is unwavering and I'm honored to be a part of it."

Brookins went on to note the vital lessons she has learned in being a military spouse, including the importance of being "flexible, understanding and patient."

“  
*Change is certain and  
 in order to survive it,  
 you must keep an open  
 line of communication  
 and be willing to  
 accept anything that  
 gets thrown your way.  
 Deployments may come,  
 promotions might not  
 come and celebrations  
 will be missed, but if  
 you approach each  
 occurrence as a Family  
 and look for the positives,  
 you will get through.*  
 ”

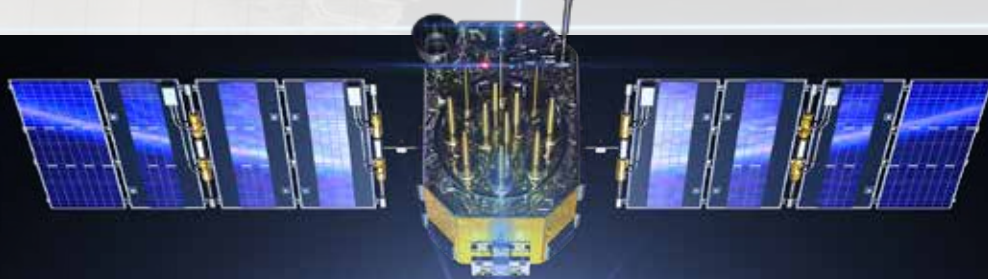
– Shelia Brookins

"The military has taught me that I am stronger than any obstacle that is set before me," she said. "Change is certain and in order to survive it, you must keep an open line of communication and be willing to accept anything that gets thrown your way. Deployments may come, promotions might not come and celebrations will be missed, but if you approach each occurrence as a Family and look for the positives, you will get through."

While Brookins is the 2018 National Guard Spouse of the Year, she emphasized the importance of showing recognition and gratitude to all military spouses.

"Even though I've gotten this recognition, there are other spouses out there who may never be recognized, but do some of the same – or better things – than I do," Brookins reflected. "Many times, we recognize the service member, but behind the scenes there's the Family and the support. [This award] lets me know that people do recognize that we make sacrifices too. It's nowhere close to the sacrifices our Soldiers make, but they are still sacrifices." ●





## OUT OF THIS WORLD **SUPPORT** COLORADO'S SPACE SUPPORT TEAMS TAKE THE FIGHT TO THE NEXT FRONTIER

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

**A**rmy Space Support Teams (ARSSTs) from the Colorado Army National Guard's 117th Space Support Battalion are successfully showing the importance of space-based support to warfighters on the ground.

Space capability has become an essential tool in U.S. Army combat operations. It has the potential to impact nearly every warfighting function. ARSST Soldiers are experts in the space domain. The teams rapidly deploy across the globe and provide situational awareness of space capabilities and assets. ARSSTs integrate

with units to augment their intelligence and operations planning capabilities and ultimately increase the units' abilities.

The 117th Space Support Battalion is the only Army National Guard Space Battalion. It falls under the U.S. Army 1st Space Brigade. Within the battalion are two identically structured companies – the 1158th and the 217th. Each company includes six ARSSTs, for a total of 12 teams across the battalion. Each six-person team is comprised of two operations officers, an all-source intelligence analyst, a geospatial engineer, a

satellite communications specialist and an information technology specialist.

"All of us receive specialized training on all space-based assets that the DoD utilizes and integrates into operations at the technical level," explained MAJ Kevin Trabert, commander of the 1158th Space Company. "We deploy globally to execute planning, coordination and integration of the space force enhancement functions, space situational awareness and technical operations."

Rather than deploying as an entire company, ARSSTs deploy one team at a

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> lat 33.621937  
> lon 17.047852
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time in nine-month rotations. The goal of ARSSTs is to increase a unit's ability to provide lethal and non-lethal effects on targets.

"If we lose space, we lose the ability to conduct offensive and defensive operations," explained MAJ Scott Sharkey, commander of the 217th Space Company. "We have this enormous comparative advantage against many of our adversaries that can be nullified, to a degree, if systems go down. Our ability to predict what some adversaries might do to try and take away those [advantages], to protect them, and then to proactively look at ways [to integrate them] into our offensive and defensive operations – that is the heart and soul of what a good ARSST is able to bring."

In April of this year, Team 27 of the 217th deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation Spartan Shield (OSS). OSS has a mission of building up partner capacity and deterring regional aggression in the Middle East. While deployed, ARSST-27 has a complementary mission that is twofold.

"First is to combat violent extremist organizations, such as ISIS and other destabilizing extremists in the Middle East," said MAJ Sharkey. "Second is to act as a strategic deterrent against malign regional actors, such as Iran and the Assad regime, so that the orders and the missions handed down from the President, through the chain of command, can be acted upon."

To support OSS, ARSST-27 contributes to the situational awareness of the battlefield by providing satellite imagery, reconnaissance, surveillance, early warning of missile threats, GPS monitoring and accuracy reporting, and monitoring and reporting of counter-improvised explosive device programs.

In relation to targeting, ARSST provides GPS navigational accuracy reports. The reports model space and terrestrial environmental conditions – mainly the presence of radiation, space debris and meteoroids – that can affect the travel speed and locations of individual GPS satellites and degrade the accuracy of the GPS signal.

PEOPLE UTILIZE EQUIPMENT  
EVERY SINGLE DAY THAT THEY  
DON'T REALIZE HAS A SPACE  
COMPONENT TO IT - NOR DO  
THEY REALIZE THE IMPACT  
THE SPACE ENVIRONMENT CAN  
HAVE ON THE OPERATION OF  
THEIR EQUIPMENT.

LTC Joe Paladino

"If there's a planned kinetic strike, we can give advice to the warfighting commanders to say this time window would be ideal from a precision munition perspective as opposed to this other window of time where the [space] environment is not as favorable," MAJ Sharkey noted.

ARSSTs help units strike targets with precision and avoid unnecessary damage. The accuracy reports are a critical planning component when using GPS guided missiles, especially the type that can adjust coordinates in mid-flight.

"In the fight against ISIS, the U.S. military relies heavily on long-range missiles to engage and destroy the enemy," explained LTC Joe Paladino, commander of the 117th Space Support Battalion. "Oftentimes, the targets of these strikes are located in dense urban

areas where accuracy of a GPS guided missile is critical to hit the target."

He continued, "You want to make sure you are launching that strike at opportune times so that you can minimize the collateral damage and prevent civilian casualties because once that occurs, it gets broadcasted around the world and that is not a position our military wants to be in."

An ongoing challenge for the ARSST members is managing the size and scope of their mission with such a small team.

"Usually, when we go to one of these missions, we are given a fairly tight area of operation," said MAJ Sharkey. "Because our capabilities are truly global, we have to be able to respond to requests potentially concurrently. It's a six-person team that has to be able to respond to requests for support from multiple places throughout an entire major command area."

Army Space Support provides a unique skillset. So much so that incorporating the ARSST's expertise within an assigned unit often presents some up-front difficulty.

"We are a highly specialized unit and mission set, so it's challenging to make that initial integration with the supported unit and convey to them how we increase their capability," MAJ Trabert said. "For example, when an infantry division receives an artillery unit,



there's a common clear understanding of what the artillery does for them. When an ARSST shows up to support these units, it requires a lot of education on our part to explain what we provide and how we can help them."

Education is a key component of the ARSST mission. According to LTC Paladino, more than 70 percent of current Army equipment relies upon some component of the space segment in order to operate. With that said, it is important for Soldiers to understand the role space plays in regular Army operations.

"[Most] people recognize their navigation systems utilize GPS, but it goes way beyond that," LTC Paladino explained. "People utilize equipment every single day that they don't realize has a space component to it – nor do they realize the impact the space

environment can have on the operation of their equipment."

LTC Paladino went on to note that he does not mind having to inform his fellow Soldiers about the value of his unit; in fact, he said he quite enjoys it.


"My favorite aspect is educating the warfighter," he said. "We integrate – usually at a division level or higher headquarters – and a lot of people will wonder what we do. We inform them of our capabilities and what their limitations and constraints are. Then we show them how they can best utilize those capabilities to enhance their tactical operations.

"We get to educate people on how you preserve your ability to use equipment reliably, how you prevent the enemy from engaging your ability to use that equipment, and how you can efficiently conduct

operations and preserve your ability to command control of your forces to deliver precision munitions. We educate them on what technology has done for our Army and how it helps them do their mission that much better."

As technology's role in military operations increases, so does the importance of space capabilities and the experts who manipulate them. The Soldiers of ARSST-27 play a vital role in U.S. space operations. They, and the entire 117th Space Support Battalion, are helping to increase the U.S. Army advantage in the fight against our Nation's enemies.

"Most people don't realize how much of their daily lives are connected to a satellite rotating around the Earth," MAJ Trabert commented. "The space domain is becoming more involved in warfare, and it's our responsibility as space professionals to educate Soldiers on the capabilities and vulnerabilities of this domain. It's a unique skillset that you can't find anywhere else in the Army." ●



Colorado Army National Guard SGT Nathan Faith, 117th Space Battalion, checks a satellite dish in advance of GPS monitoring and satellite image gathering conducted by members of the battalion.

Colorado National Guard photo by TSgt Wolfram M. Stumpf





The Trio Academy building, located on the grounds of the Indiana National Guard's Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, is now the main location of the new Muscatatuck Cyber Academy.

National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohl

## Building the Cyber Force — Muscatatuck Cyber Academy

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

**W**hen the Indiana National Guard is not using the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center (MUTC) to train Soldiers on how to respond to “America’s worst day” (see “The Day We Dread,” article on p 23), they employ the unique facility for all manner of events – ranging from government conferences and workshops to the filming of disaster scenes for major movies and television shows.

The latest project to be housed on the Muscatatuck campus is an ingenious partnership between the Indiana National Guard, Indiana-based Ivy Tech Community College and the National Center for

Complex Operations (NCCO) – a nonprofit organization that provides effective coordination of DoD and other government personnel for complex operations.

Motivated by the Army’s cyber initiative, the Indiana Guard worked with Ivy Tech and NCCO to establish and launch the Muscatatuck Cyber Academy.

The formation of the Cyber Academy will help to foster a superior national cyber defense by supporting the development of skilled and agile cybersecurity experts. As part of its curriculum, the Academy will create real-world scenarios that will serve to train students on counteracting adversarial

cyberattacks. It will also create a pipeline of potential recruits capable of stepping directly into a cybersecurity MOS.

“While this does not translate to a specific cyber MOS for the Army, it whets the appetite for our youth who are interested in careers in cyber,” explained LTC Chris Mabis, commander of MUTC. “If they choose to join any branch in the Service, to include the Army National Guard, it gives them a leg up if they go into a cyber MOS.”

The Cyber Academy will hold its first set of classes beginning in August of this year, with 40 students already enrolled.

“The main goal is to get educated





TOP: Army National Guard cyber force Soldiers participating in Cyber Shield 18, a cyber defense training exercise held at Camp Atterbury, Ind., May 6-18, 2018.

Indiana Army National Guard photo by SSG Jeremiah Runser

BOTTOM: Ivy Tech students studying under the Information Technology and Business Technology certificate program.

Photo courtesy Indiana Ivy Tech Community College

people in cybersecurity out into the workforce,” explained Pam Schmelz, IT Department chair at Ivy Tech. “There is such a shortage of cybersecurity professionals, businesses are having a hard time defending their networks and defending their private information. We are trying to help [with that] the best we can.”

The Cyber Academy structures its curriculum such that students may earn an accelerated Cyber Security/Information

Assurance associate of applied science degree from Ivy Tech in just 11 months. The program also makes accommodations for students currently serving as Guard Soldiers, allowing up to 20 percent of the curriculum to be modified to meet emerging Army requirements for cyber MOSs. Graduates will earn certificates of A+, CCENT and Security+ – all highly sought-after, industry-leading certifications that are useful in both military and civilian careers.

“Our initial audience for this initiative was National Guard Soldiers,” LTC Mabis said. “However, this program is open to the general population, as well as to all veterans and [service members of] all branches of Service.”

The 60-credit-hour program consists of classes held Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with lab hours offered on Friday. Given the demanding nature of the course, students are encouraged to live on the MUTC campus.

