

# CITIZEN-SOLDIER



CITIZEN-SOLDIERMAGAZINE.COM

ISSUE 2 // VOL 2

## MAXING -OUT THE PRE-MOB

Arizona Soldiers maximize training effectiveness before deploying to Kuwait. | Page 6



### **Rising Eagle 6**

Iowa Guard Soldiers stand tall at the nation of Kosovo's largest multilateral training to date. | Page 11

### **Beyond the Horizon**

Soldiers of the Florida National Guard work to make a difference for villagers in El Salvador. | Page 46

# Learn More about the *MARINE to GUARD (M2G)* Program



- ★ TRICARE Reserve Select
- ★ Up to \$20,000 Enlisted Affiliation Bonus
- ★ Full-Time Employment Opportunity
- ★ Stabilization (up to 36 months)
- ★ Additional State-specific Benefits
- ★ Retirement Benefits
- ★ Opportunity to continue to serve in uniform when a USMCR billet is unavailable

\* Programs and benefits subject to change

Refer a Friend or  
Family Member

**UP TO A \$20,000 BONUS** for those who qualify

**CONTACT YOUR RESERVE COMPONENT CAREER COUNSELOR  
FOR MORE INFORMATION**

TEXT M2G TO 462769 ★ 1-800-GO-GUARD ★ NATIONALGUARD.COM/M2G



M2G IS ENDORSED BY THE MARINE FOR LIFE PROGRAM



## MAXING-OUT THE PRE-MOB

**6** Soldiers of the Arizona Army National Guard conduct pre-mobilization training in advance of a yearlong deployment to the Middle East.

## RISING EAGLE 6

**11** Iowa National Guard Soldiers serve as observers and mentors during the largest multilateral training ever conducted by their State Partners, the Kosovo Security Force.

## EXERCISE AFRICAN LION 18

**16** Utah National Guard Soldiers strengthen interoperability and deliver much needed dental services to citizens in the nation of Morocco during exercise African Lion.

## DOWN HOME TRAINING

**24** Soldiers of the Iowa Army National Guard maximize time and efficiency during a unique home-state pre-mobilization training.



# FEATURES

ISSUE 2 | VOL 2

## A TALE OF TWO GEORGIAS

**32** Members of the Georgia Army National Guard train with State Partners from the nation of Georgia during the multinational event, Noble Partner 18.

## THE INTEGRATED FORCES OF COUGAR RAGE

**40** Oregon Soldiers train alongside Canadian soldiers in this first-time joint initiative focused on improved readiness for both forces.

## BEYOND THE HORIZON

**46** Engineer units with the Florida Army National Guard participate in a humanitarian mission led by U.S. Army South and U.S. Army Southern Command in the Republic of El Salvador.

## AN UNUSUAL ADDITIONAL DUTY

**58** New England CERF-P units put their unique skill set to the test during validation training at Joint Base Cape Cod.

## LESSONS IN LOGISTICS

**70** Utah National Guard's Homeland Response Force keeps order at the New Madrid Seismic Zone training exercise.

16



32



**CITIZEN-SOLDIER**  
citizen-soldiermagazine.com

# DEPARTMENTS



52

## WHAT'S TRENDING

- 4 The New Standard of Fitness
- 5 Swipe, then Eat

## LEGACY

- 20 Sergeant Stubby — A Guard Soldier's Best Friend

## GEAR + TECH

- 27 Shooting Around Corners
- 30 Reimagining the Meganut

## CAREER

- 37 Full-Time Service, Full Array of Benefits
- 39 Celebrating 100 Years of the Warrant Officer

## BENEFITS

- 44 A Bridge of Coverage
- 45 Keeping Vision Care In Sight

## WELLNESS

- 50 Shots, Shots and More Shots
- 52 PT Tips — Lower Body Workout

## FAMILY

- 54 Making a Formal Impression
- 56 Poised for Success

## CYBERSPACE

- 62 Cyber Yankee 18

## ALWAYS READY

- 65 Finding Peace in the Aftermath

## GUTS + GLORY

- 74 On Target Across the Pond

## PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

- 78 Iconic Images of Soldiers at the Ready

## ON YOUR RADAR

- 90 Army National Guard Spotlights from Around the Nation

## HOW DO I... ?

- 102 Answers to Commonly Asked Questions

## DOWN THE PIKE

- 103 In the Next Issue: Next-Level Training

## JUST FOR FUN

- 104 Army National Guard Comic Page



30



62

65

# CITIZEN-SOLDIER

## Managing Editor

Camille Williams

## Public Relations Specialist

Nerita Scott

## Creative Director

Hiyan Sisson

## Graphic Designers

Russell Nemec

Luke Sohl

## Staff Writers

Tatyana White-Jenkins

Matthew Liptak

Chase Whitlock

Ruth Ann Replogle

Pamela DeLoatch

Keegan Rammel

## Recurring Contributing Writers

MAJ Darrin Haas, Tennessee Army National Guard

## Copyeditors & Proofreaders

Collie Johnson

Janet Purdy

Carl Moritz

Nancy Leslie

To write a letter to the editor or submit general information, send an email to

**Editor@Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com.**

*Citizen-Soldier* encourages article and photo submissions from Soldiers, Family members, employers and supporting agencies. Content may be submitted on our website, [Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com](http://Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com). When submitting, please be sure to include your full contact information. Submissions may also be sent via email to

**Editor@Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com.**

If you no longer wish to receive this publication, email **Unsubscribe@Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com** to be removed from the mail list.

All submitted content (photos, articles, video) becomes the property of the Army National Guard upon submission. While we will make all reasonable attempts to include submitted content, *Citizen-Soldier* does not guarantee all submissions will be published.

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

Published by Schatz Strategy Group

©2018 *Citizen-Soldier*

ON THE COVER: SPC Ari Quinonez Delgado (right) and SSG Nathaniel Elliott, mortar men from C Company, 1 Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment of the Arizona Army National Guard, fire a 60mm mortar while on the Florence Military Reservation, Arizona as part of infantry skills training in preparation for an upcoming deployment to Kuwait and Afghanistan.

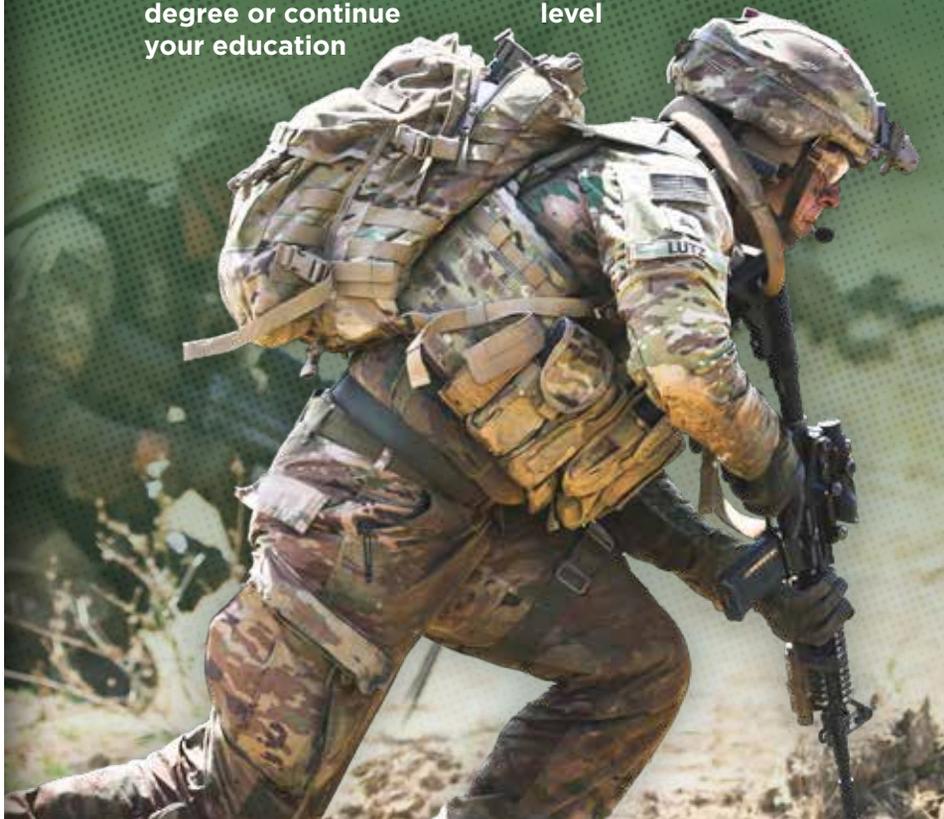
Arizona Army National Guard photo by CPT Jonathan Leigh

# TAKE A PATH WITH PURPOSE

**AS A GUARD SOLDIER**, you'll have the rewarding mission of serving both your community and country, all while earning unmatched benefits.

## **BENEFITS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:**

- Signing bonus of up to \$20,000
- A guaranteed second income
- Cutting edge on-the-job training in a wide range of fields
- Money to earn your degree or continue your education
- Low-cost health and life insurance plans for the entire Family
- Access to a federal retirement plan
- Options for full-time employment on both the State and federal level



## **NATIONAL GUARD**

### **MAKE THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD YOUR MISSION TODAY.**

Go to ***NationalGuard.com*** for more information or to connect with a recruiter.

SGT Tyler Chase, a team leader assigned to Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, North Carolina Army National Guard, sprints to a fighting position during a Table XII live fire exercise held in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

North Carolina Army National Guard photo by SGT Jamar Marcel Pugh

# THE NEW STANDARD OF FITNESS

## THE ARMY COMBAT FITNESS TEST

By STAFF WRITER Ruth Ann Replogle



**A**fter nearly 40 years of serving as the standard for determining Soldier fitness, the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) is being retired. Beginning in October of 2020, all Army Soldiers will be required to take the new gender- and age-neutral Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT). This six-event readiness assessment will replace the three-event APFT.

ACFT is designed to provide a broader measurement of a Soldier's physical fitness. MG Malcolm Frost of the Center for Initial Military Training said the ACFT will help determine the level to which a Soldier will be effective in combat. While APFT focused on muscular and aerobic endurance, the ACFT will focus on combat readiness, measuring individual capacity in all areas of fitness including strength, power, speed and agility.

The overhaul of the Army's fitness test comes on the heels of the 2028 Army vision statement, in which Secretary of the Army, Dr. Mark T. Esper, stressed the need for Soldiers to be physically fit and mentally tough in order to fight and win in high-intensity conflict.

### THE SIX COMPONENTS OF THE NEW PHYSICAL TEST ARE:

#### 1. STRENGTH DEADLIFT

The deadlift event is similar to the one found in the Occupational Physical Assessment Test (OPAT) for new recruits. It is meant to assess lower body strength. Soldiers will deadlift between 120 to 420 pounds three times in five minutes. This lift replicates picking up ammunition boxes, a wounded battle buddy, supplies or other heavy equipment.

#### 2. STANDING POWER THROW

This event requires tossing a 10-pound ball overhead and backward as far as possible. Three minutes are given for a practice throw. The graded throw must be completed in two minutes. This throw measures the muscular explosive power needed to lift oneself, or a fellow Soldier, over an obstacle or to rapidly move across uneven terrain.

#### 3. HAND-RELEASE PUSH-UPS

This test starts with a traditional push-up, then when in the down position, the arms are moved outward like a T and then back in to do another push-up. These push-ups demonstrate a Soldier's ability to push a vehicle when it is stuck or push away during evasive maneuvers. These alternative push-ups are meant to assess the type of upper body strength needed to push away during evasive maneuvers.

#### 4. SPRINT/DRAW/CARRY

In this multi-step dash, Soldiers will have four minutes to complete a sprint, drag a 90-pound sled, run a lateral shuffle, carry two 40-pound kettle bells and then complete a second sprint. Spanning 25 meters, the dash runs five times back and forth and simulates pulling a battle buddy out of harm's way, moving quickly to take cover, or carrying ammunition to a fighting position or vehicle.

#### 5. LEG TUCK

Similar to a pull-up, in this event Soldiers will lift their knees up to their elbows as many times as possible in two minutes. This test measures core muscle strength.

#### 6. 2-MILE RUN

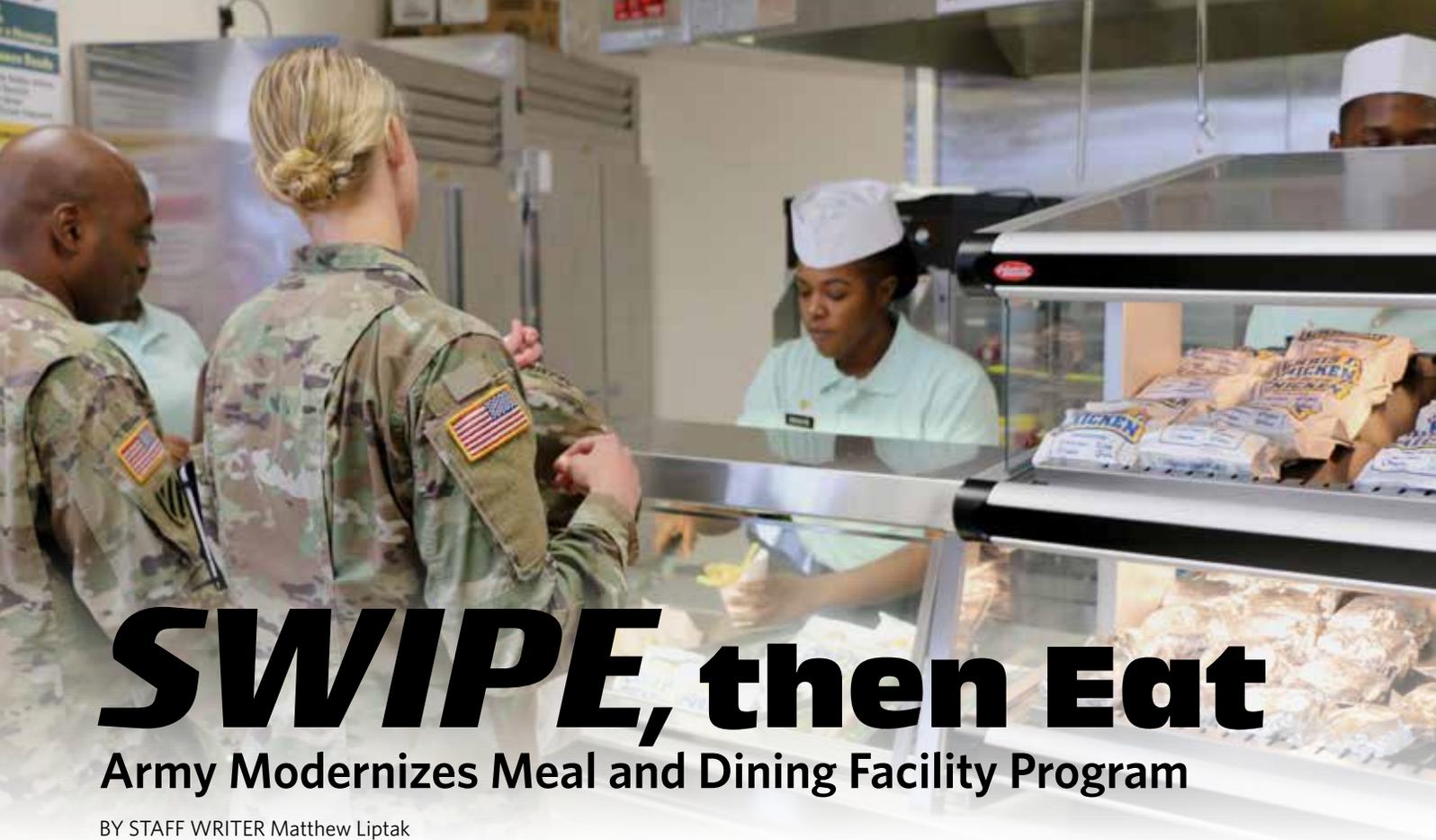
The single holdover from the APFT, the format of the 2-mile run remains unchanged.

According to MG Frost, Soldiers will continue to wear physical training uniforms, rather than combat uniforms or body armor as had been proposed in the past. The time requirement will be a maximum of 50 minutes and minimum scoring ranks will be military occupational specialty (MOS)-dependent.

Unlike the APFT, the ACFT includes no plan for alternate events. Soldiers may be evaluated for disability on an individual basis.

To help units prepare for the ACFT, the Army is developing a certification and training program for all graders – specifically for Master Fitness Trainers (MFTs). MFTs will aid unit leadership in minimizing and mitigating Soldier injury during the transition period. ●

A Soldier carries two 40-pound kettlebell weights during a pilot for the new Army Combat Fitness Test. U.S. Army photo by Sean Kimmons



# SWIPE, then Eat

## Army Modernizes Meal and Dining Facility Program

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

**A**fter decades of use, the Army has phased out the manual meal card system that dates back to the World War II era and has replaced it with the new Meal Entitlement Maintenance (MEM) system. The new system calls for Soldiers to swipe their common access cards (CACs) rather than presenting a meal card when eating at an Army dining facility. The MEM system, developed by the Army's Software Engineering Center, requires the scanning of a meal entitlement code that is preloaded onto the CAC by a military personnel office.

The old system, which required Soldiers to manually sign into a written log or be checked into a log upon leaving the dining facility, often caused long lines and presented challenges for Soldiers participating in large training exercises.

"That's a very antiquated and labor-intensive program," said Jack Skelly, chief of the Food and Field Services Branch, Army G-4, at the Pentagon. "[The new system] will ultimately speed [Soldiers] through the line at the dining facility."

The MEM program is one part of a larger Army initiative to automate many mandatory tasks at the headquarters level and below. The overall goal is to allow

commanders and unit leaders to take back the precious hours often spent on administrative tasks and refocus that time on training and readying the force.

"What we are trying to do ... is give commanders an efficient, effective system to account for a member's meal entitlements," said Larry Lock, chief of Military Compensation and Entitlements.

MEM will impact every Army Soldier. In addition to Soldiers living on post and eating in a dining facility on a regular basis, Soldiers receiving basic allowance for subsistence while on temporary duty, special missions, institutional training, deployments and, for Guard Soldiers specifically, drill duty or annual training will have a meal entitlement code on their CAC.

Full rollout of the MEM system began in the fall of 2018, and a Sept. 30, 2018 deadline was set by the Army for all Soldiers to have their CACs updated with meal entitlement codes at their appropriate military personnel office.

Further efficiencies expected to be implemented by Food and Field Services in the near future include food trucks and food kiosks. Currently being piloted at Fort Stewart, Georgia and Fort Carson,

Colorado, both the trucks and kiosks will offer hot and cold menu options prepared in advance at an Army dining facility.

"Soldiers can't always get back to their dining facility," said Skelly. "So, we're taking [the dining facility] to them."

Skelly added that food truck locations and their status will be posted on the social media pages of installations receiving the new service. Unit commanders will also have the option to specially request mobilization of a food truck. Though the kiosks are still in the pilot stage, they are expected to be placed indoors in high-traffic areas that have high concentrations of troops.

With MEM and the new dining-type options also come more nutritional food choices. The new facilities will offer wholesome menu selections such as Asian rice bowls, wraps and lean-beef hamburgers.

"All menus are designed to be healthier," Skelly said. "[The entire program] is extending our feeding options." ●

---

Soldiers attend the grand opening of a new "Grab and Go" food kiosk on Fort Stewart, Ga. The kiosks allow Soldiers to quickly choose from several pre-packaged, healthy food items.

U.S. Army photo by SPC Robert Winns

# MAXING-OUT THE PRE-MOB



## Arizona's 1-158th Infantry Regiment Prepares to Join the Fight in the Middle East

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

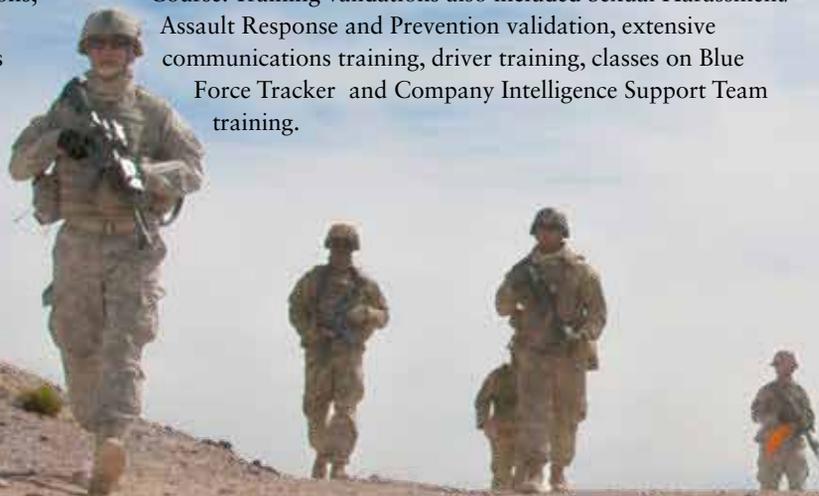
Four hundred Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment “Bushmasters,” Arizona Army National Guard, spent 45 days this past summer at Fort Bliss, Texas, conducting premobilization training and validation in advance of a one-year deployment to Kuwait.

While the Soldiers of the 1-158th did not have the exact details of the mission ahead, they knew it would involve providing security to naval bases and convoys in the regions in and around Kuwait.

“We’ll be the primary security detail on convoy operations, base defense and security force [SECFOR] missions,” explained SFC Pedro Villanez, commander of the 1-158th’s 1st Platoon, B Company. “On a day-to-day basis, it would be the securing of the patrol that we were going to run,

whether it’s mounted on vehicles such as M1151 HMMWVs [high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles], or MaxxPros or M-ATVs [Mine Resistant Ambush Protected-All Terrain Vehicles] that we have.”

Training validations for the light infantry unit encompassed roll-over training for the M-ATVs and shooting range qualifications, including small arms ranges and crew-served weapons ranges. The unit was also tested on medical validation, both personnel physical exams along with a Combat Life Saver Course. Training validations also included Sexual Harassment/ Assault Response and Prevention validation, extensive communications training, driver training, classes on Blue Force Tracker and Company Intelligence Support Team training.



Bushmasters prepare to enter the MRAP rollover trainer during premobilization training at Camp McGregor on Fort Bliss, Texas.

Arizona Army National Guard photo by CPT Jonathan Leigh



Ssg Brandon Nelson and SPC Jared Nicol tighten tension cables as part of the 158th Infantry Regiment’s premobilization training this past summer at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Arizona Army National Guard photo by CPT Jonathan Leigh

Also included was a 10-day course on Base Expeditionary Targeting and Surveillance Systems – Combined (BETSS-C). The BETSS-C is a networked sensor package focusing on surveillance, detection, security monitoring and targeting.

“BETSS-C is a new concept to me,” said CPT James Roe, Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander for the 1-158th. “What’s great about [BETSS-C] is that it results in certifications for our Soldiers that won’t time out after the deployment. They can carry [the certifications] for the rest of their careers.”

Planning well ahead of the deployment, Arizona National Guard leaders worked to ensure the 1-158th had plenty of advance training and opportunities to begin their validation as a unit before arriving at Fort Bliss.

“When we hit the ground, we were well into the 80 to 90 percent across the board on [completing] all of the validation requirements,” said 1-158th Infantry Regiment Operations Officer MAJ Brian Gaume. “That allowed us time to conduct quite a bit of extra training.”

MAJ Gaume attributed the unit’s efficiency in validation to Arizona’s designated State mobilization team, which focuses on preparing Arizona Guard units for validation in advance of arrival to the pre-mobilization site.

“They knew all the validation requirements that we’d be asked of once we got to mobilization training,” he explained. “They ensured that we got good quality training on those tasks before we got here.”

The Soldiers had three opportunities across the previous year to begin validation before pre-mobilization.

The battalion had three weeks of annual training in March of this year. There, the Soldiers completed extensive weapons qualifications, including personal weapons and validation on the M249 and M240 Bravo. In May, they conducted an enhanced nine-day drill and in June they completed the State mobilization training. These separate, staggered opportunities allowed the unit multiple passes to get every Soldier 100 percent qualified.

That, in turn, gave the unit extra time to conduct a high-intensity air assault exercise while at Fort Bliss.

With the help of the 501st Assault Helicopter Battalion, 250 of the 1-158th’s Soldiers trained with a total of six aircraft – four UH60 Black Hawks that moved personnel and two AH64 Apaches that provided overwatch.

“[The training] went great. We successfully completed the air assault mission and the infantry’s primary mission, which was to set up blocking positions,” explained CSM Daniel Figueroa, Special Operations Team, 1-158th Infantry Regiment. “We’re not air assault-qualified, but we do conduct air assault missions using aviation assets.”

Back in January of this year, the 1-158th conducted an air assault training mission



A Soldier of the 158th Infantry Regiment fires the Carl Gustav recoilless rifle during the heavy weapons portion of the unit’s pre-mobilization training.

Arizona Army National Guard photo by CPT Jonathan Leigh

Soldiers from B Company, 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment, Arizona Army National Guard, advance towards a support by fire position as part of a squad live fire exercise during their unit’s annual training this past March at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Arizona Army National Guard photo by CPT Jonathan Leigh



Arizona Guard Soldiers of the 158th pull security after exiting a Black Hawk during pre-mobilization training at Camp McGregor on Fort Bliss this past summer.

Arizona Army National Guard photo by CPT Jonathan Leigh



SPC Gonsalo Tabares, 1st Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment pulls security from the turret of the lead vehicle in herringbone formation, while CPT Colin Jones walks between vehicles during a key leader engagement training mission during the 158th's pre-mobilization training held at Fort Bliss.

Arizona Army National Guard photo by CPT Jonathan Leigh

with Arizona's State aviation unit. It was very similar to their Fort Bliss exercise, MAJ Gaume said. Four UH60s were moving in personnel and two Black Hawks were on station awaiting call-for-fire. The unit also participated in air assault training during last year's Exercise Northern Strike.

"We're no strangers to air assault missions, no strangers to getting in and working with our aviation brethren," MAJ Gaume noted.

The Arizona Soldiers put the additional training time at Fort Bliss to good use. According to CSM Figueroa, this was a first deployment for about 70 percent of

the unit, and its leadership wanted to ensure each member was completely mentally and physically prepared for their deployment.

"I think across the board, we're really faring quite well," CPT Roe remarked. "We're ready to move on to the next phase."

"First and foremost, this mission will be accomplished no matter what or how long it takes," added CSM Figueroa.

During the unit's last deployment to Afghanistan in 2007-2008, two Soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice. Killed in action were SSG Charles Browning and PFC Mykel Miller.

"At the time, I was assigned to Bravo Company and 1st Platoon lost SSG Browning and my Platoon - 3rd Platoon - lost PFC Mykel Miller," recalled

### SAGE WISDOM FROM A BUSHMASTER: SGT MORGAN'S THREE KEYS TO LIFE IN THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

#### THIS IS THE "US" ARMY:

"We are a team and we are stronger as a team, both downrange and back home."

#### THE ARMY WAS HERE BEFORE US.

#### THE ARMY IS HERE WITH US.

#### AND THE ARMY WILL BE HERE AFTER US:

"Consider how we influence [others] during our time in the Army - how we leave our legacy behind with the Soldiers who carry on your leadership traits. Just because you get out, do not think you have not left a lasting impact on the uniform."

#### DON'T EVER THINK YOU HAVE TO FIGHT ALONE:

"I would say, when you come home, know that there is someone out there who has your six 24/7, 365. You can call them up and they'll round up a QRF [quick reaction force] and get help to you. Even people that have not been downrange are affected by post-traumatic stress in ways that are seen stateside. So when you need help, ask for it. Nobody's going to look at you like you are weak. I tell people all the time - the strongest thing you can do is ask for help."



Soldiers of the 158th participate in squad live fire drills at forward operating base Westbrook in McGregor Range, N.M., during the unit's annual training this past March.

Arizona Army National Guard photo by MAJ Andrew Lee



SGT Ashley Villalobos applies a bandage to the back of an extremely wounded mannequin during combat life saver training as part of the 158th's premobilization validation at Camp McGregor on Fort Bliss.

Arizona Army National Guard photo by CPT Jonathan Leigh

SGT Alejandro Morga, commander of 1st Squadron, 3rd Platoon, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment.

He said he has grown as a man and a leader since joining the unit. For SGT Morga, the big picture is not only the larger strategy and logistics of operations. He is focused on his Soldiers and making sure they are taken care of and squared away. He wants them to accomplish the mission and wants to ensure that they can come home to talk about it.

"I've got to focus on ensuring my Soldiers are ready for whatever mission the battalion is handed, whatever mission Charlie Company gets chosen to do. Whether it's staying in Kuwait or pushing forward into another country, I need to ensure the troops are ready with their military abilities and their mental, physical and emotional well-being," he explained.

"I expect the best out of my Soldiers and they should expect the best out of me as well, [because] every deployment is an engagement," said SFC Villanez. "Whether it's combat arms engagement or a person-to-person engagement, they're all important. Having a face-to-face with someone is an engagement and you can win a battle just by talking to someone. On the other hand, if we have to close with and destroy the enemy, we are trained for that and the men will be ready." ●

“ I EXPECT THE BEST OUT OF MY SOLDIERS AND THEY SHOULD EXPECT THE BEST OUT OF ME AS WELL.”

— SFC Pedro Villanez



Soldiers of the 158th fire 81mm mortars at forward operating base Westbrook in McGregor Range, N.M., during the unit's annual training this past March.

Arizona Army National Guard photo by MAJ Andrew Lee



Your connection to  
confidential help  
across all aspects of  
military life.



**CALL:** 800.342.9647

**CLICK:** [militaryonesource.mil](http://militaryonesource.mil)

**CONNECT:** 24 hrs | 7 days | 365 days a year

Family & Relationships

On- & Off-Base Living

Deployment & Transition

Financial & Legal

Health & Wellness

Education & Employment

# RISING EAGLE 6



*Iowa Army National Guard Helps Nation of Kosovo Reach New Heights*



MAJ Jamie Clasen (far right), and other members of the Iowa National Guard, observe and coach soldiers with the Kosovo Security Force as they conduct a simulated medical evacuation during Eagle 6, a multilateral field training exercise held in Pomozetin, Kosovo, this past May.

