

CITIZEN-SOLDIER

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ISSUE 1 // VOL 2

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HUMANITARIAN SERVICE MEDAL for 2017 Relief Efforts

Did You Serve During 2017's Historic Hurricane Relief Efforts?

Military members who served in disaster relief efforts for hurricanes HARVEY, IRMA or MARIA are eligible for the Humanitarian Service Medal.

The Humanitarian Service Medal was created in 1977 to recognize any service member, including those in the National Guard and Reserves, for admirable service in humanitarian relief efforts.

Any qualified personnel who directly participated with hurricane relief efforts and provided disaster support to impacted areas are eligible for the medal.



For hurricane HARVEY, service dates for eligibility start Aug. 23, 2017, and end Oct. 31, 2017, for locations in Texas and Louisiana.

The **Texas counties** are: Aransas, Austin, Bastrop, Bee, Brazoria, Calhoun, Chambers, Colorado, DeWitt, Fayette, Fort Bend, Galveston, Goliad, Gonzales, Hardin, Harris, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Karnes, Kleberg, Lavaca, Lee, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Newton, Nueces, Orange, Polk, Refugio, Sabine, San Jacinto, San Patricio, Tyler, Victoria, Walker, Waller and Wharton.

The **Louisiana parishes** are: Arcadia, Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Iberia, Jefferson Davis, Natchitoches, Rapides, Sabine, Vermilion and Vernon.

For hurricanes IRMA and MARIA, service dates for eligibility run from Sept. 8, 2017, to Oct. 20, 2017, for the entire State of Florida, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin islands and the adjacent waters near Barbados, Anguilla and the Florida Straits.

For specific eligibility requirements, wear and classification of the Humanitarian Service Medal go to [HRC.Army.mil/content/Humanitarian Service Medal](http://HRC.Army.mil/content/Humanitarian%20Service%20Medal).

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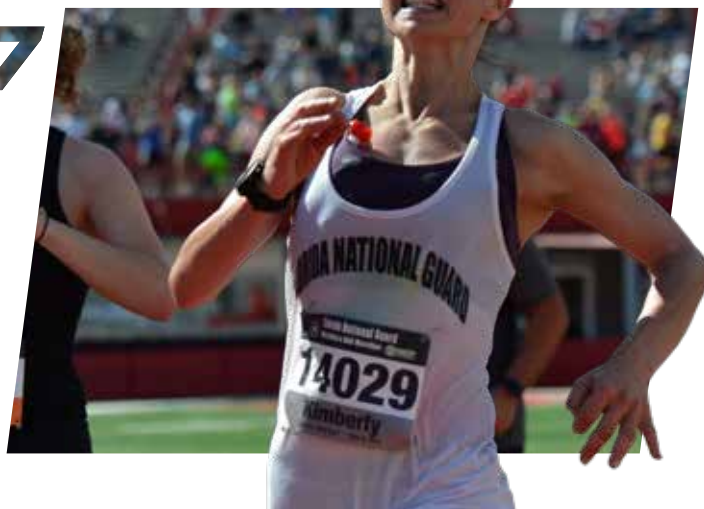
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Mission: To celebrate and support the Soldiers and Families of the National Guard. To provide today's Army National Guard members with information on becoming a better Soldier and better citizen. To encourage and assist Guard Soldiers in maximizing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

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ON THE COVER: 1LT Aaron Hew Len of the Hawaii National Guard measures levels of toxic sulfur dioxide gas near a lava flow in the Leilani Estates subdivision on the island of Hawaii amidst ongoing eruptions of the Kilauea Volcano.

AP photo by Caleb Jones

BACKGROUND IMAGE: Lava fountains from Fissure 22 at Kilauea's lower east rift.

Image courtesy United States Geological Survey Hawaiian Volcano Observatory

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PFC Diamond Singleton, a petroleum supply specialist with the 185th Aviation Brigade, Mississippi Army National Guard, conducts a refueling mission in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.

Mississippi Army National Guard photo by
SSG Michael Williams



A Next Step in Service —

MARINE to GUARD

New Program Looks to Strengthen Army National Guard Force

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

Do you know an exiting Marine still looking to serve?

The National Guard has introduced a program dedicated to enhancing the component's force with already skilled and dedicated service members – specifically those who possess the highly specialized training unique to the Marines. The program is Marine to Guard (M2G), which began as a pilot program in 2016 and is currently in full rollout.

Spearheaded by LTC Bruce Delaporte, a former Marine and the current senior operations officer for the National Guard Bureau's Strength Maintenance Division, M2G began with the idea to expand upon the common practice of strengthening the Army National Guard with prior service members.

"The idea was, it is much better to bring in someone with prior service and training into the Guard," LTC Delaporte said. "We look for opportunities to bring prior service, both from the Army and also the Marine Corps and other branches."

After receiving clearance from leadership at Headquarters Marine Corps, a team from the Strength Management Division began putting into place a pilot program that would send Army National

Guard recruiting personnel onto Marine bases to speak with transitioning Marines about the opportunities available in the National Guard.

"Upwards to 70 percent of Soldiers are being retained in the Army National Guard," explained LTC Delaporte. "The Marine Corps keeps approximately 16 percent of its first-term personnel. It's a very young force. So, we looked at how we could help these young men and women who joined the Marine Corps to continue with their service after they've transitioned."

The pilot started with just one

location at Camp Pendleton, California. After over a year of success as a pilot program, the leadership team at Strength Management Division worked once again with Marine Corps leadership to have the pilot converted into a program of record, beginning this year.

Now, when a Marine is ending active service and entering their transition program, an Army National Guard career counselor will brief them on the opportunities available to them through the Army National Guard. The new program serves to not only highlight a new realm of opportunity for transitioning Marines, but also to strengthen the National Guard as a whole.



Cpl Shane Gallagher, squad leader with India Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, directs his team during a squad live fire event at Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii.

U.S. Marine Corps photo by LCpl Luke Kuennen

“We at the National Guard saw this as a win-win opportunity,” LTC Delaporte said. “We are helping Marines continue their service and we’re filling our ranks with quality men and women.”

SGT Lowell Muenchau, with Charlie Company, Recruiting and Retention Battalion of the California Army National Guard, was the coordinator for the M2G pilot program. Also a former Marine, SGT Muenchau was able to use his first-hand experience to share with exiting Marines a detailed picture of how the Guard could help them accomplish their goals.

“I would brief the transitioning Marine on the opportunities the National Guard could give them to continue on their service wherever they may go,” explained SGT Muenchau. “I would give them other options on how to continue their service and do what they need to go back home, or go to school, or other things they wanted to pursue. I let them know the National Guard can be worked into that, and how they could bring their experience with them.”

The M2G program is open to both enlisted Soldiers and officers. Sixty-eight Marine Corps military occupational

specialties (MOSs) directly translate into the Guard, without any required retraining. The program also has opportunities for Marines who want to continue their service, but would like to change their MOS.

While the cultures of the Marines and the National Guard manifest inherent differences, SGT Muenchau noted the transition as straightforward for most Marines.

“Marines are famous for ‘adapt and overcome,’” explained SGT Muenchau. “It’s a new military service and with any new job or transition, there’s going to be different challenges. If they come in with an open mind, they’ll be just fine.”

For Soldiers wanting to inform a Marine about the M2G program, SGT Muenchau recommends focusing on the limitless benefits a Marine can gain from service in the Guard. Soldiers should ask what ambitions the Marine has and mention the correlating benefits the Guard has to offer. Benefits like State tuition assistance, scholarships, career development and flexibility are just a few of the benefits

that may be of interest to a transitioning Marine.

“A lot of [Marines] want to continue in service, but they also have higher ambitions that they want to [achieve],” explained SGT Muenchau. “They want to be with Family, be a working professional, go after their academic careers or maybe they want to be an officer. [The National Guard] gives them other options [for pursuing] those particular endeavors.”

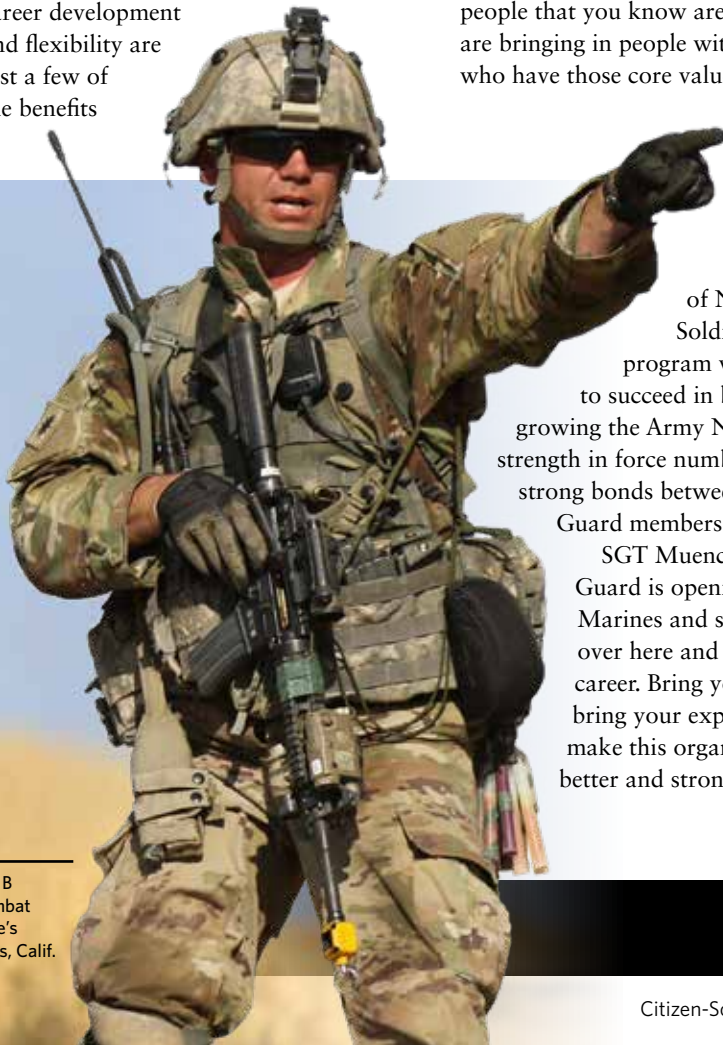
If a Guard Soldier knows a Marine with such ambitions, SGT Muenchau noted, they should encourage that Marine to learn about the M2G program. Using personal stories, Soldiers can share what they have gained from the many benefits associated with the Army National Guard. The opportunity to inform a transitioning Marine about this incredible opportunity gives Soldiers the ability to make a direct impact on the force.

“Think of yourself as the hiring manager,” SGT Muenchau noted. “When you are talking to your buddy, you are building your own military force with people that you know are qualified. You are bringing in people with experience who have those core values that we want.

This gives you the ability to make the Guard stronger.”

With the help of National Guard Soldiers, the M2G program will continue to succeed in both further growing the Army National Guard’s strength in force numbers and forming strong bonds between Marines and Guard members.

SGT Muenchau said, “The Guard is opening their arms to Marines and saying ‘hey, come over here and continue your career. Bring your leadership, bring your experience and let’s make this organization bigger, better and stronger.’” ●



A squad leader from Oregon Army National Guard’s 1st Platoon, B Company, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team directs an assault on an enemy position, during the brigade’s eXportable Combat Training Capability exercise at Camp Roberts, Calif.

Oregon Army National Guard photo by MAJ W. Chris Clyne



REMEMBERING SSG Eddison Hermond

The Epitome of Selflessness

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins



SSG Eddison Hermond

Image courtesy of Maryland Army National Guard

“I feel we should be doing something,” was a statement often made by SGT Eddison Hermond, the Maryland Army National Guard Soldier who passed away Memorial Day weekend attempting to save a life.

His trademark words rang true through his actions in both his military and civilian life. Born in New York and raised in California, SGT Hermond had a reputation for kindness, service and leadership from the time he was a child. As noted in his obituary, while attending Roosevelt Junior High School, in 1991 SGT Hermond participated in the San Diego Police Athletic League and was honored with the National Team Spirit Award, which recognized his ability to work well with others, his infectious enthusiasm, positive attitude and mental toughness.

Continuing on a path of service, SGT Hermond joined the Air Force in 1996 – right out of high school. After serving

10 years as an Airman – completing tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan – he settled down in Maryland and joined the Maryland Army National Guard in 2006. Renowned for always putting others before himself, SGT Hermond was known to be a selfless and caring person.

The Friday before Memorial Day 2018, he took time to remind friends of the importance of the holiday.

“Okay kiddos, it’s Friday and the start of Memorial Day weekend,” SGT Hermond wrote in a Facebook post. “Let’s get the hate out of our hearts. Focus on the positives and let’s all, for once, enjoy life as it’s meant to be enjoyed ... We’re free because people gave their lives for us to live this way.”

The 39-year-old took his own advice that following Sunday by enjoying the company of his friends at a restaurant in downtown Ellicott City. As he was celebrating the holiday, rain in the area



ABOVE: Downtown Ellicott City, Md., in the days following the May 27th flash flooding.

Photo courtesy Howard County Government

abruptly turned into torrential storms, creating deadly flooding within a matter of just three hours. Water levels reportedly rose as high as 15 feet. Rushing through the streets of downtown Ellicott City, the water collapsed buildings and overturned cars, prompting Maryland Governor Larry Hogan to declare a state of emergency in Howard County, Maryland.

As the threatening floodwaters gained power, SGT Hermond noticed a woman just a few yards away. The woman, Katie Bowman, was holding her cat and was trapped by the rising currents. As he and his friends stood outside of the restaurant, SGT Hermond shouted to Bowman to stay where she was so he could come to her aid.

"It was like nothing I've experienced in my life," Bowman told the Washington Post. "I was floating all over the place. It was like someone was pouring buckets over my head. [SGT Hermond] was trying to keep me calm. He was trying to save me."

But as he took a step toward her, the rushing waters overcame him.

"He just stepped over the ledge, and he was immediately washed away," Bowman said.

Bowman was able to find higher ground and make her way to SGT Hermond's friends to tell them what happened. After two days of searching, SGT Hermond's body was found by rescuers on Tuesday, May 29, in the Patapsco River. Some of his rescuers were fellow National Guard Soldiers. They immediately draped his body with an American flag.

Following his death, SGT Hermond was posthumously promoted to staff sergeant.

SSG Hermond's death came as a shock to his family and friends, but his willingness to put the life of someone in need above his own did not.

"The situation that ended up causing him to put his life at risk indicated how unselfish he was and how he sacrificed himself for others," said SGT Eric Johnson of the 110th Information Operations Battalion, Maryland Army National Guard. "He truly cared for other people."

When SGT Johnson met SSG Hermond in 2011, SSG Hermond's warm personality stood out to him.

"He was very down to earth and kind," SGT Johnson remembered. "He cared about the people that he worked with. He was always willing to help."

After working with SSG Hermond for a year at Maryland Army National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters in the Human Resources (HR) systems division, SGT Johnson left for a second Active Duty Operational Support (ADOS) tour overseas in Germany. The two Soldiers kept in contact during that time and often discussed their similar ambitions.

"We both had the same career aspirations," SGT Johnson said. "We both wanted to become full-time active duty Soldiers in the Maryland Army National Guard."

After learning of open active duty opportunities in Maryland, SSG Hermond contacted SGT Johnson to ensure he did not miss out on the opportunity due to his deployment.

"He called to let me know that there were positions open, so he and I both interviewed for active duty positions at the same time," said SGT Johnson. "That was an example of him looking out for his friend. He very well could have not [told] me when that opportunity came up, but he did. That made me realize that he really cared about his friends and his fellow Soldiers."

CSM Perlisa Wilson, G1 Sergeant Major for the Maryland Army National Guard, commented about SSG Hermond's compassion and dedication to helping his fellow Soldiers.



Color guard members from local and State police and fire departments stand as SSG Hermond's funeral procession begins to leave The Church at Severn Run heading for Maryland Veterans Cemetery in Crownsville, Md.

Maryland National Guard photo by A1C Sarah McClanahan



TOP: Mother of SSG Hermond, Cleola Thompson (center), stands with Family, service members and friends as they view the interment at Maryland Veterans Cemetery in Crownsville, Md.

BOTTOM: SSG Hermond's sister, A1C Alicia J. Armstrong, participates in the presentation of the flag to SSG Hermond's mother.

Maryland National Guard photos by A1C Sarah McClanahan

"He always cared about the Soldiers that he worked for, the Soldiers he worked with and the people that he served under," CSM Wilson noted. "SSG Hermond was one of those people who believed in serving down, but also in serving up. He did his best to take care of everyone no matter what rank they were. Everyone received the same respect. That had a lot to do with his own personal character."

After years of working with SSG Hermond, CSM Wilson said she noticed

the unwavering positivity with which he carried out his work.

"SSG Hermond was a technician with us for about three years, and he served on active duty special operations work for two years. He liked to laugh and joke and do exercise challenges with the other staff members. He never seemed to have a bad day. If he did have a bad day, he never let it get him down."



SSG Brandon Jeffers of the 200th Military Police Company knew SSG Hermond for 10 years and could only recall one moment when SSG Hermond was not in good spirits.

"The only time I remember him being sad or down was when he missed a PT [physical training] test by seven seconds," SSG Jeffers explained. "He always had a positive outlook and looked at the best in every situation."

"His positivity was infectious," continued SSG Jeffers. "He always trained to standard and above. He was a great Soldier, but an even better human being. He definitely impacted a lot of people."

SSG Hermond's kindness saw no bounds as he surrounded himself with a diverse set of individuals.

"He wasn't a person who limited himself to making friends or associating himself with one particular type of person," SGT Johnson said. "He had open arms for people of all backgrounds, cultures and socioeconomic statuses. He didn't exclude anyone from his circle of friends."

SFC Willie Brown met SSG Hermond when SFC Brown was sent on ADOS orders to work in HR systems at the



Maryland Governor Larry Hogan (right) addresses the congregation while on stage with SSG Hermond's uncle, Navy SCPO Gene Cooper (center), who gave the eulogy, and CPT Leona Brown, Chaplain, Maryland Army National Guard at SSG Hermond's funeral held at The Church at Severn Run in Severn, Md.

Maryland National Guard photo by A1C Sarah McClanahan

Maryland Joint Force Headquarters. As a full-time technician, SSG Hermond reported to SFC Brown for two years, beginning in 2014. The two Soldiers often worked side by side and over time formed a bond.

"He was a super nice guy who was always willing to help," said SFC Brown. "He worked for me helping to build packets and coordinating promotions across the State. We hung out a couple times at social events in Maryland. My wife thought he was super friendly. She was glad to see that I surrounded myself with good people."

SFC Brown went on to recall SSG Hermond's dedication and commitment to his work.

"He was very patient with seniors, subordinates and peers," he said. "He led by example. He was always focused on being efficient. He took initiative to go above and beyond. We both loved reaching out to Soldiers and he'd even go to Facebook to reach out to let them know the good news of being selected for a promotion."

When SFC Brown was working on promotion boards for their largest E4

" SSG Hermond was one of those people who believed in serving down, but also in serving up. He did his best to take care of everyone no matter what rank they were. Everyone received the same respect. That had a lot to do with his own personal character. "

- CSM Perlisa Wilson

population, he knew he would need to put in extra hours to complete the task. Without hesitation, SSG Hermond offered his assistance.

"I told [SSG Hermond] he could go home and since he was a tech, he didn't need to worry about it," SFC Brown noted. "He said, 'No, we're a team. We got this!' He felt that he needed to stay. We worked together and put in some extra time to make sure we had everything ready. That stood out to me."

"Whenever it seemed like something wasn't right or he felt like he had the capability to make a change, he would say 'I feel we should be doing something,'" SFC Brown continued. "He would probably want to be remembered by those words. And I think that's how I'll remember him."

SSG Hermond's charisma and dedication to his service left a permanent imprint on those lucky enough to have known him. His passion for helping others was palpable up until his final moments. He will be memorialized for his generosity and gallant service.

"He had a great spirit and a strong willingness to help and sacrifice," said CSM Wilson. "We miss him. We are very proud of him and are honored to have known him." ●

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KILAUEA UNBOUND

Guard Soldiers hold the line between
MOTHER NATURE and CIVILIZATION

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

ON May 3 of this year, the Hawaiian volcano Kilauea began to once again make its power known. Rivers of crimson bubbling magma began to flow down from its summit, molten rock erupted hundreds of feet into the air, dark clouds of ash billowed 5 miles into the sky and toxic gas that cut down much of what was living nearby spewed from its peak.

Kilauea, which has been continuously erupting by varying degrees since 1983, is a persistent threat to the population of Hawaii – the official name of the island that is not only the largest island in the Hawaiian island chain, but in all of the United States. It bears the fitting, and more commonly used nickname – The Big Island.

As of early July, the most recent eruptions from Kilauea had created just over 10 square miles of new lava flow in

“
**They described it like a
scene from Jurassic Park.
They said they could hear
the crackling. They could
feel the heat, see the glow
in the night sky and see
the trees coming down as
the lava was advancing.**
”

– LTC Shawn Tsuha

the lower Puna district of the Big Island. The total affected population was roughly 5,600 people – 2,000 of whom were forced to evacuate, according to Hawaii County officials.

While Kilauea has been erupting since 1983, this last episode was the most dangerous to date. On May 3, newly formed fissures sent lava flowing into the residential neighborhood of Leilani Estates, near the community of Pahoa. The situation became more dire from there.

“Into the second week, she erupted again,” recalled LTC Shawn Tsuha, commander of Task Force Hawaii and a 30-year veteran of the Hawaii Army National Guard. “[Up until that point], older fissures were spewing, but not a lot. Then the next thing you know, a couple of older fissures just blew up. That’s when



the lava started its march towards the ocean. Within a span of two or three days, it reached the ocean from where the initial event started ... and now it's marching towards the neighborhood of Kapoho, which is on the coastline also."

In the wake of the eruptions occurring between May and July, Kilauea destroyed approximately 500 homes and completely filled in Kapoho Bay with newly hardened molten rock, according to reports from the County of Hawaii.

LTC Tsuha, recalling a night patrol near the lava flow, continued his narrative. "Our Soldiers were doing a roving patrol and they could hear the lava moving through the forest knocking down the trees," he said. "They described it like a scene from Jurassic Park. They said they could hear the crackling. They could feel the heat, see the glow in the night sky and see the trees coming down as the lava was advancing."

SPC Joshua Myrick, 1st Squadron, 299th Cavalry Regiment, Headquarters Troop, Hawaii Army National Guard, has also encountered Kilauea's eruptions up close and personal. He said that often, the best the Hawaii Guard Soldiers can do is ensure residents keep a safe distance from volcanic threats, which sometimes means leaving their homes. Yet, SPC Myrick said he is sympathetic when some are reluctant to evacuate.

"We understand where they're coming from," he said. "A lot of us here in the Guard are from around Puna and the outlying areas, so we can understand not wanting to leave homes behind. These are people's entire lives that are literally going up in smoke right in front of their eyes – and nothing can be salvaged."

BG Kenneth Hara is the dual status commander of the Hawaii National Guard's Joint Task Force (JTF) 5-0. Like SPC Myrick, BG Hara said he understands the plight of his neighbors, and that he and the rest of JTF 5-0 are dedicated to keeping them safe and supporting their ongoing needs.

"[All] they have left are memories," BG Hara commented. "I feel for those that lost homes and pets. I'm from this island. From the get-go, my priorities have



TOP: Lava fountains from fissure 8 – shown from June 12, 2018 – build a cinder-and-spatter cone around the fissure's vent, with the highest part of the cone rising approximately 125 feet high

Image courtesy United States Geological Survey, Hawaiian Volcano Observatory

MIDDLE: Burning lava flows onto a residential street in the Puna district of Hawaii, May 28, 2018.

Hawaii National Guard photo by MSGT Thomas Wheeler

BOTTOM: An ash plume from one of Kilauea's eruptions rises out of the Overlook crater on The Big Island.

Image courtesy United States Geological Survey Hawaiian Volcano Observatory





“
**You can feel the
 heat coming off
 of it – burning
 your skin,
 burning your
 face. It’s difficult
 to breathe. You
 just feel this
 immense power
 from it. It shakes
 the ground as it’s
 rolling through.**
 ”

– SPC Joshua Myrick

SGT Ambrose Leon and SPC Anyanee Sangchan, both members of the Hawaii National Guard’s Task Force Hawaii, give safety instructions to Kina Sai, a resident of the Upper Puna District.

Hawaii National Guard photo by SrA John Linzmeier

been to save human lives, prevent human suffering and, if possible, mitigate property damage. Those are the three things that kept me up at night making sure that we were positioned to support the county of Hawaii.”

JTF 5-0 was tasked with supporting and assisting the overarching civilian agency that led the volcano response – the County of Hawaii Civil Defense Agency.

The task force was comprised of three National Guard-led forces: Task Force Hawaii, which included 178 National Guard Soldiers and 38 National Guard Airmen; Task Force Aviation – the helicopter unit assisting in air evacuation and reconnaissance; and Civilian Support Teams that were mostly made up of Soldiers activated from other States to assist in the response.

States and Territories that activated National Guard members in support of the volcano response included Arizona, California, Guam, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland and Washington. The National Guard Bureau also sent Joint Enabling Teams to assist in the effort. All totaled, over 500 National Guard members were

activated in response to Kilauea. The Reserves, Marines, Coast Guard and the U.S. Public Health Services Commissioned Corps – a federal uniformed service fully dedicated to public health promotion, disease prevention and the study of public health science – also sent troops to support the response.

By early July, National Guard members had employed in the response effort several fuelers and wreckers, 30 High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs), three Light Medium Tactical Vehicles plus 10 UH60 and HH60 helicopters, according to the Hawaii Army National Guard Public Affairs Office.

SPC Myrick said his rover team, also known as a presence patrol, was made up of a squad of 12 Soldiers. Each day of the response, these Soldiers of the 1-299th patrolled the areas that were the hottest and hardest hit by volcanic activity. The squads conducted search and rescue, provided security, set up landing zones and manned checkpoints. They went out in three shifts – morning, midday and evening.

A major component of their security

"FROM THE GET-GO, my priorities have been to save human lives, prevent human suffering and, if possible, mitigate property damage. Those are the three things that kept me up at night making sure that we were positioned to support the county of Hawaii." - BG Kenneth Hara



LEFT: Soldiers of the Hawaii Army National Guard walk in front of a wall of lava after testing toxicity levels in the air at Leilani Estates on the island of Hawaii.

REUTERS photo by Brian van der Brug

RIGHT: Soldiers from the 230th Vertical Engineer Company, Hawaii Army National Guard, build subflooring for a microshelter in Pahoa, Hawaii.

Hawaii National Guard photo by SSgt James Ro

role was protecting the vacated property of evacuees. According to SPC Myrick, in the three weeks he had been on duty, the patrols had caught 120 trespassers and intercepted one attempted burglary. The Soldiers apprehended the perpetrator and transported the individual to the local police.

"We were also providing route reconnaissance for Task Force Hawaii, looking for any kind of damage to roadways or infrastructures that could inhibit evacuation efforts. We kept pretty busy."

SPC Myrick went on to say that checking on civilians who decided to stay in their homes as long as they could, at times required him to get within 5 meters of lava flows and 20 meters of fissures that were shooting lava 100 meters into the air.