“It is optional to live on-site, but it’s suggested since the curriculum will be so rigorous,” explained Schmelz. “Students will be taking four or five classes every eight weeks, which is a lot of work. These are highly technical classes where students will need to practice with the material to absorb it. It’s very hands-on, but it will be fun for students.”

While the academy will be extremely demanding, the rewards of the program are expected to prove well worth the effort.

“The pace is rigorous,” said Dr. Steven Combs, chancellor at Ivy Tech. “But for students who are well-prepared and up to the challenge, they can complete a two-year degree and begin a career in a high-demand, well-paying industry in less than one year.”

“My advisor told me it’s a small sacrifice for a big reward,” said SGT Darius Mpinga of the Indiana Army National Guard. “I like the accelerated schedule and being able to knock it out. Instead of having lax time to procrastinate, it’s straight business.”

Living on the MUTC campus will be no ordinary college experience, as MUTC has a host of unique perks cyber-savvy



students should enjoy. It also boasts the DoD's largest urban training complex. The section of the campus known as a "CyberTropolis" features an integrated cyber-physical environment.

"With the state-of-the-art technology and real-world simulation available through the MUTC, our students will have [an advantage] through training and skill development that will set them apart when they are pursuing their careers," Combs explained.

At MUTC, students will be allowed access to monitor regular National Guard and other DoD testing and training events that are not readily available to the public.

"Muscatatuck is a living, breathing city," LTC Mabis explained. "Students will interact with whatever exercises that are going on. We are developing processes so that the students will know through a daily briefing what exercises are going on and what expectations are as far [as] where they can go, what they can see and what they'll be exposed to every day."

Karson Spurgeon, a senior at Jennings County High School, who is already enrolled to begin classes at the Cyber Academy this fall, said he is looking forward to experiencing the campus and to leveraging the preparation it will give him for a cyber career.

"I hope to further my education in cybersecurity and hopefully find a good career," Spurgeon said. "It's not the average campus, so I'm getting a different experience. I'll be more capable of adapting to change."

In today's internet-based society,



Muscatatuck Urban Training Center during the 2018 Guardian Response CBRN training held April, 2018.  
National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohl

## ***"Muscatatuck is a living, breathing city...Students will interact with whatever exercises that are going on..."***

- LTC Chris Mabis,

graduating with a cyber defense degree puts students in an excellent position to take advantage of the many opportunities available to skilled professionals in the job market. Graduating with a cyber defense degree that is based in the type of DoD-specific training students at the Muscatatuck Cyber Academy will receive, puts these students in a unique category of professionals who are sought after by employers across the county.

"The great thing about this program is the job demand" said Randy Profitt, vice chancellor for Enrollment Services of Ivy Tech. "Supply is low and the demand is high. That creates a situation where students can have a high-paying career. The average salary for a cybersecurity analyst is about \$70,000 per year."

Profitt went on to note that he anticipates positive outcomes for the future Cyber Academy graduates.

"Every company has a network and every network needs security. Healthcare,

banking, manufacturing – these companies and institutions need network security," he commented. "When we last looked, there were 600-plus cybersecurity jobs in Indiana. And there is job demand throughout the entire country. We are very optimistic that our graduates will find careers."

As for the Academy's ability to equip Army National Guard graduates, SGT Mpinga sees a distinct connection between his MOS in the Guard and the curriculum he will study at the Cyber Academy.

"My MOS in the military is electronic warfare, which is going to be integrated into the cyber program," SGT Mpinga explained.

"I saw [the Cyber Academy] as a way to get a leg up and become more well-versed in the cyber community."

The innovative partnership that resulted in the Muscatatuck Cyber Academy highlights the importance of military, government and civilian organizations being willing to work together to strengthen our Nation's defenses.

"We live in a time when an adversary across the world with a \$200 laptop could affect the lives of American citizens or undermine its economy in seconds," explained MAJ Jonathan Rupel, cyber operations officer of the Indiana National Guard. "The only way to protect against this is with collaboration between academia, our military teams, government at all levels and the countless cybersecurity personnel who defend their organizations' networks."

To learn more about the Muscatatuck Cyber Academy contact Ivy Tech Community College at 1.888.IVY.LINE (1.888.489.5463) ●





# ***JOINT TRAINING at Its Best***

## **2018 Patriot Exercises Epitomize National Guard Mission**

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

**T**he National Guard has experienced a historic year of responding to weather and natural disasters. With catastrophic hurricanes, raging wildfires and volcano eruptions, Guard Soldiers have epitomized the “Always Ready, Always There” motto more than ever.

Nevertheless, in an unpredictable world, there will always be new threats to defend against. To prepare for the natural disasters and emergencies that have yet to come, members from the Army and Air National Guard participated in Patriot South 2018, an emergency response training exercise with the goal of increasing the ability of federal, State and local agencies to respond in unison to a natural or man-made emergency.

Patriot South is one leg of what is a two-part series of exercises – Patriot North, held in the northern regions of the United States and Patriot South, which is held in the southern regions.

With participation from 1,900 military and civilian personnel, the Patriot exercises garnered National Guard representation from 46 States and 86 units and wings.

“This exercise is really the only

exercise where our National Guard units are able to hit the three tiers [of the National Guard mission],” explained Capt Michelle Clark, of the 130th Air Wing, West Virginia Air National Guard and Patriot South project manager. “The first thing is our homeland response, so we are validating State’s all-hazards plan. We are also building partnerships. Not only our partnership between the Air Guard and the Army Guard, but our partnerships with our civilian communities. And at the same time, we are still getting our wartime training needs met. [Guard members] are doing the same job responding to a hurricane and evacuating patients as they do when they are downrange.”

Sponsored by the National Guard Bureau and accredited by the Joint National Training Capability (JNTC) program, this year’s Patriot South exercise was held at the Combined Arms Combat Training Facility (CACTF) at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, from Feb. 12–15.

The exercise provided Guard members with critical training in domestic operations while coordinating with civilian partners. There was

participation from numerous civilian entities, including Mississippi Emergency Management and the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security.

“It’s a training venue where, just like in a real-world event, you are able to bring the military side of it and work together with the civilian partners,” explained LTC Douglas Leslie, battalion commander for South Carolina Army National Guard’s 2-151 Security and Support Aviation Battalion. “You have multiple agencies coming together and learning how to work with each other and how best to respond to events, whether it’s a hurricane, earthquake or wildfire. It allows multiple agencies from across the country to come together and collectively try to better respond and give support that the citizens will need.”

Patriot simulated an earthquake in Mississippi, a realistic simulation given the State’s proximity to the New Madrid Seismic Zone – a prolific source of earthquakes. Organizers set up venues at Camp Shelby to simulate collapsed structures with victims inside.

The exercise offered a realistic





environment, mimicking how units would need to respond if they were called upon during a real disaster.

“The exercise was fantastic as far as the layout and what it gave us,” said SSG Steven Hughes, crew chief, Alpha Company, 1-111th Aviation Regiment, South Carolina Army National Guard. “We didn’t have any part in the planning. We just knew that we were going down to an earthquake in Mississippi and that was pretty much all we knew. It played out real life. You get a call, you get down there and you have to assess and see what’s going on.”

While communication and teamwork are key elements in the success of any exercise, the number of organizations partnering in Patriot South made it crucial for team members to remember that good

communication is not just about sending information, but also about ensuring that information is understood.

“We are working with our civilian partners, like the emergency operations centers, firefighters, police officers and

challenging, but it works itself out during the planning process and the execution.”

As with a real disaster, the exercise saw its share of challenges. A government shutdown and less than ideal weather in southern Mississippi caused delays during the exercise.

“The weather hampered us a couple of days, and we were late deploying to the exercise due to the budget not being resolved,” said LTC Leslie. “All of these real-world issues that were injected into the training were like when we have a mission and are called up to support. It helped Soldiers, staff and officers develop a better understanding of what they will face when the [real] time comes and how to work around problems to develop a good solution.”

LTC Leslie said he was impressed by how his battalion performed, despite the delays.

“**You have multiple agencies coming together and learning how to work with each other and how best to respond to events, whether it’s a hurricane, earthquake or wildfire.”**

— LTC Douglas Leslie

search and rescue, so initially it’s a challenge because we speak different ‘languages,’” Capt Clark said. “It’s initially

Soldiers from Alpha Company, 1-111th Aviation Battalion, South Carolina Army National Guard, transport members of the South Carolina Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team and a simulated casualty victim on their UH-60 Black Hawk during Patriot South 2018, held at Camp Shelby, Miss.

Colorado National Guard photo by SSgt Michelle Y. Alvarez-Rea





SGT Brian Lunsford of the 2nd Battalion, 151st Aviation Regiment, South Carolina Army National Guard trains on elevated rescue hoists during the Patriot South 2018 exercise at the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center near Camp Shelby, Miss. Mississippi National Guard photo by SSgt Jessica Fielder

“We were able to deploy the battalion from South Carolina to Mississippi [and back], both in multiple flights of aircraft,” LTC Leslie said. “For the convoys there and back, we put in just around 38,000 vehicle miles with no issues or accidents. It’s a proud moment knowing that they did it without a single incident.”

South Carolina Army National Guard participated in Patriot South through their Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team (HART), a State program consisting of civilian and military assets, and provided aviation support during the exercise. The program is a joint venture that teams Guard members with civilian emergency responders who are trained in emergency rescues.

“The Guard provides the air crews and the aircraft, while civilian agencies supply us with the paramedics and

firefighters,” explained SSG Hughes. “Whether it’s a flood or someone falling off of a mountain, we’ll fly up there and pick up the crew of the civilian entity. Then we use the aircraft and hoist the rescuers down, hoist them back up and fly that person to higher care.”

South Carolina HART (SC-HART) came to the Patriot South exercise with a dose of real-world missions fresh in their minds, having recently served in response to last year’s hurricanes.

“Our role [here at Patriot South], just like in any real natural disaster or anytime that we are called up to serve, was providing aviation support for the State,” LTC Leslie explained. “We deployed assets to both Houston and Puerto Rico, so we had that under our belt and were able to bring real-world

experience to the training scenario.”

Patriot South provided participants the opportunity to hone the skills required for each group to properly execute their unique role in an emergency situation. Soldiers were given a venue where they could put their specific training to the test and watch it play out on a large scale.

“We were responsible for the hoist operation,” said SGT Bryon Lunsford, SC-HART crew chief for the 2-151st. “We train regularly for it and [during the



ABOVE AND RIGHT: A South Carolina Army National Guard UH-72 Lakota helicopter crew hovers over buildings at the Combined Arms Combat Training Facility on Camp Shelby as members of the South Carolina Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team hoist a simulated natural disaster victim from a rooftop during Patriot South 2018.

Ohio National Guard photos by TSgt Nic Kuetemeyer

LEFT: Regional Emergency All-Climate Training Center (REACT) instructor, Jake Kershner (far right), familiarizes firefighters from Army and Air National Guard units with pulley systems used to conduct search and rescue operations as part of the training during Patriot North 2017 held at Camp Williams, Utah.

California National Guard photo by 1LT Jason Sanchez







exercise] had people on helicopter cables with multiple aircraft in the same vicinity, so it was a big deal. Being able to rescue people off of building tops was exciting.”

SSG Hughes noted how the experience of the exercise directly aligned with the Guard’s core mission.

“Any natural disaster, whether it’s hurricane Harvey, floods or an earthquake in Mississippi, we are going to be the ones responding,” he said. “It’s going to be the Guard doing their State mission. That’s one of the biggest reasons why it’s a great exercise. It helps us grow and learn a little bit more about what we are supposed to do

in the event we have a natural disaster.”

The second leg of the exercise, Patriot North, occurred July 14–20 and was hosted by both the Wisconsin Army National Guard at Fort McCoy and the Wisconsin Air National Guard at Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center. Like Patriot South, the exercise simulated an emergency that required a joint response from military and civilian personnel.

“The great advantage of [Patriot exercises] is the realism it provides the Guard and our partners,” said Lt Col Roger Brooks, exercise director for the Patriot exercises (both North and South) and commander of the 116th Security Forces Squadron, Georgia Air National

Guard. “These exercises will help all of us prepare for any disaster.”

While exemplifying the core missions of the National Guard, the 2018 Patriot North and South exercises provided realistic and challenging training environments where Guard members could broaden their skill sets and increase their understanding of joint emergency responses.

“This is the time that we can plan for when a disaster does hit,” said SSG Hughes.