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak  
Iowa Army National Guard photos by SGT William Prah

The year 2018 marks the sixth iteration of the annual Eagle exercises in Kosovo. The two-week disaster response training is the largest exercise planned, hosted and led by the Kosovo Security Force (KSF).

The Eagle exercises serve to test soldiers' natural disaster reaction and relief skills, emergency response skills, refugee care techniques, humanitarian aid techniques and cooperation with local authorities, organizations and international military partners.

With the event growing in size and complexity each passing year, this year's

Eagle exercise – Eagle 6 – hosted more than 600 participants hailing from the United States, Albania, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

The Iowa National Guard joined Eagle 6 as Kosovo's partner through the National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP). Thirty-five Soldiers from Iowa Army National Guard's 831st Engineer Company and 18 Airmen from Iowa Air National Guard's 132nd and 185th Medical Groups took part in this year's event.

The Iowa Guard members functioned as subject matter experts working as

observers and mentors during the training.

"Participating in this exercise is an incredible opportunity for us as international partners to train our forces in a combined, joint and global environment," said Iowa National Guard Vice Chief of Joint Staff COL Justin Wagner.

This year's training scenario centered on a fictional flooding disaster near Pristina, Kosovo's capital and largest city, which encompasses two major lakes.

"[In the scenario], there were some isolated families that lived in the area. Soldiers had to find them and get them



Iowa Army National Guard engineers from the 831st Engineer Company work with their Kosovo Security Force counterparts to complete a wire obstacle emplacement mission as part of the Eagle 6 exercise hosted by the Kosovo Security Force.

out to safety,” explained SGM Dan Cain with the Iowa National Guard Joint Force Headquarters. “They also had to find some missing children, one of whom was injured, [and soldiers had to demonstrate the procedure to] air medevac the child out.”

SGM Cain went on to describe how the participants additionally had to find a barrel, containing a hypothetical toxic substance that was lost in the lake. As the lake is the primary water source for that region, a real event of this nature would have been a very sensitive issue, he said.

The Eagle 6 training also included a scenario requiring the neutralization of armed terrorists. The simulated terrorist cells used the distraction of the flooding as an opportunity to infiltrate the area and attempt to damage the city’s levies, which would cause even more flooding and potentially inflict more harm on the local residents.

*“They really embrace Americans. They’re very grateful for the help that we provided to them as they fought for their independence and their sovereignty.”*

— SGM Dan Cain

According to SGM Cain, the KSF soldiers have improved their proficiency in disaster response training over the course of the Eagle exercises.

Kosovo is a young country, having broken with Serbia in 2008, which itself was formerly part of the nation of Yugoslavia that broke up in the early 1990s, at the end of the Cold War. The Eagle exercises have a dual benefit for the KSF, as the events not only serve to enhance the readiness of all participating groups, but they also afford the KSF with NATO-affiliated expertise from around the world as the nation works to field a more capable military force.

Brig. Gen. Naim Haziri, KSF director of the Eagle 6 exercise, noted the significance of the joint training environment.

“We are exercising together with [our] local agencies and our international partners in order to intervene together in real operations throughout Kosovo or



elsewhere,” he said.

As mentors and advisors, the participating Iowa National Guard members worked with their Kosovar counterparts using KSF doctrine and KSF training-evaluation outlines when observing the Kosovar soldiers and evaluating them against the standard. The challenge in evaluating the KSF members was that, first, KSF doctrine is still in the process of being developed, and second, translations of the existing portion have yet to be made.

“It’s a work in progress,” SGM Cain stated. “[What doctrine they do have] is in Albanian. We had interpreters, but the language barrier was a big issue. We could try to mentor them, but it was very difficult to hold them to their standard.”

One protocol the U.S. Soldiers noted as having room for improvement was the KSF soldier’s tendency to take multiple breaks between tasks. This was an example of an area where mentoring from the Iowa Guard Soldiers was key.

In spite of the challenges, the Iowa units were able to help the KSF members establish a baseline from which they can continue to grow.

In addition to disaster response training, KSF soldiers also focused on building skills and elements that would aid the force in

fulfilling NATO certification requirements. These elements include a forward operating base (FOB), which KSF soldiers were actively building while the Eagle 6 exercises were underway.

2LT Sebastian Paradise, platoon leader of the 2nd Platoon, 831st Engineer Company, said his unit supported the KSF engineers as they constructed their new FOB. That work included creating roads, putting up fences, establishing proper site drainage and conducting technical recon for the site.

“We went with them on the recon just to provide more expertise,” 2LT Paradise said. “When you’re moving excavators, they can get up there in height. There are a lot of sharp turns and some areas where the roads were a little rougher. You have to be cognizant of all that. At one point, we knew there were going to be some low-hanging wires that [the KSF soldiers] weren’t going to be able to make it under, but they figured out how to get around those obstacles.”

In creating roads, the engineers took what were basically crude paths

and turned them into paved roads. 2LT Paradise said the paths were cleared of muddy buildup and stone was laid down. In addition to helping with traction and stability, the stone will also serve to provide proper drainage for the new road.

“It’s really important because we have the medical tents farther down the road,” 2LT Paradise explained. “If we do have a real-life scenario where we need a medevac, we now didn’t have to worry about the vehicles getting stuck somewhere and not being able to [transport] the patients.”

The Iowa Soldiers also helped the KSF members add concertina wire to the base’s perimeter, establish a control point for the front gate and build fortified fighting positions using sandbags.

The work was substantial, but fairly straightforward and the soldiers from the two forces – leveraging experiences with one another based on past SPP events – worked well together.

Even the common issue of language barrier, which plagues most multinational training events, was lessened by the troops’ familiarity with the partnering force. During the seven years Iowa and Kosovo have been State partners, KSF soldiers have traveled to Iowa for classes on prior missions, where they have been able to improve their English. In that same



Members of the Rapid Response Brigade of the Kosovo Security Force set up a checkpoint near Marevc, Kosovo, May 6, 2018, in support of the Eagle 6 training exercise.



SGM Dan Cain (center) speaks with Pvt. Kushtrim Lutfiu, Rapid Response Brigade, Kosovo Security Force, and a fellow Kosovo soldier at a roadblock near Marevc, Kosovo, while participating in the Eagle 6 exercise in May of this year.

time, Iowa's Soldiers have also had the opportunity to pick up a bit of Albanian during deployments to the Eastern European nation.

One Soldier who overcame the language barrier is SGT Briger Willcott, a heavy equipment operator with the 831st.

"When we first got there, we were setting up tents and [the KSF soldiers] kept yelling 'cekic,'" SGT Willcott recalled. "I finally asked one of the guys, 'What is cekic?' He was like, 'Oh, it means hammer.' You just figure out little stuff here and there."

With the help of the Iowa National Guard and other NATO countries, the KSF is expected to continue to develop its doctrine, resources and protocols.

"They really embrace Americans," SGM Cain said. "They're very grateful for the help that we provided to them as they fought for their independence and their sovereignty."

SGM Cain noted the incremental progress already made by the KSF as indicative of their future advancement.

"They will be able to achieve NATO certification in the future, even if that goal might still be a little far off," SGM Cain concluded.

2LT Paradise noted that the positive impact of the Eagle exercises – which play a part in the tactical growth of the KSF – is easily recognizable.

"The thing I enjoyed the most was

*"Participating in this exercise is an incredible opportunity for us as international partners to train our forces in a combined, joint and global environment."*

— COL Justin Wagner

being able to see how far [they've come]," he said. "You could see the changes they have implemented based on AAR [after action report] comments from years past. The growth was incredible to see. It's

a willingness and it's almost palpable. You can see it. You can touch it. They want to do their best."

During a local press conference held in Kosovo, COL Wagner summarized his thoughts about Eagle 6 this way. "I am impressed with the planning and the attention to detail with which the members of the Kosovo Security Force have approached this exercise. It is a testament to the focus they have placed on building capacity within their current mandate and developing interoperability with their [NATO, Kosovo Forces] and regional partners. This will truly benefit all the people of the region should a disaster strike." ●



SPC Brady Verbrugge (right), 831st Engineer Company, Iowa Army National Guard, works with one of his State Partner counterparts, a soldier of the Kosovo Security Force, to fill sandbags at their forward operating base near Pristina, Kosovo, during the multinational exercise Eagle 6 held this past spring.

# Max your APFT performance with **GUARD FIT**

**D**eveloped by Guard Your Health, a comprehensive health and wellness campaign for Army National Guard Soldiers, the Guard Fit Android mobile app is designed to help Soldiers improve Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) scores and stay fit and mission ready year-round. It is a one-stop-shop for APFT training, tracking progress toward fitness goals and finding resources on a variety of health topics.

*The Army National Guard's goal is to recruit and retain Soldiers that are, and continue to be, physically fit. Fitness is the primary driver for readiness in our formations. If a Soldier is struggling with fitness, we want to provide resources and tools to help them get on track and stay on track."*

— COL Robert Kuster, Chief, Army National Guard Strength Maintenance Division



## **TRACK**

Set APFT goals and track your progress



## **TRAIN**

Test yourself with APFT event timers and customize your daily PT plan



## **COMPETE**

Find friends, form groups and issue challenges



## **TOOLS**

Find resources to help you meet your goals

[gyh.tips/Guard-Fit](http://gyh.tips/Guard-Fit)





*Exercise*

# *African Lion 18:*

## **MORE INTEROPERABILITY IN MOROCCO**

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

Utah Army National Guard photos by MAJ Samantha Madsen

**H**eld this past April, Exercise African Lion 18 was a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff-sponsored, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM)-scheduled, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa-led, joint and combined exercise conducted in the Kingdom of Morocco with a spoke in Tunisia.

The two-week exercise provided training and promoted interoperability between the United States and Moroccan forces. Approximately 900 U.S. service members worked alongside 400 members of the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces for the annual exercise. The training also included 250 members of the Tunisian Armed Forces plus armed service members from Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy and Spain.

Participating U.S. military forces included units from the Utah Army

National Guard; Colorado, Georgia and Utah Air National Guards; active duty Army; U.S. Marine Corps; U.S. Marine Corps Reserve; U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force.

African Lion 18 consisted of several training missions completed throughout Morocco. These missions included military training in command-post activities, academics, field training focused on countering violent extremist organizations, aviation training, a senior leader dialogue and humanitarian civic assistance (HCA) training.

The Utah Army National Guard Medical Command was responsible for the HCA component of Exercise African Lion 18. Soldiers from the Utah Medical Command worked from a mobile hospital, established and run by the Royal Moroccan Army Medical Battalion, in the small, rural town of Bounaamane, located in the Tiznit Province.

“We came in as [part of] an interoperability and a mutual collaboration effort to help the people in this particular area [of Bounaamane],” MAJ Samantha Madsen of the Utah Medical Command explained.

Since 2003, the Utah National Guard has partnered with Morocco as part of the National Guard’s State Partnership Program (SPP), and the Department of Defense has recognized Morocco as one of the Nation’s steadfast partners in the effort to defeat the Islamic States of Iraq and Syria. Annual events, like African Lion, serve to both strengthen those partnerships and offer opportunities to improve mutual understanding of each other’s military tactics, techniques and procedures.

“Morocco has been a long-standing ally of the United States,” said MAJ Martin Kerbo of the Utah Medical Command. “It is important to keep [good] relationships





LEFT: CPT Justin Couraud and SSG Kurt Peters, a dentist and dental technician respectively, both with the Utah Army National Guard, perform a dental procedure on a local Moroccan woman during the Humanitarian Civic Assistance component of Exercise African Lion 2018 in Bounaamane, Morocco.

BELOW: MAJ Che Eissinger, deputy commander of the Utah National Guard medical detachment, poses for a photo with a young Moroccan boy during the Humanitarian Civic Assistance component of Exercise African Lion 2018 in Bounaamane, Morocco, April 2018.

Utah National Guard photo by TSgt Amber Monio

between us and our [SPP] partner. It deepens our bond with them. I wish we could do it more often, but the exercise only happens once a year. It gives us the opportunity to assess our mission-essential tasks as well as foster camaraderie with our [partner] nation.”

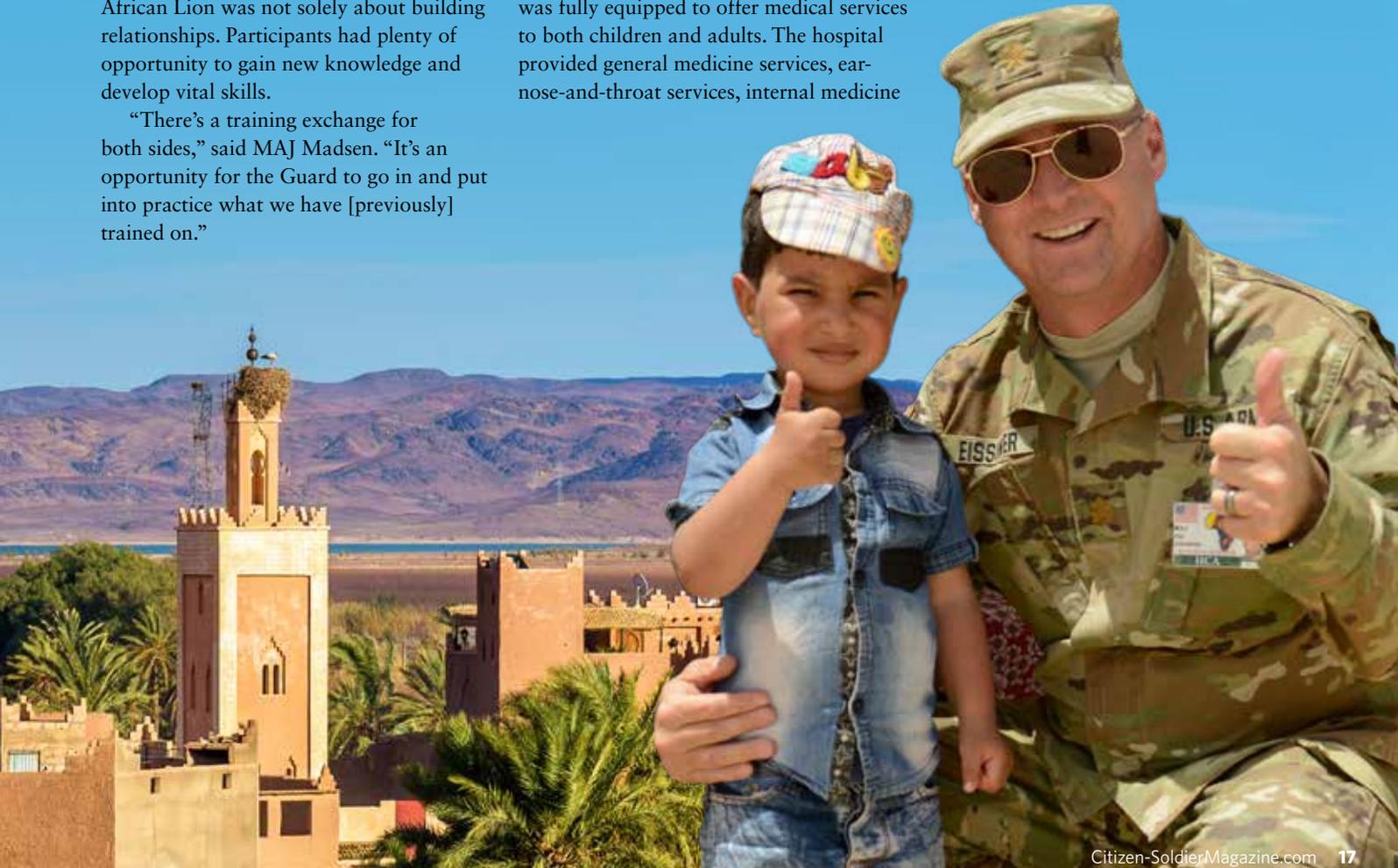
While camaraderie is an important component of any partnership, Exercise African Lion was not solely about building relationships. Participants had plenty of opportunity to gain new knowledge and develop vital skills.

“There’s a training exchange for both sides,” said MAJ Madsen. “It’s an opportunity for the Guard to go in and put into practice what we have [previously] trained on.”

During the two-week exercise, the Utah medical Soldiers not only enhanced their capabilities and developed their relationship with their Moroccan counterparts, they also helped to treat more than 6,000 patients in Bounaamane.

With a 14-bed recovery area, x-ray and ultrasound machines plus a blood work lab, the mobile hospital in Bounaamane was fully equipped to offer medical services to both children and adults. The hospital provided general medicine services, ear-nose-and-throat services, internal medicine

services, gynecological services, pediatric services plus dental, optometry and psychiatric services. Exercise participants issued eyeglasses and performed root canals, fillings, cleanings and tooth extractions. They conducted cataract surgeries, gall bladder removals, hernia repairs and fatty benign tumor removals.





TOP: SGT Samantha Miller, a member of the Utah Army National Guard and a dental technician, takes a dental x-ray of a young Moroccan boy while serving as part of Exercise African Lion 2018 in Bounaamane, Morocco.



BOTTOM: Utah Army National Guard's CPT Mark Bennett, a pediatrician in his civilian job, examines a child's leg during the Humanitarian Civic Assistance component of Exercise African Lion 2018 in Bounaamane, Morocco.

children because the form is different, it takes more time. It's important that you get it right."

MAJ Madsen was impressed with the overall efficiency of the medical operations, despite their complexities.

"The pharmacy we had there would sometimes be lacking something specific that a patient needed," MAJ Madsen said. "But the Moroccans were very good about responding to medication needs. If you think about the chain of supply and all that is involved to get medicine into the patient's hands – from the physician, to the pharmacy, to the American leadership, to the Moroccan leadership, the government and hospital funding for medication – it's a lot. The turnaround time was very fast and that was really impressive."

"It was a very successful exercise," MAJ Kerbo said. "We helped an underprivileged, underserved population while our commander was able to assess our ability to integrate with Moroccans and provide medical service. It also placed us in an austere environment and helped our commander observe our ability to complete mission-essential tasks."

With differences in language and procedures, the exercise presented a few challenges. However, according to MAJ Kerbo, the collaboration between the two forces allowed for those challenges to be easily alleviated.

"The language barrier was the toughest, but it was easily overcome," MAJ Kerbo explained. "[The Moroccans] had the same common operation picture. [It can be difficult] when you all speak the same

language and you are dealing with similar, but different doctrine. When you add in the twist of the language barrier, it can be somewhat challenging."

This was especially true concerning medications for patients. Because of the differences not only in language, but also in the variances of medications in Morocco, interpreters were utilized and extra steps were taken in order to safely treat patients.

"Some of the drugs that [Moroccans] use are not approved in the United States," explained MAJ Madsen. "That's not necessarily a bad thing. The U.S. approves one form of a drug and another country may approve a different form of the drug. But all of the language inserts and packaging were in French. When trying to determine proper dosing, especially with

The leadership coordination between the United States and Morocco most impressed MAJ Kerbo.

"Anytime you have leadership work together, there's always little rough spots you have to get over," he said. "I think for the most part, the standout was how well the leadership worked together for a common goal, which was not only for us to [display] the ability of the units to perform a mission, but also to provide medical services to the people of Tiznit."

The minor challenges Exercise African Lion presented



allowed Soldiers to grow and become more efficient in their tasks. These experiences also allowed the Utah Guard Soldiers to build upon the relationships they had previously formed with their Moroccan partners.

“Relationships are what help us to be good neighbors,” explained MAJ Kerbo. “Without those relationships, it would be difficult to perform missions like this where people are provided medical care. We were able to work and overcome training challenges that are associated with performing missions within [another] country. When we have those obstacles like language, perception of how things should be done and different doctrines, [having relationships] helps us maintain our adaptability and versatility and it also helps us to hone our skills.”

Having participation from Soldiers with a wide range of backgrounds, skill sets and years of tenure, African Lion 18 presented a unique environment that allowed for heightened levels of learning across specialties.

“You had some of our folks who had never been involved in an exercise like this, and then we had some who had been two or three times,” commented MAJ Madsen. “There was great cross training between the medics. They were learning new skills and had an opportunity to put into practice some of the things they probably would not get elsewhere. Someone who may normally do vitals, may have gotten to work in a dental tent as an assistant. They loved that.”

At the end of the day, one of the most important outcomes of any multinational exercise is the serving and protecting of

“  
**To be able to go  
in and help an  
underserved  
population and to  
see how grateful  
they were - that  
was [amazing]**  
”

— MAJ Samantha Madsen

the people of our allied nations. That fact was not lost on these Utah Guard Soldiers.

“The difference we were able to make was my favorite aspect of the exercise,” said Utah Medical Command’s SSG Jennifer Brady. “The kids were excited to get certain issues taken care of that they had been dealing with for some time. That was great to see. I enjoyed the changes we were able to bring about with the providers there.”

MAJ Madsen emphasized the value of the bonds formed between the United States and Morocco as a result of Exercise African Lion 18.

“To be able to go in and help an underserved population and to see how grateful they were – that was [amazing],” said MAJ Madsen. “The relationships that developed between some of the Americans and the Moroccans was also great. We were in close proximity when performing these exercises and everyone worked together so well. It was very impressive to see. I really think that some of those relationships may last a lifetime.” ●



MAJ Samantha Madsen, a planner for the Utah Army National Guard, poses with Moroccan women and young girls waiting for dental services provided by Utah Army National Guard Soldiers as part of Exercise African Lion 2018 in Bounaamane, Morocco.



SGT Stubby pictured in his battle vest.  
Photo courtesy Connecticut State Library



PVT Robert Conroy and SGT Stubby.  
Photo courtesy National Museum of America, History Division of Armed Forces

# SERGEANT STUBBY

## A Guard Soldier's Best Friend

BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER MAJ Darrin Haas

**A**cross the United States in the late spring of 1917, millions of Americans were preparing to enter the “war to end all wars” that had been raging across Europe for years. The United States declared war on Germany in April, resulting in thousands of Army National Guard Soldiers being mobilized in their home states to train and ready themselves for combat in France.

In Connecticut, hundreds of National Guard Soldiers from the 1st and 2nd Connecticut Infantry headquartered in Hartford and New Haven attended training camps, with a large contingent at Camp Yale – a mobilization camp on the Yale University campus in New Haven.

As the Soldiers trained, they weren’t the only ones interested in preparing for war. One day, while the men were drilling,

a stray dog wandered onto the Yale campus and started watching the men. He began hanging around the Soldiers, and they played with him during breaks and in their time off. The mutt, a mixed-breed believed to be part pit bull terrier or Boston terrier, followed the Soldiers around the camp and even participated in some of their drills.

The dog was a great morale boost for the Soldiers during their long days of training and time away from home, and they made him an unofficial mascot. One of the Soldiers, J. Robert Conroy, a 25-year-old private from New Britain, Connecticut, forged the closest bond with the dog and named him “Stubby” because of his short tail. He also taught Stubby how to salute and perform some of the unit’s marching commands.

After a few months, the Connecticut units were merged into the 102nd Infantry Regiment under the 26th “Yankee” Division. Eventually, they were ordered to sail for France, but the Soldiers did not want to leave their mascot behind. So PVT Conroy smuggled Stubby onto the train heading to the port, and then onto the troop ship, hiding him under an overcoat to get past the ship’s guards.

Once on board, he kept him hidden in the ship’s coal hold as they sailed across the Atlantic. The ruse didn’t last long, as PVT Conroy’s commander soon discovered Stubby. As the officer decided whether to send the dog home, Stubby saluted him, just like he was trained to do back at Camp Yale. Because of this, the officer decided to let Stubby stay on board as long as he didn’t cause any problems.

No longer in hiding and free to roam the ship, Stubby became very popular with the crew. One of the ship's machinists made Stubby his own set of metal "dog tags." When the troops finally disembarked in the port of Saint-Nazaire on France's western coast after crossing the Atlantic, Stubby disembarked as the unit mascot.

Eventually, COL John Parker, the regimental commander, gave special orders that Stubby was to remain with the 26th Division throughout the war. One Soldier said Stubby "was the only member of his regiment that could talk back to [COL Parker] and get away with it."

On Feb. 5, 1918, the 102nd entered the trenches at Chemin des Dames, north of Soissons, where Soldiers were under constant fire for over a month. Stubby was right alongside them. Unfortunately, shortly after entering the trenches, he was injured by mustard gas after an enemy attack. He was removed from the trenches for a short period to recover, then returned to the front line with a specially designed gas mask for protection.

After his injury, Stubby learned to identify the presence of gas and started warning Soldiers when he sensed the deadly chemicals were present. During

one attack, he ran through the trenches warning sleeping Soldiers of the danger, barking and nipping at them, saving hundreds.

Stubby also learned to perform other combat tasks to help the Soldiers of the 102nd. He assisted medics in locating wounded men on the battlefield, he could hear the whine of incoming shells before humans and warn them of the threat, and he was there to improve morale and remind everyone of home.

In April 1918, Stubby was wounded. During a German raid into the allied trenches, he was on top of a trench helping to repulse the intruders. As the Germans retreated, they threw hand grenades to cover their escape. One of the grenades went off and some of the shrapnel hit Stubby in the foreleg and chest. After the raid, he was evacuated from the trenches for medical treatment, where he recovered from his wounds while also lifting the morale of the other injured men. Once he recovered, Stubby returned to the trenches.

Stubby didn't just endear himself to Soldiers. After the 102nd retook Château-Thierry from the Germans, many of the women in town wanted to repay the Soldiers and Stubby for their help. They made him a coat to keep him warm and on which to pin his medals.



SGT Stubby leading a Legion parade.

Photo courtesy National Museum of America, History Division of Armed Forces



SGT Stubby being pinned with a medal by GEN John Pershing in 1921.

Photo courtesy National Museum of America, History Division of Armed Forces



SGT Stubby during a visit to the White House to meet President Coolidge, November 1924.

Photo courtesy National Museum of America, History Division of Armed Forces



SGT Stubby rides a float with a little girl, Louise Johnson, during an animal parade held in Washington, D.C., May 1921.

Photo courtesy Library of Congress, Harris and Ewing Collection

Toward the end of the war, Stubby made a major contribution in the capture of a German spy. After the spy infiltrated an allied foxhole, Stubby discovered him, gave chase and attacked the German, biting him on the rear and holding him until American troops could capture him.

Because of this action, Stubby was recommended for a promotion to sergeant, and he became the first dog in the American military to be awarded the rank. (Whether Stubby was “officially” promoted has been questioned.) The German prisoner was also wearing an Iron Cross, which the Americans took from him and pinned onto Stubby’s coat.

Stubby fought alongside the Guard Soldiers of the 102nd Infantry Regiment for 10 months, participating in four offensives: Aisne-Marne, Champagne-Marne, St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne. He would participate in 17 battles, and the unit awarded him multiple medals for bravery and even a Purple Heart.

For the return trip to the United States, PVT Conroy still had to smuggle Stubby back aboard the troop ship. Because Stubby was now well known after being written about in many of the newspapers back home, it was a much easier voyage,

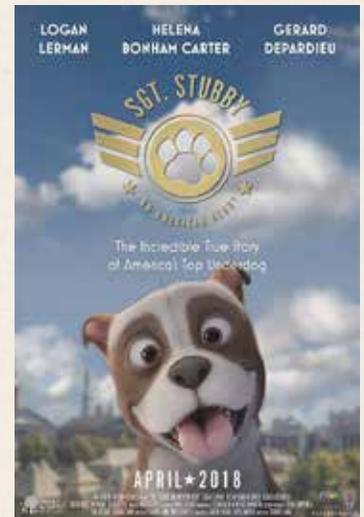
with many of the officers turning a blind eye to the stowaway.

Stubby returned home a national celebrity. He marched in, and sometimes led, parades throughout the country. In time, he would meet three different presidents, and GEN John J. Pershing awarded Stubby a gold medal from the Humane Education Society in 1921.

In the fall of 1921, PVT Conroy started attending the Georgetown University Law Center, bringing Stubby with him. Stubby often acted as the Georgetown Hoyas’ mascot and performed at halftime of football games.

In 1926, Stubby died in his sleep. Following his death, Stubby’s skin was preserved and mounted on a plaster cast. Those remains and his blanket were put on display at the National Red Cross Museum.

In 1956, Stubby was donated to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., and he is still remembered today. In 2018, an animated film, *Sgt. Stubby: An American Hero*, was released that recounted his heroic story. The Connecticut National Guard calls Stubby “the most famous and decorated war dog in U.S. history.” ●



In the spring of this year, the iconic story of SGT Stubby was made into a feature length animated film. It tells the story of this heroic service animal while offering an educational introduction to war history and promoting the concepts of teamwork and courage.