"The best way to describe it is just a feeling of being mesmerized by [the lava] and its absolute terror," he explained. "You can feel the heat coming off of it – burning your skin, burning your face. It's difficult to breathe. You just feel this immense power from it. It shakes the ground as it's rolling through. It can, at any moment, suddenly just explode this massive display into the sky. It's just pure power."

SGT Milo Kalama, with the Hawaii Army National Guard's 93rd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team (CST) based out of Kapolei, had a different type of role during the volcano response.

CSTs were on the ground monitoring the air quality in the areas closest to the eruptions. Getting close enough to collect the required samples meant SGT Kalama and his fellow CST members had to don personal protective gear that sometimes included a self-contained breathing apparatus, which kept the Soldiers from



The Hawaii Army National Guard's 230th Vertical Engineer Company provided 48 Soldiers to spearhead the building of 20 micro shelters, known collectively as the Sacred Heart Shelter, in Pahoa, Hawaii. Starting June 7, the Soldiers, along with a group of volunteer contractors, constructed the housing as part of a community effort led by Hope Services Hawaii – a faith-based nonprofit organization located on the Big Island.

The shelters went to residents left homeless by the recent eruptions of Kilauea, many of whom were living in evacuation shelters, cars and tents. Priority was given to house seniors and families with young children. "I take it very personally and want to help out," said CPT Matthew Driggers, commander of the 230th.

breathing in the deadly toxic gases emitting from Kilauea.

At the time this story went to press, no reported human fatalities were associated with Kilauea's most recent eruption. However, one serious injury resulted from a lava bomb – a projectile of cooled molten rock – that struck a resident in the leg, putting him in the hospital.

"There are now about 24 [active] fissures and we were on the ground from the time of the first six," said SGT Kalama. "We're dealing with a lot of people here who live a [rural] lifestyle – off the grid. They have propane tanks. Because of that,

you get additional hazards ... like gasoline left in their tanks."

SGT Kalama went on to note, "We are going to see off-gassing from the fissures. Plus, you have to worry about more than just the sulfur dioxide and hydrogen sulfide. You've got lava going into the ocean, so you've got that potential laze (dense white clouds of steam and volcanic glass particles that are created when the hot lava hits the cool ocean water), which contains dangerous levels of hydrochloric acid."

SGT Krysten Gennuso, the acting logistics NCO for the Hawaii Army



Several toxic haze plumes – created by the interaction of lava and cold seawater – rise along the coast of Hawaii’s Big Island.

Image courtesy United States Geological Survey Hawaiian Volcano Observatory

National Guard’s Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) had a similar mission during the Kilauea response. She too was monitoring toxicity levels in the air.

On her way to a daily briefing held at a local fire station, she noted the importance of the collaboration taking place between the various first responder groups on the ground in Hawaii.

“We all communicate,” she said. “We’re all on the same level. Everybody respects each other and the knowledge that they bring to the table. You couldn’t ask for a better team to work with.”

This was SGT Gennuso’s first time mitigating the effects of a volcanic eruption, though it was not her first encounter with Kilauea. Many people from the State have familiarity with the volcanoes of Hawaii, she said, although

this time is very different.

“I have been to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park,” she explained. “You can actually go there to see the lava flow. You can see the blow holes – the tourist kind of thing. This is completely different. Being in a tourist attraction, you don’t think of what could possibly happen versus the situation that we have now. You take for granted what you have around you. There’s so much destruction here.”

In mid-June, when *Citizen-Soldier* last spoke to BG Hara, he was hopeful that Kilauea was beginning to stabilize and entering into a new, less violent period. Meanwhile, the following statement appearing on the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park website still cast doubt on whether the mountain would soon reclaim its role as a tourist attraction.

"Most of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park remains closed due to increased

Land Covered in Lava Flow:

over 10.4 square miles

Highest altitude reached by gas/ash emissions:

30,000 feet

Number of daily earthquakes near summit (as of June 28):

~600

Largest earthquake associated with 2018 eruption:

Magnitude 6.9 on May 4, 2018

Number of Eruptions since 1952:

35

and damaging earthquakes, corrosive volcanic ash and continuing explosions from Halema‘uma‘u, the summit crater of Kilauea Volcano." ●

SERVICEMEMBERS CIVIL RELIEF ACT

The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) provides military members with a wide range of legal protections not available to the general public.

SCRA can postpone or suspend financial or civil obligations to protect Guard Soldiers from being negatively affected while away on active duty.

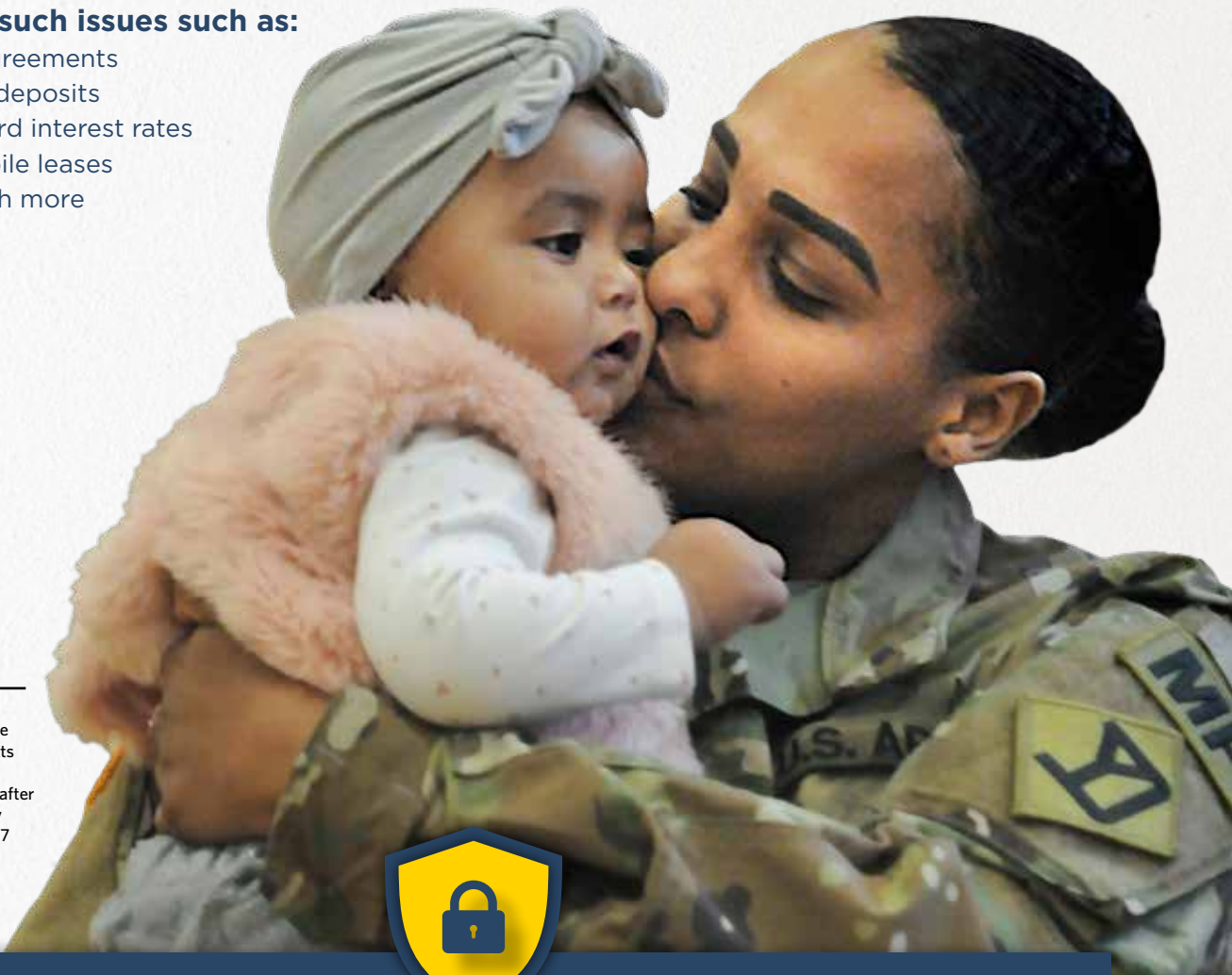
For more information or to locate the nearest Legal Assistance Office, visit, [MyArmyBenefits.us.army.mil](https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil), click on Benefit Library – Federal Benefits, then click Soldier Services and select Service Members Civil Relief Act from the dropdown menu.

SCRA covers such issues such as:

- Rental agreements
- Security deposits
- Credit card interest rates
- Automobile leases
- And much more

SPC Sandy Fonseca of the 772nd Military Police Company, Massachusetts Army National Guard, embraces her daughter after a deployment ceremony held in advance of a 2017 deployment to Cuba.

Photo by
SFC Whitney Hughes



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
MYARMYBENEFITS.US.ARMY.MIL

10 MILITARY FACTS You Probably Didn't Know

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

01



IF THE ENTIRE U.S. ARMY FORCE

was the population of a city, it would be the 10th largest in the country, having a greater population than major metropolitan areas including San Francisco, California; Jacksonville, Florida and Austin, Texas.

North Carolina Army National Guard photo by SFC Robert Jordan

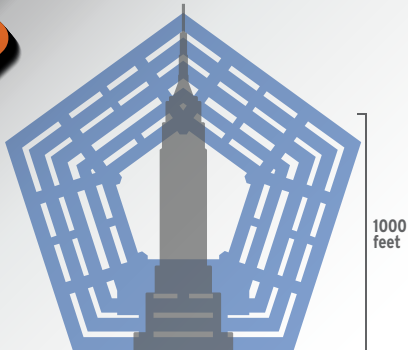
THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

(DoD) utilizes more than 30 million acres of land worldwide, which combined would make up an area slightly larger than the State of Pennsylvania.



02

03



THE PENTAGON HAS THREE

times the floor space of the Empire State Building.

WHILE THE PENTAGON

has 17.5 miles of corridors, it only takes seven minutes to walk between any two points.

04



05



ON A TYPICAL DAY,

a Pentagon tour guide walks five miles backwards, while guiding visitors through the building.

U.S. Army photo by SPC Brandon Dyer

06 THE RATION D WAS THE FIRST EMERGENCY

chocolate ration bar commissioned by the United States Army. Army Quartermaster COL Paul Logan approached Hershey's Chocolate in April 1937 for the production of the bar. He had four requirements. The bar had to:

- Weigh exactly 4 ounces
- Be high in food energy value
- Withstand high temperatures
- And to keep Soldiers from snacking on the bars in non-emergency situations – taste “a little better than a boiled potato”



06

07



AT THE START OF THE CIVIL WAR IN 1861,

John Lincoln Clem tried to enlist in the Union Army at the age of nine. After an initial rejection, Clem succeeded in joining the 22nd Michigan Volunteer Infantry where they saved down his musket to make it “kid-friendly.” Clem was promoted to sergeant and became a national hero before he was discharged at the age of 12 in 1864. He rejoined the U.S. military in 1871 and went on to become a major general before his final retirement in 1915. *

08 IN 2010, THE DOD CONTRACTED THE

use of 1,700 PlayStation 3 gaming consoles to build a supercomputer. The consoles were used in lieu of traditional computer pieces as they were more cost-efficient and environmentally friendly.



08

09



IT IS ESTIMATED

that each of the 2,700 U.S. military working dogs is individually responsible for saving 150 to 1,800 lives.

Mississippi Army National Guard photo by SSG Shane Hamann

10 WHILE 13 PRESIDENTS

have served in the National Guard/State Militias, Harry S Truman and George W. Bush are the only two U.S. presidents to serve in the Guard under its modern structure. Harry S Truman is the only one to have served under the modern Army National Guard. *



George W. Bush



Harry S. Truman

10

* Clem historical photo courtesy Library of Congress. Bush historical photo courtesy U.S. Air Force. Truman historical photo courtesy National Archives.

EXERCISE HEDGEHOG

MARYLAND AND ESTONIA PARTNERSHIP REINFORCED AT MULTINATIONAL EXERCISE

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

Maryland Army National Guard photos by MAJ Kurt M. Rauschenberg

The Estonian National Epic, Kalevipoeg, is an epic poem that features, among other creatures, a hedgehog as a wise counselor. The character from the beloved poem has made the hedgehog a favored animal in Estonia. In the same tradition of seeking sound advice that was used by Kalevipoeg and the hedgehog, this past spring, soldiers of the Estonian Defence Force partnered with soldiers from around the world – working together and offering wise counsel during Exercise Hedgehog.

Exercise Hedgehog was a multinational training event with the mission of enhancing readiness and interoperability in the Baltic region. Held in Estonia, it promotes training on territorial defense in both conventional and asymmetrical warfare.

“Exercise Hedgehog focused on several different security aspects, from threats like terrorism to a full-scale conventional war,” explained Public Affairs Officer Lt. Sander Mändoja of the 2nd Infantry Brigade of the Estonian Defence Force. “The participation of NATO allies and partner nations deepened the already existing cooperation between Estonian Defence Forces and participating countries on a strategic level. From a tactical perspective, it gave a chance for the allied troops to get to know Estonian terrain and exchange knowledge with their Estonian colleagues.”

The exercise included participants from the United States – the Maryland, Michigan and Oregon Army National Guards – Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. It also garnered participants from the Estonian Defence League (a component of the Estonian Defence Force), the Women’s Home Defence League (a volunteer organization run under the Defence League), the Estonian police and border forces, and Estonian emergency management personnel. With more than 16,000 participants, the exercise marked Estonia’s largest military exercise since the restoration of its independence in 1991.

“It was a high-profile exercise for both NATO and U.S. Army Europe,” said CPT Andrew Self, commander of the headquarters detachment for the 629th Military Intelligence Battalion of the Maryland Army National Guard.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the State Partnership between the Maryland National Guard and Estonia. The partnership was one of the first three developed





through the National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP). Participation in Exercise Hedgehog is just one example of the continued dedication of Maryland National Guard Soldiers to their Estonian partners.

"During the past 25 years, the Maryland National Guard has supported Estonian officers' and NCOs' training and education in the U.S., and has contributed to the Estonian Defence League's development," Lt. Mändoja said. "At the same time, Soldiers from Maryland have on several occasions taken part in the Estonian Defence Force's annual exercise, Spring Storm, and has always shown a good spirit along with a high level of professionalism."

During Exercise Hedgehog, MG John L. Gronski, U.S. Army Europe's deputy commanding general for the Army National Guard, visited the training area to meet with Soldiers. When speaking with U.S. Soldiers, he emphasized the importance of the exercise and how the Soldiers' role there contributes to the overall success of the National Guard's training initiatives throughout the world.

"Through SPP, the Maryland National Guard and Estonian Defence Force strengthen our alliance and support all other NATO allies and partners as well,"

"[The SPP] is an incredibly valuable asset in the Army's toolkit and I'm very proud of the role Maryland plays as a part of that."

- CPT Andrew Self

MG Gronski said. "When the Maryland Guard comes [to Estonia], they also strengthen their own readiness, which helps them seamlessly deploy alongside Estonian [troops], contributing to the overall SPP mission."

Maryland's Army and Air National Guard made significant contributions to Exercise Hedgehog. Maryland Air Guard members supported the Estonian Defence League's cyber defense unit by sharing techniques to build greater operational awareness around cyber defense capabilities. They also provided air base security support by sharing insight on protecting mission-critical resources. The Maryland Army National Guard's 20th Special Forces Group and the 629th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Battalion supported the Estonian Defence Force by providing information regarding operational planning, fighting techniques and disrupting enemy actions.

"The participation of Maryland National Guard members certainly contributed to the [level of] expertise brought by the respective staff the [Estonian] troops were attached to," said Lt. Mändoja. "Besides being involved in staff work, they also assisted Estonian Defence Force instructors in the field and provided some very valuable advice to Estonian conscripts."

The Maryland Army National Guard's 629th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Battalion was split into multiple elements, providing expertise to the 1st and 2nd Infantry Brigades of the Estonian Defence

LEFT: Soldiers from Maryland National Guard's 629th Military Intelligence Battalion serve as observers and controllers as soldiers from the Estonian Defence Force's 2nd Brigade conduct recon and react-to-contact missions as part of Exercise Hedgehog 18 held this past May in Southern Estonia.

ABOVE: MG John L. Gronski, Deputy Commanding General for the Army National Guard, U.S. Army Europe, stands with Maryland National Guard Soldiers and Estonian Defence Force personnel during a visit to Exercise Hedgehog.

MG John L. Gronski, Deputy Commanding General for the Army National Guard, U.S. Army Europe, talks with Soldiers of the Maryland Army National Guard's 629th Military Intelligence Battalion during Exercise Hedgehog 18 in Southern Estonia.

Force. During the exercise, the 1st and 2nd Infantry Brigades played opposing forces and performed operational tactics to simulate force-on-force combat scenarios.

"We were integrated with the Estonian Defence Force Brigade and we were performing mission intelligence tasks in a combined joint environment," said SGT Evan Andrew of the 629th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Battalion. "It was cool to be blended with different militaries – working alongside each other."

The 12-day exercise was broken into four phases. The first phase was three days of combat readiness training. The second phase was another three days of collective interoperability training, which included mortar and anti-tank live fire exercises. This was followed by the third phase – four days of battle training where soldiers, playing the roles of OPFOR (opposing force) and BLUFOR (blue force), rehearsed action against mock enemy forces. The final phase included the exercise's closing ceremonies. Participants were reported to be pleased with the overall structure and effectiveness of the exercise.

"I thought it went really well," said CPT Self. "It was an excellent opportunity for my Soldiers to operate in a joint and allied environment overseas. It's extremely valuable for them to be able to put their individual skills to use in an infantry brigade [environment], which is something that a lot of them had never done before."

CPT Self served as Exercise Hedgehog's liaison officer for participating U.S. Forces. He said the opportunity to work with a host of different countries in a single setting was an unmatched learning experience.

"It was great to work with NATO and allied partners in an environment like that," noted CPT Self. "I was managing the communications between



"Through SPP, the Maryland National Guard and Estonian Defence Force strengthen our alliance and support all other NATO allies and partners as well..."

– MG John L. Gronski

256 U.S. participants – managing the communication between the Estonian Defence Forces, the U.S. Forces and the U.S. senior military office. I was the only American in the office. It was a great opportunity."

Given the scale of the operation, there were many opportunities for things to go amiss during the training, but meticulous preparation on the part of the event's organizers resulted in a smooth-running exercise that benefited all involved.

"When it all kicked off, it was very cool to see how well organized everything was with the other countries," SGT Andrew recalled. "Everything meshed and the gears started turning. The exercise rolled pretty smoothly. I was impressed to see the efficiency on such a large scale."

SGT Andrew went on to note that the opportunity to work alongside allies to gain new knowledge and unique perspectives was his highlight from the event.

"Everything was integrated very well," he said. "Everyone there was very welcoming and accommodating. We all got along great with the participating countries. My favorite aspect was being able to participate and see the interoperability of the countries from a NATO perspective. I really enjoyed integrating, going over best practices and learning different perspectives on methodologies."

The large, multinational environment of Exercise Hedgehog was a challenging setting that allowed Soldiers to gain a vast amount of experience in a short period of time. CPT Self said he appreciated the National Guard's SPP for its ability to create longtime relationships that alleviate initial challenges.

"Working in an allied environment is always challenging because you have to establish trust and relationships first," explained CPT Self. "I think one of the strengths of the National Guard's SPP

is we are able to establish, but more importantly, maintain these relationships [in advance of a major operation].”

Maryland’s partnership with Estonia has proven the benefit of the State Partnership Program (SPP) and has allowed for the continuous growth of a mutually beneficial relationship over the course of 25 years.

“We learned a lot from the Estonians – as much as they learned from us,” CPT Self commented. “It really is a give-and-take relationship. It’s not as if we talk down to them or vice versa. It is a peer relationship.”

That peer relationship continues to grow and, according to SGT Andrew and CPT Self, will continue to offer up new opportunities for partnership and bilateral learning.

“[The exercise] was a valuable opportunity for Maryland, specifically because Estonia is [our] partner and we’ve been working with them for a number of years,” said SGT Andrew. “It’s another method for leveraging the Maryland National Guard and Estonian Defence

Force’s long and productive relationship. It was cool to be a part of that, and to continue to facilitate and foster a relationship with them while helping create those lasting bilateral relationships.”

“These relationships are built on mutual trust and experience working together,” CPT Self agreed. “A lot of U.S. Army units will rotate in and out of theater. They’ll meet their allied partners, establish a relationship, then the next group comes in. With the Guard, we are able to maintain those relationships for the long term. Many of our Soldiers are still in communication with their Estonian counterparts and some will go out next year and continue facilitating that relationship.”

Overall, Exercise Hedgehog was deemed a success, demonstrating to the Estonian government our Nation’s dedication to their safety and longevity as a nation.

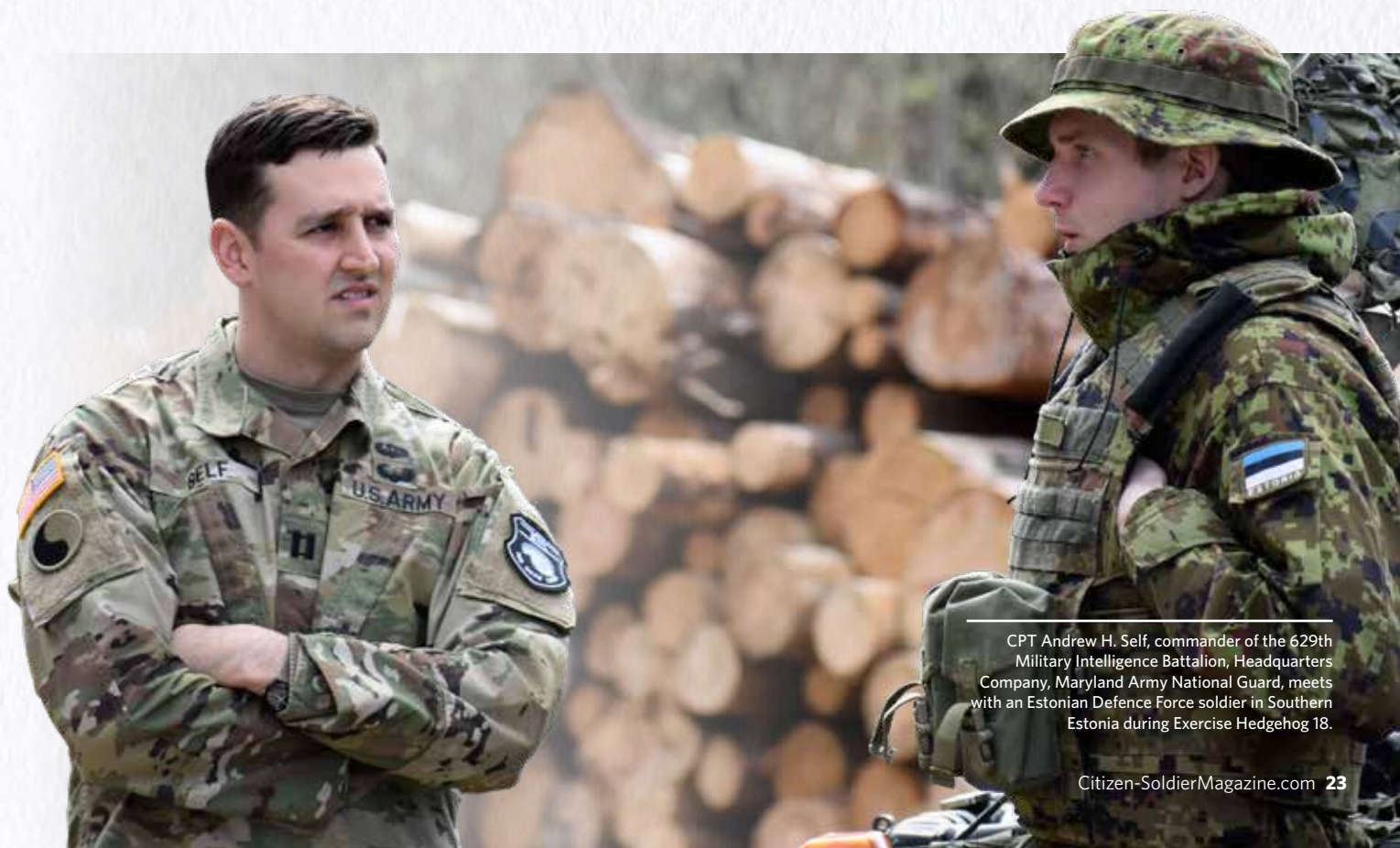
“[The exercise] shows the will and commitment of our allies and partner nations to train together with us to defend our country,” Lt. Mändoja explained.

“Estonian National Defence stands on two pillars: first, reserve army and volunteers from the Defence League as a base for our self-defense capability and secondly, our allies and partners who train together with us during peacetime and fight together with us should [we] fall under attack. Exercise Hedgehog proved that both of these pillars stand concrete and can be relied upon.”

CPT Self noted his satisfaction with the seamless collaboration between his Soldiers and their Estonian counterparts.

“I was really proud of how my Soldiers performed,” CPT Self said. “My Soldiers operated with great professionalism. They received commendations from everyone they worked with, so I’m very proud of the Soldiers from Maryland.”

“We went [to Estonia] supporting not only the U.S. Army Reserve NATO training objectives, but also the State Partnership Program,” he continued. “[The SPP] is an incredibly valuable asset in the Army’s toolkit and I’m very proud of the role that Maryland plays as a part of that.” ●



CPT Andrew H. Self, commander of the 629th Military Intelligence Battalion, Headquarters Company, Maryland Army National Guard, meets with an Estonian Defence Force soldier in Southern Estonia during Exercise Hedgehog 18.

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FORTIFYING A UNITED FRONT

Guard Soldiers Contribute to Multinational Exercises in Europe

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

Soldiers from Company D, 125th Infantry Battalion, Michigan Army National Guard, conduct a patrol-base exercise at Adazi Military Base Training Center, Latvia, in preparation for Exercise Saber Strike 18.

Michigan Army National Guard photo by SFC Helen Miller

Earlier this summer, National Guard Soldiers from across the country trekked through Europe for two related and equally significant events – exercises Saber Strike 18 and Swift Response 18.

The exercises provided realistic and relevant training held in dynamic environments. They also served to strengthen relationships with our Nation's allied partners.

EXERCISE SABER STRIKE

More than 18,000 participants from 19 allied and partner nations participated in Saber Strike. This year marked the annual exercise's eighth iteration with its four

host countries: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

"It is an opportunity for the U.S. Army to work with our coalition partners to increase interoperability and to understand the capabilities that NATO has to counter any threat to member nations," said MAJ Fred McDaniel of the 678th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, South Carolina Army National Guard.

Army National Guard units from Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Puerto Rico, South Carolina and Tennessee participated in the event. For two weeks, they worked in multi-lateral environments practicing complex combat techniques involving air, sea and land support. Saber Strike has an objective

of simulating real-world deployment scenarios. The event included more than 60 UH/HH-60 Black Hawks, CH-47 Chinooks and AH-64 Apaches, all of which were used to provide close air support and air assault operations. Also deployed were more than 45 M1 Abrams Tanks and M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles.