“I think all of us are looking forward to next year’s exercise to really see it grow and play out.” ●



“Any natural disaster, whether it’s hurricane Harvey, floods or an earthquake in Mississippi, we are going to be the ones responding. It’s going to be the Guard doing their State mission.”

– SSG Steven Hughes





# afterdeployment

## *Wellness Resources for the Military Community*



AfterDeployment is a behavioral health resource that provides support and self-care solutions to current and past U.S. service members and their Families.

Soldiers and their Families can use the site to access information addressing multiple topics, including post-traumatic stress, depression, sleep, anxiety and other behavioral health challenges commonly faced after a deployment.

SGT Kaitlyn Wilson with the 211th Military Police Company walks with her son Paxsten at the Asheville Regional Airport in Franklin, N.C., after returning from deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

North Carolina National Guard photo by SSG Mary Junell

For access to videos, assessments, discussion forums, blogs and other wellness tools, go to [AfterDeployment.dcoe.mil](https://AfterDeployment.dcoe.mil)





# Spanning the GLOBE with PARTNERSHIP— SPANNING THE DECADES WITH ALLIANCE

*National Guard State Partnership Program Celebrates 25 years*

BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER SFC Jon Soucy

**I**n some ways, the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program – which pairs National Guard elements with partner nations worldwide – started with a tuba.



SSG Ada Boyer, assigned to 1st Squadron, 150th Cavalry Regiment, West Virginia Army National Guard, and Moldovan soldiers assigned to the 22nd Reconnaissance Battalion, verify coordinates while conducting a land navigation course during the Agile Hunter 2016. The overseas deployment training exercise is part of a multi-year DoD State Partnership Program.

Army National Guard photo by SSG Brendan Stephens





Indiana Army National Guard COL Robert Burke strategizes a training assault with (left to right) MG Courtney P. Carr, Indiana National Guard adjutant general, Slovak Col. Roland Bartakovics and Slovak Gen. Milan Maxim, during a multinational training exercise held at Fort Polk, La., 2017. The Indiana National Guard and Slovak Armed Forces celebrate a 20-year State partnership.

Indiana Army National Guard photo by MSG Jeff Lowry

"The Latvian military band needed a big tuba," said retired Maj Gen John Conaway, the 22nd chief of the National Guard Bureau (NGB) and "father" of the State Partnership Program (SPP). "And we hauled a tuba over there."

The trip with the tuba was part of the early planning stages for the program, which turns 25 this year.

"We delivered that tuba to the Latvian band and they were amazed to get it," said Conaway. "That started the program with the first, initial visit."

That first visit led the way to a program that now has 74 partnerships with countries throughout the world. But it all started with three: Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

"We were received in grand fashion in all three places," said Maj Gen Conaway, referring to that initial trip. Where it would go from there, he added, was then still unknown.

"We didn't know what was going to happen," he said. "But, we had the visit. That was the start."

That first visit was the result of a simple directive from GEN John Shalikashvili, then-commander, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe (NATO), who would subsequently be appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1993.

"He called me up and said, 'we've got to help these new emerging democracies [in the Baltics];'" said Maj Gen Conaway, adding that, after additional planning with Pentagon officials, he formed a small team and they started working with the State Department. That led to meeting with the presidents of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, as well as military officials in those countries.

"It looked like they wanted our help, and we started talking about putting liaison officers from the National Guard on orders with them," said Maj Gen Conaway. "Our role was to help make the transition [to democracy] as smooth as we could."

The idea of liaison officers grew into tying specific Guard elements with specific countries.

"The [team] and I huddled and thought, 'we've got tons of Lithuanians and Lithuanian-Americans living in Pennsylvania,'" Maj Gen Conaway said. "It fit. We'll tie Lithuania to the Pennsylvania National Guard."

The idea grew from there.

"There were a lot of Latvian-Americans in Michigan, so we got with the adjutant general [of the Michigan National Guard] and tied them together with Latvia," said Maj Gen Conaway. "There are Estonian-



LTC John Brady, Alaska Army National Guard flight surgeon and Sara Seeser, a Mongolian neurologist, examine local resident Batbayar Sukhbat as part of Exercise Khaan Quest 2011, a medical readiness training held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The Alaska National Guard and the Mongolian Armed Forces celebrate 15 years of collaboration - having been State Partners since 2003.

Alaska Army National Guard photo by SGT Michelle Brown

Americans in Baltimore, and so we tied [Estonia] together with the Maryland National Guard."

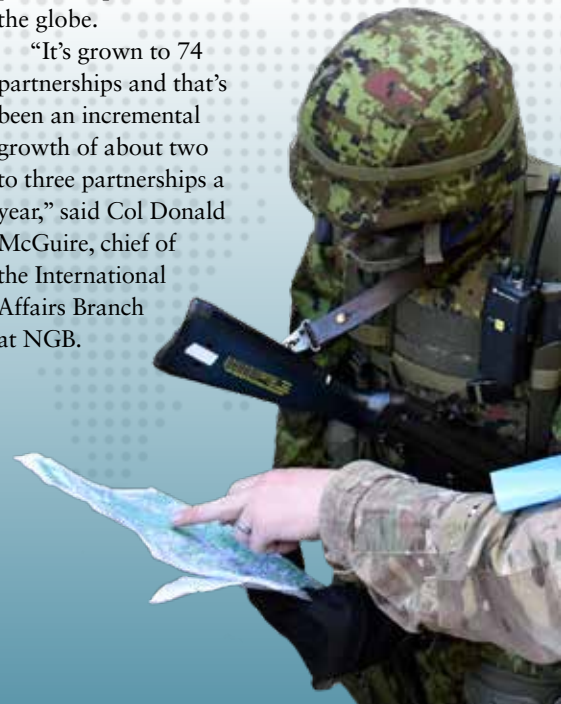
Maj Gen Conaway added there was little precedent to follow while developing the program.

"We were doing this off the back of an envelope back then," he said. "It was happening so fast."

By the time Maj Gen Conaway retired in November 1993, the SPP had 13 partnerships, primarily with former Eastern Bloc countries in Europe.

The following years saw new partnerships added from across the globe.

"It's grown to 74 partnerships and that's been an incremental growth of about two to three partnerships a year," said Col Donald McGuire, chief of the International Affairs Branch at NGB.







Soldiers from the Maryland Army National Guard, 629th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Battalion work as observers and controllers as soldiers from the Estonian Defense Force's 2nd Brigade conduct recon operations, May 6 2018, as part of Exercise Hedgehog held in Southern Estonia. This year, the Maryland National Guard and the Estonian Defense Force celebrate 25 years of partnership.

Maryland Army National Guard photo by  
MAJ Kurt M. Rauschenberg



# 74 Partnership Countries Around the World and Counting

## USEUCOM - 22 Countries

Albania / New Jersey (2001)  
Armenia / Kansas (2002)  
Azerbaijan / Oklahoma (2002)  
Bosnia / Maryland (2003)  
Bulgaria / Tennessee (1993)  
Croatia / Minnesota (1996)  
Czech Republic / Texas, Neb. (1993)  
Estonia / Maryland (1993)  
Georgia / Georgia (1994)  
Hungary / Ohio (1993)  
Kosovo / Iowa (2011)  
Latvia / Michigan (1993)  
Lithuania / Pennsylvania (1993)  
Macedonia / Vermont (1993)  
Moldova / North Carolina (1996)  
Montenegro / Maine (2006)  
Poland / Illinois (1993)  
Romania / Alabama (1993)  
Serbia / Ohio (2005)  
Slovakia / Indiana (1993)  
Slovenia / Colorado (1993)  
Ukraine / California (1993)

## USCENTCOM - 6 Countries

Kazakhstan / Arizona (1993)  
Jordan / Colorado (2004)  
Kyrgyzstan / Montana (1996)  
Qatar / West Virginia (2018)  
Tajikistan / Virginia (2003)  
Uzbekistan / Mississippi (2012)

## USAFRICOM - 13 Countries

Benin / North Dakota (2014)  
Botswana / North Carolina (2008)  
Djibouti / Kentucky (2015)  
Ghana / North Dakota (2004)  
Kenya / Massachusetts (2015)  
Liberia / Michigan (2009)  
Morocco / Utah (2003)  
Niger / Indiana (2017)  
Nigeria / California (2006)  
Senegal / Vermont (2008)

South Africa / New York (2003)  
Togo / North Dakota (2014)  
Tunisia / Wyoming (2004)

## USPACOM - 9 Countries

Bangladesh / Oregon (2008)  
Cambodia / Idaho (2009)  
Indonesia / Hawaii (2006)  
Malaysia / Washington (2017)  
Mongolia / Alaska (2003)  
Philippines / Hawaii, Guam (2000)  
Thailand / Washington (2002)  
Tonga / Nevada (2014)  
Vietnam / Oregon (2012)

## USSOUTHCOM - 23 Countries

Argentina / Georgia (2016)  
Belize / Louisiana (1996)  
Bolivia / Mississippi (1999)  
Chile / Texas (2008)  
Colombia / South Carolina (2012)  
Costa Rica / New Mexico (2006)  
Dominican Rep. / Puerto Rico (2003)  
Ecuador / Kentucky (1996)  
El Salvador / New Hampshire (2000)  
Guatemala / Arkansas (2002)  
Guyana / Florida (2003)  
Haiti / Louisiana (2011)  
Honduras / Puerto Rico (1998)  
Jamaica / District of Columbia (1999)  
Nicaragua / Wisconsin (2003)  
Panama / Missouri (1996)  
Paraguay / Massachusetts (2001)  
Peru / West Virginia (1996)  
Regional Security System (RSS) / Florida, Virgin Is. (2006)  
Suriname / South Dakota (2006)  
Trinidad-Tobago / Delaware (2004)  
Uruguay / Connecticut (2000)  
Venezuela / Florida (1998)

## USNORTHCOM - 1 Country

Bahamas / Rhode Island (2005)



As the program has expanded, the process for adding new partnerships has become more refined.

First, the country has to request to be a member of the program, said Col McGuire, adding that input from the State Department and the combatant command – the U.S. military command element overseeing specific geographic regions – goes along with that request.

“They collectively decide that this is a good country we want to nominate for selection into the program,” said Col McGuire, adding that from there, staff work is done to determine the best course of action with pairing up elements for a partnership.

“It’s very analytical what the staff here does,” said Col McGuire. “They put a lot of hard work and brain cells against making sure they’re doing a good analysis to give the chief [of the NGB] the best recommendation they can.”

The long-term success of the program has come about, in part, from that intrinsic relationship with both the State Department and the combatant command, said Col McGuire. The SPP is nested with the command’s theater security cooperation plan and the State Department’s country study plan.

“It’s in tune with the combatant commanders; therefore, it’s in tune or synchronized with the National Defense Strategy,” Col McGuire said.

Building relationships, said Col McGuire, is one of the hallmarks of the program.

“This provides perhaps the most well-known and established international partnership capability the National Guard is involved with,” he said.

“These are relationships that have grown over the course of time and continue to grow.”

Those relationships have not only seen partners in the program train together, but also work together in the wake of natural disasters and large-scale emergencies.

It’s also seen co-deployments to Iraq,



Afghanistan and other areas.

“You wouldn’t have these countries and units deploying together, necessarily, if they didn’t already have this relationship.”

Col McGuire added that’s a significant element.

“That tells you a lot about the program,” he said. “These co-deployments are real-world operations – named contingencies that represent the next level of collaboration and coordination.”

Building collaboration and coordination is also key to building greater regional security, said

Army BG Christopher F. Lawson, the NGB’s vice director of Strategy, Policy, Plans and International Affairs.

“In order to promote greater peace and stability in the world long into the future, we will need a program like the SPP because it helps nations transition from security consumers to security providers,” he said.

For Maj Gen Conaway, the continued growth of the program is more than he imagined 25 years ago.

“It is beyond my wildest dreams and imagination that it would be this passionate and this popular, and the good the National Guard has done,” he said. “Here we are, 25 years after it started, and the National Guard is just as enthusiastic as ever.”

The pairing of the West Virginia National Guard with Qatar was announced in April and Col McGuire said additional partnerships are in the coordination phase.

“We have a few more partnerships in the queue,” he said, adding he sees continued growth of the program over the next 25 years and beyond.