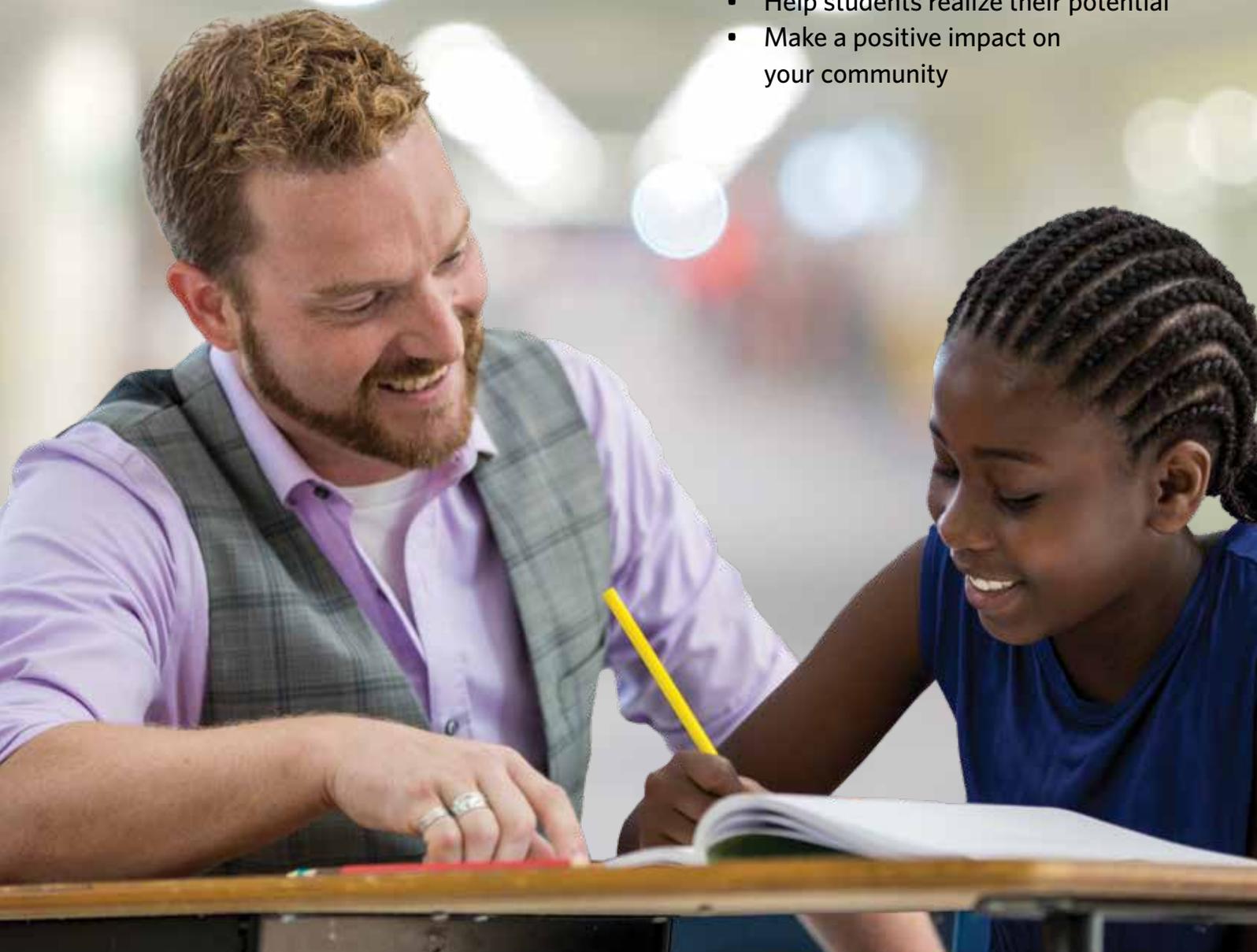
# Do **YOU** Want to Be an Educator?

## **TROOPS TO TEACHERS**

can help Soldiers transition to a teaching career in K-12 public education. Current, separated and retired members of the National Guard are eligible for Troops to Teachers program services.

## **WHY SHOULD YOU TEACH?**

- Make a difference in young people's lives
- Use your military experience to bring subjects to life
- Help students realize their potential
- Make a positive impact on your community



For more information, visit

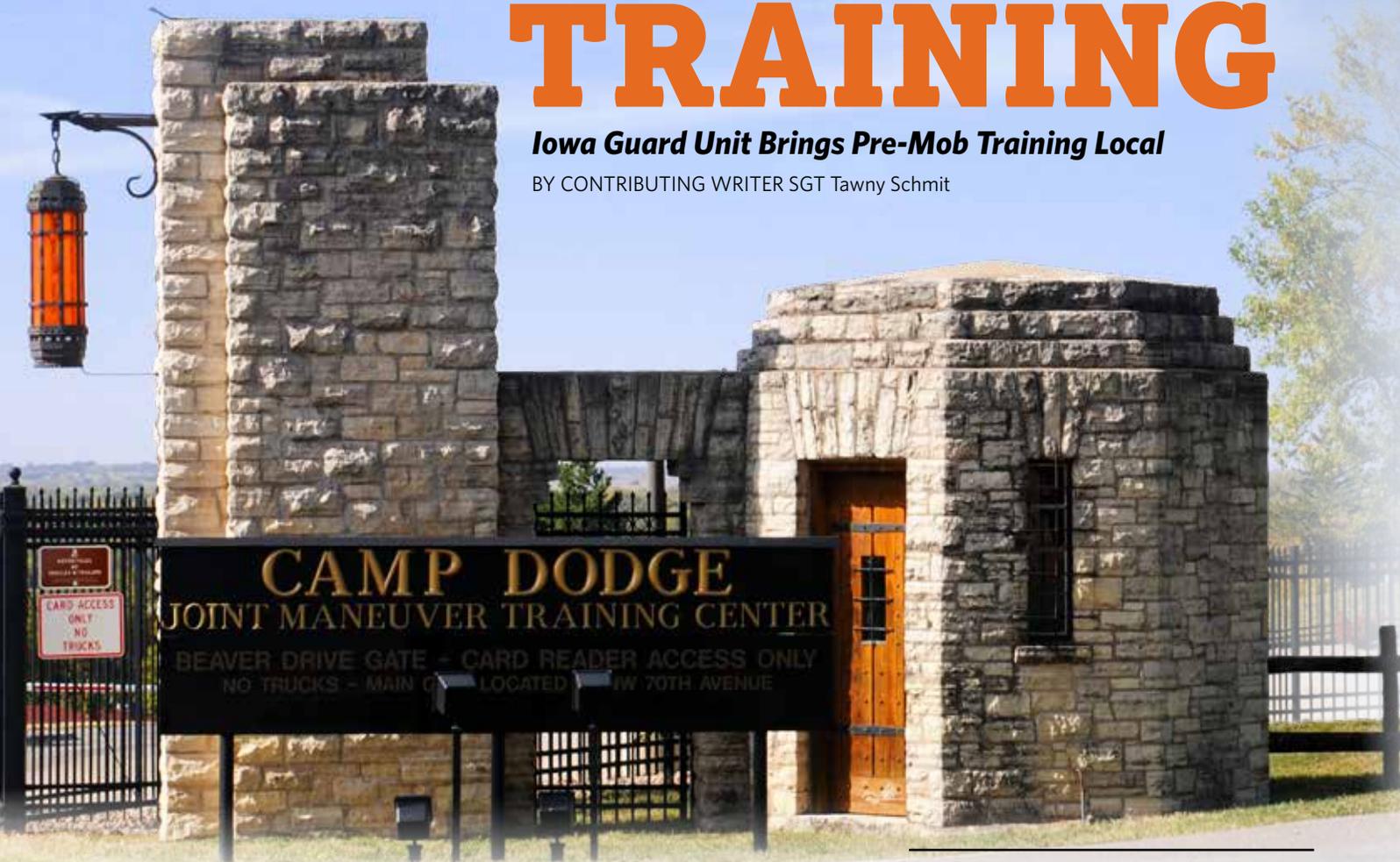
[www.ProudToServeAgain.com](http://www.ProudToServeAgain.com)



# DOWN HOME TRAINING

## *Iowa Guard Unit Brings Pre-Mob Training Local*

BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER SGT Tawny Schmit



Camp Dodge entrance gate

Photo courtesy Iowa Army National Guard

**S**oldiers from Indiana, Kentucky and Texas all converged on Camp Dodge in March of this year to support the Iowa Army National Guard's 1034th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (CSSB) during its pre-mobilization Mission Training Exercise (MTX).

Normally, units conduct these exercises after mobilizing. However, thanks to extensive collaboration between the 1034th CSSB leadership and the leadership of supporting units, Soldiers of the 1034th were able to receive this valuable training while still in their home state. The exercise was Iowa's first home station MTX. Among its pluses were reductions in cost for the State and a reduction in the amount

of time Soldiers spent away from their Families before deployment.

### **Making It Happen**

SFC Rusty Cabossart, 1034th CSSB's acting first sergeant, said the idea to host the MTX at Camp Dodge started as a casual suggestion. "It came up in conversation, and we made it happen," he said.

The exercise helped prepare the 1034th for its upcoming deployment by providing rigorous and relevant training for a role that would be somewhat unconventional for the unit. LTC Christine Brooks, 1034th CSSB commander, said her main objective for the MTX was to prepare the unit to manage contractors on deployment. While

civilian contractors often augment U.S. military personnel in overseas operations, the management of those contractors is a nontraditional role for a combat sustainment support battalion (CSSB).

As a requirement for mobilization, the 1034th CSSB needed this training to be validated by external evaluators.

MAJ Benjamin Glasgall, the exercise's project officer and scenario manager with the 2-393rd Brigade Sustainment Battalion, 120th Infantry Brigade, 1st Army Division West, managed scenario simulation and information flow during the MTX. MAJ Glasgall said the success of the training was largely due to communication between the units before the exercise.

"Over the last few months, we've had

in-process reviews that served to refine what the commander wanted to get [out of the training], so we could take her feedback and develop various realistic scenarios,” MAJ Glasgall said. “The dialogue and communication throughout the months leading up to the exercise helped them perform exceedingly well.”

LTC Brooks said the home station training allowed the 1034th CSSB to save on travel costs, complete the training within its two-week annual training period and reduce the amount of time needed at a mobilization site.

SFC Cabossart said units may spend more than a month at Fort Hood, Texas, to complete training. Bringing the MTX to Camp Dodge enabled the 1034th CSSB to cut that timeline to two weeks.

“That’s a significant amount of time these people can spend with their families versus spending it at Fort Hood,” SFC Cabossart noted.

## Building Relationships

The 1034th CSSB conducted the MTX in conjunction with the 101st Airborne Division Sustainment Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, which is serving as the 1034th’s higher headquarters during the mobilization.

“Getting the relationship with the 101st started before we even get over into theater is huge,” LTC Brooks said.

CPT Andrew Paulin, a section planner in the Support Operations section of the 101st Airborne Division Sustainment Brigade, said the brigade’s main objective was to validate the 1034th CSSB’s systems and reporting processes.

“From my standpoint, it’s a unique challenge for them mainly because they’re falling in with a smaller staff to manage a fairly large piece of the puzzle downrange,” CPT Paulin said. “This exercise, if done right, should give them all the tools to work as a team and meet those expectations.”

The “large piece of the puzzle” Paulin referred to is the Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB), an organization the 1034th CSSB will support during deployment. Since SFABs are a fairly new addition to Army force structure, proper integration is crucial.

“The major theme is that this is a nontraditional CSSB role,”

LTC Brooks said.

“There are going to be complexities ... so we’re adapting and formulating how those changes will impact us and what we will do going forward.”

## The Perfect Storm

The MTX was set up in a small brick building with rooms separating personnel to simulate distance training. SSG Nathan Moore, a water treatment specialist with the 1034th CSSB’s support operations section, said the training environment differed from that to which the unit is accustomed. The separated mission structure posed some challenges.

“Our initial hiccup wasn’t that we weren’t prepared or that we didn’t have the right mentality,” SSG Moore said. “We simply had products in front of us that needed to be improved. We needed to learn how to communicate. We weren’t all together in one group.”

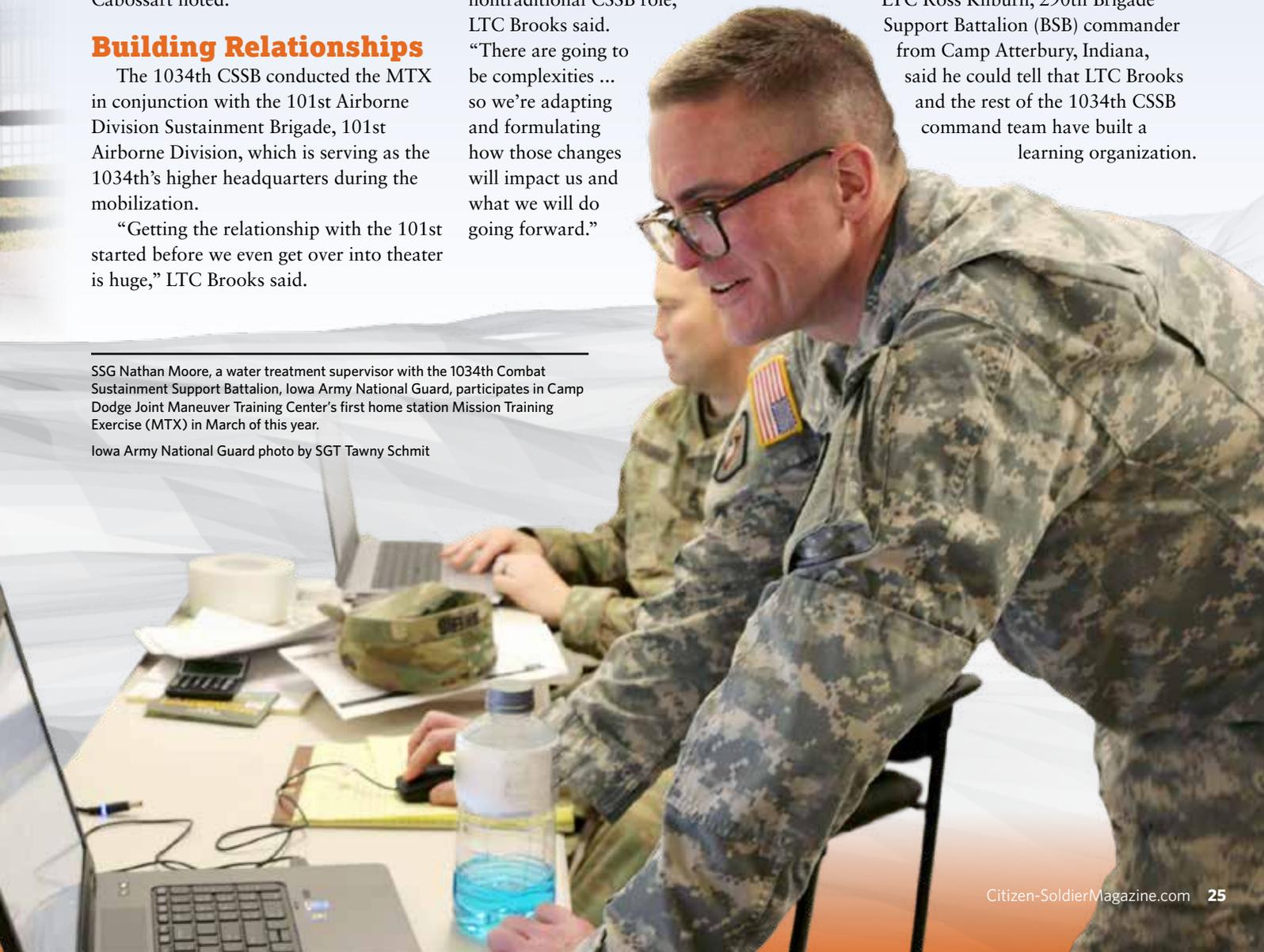
After overcoming these initial challenges, he said the exercise went smoothly. The 1034th CSSB was able to build tools, locate resources and identify areas in which it could improve.

LTC Ross Kilburn, 290th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) commander from Camp Atterbury, Indiana, said he could tell that LTC Brooks and the rest of the 1034th CSSB command team have built a learning organization.

---

SSG Nathan Moore, a water treatment supervisor with the 1034th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Iowa Army National Guard, participates in Camp Dodge Joint Maneuver Training Center’s first home station Mission Training Exercise (MTX) in March of this year.

Iowa Army National Guard photo by SGT Tawny Schmit



During the training, LTC Kilburn and his team acted as evaluators, prompting the Soldiers of the 1034th with scenarios and then assessing their performance.

“It’s such a short exercise, but in the last two days, we’ve seen marked improvement in several areas,” LTC Kilburn said. “The unit is very open to coaching and mentoring. As an [evaluator], that’s the perfect storm. We come in with decades of active duty experience to try and pass on that knowledge and doctrine as we evaluate.”

CPT Matthew Berry, a plans officer with the 1034th CSSB, noted the gratitude of the unit’s members for the knowledge offered by the 290th BSB, and the exercise’s other supporting units, as this sharing of expertise will only serve to make the 1034th a stronger and better equipped unit once in theater.

## Moving Forward

MG Timothy Orr, the adjutant general of the Iowa National Guard, was pleased with the exercise’s results, according to LTC Kilburn. MG Orr hopes to hold more pre-mobilization training in the State.

LTC Brooks said the exercise was successful in preparing the unit to better work with civilian contractors overseas.

SSG Moore, who deployed with the 1034th CSSB in 2012, attested to the benefits the proactive and focused nature of the training would bring to Soldiers. “This exercise really focused more on the actual mission and directly preparing for it,” he said.

Since its previous deployments – in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2006 and 2007 and Operation

Enduring Freedom in 2012 and 2013 – the 1034th CSSB has changed its command team and mission, SSG Moore said. The unit has worked to identify individual skill sets and build a team mentality.

MAJ Glasgall said he believes that team mentality will pay dividends during the deployment.

“What I’ve seen working with the 1034th CSSB over the last few months is that they are an incredibly capable, well-functioning team,” MAJ Glasgall said. “All the officers and noncommissioned officers I’ve interacted with are highly professional. I think they have the right people with the right skill set to deploy and accomplish their mission.”

On June 23, about 40 Soldiers from the 1034th CSSB were honored at Camp Dodge before deployment. The unit then traveled to its mobilization station in Fort Hood, Texas, for additional training before its assignment overseas in the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) theater of operations. ●



TOP: CPT Brian Lynch, SSG Nathan Moore and MSG Joel Laird, all of the 1034th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, stand at attention as MAJ Jarid Catrenich patches the three with the 101st Airborne Division Sustainment Brigade patch while the 1034th served under the 101st during deployment in the U.S. CENTCOM theater of operations.

Image courtesy Iowa Army National Guard

ABOVE: Members of the 1034th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Iowa Army National Guard, perform command duties as part of a Mission Training Exercise at Camp Dodge Joint Maneuver Training Center at Johnston, Iowa, March 2018.

Iowa Army National Guard photo by SGT Tawny Schmit

LEFT: LTC Ross Kilburn, Battalion Commander of 1st Battalion, 290th Brigade Support Battalion, Camp Atterbury, Ind., talks over mission plans with the command team as the 290th evaluates the mission performance of the Iowa Army National Guard 1034th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion during a Mission Training Exercise at Camp Dodge Joint Maneuver Training Center this past March.

Iowa Army National Guard photo by SGT Tawny Schmit

# SHOOTING AROUND CORNERS

NEW NIGHT VISION TECHNOLOGY TAKES TARGETING CUTTING EDGE

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

Photo courtesy BAE Systems

**S**ituational awareness for dismounted Soldiers is going next level with the new Enhanced Night Vision Goggles III/ Family of Weapon Sight-Individual (ENVG III/FWS-I).

When operating downrange, the ability for Soldiers to quickly and accurately lock onto their targets is crucial. This is especially true in dense urban areas where targets are often obscured by surrounding buildings or objects and during nighttime operations when visibility may be low.

The two technologies currently used to aid in increasing situational awareness – thermal weapon sight for identifying obscured targets, and night vision goggles for vision at night and in low light situations – are being combined by BAE Systems into one revolutionary device.

ENVG III/FWS-I's combination of advanced night vision goggle technology, thermal viewing and weapon sight, merged into a single view, creates a powerful night-

vision package that significantly increases Soldier lethality.

“I believe in our operational testing our Soldiers were hitting over 75 percent shooting from the hip,” said Joey Jayachandran, senior program manager for the ENVG II/FWS-I system at BAE Systems.

The weapon sight portion of the system, the FWS-I, employs a wireless camera positioned on the rifle that transmits to the goggle real-time images of the object at which the rifle is aimed.

Jayachandran also reported that residual heat signatures are visible with the goggles thermal feature for up to 1.5 minutes after the target has moved, giving Soldiers a heightened sense of when enemy combatants may be in the area.

Rapid Target Acquisition technology allows Soldiers to simultaneously display the weapon sight imagery and aim point in the goggle, thus removing the need to

shoulder the weapon to aim. Soldiers can locate and engage enemy targets from any location and virtually any position. This feature enables Soldiers to more quickly adapt to challenging terrains, potentially giving them the ability to see and shoot around a corner without being exposed.

“The biggest advantage is it's a weapons system that helps protect the warfighter,” explained Jayachandran. “[Soldiers] don't have to expose their head in the line of fire. To aim you can just expose your rifle and your hands around corners in close combat or over an armored vehicle. This is the first time you can actually do that and fire from that same position.”

Additionally, because the FWS-I is provided as a clip-on, there is no need to adjust the site every time it is taken on or off the weapon, said Dave Smialek, director of business development for BAE Systems' Precision Guidance & Sensing Solutions.

“The capability gap that we were



Sensors at PEO Soldier, explained that there is a steep learning curve on the system for most Soldiers.

“We just got through with the tests with the 4th Infantry Division back in June,” he said. “We only spent about 40 hours of in-classroom training, but we also spent about a week on the range or so. That’s where the Soldiers were really starting to get it, understand it and feel it on the range.”

The new night vision mobility and targeting system may have been challenging to grasp at first, but once the Soldiers of the 4th ID got the hang of it, they were generally all-in on the new technology.

“One Soldier, a noncommissioned officer who didn’t like [the system] at first, later asked me, ‘When are we getting this fielded?’” MAJ Smith commented. “He said he wanted it [right away].”

Fielding of both pieces of the ENVG III/FWS-I system is expected to begin in 2019, with dismounted Soldiers being the first in line to receive the new equipment. ●

tasked with [closing] by developing this technology was the rapid target acquisition capability,” said LTC Anthony Douglas, product manager for Soldier Maneuver Sensors at Program Executive Office (PEO) Soldier. “We are allowing the Soldier to actually see what is on their weapons sight, saving them time from having to bring the weapon to his eye.”

Soldiers can switch view modes with the simple push of a button. The system provides image overlay, scope-only and picture-in-picture modes, allowing Soldiers to see in their goggles only the image from the ENVG III, only the image from the FWS-I, or a combination of the two with the view from the weapon site camera in a 19-degree bubble that overlaps the main ENVG III image when looking through the goggle. The ENVG III and FWS-I can also be used independently of each other.

Twelve-micron thermal technology provides the goggles with sharp image quality in both the day and night. With the traditional night vision goggles, targets tend to blend into the background. With the ENVG III/FWS-I, targets that may have once been obscured are now fully visible. Dean Kissinger, electronics engineer with PEO Soldier, said that the contrast created by the night vision equipment really causes targets to “pop out.”

“In the case of the goggle, if you look

at it compared to the ENVG-II, it’s a significant size and weight improvement, but it’s the dual-sensor capability – the [night vision] and the thermal – that is a big improvement,” noted Smialek.

During a 2017 reliability growth test with the 4th Infantry Division (ID) based at Fort Carson, Colorado, Soldiers rated the thermal imaging as a particularly advantageous feature, as it allowed them to see through smoke when using it.

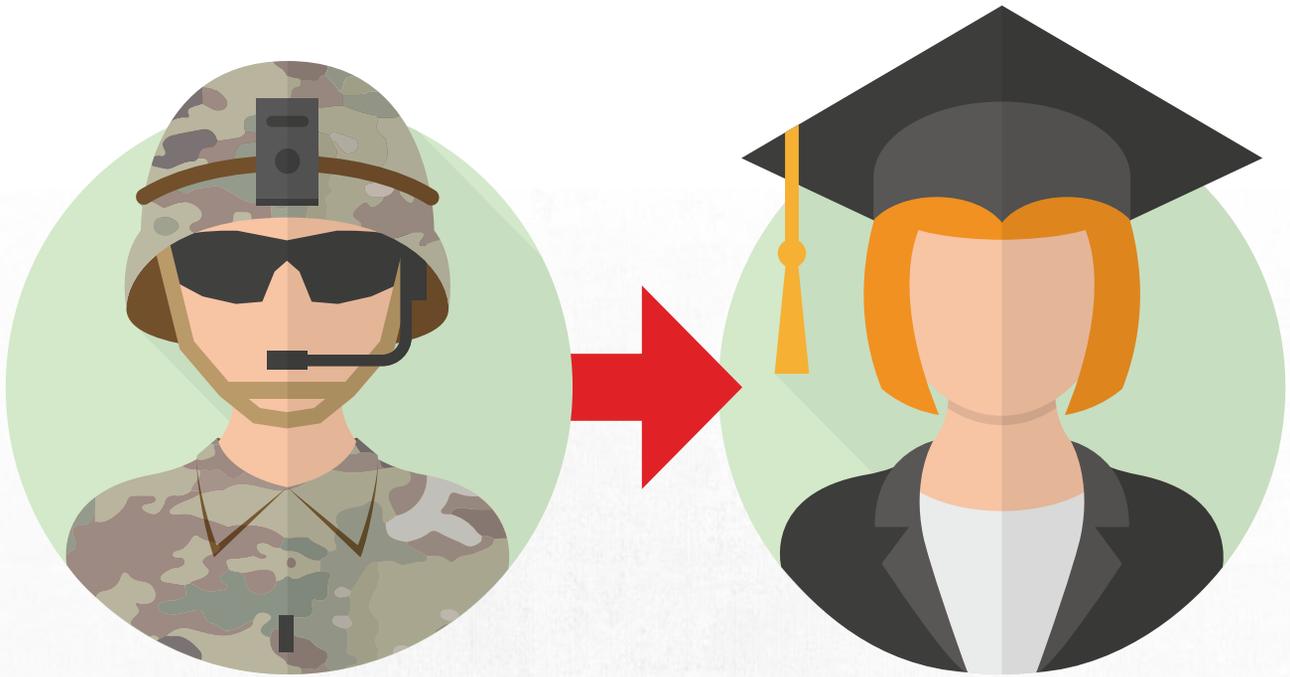
The new FWS-I comes in at under a pound and is less than half the size of previous versions. BAE Systems engineers reduced the weight by cutting the optic size in half, thus lightening the load Soldiers carry into combat.

The ENVG III/FWS-I system is optimized for minimal power consumption giving it the ability to run longer on a smaller battery. In mild temperatures battery life for the system is 10 hours, while in extreme conditions the battery will run five hours without charging.

The system’s short-range wireless transmission also enables multiple units to work in close proximity without interference or jamming.

MAJ Kevin Smith, assistant product manager for Soldier Maneuver





## ***OFFICERS WITHOUT DEGREES***

**Army National Guard officer candidates and company-grade officers are eligible for assistance with earning a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution prior to promotion to the rank of captain.**

The following qualify for the program:

- Officer Candidates
- Officer Strength Managers
- Commanders
- Military Personnel Officers
- Education Services Officers

Counseling is available to coach program participants from their current academic status through degree completion.

For more information, contact your State Education Services Officer or the Guard Support Center's Officer Counseling Team at **[officers@ng.army.mil](mailto:officers@ng.army.mil) or 866-628-5999.**





# REIMAGINING THE MEGANUT

## Texas Army National Guard Unit is First in the Army to Receive New Apache Retrofit

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

**T**he Texas Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment (Attack/Reconnaissance), 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, was the first unit in the Army to receive the newly redesigned strap pack meganut retrofit this past June.

The improvement for the AH-64 Apache helicopter, manufactured by Boeing, reduces the risk for the formation of stress corrosion cracks in the chopper's strap pack assembly. The meganut component of the strap pack holds large bolts that connect the main rotor blades to the helicopter's rotor. It essentially holds the bolts that keep the blades attached to the aircraft.

In June of 2016, the same unit lost two crew members, CW3 Dustin Mortenson and CW2 Lucas Lowe, when their Apache went down in Galveston Bay along the upper coast of Texas. Personnel from Boeing and the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Life Cycle Management Command (AMCOM) aggressively pursued remedies after concluding that stress corrosion cracks in the meganut were the culprit of the crash.

"Anytime an aircraft picks up off the ground, there is an inherent risk," said COL Ronald W. Burkett II, commander of the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade. "We mitigate that risk by having superbly trained aviators and crew members. Mechanical failures, part failures, especially the strap pack, is something that you really cannot anticipate. The rebuild of this strap pack assembly – and that

nut in particular – is a very important step forward to restoring the confidence and faith in the aircraft and allowing pilots and maintainers to focus on the things they can predict."

Before the retrofit, but after the crash, a safety measure was put in place for the Army's entire Apache fleet. Before any take-off, high-resolution bore scopes were used to inspect the strap pack. That procedure applied to all U.S. Apaches, deployed both in the United States and around the globe.

While this process was effective in the early detection of stress cracks, the time required to perform the safety scans was a major slowdown when the time came to get the Apaches into the air to conduct missions. The process also added considerably to the workload of maintenance crews. The Army needed a better solution – one that did not merely

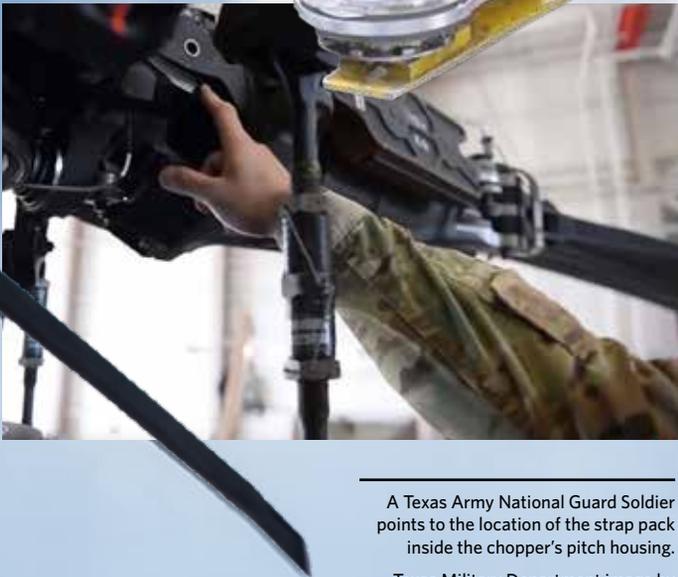
---

An Army National Guard AH-64 Apache Helicopter takes off from Grayling Army Airfield.

Michigan National Guard photo by SPC Alan Prince



Close up image of the new strap pack assembled to the main rotor hub.  
Texas Military Department image by SGT Kyle Burns



A Texas Army National Guard Soldier points to the location of the strap pack inside the chopper's pitch housing.  
Texas Military Department image by SGT Kyle Burns



BG Patrick Hamilton, assistant division commander - operations, 36th Infantry Division, examines components of the redesigned AH-64 Apache strap pack meganut while accompanied by (Left to Right) CW5 Michael Cavaco, COL Talmadge Sheppard, CW5 David Willrich and MAJ Dylan Malcomb at Ellington Field, Houston, Texas.  
Texas National Guard photo by 2LT Caitlin Rourk

treat the symptom, but instead would offer a cure for the cause.