"The training that we get here is what we build up to all year long," explained SFC Justin Aguilar, 143rd Infantry Regiment, Texas Army National Guard. "We are hitting all of our major gates and points to show that we are trained and efficient at what we do. It's an evaluation for all of us – from my platoon all the way down to the rifleman – to see if we've been preparing properly. It helps us [to know



that] we will be ready if the Nation calls and we are needed to succeed in combat.”

The exercise’s main events included force-on-force field training exercises, multiple bridging events and air assault operations, plus the movement of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR)’s 2nd Cavalry Regiment from their home station in Vilseck, Germany, through the Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia.

EXERCISE SWIFT RESPONSE

Also taking place during Saber Strike was exercise Swift Response 18. Swift Response was an associated event held in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. In its fourth iteration, Swift Response included approximately 2,300 participants from seven participating allied and partner nations. Army National Guard units from Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Tennessee and Texas took part in the exercise.

Swift Response included simultaneous airborne operations carried out by USAREUR’s 173rd Airborne Brigade going into Miroslawiec Airfield, Poland, and the 6th Polish Airborne Battalion going into the Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area in Poland.

PREPARATION AND MELDING

As both Saber Strike and Swift Response involved a large group of participants from multiple countries, U.S. Soldiers were required to account for a diverse set of cultures and procedures. In preparation, Soldiers used their time before

the exercise to research and study for the upcoming training.

The Texas Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion (Airborne), 143rd Infantry Regiment was assigned to the 173rd during Swift Response and was joined by platoon- and company-sized elements from Israel, Italy and Portugal.

“Conducting a training exercise in Europe always presents unique challenges,” explained CPT Seth Coolbrith of the 143rd Infantry Regiment. “The training required leading up to the deployment is extensive. Every paratrooper is required to validate numerous training objectives before they arrive.”

Along with pre-deployment training, Mississippi Guard Soldiers devoted time to studying the locations of the exercise and the participants they would be working alongside.

“I worked to understand the organizations to build good relations with those we would need to train, lead and support,” said LTC Hugh McCallum of the 184th Expeditionary Sustainment Command of the Mississippi Army National Guard. “We spent many hours collecting data on the units and organizations in order to better support them.”

As the strategic logistics planner for Saber Strike 18, MAJ David Leiva of the 184th Expeditionary Sustainment Command was tasked with working with the large number of exercise planners coordinating the concepts, movements and critical details of the exercise.

“Due to the [multilateral] component of the exercise, our roles were to ensure multinational interoperability

by identifying gaps and vulnerabilities to effectively enhance cooperation, understanding, coordination and unity of effort,” explained MAJ Leiva. “Working on a daily basis with officers of other nations who had a greater understanding of European customs, laws, regulations and capabilities was challenging. This was equally difficult with U.S. officers who were well-versed and experienced in the European theater. Ultimately, my learning curve was quite steep.”

To lessen some of the cultural barriers, MAJ Leiva made time to study various languages prior to the exercise and immersed himself within the local cultures while in Europe.

“I had to spend a lot of time learning about the different nations to provide context in terms of what plans may work and which would not,” MAJ Leiva continued. “This was the challenge I was looking forward to. I had brushed up on my French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Russian while I was still in the United States. I revisited Army sustainment manuals and lessons I’d learned on previous European exercises on how to be an effective liaison officer.”

SGT William Szabo, 384th Military Police Company, Indiana Army National Guard prepared for Saber Strike by studying Poland. As a senior medic, SGT Szabo’s duty was to ensure the medical readiness of the company and to safeguard the Soldiers’ medical health while abroad. To do so, he studied Poland’s environment to prepare for potentially harmful wildlife.

“From a medical standpoint, I studied [Poland’s] dangerous snakes, insects and plant life so that I had a basis for my



medical supply need,” explained SGT Szabo. “In the States, we have poison ivy and copper heads; [in Poland], you have the European adder and very different plants.”

The time the Guard Soldiers dedicated to learning about the various environments and participants helped support the efficiency of the exercises. While the exercise presented challenges, the challenges mimicked the real-life scenarios Soldiers must be ready to face.

“We have to develop relationships, define the common goal and learn to synchronize our efforts,” explained LTC McCallum. “This is a balancing act between the science of war as we crunch numbers to provide information and the art of war by coordinating through language and other barriers to provide steady and reliable sustainment to the warfighter. We must learn to adapt to

this operational environment quickly to provide real-time mission command while troops and equipment move throughout the battlefield.”

As in any exercise, effective communication was a crucial element.

“Communication is the biggest challenge because it affects all sections,” said 1LT Pilar Rolon, commander for the 755th Military Police Company of the Puerto Rico Army National Guard.

To alleviate communication challenges, Soldiers took initiative to foster relationships with their counterparts. Michigan’s 125th Infantry Battalion took the opportunity to form new connections while working alongside fellow U.S. service members from the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, the Norwegian Armed Forces and the British Royal Marines.

“Many Soldiers took it upon themselves to walk over and strike up

LEFT: Soldiers from D Company, 125th Infantry Battalion, Michigan Army National Guard, participate in field-training exercises during Saber Strike 18 held at Adazi Training Center, Latvia.

Michigan Army National Guard photo by SFC Helen Miller

CENTER: Assistant Adjutant General BG Scott A. Campbell talks to Kentucky Army National Guard Soldiers attached to the Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 623rd Field Artillery Regiment, after a Rapid Air Insertion during Saber Strike 18.

Kentucky Army National Guard photo by SSG Benjamin Crane

RIGHT: Kentucky Army National Guard Medics attached to the 1st Battalion, 623rd Field Artillery Regiment, transport a Soldier with simulated injuries during Saber Strike 18.

Kentucky Army National Guard photo by SSG Benjamin Crane

conversations with both Norway and the [United Kingdom] to get to know their counterparts,” explained SFC Matthew Boyd, senior logistics NCO with Company D of the 125th. “They were enjoying the opportunity to work with different nations and with everyone, as we were in generally

Paratrooper field artillery Soldiers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, to which Texas Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion (Airborne), 143rd Infantry Regiment was attached, rapidly reassemble an air-dropped 105mm M119 Howitzer as part of Exercise Swift Response.

Michigan National Guard photo by MAJ Savannah Halleaux





SSG Mitchel Becker, Company D, 125th Infantry Battalion, Michigan Army National Guard runs ahead of a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) during a patrol-base exercise at Adazi Military Base Training Center in preparation for Exercise Saber Strike 18.

Michigan National Guard photo by SFC Helen Miller

Indiana National Guard can bring to the table. We train hard during our drill weekends and our annual training. A lot of us also do the same thing on the civilian side so we were able to bring a lot to [the exercise].”

CPT Coolbrith highlighted how the training in Europe created an unmatched, hands-on learning opportunity for Guard Soldiers.

“I think this is a great opportunity to show the full capabilities of the Army National Guard while training in Europe,” explained CPT Coolbrith. “Every paratrooper conducted a Platoon Live Fire and the 1-143rd conducted a Joint Forcible Entry via Airborne Assault with the 173rd [Airborne] and NATO allies. I think this is one of the most unique opportunities for a National Guard Soldier.”

1LT Rolon highlighted the importance of these exercises in developing National Guard Soldiers, even if they did not attend the exercise.

“I appreciate that the National Guard is included in these exercises because we love to learn,” she said. “We utilize everything we learn, and what we learn here we can teach to our Soldiers in the States who are expecting us to bring our experiences back home.”

The Saber Strike and Swift Response exercises presented Army National Guard Soldiers with an incredible opportunity to enhance their readiness and interoperability with our allies and regional partners, while developing the skills necessary to effectively operate during a deployment.

“We enjoy what we do – that’s why we are here,” SFC Aguilar said. “We are in the Guard, but we get a lot of time to train. We take a lot of pride in how we train and how prepared we are for the next war if need be. It’s an awesome opportunity for us to come here and get good training while simultaneously getting to see a little bit of Europe.” ●

close proximity within the camp.”

SPC Eugene Gonzales, 544th Military Police Company, Puerto Rico National Guard praised the collaborative environment at Saber Strike despite the fact that it brought together soldiers from multiple units who had not previously worked together.

“Being able to experience this new training with units we’ve never encountered before – I’d say that partnership is above standard,” SPC Gonzales explained. “Everyone is communicating well. We are all one [front] – nobody is acting as an individual. It’s a great experience. I’m really honored to be here.”

The dynamic training environments present at both Saber Strike and Swift Response required Guard Soldiers to remain steadfast and ready to deal with changing circumstances and varying personnel.

“Saber Strike is an incredible exercise for Guard Soldiers because it forces the unit’s personnel to plan everything to exhaustion, and across many different partner nations, and with staff members of

the Army Service Component Command and a Theater Sustainment Command,” MAJ Leiva said. “It’s rare that a Guard unit will have this type of interaction except during a deployment.”

The challenging degree of the exercise was also a benefit, as it contributed to the growth of Soldiers.

“As an Army, we have grown accustomed to established military bases throughout the world, and this was an opportunity for the 678th to experience more full-spectrum operations,” explained MAJ McDaniel of South Carolina’s 678th Air Defense Artillery Brigade.

“This was not so much as a challenge as it was an opportunity to learn what can be accomplished with the resources on hand and exercise the ability to adapt to a quickly evolving situation.”

SGT Szabo said participating in Saber Strike gave him and his fellow National Guard Soldiers an opportunity to showcase their unique skillsets.

“It’s been a great training exercise,” he said. “It was a chance for us to shine and show the rest of the Army what the

a GLIMPSE into the GUARD

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

A civilian participant prepares to engage in a simulated gun assault using a paintball gun as his weapon during Operation Immersion, a community outreach program sponsored by the Kentucky National Guard and participating State agencies.

Kentucky National Guard photo by Stacy Floden

The Kentucky Army National Guard is working to strengthen bonds between Soldiers and the citizens of Kentucky's local communities. Through events like Boss Lift and Operation Immersion, the Kentucky Army National Guard has been inviting residents to experience firsthand what it is like to carry out the duties of a National Guard Soldier.

Employers Take Flight

Boss Lift, an annual event hosted by Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), invited employers of Kentucky Guard Soldiers to spend a day working alongside their

Soldier-employees while at annual training at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. This year's Boss Lift included 27 employers from across the State. Transported by UH-60 Black Hawks, the employers were airlifted to Camp Atterbury where they were able to get a bird's-eye view of what their employees' "other job" as Guard Soldiers is really about.

"We sent one aircraft to western Kentucky to Bowling Green; we sent another aircraft down to London, Kentucky, which is in the south. We also had two aircraft that departed from Frankfurt," explained ESGR State Chair Phillip Miller. "Then we all converged at Camp Atterbury. We planned it well, where everyone [landed] at about the same time and then met up with the unit leadership to begin the day's activities."



The goal of the Boss Lift is to foster a deeper level of understanding for civilian employers about what it is that Guard Soldiers do. Maintaining civilian employment is crucial to Guard members' ability to adequately provide for themselves and their Families. Therefore, creating a positive and proactive relationship between civilian employers, Soldiers and the Guard is a priority for the Kentucky Army National Guard.

"Community outreach is a line of effort at the highest level of the Kentucky Army National Guard," explained MAJ Jason Penn, executive officer for the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry. "This specific program was aimed at promoting that line of effort. It promotes stability within our Guard members. It allows them to be successful Guard members on both the military and civilian side. It also promotes the skills we can provide to Soldiers that they can in turn provide to their civilian employers."

The event began with an orientation about ESGR and the Kentucky Army National Guard. Afterward, the 1-149th unit operations officer gave a brief overview about the unit, the types of occupational skills Soldiers must possess, the unit's mission and the types of training they conduct.

"We expressed our thanks to [the employers] for sharing their [Guard] Soldier-employees with us and for taking their time off to show their support for the Soldiers," Miller said. "We are very appreciative of them for allowing our Soldiers time off from work to conduct their training, whether it's on the weekend, or for the two or three weeks of annual training. We absolutely could not sustain the force without the support and the commitment of the civilian employers."

Following the orientation, employers observed Soldiers training. Employers witnessed Soldiers assemble and disassemble weapons, operate High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV) and conduct a medical operation.

The day of training proved to be eye-opening for the civilian employers. The event showcased the wide range of skills and level of dedication Soldiers put into



TOP: Civilian employers of Kentucky National Guard Soldiers prepare to fly on a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter as part of Boss Lift 2018.

MIDDLE: A group of civilian employers gets a look inside a military ambulance as they are hosted by the Kentucky Army National Guard during Boss Lift 2018 held at Camp Atterbury, Ind.

BOTTOM: Civilian employers of Kentucky National Guard Soldiers view the inside of a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle while observing Soldier training as part of Boss Lift 2018.

Kentucky Army National Guard photos by SPC John Stephens



Civilian employers of Kentucky National Guard Soldiers participate in the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve's 2018 Boss Lift event as they listen to a Kentucky Army National Guard Soldier explain the operation of a lightweight mortar at Camp Atterbury, Ind.

Kentucky Army National Guard photo by SPC John Stephens

their military careers – skills and dedication that can be translated to civilian work.

“The pride you could see on the civilian employers’ faces when they saw what their Soldier did and what they were trained on was great to [witness],” MAJ Penn said. “Everyone had a grin on their face all day long and they started to realize some of the skillsets that we provide. There was a look of surprise about what it is we actually do in the Kentucky National Guard.”

“When you have a 19- or 20-year-old crew chief who is responsible for a \$15 million aircraft – and we make sure the employers know that – it speaks volumes about the faith and trust that this Nation places in its service members,” said Miller. “The employers were all smiles and all extremely enthusiastic. I’ve heard from several of them wanting to know what more they can do to help.”

Miller went on to comment on what he said was a standout moment – watching employers eat an MRE.

“We absolutely could not sustain the force without the support and the commitment of the civilian employers.”

— Phillip Miller

“Something that is always a highlight of Boss Lift is when we see to it that for lunch [employers] have an MRE,” he noted. “The troops are able to teach them how to use the heating elements that come with it. I don’t think [the employers] ate everything, but [they got enough].”

CSM Benzie Timberlake, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry, felt honored and thankful to have his employer attend this year’s Boss Lift.

“I’ve worked for the same employer for 17 years and they really did not have any clue as to what I do [in the Guard],” said CSM Timberlake. “They didn’t know what a command sergeant major was. They don’t really understand the workings of an infantry battalion, but they’ve always supported me. I wouldn’t be successful in my civilian job without the unwavering support of my employer. And now their eyes are opened even more to my abilities and what I can actually provide for them.”



Civilian participants of Kentucky Army National Guard's Operation Immersion stand in formation after first arriving to the event held at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Ky.
Kentucky National Guard photo by Stacy Floden

Immersed in the Guard

Kentucky Army National Guard's second outreach event from this past spring, Operation Immersion, also built upon the idea of fostering stronger relationships between Soldiers and their communities.

Held at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Kentucky, the week-long event gave approximately 40 civilian professionals the opportunity to be immersed into the roles of National Guard Soldiers.

The event was presented by the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, the Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities and the Kentucky National Guard.

With its participants all working in the fields of psychology, social work and counseling, the event focused on engagement with professionals who may have cause to encounter Soldiers and/or Veterans in the course of their work. The week began with classroom workshops taught by subject matter experts and then transitioned into hands-on military exercises taught by Kentucky Army National Guard leaders.

By spending the entire week sleeping in

barracks, waking up early for physical training (PT) and eating MREs, the participants were able to gain a true understanding of what Soldiers experience on duty.

“We cannot be successful in our mission as the Kentucky Army National Guard without the support of the community.”

— MAJ Jason Penn

Attendees rode on UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and participated in mock combat situations including obstacle courses, room clearing with paintball guns, HMMWV rollover training and buddy rushes.

“After [the attendees finished] an experience or training time, we would

pause for a moment and ask them how they could take what they learned and apply it to their practice with current service members,” said CPT Philip Majcher, chaplain for the Kentucky Army National Guard.

CPT Majcher explained to the attendees what his role as a chaplain entailed; he then created a mock environment where the attendees were his Soldiers and he was their chaplain.

“There was a point in the training towards the end where they assaulted a building with paintball guns,” CPT Majcher continued. “We went into the building, assaulted it and came out.”

He recalled a counselor who realized from that exercise that she needed to make a change to better serve her military clients.

“She realized how important it is for Soldiers to know where the exit is,” explained CPT Majcher. “Her office was set up in a way that her desk is facing towards the exit and her client's chairs have their backs to the door. She realized that she could make service members more comfortable if she were to rotate her office so that the chairs are not to the back of the door and service members can see the exit, see who is coming in and have a clear line to get out. I thought that was a phenomenal breakthrough.”



By encouraging dialogue and understanding between Soldiers and counselors, Operation Immersion supports the creation of a safe space for Soldiers to seek help should they need it.

“It can help the Soldiers overcome the stigma of getting help,” said CPT Majcher. “If they can go outside the military and have someone say, ‘I understand a little bit of that,’ I think that can help Soldiers to lose some of the guards they have up about getting help.”

Immersing community members into the realities of Kentucky National Guard Soldiers resulted in outcomes that could have long-lasting impacts on counselor and Soldier relationships.

CPT Majcher explained, “For [the counselors] to have this experience and implement what they’ve learned with service members, I think that will increase their camaraderie, relationship building and sincerity with Veterans and Soldiers.”

The Boss Lift and Operation Immersion events served to fortify bonds and highlight the importance of continuing efforts that nurture relationships between Guard Soldiers and local community members.

“We cannot be successful in our mission as the Kentucky Army National Guard without the support of the community,” said MAJ Penn. “To build those bridges and foster those relationships – that’s the intent and purpose behind these events.” ●



TOP: Operation Immersion participants conduct a simulated gun assault using paintball guns as part of the weeklong event at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Ky.

MIDDLE: A Kentucky Army National Guard Soldier briefs a civilian prior to a flight on board a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during the Kentucky National Guard outreach program, Operation Immersion.

BOTTOM: A Kentucky Army National Guard Soldier helps a civilian participant adjust his chin strap during a training exercise as part of Operation Immersion held this past May at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center.

Kentucky National Guard photos by Stacy Floden



AIMLOCK™ LOCKS ONTO ERROR-FREE SHOOTING

BY STAFF WRITER Keegan Rammel
Photos courtesy AIMLOCK™

Soldiers will soon have access to a higher level of accuracy in individual weapons control with a cutting-edge piece of technology – an active stabilization system developed by AimLock™. With an appearance that looks like something from a sci-fi movie, the AimLock MRR™ mid-range rifle chassis is a sensor-based platform that gives Soldiers computer-based targeting and fire control.

“AimLock™ technology dramatically increases hit probability and reduces time-to-engagement by autonomously detecting targets, ‘locking’ onto the prioritized target, and auto-correcting the weapon’s aim point to continuously compensate for shooter instability, vehicle motion, target movement, velocity, range and other variables,” according to AimLock™ officials.

The project to bring AimLock™ technology to the battlefield began in 2012 when the Department of Defense (DoD)’s Defense Ordnance Technology Consortium contracted AimLock™ to collaborate with the Joint Service Small

”
AimLock™ technology dramatically increases hit probability and reduces time-to-engagement by autonomously detecting targets, ‘locking’ onto the prioritized target, and auto-correcting the weapon’s aim point...
”

Arms Program (JSSAP). Together, JSSAP and AimLock™ are currently working to refine the technology that would translate a shooter’s intent into high-probability execution with every shot, using any firearm, in any situation.

The system can be easily configured to accept almost any existing firearm and is designed to remove virtually all user error, greatly increasing accuracy. Lightweight and easily retrofitted, the AimLock™ system requires minimal modification to the weapon it is enhancing.

The stabilization system works by allowing a computer that is retrofitted to a weapon to adjust the direction of the firearm’s barrel, which “free floats” inside of the exoskeleton of the AimLock™ platform. The computer simultaneously keeps track of both the target and the barrel. It uses electromagnetic actuators to autocorrect the firearm and continuously compensate for aiming errors.

Electromagnetic actuators, also called power transducers, are electrical devices that transform energy to mechanical work. The principle of transformation



FACING PAGE: 1LT William Renfro fires the AimLock™ Stabilized Weapon Platform during a live fire drill as part of the 2017 Army Expeditionary Warrior Experiments at Fort Benning, Ga. U.S. Army photo by Angie DePuydt

in these actuators is based on force interaction in a magnetic field. The actuators help keep the weapon on target whether the Soldier is swaying, riding in a bumpy vehicle or simply not able to keep up with the target.

The program between JSSAP and AimLock™ was given the acronym F.I.T.E.S.: Future Integral Target Engagement System. Phase One of the F.I.T.E.S. program focused on advancing handheld prototypes to technology readiness level 4 (TRL-4) for testing and evaluation. In this phase, the program relied on a technological fusion of embedded computing, microelectromechanical systems sensor integration, computer vision and lightweight materials.

Phase Two of F.I.T.E.S., which began in 2016, consists of a three-year tasking road map to further the development of AimLock™ technology across a broad range of small arms applications – including crew-served and remote weapon applications – resulting in prototypes up to TRL-6 for field testing and evaluation.

“
**F.I.T.E.S. also offers
the added benefit
of increased Soldier
safety and survivability
as the platform will
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quickly recognize
targets using computer
vision technology.**
”

“The [individual] platform is not tied to any specific weapon, but the M4 [and M110] were chosen as technology demonstrators,” said JSSAP Project Management Engineer Terence Rice. The idea is that any Soldier can slide any weapon onto the platform and increase their accuracy.

F.I.T.E.S. also offers the added benefit of increased Soldier safety and survivability as the platform will allow Soldiers to quickly recognize targets using computer vision technology. The system utilizes active target detection, which continuously searches the field of view for known target profiles and highlights them for the Soldier, who will ultimately decide whether or not to pull the trigger.

Currently, F.I.T.E.S. technology is scheduled for incorporation into the Army's Future Vertical Lift program – the DoD's plan for a family of five military helicopters of varying sizes that will share common hardware such as sensors, avionics, engines and countermeasures – in fiscal year 2019. ●

Developing the Stuff of the Future Today —

New Laser-Guided, Precision Mortar

BY STAFF WRITER Keegan Rammel

The next generation of mortar rounds is on the way to U.S. Army Soldiers. New laser-guided “smart” mortars will allow Soldiers to fire rounds on target with extreme precision. These new mortar rounds are designed to be faster, more accurate and maneuverable. They may even have the ability to track a target’s movements and engage at a position other than the one initially fired upon.

The 120mm high explosive guided mortar, or HEGM program is intended to replace the current precision-guided HE mortar — the accelerated precision mortar initiative (APMI).

The Army sought feasible designs from the private sector to create state-of-the-art technology that will outpace the APMI round. The biggest difference — the laser

guidance system replacing the Global Positioning System (GPS) used in the APMI version.

"The APMI solution was a tremendous asset for our Soldiers in Afghanistan," explained LTC Anthony Gibbs, product manager, guided precision munitions and mortar systems for Program Executive Office (PEO) Ammunition at Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey. "It filled the urgent need for a responsive precision mortar at widely dispersed combat outposts and is available for our global response force today. We are improving upon the existing technology and [incorporating] next-generation upgrades into HEGM, such as increased threat countermeasures and enhanced maneuverability."

The new mortar rounds aim to

eliminate logistical issues that have created drawbacks for current mortar use in modern warfare.

Conventional mortars typically require mortarmen to fire multiple rounds as they adjust their aim to hit the target. New precision mortars would allow Soldiers to hit the target on the first round. Such technology would be most beneficial when fighting in urban environments with dense building configurations and high populations.

"Precision allows mortars to be used in areas where typically, collateral damage concerns would prevent them from being used, so it keeps the asset in the fight," LTC Gibbs explained.

When collateral damage risks prohibit the use of mortar fire, infantry troops may

Washington Army National Guard Soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment, 81st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, fire an 81mm M252 mortar during a live fire mission at the Yakima Training Center.

Washington Army National Guard photo by SGT David Carnahan

The Accelerated Precision Mortar Initiative XM395 cartridge. A GPS receiver inside the nose of the round and computer-controlled aerodynamic directional fins on the outer frame of the nose keep the round on its programmed trajectory.

U.S. Army Photo



U.S. Army Soldiers prepare a 120mm XM395 Accelerated Precision Mortar Initiative (APMI) round for fire.

U.S. Army photo by SPC Justin Moeller

be sent on foot to engage opponents with direct-fire weapons. The new technology reduces, to an extent, the need for direct-fire engagement in certain situations.

"With precision mortar capability, you're able to quickly come in, establish fire and with one round [achieve] effects," LTC Gibbs said. "If counter fire is a threat, a precision mortar gives Soldiers the ability to get first round effects and then reposition."

HEGM offers additional benefits to Soldiers, such as the reduced logistical burden of having fewer rounds to bring to the fight.

"Instead of Soldiers having to fire two or three rounds to get effects, we can achieve effects with one," said MAJ Kenneth Fowler, HEGM assistant product manager. "This reduces required logistical support, which means less fatigue for Soldiers over time, and you can engage a wider array of targets."

Like its APMI predecessor, HEGM will be an all-terrain, all-weather mortar capable of incapacitating enemy troops that are standing in the open or located

within or behind structural barriers or light-skinned vehicles – all while minimizing collateral damage. It will be compatible with all U.S. 120mm mortar weapons and fire-control systems used in infantry, armored and Stryker brigade combat teams.

However, the HEGM will be more accurate and maneuverable than APMI. The APMI cartridge has a requirement of a 10-meter CEP (circular error probable), meaning that if a circle with a 10-meter radius was drawn around a target, the round would fall inside the circle 50 percent of the time. The HEGM program goal is a less than 1-meter CEP. Such precision is possible due to the laser guidance system that aims the mortar round, rather than using a GPS-based location to obtain the target.

The laser guidance system, specifically the semi-active laser or SAL, is an independent targeting mode that uses laser designation to guide the mortar via a laser beam that locks onto the target. This means the round is aimed at an object rather than a location, which also means

the mortar will have the potential to adjust course in mid-flight.

"Increased maneuverability will allow Soldiers to engage targets that may have moved or repositioned since the time the call for fire occurred," LTC Gibbs said. "If the target has moved, [the mortar] can still hit it if the laser has designated it."

The use of laser guidance also eliminates inaccuracies and vulnerabilities caused when GPS signals are compromised or degraded.

The Army awarded multiple contracts to private sector groups for preliminary designs of the HEGM. A final solution will be selected this year at the conclusion of a full competition for the winning design.

The HEGM program also employs expertise from the U.S. Army Armament Research, Development and Engineering Center at Picatinny Arsenal and PEO Soldier, Project Manager Soldier Sensors and Lasers, at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. While HEGM is still in the preliminary design stage, the program managers expect production to begin in fiscal year 2021. ●



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THE FASTEST MARATHON

**OKLAHOMA
GUARD SOLDIERS
OVERCOME
ADVERSITY WITH
INGENUITY**

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

When CPT Amanda Thornton, company commander for the Oklahoma Army National Guard's 2120th Engineering Company (Vertical), acknowledged the unexpected challenges faced by her unit while deployed to Iraq, Kuwait, and Syria, and how overcoming those challenges was part of the experience of being there.