“It really is the entry point to a lot of good things that happen,” Col McGuire said. ●

CENTER: Members of the 257th Army Band, District of Columbia National Guard, and the Jamaica Military Band perform for Jamaican Defence Force Soldiers during a subject matter expert exchange held in Kingston, Jamaica, July 1, 2015. The District of Columbia National Guard and the Jamaican Defence Force celebrate a 19-year State Partnership.

D.C. Army National Guard photo by SSG Gigail Cureton

BOTTOM: A Georgia Army National Guard Soldier trains on the nation of Georgia’s army weaponry with a member of the Georgian Special Operations Forces during Noble Partner 16, an annual multilateral exercise led by U.S. Army Europe and designed to support the nation of Georgia’s integration into the NATO Response Force. The Georgia National Guard and the nation of Georgia are celebrating 25 years in partnership.

Georgia Army National Guard photo by SFC Gerard Brown





**ALWAYS READY**

# Keeping at the **Top of the Game**

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak



Then-SSG, now SFC Beau Detrick, Illinois Army National Guard, carries a fully loaded ammunition box during the National Guard Best Warrior Competition at Fort Benning, Ga., July 31, 2012.

U.S. Army photo by Ashley Cross

**"T**he Best Warrior Competition opened my eyes to a drive for success and made me want to apply it to different parts of my life," said SFC Beau Detrick with November Company, Southern Region, Illinois Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention.

In 2012, then-SSG Detrick competed in the Best Warrior NCO Competition. While he did not come in first place that year, he placed in the top four – making him one of the top four NCOs in the entire U.S. Army. The experience transformed him.

"It made me hungry," said SFC Detrick, recalling the contest. "Hard work really makes things happen. I trained relentlessly for the competition – hours and hours and hours every single day. [It made me think], 'If I take that same drive and apply it to the job I do every day, I'm just going to hold on and see where this goes.'"

In the years since 2012, that work ethic and commitment to honing his craft have taken him far. Having moved on from his original MOS as a wheeled vehicle mechanic, SFC Detrick is now one of the

top performing recruiters in the entire Army National Guard.

Shortly after enlisting, he saw an opportunity to move into recruiting and took advantage. He said it fit well with his college schedule – as he was then still pursuing his bachelor's degree – plus it offered the benefit of full-time pay. SFC Detrick worked his way up from functioning as an assistant in the Recruiting and Retention Command to graduating from Recruiter School and becoming a full-time recruiter. He then continued to excel from being a novice recruiter to one of the best in the Nation.

"It's one of the most amazing blessings that I've ever had because I didn't realize how much it would do for me or how I would benefit from it until I started



getting into it,” SFC Detrick said, reflecting over his career. “Being able to talk to people and present a point effectively was something that I guess came natural to me. Maybe I just like to talk to people. I don’t know. It definitely has worked out.”

Recruiting has more than just “worked out” for SFC Detrick. His record number of recruits in a single year is 32. Last year, all of his 24 recruits had a training-pipeline success of 100 percent, which he said is a hard standard to meet.

“It comes down to enlisting the right people, but then also managing those people as well,” SFC Detrick explained.

He attributes his recruitment success to hard work and Soldier-care. No recruit’s question is undeserving of his attention, he said. He noted that he tries to leave each recruit with the feeling that he is approachable and available as a resource on every Army National Guard-related subject. That focus on individual care and attention has translated to recruit referrals, which has ultimately led to continued success for SFC Detrick.

“I do my absolute best to take care of Soldiers. There are no two enlistments that have been the same where I could say, ‘You do this and you’ll be successful.’ Everyone has been different.”

Last year, SFC Detrick won the Illinois Army National Guard’s State “Director 54” Award and was named Recruiting and Retention NCO of the Year. He went on to win the Strength Maintenance Advisory Group Regional Award and placed in the top seven at the national level. SFC Detrick was honored as the 2017 Association of the United States Army Gateway Chapter

Recruiter of the Year, and won the 2017 Paul McDade Award for recruiting. He is also a three-time “9 in 90” Recruitment Challenge winner.

“[For the Director 54,] it’s the total Soldier concept – where they look at community involvement, look at your fitness scores, your ability as a [combat] Soldier and then your ability to do your job well,” he said. “I was in essence in the top seven of the nation in my field.”

At the Army National Guard Recruiting awards ceremony, LTC Darren Horton, commander of the Illinois Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion said, “SFC Detrick’s recruiting accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2017 were remarkable. He enlisted 24 Soldiers and every one of his enlistments completed basic and advanced training.” He added that SFC Detrick not only gets consistent results, but always overproduces.

To top it all off, SFC Detrick has kept up his Best Warrior standards and continues to score 300 on his APFTs, even after 13 years in the Guard.

“If I’m being honest, I’m violently competitive,” he admitted. “When I don’t get a 300, a 298 will just eat me alive.”

Balancing his military life with his civilian life, SFC Detrick puts the same level of excellence and dedication into the work he does within his community. He lives in the small Midwestern community of Marion, Illinois, and is known throughout the town for his civic service and volunteer work. In fact, he was named the 2017 Greater Marion Area Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year.

“For where I live and where I work – a town of 17,500 I believe – it’s a big deal for my little piece of the world to find out







I was awarded citizen of the year,” he said. “It’s just incredible. It validated my hard work. To be recognized like that just blew me away. It was so cool.”

SFC Detrick’s work as a recruiter keeps him in close contact with many of the local high schools, so it’s not surprising that much of his volunteer service revolves around helping kids in the community. One youth organization SFC Detrick is very involved with is the Future Farmers of America, officially called the National FFA Organization. FFA is a career and technical student organization that promotes and supports agricultural education for middle and high school students.

SFC Detrick works with FFA as a youth mentor and coach, and serves as the alumni president. He teaches interviewing skills to students as part of the process to help them prepare for the next step on their paths to finding a career.

In addition to working with the FFA, SFC Detrick is a board member of the Marion Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Illinois Farm Bureau and is involved in the local Veteran community.

CPT Russell Hayes, South Region OIC for the Illinois Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion, said that he has been impressed with SFC Detrick’s commitment to community. He noted that he believes this is part of what makes the quintessential Guard Soldier.

“That’s what differentiates us from other branches of Service – that we live and work in the communities that we serve,” CPT Hayes said. “It’s extremely important for us to be involved in our communities

– inside and outside the uniform.

The opportunity to serve your community, the people you live and work with, your family, your friends, your acquaintances, your fellow citizens – that is one thing that is extremely important for us.”

In his down time, SFC Detrick is a family man who likes to spend time hunting, gardening and beekeeping on the 45 timber-strewn acres he owns just outside of town.

“I have a family and we live in the woods,” he said. “It’s nice to have a garden and be able to grow your own produce. As a result of beekeeping, I get to harvest honey. With that, I can have my own quart of honey that I can have throughout the year to make coffee or tea.”

Given the work ethic required to keep up his ever-growing list of achievements – both within the Army National Guard and within his community – it’s not surprising that SFC Detrick might want to take a minute to relax with a nice cup of tea and honey in his

off time. Once he is back on the clock, it’s full steam ahead.

“It’s such an amazing year where all these good things are happening,” he said. “It makes me want to push even harder.” ●



LEFT: SSG Beau Detrick low crawls on the obstacle course during the 2012 National Guard Best Warrior Competition.

Photo courtesy Illinois Army National Guard

MIDDLE: SFC Beau Detrick is presented the Recruiting and Retention NCO Recruiter of the Year regional award by LTG Timothy J. Kadavy, director, Army National Guard, National Guard Bureau, Jan. 31, 2018.

Army National Guard photo by Bradley Logan

RIGHT: SSG Beau Detrick shows John Henley, a Special Olympics Athlete from Marion, Illinois an MRE during Henley’s visit to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion 130th Infantry to be a Soldier-for-a-Day, Oct. 16, 2015.

Illinois Army National Guard photo by SSG Robert R. Adams









# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## Members of the Hawaii

Army National Guard monitor the press as they cover the activity at fissure number seven during a media escort mission at Leilani Estates, May 26, 2018. Joint Task Force 5-0 in Hawaii is helping authorities handle evacuations, provide security and monitor air quality as Mount Kilauea spews out clouds of toxic gas and lava destroys homes in its path. More than 150 National Guard troops volunteered for active duty to help with evacuations and to man checkpoints in front of the lava flow. To date, about 2,000 residents have been evacuated from their homes on the big island of Hawaii.

Hawaii National Guard photo by  
TSgt Andrew Lee Jackson









# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## **Soldiers from the**

182nd Infantry Regiment, Massachusetts National Guard use scrub brush for concealment as they fire an M240 machine gun at a notional enemy during a training exercise at Joint Base Cape Cod, May 5, 2018. Over the course of four days, the Massachusetts Guard Soldiers conducted air assault raids using aviation assets provided by the New York National Guard.

Massachusetts Army National Guard photo by SPC Samuel D. Keenan









# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## **SGT Seamus Redmond**

and SPC Joseph Page, members of Task Force Ragnar, stand guard during a rotation at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, California, May 8, 2018. Led by the Minnesota Army National Guard, Task Force Ragnar is made up by Soldiers from Utah-based B Company, 1st Battalion, 211th Assault Reconnaissance Battalion; Nevada-based B Company, 1-189th General Support Aviation Battalion; Michigan-based C Company, 3-238th GSAB; and Minnesota-based A, D, E and Headquarters Companies, 2-147th AHB and F Company, 1-189th GSAB.

Minnesota Army National Guard  
photo by CPT Katherine Zins









# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## **New Jersey Army**

National Guard Soldiers from Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry (Air Assault), bound towards a target during live-fire battle drills on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., April 9, 2018.

New Jersey Air National Guard  
photo by MSgt Matt Hecht









## PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



### **SPC Nathan Ro of the**

Utah Army National Guard's Medical Command checks the blood pressure of a Moroccan citizen during Exercise African Lion 2018, April 15–April 28.

The overseas deployment training was a joint initiative between the armed forces of the United States, Morocco, Tunisia, Canada and six European nations. The annually scheduled exercise involves various types of training and maneuvers held throughout Morocco. The Utah Army National Guard was responsible for the exercise's Humanitarian and Civic Assistance event.

Utah Army National Guard photo by MAJ Samantha Madsen









# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## **Soldiers of Battery B,**

2d Battalion 114th Field  
Artillery Regiment,  
Mississippi Army National  
Guard, hone their gunnery  
skills as they conduct a table  
XVIII qualification near  
Dona Ana Range Camp in  
New Mexico, April 28, 2018.  
Table XVIII qualifications  
consist of an entire battalion  
conducting fire missions  
together for validation.

Mississippi Army National Guard  
photo by SGT Brittany Johnson





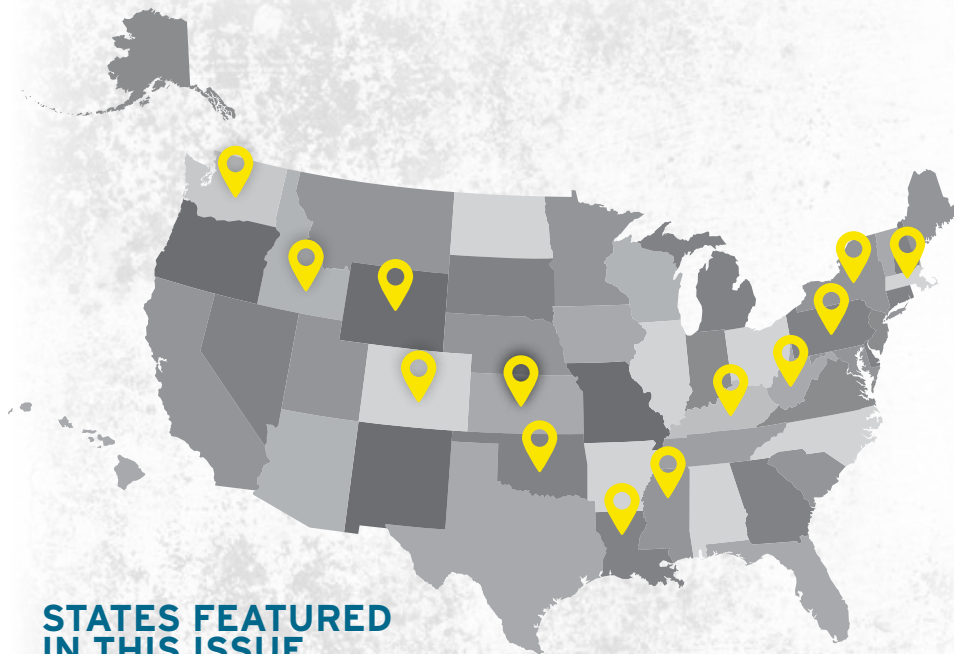
# ON YOUR RADAR

Army National Guard Spotlights  
from Around the Nation



A Colorado Army National Guard Soldier performs hoist training during Alpine Guard 2018.