“Looking at the changes in the part and how much more substantial the new part is, the new materials it’s being made of and the coatings they’re putting on it, [the strap pack is] much less susceptible to any kinds of issues they’ve had [in the past],” said BG Patrick Hamilton, assistant division commander – operations, 36th Infantry Division. “We’re continuing to test [the meganut] and make sure that our pilots’ safety is our number one concern.”

The strap pack is now considered a critical safety item, which means it must undergo a more rigorous quality control process during manufacturing and production. Boeing engineers spent several months refining the meganut’s makeup to minimize the stress corrosion cracking and to increase the overall lifespan of the

part. The nut’s new geometry reconfigures pressure points and uses thicker walls for added resiliency. Upgraded sealant improves the nut’s resistance to corrosion compared to earlier designs.

This past June, members of AMCOM and Boeing met with pilots, crew members and mechanics of the 1-149th during a visit to Ellington Field in Houston, Texas. They briefed the unit members on the changes to their Apache heavy attack helicopters.

The visit in June of this year is not expected to be AMCOM’s last interaction with the 1-149th. According to the Texas Military Department, meganuts from the 1-149th’s Apaches are planned to be sent to AMCOM after logging a pre-determined number of flight hours for continued study and improvement by AMCOM and Boeing engineers. Similar collaborations to record

and inspect the meganut’s performance are planned for attack and reconnaissance battalions across the Force.

“I do hope the Families see this as a very concerted effort by the senior leadership, from the top of the Army Chief of Staff down to the unit level, that we are all committed to making a safer environment for their Soldiers,” said COL Burkett.

The strap pack meganut retrofit is expected to be implemented over time, starting with the units that are the most in need. Those are to be the units which are stationed in coastal climates, which are most prone to corrosion risk. According to reports from Program Executive Officer-Aviation, having started fielding this past summer, it is expected that Boeing will field the new parts to two Apache battalions per month until the entire Army fleet is retrofitted. ●



# A TALE OF TWO GEORGIAS



*Georgia Army National Guard Partners with*

*Georgian Armed Forces at Noble Partner 18*

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

**U**.S. Soldiers from the 2nd Cavalry Regiment and 171st Aviation Regiment, Georgia Army National Guard, flew with Germany's 39th Panzergrenadier Battalion in two Black Hawk helicopters over the picturesque landscape of the small nation of Georgia. The small air assault simulation was part of the kick-off to Noble Partner 18, an exercise designed to demonstrate interoperability, readiness, capabilities and partnership of the attending countries' forces.

A U.S. Army Europe and Georgian Armed Forces-led exercise in its fourth iteration, Exercise Noble Partner 18 garnered the participation of over 3,000 troops from 13 nations this past August. In addition to forces from the host country of Georgia, forces from the United States, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, France, Germany, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom all took part in this year's exercise.

Noble Partner supported the training of Georgian Armed Forces' mechanized and

Special Operations Forces. Key tasks were conducting reception staging and onward movement (RSOM), conducting reverse RSOM, a tactical road march, combined urban operations, air assaults and combined live-fire exercises in the vicinities of the Vaziani and Camp Norio Training Areas in Georgia.

"We were able to design some very challenging and complex live fires, which pushed our Soldiers to make decisions under pressure in an environment in which we were reliant on our Georgian partners," said LTC Andrew Gallo, commander of 3rd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment. "The relationship between the United States and Georgia has been made much stronger at the tactical level."

Georgia has a very good reason to promote the training of its armed forces. While Georgia gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and has since had close ties with the West, its location along the

Black Sea near the borders of Eastern Europe places it in dangerous proximity to Russian-affiliated forces.

"They've got their own border challenges," noted MAJ Colin Thompson, State Partnership Program (SPP) director for the Georgia National Guard. "The goal of Georgia is to be a prosperous part of the European community. Right now, 20 percent of their territory is occupied. That is the thing the Georgians would like to remedy. They just want to be a free and sovereign country."

The CIA's World Fact Book states that for the nation of Georgia, "Joining the EU and NATO are among the country's top foreign policy goals."

"They are not an allied member of NATO, but they are definitely a significant partner,"

MAJ Thompson added.



Georgia Army National Guard Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 171st Aviation Regiment, take off in their UH-60 Black Hawks at the completion of an air assault exercise during Noble Partner 18 held at the Vaziani Training Area, Georgia.

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



A UH-60 crew chief with Georgia Army National Guard's 171st Aviation Regiment conducts aerial gunnery with an M240B machine gun during Noble Partner 18.

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

Noble Partner 18 served not only to support the training of Georgian troops, but also those of the many nations partnering in the event. The training scenarios required the soldiers to build proficiency in working together.

“I guess the key word [is] interoperability,” said COL Anthony Fournier, the Georgia Army National Guard’s co-director for Noble Partner 18. “To continue developing interoperability within our partner nations, which includes Georgia, helps us get used to working together so that we can deploy alongside each other and be able to talk and know each other’s strengths and weaknesses.”

An ongoing aspect of interoperability between Georgia and the United States is

the SPP relationship between the State of Georgia and the country of Georgia. That partnership will be a quarter-century old next year. Chief of the National Guard Bureau and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Joseph Lengyel, spoke to the importance of the relationship during his speech at the Noble Partner 18 opening ceremony at Vaziani Training Area.

“This enduring partnership, based on mutual respect and common interests, has enhanced the capacities of our respective militaries and deepened our understanding and friendships between the United States and Georgia,” he said. “Our partnership has expanded to focus more on combat-centric readiness as demonstrated by exercises like [Noble Partner]. This exercise should lead to a better understanding of how we exercise, how we

operate and how we work together toward a greater security cooperation effort.”

MAJ Thompson commented on the significance of having such high-level leadership present at the event.

“I think for [GEN Lengyel] to come out and visit the State of Georgia — as we were the only National Guard entity in the exercise — was significant for us,” he said. “It shows the commitment and the resolve of the United States to maintaining a strong presence in European exercises like Noble Partner.”

MAJ Dan Fall, collective training officer for the Georgia Army National Guard’s Joint Force Headquarters, agreed on the importance of the exercise that represents one of the most complex training initiatives conducted between the State of Georgia and the country of Georgia in the



A UH-60 Black Hawk crew of the 1st Battalion, 171st Aviation Regiment, Georgia Army National Guard, lifts off after completing an aerial insertion of Special forces soldiers of the Georgian Armed Forces during an urban operations exercise at the Vaziani Training Area, Georgia, as part of Noble Partner 18.

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



Soldiers of the Georgian Armed Forces initiate a room clearing exercise during a cordon and search exercise as part of Noble Partner 18, an annual multilateral urban operations exercise co-led by U.S. Army Europe and the Georgian Armed Forces.

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



history of their 24-year partnership.

“I’ve been helping the Georgia Army National Guard coordinate these deployment training activities for seven years now,” he acknowledged. “For my part, at a personal level, I think that [Noble Partner] is some of the most realistic and critically important training in which a National Guard Soldier

can participate.”

The air assault during the opening ceremony was a hint of what was to take place over the following few days. As part of one of the many training simulations during Noble Partner, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 171st Aviation Regiment, Georgia Army National Guard, participated in a troop-insertion exercise with Georgian Special Operations Forces at the Vaziani Training Area.

“We had a great training scenario with the host nation of Georgia. We operated with Georgian Special Forces to conduct an infiltration and exfiltration of a high-value target,” said CW3 Joseph J. McNamara, UH-60 pilot for Georgia’s



Georgian Armed Forces soldiers participate in the closing ceremony for Noble Partner 18 at Vaziani Training Area, Georgia, in August of this year.

U.S. Army photo by SGT Kris Bonet

Georgian soldiers make a final assault on a simulated enemy position during a component of Noble Partner 18 held this past August at Vaziani Training Area, Georgia.

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

171st Aviation Regiment.

Before their deployment overseas, MAJ Fall spoke about the scenarios in which the 171st would be participating.

“They will be [participating in the] air assault operations, aerial gunnery live fire and supporting ground live-fire exercises,” he noted.

COL Fournier commented on how the intensity of live-fire exercises has a tendency to enhance the Soldiers’ focus.

“I would say once you put live fire in there, it takes it up a notch as far as readiness and preparation,” he said. “It gives Soldiers more confidence in what they are doing. Just being overseas training with foreign armies – doing an air assault with the Georgian Special Forces – also boosts confidence levels. The terrain is different, the temperature is a little different over there – it all gives a different experience, a different environment. So it [works to boost] your skill and confidence in your skills.”

For the Soldiers, Noble Partner was not only an opportunity for field training, but also to exchange ideas, build relationships and experience a different culture.

SGT James Anderson is a signal support specialist and was the 1-171st Communications Section team leader during the exercise.

“My goal was to ensure that the battalion, including the helicopter [crews], had communication both internally and

with the other forces,” SGT Anderson said. “I [had the opportunity to] talk shop a lot with the British on how they used their equipment and the type of equipment they had.”

COL Fournier spoke to the importance of understanding the differing cultures present at a joint event like Noble Partner, noting what he would like to see Soldiers

“THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND GEORGIA HAS BEEN MADE MUCH STRONGER AT THE TACTICAL LEVEL.”

— LTC Andrew Gallo

take away from the event.

“I’d want them to hopefully get the impression that these other nations are working with very professional armies,” he said. “I’d like them to understand how we work together with other nations. And hopefully, they will have a good time training over there, as I have done in the past.”

COL Fournier has been to the country

of Georgia three times previous to Noble Partner 18. In 2016, he was the deputy director for that year’s Noble Partner exercise, he said.

“My first time there, I went for four months back in 2007 as part of what was called GSSOP [Georgia Sustainment Stability Operations Program]. I assisted in training a [Georgian] brigade to go to Iraq.”

COL Fournier went on to note that back then, when he had time off on weekends, he would go down to the local town to try the food, get to know the people and see the Georgian sights. He said it was a great experience and that he admires the culture, which has a history that dates back not decades or centuries, but millennia.

By the closing of the exercise, the 190 participating Georgia National Guard Soldiers had gained valuable training, built interoperability with partnering forces and strengthened their relationship with their SPP counterparts. By all accounts, the mission was deemed a success.

“These tasks were not easy,” said BG Reginald Neal, director of the Joint Staff for the Georgia National Guard, as he addressed a formation of soldiers during Noble Partner 18’s closing ceremony. “But due to your perseverance and ability to work together through daily challenges, this exercise has been a tremendous success.” ●



A U.S. Georgia Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew loads Georgian Special Operations soldiers into their chopper during a combined urban operation exercise with Ukrainian and German forces as part of Noble Partner 18.

North Carolina Army National Guard photo by SFC Robert Jordan



BG Reginald Neal, director of the Joint Staff for the Georgia National Guard, delivers remarks during the closing ceremony of Noble Partner 18.

U.S. Army photo by SGT Kris Bonet

# 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 (SGLI), 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 [www.nationalguard.com/tools/life-insurance](http://www.nationalguard.com/tools/life-insurance).

# Full-Time Service, Full Array of Benefits

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

**F**inding harmony between the duties of the Army National Guard and the duties of a full-time civilian job can be a unique and ongoing balancing act. For some Guard Soldiers, the best way to achieve this harmony is to combine the two and make the Army National Guard their full-time job.

By joining the Active Guard Reserve (AGR) program, Soldiers can volunteer to provide full-time support to the Army National Guard on either the State or National level. The opportunity allows Soldiers to offer full-time support to the organizing, recruiting, administering, instructing and training of the Reserve Component, while also taking advantage of active duty-level benefits and pay.

Soldiers may be placed on AGR status for a period of 180 consecutive days or more through Title 10 and Title 32. When part-time Guard Soldiers apply for the Title 10 AGR program, they submit an application for full-time status in a Federal level position. Soldiers in the Title 10 program have opportunities to be stationed at one of hundreds of locations worldwide.

---

SFC Justin Mullenix, Alaska Army National Guard reserve component transition coordinator, speaks with potential recruits at Mt. Edgecumbe High School, Sitka, Alaska.

Alaska Army National Guard photo by SGT David Bedard



CPT Krista Bordatto, Judge Advocate General Corps (JAG) officer and commander of the North Carolina Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion, 60th Troop Command, speaks to Law and Justice honor students at Athens Drive High School in Raleigh, N.C., about career opportunities within the National Guard.  
North Carolina Army National Guard photo by SSG Mary Junell

Title 32 allows a State Governor, with approval from the President or the Secretary of Defense, to order a member to duty for operational Homeland Defense activities. Under Title 32, Soldiers can be ordered to report for full-time National Guard duty at the State level.

Serving full-time provides a host of benefits to Army National Guard Soldiers. Soldiers placed on AGR, through Title 10 or Title 32, earn the same benefits and entitlements as an active duty Soldier, including paid leave, medical care for themselves and their immediate Family, full educational benefits and the opportunity for immediate retirement after 20 years of active federal service. Soldiers are also offered promotion and training opportunities at active duty Army schools at more than 6,000 training locations.

Along with a wide variety of assignment locations, Soldiers on AGR have the opportunity to serve in a wide range of fields and Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). AGR Soldiers can work in the areas of:

- Recruiting
- Public Affairs
- Transportation
- Quartermaster
- Chemical
- Military Police
- Signal
- Retention
- Operational Research and Systems Analysis
- Information Operations
- Logistics Operations
- Judge Advocate General
- Finance
- Adjutant General
- Engineer
- Military Intelligence
- Ordnance
- Civil Affairs
- Aviation

For more information about Title 10 and Title 32, talk to your retention or readiness NCO, or visit the Army Human Resources Command website at [HRC.army.mil](http://HRC.army.mil) and select Career from the main menu. From there, select either Active Guard Reserve-Enlisted or Active Guard Reserve-Officer. ●

# Celebrating 100 YEARS of the WARRANT OFFICER

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

CW2 Nick Pickett, a pilot with Company C, 1-189th Aviation Regiment, South Dakota Army National Guard, flies in the back of an HH-60M Black Hawk while assisting with the transportation of Board of Military Affairs members during Golden Coyote 18.

South Dakota Army National Guard photo by SPC Kayla Cooper

**I**t is hard to imagine an Army without warrant officers, the technical and tactical subject matter experts of the Force. Considered the best of the best in their respective fields, modern-day warrant officers are vital to the success of the Army's overall mission.

2018 marked the 100th anniversary celebration of the U.S. Army Warrant Officer. The initial formation of the Warrant Officer dates back to World War I, when Army leadership noticed a need for technical experts and leaders to support mine planting operations.

Before the warrant officer, civilian mariners under the direction of Army Coast Artillery officers filled this role. With the civilian mariners often seeking other employment ventures, which negatively affected Army operations, the Army requested legislation in 1916 to fulfill the need for military experts in the mine planting vessels.

In 1918, Congress passed an act that officially established the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Corps. The Army then opened the first official warrant officer training institution at Fort Monroe, Virginia, and sanctioned 40 warrant officers to support the mine planting operations.

A century later, warrant officers are highly specialized technical experts in multiple fields, including intelligence, military police and personnel management. The importance of the position and its centennial anniversary were celebrated by Army National Guard units across the country. Units held ceremonies, dedicated monuments and hosted events to recognize the importance of the warrant officer role.

To honor the anniversary, BG William J. Walker, acting commanding general of the District of Columbia National Guard, deemed 2018 as "Year of the Warrant Officer" in the District of Columbia National Guard. The signed proclamation highlighted strengths of the warrant officer and encouraged continued development of the position.

*...the warrant officer is integral to the armed forces. I encourage all personnel to recognize their achievements, impacts and significant contributions across the armed forces; and seek a greater awareness of the warrant officer's competencies and employment; and to assist in the identification and development of future warrant officer professionals to strengthen and advance the cohort.*

Warrant officers make up less than 3 percent of the total Army strength, but they hold great responsibility in their role. Tasked with training and advising commanders, senior leaders and Soldiers, organizing missions and advancing within their career specialties, the duties of the warrant officer hold great weight.

Becoming a warrant officer can lead a Soldier down a path to higher pay, greater benefits,

increased military authority and increased technical and management skills that may enhance civilian career opportunities.

Soldiers may now apply for 44 different technical warrant officer specialties within 17 branches. Soldiers interested in becoming a warrant officer must be selected for Warrant Officer Candidate School (WOCS). WOCS is designed to assess candidates' potential for appointment and provide them with foundational leadership skills that will aid in directing others. Once candidates complete WOCS, they are appointed as a Warrant Officer (WO1). Graduates then receive more focused training in their designated specialties.

For more information on how to become a warrant officer, contact your State's warrant officer strength manager (WOSM). Visit [NationalGuard.com/contacts/wosm](http://NationalGuard.com/contacts/wosm) for a directory of WOSM contact names and numbers listed by State. ●

BG William J. Walker, acting commanding general, District of Columbia National Guard, presents CW5 Michael R. Jewett, command chief warrant officer, D.C. National Guard, with a proclamation declaring 2018 the Year of the Warrant Officer.

D.C. Army National Guard photo by SPC Kevin Valentine



# THE INTEGRATED FORCES OF COUGAR RAGE

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins  
Oregon Army National Guard photos by MSG John Hughel

This year, Soldiers from the Oregon Army National Guard trained side by side with Canadian forces during a first-time joint effort during Exercise Cougar Rage 18. Held in April at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in the State of Washington, the annual exercise focused on integrating force support and soldier skill sets to improve the long-term readiness of both the U.S. and Canadian forces.

During the exercise, 17 Soldiers from Oregon's 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, attached to Canada's 39th Brigade Group. The Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers were invited by the Canadians specifically to participate in the four-day exercise.

“  
**One thing they had a lot of was the camaraderie. They loved what they were doing. I just took away how important that is.**  
”

— SPC Cameron Atherton

“When planning for the exercise, we traveled down to Oregon to invite [the 162nd] into the integration process of the MPC [Mission Planning Center] and other aspects of the exercise,” explained Maj. Pawel Dudek, Canadian Plans and Policy for the 39th Canadian Brigade Group. “In the past, we have trained many times with U.S. military, but this is the first time a scout formation has joined our actual formation out in the field.”

Planning for Cougar Rage 18 began in January of this year. SFC Tyson Bumgardner and CPT Troy Bagnall, both of the 162nd Infantry Regiment, attended multiple planning conferences with the 39th to thoroughly prepare for the exercise.

“We were invited by the Canadians to participate, so CPT Bagnall and I made three trips to Fort Lewis to participate in their planning and to learn how that [process] works for the Canadian army,” explained SFC Bumgardner, U.S. scout platoon sergeant for the exercise.

As might be expected, the Canadian force works a bit differently than U.S. forces. Hence, the planning meetings were vital to the success of the exercise.

“Some of the big challenges were trying to understand the planning requirements for the Canadian

---

Canadian Army Col. David Awalt, 39th Canadian Brigade Group Commander (right) expresses his appreciation and support to Oregon National Guard CPT Troy Bagnall (left) and SFC Tyson Bumgardner as Exercise Cougar Rage 18 concludes in the training village of Leschi Town at Joint Base Lewis-McChord.



side,” said CPT Bagnall, U.S. exercise planner for Cougar Rage. “Some of the training requirements were similar to ours, but they conduct them differently, so they plan for that differently.”

Despite their planning differences, the conferences were deemed a success.

“I liked integrating with the Canadian forces,” said CPT Bagnall. “They are pretty easy to work with and they were very flexible with some of the things we had to work out with our section. Up front, we told them that we were really trying to use this exercise to work out some of the kinks in training for our 2018 XCTC [Exportable Combat Training Capability] requirements. They were very flexible with letting us change the exercise dynamic in order to accommodate that.”

Thanks to the proactive planning shown by the leadership of both units, Cougar Rage resulted in valuable training for both the Oregonian and Canadian Soldiers.

“It was a big opportunity for my platoon to get a dress rehearsal for our eventual AT [annual training] in California,” SFC Bumgardner noted. “The exercise was executed well by all parts. It was great to train with an international force like the Canadian army. Our coordination with the Canadians was crucial. If we had not done that, [Cougar Rage] would have been a failure.”

The Oregon Guard Soldiers spent over a year preparing for Cougar Rage – an exercise that would test their strengths in multiple areas.

“They’ve been training hard for the mission for over a year and a half,” SFC Bumgardner said. “[Cougar Rage] was



Soldiers assigned to Oregon National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, and the 39th Canadian Brigade Group enter the Leschi Town training village at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., as part of the four-day multilateral training, Exercise Cougar Rage 18.



An Oregon Army National Guard Soldier plays the role of the opposing force as his unit moves to take key buildings in the Leschi Town training village during Exercise Cougar Rage 18, held at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. this past April.

about physical fitness, knowing battle drills and keeping weapons as clean and dry as possible – because it was pretty bad weather the whole time. It was an outstanding training.”

The first two days of the exercise consisted of weapons qualifications and rappelling. This led up to a culminating event at which the integrated teams were tasked with the mission of attacking and holding “Leschi Town,” a mock village at Fort Lewis.

“  
**Even though it’s a different country, a lot of how we run our armies is the same. We can learn things from them and they learn things from us, so we all are able to grow. It was cool meeting other guys who are trying to do the same thing that you are for their country.**  
”

— SPC Joshua Lebow

SFC Bumgardner explained, “Our mission during this exercise was to get out ahead of the Canadians; to get eyes on the site, collect intelligence and report it back to their company commanders prior to the attack on the village.”

The attack on Leschi Town was a highlight of the exercise for some participants.

“I would say my favorite moment was when we finally got to the village and were descending the buildings with [the Canadians],” said SPC Joshua Lebow of the 2-162nd. “Being able to watch them work and go through the village along with our guys was pretty cool.”

The culminating exercise displayed how well the Oregon Soldiers’ dedication to training prepared them for the event.

“The opposing force was supposed to find us, so they were given our exact grid,”



Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers SPC Tyler Takagi (right) and SPC Dakota Cunningham perform communication checks prior to the start of the multinational training event, Exercise Cougar Rage, held at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., in April of this year.



Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, and Canadian Army Reservists assigned to the 39th Brigade Group, Vancouver, British Columbia, listen to an after-action report during the closing ceremony of Exercise Cougar Rage 18.

explained SPC Cameron Atherton, also of the 2-162nd Infantry Regiment. “We were hidden so well that they literally couldn’t find us. There was one point where we were called up on the radio and told to take a shot so that they could know where we were. That was a highlight for me. I was proud.”

“We got to participate in that tactical event all day,” SFC Bumgardner said. “To me, that was the best day of the exercise because we got to fire our weapons, maneuver and interact with [soldiers] on the radio to support their attack.”

According to SFC Bumgardner, the camaraderie between the two forces was also a highlight of the exercise.

“The morning of day two was a really good time,” he recalled. “We had a little pre-party with the Canadians. We got to drink some beer and eat with them, which was great. I hope we get to work with them again.”

Working closely with the Canadian soldiers proved beneficial to the Guard members in unexpected ways. Attaching directly to Canada’s 39th revealed that the

two units are actually structured quite similarly, according to CPT Bagnall. This led to increased value in training together, as any new or different techniques the Oregon Guard Soldiers learned from the Canadian soldiers could be immediately put into use without the need for high levels of adaptation.

Ultimately, the main differences between the two forces lay in their communication techniques.

“During the exercise, communication was one of the largest issues because we use different communication platforms,” explained CPT Bagnall. “There are security requirements on both sides where we cannot use some pieces of their [communications] equipment and they cannot use some pieces of our [communications] equipment, so we had to iron those issues out.

“It also took time to understand some of the nomenclature [the Canadians] use,” CPT Bagnall continued. “A lot of things are similar between the Canadian side and the U.S. side, but they are called by different names. Trying to understand the two was not so much a challenge, but just something that had to be [worked through].”

Reflecting on the similarities between the two forces, the Oregon Soldiers noted their level of respect and appreciation for their northern counterparts.

“Even though it’s a different country, a lot of how we run our armies is the same,” said SPC Lebow. “We can learn things from them and they learn things from us, so we all are able to grow. It was cool meeting other guys who are trying to do the same thing that you are for their country.”

“[The Canadians] don’t have a lot of the equipment platforms that we do,” CPT Bagnall said. “But they still are able to get the job done – sometimes even better than us – using some of the equipment we have on our side.”

“What I noticed that was cool about the Canadians was while they were not

nearly as equipped as we were, one thing they had [a lot of] was the camaraderie,” SPC Atherton commented. “They loved what they were doing. I just took away how important that is.”

The respect and appreciation for teamwork was not unique to the U.S. Soldiers. It was fully reciprocated by the soldiers of the 39th.

“This was my first time to work with American Soldiers, and I learned a lot in the experience, from how the snipers prepare their camouflage in the field, to how they hide their depths inside the buildings,” said Pvt. Chakkathon Duangkaew of the 39th Canadian Brigade Group. “It was really worthwhile.”

In addition to successfully building relationships with the Canadian soldiers, the Soldiers of the 162nd Infantry Regiment succeeded in using Cougar Rage 18 as an opportunity to prepare for their XCTC rotation in California the following summer.

“When we got to California, the scout platoon was outstanding,” said SFC Bumgardner. “It was a chance to operate outside, use our vehicles and put our hands on our equipment one more time. I think Cougar Rage definitely prepared us for that.”

SPC Atherton said he is thankful he can take the lessons he learned during Cougar Rage 18 and apply them to future exercises and deployments.

“[Cougar Rage] was an extremely valuable experience,” he remarked. “[When] working overseas, we’ll be doing the same things. Doing this up front helps us know what to expect. I wish we could do it on a daily basis.” ●





# A BRIDGE OF COVERAGE

## TRICARE Transitional Assistance Management Program

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

**F**or Guard Soldiers serving on active duty orders for more than 30 consecutive days, TRICARE Select<sup>SM</sup> is a valuable benefit that offers full healthcare insurance to Soldiers and their Family members. However, when the time comes for National Guard members to transition from active duty, many are left wondering if they and their Families will be forced to go without healthcare coverage.

Luckily, TRICARE's Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP) provides eligible service members and their Families with 180 days of premium-free transitional health care benefits after regular TRICARE Select<sup>SM</sup> benefits have ended.

**Eligible service members and Family may be covered by TAMP if the service member is:**

- › A National Guard or Reserve member separating from a period of more than 30 consecutive days of active duty served in support of a contingency operation or a planned mission
- › Involuntarily separated from active duty under honorable conditions including:
  - › Members who receive a voluntary separation incentive (VSI), or
  - › Members who receive voluntary separation pay (VSP) and are not entitled to retired or retainer pay upon separation
- › Separating from active duty following involuntary retention (stop-loss) in support of a contingency operation
- › Separating from active duty following a voluntary agreement to stay on active duty for less than one year in support of a contingency operation

- › Receiving a sole-survivorship discharge
- › Separating from regular active duty service and agreeing to become a member of the Selected Reserve Component. The service member must become a Selected Reservist the day immediately following release from regular active duty service to qualify.

**TAMP's 180-day period begins upon the conclusion of a Soldier's active duty orders. With TAMP, Soldiers and Family members are eligible to use one of the following health plan options in addition to military hospitals and clinics:**

- › TRICARE Prime (where locally available; enrollment required)
- › TRICARE Select
- › US Family Health Plan (if you live in a designated location; enrollment required)
- › TRICARE Prime Overseas (enrollment required)
- › TRICARE Select Overseas

Since TAMP is a temporary program, Soldiers should start considering long-term health care options well before the program ends.

TAMP eligibility is ultimately determined by a Soldier's documentation in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). Soldiers may view their eligibility online through MilConnect at [MilConnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/](https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/). Soldiers should also check with their unit command for information or assistance with TAMP eligibility.

For more information about TAMP, visit [Tricare.mil/Plans/SpecialPrograms/TAMP](https://Tricare.mil/Plans/SpecialPrograms/TAMP). ●

# KEEPING VISION CARE IN SIGHT

## Expansion of Federal Vision Insurance Opens Coverage Options to National Guard Members

BY STAFF WRITER Pamela DeLoatch

**T**his past March, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, in partnership with the Defense Health Agency and the Department of Defense, announced that for the first time the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) will offer vision insurance coverage to Guard Soldiers and their Family members.

National Guard members already enrolled in a TRICARE Reserve Select healthcare plan will be eligible to enroll in a FEDVIP vision plan during the next open season. Similar to the TRICARE dental program, enrollment is voluntary and applicable premiums and co-pays apply.

The program offers four providers from which to choose a FEDVIP vision plan: Aetna Vision, FEP BlueVision (a subsidiary of Blue Cross Blue Shield), UnitedHealthcare Vision and VSP Vision Care.

### All FEDVIP plans offer the following coverage:

- Routine eye exams and vision correction without having to be referred by a doctor
- Low vision exams for those with vision impairment, perhaps due to eye disease or injury
- Eyeglasses (frames and lenses) or contact lenses
- Lens options including scratch-resistant, shatter-resistant polycarbonate, UV coatings, tinted and progressive lenses
- Discounts on laser eye surgery

All four vision plans offer single and Family coverage, standard and high plan options and include discounts on various vision-related products.

The FEDVIP website – [Tricare.Benefeds.com](http://Tricare.Benefeds.com) – offers an online tool that compares premium rates and coverage options from all four providers for the 2019 plan year.

### As you look at the different plans, consider your needs:

- What services are covered in each plan?
- What are the monthly premiums?
- How do the co-pays compare?
- Are some programs better for frequent or more complex eye care needs?
- Which is better if you anticipate just basic needs, such as just a once-a-year eye exam?
- Does the provider's network include your current eye doctor or eye care center, or could you switch to an in-network doctor with whom you would be comfortable?

### Enrollment in a Vision Plan

National Guard service members will be eligible to enroll in a FEDVIP vision plan during the next Federal Benefits Open Enrollment Season, which takes place November 12, 2018, through December 10, 2018. This is the only period in which service members may enroll for 2019 coverage – outside of specific life-changing events such as marriage, the birth of a child or loss of a Family member. Plan coverage begins Jan. 1, 2019.