"It was all at once, [a] constantly changing environment," she said, describing the workload of the company's 156 Soldiers who were deployed in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. "Everyone kept saying, 'It's a marathon – it's not a race,' but I tell you, it is the fastest marathon you ever ran. It was a whirlwind. I'd definitely say it was more challenging than your average drill weekend."

The 2120th is a vertical engineering company – the company's Soldiers construct buildings and structures from the bottom up. The unit is made up of electricians, plumbers, carpenters and masons. They perform everything from wood framing, to electrical and utility work, to full housing construction.

"On this deployment, we did a little bit of everything – even a little combat engineering," CPT Thornton said. "We did some [barbed] wire fences. I had some of the Soldiers with me from the horizontal construction operators [heavy equipment operators who prep sites for engineering companies], and they did tank ditches, berms and defensive postures for the area of operations. At the same time, we were building a two-story troop medical clinic." The company's deployment ran from the summer of 2017 through this past spring. The Soldiers landed as a single unit in

ABOVE LEFT: SPC Steven Ward of the 2120th Engineer Company, 458th Engineer Battalion, 35th Engineer Brigade, puts his civilian skills as a subcontractor to good use as he frames out a doorway for a new office in the Iraqi customs building.

ABOVE CENTER: SPC Austin Michael (right) of the 2120th Engineer Company, 458th Engineer Battalion, 35th Engineer Brigade, checks the framing of what would be the emergency entrance of a new troop medical clinic in Iraq.

U.S. Army photos by CPT Charles Adamson

ABOVE RIGHT: SPC Cory Hensley of the 2120th Engineer Company, performs electrical prep work before installing ceiling lights as part of a construction project completed while the unit was deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

U.S. Army photo by SGT Amber Criswell



TOP: Soldiers with the 2120th Engineer Company, 120th Engineer Battalion, 90th Troop Command, Oklahoma Army National Guard, participate in situational training exercises at the Camp Gruber Training Center, Okla., in preparation for deployment to the Middle East.

BOTTOM: A Soldier with the 2120th Engineer Company, 120th Engineer Battalion, 90th Troop Command, participates in a dry fire training exercise at the Camp Gruber Training Center, Okla., in preparation for deployment to the Middle East.

Oklahoma Army National Guard photos by
SGT Bradley Cooney

Kuwait, but within 72 hours of hitting the ground all of the unit's personnel were spread throughout three countries – Kuwait, Iraq and Syria. They were ultimately stationed across 13 different locations throughout the region – all supporting different missions as part of Operation Inherent Resolve, CPT Thornton said.

All did not go smoothly in the company's efforts. CPT Thornton noted that some unexpected supply issues impacted construction.

The mission could have been jeopardized if not for the Soldiers' willingness to adjust and their ingenuity in adapting workarounds when problems arose.

"This is pretty much standard anytime we're talking about theater construction," CPT Thornton said.

"You don't have the right materials for what you need when you need them. It's been that way forever. You have to try to make your design work with your Iraqi product."

She explained how the Iraqi and American approaches to construction differ. Where local engineers may be satisfied with stacking masonry and then filling it in with stucco on the outside, American standards require rebar and mortar on the inside of the masonry blocks.

"It was very interesting," CPT Thornton continued. "I had some very good people on that site. They were adept and very flexible. Between all the people there, we were able to make sure that any of the modifications we were making were structurally sound. It came out great."

SGT Josh Jacox, platoon SGT for 2120th's 2nd Platoon, was the Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge (NCOIC) for 78 Soldiers from the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Headquarters platoons. The Soldiers from these units spent their days working hard to build a medical clinic. The many roadblocks they faced during construction became clearer as he delved into the details of their mission.

"After about two weeks of working on the hospital, we realized that we only had about 40 percent of the material that we needed to do the whole job," he said. "My guys put up 1,800 2x4s to frame walls. That took them about two weeks. Then we realized we were missing another 2,000 boards."

Leaning hard on their Army training, the Soldiers adapted to the situation. One of the most obvious challenges that confronted them was how to mitigate the time lost while waiting for the additional lumber to arrive.

They shifted their focus, SGT Jacox explained. With a solid background as an assistant project manager on his civilian job, it wasn't the first time SGT Jacox had dealt with mix-ups on a job site. He moved his Soldiers to tasks that did not require lumber and did not dwell on the supply problem.

Though the holdup caused a delay in schedule, work continued at a brisk pace. Plenty of other work still remained to be done – electrical and plumbing preparation, for example. The Soldiers transitioned their efforts to those tasks.

Other projects were required as well – three to five at any given time, according to SGT Jacox. The platoons ran missions with Marine units building what SGT Jacox referred to as "tons and tons" of firebases. Managing all the personnel for the multiple missions presented a challenge of its own.

“That was difficult on our end, just because of the preparation for the personnel constantly evolving – having to send people out, then bringing them back and trying to get them cycled through. Accountability was huge. It was really difficult at times. At the same time, you still have to manage all the projects on the base. They still required a deadline that we had to hit,” said SGT Jacox.

During World War II, Army pilots would often blame unforeseen obstacles that popped up during a mission on gremlins – fictional and mischievous creatures regarded as responsible for an unexplained problem or fault. Some might say that the Soldiers of the 2120th

had a gremlin or two on their medical clinic construction site, as the engineers continued to experience a level of frustration with supply-oriented issues.

But these Soldiers would not be deterred. Where there were gremlins, they made “gremlin-ade.”

“We weren’t getting the right material,” SGT Jacox recalled. “The Army would order it and then we would get a product that [technically] met the requirement, but it wouldn’t work with what we needed. Like plumbing, for example. All the piping we received was European – it was all in millimeters. All the fittings were American. They don’t work together, so you use a lot of glue.”

SGT Jacox said he knew that the glue was not the optimal solution, but it was a viable solution. He went on to say he also recognized that he needed to keep his Soldiers focused on what could be done to supply the best possible remedy under difficult circumstances.

“A lot of people just wanted to give up,” he remembered. “They felt like they were being overwhelmed. We had to sit them down and tell them ‘Look, it’s not the end of the world. Let’s just think about it.’ I had really good project leads in charge of the site who were able to keep the guys on point. They got real creative.”

In the end, the solutions the engineers employed worked out exceptionally

RIGHT: The Soldiers of the 2120th Engineer Company stand at attention during the unit’s deployment ceremony.

Photo courtesy Oklahoma Army National Guard

BOTTOM: The new troop medical clinic built in Iraq by Soldiers of the 2120th Engineer Company.

National Guard photo by WO1 Brenda Parks





TOP: SPC Austin Michael and SPC James Jones, both of the 2120th Engineer Company, 458th Engineer Battalion, 35th Engineer Brigade, build framing for walls as part of a construction project completed while the unit was deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

U.S. Army photo by CPT Charles Adamson



INSET: Soldiers with Oklahoma's 2120th Engineer Company, 120th Engineer Battalion, 90th Troop Command, radio in orders while conducting situational training exercises as part of the unit's pre-mobilization training in advance of deploying to the Middle East in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

Oklahoma Army National Guard photo by SGT Bradley Cooney

well. So well in fact, soldiers from allied forces who were also on the ground doing construction sought out the unit to learn their techniques.

"We ran into issues where a lot of [our Soldiers] didn't know how to do framing," SGT Jacox said. "We had to put up about 2,000 to 3,000 linear feet of walls. One of the sergeants on the team, SGT Eric Needham, built a jig – like a template – to set the walls in. Then all [the Soldiers had to] do is nail them together. It was successful to the point where the British, Danish and the Marines all came over. SGT Needham would give them classes during the day on how to do wall framing."

Cross-training was one of the most vital aspects of the 2120th deployment. At the onset, Soldiers were not exactly excited about working outside their designated military occupational specialties (MOSs), SGT Jacox said. But once they realized how important it was to accomplishing the mission, they were all-in.

"Every one of our personnel not only worked in their MOS, but they also had [an] opportunity to cross-train," said CPT Thornton. "We did not need as many plumbers or carpenters, but there was a need for electrical upgrades all throughout the area of operations. [In response], a group of our carpenters and plumbers cross-trained as electricians."

The continued resiliency of the Oklahoma Guard Soldiers not only resulted in an over 15,000-square-foot medical clinic for troops on the ground in Iraq, but also in the successful completion of the 2120th's overall mission in support of the defeat of ISIS and other extremist groups in the Middle East – gremlins or no gremlins.

"I'm really satisfied with the work that was done," SGT Jacox said. "What we did with what we had was amazing. I had extremely knowledgeable Soldiers who went out there and kicked [butt]. I would say I had the best guys in the world." ●

The Fast Lane to Benefits

Changes to Tuition Assistance Program Make Benefits More Accessible

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

The Army National Guard's Tuition Assistance Program recently underwent changes that resulted in Guard Soldiers receiving almost immediate access to education benefits.

Effective August 5, 2018, the newly amended Tuition Assistance Program now offers increased access to higher learning opportunities and benefits.

Previously, Soldiers were required to wait one year after completing Advanced Individual Training (AIT) before becoming eligible to use tuition assistance benefits. Now, the one-year waiting period has been removed.

"Soldiers will now come home [from AIT] and they can immediately use their benefits," explained Ken Hardy, chief of the Army National Guard's Education Services Branch.

Officers who have completed the Basic Officer Leaders Course and warrant officers who have graduated from the Warrant Officer Basic Course will also be immediately eligible for tuition assistance, according to Pamela Raymer, chief of the Army Continuing Education System, Human Resources Command.

Additionally, the changes to the program remove the requirement for Soldiers to complete 10 years of service before tuition assistance can be used toward a master's degree. Instead, benefits for obtaining a master's are now tied to professional military education requirements. The requirements ensure Soldiers are on track in their military career as they further their education.

"The biggest benefit is easier access," said Hardy. "It's always good to have as much access to your benefits as you can possibly have, with few restrictions."

“Currently less than 20 percent of Soldiers in all components use tuition assistance.”

— Pamela Raymer

The military education requirements only apply to Soldiers who are pursuing a master’s degree and previously used tuition assistance to earn a bachelor’s degree. If a Soldier did not use tuition assistance for their undergraduate degree, the military education requirements do not apply.

Adherence to the education requirements calls for enlisted Soldiers to complete the Advanced Leaders Course, officers to complete the Captains Career Course and Warrant officers to complete the Warrant Officers Advanced Course.

A waiver process is under consideration for Soldiers following the military education requirements who are unable to comply due to circumstances beyond their control.

“You have some Soldiers who have put in for school and it’s a three-year wait for an open seat,” explained Hardy. “We’re going to let it ride and see what kind of feedback we get from Soldiers and how many are in that situation. If it is a big problem, we may look at writing a policy to [address] it. If it is a small problem, we may at least allow some exceptions for these unique cases.”

Held over from the old Tuition Assistance Program is the 16-credit-hours-per-year limit. Though, according to Hardy, that limit may be increased in the future. The credit-hour cap applies regardless of whether a Soldier is using the benefit to pursue a bachelor’s or master’s degree.

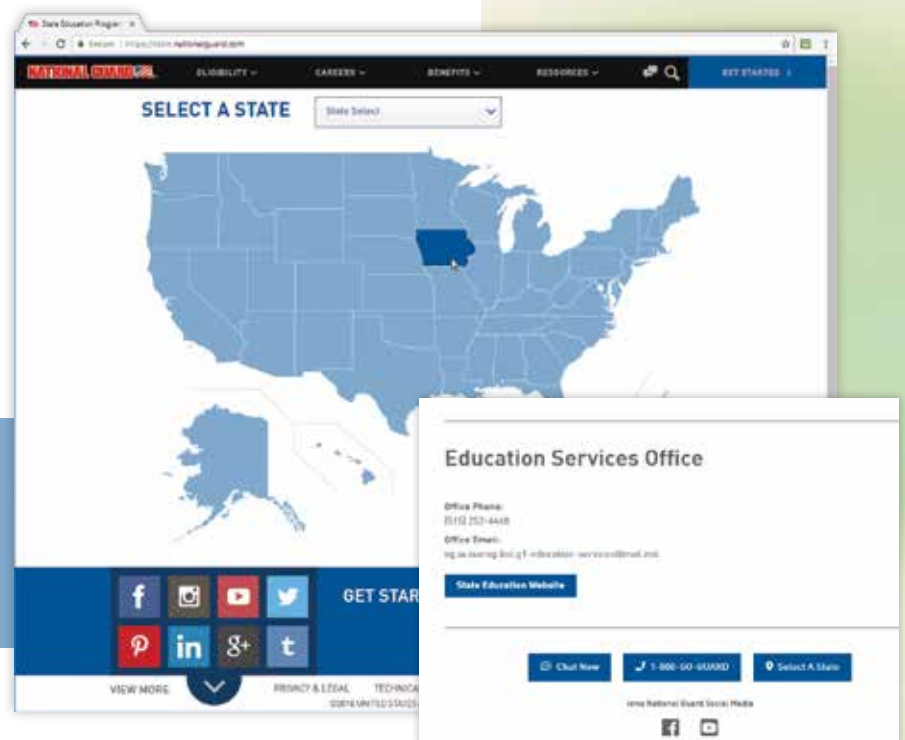
For more information about the tuition assistance program and its available benefits, Soldiers should contact their State’s education services officer. Individual States may offer separate tuition assistance plans that provide benefits in addition to those from the national level.

Ultimately, the new changes to the national Tuition Assistance Program are making it easier for Soldiers to further their education faster.

According to Raymer, currently less than 20 percent of Soldiers in all components use tuition assistance.

“We’re hoping this new policy will encourage more Soldiers to sign up for tuition assistance,” she noted. “This will help them professionally in the Army and increase their employability [in the civilian sector].” ●

To find contact information for your State’s education services office go to State.Nationalguard.com, click on your State, then scroll to the bottom of the page for a listing of that State’s education office phone, email and web address.



The Call for COMBAT ADVISORS

The Army Stands Up New Security Force Assistance Brigades

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

What does one do when facing near-peer threats, but also heavy train-advise-and-assist demands on current available units? This is a question U.S. Army commanders have grappled with for years. The United States Army operates from a position that requires a near-constant response to both near-peer threats as well as the train-advise-and-assist needs of allied forces. To more efficiently allocate resources to these two demanding and equally important needs, in 2016 the Secretary of the Army approved the creation of Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs).

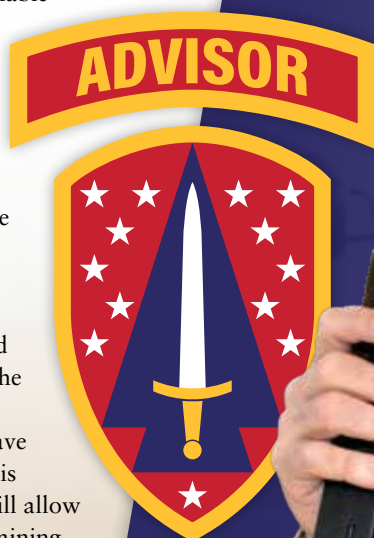
SFABs are specialized units with a core mission to train, advise, assist, enable and accompany operations with allied and partner nations. SFAB Soldiers are highly trained and among the top tactical leaders in the Army. Their work will help to strengthen our allies' forces while supporting this Nation's security objectives and the combatant commanders' warfighting needs. Specifically, the highly specialized SFAB units will serve to reduce the combat advisor role for Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs), which have traditionally been tasked with this effort. This reduction, in turn, will allow BCTs to increase focus on maintaining readiness for warfighting against near-peer threats. Soldiers assigned to an SFAB will deploy to support combatant command requirements worldwide.

"When deployed, SFAB Soldiers will be the day-to-day experts combatant commanders need to train, advise and assist our allied and partnered indigenous security forces," said Indiana Adjutant General MG Courtney P. Carr.

The new SFAB units are permanent additions to the Army force structure. They have an organizational assembly similar to a BCT, with a brigade headquarters, two maneuver battalions, a cavalry squadron, an engineer battalion, an artillery battalion and a support battalion.

In all, six SFABs will be stood up – one Army National

Guard and five active duty. The first SFAB was established at Fort Benning, Georgia, in August 2017, and the second was established at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in January of this year. The Army National Guard unit is the 54th SFAB. Headquartered under the Indiana Army National Guard, the 54th includes a brigade headquarters and six battalions – two infantry battalions, an engineer battalion, an artillery battalion, a cavalry battalion and a support battalion – located in Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Texas. The brigade is slated to begin manning its force in September.



MAJ Jay Robinson of the Florida Army National Guard – shown sending a block of instruction on a call for fire during a unit training exercise – is assigned to serve as operations officer for the 3rd Battalion (Cavalry) of the newly formed 54th Security Force Assistance Brigade.

Florida Army National Guard photo by SSG Carmen Fleischmann



“It is my assessment and the assessment of the Secretary and the assessment of the Army staff, that we are likely to be involved in train-advise-and-assist operations for many years to come,” said Chief of Staff of the Army GEN Mark Miley at last year’s Association of the United States Army’s annual meeting.

Indeed, for over a century, the conventional Army undertook similar advisor missions. Today, SFAB Soldiers will train to improve upon the Army’s past ad hoc solutions.

In preparation for service on SFABs, qualifying officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) are trained as combat advisors. Training takes place at the Military Advisor Training Academy (MATA) located at Fort Benning, Georgia. The training requirement is broken into a three-phased approach – advisor training, advanced skills training and collective training. The MATA curriculum includes language training, cultural training, foreign weapons training and advanced medical training. The academy’s individual skills-building courses cover the areas of expertise required of a military advisor, such as building relationships, negotiation and mediation, leader engagement, managing and communicating through interpreters, developing training plans and planning partnered operations.

LTC Gregory A. Marcuson led a train, advise and assist team of 38th Infantry Division Soldiers to Afghanistan in 2017. He had this to say about the importance of the role of SFABs. “Advisors are critical in achieving national security objectives without employing a significant amount of U.S. forces in combat. U.S. Soldiers that conduct train-advise-and-assist missions

to an allied nation’s military, ultimately build that nation’s capability to conduct military operations independently from U.S. personnel and resources. Combat advisors need to be as adept in the cultural and political aspects of the nation as they are in military affairs.”

The Army National Guard is currently looking for Soldiers interested in manning this critical and all-volunteer element of the force. SFAB members will be recognized as specialized Soldiers and, as such, will be eligible for special promotion rates and boards, selection boards and special pay. Soldiers who volunteer for an SFAB unit will be provided with advanced training and will have access to the most cutting-edge military equipment available.

SFABs will have the same range of career fields as a BCT, including infantry, armor, field artillery, engineer and sustainment. They will also include personnel with specialties in civil affairs, psychological operations, foreign areas, strategy, force management, financial management and cyber protection.

Traits Army leadership seeks to find in potential SFAB Soldiers include:

- Expertise in the profession of arms
- Persistent agility and flexibility (adaptive to changing conditions)
- Professional leadership experience
- Proven track record of functioning as a standard bearer (always teaching through example and demonstrating strong moral character)
- Complex problem-solving skills (always finding solutions)
- Understanding of the human element in others
- Ability to think on a commonsense level

Requirements for volunteering include:

- Rank of E-6 or above
- Proof of completion of Key Developmental (KD) assignment and demonstrated excellence in past performance
- Minimum General Technical (GT) Score of 110
- Physical Capacity/Stamina, Upper Extremities, Lower Extremities, Hearing, Eyes, Psychiatric (PULHES) profile of 111211 or better with no Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) limiting profile
- Minimum APFT score of 240 points
- Secret Security Clearance
- Fully deployable

Soldiers interested in volunteering for the 54th SFAB should contact their branch manager for more information and for next steps. To locate the appropriate branch manager, Soldiers may go to HRC.army.mil/content/5418 and use their assigned Common Access Card (CAC) or Department of Defense Self-Service (DS)

Login to access a listing of branch manager contact information. ●



Security Force Assistance Brigades wear brown berets. SFAB Soldiers will be on the ground with their partners – fighting side by side with them in all conditions, so the brown beret symbolizes dirt or mud akin to the “muddy boots” moniker given to leaders who are always out with the troops. Brown berets are not similar to any other beret currently in the Army inventory.

Photo courtesy U.S. Army

A RACE FOR THE GUARD

Soldiers Run to Qualify for the All Guard Marathon Team

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

This past May, 143 Army National Guard Soldiers from around the country burned up a marathon course running amidst 12,000 civilians at the Lincoln Track Club in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Lincoln National Guard Marathon – a public marathon that is funded, in part, by the State of Nebraska – serves as the only qualifying marathon for the All Guard Marathon Team.

“The program encourages and enhances the National Guard’s [recruitment and] retention program mainly by instilling physical fitness and self-discipline and esprit de corps,” said SFC Christopher Sterns, the marathon’s coordinator with the Nebraska Army National Guard’s Joint Force Headquarters.

In an average year, just over 60 male and female Soldiers make the team, SFC Sterns said. The team competes in several marathons throughout the year in an effort to promote just some of the many benefits related to serving with the Army National Guard.

Each year, States and Territories send National Guard athletic teams to compete in the Lincoln Marathon. Those with the

CPT Kenneth Raynor runs the race course winding through the city of Lincoln, Neb., to take first place in the men’s category of the 2018 Lincoln National Guard Marathon.

Nebraska National Guard photo by A1C Jamie Titus

fastest times join the All Guard team.

“They are competing for 61 slots,” SFC Sterns explained. “We choose the top fastest 40 males and the top 15 females. Then we have three male Masters [Soldiers over the age of 40] and three female Masters.”

To qualify for the Lincoln Marathon, male Soldiers under the age of 40 must have run a



recognized marathon, taking place in the 18 months prior to the Lincoln Marathon, in under four hours. For women and Masters, the time requirement is 4 hours 30 minutes.

SFC Sterns said part of his role is to notify State coordinators about the number of competitive slots available for their State.

“I send out State rosters in December of each year saying, ‘Hey, you need to start building your team,’” he said. “I tell them how many Soldiers the marathon program can fund. The program will fund [Soldiers] to come to Lincoln and run. Some States really believe in the program and they will fund people past what we can fund.”

The 26.2-mile race starts and ends at the University of Nebraska – specifically at the Lincoln Football Stadium. The race course winds through a significant portion of the city, then wraps back around to end on the 50-yard line.

During the race, runners get an up-close-and-personal tour of Lincoln, Nebraska. They pass by both urban and suburban scenes, run across college and

high school campuses and even stride past the State capitol and the city’s zoo.

This year, leading the pack of National Guard qualifiers were CPT Kenneth Raynor and CPT Kimberly Quinn, who came in first place for the male and female categories, respectively. They are now both on the 2018 All Guard Marathon Team. This year’s win marks a first for CPT Quinn, while CPT Raynor is an old pro when it comes to running on the All Guard team.

First Place Winner, National Guard Men’s Category



CPT Kenneth Raynor, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 74th Troop Command, D.C. Army National Guard

Running Time: 2:38:55

CPT Raynor came to run at the 2018 Lincoln marathon, sent by the Washington, D.C. Army National Guard. It was the

fifth year he had run the race and the third time he had come in first among National Guard contenders. The Lincoln marathon marked CPT Raynor’s 16th completed marathon. He came in sixth place overall – just 9 minutes 18 seconds behind the overall winner, a civilian by the name of Geoffrey Terer.

CPT Raynor has been a member of the All Guard Marathon Team for five years and has been a competitive runner since high school. His civilian job is in law enforcement. He simultaneously began both his law enforcement and military careers right out of college. He said he realized that being part of a police force and being part of the Guard meshed well for him.

“I definitely thought of different avenues, but I think the challenge of [doing both] was really big for me,” CPT Raynor commented. “I felt like, physically and mentally, law enforcement and the military gave me that opportunity to challenge myself more than anything else.



Runners starting off in the beginning miles of the 2018 Lincoln National Guard Marathon.
Nebraska National Guard photo by SSGT Jason Wilson

The military gave me that good balance to start with and that really helped me in law enforcement. Having that base of fitness and military toughness from being in the Guard helped me."

When talking about this year's marathon, CPT Raynor said the course has not changed much over the years he has participated. He describes it as mostly flat, except for some slight elevations towards the end, with little shade. The warm May temperatures can make the last miles of the marathon particularly grueling, he said.

"The route is good," CPT Raynor noted. "But there's no shade, so by the time you get to the second half of the race, the heat gets really bad. It's tough. It definitely heats up."

CPT Raynor noted that in recent years warm run days have been the rule in Lincoln, rather than the exception.

"A May race is usually pretty tough, especially when there is no shade and the sun's out," he said. "This is probably the hottest year we've had, but it's been hot four out of five [years]. The last year it was cool was 2013, when it was around 40 degrees. It's been tough for a lot of Soldiers, especially for these guys that are doing their first marathon in that kind of weather."

CPT Raynor went on to note the wave of support from local residents, who came out in droves to cheer on all the runners.

"It is a cool city," CPT Raynor recalled. "I think it has a good feel to it. The community is really, really into it, especially for a race of that size. It seemed like the whole community was out there. It's a great place to hold the marathon."

First Place Winner, National Guard Women's Category



CPT Kimberly Quinn, Range Officer,
Camp Blanding Joint Training
Center, Florida Army
National Guard

Running Time: 3:11:29

CPT Quinn also expressed a sense of appreciation for the supportive nature of the Lincoln city residents.

"Lincoln, Nebraska is awesome!" she said. "The community out there supports the National Guard. There were patriots lining the street the entire way and it was incredible. It's beautiful. I just ran the whole time thanking people."

It was amazing.”

CPT Quinn is one half of an Army National Guard power couple. Together with her husband CPT Ryan Quinn – a regionally recognized racecar-drifting driver – the Quinns work hard to support each other’s passions and to support the recruiting and retention efforts of the Florida Army National Guard.

Being a member of an initiative that works in direct support of the National Guard’s recruitment and retention program is a perfect fit for CPT Quinn, but making the team was no easy feat as the Lincoln race was just her second marathon. She had raced only once before in Clearwater, Florida, to qualify for the Lincoln contest. An obvious natural for the sport, she placed fourth out of all female runners in the Lincoln marathon.

While she may possess a natural propensity for running, placing in the top four at a national-level marathon did not come by luck. CPT Quinn explained that she at first had a love-hate relationship for the training required to enter the marathons.

“I found out [there was a chance I could make the State team] last October and I started training last October,” she recalled. “My first race was in January. To train for that marathon, I was running once a week. I ran up to 21 miles. I would do one run a week and the rest of the week was weightlifting and cross-training.”

She said her training was a bit of a trial-and-error experience. The final miles in Clearwater showed her that she needed to move her training up a notch.

She laughed about it in retrospect.

“I despise the fact that it hurt really, really, really bad,” she said. “It worked, because I qualified – I had like a three-and-a-half-hour [race] time. It just hurt really badly, especially the last mile. My legs were just in complete and utter pain.”

When she was chosen for the State team, she decided to devote more time to training. She started running six days a week. The increased training paid off. In Lincoln, CPT Quinn still had plenty of gas in her tank as she approached the end of the race.



She actually sprinted toward the finish line.

“I felt so good,” she said. It was really hard to find my pace to keep from setting myself up. That was the hardest part—knowing how hard to push myself.”