Colorado National Guard photo by SSG Ben Kimball



## STATES FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

- COLORADO
- IDAHO
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## COLORADO

BY SPC ASHLEY LOW,  
COLORADO NATIONAL GUARD

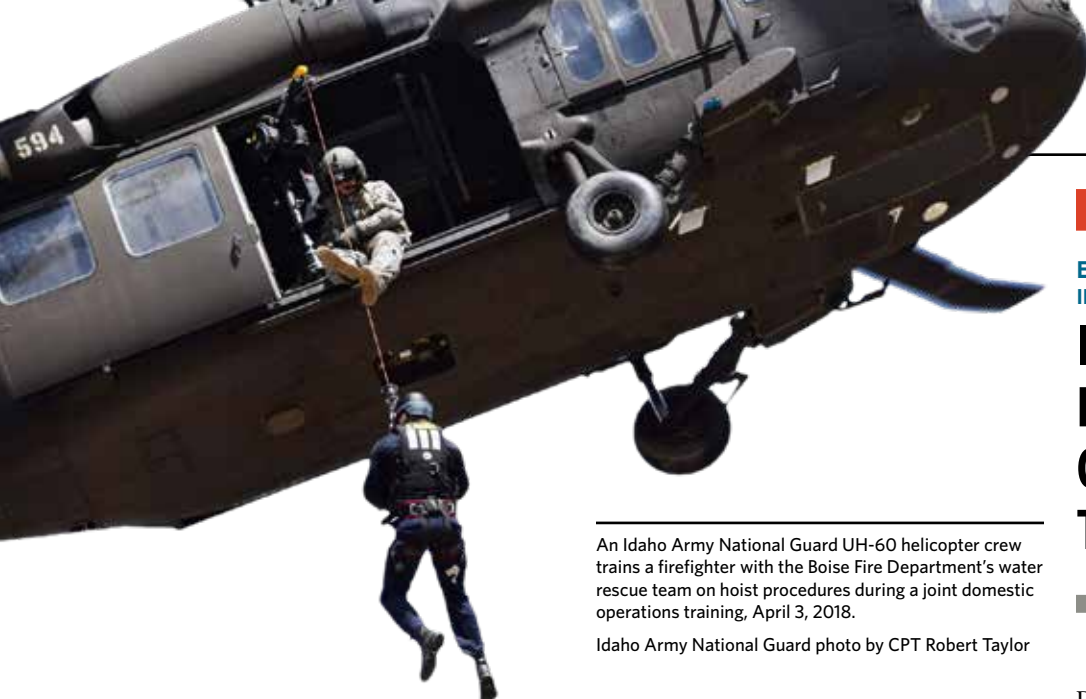
## Colorado Guard Participates in Disaster Response Exercise

**T**he Colorado National Guard and more than a dozen federal, tribal, State and local agencies worked together to hone their response capabilities and assist civil authorities and residents during a disaster response exercise April 3-6.

Alpine Guard 2018 involved a coordinated response to power and communication failures caused by tornado and flood scenarios that affected four counties (Morgan, Elbert, Archuleta and Denver) and the Southern Ute Tribe.

Besides the Colorado Guard, participating agencies included the





## IDAHO

BY CPT ROBERT TAYLOR,  
IDAHO NATIONAL GUARD

## Idaho Guard, Boise Fire Department Conduct Joint Hoist Training

An Idaho Army National Guard UH-60 helicopter crew trains a firefighter with the Boise Fire Department's water rescue team on hoist procedures during a joint domestic operations training, April 3, 2018.

Idaho Army National Guard photo by CPT Robert Taylor

The Idaho Army National Guard state aviation group conducted hoist training with the Boise Fire Department April 2-6 at Gowen Field in Boise to facilitate future readiness for domestic operations.

The two agencies previously worked together in February 2017 to rescue a 68-year-old man in the community of Weiser after floodwaters left the man stranded in his house. This training program was the result of an after-action review of the rescue.

During the rescue, an Idaho Army National Guard Soldier was lowered by hoist into the river after it was discovered firefighters did not have the proper hoist training. Leaders from the Idaho Army National Guard and the Boise Fire Department agreed afterward that joint training should occur so that in the future, officials will have the option to lower a firefighter with swift water rescue training and equipment into the water in a similar situation.

"The collaborative training we do with the Idaho National Guard is priceless," said Paul Roberts, Boise Fire Department division chief of special operations. "This joint training that the Guard provides Boise Fire with is highly specialized, and it provides the unique opportunity to learn techniques that could save a life. This training solidifies what we need to know to be successful in helicopter rescue scenarios."

The training was designed to allow members of Boise Fire Department's dive/swift water rescue team to become familiar with an aircraft's hoist while wearing their river rescue gear. In addition, the training provided the opportunity for Soldiers and firefighters to work together

Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control, Wyoming National Guard, county sheriff offices, Boulder Fire-Rescue, Fort Morgan Police Department, U.S. Forest Service and a number of other local agencies and businesses.

Alpine Guard 2018 was part of a statewide effort to provide a safe and realistic training environment for comprehensive practice and development of skills in a simulated natural disaster scenario.

"Joint exercises help us to learn the advantages of being able to operate effectively with our civilian counterparts," said Colorado Army National Guard COL Mechelle Tuttle, chief of the joint staff for Joint Task Force – Centennial (JTF-C). JTF-C integrates forces by providing command and control for military forces in support of civil support operations in Colorado and for Colorado National Guard forces responding throughout the Nation.

The Alpine Guard exercise helped multiple agencies learn each other's capabilities, along with helping each entity understand how to respond and work together more effectively.

As part of Colorado's State Partnership Program with Slovenia (which is in its 25th year), delegates participated in a tour and observed the collaborative efforts in response to the mock natural disasters.

Slovenian delegates, Minister of Defense Andreja Katic, Chief of Defense Maj. Gen. Alan Geder, and others had the opportunity to learn more about the exercise from the

Director of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Kevin R. Klein and BG Michael J. Willis, who is general director of the Office of Emergency Management and the Assistant Adjutant General – Cyber, Space and Missile Defense, Colorado National Guard.

During the briefing with the Slovenian delegation, Klein said it's important to deploy National Guard resources as early as necessary in real-world scenarios because they can always be recalled.

The Alpine Guard 2018 exercise facilitates real-world practice by deploying troops to different areas of the state for various missions in support of civil authorities.

The training operation involved scenarios such as mass casualty response, missing persons search and rescue, and other situations that could overwhelm local first responders in the event of a large-scale crisis.

"When you have a plan, it may be good right up until the point of execution," COL Tuttle said. "During real-world scenarios, we have to constantly be adapting our plan."

One of the intended outcomes of the exercise was for the Colorado National Guard to capitalize on skills and training in preparation for federal missions that support Colorado communities.

"We are always in a support role to our civilian counterparts," COL Tuttle said. "Supporting neighbors in a time of need is the most rewarding mission the military has to offer." ●





outside of an emergency situation. The training was conducted over multiple days so that members from each of the fire department's three shifts could complete the program.

Firefighters received classroom training and then practiced hooking into the hoist while still on the ground inside an aircraft hangar before completing familiarization training in an H-60 Black Hawk. Firefighters trained on both the Black Hawk and the UH-72A Lakota.

"It's easier to train a firefighter who has swift water training to ride on the hoist than it is to train an Army hoist operator to become swift water-qualified," said senior firefighter Mike Barbero, who is also an Idaho Army National Guard helicopter pilot.

Barbero coordinated the training between the Idaho Army National Guard and the fire department.

In addition to completing the Weiser River rescue, the 1st Battalion, 183rd Aviation Regiment also rescued a 55-year-old man stranded in the Frank Church Wilderness area in October 2017. ●

TOP LEFT: Topeka West High School JROTC student Seth Cummings is pictured with MG Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general of Kansas, while on a tour of the Kansas Statehouse, April 2, 2018.

Photo courtesy Kansas Army National Guard

TOP RIGHT: Seth Cummings, a JROTC student at Topeka West High School, prepares to pull the cord on the Paladin M10946 155 mm howitzer.

Photo courtesy Kansas Army National Guard

## KANSAS

BY SSG MARK NUSSBAUMER,  
KANSAS NATIONAL GUARD

### Kansas Guard Fulfills Teenager's Three Wishes

**O**n March 24 of this year, Seth Cummings, a junior at Topeka West High School, had an opportunity few high school students are offered: pull the tail on a Paladin M10946 155 mm Artillery System.

Pulling the tail involves hooking a rope to the firing mechanism on the gun after the weapon is primed and loaded, then yanking the cord. The projectile that was launched from the Paladin hit the target approximately 20 miles away. After the three rounds were fired by the crew, there was still time to pose for a photo by the weapon.

Although, the first round surprised him by its sheer force, Cummings said pulling the tail was a thrill. "Explosions are always cool," he said.

Cummings, a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps cadet, suffers from stage four Alveolar Rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare soft tissue type of cancer found most commonly in older children and teens.

"We want to make as many memories as we can – putting a flag in the earth saying, 'Seth was here,'" said Heather Cummings, Seth's mother.

The chance to fire the Paladin was one of three wishes expressed by Seth. Those wishes reached Kansas Army National Guard CPT Benjamin Moore, who assisted in the planning of the Paladin event and two others.

"My mission is to support you and make sure you get your desired outcome," CPT Moore told Cummings. "How can I help with your goals?"

Cummings was also offered a chance to shoot from an M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle, an armored personnel carrier used by the Kansas Army National Guard, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment, headquartered in Kansas City, Kansas. After the shots were fired from the Bradley's 25mm M242 chain gun, MSG Timothy Buchhorn, the master gunner, presented Cummings with a shell casing of the rounds he fired.

Cummings' third wish was to take a flight aboard a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter. This wish was granted on March 30 by the Kansas Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment, headquartered in Topeka. Cummings flew with pilots CW3 Bodie Miller and CW3 Matthew Osborne and SPC Kolton Carbon, the flight's crew chief.

"Seth had lots of questions [about] what we do and how we do it," SPC Carbon said. "We did our best to answer them, and I am pretty sure that he wasn't able to stump us on anything."

The flight took him on a trip around Topeka, where he was able to see his house



and experience what it's like to fly in a military aircraft.

"The flight was awesome," Seth said. "I finally got a ride in a military helicopter.

"I am very grateful for everything the Kansas National Guard has done for me," he added, "and all the support that I have been given."

Seth Cummings passed away on May 15. The Kansas National Guard posted the following message:

"It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our friend, Seth Cummings.

In the short time we knew Seth, he made an impact on the Kansas National Guard. He reminded us to live life to the fullest.

Our deepest condolences go to his family and friends." ●

## KENTUCKY

BY SSG SCOTT RAYMOND,  
KENTUCKY NATIONAL GUARD

# Kentucky Soldiers Rescue Man From Car in Floodwaters

**T**wo Kentucky Army National Guard Soldiers saved the life of a man who was trapped in a sinking car in floodwaters on Feb. 27 in Owensboro, Kentucky.

SPC Casey Brandle and SPC Justin Stinnett, members of the 206th Engineer Battalion, rescued David Hamilton, 87, after he lost control of his car and drove into floodwaters. He was trapped inside when the National Guard Soldiers arrived on the scene.

"The Army taught us selfless service," SPC Stinnett said. "And what was going through my mind was how Mr. Hamilton has a family and how we each have our own ... and family always comes first. I'm just thankful that we were there at the time to be able to help."

A Daviess County sheriff deputy reported that Hamilton lost control of his vehicle and plunged into the waters along a stretch of highway. The deputy witnessed SPC Brandle and SPC Stinnett "selflessly and without hesitation" jump into the water, swim to the vehicle and assist Hamilton out of the car and up the embankment, where he received care from emergency personnel."

"We were on our way to the armory when we noticed the car drive off the road and into the floodwater," SPC Brandle said. "We stopped to see if anyone needed

assistance, and we saw the car was sinking and someone on the inside trying to get out, so we jumped in to help."