Service members may also sign up for plan update notices through [Tricare.Benefeds.com](http://Tricare.Benefeds.com).

### Remember these key dates for the FEDVIP vision plan enrollment:

**NOV. 12, 2018:** Federal Benefits Open Season begins

**DEC. 10, 2018:** Federal Benefits Open Season closes at midnight, Eastern Standard Time

**Jan. 1, 2019:** Plan coverage begins

### FOR DETAILED INFORMATION ON COVERAGE FROM EACH OF THE PROVIDERS, VISIT:

Aetna's website at  
[AetnaFeds.com/fedvip-vision.php](http://AetnaFeds.com/fedvip-vision.php)

FEP BlueVision's website at  
[DVTV.DavisVision.com/bluevision/bcbsa.htm](http://DVTV.DavisVision.com/bluevision/bcbsa.htm)

UnitedHealthcare's website at  
[FedVIP.MyUHCvision.com/MWP/Landing](http://FedVIP.MyUHCvision.com/MWP/Landing)

VSP Vision Care's website at  
[ChooseVSP.com/tricare.html](http://ChooseVSP.com/tricare.html)

# Beyond the Horizon

## Guard Engineer Forces Lead Construction in El Salvador

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins  
Florida Army National Guard photos by SGT Debra A. Cook

“There aren’t many times in a career when you can [directly see how] you are making a difference,” said LTC Blake Heidelberg of Joint Force Headquarters, Florida Army National Guard.

This summer, LTC Heidelberg and other members of the Florida Army National Guard had the opportunity to see the difference they were making for multiple communities in El Salvador when participating in Beyond the Horizon (BTH) 2018.

BTH is an annual mission conducted as part of U.S. Army South and U.S. Southern Command’s Humanitarian and Civic Assistance Program.

This year’s BTH deployed nearly 800 U.S. service members from the Army – including National Guard, Active Duty and Reserve components – Air Force and Marines to work with the El Salvadorian military and civic agencies in an effort to

**“I believe that everyone left with their heads held high and their chests poked out knowing that they made a difference in El Salvador.”**

— LTC Blake Heidelberg

bring vital services and resources to rural El Salvadorian communities.

Successfully completed under budget and 10 days ahead of schedule, the 2018 BTH mission was to build four schools – the Canton el Amate schoolhouse, the Escolar Santa Rita schoolhouse, the San Marcos de la Cruz schoolhouse and the Ulappa schoolhouse – and one health clinic – Unidad Clinica de Salud.

“I believe that everyone left with their heads held high and their chests poked out knowing that they made a difference in El Salvador,” LTC Heidelberg said.

Service members deployed as part of Combined Joint Task Force Hope.

Florida Army National Guard Soldiers CW2 Theresa Christiansen (left) and 1SG Chaddrick Faison, both Beyond the Horizon 2018 site project managers, evaluate the cement slab at the Ulappa school site.





Beyond the Horizon 2018 Task Force  
Commander Florida Army National Guard COL  
Dwayne Jarriel checks a material delivery for the  
medical clinic construction in La Paz, El Salvador.

Members of the task force were deemed “warriors,” as the group included members from the multiple Service branches.

“I think it’s a great exercise, a great mission and it’s certainly very rewarding, not only for the individual Soldier, but also for [our] country,” said COL Dwayne Jarriel of Joint Force Headquarters, Florida Army National Guard.

National Guard Soldiers and Airmen from 13 States participated in the mission. The 90-day mission was broken into six rotations of 148 service members each, all led by the Florida Army National Guard. With COL Jarriel leading the first leg of the mission and LTC Heidelberg leading the second leg, the Florida Guard was in charge of the overall logistics for

construction as well as ensuring all Soldiers were kept on task.

“I was honored and fortunate enough to be the task force engineer commander, so I was responsible for all the engineer forces who did the actual construction,” explained LTC Heidelberg. “It was a privilege to be involved in that mission in El Salvador. It was a great humanitarian mission and a great learning experience, but it was also an honor to represent Florida and the Army National Guard.”

When the Michigan Army National Guard was forced to withdraw from the El Salvador mission due to deployments and other obligations, the Florida Army National Guard was tapped to lead the exercise. Given the late start, the Florida

command team did not have as large of a planning period as is usually slated for this type of mission, but the team did not allow that setback to deter progress.

“One of the biggest challenges for us was not having the ability to do all of the preplanning ahead of time,” COL Jarriel said. “But, it was a great opportunity to be hands-on and exercise our military occupational skills.”

COL Jarriel also noted the cultural challenges the mission presented.

“As Americans, we are used to everyone doing things the same way we do,” explained COL Jarriel. “I think [this mission challenged] those expectations – thinking that their vendors and their industry contractors are similar to ours. They are not. The terrain is different, the culture is different and so obviously, there’s a lot more time that needs to be built into planning.”

LTC Heidelberg also took note of the cultural differences. “We had challenges with the language barrier and with getting our contracts on time and to standard so that we could, [in turn, construct] the buildings to standard,” he explained. “It was another opportunity for us to excel and overcome.”

The cultural differences were apparent not only between the United States and El Salvador, but also between the various branches of Service.



A local El Salvadoran painting company puts finishing touches on the new San Marcos de la Cruz schoolhouse mural.



“Bringing forces from across the full spectrum of the DoD together – we all speak different languages, so to speak. Getting that team moving together in the right direction and toward the same goal can be a challenge.”

Taking the scope of the mission and its many moving segments into consideration, Task Force Hope leaders kept a keen focus on ensuring effective communication among the diverse set of counterparts.

“I learned a lot of patience,” said SGM Jeff Topping of Joint Force Headquarters, Florida Army National Guard. “Other countries do not operate like the United States. They often don’t have the means to do what we do. It was a learning process. Communication is

the key to all of this. At the end of the day, everyone came together and we successfully completed the mission.”

The BTH mission not only provided El Salvadorian citizens with much needed resources, but also presented Army National Guard Soldiers with hands-on experience and an opportunity to broaden their knowledge base.

“It’s an opportunity to hone our skills as engineers,” explained COL Jarriel. “It gives us the ability to work in partnership with the host nation engineers as well. We get to see the techniques they use to do what we do and we can share our techniques. I think it puts more tools in the tool kit for the engineer, and in this case the many other service [members] who were there with us – every one of them brought something different to the table.”

“This gave us an opportunity to do something for someone else and put our MOS into practice,” SGM Topping said. “It’s a win-win for the Guard. It’s important for us to exercise our skills. Then, we can go out and build these things, leave a final product

TOP: SFC Jeffrey Lambert, Translator for Utah National Guard - representing one of 13 States participating in Beyond the Horizon 2018 - takes a break to play kickball with a local child during the construction of the new medical clinic in La Paz, El Salvador.

TOP MIDDLE: Students start their school day in their new school building at San Marcos de la Cruz.

BOTTOM MIDDLE: SGM Jeffrey Topping, Beyond the Horizon 2018 task force engineer senior enlisted leader, Florida Army National Guard, discusses construction details with Florida Soldiers working at one of four new school sites in La Paz, El Salvador.

BOTTOM: Student sit at their new desks for the first time as they thumb through new school books donated to the school at the Beyond the Horizon 2018 closing ceremonies.

for somebody else to use and walk away feeling like we accomplished something and turned over a [valuable] product.”

After only 80 days in El Salvador, Guard Soldiers and their fellow service members had constructed all five structures. The buildings had power and running water, and ribbon-cutting ceremonies had been conducted as part of the signing over of the buildings to their respective counterparts.

As the final pieces of the mission fell into place, the true impact of the mission became more apparent.

“The construction mission was hugely successful. The warriors received hands-on training, which is very beneficial. But bigger than that, we made a positive impact on the El Salvadorian people,” remarked LTC Heidelberg. “Working with the El Salvadorian engineers on site with us – that was a positive and big relationship builder. In addition, our engineers worked hand in hand with local [residents], local community representatives, teachers, students and the doctors at the clinics that they worked with day in and day out – they really built relationships.”

The realization of how much they were helping this community in need spurred on a philanthropic spirit amongst the Soldiers. Warriors found themselves starting fundraisers, making donations, buying toys and school supplies and assisting parents and teachers with the transition into the new schools. Community engagement became a huge part of the mission.

“We had paint days where the local residents came to help paint,” explained LTC Heidelberg. “We had cleanup days where the residents helped us clean and prep the site for the [ribbon-cutting] ceremonies. While the training was the priority and it was outstanding training, the lasting relationships and the good will that was built I think was the big takeaway from the mission this year.”

The presentation of the four schools and medical clinic to the people of El Salvador was noted as a standout moment for the Soldiers.

“The day that we signed over the keys – gave them to the teachers and school administrators and handed keys over

to the clinic – it was a big deal,” LTC Heidelberg added. “The communities were out there and you could feel the excitement. The students were moving things into the classrooms, so it was a huge accomplishment seeing the smiles on the faces of everyone, knowing that we had worked hard to accomplish this mission.”

The Florida Army National Guard’s leading role in BTH 2018 helped change the lives of the people in one small community in El Salvador, and Guard Soldiers, along with their counterparts, developed their skills and gained a beneficial learning experience.

“For the Guard, it’s an outstanding opportunity that everyone needs to try to take advantage of or be involved with,” LTC Heidelberg said. “Every day was a good day to just be down there. [The mission] was a tremendous accomplishment and something in which we took great pride.”

The positive impact of BTH proved to be an unforgettable experience not only for the Soldiers, but also, and perhaps more importantly, for the El Salvadorian citizens reaping the benefits of the new schools and clinic.

“One of the school directors told us that for 25 years she has been praying that something like this would happen,” SGM Topping said. “It was amazing for us to be a part of that. We got to be a part of her answered prayer.” ●

---

During the Beyond the Horizon 2018 closing ceremonies, local students presented plaques to the El Salvador government officials who helped make their new classrooms a reality.

**“One of the school directors told us that for 25 years she has been praying that something like this would happen. It was amazing for us to be a part of that. We got to be a part of her answered prayer.”**

— SGM Jeff Topping



# Shots, Shots and More Shots

## Maintaining Medical Readiness with Immunizations

BY STAFF WRITER Ruth Ann Repogle

**I**mmunization against disease is an important component of maintaining medical readiness in advance of worldwide deployment.

Medical Protection System (MEDPROS) provides for the recording, reporting and tracking of medical readiness information for Soldiers, units and task forces. This includes immunization records for documentation of past vaccinations. If no documentation is on file for an individual Soldier, it may be assumed that Soldier was never vaccinated and their deployable status may be affected.

The Reserve Health Readiness Program (RHRP) offers Guard Soldiers immunizations both in-clinic or through group events. While a group event must be initiated by a unit's command, Soldiers may schedule in-clinic appointments with an RHRP provider at any time by using the Automated Voucher System (AVS).

Before receiving vaccinations, Soldiers should inform the RHRP provider if they are pregnant, think they may be pregnant or if they are allergic to any medications. Soldiers may also be required to bring medical and shot records to appointments for immunizations.

For more information on the immunization process, visit [Health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Health-Readiness](http://Health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Health-Readiness). From the left-hand navigation bar, select Reserve Health Readiness Program. From the resulting drop-down menu, select Army National Guard, then Service Member Responsibilities.

**The following are standard required immunizations:**

### Meningococcal Vaccine

A vaccine required every 5 years for all Soldiers deploying to specific regions. Meningococcal disease – spread from the throat secretions of infected persons – is one cause of bacterial meningitis, which can also lead to blood infections.

**Potential side effects:**

Redness or pain at the site where the shot was given lasting 1 to 2 days, fever and allergic reaction.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### Hepatitis A Vaccine

A series of 2 injections given at least 6 months apart to protect from contracting a serious liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus, which is usually spread by close personal contact with an infected person and sometimes by eating food or drinking water containing the hepatitis A virus. Hepatitis A vaccine is required prior to deployment to certain areas of the world.

**Potential side effects:** Soreness where the shot was given, headache, loss of appetite and tiredness. These problems may occur 3 to 5 days after vaccination and last for 1 or 2 days.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### Hepatitis B Vaccine

A series of 3 injections, given at months 0, 1 and 6, to protect from contracting hepatitis B – a serious disease causing inflammation and damage to the liver that may lead to cirrhosis of the liver, chronic liver disease and liver cancer. Hepatitis B Virus is spread through contact with the blood and body fluids of an infected person. Required for Soldiers in specific MOSs and deployment to specific areas of the world.

**Potential side effects:** Soreness where the shot was given, mild fever, allergic reaction.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Tuberculosis (TB) Screening

All deploying Soldiers must have a TB test within 12 months of deploying. Soldiers should inform the RHRP provider of any positive TB tests from the past. Non-deploying, non-medical personnel should be tested every 5 years. Medical personnel are tested annually.

TB is a disease caused by bacteria that can attack any part of the body, but usually attacks the lungs. TB is airborne and spreads from one person to another. A TB skin test is the only method to determine if a person has a TB infection.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) Vaccine

Measles, mumps and rubella are three separate illnesses caused by three different viruses. These are airborne diseases that spread from person to person. Every Soldier must have documented proof of receiving a measles vaccination upon entry into the military or at any time since entering the military. If there is no documentation, a single booster of MMR is given.

**Potential side effects:** Fever, mild rash, swelling of glands, temporary pain and stiffness in joints, and allergic reaction.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Typhoid Vaccine

A vaccine required for all Soldiers deploying to countries where typhoid is common. The vaccine is available in oral and injectable forms. The manufacturer and the dosage form determine the number of dosages needed.

Typhoid fever is a life-threatening illness caused by the Salmonella Typhi bacteria, which lives only in humans. Typhoid fever is passed by eating food or drinking beverages that have been handled by an infected person or prepared using water that had been contaminated with the bacteria.

**Potential side effects:** Soreness, redness and swelling where the shot was given, low fever, nausea, diarrhea, stomach pain, headache.

## Influenza Vaccine

A yearly vaccine required for all Soldiers to protect from a virus that spreads from the nose or throat of the infected persons to others. The "influenza season" in the United States is from November through April each year. The viruses that cause influenza frequently mutate. For this reason, the influenza vaccine is updated each year. Protection develops about 2 weeks after the shot and may last up to a year.

**Potential side effects:** Soreness, redness or swelling where the shot was given, fever and aches. If these problems occur, they usually last for 1 to 2 days.

**The viruses in the vaccine are killed. You cannot get influenza from the vaccine.**

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Rx

## Tetanus-Diphtheria Vaccine

A vaccine required for all Soldiers every 10 years throughout life to prevent tetanus (lockjaw) and diphtheria. Tetanus – caused by a germ that enters the body through a cut or wound – can cause the inability to open the mouth or swallow. Diphtheria – spread by a germ passed from an infected person through the nose or throat of others – can cause breathing problems, heart failure, paralysis and death.

**Potential side effects:** Soreness, redness and swelling where the shot was given and allergic reaction. Side effects may occur within hours or a day after the vaccine and last 1 to 2 days.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Rx

## Inactivated Polio Vaccine

Soldiers are required to receive a total of 3 polio vaccines. Those who have never been vaccinated will require all three. Those who have received 1 or 2 will be required to receive additional vaccines for a total of three. Those who have had 3 or more vaccines in the past are required to receive a booster dose.

Polio is a disease caused by a virus that enters the body through the mouth. Polio may or may not cause serious illness including paralysis or death. Though Polio is no longer common in the United States, the disease is still common in other parts of the world.

**Potential side effects:** Soreness where the shot was given, allergic reaction.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Rx

### Sources:

Health.mil

U.S. Army Medical Department, Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center  
– [www.CRDAMC.AMEDD.army.mil/soldiers/shots.aspx](http://www.CRDAMC.AMEDD.army.mil/soldiers/shots.aspx)

# PT TIPS — LOWER BODY WORKOUT

BY STAFF WRITER Ruth Ann Replogle

**W**ithout a doubt, one thing Soldiers are sure to do is a lot of walking. To protect the body from potential injuries that result from prolonged walking and other related activities, a solid lower body workout plan is essential. The lower body acts as the base of support as you walk, run and jump. Regular lower body exercise increases bone strength, improves balance and stamina, decreases the odds of injury to knees and hips and reduces the risk of falling.

As a follow-up to the upper body workout plan shared last issue, power up with these lower body exercises during your next workout.

## SQUATS: As many as possible in 2 minutes

- Stand straight with your feet hip-width apart.
- Lower your body by pushing your hips back and bending your knees, sinking into your heels without bending the knees past the toes.
- While lowering your body, raise the arms forward and above the head, keeping the spine straight.



- Pause.
- Lift up and return to the starting position, then repeat.

## DEADLIFT: 3 reps in 5 minutes

- Stand with feet hip-width apart, knees slightly bent and a weight by each foot (or a single bar in front of both feet).
- Hinge at the hips with a slight bend in the knees to lower your body.
- Grab each weight with your arms kept straight.
- Push the buttocks out while keeping the back flat. Your torso should be almost parallel to the floor.
- Keeping your core tight, push through the heels to stand up straight, keeping the weights close to the shins while pulling up.
- Pause at the top, squeeze the buttocks then slowly lower the weight along the shins.



Ssg David Immler, a recruiting and retention noncommissioned officer with the Missouri National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion, measures a recruit's performance during the strength deadlift - one of four events included in the Occupational Physical Assessment Test.

Missouri Army National Guard photo by CPL Samantha J. Whitehead

**LUNGES:**  
As many as possible in  
2 minutes

- Step forward with one leg.
- Lower hips until both knees are at a 90-degree angle.
- Be sure the front knee is directly above the ankle and the back knee is not touching the ground.

- Push up through the thighs and hips to return to the starting position.

- Switch legs and repeat.



**KETTLEBELL SWING:**  
10 sets of 10 reps with 1-minute  
rest between

- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart with a kettlebell about a foot in front of you on the ground.
- Bend at the waist and grasp the kettlebell handle with both hands, keeping the palms facing the body and the torso nearly parallel to the ground.
- Pull the shoulders down and back, bracing the core before beginning to swing.
- Lift the kettlebell and swing it between your legs, keeping both knees slightly bent, the back flat and neck straight.
- Forcefully drive the hips forward to propel the kettlebell forward and up.
- Control the kettlebell's momentum, without pulling it up and without allowing it to swing higher than the shoulders.
- Allow the kettlebell to swing back down and back through the legs, continuing to control the momentum by keeping the core engaged. Progress to the next rep in a single, fluid motion.



**WALL SIT:**  
Hold for 1 minute

- Press your back against a wall
- Spread the feet shoulder-width apart, about 2 feet in front of you.
- Slide down the wall until the knees are bent at a 90-degree angle.
- Keep the shoulders, upper back and the back of head against the wall.
- Keep both feet flat on the ground.
- Hold the position for 1 minute.
- Return to the starting position.



# Making a Formal Impression

## Tips for Military Formals and Galas

BY STAFF WRITER Pamela DeLoatch

**A**s the winter holiday season approaches, so do a variety of formal military events. For spouses and significant others who are new to the military community, there may be questions about these gatherings, ranging from what to wear, to the order of ceremony, to the do's and don'ts in behavior. The collection of tips below should help in preparing to make that first-time military event one to remember.

### WHAT TO WEAR

Events may range in formality, so the best rule of thumb is to follow your Soldier's dress. If your Soldier is wearing their Class A/Dress Blues, that means the event is formal and you should dress accordingly.

For men, this means wearing a formal suit or tuxedo in a dark color, such as black or navy, with a white shirt and a tie. A blazer and slacks would generally be considered too informal for these events.

For women, formal elegance is the theme. As with men wearing a blazer, a cocktail dress or sundress for a woman would generally be considered too informal. Modern formal gowns come in a wide range of cuts, colors and lengths. The key is to choose a dress that is flattering, appropriate to the occasion and fitting of your personality.

### SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Military balls are often steeped in tradition, and as much as these events may be party-like in atmosphere, they are still work-related events and it is important to maintain a degree of professionalism even as you socialize.

Military balls, parties and other social events may vary in their structure, but here is a common timeline:

### Cocktail Hour

- This informal period gives guests a chance to mix, mingle and perhaps take photos.
- Alcohol will likely be served during the cocktail hour and other portions of the evening. Pace your drinking throughout the night, making sure not to over-consume. If both you and your Soldier plan to drink, pre-arrange for a ride home. Never get behind the wheel to drive while under the influence of alcohol. If under the age of 21, do not drink.



## Receiving Line

- This is an opportunity for everyone to be briefly greeted by the most senior officers.
- Before entering the line, be sure to set down any food or drinks so your hands are free. Also, leave any items, such as coats or umbrellas, with coat-check or at your table.
- Women may bring their purses and should remove any evening gloves before shaking hands. Be sure to turn off your cell phone, or leave it at the table.
- As you go through the line, the Soldier will generally perform introductions unless an announcer is stationed to introduce you and your Guard member.

## Pre-Dinner Ceremony:

- This is the point in the evening when dinner is announced and everyone proceeds to his or her assigned tables.
- Once at your table, remain standing until the Color Guard and Invocation is complete and the head table is seated.

## Dinner

- The meal may be buffet style or served to each table. Often, a program and presentations may be taking place during dinner.
- Be courteous during speeches and keep your phone turned off and kept out of sight.

## Dancing:

- After dinner and presentations, fun follows with dancing. While you want to have fun on the dance floor, remember that this is a work function. Be mindful that you may not want to go into full-on "club mode."

Military balls and social events are a fun and exciting time. By understanding the protocol and process, you can approach each event with confidence and anticipation. ●

---

Soldiers, Family members and guests danced the night away at the second annual Hydra Ball hosted by the 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, Georgia Army National Guard, in Columbus, Ga.

U.S. Army photo by 1SG Rachel Dryden



# Exceptional Families, **Exceptional Service**



The Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) helps service members gain access to programs and services that can assist in managing the care of Family members with special needs.

## **Services offered by EFMP include:**

- Non-clinical case management, including individualized service plans
- Early intervention services
- The identification of community resources appropriate for specific special needs
- The identification of local schools with special needs programs or services

For more information, visit [www.myarmyonesource.com/familyprogramsandservices/FamilyPrograms](http://www.myarmyonesource.com/familyprogramsandservices/FamilyPrograms) or speak to the EFMP manager in the Army Community Service office at the nearest military installation.





# POISED FOR SUCCESS

## NMFA Scholarships and Career Funds Help Military Spouses Fund Their Goals

BY STAFF WRITER Keegan Rammel

**M**ilitary spouses with a valid military ID can take advantage of career funding and scholarship money through the National Military Family Association (NMFA). A major advocate for military families for nearly 50 years, NMFA is a proud member of the Defense Department's (DoD)'s Military Spouse Employment Partnership. The program awards an average of \$500 for career funding, \$1,000 for degrees and certifications, and up to \$2,500 for clinical supervision towards a license in the mental health profession. An average funding of \$1,000 is also available to entrepreneur spouses who own Limited Liability Companies operating in a variety of fields.

These funding opportunities are exclusive to military spouses and are designed to help service member Families achieve their goals both financially and professionally. The NMFA is also partnered with several schools and programs that may award spouses additional money for educational and licensure programs. Some schools offer as much as \$7,500 in scholarships for degrees in a wide variety of fields ranging from teaching to nursing to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)-related occupations.

Through the NMFA website, spouses may access career advice, help with completing applications and encouragement from other military spouses who are already using scholarship or career funds.

To qualify, one must be a legal military spouse at the time of scholarship award. Those who are eligible are:

- A military spouse with a valid military ID
- Married to a National Guard, active duty, Reserve, retired, medically retired, wounded or fallen service member (must be a Service-related wound, illness, injury or death that occurred after Sept. 11, 2001)
- Married when asked for verification paperwork (usually a month after the applications close)
- A dual-service military spouse
- A divorced spouse who receives 20/20/20 benefits

Those who are not eligible are:

- Surviving spouses who are remarried, unless they are remarried to a service member
- Children (For information on scholarships for military children, check the Defense Commissary Agency Military Children Scholarships at Fisherhouse.org)
- Spouses of former service members, unless they are retired or medically retired

The 2018 fall/winter scholarship application period runs from Oct. 1, 2018 through Jan. 15, 2019.

For details on the application process or for information on the full spectrum of funding opportunities available to spouses through the NMFA, visit [MilitaryFamily.org/spouses-scholarships/](http://MilitaryFamily.org/spouses-scholarships/).

**Military spouses who are considering a degree in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) may be eligible to receive up to \$4,000 in scholarships through My Career Advancement Account (MyCAA), a component of the DoD's Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Program. Spouses interested in STEM degrees may also want to consider joining the Society of Military Spouses in STEM (SMSS), a non-profit, member-run organization focused on advocating for military spouses with technical interests.**

**For more information on MyCAA, go to [MyCAA.militaryonesource.mil](http://MyCAA.militaryonesource.mil). To learn more about SMSS, visit [SMSSTEM.org](http://SMSSTEM.org).**

# AN UNUSUAL. ADDITIONAL. DUTY

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak | Maine Army National Guard photos by CPL Jarod Dye

**C**hemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERF-P) units represent a substantive force for good – and more importantly, hope – for any American community that has become victim to a biological outbreak or chemical/nuclear threat. The men and women of the National Guard assigned to these units are tasked with being at the scene of an incident within six hours of its occurrence.

The New England CERF-P is just one example of these combined Army and Air Guard units that conduct everything from decontaminating victims (up to 100 per

hour), to extracting victims from collapsed buildings, to providing victims with life-saving medical care.

“CERF-P is not an MOS [military occupational specialty], it’s an additional duty,” said LTC Mark C. Stevens, commander of the 521st Troop Command Battalion, Maine Army National Guard. “[Our normal jobs] take the backburner at times.”

With command of the 521st Troop Command Battalion, LTC Stevens also inherits command of the New England CERF-P. The New England CERF-P is an all-volunteer force, made up of 203 Soldiers from Rhode Island, Maine and New Hampshire. For many of the CERF-P unit members, including the commander, it can be tricky to balance CERF-P duties with the responsibilities of command

and the normal duties associated with each Soldier’s MOS. This is especially true since most of the CERF-P Soldiers are traditional drilling Soldiers and are attempting to complete the requirements of both roles on limited hours.

“This is my part-time job to my part-time job,” LTC Stevens quipped regarding the CERF-P.

As challenging as its prioritization may be, the role of the CERF-P unit is a critical job, and these New England Soldiers take it very seriously.

“I’m glad we’ve never had to use [the CERF-P unit] because if we used it, that means something really bad happened and people died,” reflected 1SG Felix Marinelli with the 861st Engineer Company, Rhode Island National Guard and New England CERF-P member.



# New England CERF-P Units Offer Hope in Face of Untold Disaster

1SG Marinelli went on to express his enthusiasm for being a part of the Search and Extraction (S&E) element of the New England CERF-P. If an incident were to occur, he and his fellow Soldiers would be there – ready to serve.

“The reason I’m [on the team] is because we actually go in where the rubber meets the road,” he said. “We’re saving people. We’re getting victims out of the situation. You’re helping people downrange. It’s one of the most visible elements of CERF-P, because you’re right down with the folks.”

Unique to most military units, a deliberate practice of the New England CERF-P is to let the most experienced team member lead a mission, regardless of rank.

“If we have an E-7 and a private out there, if the private knows more in, say ropes, we would have that private lead that team,” noted SGT James Graves with the 861st. “It’s more based on experience and not rank-structured. I think it works well. Everybody knows [the policy], so you’re not going to have that E-7 or E-6 barking at [the lower ranking Soldiers].”

This past May, the New England CERF-P’s readiness was tested during a training and certification exercise held at Joint Base Cape Cod, Massachusetts. The unit was evaluated by the Joint Interagency Training and Education Center (JITEC) based out of West Virginia. JITEC is the National Guard Bureau lead for CBRNE and Critical Infrastructure Protection training. Utilizing a cadre of

military and civilian subject matter experts for homeland defense and civil support activities, the JITEC is an active National Guard unit that supports National Guard training and education.

To pass the evaluation, the Soldiers had to successfully travel to the disaster site, set up their teams, then find, recover, transport, decontaminate and medically treat victims played by local, civilian role players.

---

New England Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) Enhanced Response Package (CERF-P) Soldiers, donned in full chemsuits, treat mock victims during the unit’s validation exercise this past May at Joint Base Cape Cod, Mass.



**"It also brings us closer to the first responder community; one thing we always hear from our evaluators is how quick we are to come together, unify, problem-solve and make connections."**

— MAJ Michael Gary

CERF-P validation takes place every three years. The unit trained heavily to prepare for this year's validation, prepping for approximately six months prior to the event.

"They were testing us on our proficiency with a factor of time," said MAJ Michael Gary with 521st Troop Command, Maine Army National Guard. MAJ Gary is the executive officer of the 521st. He is also the deputy commander of the New England CERF-P.

The scenario for the validation exercise centered on a fictional nuclear device exploding in Rhode Island. In part, the incident briefing for the exercise read:

*On May 14th, 2018 at 0800, a major explosion occurred in Providence, RI, followed by secondary explosions, collapsed*

*structures, fires and numerous vehicular accidents. Source of the detonation appears to be a 10kT nuclear device detonated at ground level within the city of Providence, RI. Wind is out of the West at about 10 mph and has created a fallout plume that stretches east all the way to Cape Cod. A shelter-in-place order has been issued. Casualty shelters and treatment centers outside the light damage zone (est. 3-mile radius from blast epicenter) are being established. Early projections estimate over 25,000 fatalities and over 34,000 injuries.*

Despite the bleak situation, the New England CERF-P was ready for the job at hand. The unit is broken up into six elements to allocate resources and designate tasks: the 16-person command and control (C2) element, led by Maine's 521st Troop Command Battalion; the six-person communications element,



made up of Air Guard personnel; the 50-person search and extraction element, made up of Army National Guard Soldiers; the 75-person decontamination element, also made up of Army National Guard Soldiers; the 45-person medical element, made up of Airmen; and the 11-person Fatality Search and Recovery Team element.