Being on the All Guard Marathon Team also gives CPT Quinn the opportunity to work on another important Army National Guard initiative. CPT Quinn regularly scores 300-plus on her Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) and she wants to see her fellow Soldiers excel in this area as well. As she explained, physical fitness is not only important for personal development, but for the health of the Guard as a whole.

“We need people to be healthy so that they can continue to fight and win our

Nation’s wars – and not necessarily just for our wartime missions, but for peacetime missions and to serve in times of natural disasters. We have to be a fit force. The health of our Nation is important. This marathon team allows me a platform to speak to that threat.” ●



CPT Kimberly Quinn sprints to the 50-yard line of the University of Nebraska’s Lincoln Football Stadium to cross the finish line and take first place in the women’s category of the 2018 Lincoln National Guard Marathon.

Nebraska National Guard photo by A1C Jamie Titus

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

The program also includes over 100 business and IT certification prep courses and exams, including Project Management Professional (PMP), Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM), Certified Business Analysis Professional (CBAP), Certified Information Security Manager (CISM), Amazon Web Services (AWS) Certified Solutions Architect/Associate and Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), to name just a few.

For those who find independent learning to be a challenge, Army e-learning has you covered. The program facilitates access to mentors and subject matter experts – available 24-hours a day via live chat, phone and email – who can answer student questions and offer advice. The option to create Customized Learning Paths, which can be structured to fit the organizational training needs of individual students, is also offered through e-Learning. This feature allows students to map their curriculum to match the requirements of their particular military occupational specialty (MOS) or civilian

The Army e-Learning Program offers Soldiers and DA Civilians the ability to train when and how it best fits their professional needs and personal schedules. Take advantage and start advancing your career today. ●

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Army's Distributed Learning System:

EFFECTIVE EDUCATION ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

Soldier readiness necessitates on-demand training. Yet, the concept of “on-demand” often conflicts with traditional training structures and environments. Course curricula offered once or twice a year, in a handful of brick-and-mortar locations, may limit Soldier access and slow down the training process. The Army Distributed Learning Program (TADLP) works to ensure that Soldiers have training options beyond traditional classroom settings and are able to gain critical training anytime, anywhere.

The Army National Guard Distributed Learning (DL) Program, a component of TADLP, provides multiple distributed learning methods and technologies that facilitate the improved readiness of Soldiers by offering flexible, online or remote delivery of standardized training materials and coursework.

Using Guard Knowledge Online (GKO), Soldiers may collaborate with fellow Soldiers and instructors, share files, access DL Program contact information and learn more detailed information about the program in general. Soldiers may use their common access cards (CACs) to login to GKO at GKOPortal.ng.mil/my.policy.

The Army National Guard DL Program offers more than 400 internet-accessible Distributed Learning Classrooms (DLCs) nationwide.

The Army National Guard DL Program is comprised of the following elements:

Distributed Learning Content Development

Army National Guard DL content is focused on Guard-specific needs, with emphasis on preparing Soldiers to meet all functional and readiness requirements. Content dealing with Duty Military Occupational Specialty Qualification training and professional military education is also at times offered. The DL program has also collaborated with U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) in the development of training apps for use on mobile devices.

GuardU

Through the online learning portal, GuardU, Soldiers may access over 200 links to DL-based instructional content that covers topics for both directed learning and self-development. In an effort to facilitate an instructor-led, yet collaborative and self-paced learning environment, trainers assemble, manage, deliver, discuss and document course materials through the GuardU site. To visit the GuardU site, Soldiers may use their CACs to login at GuardU.ELLC.Learn.army.mil/.

Distributed Learning Capabilities

The Army National Guard DL Program leaders coordinate and manage a federal program that provides States and Territories with DL capabilities that include both fixed and mobile DLCs. Each classroom has video tele-training capabilities, networked computer workstations as well as audio/video equipment. A mobile DLC, or Mobile Digital Training Facility (MDTF), is a wirelessly networked classroom consisting of 10 notebook PCs, video tele-training/video conferencing equipment and two ruggedized cases for storage and/or shipment of the classroom elements. The MDTFs are designed to run off a local connection to a secured wireless network for use wherever and whenever access to DL is needed. ●

FOR MORE INFORMATION on the Army National Guard DL Program or to register for a class, visit the GKO website at GKOPortal.ng.mil/my.policy or GuardU at GuardU.ELLC.Learn.army.mil/.

PT TIPS — UPPER BODY WORKOUT

BY STAFF WRITER Ruth Ann Replogle

HAND-RELEASE PUSH-UPS: As many as possible in 3 minutes



- Start on the floor with your hands slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. Keep your legs fully extended and feet together. Keep abdominals and lower body tight. Elbows should be at a 45-degree angle.
- Release your hands and feet briefly from contact with the ground.
- Immediately return your hands and feet to the ground and forcefully push up.
- Return to starting position.

STANDING POWER THROW: 2-3 tosses in 3 minutes



- Grasp a 10-pound medicine ball with both hands at hip level.
- Prepare to throw by bending at the knees and lowering the medicine ball almost to the ground.
- When ready to throw, bend at the knees, lean slightly forward at the hips while lowering the medicine ball almost to the ground. As you begin to stand, toss the medicine ball from an underhanded position over your head.
- Both feet should remain in contact with the ground throughout the entire movement.

PULL-UPS: As many as possible

- Grab the bar with a shoulder-width overhand grip.
- Make sure your arms are completely straight and your feet are off the ground.
- Pull yourself up until your chin clears the bar and your chest is near the bar.
- Be sure to actively contract your back by pulling through your elbows (not wrists) while keeping your eyes forward.
- Lower your body until your shoulders and arms are fully extended to return to starting position.



Maintaining physical fitness is a constant for Army Soldiers. A proper exercise program not only increases Soldier and unit readiness, but can also enhance quality of life, improve productivity, and bring about positive physical and mental change. Soldiers working to sustain a healthy exercise regimen may enjoy incorporating these upper body exercises into their next workout.

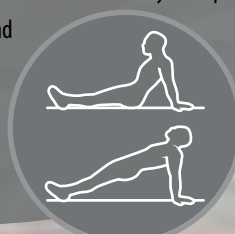
CHAIR DIPS: As many as possible in 2 minutes

- Hold onto the edge of your chair and slide your butt off the seat.
- Holding yourself up with arms straight, lower your body, bending your arms until your elbows are at a 90-degree angle.
- Hold for 2 seconds.
- Push up until your arms are straight.
- Hold for 2 seconds.
- Return to starting position.



REVERSE PLANK: Hold for 1 minute

- Sit on the floor with your legs extended in front of you.
- Place your palms on the floor slightly behind and outside your hips.
- Press into your palms and lift your hips and torso toward the ceiling.
- Squeeze your butt and thighs as you hold the position.



SPC Kevin Maxey, a Human Resources Specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment, 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, completes the pull-up portion of the French Commando pre-evaluation test at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.

Arkansas Army National Guard photo by SPC Victoria Eckert

OPTIMIZE YOUR HEALTH using the PERFORMANCE TRIAD

BY STAFF WRITER Ruth Ann Repogle

Want to build and sustain strength, agility and endurance? You can achieve these goals by using Performance Triad, or P3, strategies.

The Army began the P3 initiative in 2013 to help Soldiers optimize their health and achieve both individual and unit peak performance levels. P3 centers on three pillars that are

scientifically proven to affect physical and mental performance — sleep, activity and nutrition.

By targeting and improving daily habits in all three areas, Soldiers can become stronger, faster, leaner and mentally sharper.

So how do the P3 pillars work?

1. SLEEP

Sleep is crucial to the proper

cognitive and physical functioning of the body. Inadequate sleep is often associated with accidents, poor mood or morale and impaired judgment. For Soldiers, this may lead to a slowed ability to execute orders both on and off the training ranges and battlefields, potentially putting Soldiers and units in harm's way. By contrast, achieving an adequate amount of sleep every day is linked with increased reaction times and improved decision-making.

Try these tips for reaching optimal rest each day:

- Get a total of seven to eight hours of sleep in every 24-hour period
- Create a technology-free “wind-down routine” for the 30–60 minutes before going to sleep at night (no smartphones, tablets, laptops or TV)
- Do not eat or drink products containing caffeine or sugar within four hours of going to bed
- Create your sleep space by blocking out light and noise
- Take a power nap (or two) — 20 minutes or less — to help re-energize before shift work

Talk to your Medical Readiness NCO if you are experiencing problems sleeping that have persisted for more than two weeks.

2. ACTIVITY

Maintaining physical fitness is key to Soldier

readiness. Keeping active and practicing principles of safe and effective training enables Soldiers to perform the duties of their jobs, plus become stronger warfighters.

The Department of Health and Human Services recommends adults get 150 minutes of exercise every week (Soldiers on active duty may require more in order to meet Army fitness requirements). Those minutes may be split multiple ways to accommodate varying schedules — whether it be 10 15-minute increments of exercise or five 30-minute workouts. Split your workouts between cardio and strength training for maximum performance.

In addition to regular physical training, physical activity includes getting up from an office desk every hour to stand and stretch, and walking up to 10,000 steps a day. You can get your steps in by:

- Taking the stairs instead of the elevator or walking up the escalator instead of riding up
- Jogging around the building during a lunch break
- Parking in the farthest spot from the building when parking in a lot
- Strolling through the park before or after work
- Doing high knees while watching TV

Decrease the risk of injury by properly stretching before and after workouts. Warm up muscles by performing dynamic stretches such as high knees, lunges, jumping jacks and arm circles. Dynamic stretches will increase the heart rate and prime muscles. Cool down muscles with static stretching or yoga poses. Static stretches increase flexibility and relax muscles. Many fitness experts recommend static stretching be done every day to improve balance, relieve muscle tension, improve posture and increase blood flow.

3. NUTRITION

Healthy eating enables training,

increases energy and endurance, shortens recovery time between activities, improves focus and concentration, and helps Soldiers to look and feel better.

As the old adage goes, you are what you eat. Eating right means choosing the right mix of food at each meal. Learn how to build a healthy plate using ChooseMyPlate.gov as your guide:

- Fill half your plate with fruits and veggies
- Aim for fresh or frozen produce when possible
- Opt for lean proteins (fish and turkey)
- Choose whole foods such as fruits, whole wheat and whole grains
- Limit fried, sugary and fatty foods

Just like an obstacle course is challenging yet doable, so is managing sleep, activity and nutrition. Incorporating the P3 pillars and fundamentals into a daily routine and lifestyle helps Soldiers dominate on and off the battlefield.

For more information on the P3 program, or to access helpful articles, resource links and more, visit P3.AMEDD.army.mil. For P3 information on demand, download the Performance Triad app, available on both the Apple App Store and Google Play. ●



Peace of mind for you and your Family

Did you know that Guard members and their Families have low-cost insurance plan options?

Through the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance, Soldiers are eligible for up to \$400,000 of insurance through age 60. Family members are eligible for Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance, which provides up to \$100,000 of insurance for spouses and \$10,000 for dependent children.

For the latest information, contact your local recruiter or visit

NationalGuard.com/tools/life-insurance.

25 Years of ChalleNGe, a Lifetime of Change

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

For the past 25 years, the National Guard has been dedicated to giving at-risk youth a second chance at a better life.

As part of this effort, in 1993 the National Guard established the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program – a free alternative education program for young men and women between the ages of 16 and 18, who have experienced difficulty in traditional high school settings.

Currently, 40 program locations are spread across 28 States, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. More than 160,000 cadets have graduated from the program to date, with an average of 10,000 cadets graduating each year. Graduates of the program have found success in college, trade school and careers in and outside of the military.

“It gives these at-risk kids a second chance that they wouldn’t otherwise have,” said COL Wallace

Steinbrecher, director of Georgia’s Youth ChalleNGe program. “It’s a voluntary program, so they have to actually commit to make a change in their lives.”

The program utilizes discipline and training techniques based on proven Army tactics – emphasizing academic excellence, leadership, followership, job skill development, mental and physical health, community service, citizenship and life-coping skills.

The program follows a two-phased approach. The first phase is the core segment of the program and occurs across five and a half weeks at a Youth ChalleNGe Academy (YCA). During this time, cadets receive uniforms and haircuts, and live full-time at the academy – taking fully accredited academic classes and participating in drills and other structured program activities. Cadets are taken out of their everyday surroundings to remove potentially poor influences like social media, email, friends, personal items and other distractions.

“They are removed from their normal environments and placed in an environment



Students from the Georgia National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Academy's Color Guard raise the U.S. Flag during the academy's Family Day.

Georgia Army National Guard photo by SSG R.J. Lannom Jr.

where they can focus 100 percent on themselves and gaining the skills they need,” explained Kimberly Folsom-Kuster, national program manager for the Youth ChalleNGe program. “The experience can turn the direction of their lives in a completely different way – for the better.”

The in-residence phase places cadets in a structured and disciplined setting where they can develop their social, emotional, academic and basic-life skills.

Once a cadet graduates from the first phase of the program, they move on to the second phase – a 12-month non-residential program. In this phase, cadets are paired with a specially trained mentor from the cadet’s community, with whom they work on a daily basis. The Youth ChalleNGe program is the only program of its kind that provides graduates with a personal mentor for a full year to help them transition out of the program and onto a productive path for life.

“The mentor provides a touchpoint for [graduates] to go back to whenever they need guidance,” explained COL Steinbrecher.

As one of the original 10 YCAs established in 1993, Georgia’s Fort Stewart campus hosted civic leaders and alumni during their 25th Anniversary Celebration and All Class Reunion.

Garnering hundreds of attendees, including more than 50 civic and business leaders, the event was a testament to, and celebration of, the Georgia Youth ChalleNGe program’s impact on both its graduates and the State.

“I learned who I was because of the YCA,” said Churisse Jones, a graduate of Fort Stewart’s YCA class of 1998. “YCA taught me that to be successful, you must have [high] character. If you have poor character, you will fail.”

During the celebration, Jones was with her former

instructor, SFC Annie Powell (Ret.) of the Georgia Army National Guard.

“Ms. Powell has been a mentor to me throughout the last 20 years,” Jones explained. “We talk all the time about my goals.”

Georgia’s three YCA locations have graduated more than 16,000 cadets. Of those graduates, 42 percent went on to educational institutions including liberal arts college, technical college or, for cadets who entered as high school juniors at risk of dropping out, back to high school. Forty-five percent of cadets ultimately gained steady employment outside of the military and eight percent went on to join the Armed Forces. While the program hopes to increase the number of graduates joining the military, its leaders note that is not the core mission of the academies.

“We don’t want to be seen as a recruiting tool for the military – that is not what we do,” COL Steinbrecher explained. “We are trying to raise that number, because there are a lot of benefits for these at-risk kids who go into the military. They continue on in the military environment and that military environment is what we have found is the key to [their] success.”

Folsom-Kuster attributes the program’s 25 years of long-term success to the military environment and the dedication of the staff and instructors to the program’s core mission.

“The staff members that operate the program at the State level are truly gifted,” she said. “We have active and

retired military, former legislators and remarkable educators, so there is a lot of experience and wisdom. Many of our staff members view it as a calling and not a job. They believe in the program and what we’re doing.”

Soldiers can partner with their State’s Youth ChalleNGe program by volunteering to serve as a mentor to a cadet during the non-residential phase of the program. They

can also serve as role models by sharing their stories and setting an example for the cadets who are staying on-post during the program’s in-residence phase.

“It’s always a positive experience for cadets to have a role model to look up to when they are out doing their physical training every morning,” said Folsom-

Kuster. “Guard Soldiers make up the communities that we live in and come from all walks of life. Just sharing their career experiences with cadets opens their mind to opportunities they didn’t know existed otherwise.”

For more information on the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program, including a listing of YCA locations, Soldiers can go to JointServicesSupport.org/ngycp. ●



1998 Georgia National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Academy graduate Churisse Jones poses with her former Youth ChalleNGe Academy mentor and cadre advisor, retired Georgia Army National Guard SFC Annie Powell during the Fort Stewart Youth ChalleNGe Academy 25th Anniversary Celebration and All Class Reunion. Georgia Army National Guard photo by SSG R.J. Lannom Jr.

“YCA taught me that to be successful, you must have [high] character. If you have poor character, you will fail.”

— Churisse Jones



State Teen Panels

Inspire Community Activity and Involvement

BY STAFF WRITER David Majors

Teenagers get criticized a lot. They are sometimes described as being self-focused – obsessed with their phones and status on social media. They are accused of being removed, relying too heavily on technology instead of getting out and connecting with the world in person. But many of today's young people prove these generalizations to be inaccurate. For example, National Guard teens who serve as members of a National Guard State Teen Panel.

As part of a State Teen Panel, teenaged children of National Guard Service Members not only make connections with one another, but also with their community at large. A component of the National Guard Family Program and the National Guard Child and Youth Services, State Teen Panels are designed to connect, support and inspire National Guard youth at the local level. Participating teens form a delegation to discuss issues and concerns faced by Guard youth today. The panels also participate in community outreach and volunteer events, plus provide feedback to National Guard leadership on many teen-oriented programs offered within the Guard. These teens work together, learning valuable life skills while contributing to their community.

Each school year, the National Guard Teen Panel – made up of teen representatives from the State panels – establishes an overall activity theme. Based on the national theme, the State panels build their Guard community and community-at-large service projects.

The long-term skills gained by teens who participate in the National Guard Teen Panels will not only help them as they navigate their teen years as part of a military family, but also as they navigate through adulthood.

Most importantly, teens who participate in service organizations, such as the State Teen Panel, learn that, despite the sometimes-negative view of their generation, they have a valuable perspective and an important voice, and that when people of any age come together to do good, they can make a difference.

Below is just a sampling of the efforts completed by National Guard State Teen Panels.

- The **Kansas National Guard Teen Panel** spent a morning helping harvesters in Topeka fill more than 5,000 bags of produce.
- Members of the **Massachusetts National Guard Teen Panel** created a college preparedness seminar guide. Different from traditional college fairs, the guide offered tips on how National Guard youth throughout their State could hold informational events discussing opportunities and funding available to National Guard Youth.
- The **Minnesota National Guard Teen Panel** constructed toy boxes to be sold or given away by Habitat for Humanity.
- **New York National Guard Teen Panel** members held an outreach program directed toward high school guidance counselors, providing them with information on the National Guard and the Teen Panel program.
- The **Wisconsin Army National Guard Teen Panel**, together with Teen Panels in 19 other States, test piloted a program to help teens build resiliency by participating in workshops focused on life skills such as self-awareness, critical thinking and relationship building.

To be considered for membership on a National Guard Teen Panel, teens must be National Guard dependents age 13–17, meet academic requirements and complete an application that includes an essay, a letter of recommendation and a description of previous involvement in voluntary and community activities. For more information, contact your State's Child and Youth Services Program Coordinator. A listing of State coordinators can be found at JointServicesSupport.org/spn. ●



Oregon National Guard Teen Panel members (left to right) Caitlin Conn, Oscar Nguyen, Tori Shine and Avery Sullivan receive instruction from Boys and Girls Aid employee Irena Broadwater (far left) as they participate in a community service project to help the workers of Boys and Girls Aid prepare for an upcoming relocation.

Oregon National Guard photo by SSG Paul Rushing



New York Army National Guard SPC Adam Proctor, assigned to Echo Company, 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Regiment, instructs Soldiers on the proper technique to empty an M240 helicopter's brass bag during the unit's yearly live fire door gunner qualification exercise.

New York Air Assault Crew Impresses at Fort Drum

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak
New York Army National Guard photos by SPC Andrew Valenza

The Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Regiment (Assault Helicopter), based out of Long Island, New York, recently made the trek up to Fort Drum in northern New York State for their yearly live fire door gunner qualification exercise.

Door Gunnery is an essential skill for members of an air assault unit. It is also a skill on which Guard Soldiers do not often have the opportunity to train – making annual training like this one crucial to the overall readiness of the unit.

"It keeps them proficient in case they have to deploy," said 3-142nd Executive Officer MAJ Eric Fritz. "If they deploy to a combat environment and need to engage the enemy, to protect the troops onboard

or onboard other [U.S. or allied] aircraft, they will be ready to do so."

The Soldiers made each round count during their time at Fort Drum this past June. Most hailed the training a success and said they gave the targets on Range 48 a good workout.

"I think the training was amazing," said SGT William Flaherty, a door gunner/crew chief with the 3-142nd and a member of the New York Guard for the past 13 years. "We have a great training NCO that made the training very realistic. Plus, how the pilots and the crew chiefs worked together made it very good."

MAJ Fritz concurred with SGT Flaherty's assessment and said he felt the overall training goal was met. He had spent the months leading up to the exercise

planning and organizing the event, and said it was most rewarding to hear the feedback that Soldiers thought it all went well. Some went as far as to describe it as "excellent," MAJ Fritz noted.

Fort Drum has been a major Army facility since the turn of the last century. Established in 1907 as Pine Plains Training Area and then expanded and renamed Fort Drum in 1951, the Fort Drum training complex boasts nearly 96,000 acres – or 150 square miles – of training space. It offers nine different virtual/simulation training facilities and 30 ranges, including drop zones, an air gunnery range, an indoor range, a military operations in urban terrain facility, cultural awareness sites and a convoy live fire lane.

Range 48, the air gunnery range



[Enlisted], NCOs and officers – they were able to execute the plan, adapt to any changing conditions, train everyone and get back to base.”

Two separate crews would take two separate UH-60 Black Hawks out on the range at a time. Those two aircraft would fly out and complete their tables. Once they were done, they would fly back, land and the next two aircraft would traverse the course. In all, each crew required about an hour to complete all tables.

Crews were made up of six Soldiers – a door gunner/crew chief on each side of the aircraft, two pilots and two flight instructors. The flight instructors were there to observe and evaluate the gunners’ performance.

where the 3-142nd trained, was said to be superior to some ranges the unit had trained on in the past.

“I believe Fort Drum has one of the better ranges,” said CW2 Aaron Chiu, a UH-60 pilot for the 3-142nd. “I’ve been to some ranges where there really is no flying [space] other than hovering and moving side to side. This one has different terrain that you fly through and there’s actually a little course that you fly through.”

Preparation for training started a year out and required planning on multiple fronts. The advance reservation of ranges and forecasting for funding and ammunition requests was one front. Assembling the convoy that would drive the nearly 400 miles from Long Island to Fort Drum was another front. Planning the logistics involved with the six UH-60 Black Hawks the unit flew up for the training – and arranging the hot refueling operations that would be needed along the way – was yet another front.

Timing everything and then executing in unforeseeable weather was also a challenge. Considering these elements were just the tasks required to get the unit on post, describing the planning for the entire training exercise as a major undertaking would be a major understatement.

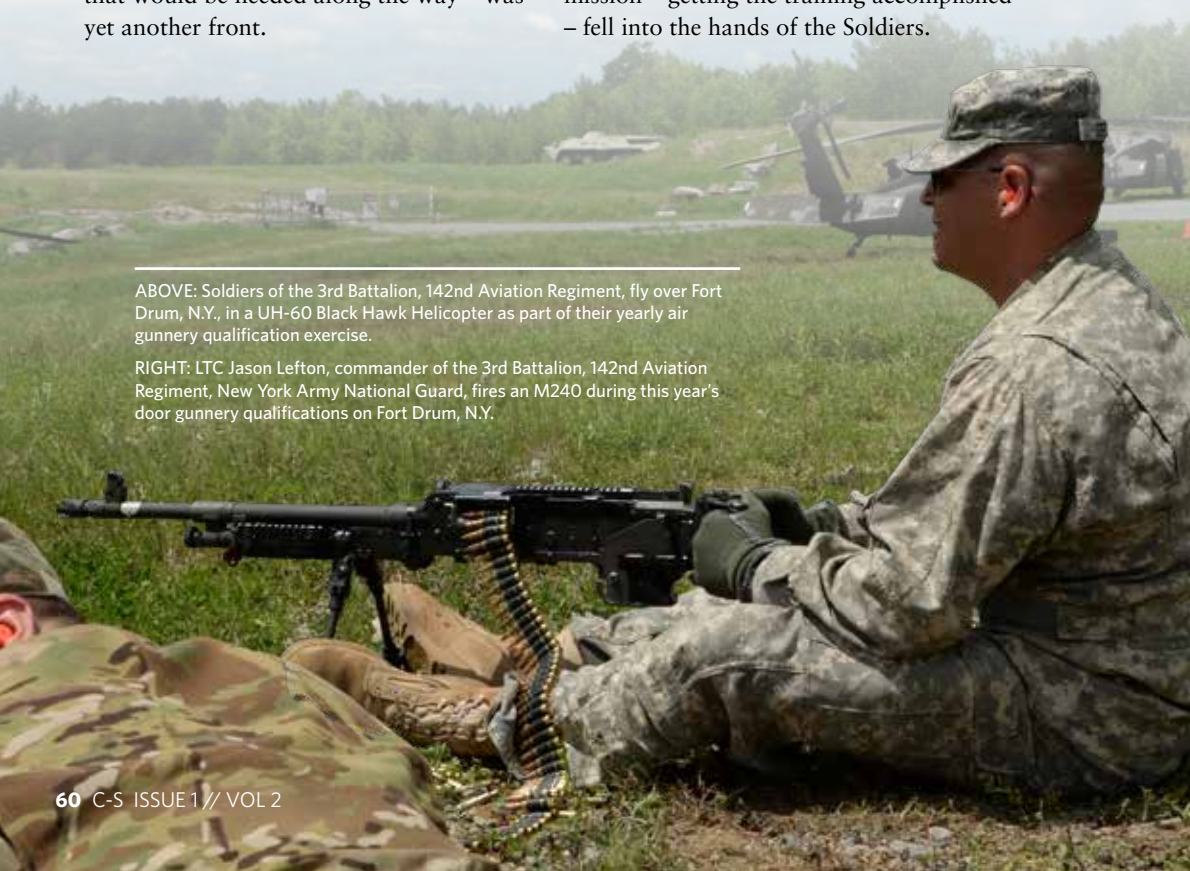
Sixty-five Soldiers from the unit’s Bravo and Alpha companies participated in the exercise. After completing a qualification course at Fort Drum to use the air assault range, the Soldiers spent the rest of their time on the range honing the basic warrior skills they would later showcase at their upcoming National Training Center annual certification at Fort Irwin, California.

While it was MAJ Fritz who was responsible for much of the exercise’s preparation, it was up to the Soldiers to accomplish the mission, MAJ Fritz said.

“They executed it flawlessly,” he remarked. “The overall success of this mission – getting the training accomplished – fell into the hands of the Soldiers.

ABOVE: Soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Regiment, fly over Fort Drum, N.Y., in a UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopter as part of their yearly air gunnery qualification exercise.

RIGHT: LTC Jason Lefton, commander of the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Regiment, New York Army National Guard, fires an M240 during this year’s door gunnery qualifications on Fort Drum, N.Y.



“It took about two days for the company to knock everything out,” CW2 Chiu commented. “We did up to 9 tables.”

The Soldiers were also monitored by electronic sensors. Sensors in the targets measured the number of rounds that hit each target, the number missed and number of near-misses. That information was transmitted back to computers in the range tower and was reviewed by an instructor who would grade Soldier performance.

The door gunners fired at tanks, trucks and other targets with an M240H machine gun, using multiple grips to demonstrate competence for multiple combat scenarios.