As the two Soldiers made it to the vehicle, SPC Stinnett applied his weight to the rear of the car to keep it from nose diving more into the water, while SPC Brandle pulled Hamilton through the driver's side window.

"I'd say my military training helped me stay focused on what needed to be done," SPC Brandle said. "There was really no time to stop and think things through. We just acted. I didn't think too much after hitting the water. It was just, 'Keep moving and don't stop.' Afterwards, it was a little surreal. I kept thinking, 'Did that just happen?'"

Hamilton was treated by the deputy and emergency medical technicians, who noted that he sustained no serious injuries. Hamilton paid a visit to the 206th Armory in Owensboro on March 19 to say thank you again to SPC Brandle and SPC Stinnett and pose for a photo with his new friends.

"I might forget what happened that day, but I'll never forget them," Hamilton said. "They are heroes. And you don't have to go to war to be a hero."

SPC Justin Stinnett and SPC Casey Brandle are pictured with David Hamilton, an Owensboro, Ky., resident whom the Soldiers saved from an auto accident in floodwaters on Feb. 27, 2018.

Kentucky Army National Guard photo by SGT Brooklynd Decker







SPC Brandle serves in the 206th Forward Support Company as a wheeled vehicle mechanic, and SPC Stinnett is an allied trade specialist in the 206th FSC. Both have been in the Kentucky Army National Guard for six years.

1LT Marvin Lawrence, commander of the 206th FSC, called the Soldiers' actions heroic and said they have the "core morality we want for all our Soldiers in a crisis." ●

## LOUISIANA

BY SGT GARRETT DIPUMA,  
LOUISIANA NATIONAL GUARD

# Louisiana Guard Helps Combat Coastal Erosion in New Orleans

**T**he Louisiana Army National Guard's 1st Assault Helicopter Battalion, 244th Aviation Regiment and Forward Support Company, 205th Engineer Battalion, supported the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the annual

Christmas Tree Drop March 14 in the Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in New Orleans East.

During the operation, Louisiana Army National Guard aviators and engineers dropped bundles of recycled Christmas trees provided by Orleans Parish residents into key areas to rebuild marshland in Bayou Sauvage. This process creates new marsh habitats by building structures that can support native marsh grasses, which trap and hold sediment, creating more land.

The project has re-established hundreds of acres in the Bayou Sauvage NWR over the last 23 years. This year, the Louisiana Army National Guard and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service placed about 8,000 Christmas trees.

"Bayou Sauvage is the second-largest urban wildlife refuge in our system of over 544 refuges in the United States," said Shelley Stiaes, refuge manager for Bayou Sauvage, Mandalay and Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuges. "It's very important for creating waterfowl habitat. ... We have seen several acres of emergent marsh growth over the past 23 years that we have been doing this program."

Stiaes said that in addition to creating a wildlife habitat, rebuilding eroded marshlands in the area is important

because they act as wave breaks that protect against flooding in New Orleans East from storm surge during hurricanes.

"This is important because we're helping our community by restoring the coastline while we get valuable training time," said CW3 Gabriel Ruiz, the Louisiana National Guard officer in charge of the operation. "Sling-load training opportunities don't come very often, so when we get an opportunity to train this way, there's a lot of value to it."

CW3 Ruiz said the benefits of this training were visible as recently as two years ago, when Louisiana National Guard flight crews dropped countless sling-loaded sandbags into breached levees to slow floodwaters.

"You have to be pretty precise in sling-load operations, but it's more about communication than anything," CW3 Ruiz said. "Once we get over a load, the pilots can't see anything, so they rely on the directions they get from the crew

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Louisiana Army National Guard Soldiers of the 1st Assault Helicopter Battalion, 244th Aviation Regiment, drop bundles of recycled Christmas trees from a UH-60 Black Hawk into Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge in New Orleans East to help combat coastal erosion, March 14, 2018.

Louisiana Army National Guard photo by SGT Garrett L. Dipuma



member in the back of the helicopter who is looking at the load while they fly.”

CW3 Ruiz said the opportunity to participate in the Christmas Tree Drop every year is invaluable for developing skills in a controlled environment. As a result, flight crews are ready to complete their missions quickly and efficiently when the need arises.

“We could not do this project without the National Guard,” Stiaes said. “When we started this project, it was very labor-intensive, and once we partnered with the Guard, we were able to do this project in a matter of hours instead of weeks.” ●

## MASSACHUSETTS

BY SPC SAMUEL KEENAN,  
MASSACHUSETTS NATIONAL GUARD

# Guard Soldier Comes Full Circle with Boston Marathon Duty

**J**ust before 3 p.m. on April 15, 2013, two bombs exploded on Boylston Street in Boston, ripping through a crowd that had gathered near the finish line of the Boston Marathon. The explosion killed three and injured another 264 people.

Joe Fortini was a senior at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth when he watched the tragedy unfold. Like so many others, Fortini watched the footage of spectators and runners alike sprinting to safety as first responders charged onto the scene.

The Plymouth, Massachusetts, native realized that day that the menace of terrorism was not just an overseas concern, but a real and local threat.

“Before that, I guess I didn’t realize that stuff like that could happen here,” he said. “You don’t realize the enormity of it until it comes to your backyard.”

Feeling the impact of the attacks and realizing that evil can lurk nearby, Fortini made the decision to join the

Massachusetts Army National Guard to defend his country and community.

Five years after the bombing, Fortini’s role in the Massachusetts Guard brought him full circle to that fateful day in 2013. On April 16, 2018, 1LT Fortini led the 387th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company as the unit conducted anti-terrorism operations along the Boston Marathon route.

Explosive Ordnance disposal (EOD) units, or in layman’s terms, military bomb squads, are incredibly skilled and close-knit communities.

“It really requires what has been characterized as a very special kind of courage,” said LTC Jay Rose, the former commander of the 387th EOD. “You are working in a discipline where men and women are asked to go to these dangerous situations and give everything they’ve got, including laying down their lives to protect other people and preserve the mission.”

“[1LT Fortini] struck me as someone who was mature for his age and experienced – someone who was very focused on learning quickly to be an effective leader,” LTC Rose said.

“He gave me the sense that he wanted to really, truly give as much as he could during his time in uniform.”

The 387th EOD was part

of the Massachusetts National Guard’s 500-member force that assisted local, State and federal authorities in maintaining public safety during the marathon.

1LT Fortini was excited to be a part of the shield that ensured the Boston Marathon was a safe and fun event for everyone involved.

“The reason I joined is because of what happened at the 2013 marathon; now, I get to be part of it,” he said. “It’s surreal, honestly.”

“Joe took the fear that so many people felt in those series of dark days and turned it into something incredible,” LTC Rose said. “He acted on those feelings in a really different way and made an extraordinary commitment.” ●



Massachusetts Army National Guard Soldier 1LT Joe Fortini, an explosive ordnance-qualified officer, is shown wearing full explosive protective gear April 11, 2018.

Massachusetts Army National Guard photo by SPC Samuel Keenan



## MISSISSIPPI

BY SGT BRANDON BANZHAF,  
MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD

# Mississippi Medics Gain Valuable Experience in Mass Casualty Exercise

**M**edics with the 2nd Battalion, 198th Armored Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard, conducted a mass casualty exercise (MASCAL) on April 16 at Fort Bliss, Texas.

The battalion aid station received six simulated casualties – each with a different set of “injuries” meant to stress the team of medics.

“Essentially, they bring us enough casualties from the line units to overwhelm the forward aid station and battalion aid station assets,” said SGT Tyler Knox, the station’s treatment noncommissioned officer in charge.

Senior leaders of the 177th Brigade Combat Team acted as observer/coach trainers (OC/Ts) to watch and evaluate the medics in the high-stress environment.

“I’m a medical OC/T,” said SSG Carl Adams, a medical operations noncommissioned officer with the 2nd Battalion, 351st Infantry Battalion, 177th BCT. “I’m here to evaluate their

ability not only to handle a MASCAL, but to effectively give healthcare to all of the Soldiers in their unit, whether that is preventative or active medical care.”

SSG Adams planned the MASCAL exercise. He constructed the situations, used realistic makeup for the simulated injuries and then followed the medics throughout the aid station as they tried to address various problems at a time.

The exercise started with medics calling in a medical evacuation after applying tactical combat casualty care – stopping any bleeding, dressing wounds and applying tourniquets.

As the MEDEVAC picked up the injured and delivered them to the aid station, SGT Knox and his team of medics were standing by with latex gloves on their hands and stethoscopes around their necks.

As the treatment beds were quickly filled, communication became critical. SGT Knox began by yelling out his patient’s injuries and asking for any assistance he needed. The other medics did the same with their patients.

“We check for major hemorrhaging, make sure their airway is open, make sure they are breathing adequately and make sure they don’t need fluid or resuscitation,” SGT Knox said.

He said the simulation brought valuable experience. Treating a casualty with fake blood and aesthetics, coupled with the pressure of making an evaluation, is much more beneficial than just talking about how to address certain injuries.

After the patients’ injuries were treated and they received the appropriate care, they were evacuated to a higher level of care, concluding the exercise. ●

## NEW YORK

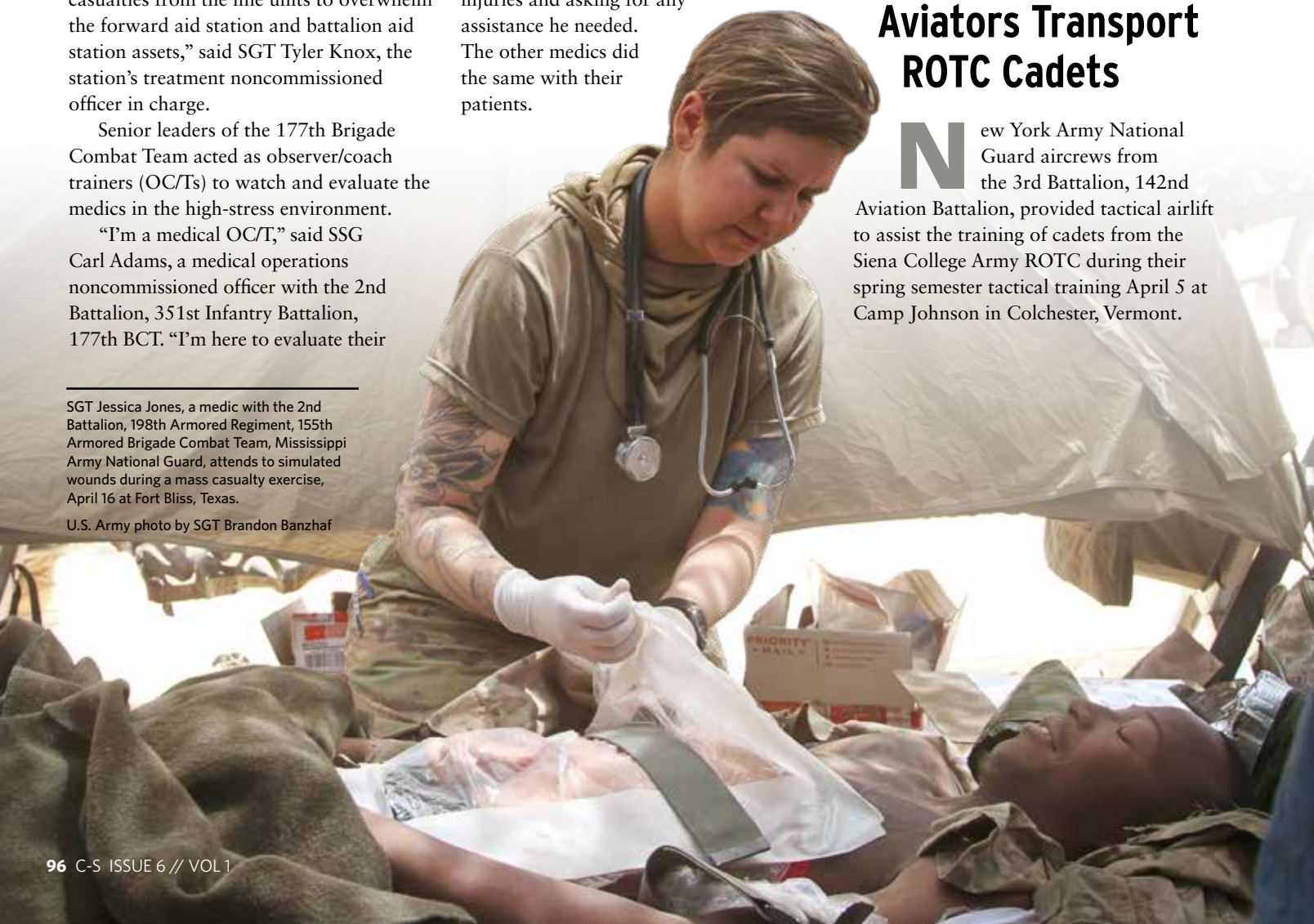
BY SPC ANDREW VALENZA,  
NEW YORK NATIONAL GUARD

# New York Guard Aviators Transport ROTC Cadets

**N**ew York Army National Guard aircrews from the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Battalion, provided tactical airlift to assist the training of cadets from the Siena College Army ROTC during their spring semester tactical training April 5 at Camp Johnson in Colchester, Vermont.