Before going downrange, the search and extraction team talks to the C2 and partnering first responder agencies to obtain information regarding the specifics of the incident.

"There are other military teams out there to tell us what



A Guard Soldier of the New England region's Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERF-P) treats a mock injury on a role player during the unit's validation exercise this past May.



Members of the New England Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERF-P) check a mock victim for residual radiological contamination after passing through a decontamination shower as part of the unit's triennial evaluation exercise.

the threat is – whether it's chemical, nuclear or biological," 1SG Marinelli said. "We suit up accordingly based on that information."

MAJ Gary expressed the importance of joint training not only with other U.S. military forces, but also with local first responders. "When you get together with Air, Army and different units, you can unify to solve a problem," he said. "It also brings us closer to the first responder community; one thing we always hear from our evaluators is how quick we are to come together, unify, problem-solve and make connections."

For the validation exercise, one of the search and extraction tasks was to rescue a victim from the bottom of a 50-foot elevator shaft. The shaft was simulated by stacking CONEX shipping containers on top of one another. To complicate matters, Soldiers began their work in total darkness.

"Basically, in full chemical suits and chemical gear, [Soldiers are] walking up a flight of stairs with a 60-pound backpack full of their ropes, gear and their tripod,"

explained SSG Brian Wheeler, a platoon sergeant for Rhode Island's 861st and noncommissioned officer-in-charge for the search and extraction element.

SSG Wheeler went on to explain how the search and extraction Soldiers then prep a rope line to send team members down the shaft on a harness.

"We'll send a medic and then another person down. The medic will perform first aid while the other guy helps package the patient. They've got to harness the patient, and then do it all over again going up [themselves]. The guys on the top end are pulling the rope system."

A major challenge for the search and extraction team, and for all CERF-P Soldiers, is the perishable nature of the skills required to complete their missions. Unless the core tasks are practiced repeatedly, the ability to perform them with efficiency will quickly begin to decline.

"Rope training is one of the most perishable skills we have," said SSG Wheeler. "There's never enough training that we can do for ropes."

1SG Marinelli agreed. "For the amount of time you have to train with those things, it's very sketchy," he said. "But the guys pulled through. We had classes right before [going to validation]."

By all accounts, this year's validation for the New England CERF-P was a success. In fact, the New England Soldiers reported their performance as exceptional.

"We knew we were going to knock it out of the park," MAJ Gary noted. "We did really well. The evaluators were very impressed with the way we performed."

In addition to the JITEC evaluators being impressed, the Soldiers of New England's CERF-P were happy with the effort put into their performance.

"I enjoy it," said CW2 Eric Martins, with the 521st Troop Command. "I think most of the guys do because it's a big buildup. There's lots that goes into it – months of planning ahead of time, a lot of behind-the-scenes stuff just to get us there. It keeps us really busy. Then when you get there, and you see it all come together and it goes off smoothly, it's really satisfying." ●



# CYBER YANKEE 18

## BROADENING THE CYBER DEFENSE NETWORK

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

When the hacktivist group Hacktovia caused significant disruptions to the World Peace Conference at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston, Massachusetts, Army National Guard Soldiers from the New England States answered the call for help.

In this fictional scenario conducted during Cyber Yankee 18, Guard Soldiers came together to execute realistic cyber defense exercises.

Cyber Yankee 18 – a two-week, regionally focused training – was hosted by the Massachusetts Army National

Guard last June at the Regional Training Institute on Camp Edwards. The goal of the exercise is to create a lifelike cyber environment where Soldiers could apply their skills as cyber defenders while building upon the relationships between the National Guard, federal government, State government and industry partners in New England.

Started four years ago, Cyber Yankee was created in response to a need for a more regionally focused exercise.

“We really didn’t have anything that we considered to be low cost, focused on domestic support and regionally focused,” COL Michael Tetreault of the Rhode Island Army National Guard said.

“It became an exercise almost out of necessity. We needed an exercise

that could train our traditional Guard folks working in the field of cyber where they could take everything that they’ve been learning and put that to use in an annual training environment.”

Along with COL Tetreault, the exercise was planned and executed by Cyber Yankee Exercise Director COL Richard Berthao of the Massachusetts Army National Guard and Cyber Yankee Deputy Director LTC Woody Groton of the New Hampshire Army National Guard.

With approximately 200 participants, Cyber Yankee 18 included Soldiers and Airmen from the Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont National Guard. There were also government agency and industry participants, including the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Energy Regulatory Agency, Massachusetts Water Resource Authority and the New Hampshire State Police.

SSG Shawn Lane of the 3rd Information Operations Battalion, 124th Regional Training Institute, Vermont Army National Guard conducts a forensic investigation of a laptop during the 2018 Cyber Yankee network defense training event.

New Hampshire Army National Guard photo by LTC Woody Groton



Fourteen Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 123rd and 124th Cyber Protection Battalions, 91st Cyber Brigade, take part in the Cyber Yankee network defense exercise June 2018, at Joint Base Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

Virginia Army National Guard photo by Cotton Puryear

“The exercise allows the cyber Soldiers and Airmen to train on cyber defense skills in a realistic environment with a realistic scenario,” LTC Groton said. “One of the key successes this year was how we enhanced the realism by working with industry partners. It makes for better training for Guard members.”

Given the smaller size of the event, planners were able to create a flexible and tailored environment that could be adjusted to meet the specific needs of the participants.

LTC Groton explained, “It’s big enough that we can meet the training values, but it’s small enough that we can react very quickly to any issues that come up, make changes and continue with the training.”

“We control the exercise,” said COL Tetreault. “We can tailor the pace to ensure that each team is learning at the level they need to be learning. My favorite aspect of this exercise is that we, as a region, can get together as a [planning-group], and we all have an active role in what we want the exercise to be.”

During the exercise, participants were broken up into three teams: Blue, Red and White. The Blue team was deemed the “good guys,” and assisted a compromised civilian partner in the scenario. The Red team played the “bad guys,” who attacked the Blue team. Members of the White team evaluated how the Blue

“

**CYBER IS A  
TEAM SPORT.  
One person can’t do  
it all by themselves.  
It’s not just the  
hands-on-keyboard  
work, but it’s also  
how they exercise  
their leadership  
principles, how  
they exercise their  
concepts and their  
processes that they  
put in place to go  
through and defend  
the network.**

”

— COL Michael Tetreault

team was responding to the Red team’s attacks. Based on the White team’s evaluations, the exercise was adjusted for maximum benefit.

“The White team coordinates with the Red team to pace the exercise based on how the attacks are going,” explained COL Tetreault, who acted as the White Cell officer in charge. “Is the team doing well? Could they be attacked more frequently or aggressively? Or are they struggling? If so, we need to back down a little to give them an opportunity to reorganize and prepare to get their processes in place for more efficiency at completing their mission.”

The exercise layout proved successful. Soldiers left the event with an improved expertise in cyber defense.

“I thought it was excellent this year,” COL Tetreault said. “Each year we continue to build on the lessons learned from the prior year. The things that didn’t work, we made sure we don’t repeat those mistakes again the following year.”

SSG Michael Kinney of Detachment 2, 146th Cyber Warfare Company, Maine Army National Guard, played a supporting role on the Red team during Cyber Yankee 18. As it was his first time participating in the exercise, he said that he appreciated the opportunity to develop his cyber skills.

“It was a good exercise,” he explained. “I learned a lot, even if it was just how much I don’t know about some of the tools



SSG Paul Eaves (left) and 1LT William Black (right), both of the 126th Cyber Protection Battalion, work with 1LT Heather Boucher of the 223rd Military Intelligence Battalion, Massachusetts National Guard, as they review a chain of custody for a locked laptop that was captured in a raid as part of a training scenario during Cyber Yankee 2018, a network defense training held in June of this year.

New Hampshire Army National Guard photo by LTC Woody Groton

we were using. I enjoyed getting to work with our counterparts from other States and seeing everyone involved.”

Among the many beneficial aspects of the Cyber Yankee exercise is the fact that it is performed on an unclassified level. This allows important lessons learned throughout the exercises to be shared with outside organizations.

“We can share information, not just amongst ourselves, but with our State partners and with some of our industry partners that we bring into exercises,” COL Tetreault said. “Even if you weren’t in the exercise, you can benefit from the sharing of that information.”

The exercise showcased the importance of teamwork in cyber operations – teamwork between both the team members and their civilian counterparts.

“Cyber is a team sport,” COL Tetreault said. “One person can’t do it all by

themselves. It’s not just the hands-on-keyboard work, but it’s also how they exercise their leadership principles, how they exercise their concepts and their processes that they put in place to go through and defend the network. It’s about being able to follow proven processes and it’s also about combining cyber-experts with intelligence-experts.”

Within the three participating teams, one team was less experienced than the others. This was clear on the second day of the exercise, when that team began falling behind. Because of the flexibility built into the exercise, the planners were able to adjust the teams to ensure the teams were on an even playing field and each individual team member could benefit from the experience.

“We realized that [the team] just needed some more talent in their cell,” said COL Tetreault. “We were able to cross level

from one of the high performing teams over to the lower performance team with some talent to help mentor them and get them where they needed to be.”

COL Tetreault continued, “The Soldiers actually really appreciated that because instead of getting frustrated, they requested assistance and we were able to maximize the learning. The underperforming team ended up really feeling like they got a lot out of the exercise and benefited from being there.”

With plans for Cyber Yankee 19 already in the works, Soldiers have noted an eagerness to continue to increase their cyber skills and experience insightful interactions with their State, federal and local counterparts during future exercises.

“The skills involved with cyber, if you don’t use them, you lose them,” SSG Kinney said. “You may remember general concepts, but the actual steps that go into each individual piece – whether you are on offense or defense – are critical. Having an opportunity to do this every year is great. I’m already looking forward to next year.” ●

1LT Charles Mayer of the Virginia Army National Guard, 91st Cyber Brigade works with Norman Greene of the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority to analyze a fictional cyberattack on an industrial control systems/supervisory control and data acquisition (ICS/SCADA) system as part of 2018’s Cyber Yankee exercise.

New Hampshire Army National Guard photo by LTC Woody Groton





# FINDING PEACE in the Aftermath

SSG Albert Vieth exits his UH-60 Black Hawk during a training exercise in the spring of 2015 at the Salyor Creek Range near Mountain Home, Idaho.

Photo courtesy SSG Albert Vieth

BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER CPT Robert Taylor

**I**t's been six years since Idaho Army National Guard SSG Albert Vieth was shot two weeks into his unit's nine-month deployment to Afghanistan.

He still lives with pain in his left wrist, resulting from the wound suffered on June 3, 2012, but he doesn't spend much time thinking about that day.

"I don't really think about it a whole lot anymore," SSG Vieth said. "I realize I have certain questions that can't ever be answered. I got as many answers as I could and put it to bed in my mind."

After two years of counseling and conversations with everyone involved but the shooter himself, SSG Vieth sleeps peacefully at night.

"Life's too short to waste time on things you can't affect," he said. "If you go your whole life thinking about it, it will eat you up. I'm still here. I'm still alive. You gotta do as much as you can while you can."

## "JUST ANOTHER DAY"

Before Company A, 1-168th General Support Aviation, deployed to Afghanistan in May 2012, it conducted mobilization training at Fort Hood, Texas. The Idaho National Guard unit was a command aviation company responsible for transporting Soldiers and VIPs throughout the country.

The unit was two weeks into its battle handoff with the Utah National Guard's 1st Battalion, 211th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion. Flight crews were a mixture of members from both units as the outgoing unit showed the incoming unit the terrain and key locations it would need to know.

Then SGT, now SSG, Vieth was a Black Hawk crew chief at the time. He wasn't scheduled to fly on June 3, but he volunteered for a mission to Taqab to

allow another crew chief some rest after a long flight the night before.

"It's just another day," he said.

A team of two Black Hawks flew to Taqab. Though the area was a known hot spot for enemy activity, the team flew without the support of a gunship. The 1-211th had almost completed its deployment and had not lost a single Soldier or aircraft.

Once at Taqab, SSG Vieth's helicopter stayed in the air to provide security while the other Black Hawk landed with the passenger. SSG Vieth was on the aircraft's right when he saw something white come out from under the trees ahead of him.

"I remember seeing this man come from underneath the trees," he said. "He had his gun turned to the left. I saw him raise his arms. I could see he had a rifle of some sort. He was a direct threat to aircraft, so I immediately engaged. So did he."

SSG Vieth fired his M240H machine gun at the man. He did not miss, but neither did his target.

“I remember seeing a dust [cloud] around his feet, but at the same time, I remember getting thrown off my seat,” he said.

An armor-piercing round entered the bottom of his left forearm, shattered two inches of his radius as it exited and went through his shoulder.

His first thought was to try to communicate to the crew what had happened, but he couldn’t reach his headset’s foot switch from the aircraft’s floor. He realized he couldn’t hear the other crewmembers because the round that had passed through his body twice had also passed through the communication cable attached to his helmet, leaving him unable to communicate with crewmembers.

Then 1LT, now CPT Ramesh Kreizenbeck, who was piloting the Black Hawk, recalled hearing the outgoing fire, but not the incoming enemy rounds. When he called back for a status check he received no response.

“What’s going on?” he asked. “Do you see anything?” When he did not receive a reply, he thought it abnormal, CPT Kreizenbeck said.

“I asked the other door gunner, SPC Janica Hanover, to see what was going on with SGT Vieth,” CPT Kreizenbeck recalled. “She looked back and said, ‘He’s on the ground.’ I looked back from my seat and I could see him on the floor of the aircraft bleeding.”

“My life flashed before my eyes at that point,” SSG Vieth remembered. “I felt [disconnected] because I couldn’t communicate. I saw [my whole life] – from when I was a kid, up until the unit left Boise – everyone and everything in a matter of seconds.”

SSG Vieth said he never lost consciousness and that initially, due to the adrenaline his body was releasing as it went into shock, he did not feel much pain.

“I was talking to my God and asking him if he was going to allow me to at least let me see my wife and kid one last time before I go,” he said.

But his fellow Soldiers had already begun to act as their training took over. CPT Kreizenbeck directed SPC Hanover to apply first aid. He then radioed in to inform the unit’s command and the second chopper’s crew of the situation. The other Black Hawk had already discharged its troops, accomplishing the mission. CPT Kreizenbeck flew the 20

miles back to Bagram Air Base and landed as close to the hospital as possible. SSG Vieth said the adrenaline had started to wear off by that point and his arm was hurting badly.

The medical staff had a gurney, but SSG Vieth said he was too hardheaded and proud to use it, as he demanded to walk into the hospital on his own.

Within six hours, SSG Vieth was out of the country. He would later ask his entire chain of command if he could return and complete the mission with his unit, though he was ultimately unable to do so.

## THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

SSG Vieth would receive seven surgeries as a result of his wounds. The first was in Afghanistan. Then he was flown to Germany and then Joint Base Andrews in Maryland for additional surgeries before having his arm rebuilt at Madigan Army Medical Center at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.

Today, he has full use of his left arm and fingers. He lost some mobility in his wrist, but can move all his fingers and has feeling in most of his arm. His arm was numb at first, but eventually regained feeling after its nerves recovered from the shock of having a round

pierce through it. His fingers started working on their own, but his thumb required a tendon transfer. One of the two tendons from his middle finger was cut and transferred to his non-working thumb’s tendon.

“For about a month, I would move my middle finger and my thumb would move at the same time,” he said.

SSG Vieth spent four months recovering at Fort Lewis before returning home. He wore an arm brace for about a year and had a permanent profile for push-ups. Once he felt fully recovered, he asked to



Then-SGT Albert Vieth meets CPT Nicole Washington at Fort Hood, Texas upon his return to the States after being shot in the arm during a 2012 deployment to Afghanistan.

Photo courtesy Idaho Army National Guard



SSG Albert Vieth prepares for takeoff inside his UH-60 Black Hawk prior to A Company, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion's aerial gunnery training at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho.

Photo courtesy SSG Albert Vieth



SSG Albert Vieth looks out from his UH-60 Black Hawk to direct the pilot into the extraction zone during a training event at the Saylor Creek Training Range.

Photo courtesy SSG Albert Vieth

have that profile removed and performed 76 push-ups on his next Army Physical Fitness Test.

“Wounds, whether physical or mental, don’t have to be the limiting factor in your life,” he said. “Some way, somehow, you can find a way around it to do whatever you want to do. If you’re driven, you can still make your life happy.”

CPT Kreizenbeck now works on the same base with SSG Vieth and sees him weekly. He described SSG Vieth as a hard-nosed, but friendly man.

“He’s a go-getter,” said CPT Kreizenbeck “Even if he gets hurt, he wants to keep going, fighting on.”

## FIGHTING ON

After returning home, SSG Vieth started having flashbacks and nightmares of his time in Iraq with the First Infantry Division during Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield in 1991. He has no idea why his mind focused on that deployment and not his more recent one, but he became restless in bed, tense in cars and haunted by the death and destruction he saw during the Army’s initial invasion of Iraq.

It became too much for his marriage, though he doesn’t blame himself or his former wife for the divorce. As his physical injuries healed, he sought help in maintaining his mental health. He found relief in the words of those present the day his life changed, as well as a counselor who listened to his thoughts on a

wide range of topics.

SSG Vieth said after talking to a counselor for two years, a lot of what bothered him went away.

“I’m a big fan of people with PTSD going to talk to people,” he said. “It seemed to work itself out. I sleep pretty peacefully now.”

He said he talked about a number of things with the counselor and that having a neutral party who didn’t know him or judge him made it easier to sort through things in his head.

“A lot of people are anti-counseling,” he said. “It’s human nature to think you can fix everything. Understand that if you need help, there are people who are educated in this area who are good at it. If you can get past that first hurdle, it’s easy.”

After returning home, SSG Vieth was able to talk to the crew and his commander about what happened the day

he was shot, which helped him come to terms with the event.

As an Active Guard/Reserve Soldier, SSG Vieth is now the readiness noncommissioned officer for Company B, 1-183rd Aviation Battalion.

“I realize I have certain questions that can’t be answered,” SSG Vieth said. “I think a lot of people go wrong because they think about it and think about it, but they never go to the source or the people who can give them some sort of information that can answer the questions that can be answered. I got answers to the questions I knew I could get, and that was it.”

## “I LIVED. HE DIDN’T”

SSG Vieth is also at peace with the man who shot him.

“That guy was doing the same thing I was doing,” he said. “Regardless if I believe in his cause or he believes in mine, we’re both Soldiers doing a job, so it doesn’t matter. I chose to be there. He chose to be there. We both chose to be there and play the game. I lived. He didn’t.” ●



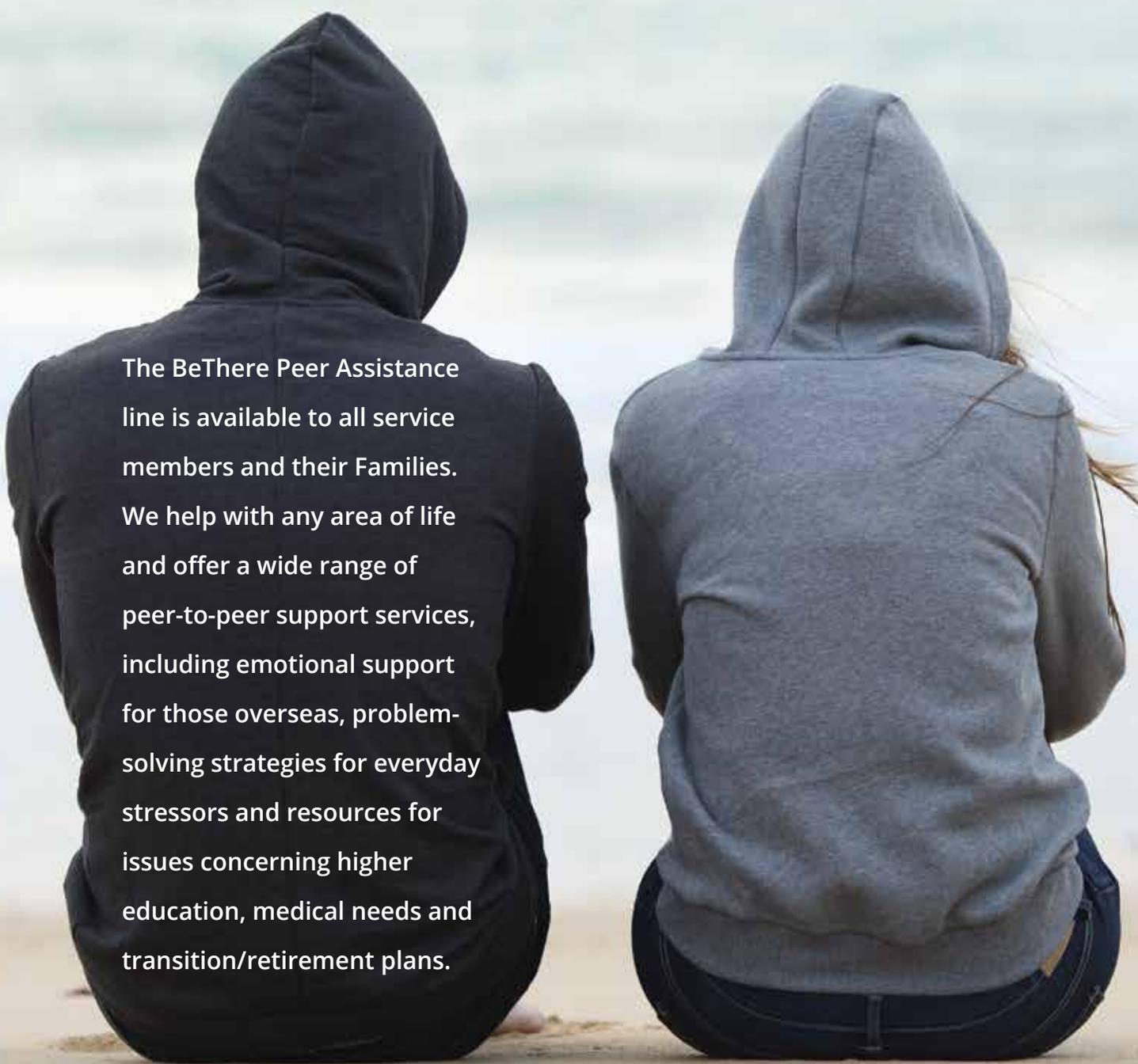
SSG Albert Vieth, shown with two civilians, Jacob Mills and Kendra Midkiff, after giving the two a tour of an Idaho National Guard military facility in 2013.

Photo courtesy Jeff Mills



# BeThere

*We've Been There.  
Now, We're Here for You.*



The BeThere Peer Assistance line is available to all service members and their Families. We help with any area of life and offer a wide range of peer-to-peer support services, including emotional support for those overseas, problem-solving strategies for everyday stressors and resources for issues concerning higher education, medical needs and transition/retirement plans.



Call 844-357-PEER (7337)



text 480-360-6188



visit [www.betherepeersupport.org](http://www.betherepeersupport.org)

# LESSONS IN LOGISTICS

UTAH HOMELAND RESPONSE FORCE SHOWS VALUE OF COMMAND AND CONTROL

BY STAFF WRITER Mathew Liptak  
Utah Army National Guard photos by SGT Lalita Laksbergs

“The HRF mission is critical given the increased danger that we have responding to domestic terror or disasters.”

Making this observation was LTC Tom Mills of the West Virginia Army National Guard’s Joint Interagency Training and Education Center, who was describing the importance of Homeland Response Forces (HRFs) while observing a training mission conducted by the Utah Army National Guard’s HRF earlier this year.

Established in 2012 as part of a larger reorganization of the Department of Defense’s domestic consequence management enterprise, HRFs serve to increase response

efforts in support of local and federal authorities after the occurrence of a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosives (CBRNE) incident in the United States.

HRF units are alerted, assembled and deployed within six to 12 hours of an incident occurrence. They conduct command and control, casualty assistance, search and extraction, decontamination, medical triage and stabilization, and fatality search and recovery.

Ten National Guard HRF units are based across the country, regionally oriented to align with the 10

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regions. Eight of the 10 are hosted by a single State in its particular FEMA region. Those States are California, Georgia, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah and Washington. The remaining two HRF assets are distributed across two States per region. In Region I, HRF units are stationed in Massachusetts and Vermont, and Region II elements are shared between New Jersey and New York.

Each HRF is comprised of approximately 580 personnel. Designed to operate either alongside or in advance of other National Guard, local, State and federal first responders, the core of each HRF is a CBRNE response capability that is similar to that found in a CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package (CERF-P).

In addition to its CBRNE competency, HRF units have a substantial command and control capability.

2LT Mark Sagvold is with the Utah National Guard’s HRF, under the 97th Troop Command, and has worked out of his unit’s logistics operations center during past missions as an S4 shift supervisor.

“In a big picture, my job really is to get life-saving supplies and resources to the people in the field that are outside saving lives,” he explained.

2LT Sagvold spoke about how critical it is to coordinate all the various agencies and military components that respond to a CBRNE disaster.



Members of the Utah National Guard’s 116th Engineer Company, Homeland Response Force, work with members of Missouri Task Force One during a notional search and extraction mission as part of the Missouri National Guard-led, New Madrid Seismic Zone regional disaster training.



Members of the Utah National Guard Homeland Response Force carry out command and control objectives as part of the New Madrid Seismic Zone exercise, a regional disaster training that focused on urban search and rescue operations, hosted in May of this year by the Missouri National Guard.

While all members of an HRF team are critical to its function, 2LT Sagvold noted two command and control roles of particular importance. One is the radio transmission operator (RTO).

“The [RTOs] monitor the radios and the communication channels,” he explained. “When there are requests that come through, they’re the ones that take in those requests. They pass it to the proper person that can handle the matter and execute on it. The RTO has to be at the top of their game to be able to respond to each request and push it out to the right individuals.”

The second critical role 2LT Sagvold highlighted is that of the logistic operations non-commissioned officer (NCO).

“The logistic operations NCO is a very important position,” he said. “That person is constantly [receiving] status reports and information on how our life-saving units on the ground are doing with equipment and if they need more. He or she is out there making material projections so they can anticipate what may be needed – whether that’s contamination suits or masks or water.”

HRF Soldiers are required to expect the unexpected. They must accomplish their missions in an environment that is reverberating from the chaos that accompanies most disasters.

**“THE HRF MISSION IS CRITICAL GIVEN THE INCREASED DANGER THAT WE HAVE RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC TERROR OR DISASTERS.”**

— LTC Tom Mills

The members of the Utah HRF unit had their ability to meet this requirement tested last spring at the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ) exercise – a regional disaster training hosted by the Missouri National Guard.

Held at the Boone County Fire Training Center in Columbia, Missouri, the NMSZ exercise simulated a catastrophic earthquake occurring along the New Madrid Faultline that registered 7.7 on the Richter Magnitude Scale.

During the training, Utah’s HRF worked alongside members of the Missouri and Colorado National Guards, the Boone County (Missouri) Fire Protection District, Task Force One and observers from the West Virginia National Guard Joint Interagency Training and Education Center (JITEC).

“The Utah [HRF] is part of this exercise because we’re part of the plan to support Missouri in the event of an earthquake,” said COL Scott Burnhope, commander, 97th Troop Command and HRF. “We’re practicing skills that we need such as command and control, and search and extraction in order to better support the mission. Every time we get a chance to work together with other partners in an event, it’s going to help.”

Sixty-five personnel, out of the Utah HRF’s 583 total members participated in the exercise.



Soldiers of the Utah National Guard Homeland Response Force train with members of Missouri Task Force One to rescue a hypothetical victim during a search and extraction mission as part of the New Madrid Seismic Zone exercise held by the Missouri National Guard this past May.

extraction.

“[During the training], the exercise planners are throwing different things at you,” said 2LT Sagvold. “It really challenges you to think about the geographic area that you’re in. When you’re trying to make transportation plans, you’re constantly poring over maps and looking at different routes. When you make a plan and say ‘Alright, we’re going to go this way,’ the exercise planners come back and say ‘No, all those bridges now are gone.’ All your plans go out the window.”

2LT Sagvold recalled one particular inject – an unexpected directive from exercise planners – that posed a significant challenge.

This particular inject was the simulated breakdown of a refrigerator truck. These trucks are used for the grim, but necessary, work of preserving the remains of deceased disaster victims.

2LT Sagvold and his Soldiers immediately set out looking to find a replacement truck that could be obtained

“Being able to respond and train with our partners, like the National Guard, gives us the ability to be stronger in response to what the people and communities [of our State] are going to need,” said Chuck Leake, task force leader, Missouri Task Force One and assistant chief of the Boone County Fire Protection District.

“The Utah HRF, being the FEMA Region 8 HRF, would be the responding team to the State of Missouri in the event of a New Madrid earthquake,” Leake added.

The week-long exercise included missions for several disciplines including operations and logistics, disaster medical assistance, swift water rescue response and search and



Soldiers of the 116th Engineer Company, Utah National Guard Homeland Response Force, and a member of Missouri Task Force One shore up an unstable structure while participating in the regional disaster training, the New Madrid Seismic Zone exercise.

# **“BEING ABLE TO respond and train with our partners, like the National Guard, gives us the ability to be stronger in response to what the people and communities of our State are going to need.”**

— Chuck Leake

within budget. They also had to find a way to navigate the replacement vehicle through the tangle of closed roads and broken bridges to get it to the proper location. They scoured the internet, calling real businesses until they found one that could supply a refrigerator truck in a one-day turnaround.

“We had to come up with real answers,” 2LT Sagvold explained. “We had to come up with something realistic based upon the way things were. For this particular inject, we were calling around and seeing who had availability to try to play it as real as possible. We didn’t actually book [the truck].”

SFC Nathan Torres, Utah HRF’s full-time planning non-commissioned officer in charge, was initially responsible for the upfront planning to the HRF unit on the ground in Missouri. Once there, he was tasked with keeping the ball rolling smoothly.

“Once we got there on the ground, my job was to work in the plans section and keep track of all the units that were there underneath us,” he said. “We would track the units and what site they were at, and then anticipate how they would be used or if they were going to be needed somewhere else in

the next 48 to 72 hours.”