“We shoot an M240Hotel,” CW2 Chiu said. “It has a butterfly trigger and a pistol trigger. You can swap it back

“Air assault is pretty versatile and a UH-60 Black Hawk is pretty versatile. You do a lot of different things, from air assault missions to moving cargo.”

— CW2 Aaron Chiu

and forth depending on if you need it on the ground or in the air.”

There were two iterations of the training – live fire during daylight and night fire using night vision goggles. Night fire often carries its own set of challenges that stem from an obvious fact – it takes place in the dark. While the Soldiers are wearing night vision goggles, it can be harder to fix jams or reload weapons as depth perception is low and identifying objects without a flashlight is difficult.

“Night vision is always the harder mode of flight,” SGT Flaherty said. “You’re restricted to only what your goggles can see. It’s definitely harder, but it’s a little bit more of an adrenaline rush. It’s a lot less forgiving. The only thing that does help at night with night vision goggles is the tracer rounds. It is a little easier to see where your round is going.”

New York Army National Guard SPC Mirza Dizinic (left) and SGT Ryan Couture, both assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Regiment, mount an M240 to a UH-60 Black Hawk during live fire gunnery qualifications this past June on Fort Drum, N.Y.





A Soldier of the 142nd Aviation Regiment fires an M240 from a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during air gunnery qualification this past June.

CW2 Chiu said the exercise also provided ample challenges for the pilots. He explained what he found to be the most trying test of his abilities.

“From a pilot’s perspective, it was setting up the door gunner to maximize effectiveness against the target,” he said. “That was probably the more challenging thing, other than flying straight and level. We might have to put the aircraft out of trim to allow the gunner to engage the target for a long period of time.”

Overall, CW2 Chiu said he was very impressed with the training. As a former crew chief he has a unique perspective on the mission. The 17-year Army National Guard member could appreciate what it takes to complete the tasks happening on both ends of the aircraft.

“I think it’s great training,” he said. “I was a crew chief for about 12 years. It’s the transition between the back and the front. Now as a pilot, I have a better understanding of what a crew chief wants us in the front to give them [in terms of] a better angle to set them up to put more rounds on the target.”

By the end of their door gunnery training, the 3-142nd had expended quite a bit of ordnance: 113,000 7.62 mm rounds, 65 smoke grenades, 20 artillery simulators and 55 star clusters.

In his civilian life, SGT Flaherty is a New York City police officer and CW2 Chiu works full time in the Guard as a Black Hawk test pilot. Both Soldiers noted the value they saw in the overall training and the pride they felt being part of an Army National Guard Air Assault Battalion.

“Air assault is pretty versatile and a UH-60 Black Hawk is pretty versatile,” CW2 Chiu said. “You do a lot of different things, from air assault missions to moving cargo.”

“I personally love being in the Guard,” SGT Flaherty said. “You could be in your own neighborhood helping the same people that you live with, but you could also be overseas protecting the country.

That’s my biggest thing. That’s why I love doing it.” ●



PFC Arthur Allen puts on his flight helmet while participating in the 142nd Aviation Regiment’s air gunnery qualifications on Fort Drum, N.Y.



SHADOW WARRIOR LEADS THE WAY AT CYBER SHIELD 18

BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER SSG Chad Menegay

A shadow warrior's face, lit by liquid-crystal displays (LCDs) with light-emitting diodes (LEDs) backlighting, remains inscrutable to the public eye.

Unknown, unsung, he targets the enemy (hostile adversaries) via integrated and synchronized cyberspace operations – the fifth dimension of warfare.

He works on a handful of computers simultaneously, conducting cyber opposing force support, network warfare activities and cyberspace intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. He provides mission command to network warfare teams, cyber analysis teams and cyber support teams, offering operational direction and guidance in the conduct of cyberspace operations.

He is SPC David Igou, an information technology specialist for the 144th Cyber Warfare Company, which falls under the 91st Cyber Brigade – the first brigade level cyber unit in the Army National Guard. He is a self-proclaimed typical nerd and exactly the type of Soldier the Army needs to carry out the fight on the cyber warfront.

He stands about 6 feet, weighs about 180 pounds, with dark hair, thick eyebrows and freckles.

“His eyes shift around as he's talking,” said SFC Jeff Pullen, SPC Igou's platoon sergeant and co-worker. “Like any good Linux guy, he's got his quirks.”

SPC Igou is currently an infrastructure consultant at Red Hat, a software development company based out of Raleigh, North Carolina.

SFC Pullen helped him land the job.

“I ended up referring him to my company, Red Hat, because he's a smart guy,” SFC Pullen said. “He was hired, not so much because of my referral, but because of his own credentials. He showed a lot of talent with development and Linux systems, which in this field not a lot of guys have, so he kind of stood out.”

SPC Igou has worked in the industry for 10 years.

In eighth grade, SPC Igou built his own computer lab, setting up servers, just because he enjoyed it.

“It was the only thing I could do well,” SPC Igou said.

One of the things SPC Igou has done well for the 144th is build a lab – a virtualization platform for the unit that serves as a structure for building servers and virtual ranges.

“We've practiced on it to get ready for Cyber Shield 18,” SFC Pullen said. “He built an environment with lots of different servers using old hardware we had lying around and recommissioned it back into something working. He worked after regular drill hours late into the night putting it together.”

It's that kind of selfless service, in putting the unit's needs first, that sets SPC Igou apart, SFC Pullen said.

“I was able to use a piece of technology from my civilian job, apply those skills for my unit, and give my unit a leg-up on training,” SPC Igou said.

SPC David Igou, an information technology specialist for the 144th Cyber Warfare Company, works to infiltrate and disrupt networks run by notional enemies during a training scenario as part of Cyber Shield 18 at Camp Atterbury, Ind.

Ohio Army National Guard photo by SSG Chad Menegay

Of course, he hasn't always been leading training activities; he's long been a student of his craft. Computer classes became his forte in high school, and he carried that on to a computer science degree from Virginia Commonwealth University.

SPC Igou decided to join the military while in college.

What he loved about basic training was that it was "hard-coded" and "static," he said.

"You didn't have to worry about what might happen; it was all laid out for you," SPC Igou said.

Things are not always so easily laid out in information technology.

"Technically, there's something people talk about in IT called idiot syndrome, where because technology is so wild and emerging every day, that you're going to see something that you've never seen before," SPC Igou said. "It's always really painful right when you first see it because you're like, 'Oh, crap, I don't know any of this.' So, there's always a

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”

– SPC David Igou

moment – and everyone in IT has it – when you just doubt your entire career. IT can be overwhelming.”

SPC Igou, a humble, sometimes self-deprecating IT authority, claims he has this moment often.

“My company will fly me across the country to go to this customer's site, be this resident expert on a piece of technology, and help them integrate it into their infrastructure,” SPC Igou said. “There's always a time when I think, ‘I cannot believe that there are enough people in this world that have enough faith in me that I can do this.’”

It's not only in the private sector, though, that SPC Igou engenders such faith.

“He's one of those dependable guys I can go to with technical tasks,” SFC Pullen said. “He'll figure it out whether or not he knows it.”

This faith in his ability runs to the top of his unit's chain of command.

“He's the example of what the Army National Guard brings to the Cyber fight because he's an E-4, [holds] a bachelor's degree in computer science, and there's a lot he brings to the 144th from that perspective,” said CPT Anthony Stephens, commander of the 144th.



Soldiers and Airmen from around the country monitor network traffic for fictional malicious intrusion during Cyber Shield 18.

Ohio Army National Guard photo by SSG Michael Carden



SGT Kyle Plumley, an intel analyst for Joint Force Headquarters, Ohio Army National Guard, monitors for internal network threats as part of a training scenario during Cyber Shield 18.

Ohio Army National Guard photo by SSG Chad Menegay

SPC Igou's expertise is highly useful, in part, because his unit was just recently established as a cyber warfare unit and, in part, because his unit is the first cyber warfare unit in the country. Everything the unit does is groundbreaking.

At Cyber Shield 18, the 144th and SPC Igou are acting as the opposing force (OPFOR) and engaging in criminal activity, trying to disrupt the infrastructure of Blue Cell.

Cyber Shield is designed to train National Guard members from across the United States on cyber protection; network defense; forensic analysis; tactics, techniques and procedures; and defense against cyberattacks, hackers or other malign actors. The exercise is a culminating training event that supports the National Guard's defensive cyberspace operations missions to defend Department of Defense assets by conducting cyber command readiness inspections and critical infrastructure vulnerability assessments.

"Igou has taught the whole OPFOR how to use some of the tools and develop tactics that we've used here," CPT Stephens said.

Members of the 144th have not worked as Red Team before, so while all the tools and tactics might not be entirely new, the way they've been used here at Cyber Shield 18 has been new.

"We're trying to challenge ourselves because we're the first to do it [to stand up as a Cyber Warfare Company]," SPC Igou said.

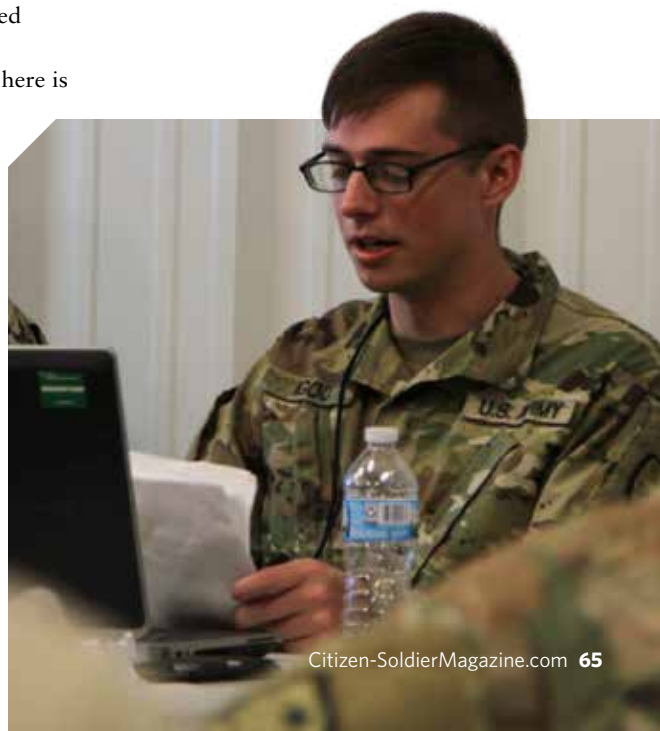
The 144th is part of an effort to prevent a cyber 9/11 in the United States, SPC Igou explained.

SPC Igou's Cyber Warfare Company has Soldiers with varied skill sets and backgrounds – a team of specialized shadow warriors.

"My biggest skill set that I use here is probably IT infrastructure," SPC Igou said. "In Cyber Warfare, reconnaissance for me is a lot easier and faster because I can kind of fill in a lot of blanks right off the bat ... I think, 'I've seen this at work.' The role reservists in Cyber Warfare really play is, say, a private company or private utilities' provider is

attacked by an adversary, and they call in the National Guard. People in the National Guard do this 28 days a month, whereas an active component probably wouldn't have as much diversity in experience. Every day of the week when I'm not in this uniform, I'm in real companies and infrastructures that are candidates for attack.

"It's like if you want to break into a building, and you want to plan that attack – find somebody who builds secure buildings for a living," SPC Igou said. ●



SPC David Igou explains the techniques he used to infiltrate fictional enemy networks as part of the Cyber Shield 18 training event.

Ohio Army National Guard photo by SSG Chad Menegay

DEDICATION EQUALS INSPIRATION

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

SPC Cole LaRocque first dove into the realm of art as a child, when he would sit and draw pictures of planes. Now, as an Avenger crewmember for the North Dakota Army National Guard, SPC LaRocque's life imitates his childhood art.

"I began drawing by tracing jet aircraft," he explained. "Now, I look at jets to identify them [for the Army]."

Even before becoming a teenager, SPC LaRocque recognized his growing passion for art and became dedicated to perfecting his craft. Starting with drawing and eventually transitioning to painting, he spent years developing himself as an artist.

"I've always had an interest in making art," said SPC LaRocque. "When I was very young, I could draw fairly well representationally [a form of art where the artist depicts objects, figures or scenes as seen by the naked eye]. It all started with drawing, and I slowly got better. I really immersed myself and took a greater interest in art when I was in high school."

It was in high school

when SPC LaRocque encountered an inspirational teacher, and eventually mentor, who introduced him to watercolors.

"It was love at first sight when it came to watercolors," he said. "I felt an

"My combat experiences and proximity to death have had a huge impact on my art. I could have been killed, so that made me think of how precious and temporary life is."

SPC Cole LaRocque

immediate connection to the material. It resonated with me."

Watercolors is a form of painting that uses the technique of mixing paint with water to produce paler colors – resulting in a different effect than lightening colors by

adding white paint. It is a very demanding style of art, where the thinner paint can reveal even the smallest error made on the canvas. In this form, white paint is not used at all; rather, the whites in the image are the canvas itself. Consequently, once a mistake is made, there is no removing it. SFC LaRocque said the thrill of the immediacy of watercolors is what attracted him to the art form.

"There is a certain liveliness to it that I enjoy," he explained. "I really enjoy how I can add several different layers of color to a piece at once. I do enjoy working with other media, but I work mostly with watercolor."

"Sometimes I add markers or other nontraditional media into the mix just to try something new. There is no set rule that I must work with watercolor or oil or graphite. Some rules are there, but I think rules are meant to be broken when it comes to art."

While studying art at North Dakota State University, SPC LaRocque had the opportunity to study overseas.

"Seeing some of the ancient Roman ruins and Tuscan ruins in Italy really etched into my heart my interest in art," he said.

SPC LaRocque, a member of the North Dakota Army National Guard's 1st battalion, 188th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, first joined the Guard in 2002. He joined seeking an adventure that would open him to new experiences.

"When I first [joined], my favorite aspect was having the thrill of something

SPC Cole LaRocque (left) of the 1st Battalion, 188th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, North Dakota National Guard, shakes hands with CCM Paula Johnson while serving on a 12-hour shift during a flood levee patrol after massive flooding hits Pembina, N.D., in 2011.

North Dakota National Guard photo by SMSgt David Lipp

new and seeing a different part of the world,” noted SPC LaRocque. “I wanted to go to Afghanistan and I was interested in what that experience was about. Needless to say, it was bittersweet.”

SPC LaRocque’s experiences in the Army National Guard are now significant motivators for his art. He has created numerous works based on the people and places he has encountered during his service. His paintings are now largely inspired by his overseas deployment to Afghanistan – more specifically by the multiple improvised explosive device (IED) attacks he encountered while there. He said one of his favorite pieces was inspired by an IED attack he experienced in 2006.

“Our truck ran over a pressure plate mine,” SPC LaRocque recalled. “It blew the left front half of our truck off – and I was the gunner.”

Flooded with a whirlwind of emotions after the explosion, SPC LaRocque used his art as a means of processing the event.

“[The painting] wasn’t an exact representation of what happened, but more of an emotional interpretation,” he explained. “I had feelings of intense rage. I didn’t know if I’d be alive in the next moment. Having that mystery and feeling of the unknown was very invigorating.”

SPC LaRocque went on to explain how translating his emotions through his artwork is an important, yet challenging, aspect of his work.

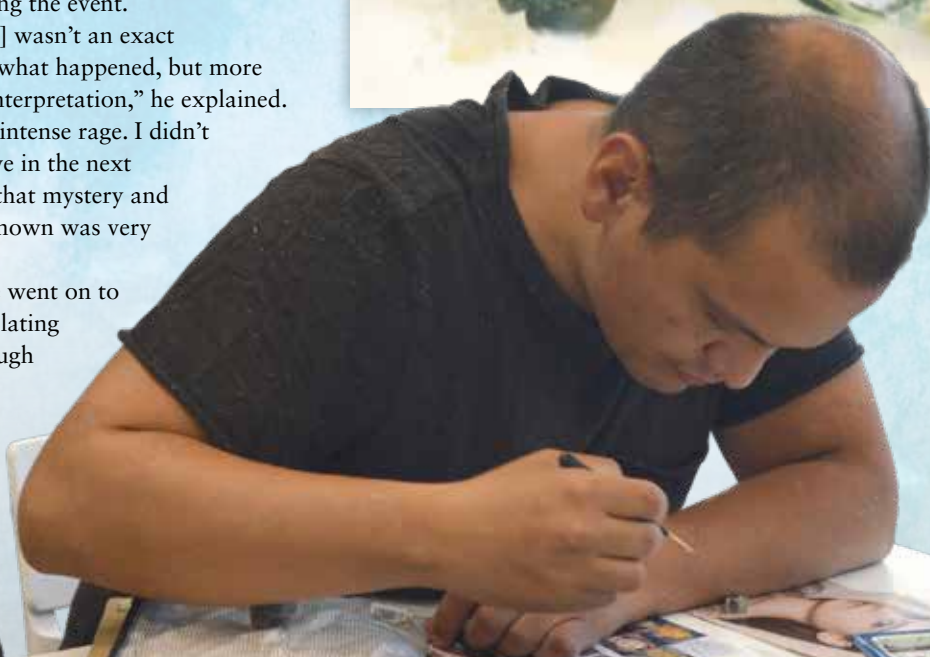


LEFT: Image of the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV), on which SPC Cole LaRocque was the gunner, after it was destroyed by an improvised explosive device (IED) in Afghanistan, 2006.

Photo courtesy SPC Cole LaRocque

BELOW: SPC Cole LaRocque paintings inspired by his experiences during deployment in Afghanistan.

Images courtesy SPC Cole LaRocque and Ecce Gallery



SPC Cole LaRocque at work on a large watercolor featuring over 1,000 faces.

Photo courtesy SPC Cole LaRocque

“Sometimes having that translation presents difficulty,” SPC LaRocque said. “Art requires a certain degree of emotional honesty, as well as skill. You can tell if something is [genuine] or not. When I’m not being honest to myself or my ideas, I feel like there is something missing.”

Over the past decade, it has become more common for Soldiers to use art as a way to process their experiences after returning from combat. Today, art therapy

program based on using art therapy to help heal the emotional wounds of combat. The initiative, called Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network, connects Soldiers, Veterans and their Family members with therapeutic art activities that are available in the service members’ local communities. These art therapy programs have been proven to lead to marked improvements in post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, anxiety and other invisible wounds.

Since SPC LaRocque’s relationship with art began before he joined the Guard, his military experiences have only heightened his artistic expression. His time in the Guard has also inspired him to study a new field of art – religious art. SPC LaRocque has recently employed this new artistic style to create works that reflect his spirituality.

“My combat experiences and proximity to death have had a huge impact on my art,” explained SPC LaRocque. “I could have been killed, so that made me think of how precious and temporary life is. In all of these [experiences], no matter how bitter they are, there’s a silver lining in that it refocuses your attention on what is important.”

SPC LaRocque is currently working on a painting inspired by his newfound

perspective of life.

“The [piece] I’m working on now has more than 1,000 faces,” he said. “It requires skill and craftsmanship to be able to draw and then paint those faces. It can be challenging. My concern is showing something that speaks truth.”

His current artistic endeavor incorporates the detailed faces of celebrities, SPC LaRocque’s Family and fellow National Guard Soldiers with whom he has served.

“I’ve tried to make sense of the human condition,” SPC LaRocque explained. “It gave me the idea to paint people from all walks of life. I want to pay attention to the detail and subtlety of every face.”

In addition to acting as an inspiration to his artwork, SPC LaRocque commented that his Army National Guard Family has been an essential support system in his life.

“Through several trying times in my life, the National Guard has reached out and helped me. The people in my unit have been there for me – that’s one of the reasons I’m in the Guard,” he reflected.

SPC LaRocque’s artwork can be seen at Ecce Art Gallery in Fargo, North Dakota. While he does sell his art, he emphasized that his motives for producing art are not monetary.

He said, “The reason I make art is to [help] heal people.” ●



RIGHT: SPC Cole LaRocque painting, entitled “Moqur”, depicts a scene from his time deployed in Afghanistan.

ABOVE: SPC Cole LaRocque original watercolor, entitled “Maya.”

Images courtesy SPC Cole LaRocque and Ecce Gallery

is widely seen as a viable alternative for Soldiers who do not benefit from traditional therapy. Always in search of new ways to support Soldiers and Veterans, the Department of Defense, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), developed a unique



Cole LaRocque’s latest piece, still in progress.

Image courtesy SPC Cole LaRocque



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Colorado National Guard Soldiers participate with soldiers of the Jordanian Armed Forces in a chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) defense exercise during a State Partnership Program exchange.

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

How to Counter

MASS DESTRUCTION:

Colorado National Guard Partnership Enhances Jordanian Security

BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER Lt Col Elena O'Bryan

The Jordan News Agency (Petra) reported in early June that Jordan's Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Lt. Gen. Mahmoud Freihat, said to officers of the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF): "We have to realize that our country is targeted, and therefore, we are required to deny those willing to tamper with Jordan's security and stability."

Jordan's security depends heavily on its capacity to prevent the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and related materials across its borders and to counter such threats from within.

Now eight Colorado Army National Guard Soldiers have received top Department of Defense awards for exceptionally meritorious achievement as members of a Mobile Training

Team (MTT) for the Jordan Analytical Laboratory System, which enhanced Jordan's preparedness to counter the WMD threat.

"This has been by far the most important mission of my military career," Colorado Army National Guard SFC Stephen Russ said. "The lessons I have learned will stay with me for the rest of my life."

The mission came into being when the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) partnered with Jordan to increase its preparedness for mass casualty-causing incidents as part of the U.S.-Jordan Countering WMD, Building Partner Capacity Program. Through the program, the JAF received multiple decontamination systems.

The equipment's arrival in Jordan was only the beginning. DTRA needed experienced operators to help train Jordanian personnel – operators like SFC Russ, who for six years had been working as an Active Guard Reserve (AGR) member at the Colorado National Guard's 8th Civil Support Team, Buckley Air Force Base, Aurora, Colorado.

"It's an enemy that you cannot see so you have to rely on your equipment that must be maintained properly, and you must know how to operate it," SFC Russ said.

In 2015, his leadership asked if he wanted to accompany



MAJ Vincent Cipriano to conduct an initial assessment of Jordan's WMD capabilities.

"I accepted the position immediately," SFC Russ said. He even resigned a coveted AGR position to go on active duty for Operational Support orders.

Though he had never before been to the Middle East, Jordan was not an unknown.

"The reason that this mission was so successful was that Jordan and Colorado were already partners," SFC Russ said.

Colorado and Jordan established a relationship in 2005 through the National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP), which supports geographic Combatant Commands by building long-term relationships, improving interoperability and enhancing military capabilities and the principles of responsible governance.

"Not only are Colorado and Jordan like family, we also have similar WMD defensive equipment," Colorado National Guard Director of the Joint Staff, Brig Gen Gregory White, said.

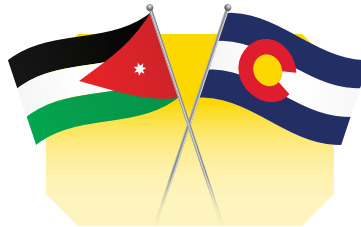
DTRA leveraged this longstanding relationship by initiating the Colorado National Guard military-civilian training in counter-WMD. Approximately every month for three fiscal years the Colorado National Guard team traveled to Jordan. SFC Russ became the non-commissioned officer in charge and lead instructor. Colorado National Guard COL Kelsey Marchalk later became the officer in charge after taking

a leave of absence from her civilian mechanical engineering job.

"We hand-picked everyone for the team," SFC Russ said. "This training was successful because of the amount of effort which the team put forward."

We bonded as a training team and that filtered to the Jordanians, so trust between all of us was built early on."

The MTT developed curriculum and conducted 22 courses, numerous complex scenarios, and a joint civilian and military exercise that trained more than 30 Jordanian students in Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) and high-yield explosives' response protocols, reconnaissance, sampling and rescue.



The instructors used professional Arabic translators and training materials printed in both English and Arabic. Discussions often became drawn out because word-for-word conversions do not exist between English and Arabic.

Such challenges aside, the MTT, together with the Jordanians, built an effective training program and a trained force, armed with a manual of standard operating procedures (SOP), and the ability to teach the skills described therein. To date, more than 750 Jordanians from four military and civilian units, including the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army Chemical Support Unit and the Jordanian Civil Defense Directorate, are proficient in mass casualty decontamination operations.

"They have an increased level of confidence in how to respond as an individual or as a team," COL Marchalk said. "This has been a strategic mission for the U.S. that ties into our own national security."

The training, led and funded by the DTRA, strengthened Jordan's counter-WMD capabilities and resulted in the completion and opening of Jordan's CBRN Center of Excellence at the JAF's chemical support unit.

"The support we have received from our American partners has been great," said JAF Lt. Col. Mirza Hatoqay, from the Arms Control branch. "DTRA and the Colorado National Guard have been very helpful in training with us on SOPs and how to sustain the training and equipment. We are grateful for that."

Ongoing SPP subject matter exchanges between Colorado and Jordan help sustain the program. Hundreds of new friendships also endure.

At the training's graduation ceremony in Jordan, SFC Russ said, in Arabic, to his students:

"To my brothers: My time with you has been extraordinary. I thank you for your brotherhood, love and respect. You will forever be my brothers." ●

FROM LEFT: Colorado National Guard Chief of the Joint Staff COL Scott M. Sherman talks with SGT Kordney Flournoy, SFC Seth Mager, COL Kelsey Marchalk, CPT Scott Snyder and SFC Stephen Russ, all members of the Colorado Army National Guard Mobile Training Team recognized for accomplishments in working with the Jordan Analytical Laboratory System.

Colorado Army National Guard photo by SSG Joseph K. VonNida



GETTING ON TRACK

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

Ohio Army Guard SGT Jonathan Weasner's Special Forces career was cut short by injury, but that has not kept this Soldier from excelling and meeting his new life goals.

Like many Soldiers, SGT Weasner has felt pain – physical pain from a serious injury and the emotional pain involved in learning to deal with the reality of the injury. SGT Weasner had been in the Ohio Army National Guard four years, serving as an 11Bravo training to be an engineer when he was injured at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, while completing the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC).

"I wish I could say it was one specific dramatic injury, but I think more or less it just happened over time and then it just gave out," he said. "I tore my labrum in my right hip. My ball joint was turned into an oval joint. I started losing the feeling in my back and in my legs."

SGT Weasner is now officially part of B Company, 219th Special Forces Group, Ohio Army National Guard, but was attached to the Warrior Transition Battalion (WTB) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, after his injury.

WTBs support wounded, ill and injured (WII) Soldiers, across all three Department of Defense (DoD) Components, as they rehabilitate from their medical conditions. WTBs have a mission to transition Soldiers, through a comprehensive treatment plan, either back into the force or into the community as productive

Veterans with dignity, respect and self-determination. WTBs offer a triad of squad leaders, case managers and primary care physicians who work together as part of an inter-disciplinary team that ensures advocacy for Soldiers and continuity of care.

"He's been doing extremely well as a Soldier," said LTC Shawn Butler, commander of the WTB at Fort Campbell. "He does a lot of handcycling and other activities of that nature. He is one of the [Soldiers] that sets the standard for others to follow."