SGT Jessica Jones, a medic with the 2nd Battalion, 198th Armored Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard, attends to simulated wounds during a mass casualty exercise, April 16 at Fort Bliss, Texas.

U.S. Army photo by SGT Brandon Banzhaf





The flight mission involved a multi-ship air insertion of cadets from the Siena Mohawk Battalion to Camp Johnson for a three-day field training exercise (FTX). The cadets practiced squad tactics alongside ROTC cadets from the University of Vermont's Green Mountain Battalion as part of the combined training exercise.

"We do training exercises once a semester," said Cadet Camille Valenza, a platoon leader with the Siena ROTC program. "It's pretty awesome, because we never get to do stuff like [flying in Black Hawks]."

The opportunity to fly in helicopters happens only once a year, if ever, for the cadets, Valenza said.

During the hour-long flight from Albany, New York, to Camp Johnson, the Army National Guard pilots gave the future officers some thrills. Once clear of residential areas, the four UH-60 Black Hawk pilots increased the speed of their aircraft, made some sharp turns and quickly dropped altitude as part of their flight maneuvers.

Upon arrival at the landing zone at Camp Johnson, the cadets rushed out to begin the tactical portion of their training while the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Battalion crews refueled their aircraft and returned to Albany to pick up the next group of cadets.

Crewmembers provided static training for how to safely enter and exit the aircraft to prepare the cadets for their training. Crews also practiced their National Guard aircrew skills for air assault and air insertion missions.

SGT Joseph Roth, a crew chief with the 3-142nd Aviation, said the training support for the ROTC cadets gave the aircrews a chance to refine their multi-ship flight training, sustain their readiness for night vision operations and rehearse for more complex air assault missions.

The 3-142nd aircrews will deploy a flight company later this summer in support of a combat training center



An Oklahoma Army National Guard UH-72 helicopter crew, working as members of Oklahoma Task Force One, perform a mock rescue over the Oklahoma River during a joint water rescue training, April 5, 2018.

Oklahoma Army National Guard photo by MAJ Geoff Legler

rotation at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California.

"We get to work with other units and different skill levels," SGT Roth said. "Everybody is at a different level of readiness right now. Some people are at the crawl phase, walk phase or run phase. Each unit operates differently, so it gives us the opportunity to work with a wide scope of unit readiness levels."

The Green Mountain Battalion cadets from Vermont lifted off in the early evening and were given a ride to their tactical landing zone as the sun set over the horizon.

As the cadets moved on to their nightlong tactical training, the 3-142nd aircrews prepared to return to their flight facility in Latham, New York, using night vision goggles to maintain currency and proficiency. ●

## OKLAHOMA

BY MAJ GEOFF LEGLER,  
OKLAHOMA NATIONAL GUARD

# Oklahoma Guard Aviators Hone Water Rescue Skills

As part of a newly formed rescue task force, members of the Oklahoma Army National Guard participated in a water rescue training exercise on April 5 over the Oklahoma River in Oklahoma City.

Oklahoma Task Force One is comprised of members of the Tulsa, Verdigris, Norman and Oklahoma City Fire Departments, along with members of the Oklahoma Army National Guard. Task Force One firefighters are certified rescue divers and paramedics who filled the roles of both the flood victims and rescue swimmers during the exercise.

Oklahoma Army National Guard helicopters and Soldiers from Army Aviation Support Facility (AASF) 1, in Tulsa, and AASF 2, in Lexington, Oklahoma, spent most of the day hovering over the Riversport complex, hoisting rescue divers from the water.

Task Force One, which officially began operations in October 2017,

Cadet Camille Valenza, a Siena College ROTC platoon sergeant, along with the rest of her troop, receives a tactical airlift from a New York Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew going from Albany, New York, to Camp Johnson, Vermont, for ROTC spring semester tactical training April 5, 2018.

New York Army National Guard photo by SPC Andrew Valenza





specializes in rescuing civilians from deadly situations, which include open and rapid water, lost hiker, collapsed trench, rooftop and post-natural disaster rescues, among others.

“[We] are deployable during State/ local emergencies and regional to national emergencies similar to what [is] seen during our flood season in the spring, [and periods of] heavy storm impact, even up to the hurricanes that we’ve seen as recent as last year in Texas,” said Lt. Josh Pearcy, lead rescue swimmer for the Oklahoma City Fire Department.

Together, the firefighters and National Guard aviators comprise what is known as an HSRT, or Helicopter Search and Rescue Team, which is overseen, funded and dispatched by the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management.

For this exercise, the Oklahoma Army National Guard used two UH-60 Black Hawk and two UH-72 Lakota helicopters. The aircrews, along with rescue divers,

SPC Trevor Tompkins, a combat medic with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard stands in front of a Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle during a field training exercise at Fort Sam, Houston.

Pennsylvania Army National Guard photo by SSG Coltin Heller

practiced open water rescue techniques utilizing both strop harnesses and rescue baskets.

Each rescue diver had the opportunity to play both the rescuer and the rescued. Divers rotated between each of the helicopters using both the harnesses and baskets. ●

## PENNSYLVANIA

BY MAJ GREGORY MCELWAIN,  
PENNSYLVANIA NATIONAL GUARD

# Pennsylvania Soldier Uses Training to Save Man at Airport

**O**n March 15, SPC Trevor Tompkins arrived at Philadelphia International Airport to pick up his mother. She was flying in to be with her father, who had suffered a major heart attack the day before.

SPC Tompkins was waiting for the plane to land when he noticed an airport employee trying to rouse an elderly man in the terminal.

SPC Tompkins, a combat medic with Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, ran over and helped lower the man safely to the ground while announcing that he was a trained medic.

“My first thought was, ‘Oh no, this guy is having a heart attack,’” said SPC Tompkins, of Penns Creek, Pennsylvania.

He shouted for someone to call 911 and asked for an automated external defibrillator (AED). Tompkins instantly began performing CPR.

James Lutey, a customs and border protection officer with Homeland Security, arrived shortly after Tompkins started chest compressions and rescue breathing.

“When I got on scene, he was getting out the AED and hooking it up,” Lutey said. “I assisted, but he directed everything. It was clear he was experienced.”

For 15 minutes, SPC Tompkins alternated between AED applications and CPR to resuscitate the man.

“I put my heart into this; my biggest fear was losing him,” SPC Tompkins said. “Of course, there was anxiety; I did not want to lose this guy. When I was treating him, it hit close to home, because my grandfather just suffered a major heart attack the day before.

“It was muscle memory; it worked like clockwork,” he added. “Last month, we did CPR retraining to stay current. Being a medic is a perishable skill. We all have civilian jobs – I am a sales [representative] for a home building company; I have no medical practice outside of the Army. When we have drill, we train hard.”

After a few minutes, SPC Tompkins found a pulse and the man began breathing on his own. Tompkins rolled him over onto his side and put him in the recovery position so that he could maintain a clear airway.

“I was elated that I had restored his pulse, but I monitored him every 15 seconds,” SPC Tompkins said. “I knew I may have to start CPR again.”

As they waited for emergency medical services to arrive, Lutey said SPC Tompkins was in firm control of the situation. “It is clear that he is well trained and is able to perform admirably in uniform and outside of his military duties,” Lutey said.

“At the end of the day, I was just doing my job,” SPC Tompkins said. “When you see someone go down, it is just second nature. As a medic, you are the deciding factor whether or not they get to go home. I wanted to make sure this guy went home.” ●





## WASHINGTON

BY CPT JOSEPH SIEMANDEL,  
WASHINGTON NATIONAL GUARD

## Washington Guard's 10th CST Makes Widespread Contributions

**W**ashington Army National Guard LTC Ricky Thomas jokes that since taking command of the 10th Civil Support Team (CST) in late 2016, he has yet to unpack his suitcase. Looking at his calendar, he knows his bags will remain packed for a while.

“When I first came to the CST, we didn’t have as much going on,” he says. “But we made it a point to start doing outreach in the community, and not just Washington communities but across the first responders everywhere.”

In his time with the 22-person team, LTC Thomas has been all over the world. His team’s primary focus has been at home in Washington, but trips to Saipan, Guam, Alaska, Hawaii, Florida and Washington, D.C., among many others, underscore the importance of the CST.

The team specializes in identifying and assessing suspected weapons of mass destruction, advises civilian responders on appropriate actions through on-site consultation, and facilitates the arrival of additional State and federal military forces.

“When we aren’t on-site for an incident, we are training and teaching,” LTC Thomas said. “We are always training.”

The requirements to join a CST are similar to requirements for many other jobs in the military. You have to obtain the proper military occupational specialty, but that’s not where the training stops. In just two years, the 10th

CST has invested more than \$4 million into training its members.

“It can take a minimum of three years to get qualified for our positions and trained up to do the job in the field,” LTC Thomas said. “We have had a lot of turnover the last few years. Part of that is people being promoted, people taking different jobs in the Guard or moving on to the civilian sector, but we find a way to still accomplish the mission with less.”

In 2017, the 10th CST supported the Presidential Inauguration and the Washington State Governor’s Inaugural Ball, worked with Seattle Fire and Police at every Seattle Seahawks home game, responded to numerous suspicious packages and assisted with illicit drug investigations. This year, the unit has already been pulled in numerous directions.

“In January and February, we had the honor of working at Super Bowl 52 in Minneapolis alongside other CSTs,” LTC Thomas said. “And we [had] members heading to Hawaii and Guam, Louisiana, Nevada and conducting training here at home – all before the end of March. Our

schedule has a return trip to Saipan and a trip to Thailand before the end of the year as well.

“It’s an honor to be considered one of the premier Civil Support Teams in the country,” he added. “We work hard to build and maintain our relationships.”

Whether it’s supporting local authorities with illicit drug busts, monitoring the air quality at sporting events or training other CBRN professionals, the 10th CST shows no signs of slowing down.

“We are ready to take on missions and continue to build relationships,” LTC Thomas said. “I think everyone here likes being busy and having a full schedule. It shows how important this job truly is.” ●

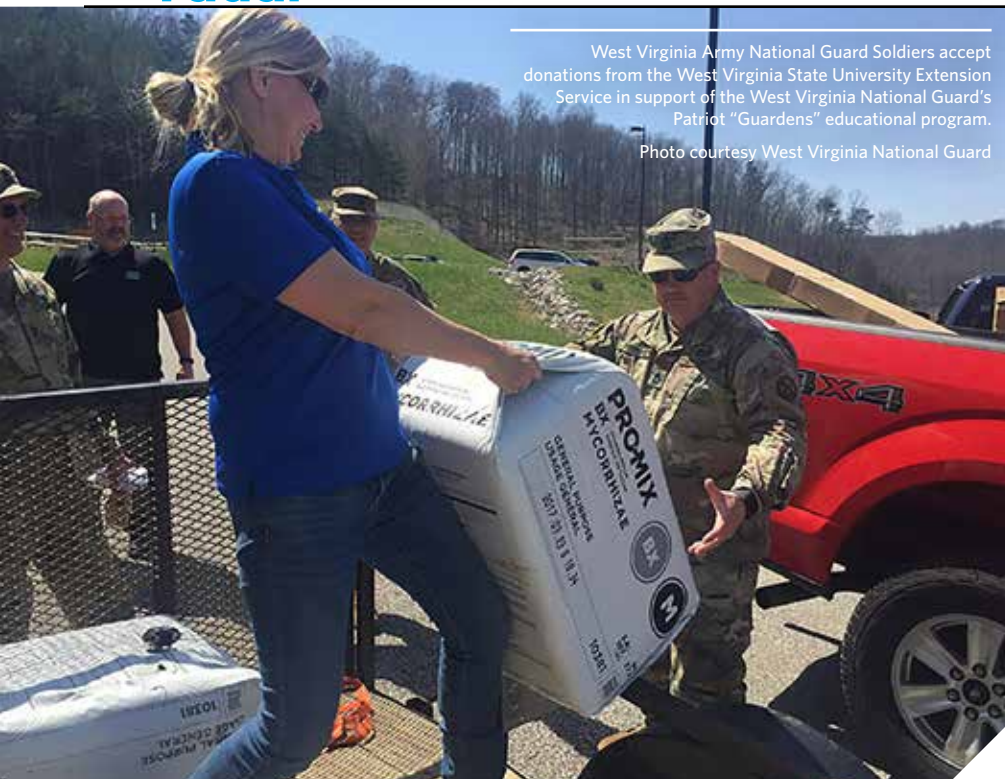
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LT Dustin D. McCormick, 10th Civil Support Team, Survey Team Leader demonstrates the operation of a radiation detector for a soldier of the Royal Thai Army during a joint Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear exchange at the Hawaii Army National Guard’s Regional Training Institute in Waimanalo on the island of Oahu, March 22, 2018.