To accurately carry out these duties, SFC Torres and the other Soldiers working in command and control needed to attain up-to-the-minute information from the fielded elements like the HRF’s CERF-P team. That wasn’t always easy.

“You’re asking them for reports and numbers to be sent back to you, but they’re actually on the ground,” he acknowledged. “Their mission to save lives and get people out of the danger zone obviously comes first. That’s always a challenge – to get reports on time when you ask for them [while everything else is going on].”

Though the responsibilities of directly saving citizens on the ground and indirectly saving citizens by reporting back vital information that would be used to ensure a safer environment may have sometimes conflicted with one another, the Soldiers of Utah’s HRF demonstrated a keen understanding of the need for the completion of both tasks.

SSG Jeremy Teela is one of the Utah HRF’s CERF-P Soldiers in the field at the NMSZ exercise.

“I was part of the search and extraction team,” he said. “It’s super important to have someone watching from above because nothing happens without logistics. [For example], how do you feed and house all these rescued people? You’ve got to look at this as a giant organization that you put into [play] during a disaster. Without the logistical piece working like clockwork, nothing moves, nothing happens.”

The lessons learned in Missouri will help the Utah HRF the next time it goes into the field, whether it be for another exercise or a real-world disaster. The value of on-the-ground training the Soldiers received may translate into lives saved in the case of an actual event. Based on feedback from the unit, the Soldiers improved their readiness because of the exercise in Missouri.

“We [went] through and exercised our knowledge and everything we’ve learned. If you’re not constantly on these tools and skills, it’s like anything – it’s a perishable skill. You need to use it constantly to be able to call on it at any moment’s notice.” ●



Chuck Leake, task force leader, Missouri Task Force One and assistant chief, Boone County Fire Protection District, briefs members of the Utah National Guard Homeland Response Force during the New Madrid Seismic Zone regional disaster training hosted by the Missouri National Guard this past May.

# ON TARGET

## Across the Pond

### National Guard Soldiers Score High Marks at United Kingdom Marksmanship Competition

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER  
MAJ Theresa Austin



**T**he sun beats down on two machine gunners from Delta and Charlie teams as they lay prone on the grass and provide suppressive fire at enemy targets 600 meters away. At the same time, riflemen sprint forward on line with them, completing the eight-man section.

As Charlie team members see the enemy appear, they leap forward into a sprint, moving up and down hills and jumping over trenches to take a prone firing position just 100 meters forward. As soon as they open fire on the enemy, Delta team takes off in a dead sprint, maneuvering through the same obstacles to move online with them.

Sweat pours as team members – wearing at least 22 pounds of gear and body armor not including their helmet, weapon and ammunition – continue this explosive bounding

forward until they are 300 meters from the enemy and within the range of the average Soldier’s marksmanship ability. They continue forward 200 meters, riflemen taking a kneeling firing position and machine gunners prone, and take out the remainder of the enemy targets with fierce lethality.

This event, reminiscent of combat environments, was one of over 20 operational “combat-style” shooting matches conducted in the 2018 United Kingdom Defence Operational Shooting Competitions (DefOSC) this past June at Bisley Camp and Army Training Centre Pirbright in Woking, England.

During the Army Reserve Operational Shooting Competition portion of DefOSC, the National Guard All Guard International Combat Team displayed its lethal skills by winning first place in five matches and placing in the top three in 11 of 13 matches.

“All the events were like combat,” said All Guard Team member 1LT Garrett Miller of the 2nd Squadron,

---

SSG Michael Richey, All Guard International Combat Team member from the Missouri Army National Guard, fires his M16 Rifle after running 100 meters to his firing position during the 2018 UK Defence Operational Shooting Competition held at Bisley Camp and the Army Reserve Training Centre Pirbright, England.

104th Cavalry Regiment, Pennsylvania Army National Guard. “Each event was custom tailored to apply competitive pressure to the participants in different ways.”

Being lethal in combat is not an easy task. One of most challenging elements in this competition – similar to combat – was the speed required to move into position and engage targets.

“The competitors are challenged to sprint 100 meters forward, charge their rifle, obtain a steady position and fire as many rounds as possible at a 100-meter target in just 25 seconds, then remain in position and fire the rest of the remaining rounds of a 20-round magazine in 35 seconds at a 200-meter and 300-meter target,” said 1LT Miller, describing the Attack and Reorganize Assessment. “Then from there, the match moves right into three more phases without any reprieve.”

For the Urban Contact Assessment event, SSG Michael Richey of the Missouri National Guard Joint Force Headquarters said, “100- to 300-meter targets would expose themselves for only three or four seconds, during which time we had to go from the standing position to the kneeling

position and engage the target.”

As if the speed of movement and target engagement was not enough of a challenge, the ease of movement was also affected by the pounds of gear and body armor Soldiers were required to wear. The protective gear was similar to the requirements for combat.

“It was difficult to balance the thrill of charging forward and diving into position with the need to calmly place shots center mass in each target before the time expired,” 1LT Miller said. “Oh, and all while wearing body armor, plates and 10 kilograms (22 pounds) of kit.”

“The requirement to wear body armor and gear during the match greatly increased fatigue throughout the competition and also heart rate during the course of fire,” SSG Richey said.

While the individual aspects of the competition were challenging and combat-oriented, the team matches seemed to be most like combat.

“You had to shoot, move and communicate as a team, which is what you’ll be doing in combat,” SSG Richey said.



SFC Paul Deugan, All Guard International Combat Team member from the Iowa Army National Guard, sprints 300 meters to the firing line before engaging targets 100-300 meters away while competing in the 2018 UK Defence Operational Shooting Competition.

The National Guard All Guard International Combat Team consisted of 10 members and two team managers:

- **MAJ David Stapp**, team officer in charge, Arkansas National Guard
- **MSG Greg Neiderhiser**, team noncommissioned officer in charge, Pennsylvania National Guard
- **CPT Robert Lee**, team member, Texas National Guard
- **1LT Garrett Miller**, team member, Pennsylvania National Guard
- **SFC Christopher Catlin**, team member, Colorado National Guard
- **SFC Paul Deugan**, team member, Iowa National Guard
- **SFC David Keenom**, team member, Tennessee National Guard
- **SSG Brandon Hornung**, team member, Illinois National Guard
- **SSG Michael Richey**, team member, Missouri National Guard
- **SGT Tyler Goldade**, team member, North Dakota National Guard
- **SGT Maxium Nickerson**, team member, Vermont National Guard
- **SPC Jeremy McCombs**, team member, Colorado National Guard



SPC Jeremy McCombs, All Guard International Combat Team member from the Colorado Army National Guard, takes cover behind a “hasty firing position” and engages rapidly moving targets 100 meters down range as part of the 2018 UK Defence Operational Shooting Competition.

In this long-standing shooting competition, the National Guard and British Army Reserve battle for the Fortuna Trophy. The competition consists of four matches: Advance to Contact, Defence Assessment, Pistol Close Quarter Combat and Urban Contact Assessment.

The All Guard Team arrived with the main goal of winning the Fortuna Trophy and pushing themselves to their limits. They did that and more.

In addition to capturing the trophy, several other awards were won by the team and individual members:

- **Fire Team Combat Snap Shooting Assessment**  
- All Guard Team
- **Fortuna Cup** (highest individual aggregate on the Fortuna winning team) - 1LT Miller
- **Advance to Contact** (contributes to Fortuna Trophy) - 1LT Miller
- **Pistol Close Quarter Combat** (contributes to Fortuna Trophy)  
- SFC Deugan
- **Urban Contact Assessment** (contributes to Fortuna Trophy)  
- SSG Richey
- **Fleeting Encounter**  
- SPC McCombs

“Winning matches that utilize rifle and pistol show how well-rounded of a shooter you are,” SSG Richey said. “It felt good to win a combined rifle and pistol match.”

“Winning the Fortuna Cup is what I consider the highest honor I could possibly achieve at any operational shooting competition, because of the other names that are inscribed on it,” 1LT Miller said. “Every year, the trophy is engraved with the [names of the winning team members]. There are



The Fortuna Trophy.



SGT Maxium Nickerson, All Guard International Combat Team member from the Vermont Army National Guard, reviews his targets and scorecard with a British Armed Forces Soldier after the Urban Contact Assessment Match in the 2018 UK Defence Operational Shooting in Centre Pirbright, England.



The National Guard All Guard International Combat Team (Left to Right), FRONT ROW: MSG Greg Neiderhiser, SSG Michael Richey, SPC Jeremy McCombs, CPT Robert Lee, SGT Maxium Nickerson, SFC Christopher Catlin. BACK ROW: MAJ David Stapp, SFC David Keenom, SSG Brandon Hornung, SGT Tyler Goldade, 1LT Garrett Miller, SFC Paul Deugan.

two [engraved] names in particular that have great relevance to me – 1SG Greg Neiderhiser and CPT J.R. Treharne.

“Now MSG Greg Neiderhiser and COL J.R. Treharne have both served as influential coaches and professional mentors to me since I was a young Cadet. I certainly wouldn’t be where I am today as a competitor and a Soldier if it wasn’t for their mentorship. Knowing that my name will be forever displayed next to theirs on that trophy pays special tribute not just to my achievement, but their skill and passion as coaches and professionals.”

The All Guard Team accomplished its goal of winning the Fortuna and received many other honors, but the most

important achievements were improved combat-oriented marksmanship skills and knowledge to bring back to the United States.

“This competition helps us validate our training methods and strategies,” 1LT Miller said.

“Soldiers from all ranks, MOSs, status and levels attend and try their best. This multi-echelon exposure allows everyone to progress much faster than they normally would with just isolated training back at their home unit. Here, they can pick and choose tactics and techniques they observe from Soldiers standing right next to them on the firing line and bring those back to their home unit.”

“This competition was challenging and more realistic in regards to combat-type shooting than other matches we shoot,” SSG Richey said. “Our team participating in this competition enables us to bring that challenging and realistic style of shooting back to our respective states.”

These competitions are training multipliers that need more attention and participation.

To find out more about how to participate, contact the National Guard Marksmanship Training Center at 501-212-4420/4517/4520 or [ng.ar.ararng.mbx.ngmtc@mail.mil](mailto:ng.ar.ararng.mbx.ngmtc@mail.mil) or visit the center’s Facebook page at [Facebook.com/NGMTC/](https://www.facebook.com/NGMTC/). ●



1LT Garrett Miller, All Guard International Combat Team member from the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, competes in the 2018 UK Defence Operational Shooting Competition as he engages his final targets situated 100 meters down range after running five 100-meter sprints, engaging targets every 100-200 meters along the way.





# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



**SGT Vincent Lindelin,**

Colorado Army National Guard, sits in the back of a military helicopter while participating in a High-Altitude Army National Guard Aviation Training Site (HAATS) course. Run by full-time Colorado Army National Guard pilots, HAATS is specifically designed to train military rotary-wing pilots and offers a unique training methodology based on aircraft power that is designed to dramatically increase individual and crew situational awareness.

Photo courtesy Frank Crebas





# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## World War II Veteran

Claude Cawood gives 1SG Jeffery Lemire, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 103rd Field Artillery Regiment, Rhode Island Army National Guard, a high-five after firing the M777 Howitzer this past August at Camp Grayling, Mich. Cawood, who served three years in the Philippines and was a former section chief on the M105 Howitzer, took the opportunity to visit Soldiers supporting the Northern Strike 2018 exercise.

Iowa Army National Guard photo by 1SG Sara Robinson





# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## **SSG Ge Xiong, UH-66**

Black Hawk crew chief for the California Army National Guard's Alpha Company, 1106th Theatre Aviation Support Maintenance Group, checks his 600-gallon water bucket prior to a mission in the summer of 2018 battling the Mendocino Complex Fires in Lake, Colusa and Mendocino counties, Calif. California Army National Guard pilots used helicopters to drop close to a half-million gallons of water in just over a week as the Ranch and River fires combined to become California's largest wildfire in State history.

California Army National Guard  
photo by SSG Eddie Siguenza





# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## **Lightning strikes as**

Bradley Fighting Vehicles from the 1st Battalion, 150th Cavalry Regiment of the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, fire tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided (TOW) missiles during a Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise (CALFEX) at Fort Bliss, Texas, in August 2018. This CALFEX is part of the Army National Guard's eXportable Combat Training Capability program, an instrumented brigade field training exercise designed to certify platoon proficiency in coordination with First Army.

North Carolina Army  
National Guard Photo by  
SSG Brendan Stephens





# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## **Engineers from**

Michigan Army National Guard's 1437th Multi-Role Bridge Company, based out of Sault Saint Marie, Mich., wait as a Chinook from B Company, 3rd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment, based out of Grand Ledge, Mich., makes an aerial delivery of sling loaded components for an improved float bridge, also known as a ribbon bridge, on the St. Mary's River. The Soldiers of the 1437th, working from 500-hp MK-II Bridge Erection Boats, maneuvered the separate pieces to rehearse the assembling of a sturdy floating bridge during a training scenario in August of this year.

Michigan Army National Guard  
photo by SFC Helen Miller





# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



## **Infantrymen and**

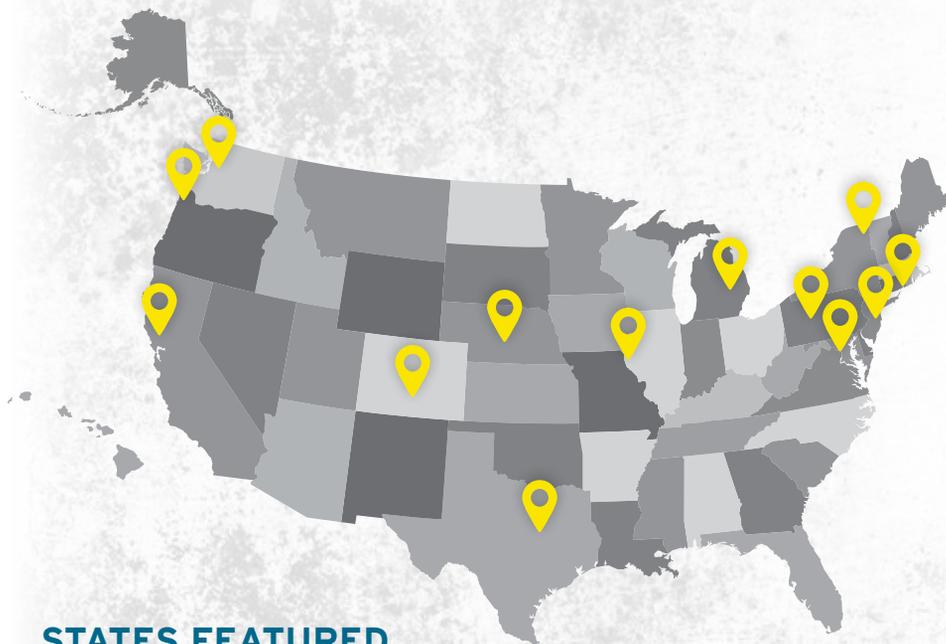
Stryker crewmembers with Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, provide support by fire for Charlie Company Soldiers by engaging distant targets with M4 rifles, rifle-mounted M320 grenade launchers, M240 and M249 machine guns, and Stryker-mounted M2 .50 caliber machine guns during their training rotation at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., August 2018.

Pennsylvania Army National Guard  
photo by SGT Shane Smith



U.S. Army engineers from the California Army National Guard's 132nd Multirole Bridge Company, 579th Engineer Battalion, 49th Military Police Brigade, shift a ramp while dismantling a floating bridge at Cache Creek Regional Park, Calif., after constructing the temporary bridge to support the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's efforts to battle northern California wildfires this past July.

California Army National Guard photo by SSG Eddie Siguenza



**STATES FEATURED  
IN THIS ISSUE**

- CALIFORNIA
- COLORADO
- CONNECTICUT
- DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
- ILLINOIS
- MICHIGAN
- NEBRASKA
- NEW JERSEY
- NEW YORK
- OREGON
- PENNSYLVANIA
- TEXAS
- WASHINGTON

**CALIFORNIA**

BY SSG EDWARD SIGUENZA,  
CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD

**California Guard  
Engineers Help  
Firefighters  
Battle Blaze**

**T**he California Army National Guard's 132nd Multirole Bridge Company played a crucial role in the containment of a wildfire in northern California this summer.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) requested assistance from the 132nd when it needed to move heavy equipment from one wildfire crisis to another in early July. After fighting the Pawnee Fire in late June (15,000 acres burned) in Lake County, California, and the Spring 2 Fire a few days later in Lake County (80 acres

burned), CAL FIRE was called to contain the County Fire that had ignited in Napa and Yolo counties.

The California Army National Guard engineers quickly stepped forward. On July 7, the Redding, California, unit constructed a 100-foot Improved Ribbon Bridge in the same location as it did three years ago for another fire.

“If we went left or right, it would have taken us several hours to get to the fight,” a CAL FIRE official stated. “But if we went up the middle, which we couldn’t at the time, we would be on site a lot faster. That’s why we called the California Guard. They helped us out a few years ago with the same thing.”

The “go up the middle” effect allowed CAL FIRE and other California Office of Emergency assets to quickly move heavy equipment and personnel to the wildfire.

The County Fire consumed more than 90,000 acres and was destined for worse until emergency services contained it. The 132nd’s efforts to build the bridge in a matter of hours contributed to the County Fire’s containment.

Just as it did three years ago, the temporary bridge structure floated adjacent to a permanent concrete bridge that was deemed “zero tons” by a California Department of Transportation engineer/inspector in 2015. The bridge is passable for normal vehicles, but big, heavy equipment such as fire trucks and bulldozers aren’t permitted on the structure.

The floating bridge was utilized for about a week, said the 132nd’s SFC Harley Ramirez, and more than 650 vehicles and 1,200 personnel crossed it. SFC Ramirez stationed his troops on a 24-hour safety watch. He credited the team for its productiveness, noting how quickly the bridge went up – and down – compared to three years ago.

“We had issues working in the tight areas, but this gave us hands-on experience on what to do and not [to do],” SGT Ellie Ogsbury said.

“This definitely opened our eyes. It let us know the importance of what we do,” SPC Aaron W. Parker said. “It’s good to know what we did made a lot of difference.”

The 132nd isn’t the only unit of the California Army National Guard’s 49th Military Police Brigade to be activated this year. In July, the 270th Military Police Company assisted law enforcers during the Klamathon Fire in Siskiyou County near the California-Oregon border.

More than 500 Soldiers from the California Army National Guard’s 144th Field Artillery Battalion were also training for wildfire ground operations by mid-July, one of the earliest call-ups for hand crews.

The County Fire destroyed 20 buildings, damaged three and caused one injury. More than 450 emergency personnel responded to the blaze, with the majority using the floating bridge California Army National Guard Soldiers had built. ●

## COLORADO

BY MAJ DARIN OVERSTREET,  
COLORADO NATIONAL GUARD

# Colorado Helicopter Units Help Suppress Massive Wildfire

Colorado National Guard helicopter and helibase support crews aided response efforts to the Spring Creek Fire in the southern Colorado counties of Huerfano and Costilla in early July.

Equipped with aerial water buckets, the crews and helicopters from 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment, arrived July 2 and conducted firefighting operations until July 10. The unit dropped more than 462 aerial water buckets on the fire in nearly 60 flight hours.

That included a unit daily high of 113 buckets on July 9, dropped by two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters that flew for a combined 10 hours. The overall number of 462 buckets of water equals roughly

Soldiers of the Colorado Army National Guard prepare to take off from the Spring Creek Fire helibase, Fort Garland, Colo., in UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters equipped with aerial water buckets to support fire suppression efforts in the State this past July.

Colorado National Guard photo by TSgt Dixie Manzanares



208,000 gallons or 1.7 million pounds. To put it into perspective, a 50-meter Olympic-size swimming pool holds approximately 660,000 gallons.

The success of the team was largely due to the forward refueling point, operated by Colorado Army National Guard Soldiers of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation, who provided support to Colorado Guard aircraft fighting the blaze. This support allowed crews to save more than 30 minutes in refueling time because they could fill up without shutting down or having to fly to a more distant airport.

Meanwhile, the Colorado National Guard's 1157th Engineer Company (Firefighters) provided 10 members for fire suppression support at the Spring Fire helibase in Fort Garland, Colorado.

"I'm proud of the support provided by our aviation and helibase support crews," said Air Force Brig Gen Gregory White, director of the Joint Staff U.S. Air Force and commander of Joint Task Force - Centennial. "Their work provided a significant contribution to the overall response. As long as we are needed, we will continue to support security efforts on the ground to safeguard communities near the Spring Fire."

The incident commander and the sheriffs of Huerfano and Costilla counties continued to employ more than 50 Colorado National Guard members, who assisted with traffic control points, roving patrols, area escort and general security.

Beginning June 30, the Colorado Guard provided an aviation search and rescue standby capability in support of the Rocky Mountain Area Coordination Center. The 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment supported the mission out of the CW5 David R. Carter Army Aviation Support Facility on Buckley Air Force Base from June 30 until called to fight the Spring Fire July 2.

The High-Altitude Army National Guard Aviation Training Site facility in Gypsum, Colorado, began providing

support for the mission on July 2. The unit provided rapid response to aviation search and rescue missions, primarily for firefighter safety, in support of multiple wildfire responses throughout Colorado.

The Spring Creek Fire burned more than 108,000 acres and was the third-largest wildfire in Colorado history. The fire was fully contained by the end of July.

On order of the governor, the standing Joint Task Force - Centennial, led by Brig Gen White, commands and integrates Colorado National Guard forces to support civil authorities in assisting Colorado, or supported states, during times of crisis and disaster to save lives, prevent suffering and mitigate great property damage. ●



WO1 Roberto Pauleus at his Warrant Officer Commissioning Ceremony at the Regional Training Institute, Camp Niantic, Conn.

Connecticut Army National Guard photo by MAJ Michael Petersen

## CONNECTICUT

BY MAJ MICHAEL PETERSEN,  
CONNECTICUT NATIONAL GUARD

# Undaunted Haiti Native Finds Success in Connecticut Guard

**W**O1 Roberto Pauleus spoke two languages, but neither was English.

Like so many immigrants before him, he came to the United States under the impression that life would be glamorous once he landed on American soil. But WO1 Pauleus quickly found himself on a difficult path, with the realization it would take blood, sweat and tears to make a good life for himself and his family in the United States.

WO1 Pauleus grew up in Gonaives, Haiti. He was a teenager in 1990, when the nation's first popular vote for president took place. Within a year of Jean-Bertrand Aristide's election, a military coup led to a repressed nation and had WO1 Pauleus wondering what his future would hold.

"It was like a civil war [in Haiti]," WO1 Pauleus recalled. "People were killing each other. I was still in high school at the time, but the goal was to join the Haitian Military Academy and to become an orthopedist after I graduated high school."

When Aristide was re-established as the nation's elected leader in 1994, it was due in no small part to the United States' involvement, which included American boots on the ground in Haiti. WO1 Pauleus, who was already planning to join the military, saw his goal shift.

"The goal was always to become a Soldier, but when I saw the U.S. Army, I changed my mind [about where to serve]," he said. "When

U.S. Soldiers peacefully came to Haiti, and I saw their professionalism, discipline and teamwork, I knew this was an organization I wanted to be a part of. They saved lives. They brought peace to the Haitian people.

“I said to myself, ‘When I come to the U.S., I’m going to become a U.S. Soldier.’”

WO1 Pauleus didn’t come to America directly out of high school. He first studied accounting and supplemented his income by teaching French – in which he was fluent, along with Haitian Creole – and basic computer skills at Success School at Port-au-Prince, Haiti’s capital city.

He returned to his hometown and became an accountant for a conglomerate that owned supermarkets, restaurants and drugstores, but he never forgot his overall goal.

“I wanted to pay back what I felt I owed to the U.S. military,” WO1 Pauleus said. “How they saved lives, how they helped the people there. It was my debt to pay back to the country.”

With a college education, a solid work ethic and an upbringing that toughened him up, he decided in June 2001 to make the move to the United States.

“When I first came [to America], I didn’t speak any English, so all I could really do was wash dishes at a local hotel,” he said. “But I worked my way up and became a line chef supervisor.

“The biggest misconception is that people don’t have to work hard in America,” he added. “I thought I’d be rich in the U.S. The political turmoil in Haiti was constant ... and it made me want to leave Haiti, despite having a house, a great job, two cars, a motorcycle.”

WO1 Pauleus joined the Connecticut Army National Guard’s 1048th Medium Truck Company in May 2003 as a motor transport operator. He served the organization full time in a variety of roles in the supply and logistics fields before deciding to take the plunge and attempt to earn a commission as a warrant officer.

In 2005, he became a United States citizen, and he began to forge a promising career.

On Nov. 17, 2017, he officially became WO1 Pauleus, the property book officer for the Connecticut Army National Guard’s 143rd Regional Support Group in Middletown, Connecticut.

WO1 Pauleus didn’t see a future for his children in Haiti. Now, he beams with pride when talking about them. His two boys are in college. One of his daughters was recently married and is working toward her teaching certification. Another daughter recently graduated from Western Connecticut State University, while a third daughter is on track to graduate from the same school next year and a fourth daughter has followed in her father’s footsteps as a unit supply specialist in the Army Reserve.

“We’re looking for her to come to the Guard when her contract is over,” WO1 Pauleus said with a smile. ●

as the 2018 All-Star Game was about to start on July 17.

Fans not already standing were asked to stand. A quiet still replaced the cheering. Honor replaced excitement. The colors of the nation were presented, and the national anthem played.

While most everyone stood, there were some nearby who didn’t. They didn’t sit in protest or to advocate any cause. They are advocates of protecting the lives, freedoms and liberties of those who gathered to watch the All-Stars play.

The District of Columbia Army National Guard’s 33rd Civil Support Team (CST), along with the Delaware Guard’s 31st CST, sat in response trucks and operations centers throughout D.C., ready to respond to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) attacks.

The composition of the 33rd CST makes it uniquely qualified to assess, advise and assist D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services, the FBI and other local and federal partners in response to CBRN threats. With team members focused on all levels of threat assessment, from those who handle administrative and operational tasks to doctors and nuclear medical scientists, the 33rd CST is equipped to respond to the full spectrum of CBRN threats.

The 33rd CST is the only D.C. National Guard unit whose members are all active Guard reserve and on call 24/7 to respond to the needs of local and federal partners. The CST is called upon regularly to support large recurring events in D.C., such as the presidential inauguration,

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

BY KEVIN VALENTINE,  
D.C. NATIONAL GUARD

# D.C. Guard CST Safeguards Baseball All-Star Game

**N**ationals Park, home of the Washington Nationals major league

baseball (MLB) team, rumbled with thunderous applause. Fans cheered with excitement

---

SSG Rayshod Thompson, administrative noncommissioned officer, 33rd Civil Support Team (CST), District of Columbia Army National Guard, monitors CST member activity from a workstation in the Joint Operations Center of the D.C. Army during the 2018 MLB All-Star Game.

D.C. Army National Guard photo by  
SPC Kevin Valentine



State of the Union Address, July 4th celebrations and other regularly scheduled large-scale events.

The team also provides as-needed support to local and federal agencies during non-regularly scheduled large-scale events such as the March for Our Lives, Rev. Billy Graham's funeral and the Washington Capitals' Stanley Cup parade.

Due to the high volume of big events that take place in D.C., the 33rd is on mission more regularly than other CSTs. The 33rd also maintains an intense training schedule that includes full-team and equipment training about six times per year.

As fans stood to honor the anthem and then enjoyed the All-Star Game, members of the D.C. National Guard's 33rd CST sat in trucks and operations centers around D.C., ready to be called upon. ●



Soldiers with the 126th Quartermaster Field Services Company set up a laundry-systems trailer during their annual training event this past April at Marseilles Training Center in Marseilles, Ill.

Photo courtesy U.S. Army

## ILLINOIS

BY SSG ROBERT R. ADAMS,  
ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD

# Illinois National Guard Armory Takes on New Mission

**A** clean uniform and a hot shower are luxuries Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers can look forward to when training in the field, thanks to the new 126th Quartermaster (QM) Field Services Company based in Quincy, Illinois.

The 126th QM provides large elements of Soldiers in the field with laundry services and the ability to take hot showers. With the capability of providing approximately 9,000 showers and cleaning 3,000 loads of laundry per day, the 126th's Laundry Advanced Systems/Shower Systems can make a significant impact.

LTC Leonard Williams, the officer in charge of the 108th Sustainment Brigade, said the 126th will be used for critical and unique missions.

"All training will be geared toward customer-based operations, meaning the

126th QM will always strive to exercise in an environment that enables the unit to support other DoD entities during all types of operations," LTC Williams said.

CPT David L. Wachtveitl, commander of the 126th, said there are few units like this one in the Army.

"We are in the process of getting assigned to shower and laundry support for engineer units conducting humanitarian construction missions in Guatemala for training year 2019," CPT Wachtveitl said. "The Army, with its new operational doctrine, is starting a transition away from relying so much on contractor support for logistics."

SGT Adam Phillips, a shower, laundry and clothing repair specialist (92S) for the 126th, said the unit is around 80 percent of its full strength. He explained that becoming a 92S requires a three-week school for reclassification or seven weeks for new Soldiers.

"The biggest benefit for a Soldier going into this military job is the upward mobility," SGT Phillips said. "It doesn't take long for Soldiers to reach the rank of sergeant."

He stressed that the unit has the opportunity to directly affect the morale of Soldiers. He said showers help them feel refreshed and ready for the next mission.

"I can speak firsthand from being at an

AT [annual training], the Soldiers were so thankful to have a shower," SGT Phillips said. "Soldiers showed a lot of gratitude for the ability to shower and do laundry."

SSG Christopher Kemper, a 92S shower and laundry noncommissioned officer, said the biggest benefits of joining the 126th are its great working environment and the effect the unit can have on the morale of Soldiers in the field.

"At Fort McCoy, [Wisconsin], we noticed that the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team [IBCT] was very happy to have our services available to them," he said.