For wounded Soldiers, using fitness training as part of the rehabilitation process – for both physical and mental healing – is not uncommon. This was the case with SGT Weasner.

"It's been up and down," he said. "I just take all of it and I throw it into what I do. I burn it out. That's my motivation. Every wheel I turn is just something I want to get rid of. It makes me happy at the end of the day."

It took time for SGT Weasner to find happiness after first arriving at Fort Campbell's WTB. He had just gone through major surgery, was in a wheelchair, and doctors had just told him that he may never run again. He loved to run, he said. He would ultimately be wheelchair-bound for months.

"Sitting around in a chair just isn't fun," he recalled. "I overheard a rumor that there's this thing that goes on –

ABOVE: SGT Jonathan Weasner competes in a handcycling track event during this year's Department of Defense Warrior Games held at the United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.

U.S. Army photo by SSG Carl Greenwell

Warrior Games. I was like, 'Alright, where do I sign up?'"

SGT Weasner said he has been around athletics his whole life and, before joining the Guard, was a high school track coach for six years. Still an athlete, SGT Weasner retains that same competitive drive. He just excels at different sports now.

"It definitely opened my eyes to [see] there are other avenues," SGT Weasner said. "You can race wheelchairs. You can race handcycles. You just do these modified sports and they are competitive. It might not be what everybody in the world knows, but there is a field out there – another community that likes guys like us."

SGT Weasner's former Special Forces Group supervisor and current-friend, retired MSG Ron Rinto, said he wasn't surprised when he heard his former Soldier was entering the Warrior Games, or even when he heard that SGT Weasner took home medals. He said to be considered for the Special Forces, a Soldier has to be in the top one percent of people in the U.S. military – physically, mentally and emotionally.

"He's a really good dude," Rinto said of his friend. "Most people tuck their tail between their legs and walk away [with such an injury] – not Jon. He's just one

It's been up and down...I just take all of it and I throw it into what I do. I burn it out. That's my motivation. Every wheel I turn is just something I want to get rid of. It makes me happy at the end of the day.

– SGT Jonathan Weasner

of those solid young men – one of those guys that's driven to be competitive and succeed. This is the kind of guy you want to have your back.”

The first DoD Warrior Games were held in 2010. They were created as a way to enhance the recovery and rehabilitation of WWII service members. Through the games, participants are exposed to adaptive sports. Adaptive sports and athletic reconditioning activities play a fundamental role in the successful recovery and reintegration of service members and Veterans.

Approximately 300 athletes participated in the 2018 competition. The events included archery, cycling, field (shot put and discus), indoor rowing, powerlifting, shooting, sitting volleyball, swimming, track and wheelchair basketball.

Once SGT Weasner had a new goal on which to focus, there was no stopping him. He pushed himself into training for the competition with a ferocious intensity.

Mondays and Wednesdays – his “light” days – he would cycle for an hour, usually between 7:00 and 8:00 in the morning. From there, it was to the track for wheelchair workouts. Later in the day, he would practice target shooting for an hour to an hour-and-a-half.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, he would practice outdoor handcycling – riding for about 27 miles, he said. That's an hour-and-a-half to two hours of riding. Weekend workouts depended on the weather. In good weather, he would cycle for a long ride. If the weather was bad, or he was hurting, he would take it easy on Friday and Saturday. Sundays were usually another cycling day.

He also had a

weightlifting regimen. On light days, he would spend three hours in the gym. On heavy days, he spent five to six hours.

He continues with this regimen, even today. His friends and colleagues continue to be impressed.

“[We] ride bicycles here [at the WTB] every couple of days and he comes out with us,” LTC Butler said. “It is impressive when we go out on a 30-mile ride and he's using a handcycle to complete that ride. He's very physically fit. I think it's outstanding.”

SGT Jonathan Weasner, a member of Team Army, competes in one of the Cycling Time Trials events at the 2018 Department of Defense Warrior Games in Colorado Springs, Colo.

U.S. Army photo by PFC Julie Driver



SGT Weasner has not let his limitations dictate what he can and can't do."

This past June, SGT Weasner made a stellar showing at the 2018 Warrior Games where he won six first place titles and placed in the top three in two other events. He also managed to set two new records while competing.

In track, under wheelchair racing classification 3.0, he won the 100-meter dash, the 200-meter dash – setting a Warrior Games record; the 400-meter dash, the 800-meter dash – setting another Warrior Games record; and the 1,500-meter race. In handcycling, under classification H5, he won first place in the time trials race and took second place in the road race. In the powerlifting 72K category, he took home the Bronze.

As with all athletes at multi-event competitions, not every event ended with SGT Weasner winning a medal. In the shooting competition, he made the semi-finals, but tied going into the final competition.

"My first shot, I ended up tying with a fellow," SGT Weasner explained. "We had a shoot-off. He shot better than me, so I got bumped out at eighth place. It's definitely a head game."

One of the wheelchair races also presented an unexpected twist. The sprint normally has a three-part command to start the race – "on your mark," "get set" and then the firing of the gun. However, in this particular race a new starting official emerged, and this official did not use the standard three-part command. Instead, he called "set" and then fired the pistol, SGT Weasner said.

"I was like, 'Wait a second, everyone else is racing,'" SGT Weasner recalled.

"Magically, I caught up to everyone and broke a record in the process. Though with some guys, you could not have overcome that [delay]."

Overall, SGT Weasner was pretty happy with his performance at the DoD Warrior Games. Though he expects to be leaving the Guard for civilian life, he said he is still pushing toward new goals. His next goal is to be accepted into the Invictus Games – which was started by Great Britain's Prince Harry – and perhaps gaining a designation as a Paralympian.

After his time in the WTB, this highly motivated Soldier gained yet another reward that was largely due to his commitment to training and the rehabilitative process. Within a year of his

injury and surgery, SGT Weasner is now walking again.

"I officially got out of my chair back in mid-November," SGT Weasner said. "Now I just use a cane whenever I'm carrying anything on my back or if I am having a bad day. If I'm having a good day, I can just walk."

Though SGT Weasner did not have the career he expected in the Army National Guard, he said he is grateful for his time in service.

"I'd say I tried everything I could," he said reflecting back over his tenure. "I wish I had not gotten injured. It's a 'shoulda-woulda-coulda' game. I met some really good guys and I stay in touch with them. I'm thankful for that. That's probably my take-away from it – the guys that I met and the comradery." ●



ABOVE: SGT Jonathan Weasner (center) holds the U.S. Army flag on the winner's platform with fellow Team Army athlete, SPC Brent Garlic (left) and Team Marine member GySgt Douglas Godfrey Jr., as they are presented with the gold, silver and bronze medals respectively for the Cycling time trials - Handcycle H5 - event at the 2018 Department of Defense Warrior Games.

U.S. Army photo by PFC Julie Driver

LEFT: SGT Jonathan Weasner competes in the shooting competition of the 2018 Department of Defense Warrior Games where he placed in the semifinals.

U.S. Army photo by SSG Kalie Frantz

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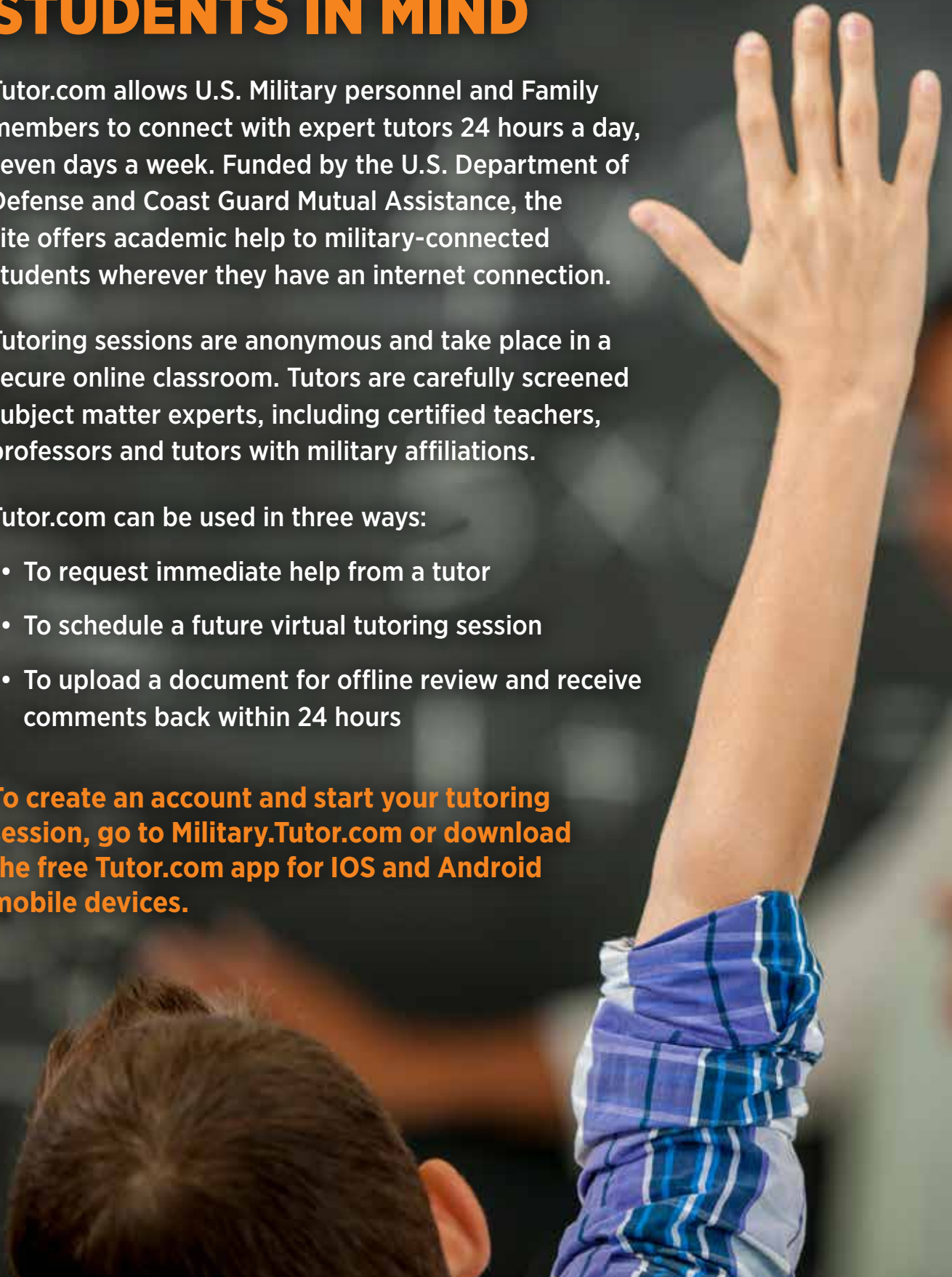
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PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Army National Guard

1LT Robert Angelini (right) from New Jersey's C Troop, 1st Squadron, 102nd Cavalry Regiment, points out enemy locations to fellow Soldiers during a training mission on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.

New Jersey National Guard photo by MSgt Matt Hecht





PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



A Soldier with the

79th Engineer Company (Firefighting), Massachusetts Army National Guard, uses a circular saw to cut through a car door during a training exercise at Tactical Training Base Kelley on Joint Base Cape Cod, Mass. The training required Soldiers to ascertain the best method to evacuate dummies from a vehicle that was flipped and burning in the night.

Massachusetts Army National Guard photo by PFC Sean Park





PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



SGT Jay Utter,

assigned to the Montana Army National Guard, fires an M136E1 AT4-CS confined light anti-armor weapon while competing in the National Guard Best Warrior Region VI 2018 competition at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, this past May. National Guard Best Warrior Region VI 2018 is a four-day competition that tests Soldiers' mental and physical toughness through a series of events designed to push technical and tactical proficiency. The region's top non-commissioned officer and junior enlisted Soldier are selected through the competition.

Alaska National Guard photo by
Alejandro Peña





PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



CW2 David Morton,

range operations manager at Camp Smith, assigned to the 42nd Infantry Division, New York Army National Guard, navigates the terrain of a mountainside using one of the newly updated rappel lanes at Camp Smith Training Site in Cortlandt Manor, N.Y.

New York Army National Guard
photo by SSG Michael Davis





PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



A launch and retrieve

team from the 132nd Multirole Bridge Company (MRBC), 579th Engineer Battalion, 49th Military Police Brigade, California Army National Guard, uses a steel guideline to move a ramp-and-bay over Cache Creek River in Cache Creek Regional Park, Yolo County, Calif. The platforms are part of a floating bridge constructed by the MRBC to help California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection vehicles and equipment cross the river to battle wildfires.

California Army National Guard
photo by SSG Eddie Siguenza





PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Soldiers from

Nebraska Army National Guard's Company B, 2-135th Aviation, practice sling load operations aboard a CH-47 Chinook helicopter at the Army Aviation Support Facility No. 2 in Grand Island, Neb. The exercise, done in preparation for the unit's annual training, offered Soldiers the opportunity to access the underbelly of the helicopters and familiarize themselves with sling load operations to include attaching procedures. These procedures would be widely used if ever deployed to active combat.

Nebraska Army National Guard
photo by SPC Chris Sheen





PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



SPC Jan Wolfisberg,

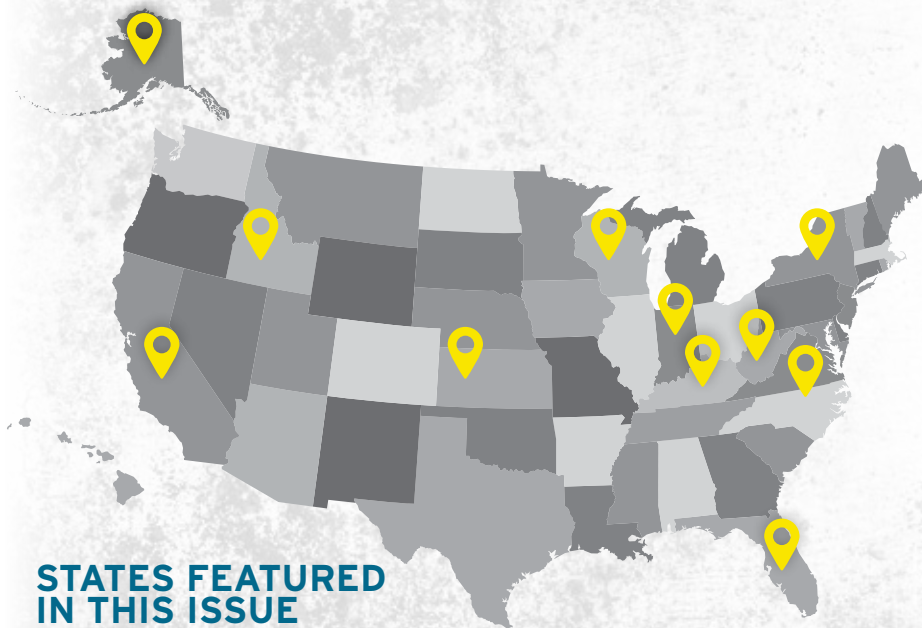
Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment, Washington Army National Guard, (right) and SGT Jordy Brewer, A Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment, Kentucky Army National Guard, exit Victory Pond at Fort Benning, Ga., during the Victory Pond swim event of the 2018 Best Ranger Competition. The David E. Grange Jr. Best Ranger Competition is an annual event in its 35th iteration to determine the top-performing, two-person Ranger team from units across the Army as well as sister Services.

U.S. Army photo by
Patrick A. Albright



Alaska Army National Guard SPC Dana Haddox and SPC Jahmoi Hodge, both members of the 297th Regional Support Group, evacuate a simulated casualty played by Navy PO3 John Bustamonte during Tactical Combat Casualty Care training at Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia, as part of Khaan Quest 2018.

Alaska Army National Guard photo by SGT David Bedard



STATES FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

- **ALASKA**
- **CALIFORNIA**
- **FLORIDA**
- **IDAHO**
- **INDIANA**
- **KANSAS**
- **KENTUCKY**
- **NEW YORK**
- **NORTH CAROLINA**
- **WEST VIRGINIA**
- **WISCONSIN**

ALASKA

BY SGT DAVID BEDARD,
ALASKA NATIONAL GUARD

Alaska Guard Soldiers Train in Mongolia to Save Lives

The typical adult human body contains five liters of blood. Responsible for transporting oxygen and nutrients to the cells and removing waste on its return trip through miles of arteries, veins and capillaries, blood is life.

Because of the heavy consequences of blood loss, SSG Stephen Behrens, a medical detachment training noncommissioned officer (NCO) for the Alaska Army National Guard, knows that stopping the

California National Guard Soldiers stationed at Camp Butmir, Bosnia and Herzegovina, brief Multi-National Battle Group - East Commander COL Nick Ducich on the job duties and assignments they carry out while overseeing Camp Butmir.

California Army National Guard photo by
CPT Jason Sweeney

bleeding is serious business – it's about saving service members' lives.

Ssg Behrens, other U.S. medical personnel and their Mongolian Armed Forces counterparts were instructors for the Tactical Combat Casualty Care session during Exercise Khaan Quest 2018, held this past June at Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia.

Khaan Quest, a multinational exercise co-sponsored by U.S. Pacific Command, is hosted annually by the Mongolian Armed Forces. This year's exercise marked the 16th anniversary of this training event.

U.S., Mongolian Armed Forces and 16 other nations participated in the Tactical Combat Casualty Care lane – one course in a round-robin training event that included sessions such as crowd control and convoy operations.

Ssg Behrens said medical personnel can't be everywhere, and it's often up to service members of every job description to stabilize a wounded comrade before they can be evacuated to medical care.

"Combat Casualty Care is the method we use to sustain life on the battlefield, then get them from the point of injury to [higher levels of] care," he said.

The MARCH algorithm, which stands for massive bleeding, airway control, respiratory support, circulation and hypothermia prevention, is essential to the training.

Ssg Behrens said the best way to stop arterial bleeding, signified by bright red blood, is to fit a tourniquet above the wound. In the training session, students practiced to fit the device – a simple nylon belt-like piece that compresses blood vessels to stop the bleeding – on partners.

2LT Sonya Hood, platoon leader for the 297th Regional Support Group contingent, winced when platoon member PFC Jessica Shields fit the officer with the tourniquet, cranking the pressure on 2LT Hood's femoral artery. Ssg Behrens said



Tactical Combat Casualty Care measures can be uncomfortable for patients, but they save lives.

"MARCH allows us to greatly increase the survivability of traumatic injuries, and it ultimately allows Soldiers to go home alive," Ssg Behrens said. ●

CALIFORNIA

BY CPT JASON SWEENEY,
CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD

California Soldiers Perform Diverse Roles at NATO – Sarajevo

COL Nick Ducich, commander of the California Army National Guard's 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), visited Camp Butmir in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina to meet with California Army National Guard Soldiers stationed there and for an office call with NATO Headquarters – Sarajevo Commander Brig Gen Robert Huston.

The 79th IBCT is the command element for Kosovo Force (KFOR) Multi-National Battle Group – East (MNBG-E). The Soldiers of the 79th IBCT are deployed to Kosovo on a nine-month peace and security mission. Each KFOR rotation provides Soldiers for NATO Headquarters – Sarajevo to oversee Camp Butmir, support the Bosnia and Herzegovina training mission, and provide essential services to the camp for the European Union Force (EUFOR) Althea peacekeeping element.

After a 90-minute helicopter flight from Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, COL Ducich sat down with California Guard Soldiers stationed at Camp Butmir to hear about their mission.

"In a roundtable conversation format, the Soldiers of the California National Guard were enthusiastic in describing their performance of their diverse assignments for NATO – Sarajevo and the Balkans Area Support Team," COL Ducich said. "Their commitment to the mission, the camaraderie among a small element, and their dedicated professionalism were my takeaways from the group discussion."

Six officers and noncommissioned officers assigned to the 79th IBCT are stationed at Camp Butmir. They handle such diverse functions as NATO Advisor

for Training and Standardization, logistical coordination with EUFOR, postal operations and administrative support for the headquarters.

“We are so far removed from the actual KFOR mission, the fact that COL Ducich came up here showed that we’re all working together – different pieces of the same Balkans’ mission. It was motivational,” said CPT Mike Scott, a California Army National Guard Soldier who serves as NATO Headquarters – Sarajevo joint logistics officer and liaison officer to EUFOR.

“At a professional level, being able to work with different nationalities and learn how they do their jobs has been a great experience,” CPT Scott said of his mission. “I’m a logistics officer, but I’ve never worked at this level – working with NATO at a strategic level in a multinational environment.”

CPT John Kuczmanski, a California Army National Guard member who serves as a NATO advisor for training and standardization, said, “We are helping the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina build up a capable army.”

CPT Kuczmanski added that he is the only American in the building where he works in downtown Sarajevo. He said he works alongside Hungarians, Austrians, Italians, Turks, Slovenians and Bosnians.

“We work with numerous nationalities,” he said. “It’s great meeting everyone from different cultures, especially when we Americans are such a small group here. It’s an interesting and dynamic work environment.”

SSG Rowena Becerra, a California Army National Guard Soldier who works as a NATO Headquarters – Sarajevo supply sergeant, said a highlight of her tour has been the opportunity to see the country on morale and welfare trips offered every weekend.

She has visited northern Bosnia, the military bunker of the late Josip Broz

Tito – the former communist President of Yugoslavia who died in 1980 – and she has skied at the site of the 1984 Sarajevo Winter Olympics.

“It’s a great country to visit with lots of history,” SSG Becerra said. “It’s green and beautiful – the rivers, the mountains. It’s a beautiful country.” ●

FLORIDA

BY CPT NATHAN DINGER,
FLORIDA NATIONAL GUARD

Florida Guard Fights Opioid Crisis on Many Fronts

As the opioid crisis rages throughout the nation, the Florida National Guard Counterdrug Program (FLNG-CDP) is leading the fight against the epidemic in communities across Florida.

One of the FLNG-CDP’s most effective weapons in combating this public health emergency is its Civil Operations Program (COP), a specialized group aimed at collaborating with local communities and

engaging citizens in strategic initiatives designed to reduce the threat.

The COP partners with prevention coalitions, law enforcement agencies, emergency services and treatment facilities throughout Florida. These localized partnerships provide a better understanding of the community’s substance use problem and facilitate the development of a more unified anti-drug approach.

As part of this effort, the COP has partnered with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and other partner agencies to plan and execute 16 “Prescription Drug Take Back” events since August 2017. The events have resulted in the collection of nearly 3,500 pounds of medications from the community. Some of the most notable drugs collected by the DEA include the highly addictive fentanyl, oxycodone and hydrocodone, all of which are opioids contributing to the national crisis.

Bridget Heenan, executive director of the PACT (Prevention, Advocacy, Choices, and Teamwork) Prevention Coalition of St. Johns County, said the “Take Back” events have created a positive impact on communities and the Florida National Guard’s support was critical to their success.



CPT Michael Coy with the Florida National Guard’s Counterdrug Program works with Orange Park Medical Center staff members during a “Take Back” event in Orange Park, Fla.

Image courtesy Florida National Guard

Two Idaho Army National Guard snipers with the 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team conduct reconnaissance standing back-to-back for a full circle view of the surrounding area during a specialized training held concurrent with the brigade's annual training at the Orchard Combat Training Center, Boise, Idaho.

Idaho National Guard photo by MSG Becky Vanshur



"In our county alone, we collected more than 943 pounds of prescription medication in four hours," she said.

The team also focuses on educating other organizations – like churches, schools and community centers – interested in participating in substance use prevention.

"The Civil Operations team partners with these organizations not only to educate them, but also to expand community outreach initiatives already being conducted within the community," said 2LT Gabrielle Magnanti, the COP South Florida lead.

One such initiative is "Night Vision," the COP's substance-use prevention briefing aimed at educating Florida's youth about the dangers of substance abuse. The briefing outlines the five gateway drugs (alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, synthetics and prescription medications) and discusses how the substances can lead to addiction.

During the 2017-2018 school year, the Night Vision anti-drug message reached more than 10,000 elementary, middle and high school students.

Nicole Stasky, a teacher at Pedro Menendez High School in St. Augustine, said the presentation made a significant impression on her students.

"It not only educated my students about the dangers of gateway drugs and addiction, but also touched them on a personal level," she said.

CPT Michael Coy, the COP North Florida lead, said programs aimed at helping young people are critical because they address the dangers of addiction before it can take hold.

"Through these programs, we hope to improve youth resiliency and empower them with the confidence to say no to drugs from the beginning," CPT Coy said. ●

IDAHO

BY MSG BECKY VANSBUR,
IDAHO NATIONAL GUARD

New Idaho Guard Sniper Platoon Continues Intense Training

Hidden beneath twigs and weeds, three snipers are flat on the ground, dirt and grime on their faces. It's a 90-degree day. A drip of

sweat rolls down into the lead sniper's eye, making it sting and smearing the camouflage paint.

All that can be seen in the bundles of cheat grass is a pair of steady, intense eyes. He does not blink and is completely silent and still. "I have eyes on the target," whispers SSG Matt Koerner, lead sniper section sergeant. "Calling it in."

The Idaho Army National Guard was recently tasked with forming a small sniper scout platoon, the first ever for the 2nd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team (CBCT).

"It's our very first sniper platoon for Idaho, and one of the challenges is finding qualified individuals," said MAJ Jason Gracida, 2nd Battalion, 116th CBCT commander. "Once we get them through sniper school, then they can come back and teach those younger future snipers."

The job of a sniper requires extensive training, intense attention to detail and complete discipline with stillness. The sniper risks exposure if he or she moves too quickly. If a bug crawls onto the sniper's face, he or she has to resist the urge to scratch as it tickles the skin.

The platoon, established one year ago, started with two previously qualified instructors. This year marks the platoon's first training in the field and coincides

with the 116th Brigade's two-week annual training at the Orchard Combat Training Center in Boise. The two qualified snipers have spent the past year training the new platoon.

"Our instructors have done a fantastic job training the platoon, putting them through the wringer," MAJ Gracida said. "Those two have worked tirelessly to get them ready for their first lane today. This is the first time they have ever actually employed sniper lanes, heading toward a certain area to begin their stalk."

Stalking is a stealthy, exceedingly slow crawl. The sniper uses an extreme amount of detailed focus to remain undercover and hidden. As they creep slowly, inch by inch, it can take up to two hours just to move 10 feet. Snipers wear a ghillie suit, which is a uniform sewn together with fabric resembling vegetation to blend in with their surroundings.

"It's called 'vegged up,'" SSG Koerner said. "We grab weeds and sticks from the environment, cut them and attach them to the ghillie suit."

Using high-powered optic binoculars and rifle scopes to scout the surrounding area, snipers

locate the high-value target and call the battalion commander to notify him that the target has been found. Then they wait for further instructions.

"The effective sniper team has to be able to move into an area, remain undetected and report enemy activity," SSG Koerner said. "Get in and get out, unseen." ●

INDIANA

BY SGT ALEJANDRO SMITH-ANTUNA,
INDIANA NATIONAL GUARD

Indiana Guard Soldiers Train for CBRN Attacks

In the age of unconventional warfare, the risk of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) attacks brings a greater need for a proactive approach. Weapons of this kind can be unseen killers.

In response to such threats, troops have many pieces of protective gear – masks, suits, gloves and boots – that must be worn and taken care of properly to


defend themselves.