Hawaii National Guard photo by TSgt Andrew Jackson







West Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers accept donations from the West Virginia State University Extension Service in support of the West Virginia National Guard's Patriot "Guardens" educational program.  
Photo courtesy West Virginia National Guard

by carefully reviewing feedback from participants in their journals.

Growing carrots is no easy task in the hard, compact West Virginia soil. By using raised beds and better soils, qualified growers in the program will have a goal of increasing the market of carrot varieties and sales in West Virginia.

Some local restaurants and chefs have signed on to buy and distribute some of the carrots grown through this joint endeavor. ●

## WYOMING

BY SFC JIMMY MCGUIRE,  
WYOMING NATIONAL GUARD

# Camp Guernsey Turns Up the Heat on Fire Mitigation

It's been six years since a fire jumped the fence at Camp Guernsey, Wyoming. Since then, many efforts have been made to ensure it doesn't happen again at a place involved in the risky business of enabling military members to practice blowing things up.

"We owe our neighbors in the area extreme vigilance regarding fires and a highly trained and responsive wildland firefighting capability," said Wyoming National Guard MG Luke Reiner, the adjutant general of Wyoming. "Our goal is to prevent fires from occurring, but if they do, our task is to quickly and efficiently put them out."

"In that same discussion, however, we also have to realize that we are a joint premier training center – one that offers a phenomenal training venue to our nation's warriors – men and women who need to be highly proficient in their warfighting tasks before they deploy."

COL Joe Huss, commander of the Camp Guernsey Joint

## WEST VIRGINIA

BY CPT HOLLI NELSON,  
WEST VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD

# West Virginia Guard's Patriot "Guardens" Program Takes Root

A new project taking root in the Kanawha Valley aims to promote carrot production with the help of small farmers and Veterans in West Virginia.

The goal of the West Virginia National Guard's Patriot "Guardens" and Capitol Conservation District's "Farm Roots" project is to help participants to grow their own carrots and then market the popular product to restaurant owners, farmers markets and other local buyers.

The first educational workshop for the Farm Roots project, held April 13 at the Tackett House at West Virginia National Guard Joint Force Headquarters in Charleston, introduced 10 Veterans, active military and community members to the program.

Throughout the program, participants will learn lessons on growing carrots.

Those lessons include designing and constructing long-lasting raised beds and low tunnels; how to achieve and maintain healthy soils; disease and pest control; post-harvest handling; good agricultural practices; and presentation and marketing.

In West Virginia, locally grown carrots are in high demand from consumers and many restaurants. When small farmers bring carrots to farmers markets, they sell out quickly.

Each grower will keep careful notes in journals about yields, crop failures, successes, growth, costs, soil amendments and pest issues.

"Working with the Patriot Guardens program has allowed me to find a small way to give back to our service members, active and retired, through agriculture," said Melissa Stewart, director of Patriot Guardens Education and deputy director of Economic Development. "Sharing my knowledge of agricultural production is one way that I hope to help our participants find some peace of mind through working with their hands toward developing a more self-sufficient lifestyle."

Organizers hope to create a program to improve and increase production of carrots for specialty markets in the State





LEFT: CPT Sabrina Kirkpatrick, environmental officer with the Wyoming Army National Guard discusses with several staff members of local civil authorities and fellow Wyoming Army National Guard officer LTC William Patton a potential breakout of fire in an area of Sawmill Canyon on Camp Guernsey, Wyo.

BOTTOM: A Wyoming Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew from G Company, 2nd Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment, approaches a drop zone during a two-day fire containment training exercise with Camp Guernsey Fire Department personnel.

Wyoming Army National Guard photos by SFC Jimmy McGuire

Training Center, said he relies heavily on the “expertise of the fire department. We get them the resources they need, and we’ve really established a battle rhythm. Prescribed fires are up, and real fires are down. That’s a good thing.”

The camp’s fire department leadership is optimistic but not ready to rest on its laurels, according to Assistant Fire Chief Chad Brush. He says the additional resources, a motivated staff and an energized mitigation plan are factors that encourage him and create synergy in the department.

“We seem to be managing our resources better and making excellent use of our time, reducing fuel for fire,” Brush said. “Command is really supportive. They encourage us to conduct controlled burns, and we’ve really got a handle on the perimeter. The boundaries are really tightened up. You can’t help where a lightning strike hits, but what we can control is really helpful.”

The full-time firefighting staff is augmented by traditional National Guard Soldiers who work one weekend a month and two weeks a year at the camp as firefighters. The camp also has a cooperative agreement with neighboring fire departments that allows the sharing of resources when needed.

A good example of partnering resources was a recent exercise involving the Army National Guard’s UH-60 Black Hawk pilots and crews from G Company, 2nd Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment. During the two-day exercise, the fire department burned about 120 acres and helicopter crews practiced dropping

water from the air – something they may be called on to do should a fire get away from ground crews.

Helicopter crews dropped more than sixty 600-gallon buckets of water dipped from the Guernsey Reservoir. “I think the helos met their goals, and we got a lot of good fire department experience, too,” Brush said. “They got to see some smoke patterns and fire behavior – a lot of real-world stuff.” ●



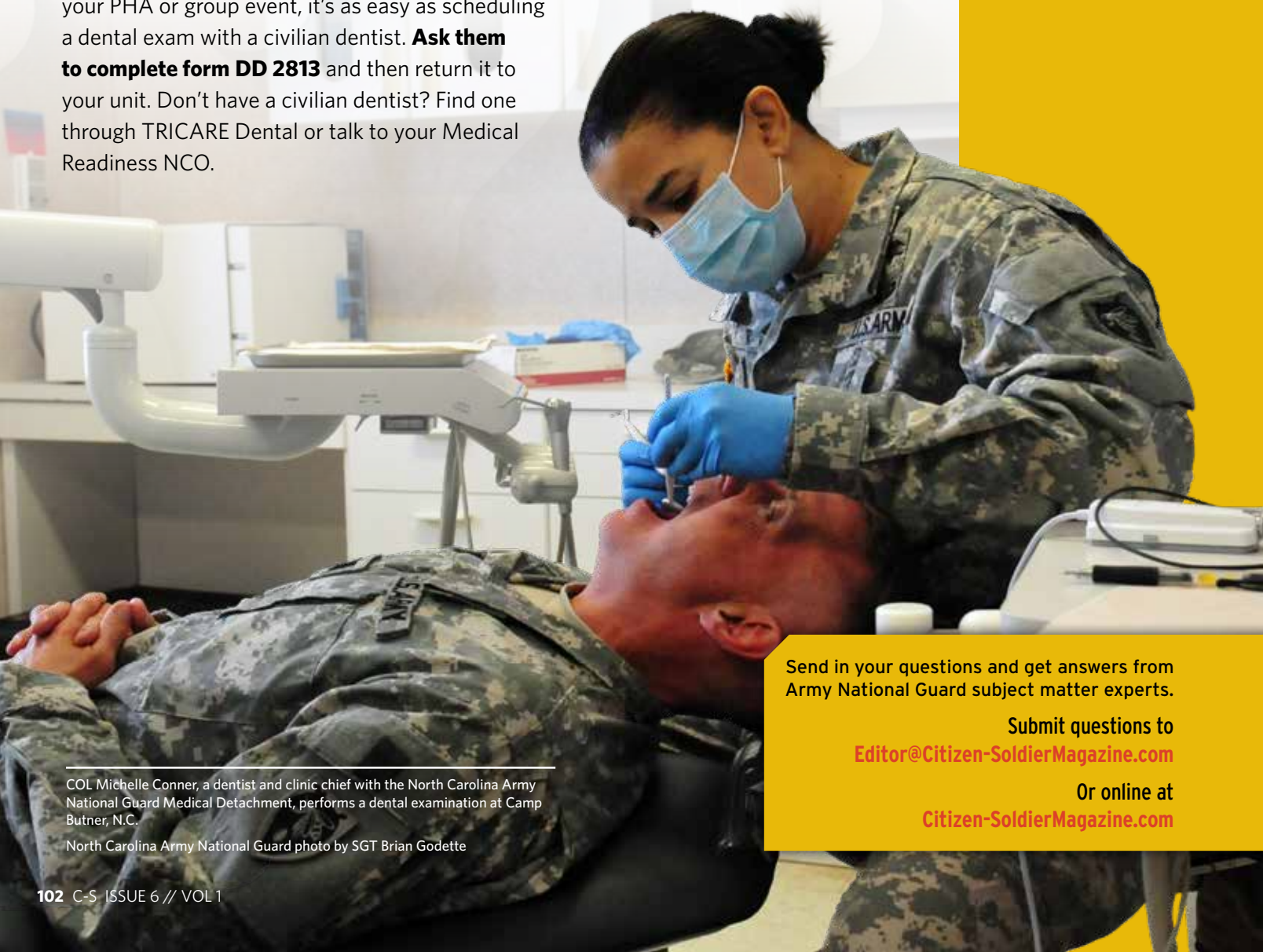
# HOW DO I...?

Get your questions answered by the experts

## Dear *Citizen-Soldier* magazine, How do I make up a missed annual dental exam?

Dental readiness, also known as oral fitness, is important for Guard Soldiers. According to Army regulation 40-35, **ALL SOLDIERS ARE REQUIRED TO EXERCISE PROPER ORAL HYGIENE TO MAINTAIN THEIR OVERALL FITNESS FOR DUTY AND REMAIN IN A DEPLOYABLE STATUS.** Soldiers who fail to exercise good oral hygiene are likely to develop oral disease(s) and risk becoming unfit for duty, which in turn impacts Soldiers' drill time and pay. Soldiers who repeatedly fail to exercise proper oral hygiene may be counseled by their chain of command.

If you miss your annual dental exam because you missed your PHA or group event, it's as easy as scheduling a dental exam with a civilian dentist. **Ask them to complete form DD 2813** and then return it to your unit. Don't have a civilian dentist? Find one through TRICARE Dental or talk to your Medical Readiness NCO.



COL Michelle Conner, a dentist and clinic chief with the North Carolina Army National Guard Medical Detachment, performs a dental examination at Camp Butner, N.C.

North Carolina Army National Guard photo by SGT Brian Godette

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

Submit questions to

[Editor@Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com](mailto:Editor@Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com)

Or online at

[Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com](http://Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com)





***DOWN THE PIKE***

# A MOUNTAIN OF TROUBLE

The Kilauea Volcano located on the Big Island in Hawaii became increasingly active in the beginning of May. Lava, ash and deadly toxic gas began spewing from the mountain and did not stop for weeks. Hundreds of homes were lost and thousands of people were evacuated while rivers of molten lava changed parts of the island forever.

Always at the ready, the Soldiers of the Hawaii Army National Guard stood strong to protect Hawaiian citizens from what has been recorded as the worst volcanic eruption in recent Hawaiian history.

**Learn how these Soldiers stood against a mountain of trouble in our next issue.**



# JUST FOR FUN



Cartoon by Russell Nemec

## 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).





# Recommended Podcast

## War College

War College takes a weekly look at the weapons systems and tactics that both endanger the world and keep it safe. Each episode explores current dangers and applies them to lessons from history. The show examines the root of conflicts, while also discussing the weapons with which the next wars will be fought.

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