"If you do not seal your suit properly, then you are dead. It sounds harsh, but that is the reality of this," said SPC Shantae Buchanan, an instructor with the Indiana Army National Guard's 438th Chemical Company. "People don't always take this training seriously because they've never had to deal with this stuff seriously. Being current with this training means ensuring your survival in the event of a nuclear or chemical incident."

To maintain currency, about 60 Soldiers from the Indiana Army National Guard participated in a three-day event in early April. The information they received and experience they gained will help them train others, which is crucial because one missed step in the preparation process can be devastating.

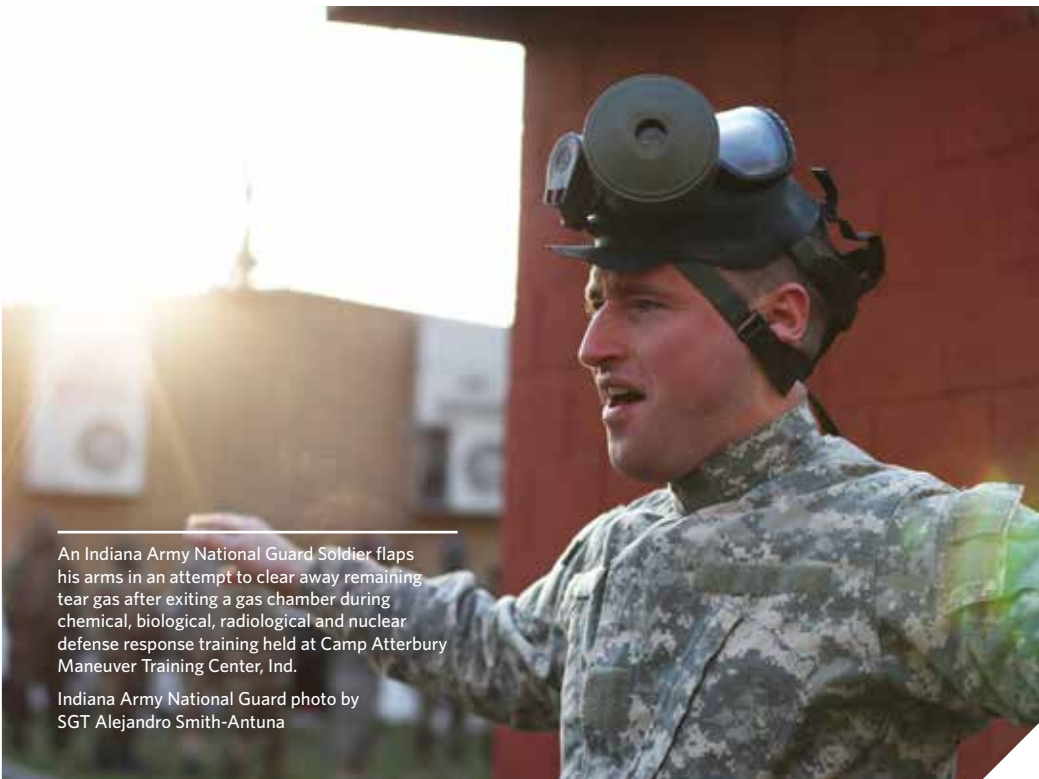
"Our state adjutant general realized that the need for CBRN training was severely lacking amongst our Guard [members]," said MAJ Ryan Core, the operations officer for Indiana's emergency response force package. "These skills are ones that are in the basic Warrior Task list that they learn, but soon forget from lack of use."

The training consisted of crawl-walk-run phases, separating training intensity as the days went on. The first day included briefs and equipment familiarization.



Indiana Army National Guard Soldiers review the different ampules on a M256 chemical agent detector kit during chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense response training held at Camp Atterbury Maneuver Training Center, Ind.

Indiana Army National Guard photo by
SGT Alejandro Smith-Antuna



An Indiana Army National Guard Soldier flaps his arms in an attempt to clear away remaining tear gas after exiting a gas chamber during chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense response training held at Camp Atterbury Maneuver Training Center, Ind.

Indiana Army National Guard photo by SGT Alejandro Smith-Antuna

KANSAS

BY SPC KRISTIN LICHIOUS,
KANSAS NATIONAL GUARD

Kansas Soldiers React to IEDs During Convoy Training

This past June, Soldiers of the Kansas Army National Guard's 137th Transportation Company participated in the Counter Improvised Explosive Device (CIED) training lane at Custer State Park in South Dakota.

Part of the Golden Coyote exercise, the CIED course provided an opportunity for participating units to practice identifying and reacting to IEDs in a tactical scenario.

"We provide quality, realistic training that allows units to gain experience in a complex environment," said MAJ Carol Jordan of the South Dakota Army National Guard's Joint Force

"For many of them, this is their first time seeing this type of equipment and handling it," MAJ Core said. "We are able to use ordinary household chemicals to fool the detectors on the equipment to show how our machines will act in the event of an incident. The plan is that after they complete their training, they will then be able to go back to their units and train their own."

The second day involved outdoor field training in round-robin scenarios. Each station consistently reinforced the need for precaution and safety. The Mission Oriented Protective Posture (MOPP) is safety gear used by military personnel in toxic environments.

Accordingly, there are different MOPP levels, ranging from 0-4, that correspond with increasing levels of protection. The levels begin with the equipment by your side, then increase to wearing the overgarment at Level 1 and eventually to wearing all protective gear – including a mask, gloves and boot covers – at Level 4.

By day 3, the Soldiers were using what they learned in the first two days, including information on decontamination, identifying and reporting CBRN attacks, and setting up gas chamber training.

"[This training] gives us that next hands-on level of learning, where we saw it in the classroom [and] now we get to see it in person and deepen our understanding," said 2LT Daniel Reynolds, a maintenance platoon leader with the 319th Forward Support Company. "This way, when we are instructing our team, platoon or battalion, we have more subject matter experts to give the best training." ●



SGT Sean Harper, a motor transport operator with the 137th Transportation Company, Kansas Army National Guard, reacts to simulated enemy fire as part of a counter improvised explosive device training lane during the Golden Coyote training exercise held at Custer State Park, S.D.

South Dakota Army National Guard photo by SGT Kristin Lichious

Headquarters and officer in charge of the training course.

The training was broken into three parts. The 137th first received instruction on how to identify and properly react to a potential IED. The unit then developed a plan of action that included tactics, techniques and procedures for reacting to and reporting identified devices. Lastly, the unit directed a convoy of tactical vehicles through several simulated scenarios on a canyon road.

"This training is new for many of our Soldiers," said SGT Mike Steed, 137th truck driver and convoy commander for the training. "It gives them the opportunity to operate the trucks in a new environment with unfamiliar terrain."

In the exercise, the convoy drove down an uneven gravel road with canyon walls and pine trees on both sides. The drivers had to maneuver over large rocks and differentiate between natural and man-made disturbances in the terrain. Anything that looked out of place could have been related to an IED.

"This is the most realistic and professional training I've been through," said SGT Sean Harper, a 137th truck driver. "It teaches Soldiers

the importance of always being aware of their surroundings and prepares them for situations they may encounter overseas."

While navigating through the canyon, convoy personnel recognized three disturbances in the road and reacted to two events in which they encountered simulated small arms and artillery fire from theoretical enemy forces.

"The training was new, fun and absolutely worthwhile," SGT Steed said. "It really shows our Soldiers what their trucks are capable of doing in these scenarios."

The CIED lane was one of several training courses in which units participated while attending the Golden Coyote training exercise. ●

KENTUCKY

BY SSG BENJAMIN CRANE,
KENTUCKY NATIONAL GUARD

Kentucky Guard Supports Police at Kentucky Derby

While a Kentucky Derby-record rainfall of nearly three inches

doused the track, more than 157,000 spectators filled Churchill Downs for the nation's biggest horse race May 5 in Louisville. Soldiers of the Kentucky Army National Guard's 198th Military Police Battalion helped ensure Derby Day was safe and organized.

Roughly 200 MPs of the 198th augmented the Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD) and Churchill Downs in providing security, directing traffic and maintaining crowd control for the race – called "the most exciting two minutes in sports."

Because of the enormous crowd and high-profile nature of the event, the Derby necessitates additional trained personnel to help law enforcement.

"Without the National Guard here, we simply couldn't do our job," said Matthew Meagher, a lieutenant with the LMPD. "There's no way we could secure this facility without having them here to help us."

"We use the National Guard to augment security for our entire backside of the Downs. The challenge is covering all the gates and gaps and keeping up with all the vehicular traffic, pedestrian traffic. And there are just so many people that you can have all kinds of issues."

The National Guard is adept at assisting in missions like this.

Kentucky Army National Guard Soldier, SPC Roy Miller, 617th Military Police Company, converses with an attendee of the 144th Kentucky Derby held at Churchill Downs, Louisville, Ky., this past May.

Kentucky Army National Guard photo by
SSG Benjamin Crane



New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen of the 24th Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team, prepare to board a UH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter during their annual helocasting certification event held at Fort Hamilton, N.Y.

New York Army National Guard photo by
SPC Amouris Coss

Building relationships with local entities develops trust and a bond that is key at this event and in other scenarios.

“We’ve got a healthy relationship with the LMPD, and we are here for them when they need us,” said 2LT Jonathan Sturdivant, security officer in charge. “As National Guard members, we are here to build rapport with the local populace and to make sure they stay safe for this event.”

Law enforcement officials face many challenges in dealing with a crowd of this size. Support from the National Guard helps make the event go according to plan.

“The biggest challenge has been dealing with the pedestrians in traffic,” said 2LT Angel Pagan, traffic officer in charge. “Everyone wants to get where they are going right now rather than follow directions from the signs and law enforcement. So far, though, everything has been running smoothly getting the civilians into the track and, hopefully, later tonight getting them out as safely as possible.”

2LT Sturdivant said, “It’s a great feeling for me to assist with Derby. When I found out I was going to be working the biggest horse race in the world, I got really excited because it’s a big deal.”

As the rain continued to fall and

everyone became more rain-soaked, the attitude of the National Guard Soldiers stood out to Meagher.

“We’re all here in the elements and standing for long periods of time today, and not one time did I hear the Soldiers complain about anything,” Meagher said. “They seemed generally happy to be here to help out.”

The National Guard has provided support at the Derby 112 times out of the 144 years Churchill Downs has hosted the event. ●

NEW YORK

BY SPC AMOURIS COSS, SSG MICHAEL DAVIS AND ERIC DURR,
NEW YORK NATIONAL GUARD

New York Guard CST Hones Helicopter Exit Technique

Once a year, members of the New York National Guard’s 24th Civil Support Team (CST) jump

out of a helicopter and into the waters of Gravesend Bay off the southern tip of Long Island.

It’s a technique called helocasting, and this year the annual training exercise to hone the technique occurred June 6. Helocasting is an aerial insertion technique used by small units to move personnel and equipment into a maritime area when a helicopter cannot land.

Members of the 24th CST are trained to detect and identify chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons and hazards for civil authorities. The 24th CST is based at Fort Hamilton and focuses on responding to incidents in New York City.

New York City is built around rivers, islands and other waterways, and traffic on local highways often becomes jammed. The fastest way to deploy could be using a helicopter to get close to an incident, and then jumping into the water nearby, explained SGT Madalena Noyse, one of the CST’s chemical operations specialists.

The 24th CST conducts helocasting training each year to prepare for such a delivery to a target site, said SFC Ryan Bhoorasingh, the 24th CST’s reconnaissance noncommissioned officer.

The 24th CST must also be prepared



LEFT: New York National Guard members of the 24th Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team prepare to helocast into Gravesend Bay off the coast of Long Island during their annual helocasting certification event held at Fort Hamilton, N.Y.

New York Army National Guard photo by
SPC Amouris Coss

RIGHT: CPT Mark Dutton (left) and SGT Brian Hardin (right), assigned to the United States Property and Fiscal Office for North Carolina, practice defensive techniques at Camp Butner Training Site in Stem, N.C.

North Carolina Army National Guard photo by
SPC Hannah Tarkelly

to respond to incidents onboard ships entering New York harbor. CPT Robert Freed, deputy commander of the 24th CST, said Soldiers and Airmen need to be prepared to exit a helicopter and into the water near a ship or Coast Guard boat if they can't land directly on a vessel.

For the training, the small unit is flown by helicopter to a position just above the water's surface. The team members jump into the water and then swim to a waiting boat or the shore.

This year's exercise, which took place in June, included a week of water-related training for the 24th CST. The Soldiers and Airmen started off by focusing on basic Army water survival and then worked on drown-proofing training to make sure they were comfortable in the water.

The next step was open water training in which CST members jumped off Coast Guard boats into the water.

The final process before the helocasting exercise was to practice jumping from a high dive into a pool, CPT Freed said. That's about the height at which the CST members are expected to exit a hovering helicopter into the water.

Along with helocasting, CST members also practiced fast-rope. In this helicopter exit technique, Soldiers and Airmen slide down a rope and into the water.

SFC Bhoorasingh said that not only is

this training useful, but it is also fun.

"It is pretty awesome," CPT Freed said about helocasting training. "One of these things about a very small, elite unit is to have these kinds of training opportunities. It is pretty special." •

NORTH CAROLINA

BY PFC HANNAH TARKELLY,
NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD

North Carolina Guard Soldiers use Karate to Learn Combatives Techniques

National Guard Soldiers assigned to the United States Property and Fiscal Office for North Carolina (USPFO-NC) participated in Army Combatives during their annual training event in April at the Camp Butner Training Center in Stem, North Carolina.

The USPFO-NC revisited and trained on many of the Army's Warrior Tasks as part of Operation Balanced Soldier.

The training included Combatives Level I and Level II taught by Army SGT Luis Piris-Santiago, and a combat urban

assault and defense class taught by David Loftis, an instructor with Karate USA in Hillsborough, North Carolina.

SGT Piris-Santiago, who is a noncommissioned officer in the data processing information technology office assigned to the USPFO-NC, taught four essential moves Soldiers can use on possible aggressors. SGT Piris-Santiago began by teaching grappling techniques such as the rear mount with opposing thumb grip. He concluded by instructing on how to utilize the full mount, full guard and side control. The techniques taught in the class focused on body control and how to properly overcome possible attackers.

"We learned a lot of great moves, a lot of great techniques on the battlefield as far as close encounter," said SFC Miranda Werner, a logistics noncommissioned officer assigned to the USPFO-NC. "It was really great training."

Loftis' class included a variety of defense techniques such as blocking, kicking, punching, strangulation and weapons defense.

"I know knowledge is power, so I want to equip them with a better way of defending themselves, getting out quickly and avoiding a really bad situation," Loftis said. "Basically, trying to arm them with knowledge so they can survive more situations with a higher percentage of success."



Karate USA volunteered the instruction time used to offer the North Carolina Guard Soldiers a mixed training environment and help them enhance their skills. ●

WEST VIRGINIA

BY SGT ZOE MORRIS,
WEST VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD

West Virginia National Guard Rescue Team Attains FEMA Type 1 Status

Soldiers from the West Virginia Army National Guard and the West Virginia Swift Water Rescue Team (WVSWRT) recently attained the necessary training and certification to identify as a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Type 1 swift water/flood search and rescue team within the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

The NIMS is the comprehensive, national approach to disaster response.

Across four days in June, three members of the WVSWRT and 18 Soldiers from the West Virginia Army National Guard's Company C, 2nd Battalion, 104th General Support Aviation Battalion, learned to master the Helicopter Underwater Egress Training (HUET) and Helicopter Search and Rescue courses.

The course, conducted on the Cheat River, included helicopter hoist training, tracking victims down river with a helicopter and deploying a rescuer from

the helicopter. The team included pilots, crew chiefs and rescue swimmers.

In addition to the training on the Cheat River, three WVSWRT Soldiers assisted Spec Rescue, a national search and rescue training organization, in training FEMA Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams from around the country June 20-21 on the New River outside of Fayetteville, West Virginia. The training consisted of a boat operations specialist course, which taught students how to navigate a boat flip, how to conduct rescues from a boat and how to tether rescue swimmers from a boat.

"This [training] is important to the West Virginia Swift Water Rescue Team as it shows our certification to operate in these flood disaster environments anywhere within the United States," said SFC Mark A. Shrewsbury, Joint Interagency Training and Education Center (JITEC) WVSWRT noncommissioned officer (NCO) in charge. "Being recognized as a FEMA Type 1 Swift Water Rescue team gives us the ability to deploy and be recognized at a national level as capable of performing many technical rescue disciplines that could occur in a flood

West Virginia National Guard Soldier SPC Evan James, a member of the West Virginia Swift Water Rescue Team, hoists a mock victim from the Cheat River during emergency response training near Camp Dawson, W.Va.

West Virginia Air National Guard photo by A1C Caleb Vance





West Virginia National Guard Soldiers with Company C, 2-104th General Support Aviation Battalion (MEDEVAC) lower a West Virginia Swift Water Rescue Team member into the Cheat River to rescue a mock victim as part of emergency response training near Camp Dawson, W.Va.

West Virginia Air National Guard photo by A1C Caleb Vance

situation, such as helicopter search and rescue, large animal rescue, technical rope rescue, flat water and swift water rescue, to name a few.”

According to Jimmy Gianato, director of West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (WVDHSEM), tying aviation rescue to swift water rescue allows this team to operate in a totally different environment and capacity than the State has had before.

“Our hope is that we can put teams like this all over the State, so that when something happens we’ve got the capabilities and the response time is diminished,” Gianato said. “It’s tremendous training, and we’ve got some outstanding swift water rescue teams in the state. By taking the National Guard capabilities and adding that with those teams, like we’ve done here, I think it will give us the capability that many other states won’t have.”

In the wake of an active 2017 hurricane season, JITEC Commander LTC Walter Hatfield said there was frustration in not being able to deploy to Texas and Florida because of the need for a few certifications.

Heading into the 2018 hurricane and storm season, however, he was confident

the team was ready to deploy anywhere in the United States and its territories to aid people in need. ●

WISCONSIN

BY SGT KATIE EGGERS,
WISCONSIN NATIONAL GUARD

Exercise Ensures Wisconsin Is Prepared for Emergencies

How would Wisconsin fare if its power grid was under attack, resulting in a long-term mass power outage? To answer that question, public safety agencies from across the State, along with the Wisconsin National Guard, tested their emergency response plans during the Dark Sky exercise this past May.

“The time to exchange business cards is not when the disaster occurs, but before the event,” said Gary Wieczorek, Wisconsin Emergency Management

Exercise & Training supervisor.

“Developing long-standing relationships and partnerships allows those agencies to better serve and protect our citizens when real events happen.”

More than 1,000 participants from federal, state and local agencies, the private sector and volunteer agencies were involved in the Dark Sky exercise. It took more than two years to plan the multi-agency exercise scenario, which focused on a mock cyber event that resulted in massive power outages.

Power touches nearly every facet of daily life, and the exercise forced authorities to consider not only how they would respond to the power outage itself, but how it could impact food, water and fuel supplies, and other critical infrastructure.

“Exercises not only test plans to identify gaps and areas that need to be improved, but they also put our emergency responders in a unique opportunity to train under realistic conditions or conditions that are as close to realistic as possible,” said Greg Engle, deputy administrator for Wisconsin Emergency Management.

The exercise, held in the counties of Brown, Calumet, Dane, Fond du



SPC Troy Sharpe (left) and SGT Sarah Pritzl, both with the 107th Maintenance Support Company, Wisconsin Army National Guard survey resident Heidi Kiley in the city of Omro, Wis., as part of a canvassing exercise during the Dark Sky training exercise.

Wisconsin Army National Guard photo by SSG Matthew Ard

Lac, Milwaukee, Outagamie and Winnebago, included activation of local and state emergency operation centers. It also provided demonstrations by law enforcement and fire departments on how they would respond to mass casualty incidents, hazardous materials spills and heightened security measures. These scenarios challenge first response agencies as they work together to provide critical services to protect citizens and communities.

“The exercise allows us to look at the local level and meet those needs, but it also allows us to collaborate with our partners from the county, from the State, and from the federal government,” Grand Chute Fire Chief Tim Bantes said. “If any of those sections are missing, the pyramid falls down. It can’t work.”

The exercise included a partnership of several entities – the Wisconsin National Guard, American Red Cross and the city of Omro – that went door to door to meet with residents, conduct a preparedness survey, provide emergency preparedness information and offer to install smoke detectors. This event simulated a real-life mission of health and welfare checks by the National Guard.

When the Wisconsin National



Guard is activated during a state of emergency, fulfilling its role as the first military responder in the Homeland, the organization operates under the direction of local authorities with the mission to assist them in emergency response situations.

MSG Glenn Hamer, the safety noncommissioned officer with the Wisconsin National Guard’s Joint Forces Headquarters, said the Dark Sky exercise provided an invaluable opportunity for the National Guard to work directly with communities and civil authorities and to develop strong relationships. ●

Omro, Wis., Police Chief Joe Schuster briefs Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers and other local and State first responders before they begin a canvassing operation in Omro as part of the Dark Sky training exercise.

Wisconsin Army National Guard photo by SSG Matthew Ard



Dear *Citizen-Soldier* magazine,

How do I become a Master Fitness Trainer?

U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's Master Fitness Trainer Course (MFTC) trains select NCOs and commissioned officers in all aspects of the Army's physical readiness training system. After graduating from the course, Soldiers are equipped to advise units on physical readiness issues and monitor unit and individual physical readiness programs.

The MFTC is broken into two phases – a self-paced, 60-hour online phase and a two-week, 76-hour in-resident phase. The curriculum covers exercise science, training principles, prescription, leadership, physical fitness assessment and unit physical readiness programs aligned with current Army doctrine and regulations.

An additional skill identifier of 6P for officers and P5 for NCOs will be awarded upon successful course completion.

If you meet the following requirements, your unit's training officer or NCO can enroll you in the MFTC:

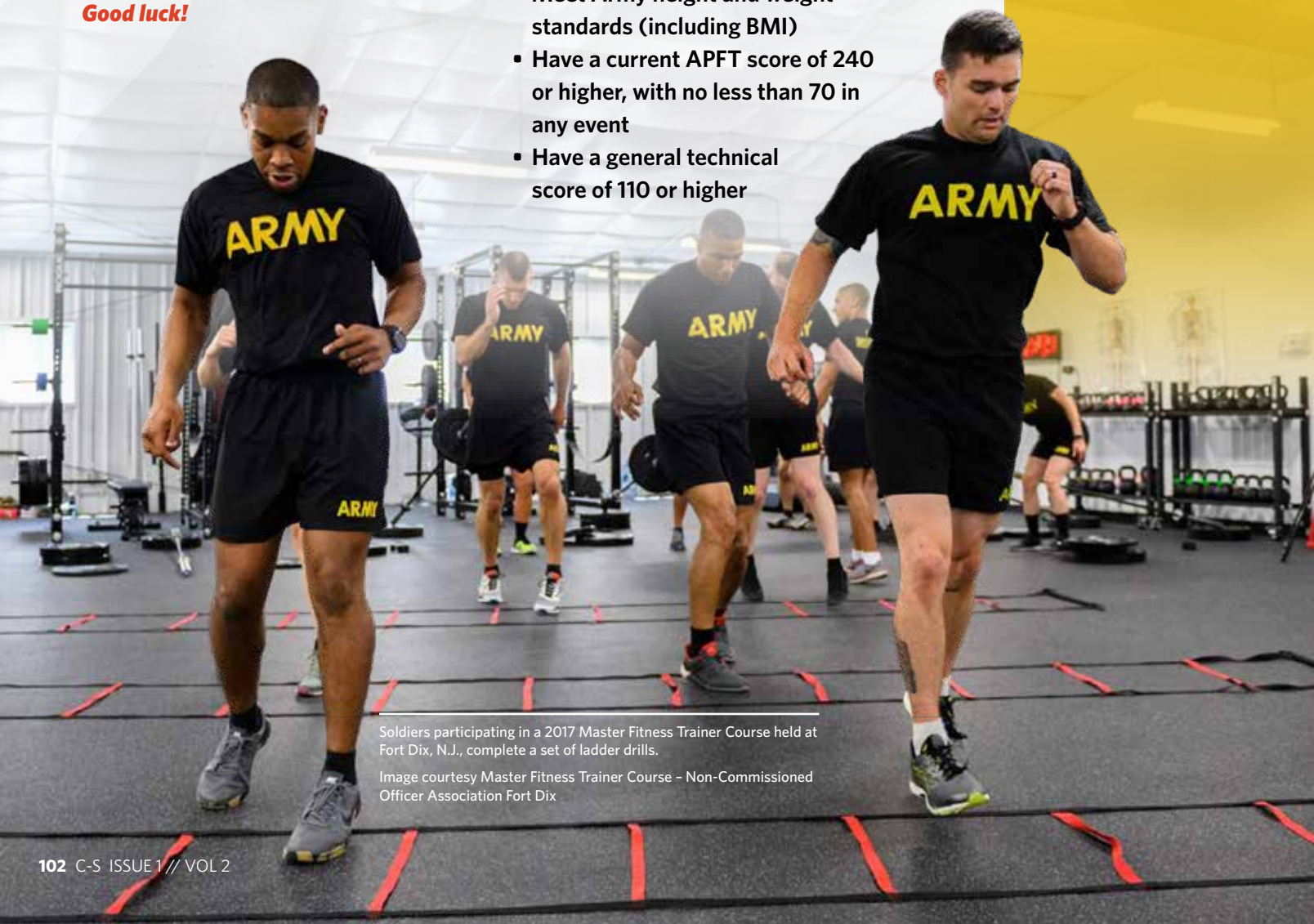
- Be a sergeant (E-5) or higher rank
- Be recommended by your unit commander
- Meet Army height and weight standards (including BMI)
- Have a current APFT score of 240 or higher, with no less than 70 in any event
- Have a general technical score of 110 or higher

Good luck!

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

Submit questions to
Editor@
Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com

Or online at
Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com



Soldiers participating in a 2017 Master Fitness Trainer Course held at Fort Dix, N.J., complete a set of ladder drills.

Image courtesy Master Fitness Trainer Course – Non-Commissioned Officer Association Fort Dix



Oregon Army National Guard Soldier SGT Paul Mannelly, of the 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment establishes a defensive observation firing position inside one of many training buildings at 'Leschi Town', a mock village on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., during exercise Cougar Rage 18.

Oregon Army National Guard photo by MSG John Hughel

COUGAR RAGE

This past spring, Soldiers from the United States and Canada took part in a multi-day exercise that included everything from **WEAPONS QUALIFICATION** to **RAPPELLING** to **AN ADVANCE ON THE MOCK VILLAGE OF LESCHI TOWN**.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF CITIZEN-SOLDIER MAGAZINE,
find out what happened when Soldiers from the
Oregon Army National Guard worked side-by-side
with Canadian Light Infantry platoons during
EXERCISE COUGAR RAGE 18.



Cartoon by SSG C.F. "Arik" Grant

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.



Recommended Podcast

Tales of Honor

The Tales of Honor Podcast tells the true stories of the over 3,500 recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor. Listen in for dramatic storytelling that describes the valiant efforts of these past war Veterans. The more people who hear their stories, the more these heroes will not be forgotten.

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