In that mission, SSG Kemper said the 126th provided 24-hour operations for the 33rd IBCT. "The leadership would let us know when the Soldiers were planning to come take showers and do laundry," he said. "We assigned 10-hour shifts to Soldiers in our platoons to ensure we kept things moving smoothly all day."

Some Soldiers may have a misconception of what it means to be a shower and laundry specialist, SSG Kemper said.

"You still get to do Army warrior tasks, and you still get to be in the fight," he said. "You are always a Soldier first in the Army, and it's no exception in the 126th." ●

## MICHIGAN

BY CPT JOSEPH LEGROS,  
MICHIGAN NATIONAL GUARD

# Michigan 'Sky Soldier' Saves Drowning Man

It was a beautiful June day in Contra Pria, Italy. Families enjoyed a picnic together, and the refreshing water served as a welcome refuge from the heat and humidity of the last weekend leading into summer.

This peaceful scene completely changed in the blink of an eye.

"This weekend I was with my family at a local swimming hole [in Contra Pria]. A local national jumped into the frigid water from a cliff and it quickly became apparent he could not swim. All of a sudden, a fully clothed 'Sky Soldier' jumped into the water from an adjacent cliff and saved the man by swimming him to the shore," stated 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne) Battalion Commander LTC Jim Keirse in a message to 173rd Airborne Brigade Commander COL James Bartholomees.

"That Sky Soldier was [Michigan Army National Guard] LTC John Hall."

When LTC Hall and his family arrived at a local swimming area in the Dolomite Mountains early that Sunday morning,

LTC Keirse and his family, who were picnicking and swimming with some family friends in the remote swimming area, greeted them. They introduced their children to each other, who then played in the beach areas together.

"The boys were taking a break when I decided I would climb up on the cliff to see what the divers were exploring," LTC Hall said. "Just as they swam away, four Italian men appeared above the river on the opposite cliff. They seemed to be daring each other to jump. Two immediately jumped and then challenged their friends. One chose not to jump at all, while the other hesitated, but after a few minutes I saw him falling through the air."

When the man hit the deep frigid water, LTC Hall said, he began to thrash about, yelling for his friends to help as he repeatedly went under water. The two men who jumped in earlier attempted a rescue, but as they swam up to him, the scene turned into what appeared to be a fight or wrestling match in the water.

As the scene developed, LTC Hall could see from his vantage point on the opposite cliff that the struggling man was drowning and would possibly drown his companions, as they all began to go under water together.

"I jumped from the cliff," LTC Hall said. "I swam over to the three men, firmly wrapped my arm around the chin of the drowning man and pulled him onto my hip."

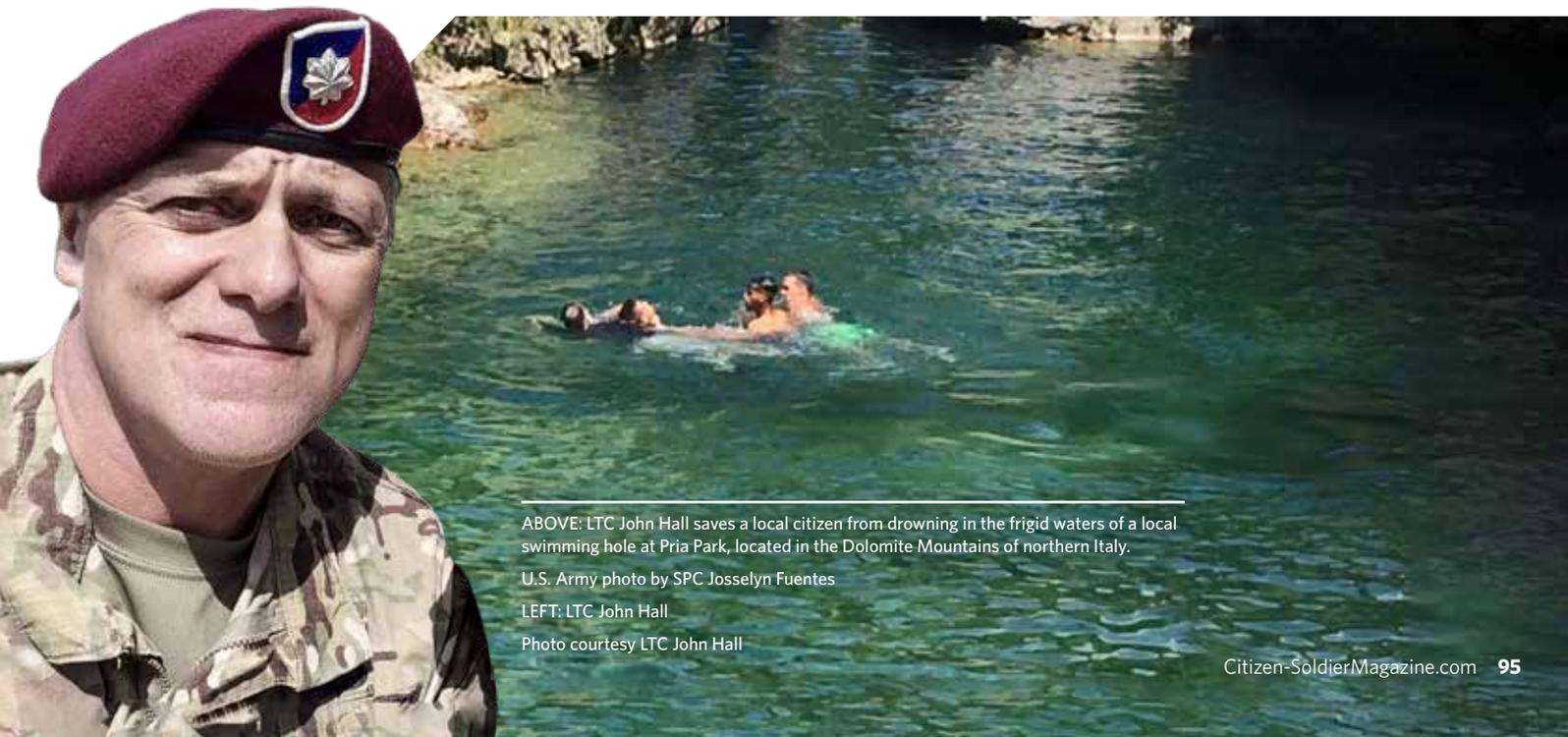
"Once he was safe, I swam over to a rocky outcropping and climbed to verify that he was OK. Still shaking from the experience, the man turned and gave me a hug."

"LTC Hall jumped, fully clothed, from a cliff to save a drowning local national. That's good stuff," LTC Keirse said.

"This is what we are trained to do, to assess difficult situations and make them better," said SSG Alexander Henninger, noncommissioned officer in charge of 173rd Airborne Brigade Public Affairs. "We emphasize to our paratroopers the need to take leader initiative, to be agile and disciplined in our responses to any situation. It is about living the Army values every day. This is who we are as American Soldiers."

LTC Hall, a teacher from Flint, Michigan, was serving a one-year tour of duty as a Sky Soldier with the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Vicenza, Italy. This fall, he returned to his classroom, teaching English, history and theater. He is an officer in the Michigan Army National Guard, and both of his daughters serve in the U.S. Army, as do all three of his brothers.

"I am just so glad that someone was there to help him," LTC Hall said. "After it was over, I couldn't help thinking [that back in the States] it was Father's Day. No man should lose his son on Father's Day." ●



ABOVE: LTC John Hall saves a local citizen from drowning in the frigid waters of a local swimming hole at Pria Park, located in the Dolomite Mountains of northern Italy.

U.S. Army photo by SPC Josselyn Fuentes

LEFT: LTC John Hall

Photo courtesy LTC John Hall



Nebraska and Iowa National Guard Soldiers assigned to 1st Squadron, 376th Aviation Battalion conduct a hoist and lift demonstration from their UH72-A Lakota in late June 2018 at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany.

U.S. Army photo by CPT Joseph Bush

## NEBRASKA

BY CPT JOSEPH BUSH,  
JOINT MULTINATIONAL READINESS CENTER

# National Guard Aircrews Support Medevac Mission in Germany

**A** UH-72A Lakota hovers over the landing zone in Grafenwoehr, Germany, and a flight medic is lowered about 100 feet to an open field.

Once clear, he rushes to the nearby ambulance to link up with the Grafenwoehr Army Health Clinic medical team to assess the simulated casualty and prepare it to be hoisted up to the helicopter. The teamwork was part of the emergency medical evacuation demonstration in late June, at Grafenwoehr Training Area.

Although this may seem like training as usual for any military installation, this demonstration was different because Iowa and Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers used a Lakota instead of the usual UH-60 Black Hawk.

“We’ve taken it over from the active duty unit, so they can be freed up to go do some training, and it gives us a chance to show our capabilities,” said CW3 Courtney Miller, a Nebraska Army National Guard pilot from Delta Company, 1st Squadron, 376th Aviation Battalion, who flew the mission.

The Lakota aircrews with the 1-376th took over the mission from an active duty Black Hawk unit, C Company, 1st Squadron, 214th Aviation Battalion, so the UH-60 crews could participate in training missions such as Saber Strike in Poland.

Soldiers from the Iowa, Nebraska and North Dakota National Guard rotated through Bavaria three weeks at a time between late May and late August, offering military air medevac support to the training areas at Hohenfels and Grafenwoehr.

The medevac support mission was developed and coordinated by the Nebraska National Guard, which saw an opportunity to expand the capabilities of its pilots and support a larger mission in Europe.

“Out here, the people have been very friendly to us and welcoming us in,” CW3 Miller said. “They have been real curious about our air frame and our mission and our capabilities.”

Over the previous several months, these crews trained on the medevac mission and hoist and lift operations to prepare for their mission in Germany.

“This is like their Super Bowl,” said MG Tim Orr, the adjutant general of the Iowa National Guard, who was on hand to view the demonstration and visit with his deployed Soldiers. “So today, I think they set a new course record that could be used in the future to employ our assets around the world to do great things.”

Because the Lakota has no configurations for mounting weapons or anti-air defense measures, the air frame has no offensive or defensive capabilities. Due to these limitations, it cannot operate in combat environments or be deployed to a combat zone.

“This was the first time the [Security and Support] organizations have been outside of the States and tied to a mission set outside of homeland defense,” MG Orr said.

Typically, these crews perform the SNS mission in support of local and State law enforcement activities, such as drug raids or other missions that require air support. ●

## NEW JERSEY

BY SFC WAYNE WOOLLEY,  
NEW JERSEY NATIONAL GUARD

# New Jersey's SWEAT Program Gets Soldiers Back in Shape

**W**elcome to SWEAT. The Soldier Wellness Education and Training program was created to help Soldiers whose careers have been set back by conditioning issues – and will end prematurely unless they improve their physical fitness. The New Jersey National Guard's two-week program, held at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, gives Soldiers the opportunity to get back in shape.

"For some people, this may be their last chance," said 1SG Peter Sarni III, one of the instructors. "We're showing them that they may have dug themselves a hole, but they can get themselves out with the right tools."

Those tools include low-key classes on

topics such as nutrition, basic physiology and resiliency, complemented by blood-boiling workout sessions, where Soldiers are pushed to their absolute limit.

Soldiers like SGT Richard Hutton say the reason they have come to love the program is that balance.

"The cadre are hardcore when we're doing PT [physical training]," he said. "But they are also compassionate. You know they want you to do well."

Like nearly all of the 23 Soldiers enrolled in the July SWEAT class, SGT Hutton serves in the National Guard part time. He said the demands of a new civilian job as a mental health technician, college classes and a new baby took their toll on his workout routine.

His failure on his most recent Army physical fitness test prevents him from attending military schools that would qualify him for promotion; plus the fitness test failure could ultimately end his Guard career.

"It's embarrassing, and it's a detriment to my career," he said. "I had started to really beat myself up. This course has me back on track. I love it. I just wish it was longer."

Everyone enrolled in the course volunteered to take it.

SPC Poonam Singh sees the SWEAT program as an opportunity to pursue a longtime ambition – an officer's commission.

But her inability to handle the physical demands of the New Jersey Army National Guard Officer Candidate course forced her to drop out. She vows that if she has the opportunity to go back, her fitness won't be an impediment.

SPC Singh lost 7 percent of her body fat and 4 inches off her waist in just 10 days in the SWEAT program. She said she learned that for her body type, many small meals a day are better than two or three big ones.

"This course has really been about wellness," she said. "It's not just a smoke session."

As the course wound down on July 25, 1SG Sarni offered class members words of encouragement after their most challenging day of workouts. The schedule began at 6 a.m. in a swimming pool at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst and ended nearly 12 hours later with a 90-minute workout that included a three-mile run, circuit training and weights.

"We're proud of you," 1SG Sarni said. "You have earned our respect." ●



Soldiers enrolled in the New Jersey National Guard SWEAT program take part in a pool workout at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

New Jersey Army National Guard photo by SFC Wayne Woolley

## NEW YORK

BY ERIC DURR AND  
SPC ANDREW VALENZA,  
NEW YORK NATIONAL GUARD

# New York Aviators Fight Fire Near Canadian Border

**N**ew York Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk aircrews from the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Regiment, dropped more than 100,000 gallons of water July 13 through 15 on a 526-acre forest fire burning in Flat Rock State Forest.

The fire, located 10 miles south of the Canadian border just outside New York's Adirondack Park, began on July 12.

More than 200 personnel – including New York State forest rangers, Department of Environmental Conservation fire crews and local volunteer fire departments – were part of the response. Crews from Quebec and Vermont also responded, according to Clinton County emergency officials.

With temperatures in the 80s that weekend, the more than six hours in the air were fatiguing for the pilots and aircrew, said New York Army National Guard CW3 Tom Brun Schmid, one of the pilots.

New York State Police helicopters were initially called in to fight the fire. The New York State Police flies civilian versions of the UH-1 Huey helicopter and can deploy firefighting buckets, which can drop 220 gallons of water.

On July 13, the New York Army National Guard was asked to put two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and eight aircrew members on standby at Army Aviation Support Facility #3 in Latham, New York. The UH-60s can deploy firefighting buckets that can hold 660 gallons of water. That afternoon, the two aircraft were deployed to the Plattsburgh area to support fire crews.

The two UH-60s flew 73 drop missions on July 13, dumping more than 48,000 gallons of water on the fire before returning to Latham after dark.

On July 15, the New York Army



New York Army National Guard SSG Jimmy Rose (right), assigned to 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Division, and civilian Steven Rosen load a Bambi bucket onto a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter in Altona Flat Rock, N.Y., July 2018.

New York Army National Guard photo by SPC Andrew Valenza

National Guard aircrews were deployed again. The two UH-60s delivered 52,800 gallons of water on the fire in 80 drop missions. Each fully loaded helicopter bucket weighs more than 5,400 pounds.

The helicopters used a lake two miles away from the fire site to fill the buckets, CW3 Brun Schmid said.

On both days, the aircrews had to stop and refuel three times due to the amount of fuel used from transporting such heavy loads.

On July 15, fire officials declared the fire 40 percent contained.

Each spring, a select number of pilots and crew chiefs prepare to fight wildfires through training that includes picking up and dumping water with the helicopter buckets. The pilots need the additional practice because a helicopter has a much different feel when it is carrying 5,400 pounds of water underneath it.

SSG Jimmy Rose, a crew chief, said National Guard Soldiers were excited about the opportunity to support their State. "Reacting to State emergencies are the best types of missions," he said. "You're working for the people of New York State, and when you're doing your job, that's who I prefer to do it for." ●

## OREGON

BY CPT LESLIE REED,  
OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

# Oregon Rappel Master Course Promotes Safety and Readiness

**"S**afety is the No. 1 priority," nearly 50 Soldiers from across the country were told while attending Oregon's annual summer Rappel Master Course June 10-14 at Camp Rilea



near Warrenton, Oregon.

“The Rappel Master Course is a safety course that teaches young leaders how to properly run a rappel tower or rappel operations out of a helicopter using a rappel system,” explained Massachusetts Army National Guard SSG Thomas Presutti, an instructor with Company B, Warrior Training Center.

Army National Guard instructors, divided into three companies and assigned to the Warrior Training Center (WTC) at Fort Benning, Georgia, serve as the point men for training service members in a variety of specialty skills to increase and maintain the operational readiness of the Army National Guard.

Company B, which instructs the Air Assault, Pathfinder and Rappel Master courses, regularly travels as a Mobile Training Team. Instructors have already made the rounds this year, completing courses in Georgia, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania before starting the June course in Oregon.

While any highly qualified Soldier between the ranks of E-4 and O-2 may be selected to attend the Master Rappel Course (regardless of MOS), Soldiers must also be a graduate of the Air Assault, Ranger, Sapper or Military Mountaineer Course. Often, Soldiers come straight out of an Air Assault Course to attend Rappel Master.

“They come right in [and] it’s tough on them, but we don’t beat them up like we do in Air Assault,” SSG Presutti said. “It’s more of a gentleman’s course.”

Nevada Army National Guard SSG Jared Hale, of the 3665th Explosive

Ordnance Company, said he benefited from taking the Air Assault and Rappel Master courses back to back.

“One of the good things about it is that it’s all fresh,” SSG Hale said. “I didn’t have to come back like some of my other Nevada counterparts and relearn. I’ve been doing this stuff for the last two weeks.”

SSG Hale said the 12-day Air Assault Course, which wrapped up on June 8 at Camp Rilea, was “more like basic training ... more dress-right-dress, show up at 4 o’clock in the morning, being smoked on zero day, the obstacle course. It’s like that all the way through.”

He said having some of the same instructors for both Air Assault and Rappel Master made things easier. “You have trust – it was actually a great transition,” he said.

Students closed out the course by completing Advanced Rappelling, also known as rescue rappelling, where one Soldier plays a person in distress while another rescues them. The last task required to complete the course is a cumulative written final exam.

SSG Hale said he recommends the Rappel Master Course. “It teaches you a lot more in depth, especially techniques, things you’re going to see and need to know than just the Air Assault course on its own,” he said.

Company B instructors were to finish their course schedule for the year with a Rappel Master Course in Grafenwoehr, Germany, in September. The Oregon Army National Guard has hosted the Rappel Master Course at Camp Rilea, on the Oregon Coast, for more than 10 years. ●

## PENNSYLVANIA

BY LTC ANGELA KING-SWEIGART,  
PENNSYLVANIA NATIONAL GUARD

# Pennsylvania Guard Activated to Fight July Floods

About 70 members of the Pennsylvania National Guard were placed on state active duty to support 11 Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) missions in central Pennsylvania during flooding July 23-July 27.

Several days of rain in July left much of central Pennsylvania’s waterways at near-record highs. On July 25, the Swatara Creek near Hershey reached 16.5 feet, the creek’s second-highest level since the National Weather Service started keeping records in 1975. In Grantville, near the Pennsylvania National Guard headquarters at Fort Indiantown Gap, rain totaled 11.4 inches as of July 25.

The flooding led to the activation of the Pennsylvania National Guard to assist in transportation missions. The operation included vehicles capable of traversing high waters, as well as helicopters and crews from the Pennsylvania Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team. This team is a partnership among the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, and PEMA, along with credentialed civilian rescue technicians.

On July 23, the Pennsylvania Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team, based at Fort Indiantown Gap, assisted local law enforcement and first responders in searching for a missing 19-year-old woman in the Conewago Creek of Dauphin County. The aircraft was in the air for 1.5 hours and then had to return to base due to weather. The body of the woman was found on July 26 by a civilian who wasn’t involved in the search efforts.

On July 25, Soldiers assisted the Middle Paxton Fire Company with the rescue of a stranded resident from their home, returning them to a temporary shelter at a local fire station. Two Pennsylvania National Guard Soldiers used



Guam Army National Guard SGT Kerman J. Melsior descends a 60-foot rappel tower as part of the curriculum of a weeklong Rappel Master Course, June 2018, at Camp Rilea, near Warrenton, Ore. Oregon Army National Guard photo by CPT Leslie Reed



Members of the Pennsylvania Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team, SGT James Murray (flight medic), Joel Koricich (rescue technician), SGT Derrick Nelan (crew chief), John Hopkins (rescue technician), Scott Grahn (senior strike team leader PA HART).

Photo courtesy Joel Koricich

During the flood emergency, other Pennsylvania Guard members prepared for possible call-ups at their armories and air stations, manned PEMA's Commonwealth Response Coordination Center in Harrisburg, and monitored and provided oversight to Pennsylvania Guard response operations from the Joint Emergency Operations Center at Fort Indiantown Gap. ●

process up to our blank fire exercises in February.”

These 32 vehicle-mounted crew-served weapon crews are part of larger changes in the U.S. Army. The missions for each type of unit have created new training requirements for transportation units.

“Under the U.S. Army’s new modular system, a combat arms unit will no longer be allocated to provide convoy security to logistics convoys,” CPT Sanders said. “So the new unit requirements allot for logistics and sustainment units to be given their own crew-served weapons to provide their own security on convoys.

“This means that my 39 gun crews in my two transportation platoons will provide their own convoy security as they move people, containers and equipment from point A to point B.”

The three-person crews completed their next two levels of exercises during their March, April and May drill weekends. These blocks of training consisted of day and night fire missions with live ammunition.

“These crews have been putting in extra drill days, and our annual training is 21 days this year when normally it’s only 15 days,” said 1SG Jason Coates of the 249th. “They’ve had to do a lot of work and training in things they have never done before. These Soldiers have gone from zero – never doing anything like this – to qualified gun crews in under six months.”

a Light Medium Tactical Vehicle (LMTV) for this mission.

“Soldiers of the 628th Aviation Support Battalion are always eager to come in and support state active duty,” said CPT Samuel DeBold, operations officer of the 628th. “Their sense of duty and commitment to the people of the [Commonwealth of Pennsylvania] is apparent every time they go on mission. They want to get out there and help in any way they can. Mr. Robert Rusbach and his first responders of the Middle Paxton Fire Company were a pleasure to work with. We at the 628th Aviation Support Battalion sincerely appreciated his hospitality throughout the mission.”

During state activations, the Pennsylvania National Guard organizes into geographic task forces – Pennsylvania Task Force North, Pennsylvania Task Force South and Pennsylvania Task Force West. These geographic commands are augmented by two functional task forces – Task Force Support and Task Force Aviation.

## TEXAS

BY SPC CHRISTINA CLARDY,  
TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD

# Texas Transportation Unit Sets Guard Gun Crew Record

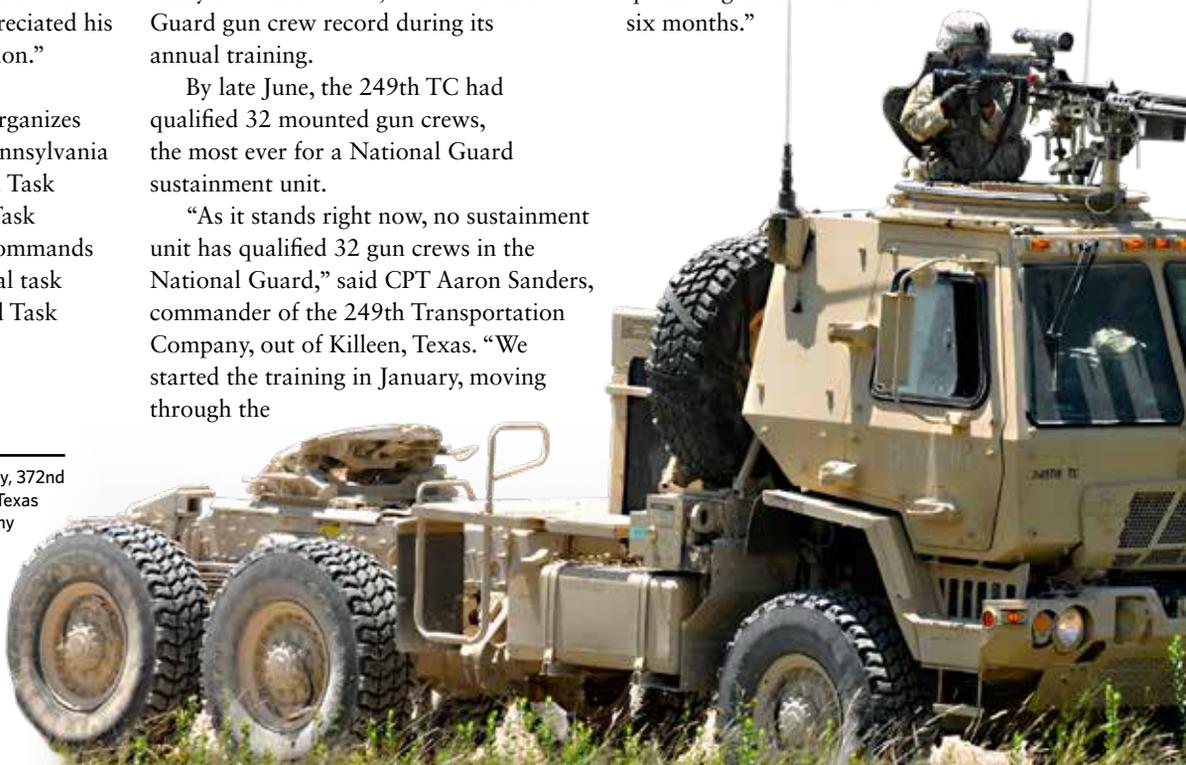
**T**he 249th Transportation Company (TC), 372nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion of the Texas Army National Guard, set a National Guard gun crew record during its annual training.

By late June, the 249th TC had qualified 32 mounted gun crews, the most ever for a National Guard sustainment unit.

“As it stands right now, no sustainment unit has qualified 32 gun crews in the National Guard,” said CPT Aaron Sanders, commander of the 249th Transportation Company, out of Killeen, Texas. “We started the training in January, moving through the

The 249th Transportation Company, 372nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Texas Army National Guard, set a new Army National Guard record as of June 2018 for being the only sustainment unit to simultaneously have 32 qualified mounted gun crews.

Texas Army National Guard photo by SPC Christina Clardy





Washington National Guard's PVT Gracie Hilinski, SPC Brandon Isaacson, SGT Richard Schutt and SPC Mitchell Potter of the Medical Section, Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 146th Field Artillery Regiment, stand with CCM Trish Almond, State Senior Enlisted Leader, Washington Army National Guard, and CSM Alfonso Cadena, Command SGM, 81st Stryker Brigade Combat Team.

Washington National Guard photo by CPT Joseph Siemandel

The sixth block of training is the qualification level. The minimum score to qualify is 700 points. A score over 800 is "Superior" and a score over 900 is "Distinguished." By June 22, the company had qualified 32 mounted gun crews and set the Guard record.

"For a bunch of the crews, day fire was really hard, but we all still qualified," said PFC Daniel Hughes, a gun crew gunner in the 249th. "However, my gun crew specifically rocked the night fire. I love being on a gun crew, and I love doing this kind of training."

In February, the 249th was officially identified as a focused readiness unit (FRU) and given a deadline of the end of June to meet the readiness standard. An FRU is a National Guard unit that has been placed at a higher state of readiness and will have a shorter time on the mobilization platform when called up. The unit must maintain this higher readiness level and status so that if called upon, it can mobilize and be deployed. ●

## WASHINGTON

BY CPT JOSEPH SIEMANDEL,  
WASHINGTON NATIONAL GUARD

# Washington Guard Soldiers Save Girl's Life

**O**n the verge of death, a small child in the North Bend, Washington, area was saved by a medic from the

Washington Army National Guard and her teammates. They spotted the child in the back of a sport utility vehicle on April 6 and quickly went to her aid.

"It was clear that if it had not been for the efforts of PVT Gracie Hilinski, the young child would not have survived," SFC Jesus Garcia said.

Before the incident, it had been a normal convoy for Headquarters Battery 2nd Battalion, 146th Field Artillery Regiment, which was traveling from the Olympia Armory to the Yakima Training Center. There was typical Friday traffic in western Washington and a fuel stop in North Bend.

"We just made our regular fuel stop at the TA truck stop in North Bend," SFC Garcia said. "While we were there, I observed a black sport utility vehicle with a lot of movement going on."

What Garcia was witnessing was a young girl in the rear passenger seat who had stopped breathing, became non-responsive and had no pulse, according to after-action reports about the incident.

"I heard a shout for a medic," said SPC Brandon Isaacson, medic specialist. "I was searching for the reason when I looked over into the parking lot. I saw PVT Hilinski by an approximately 3- to 4-year-old child's side with two or three other Soldiers."

PVT Hilinski, a medic with the unit, was the first medic to arrive on the scene. When she did not detect a pulse on the young girl, she began administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

After several rounds of CPR, PVT Hilinski took a pause for rescue breaths.

"I felt a pulse, but it was weak," SPC Isaacson said. "I confirmed with

another Soldier that 911 had been called and civilian medics were en route."

PVT Hilinski began CPR again with the assistance of her fellow Guard Soldiers.

"I felt a radial pulse and found it getting stronger," SPC Isaacson said. "SGT Richard Schutt found a radial pulse and agreed."

After another round of compressions by PVT Hilinski, the patient began making sounds as if she was trying to breathe. They turned the young girl to her side and began patting her on the back. She was breathing, and it was getting stronger – then tears came from the little girl.

Emergency Medical Services arrived shortly after and escorted the family to a treatment facility.

"PVT Hilinski's actions were immediate and confident, showing all the aspects necessary in a competent and effective medic," SPC Isaacson said. "Jumping into a scene that terrifies many new EMTs, her actions saved the life of a child."

"Based on my experience, I can say that PVT Hilinski saved that child's life that day," SFC Garcia said.

For her actions, PVT Hilinski received an Army Commendation Medal. SPC Isaacson, SGT Schutt and SPC Mitchell Potter each received the Army Achievement Medal for their assistance. ●



I APPRECIATE YOU WANTING TO SAVE A BUCK, PRIVATE, BUT YOU STILL HAVE TO GET THE NEW UNIFORM JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE.



Cartoon by Russell Nemece

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

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

Dear *Citizen-Soldier* magazine,

## How do I know which National Guard benefits my Family members qualify for?

The Army National Guard offers a host of benefits to Guard Family members. Spouses and children qualify for **health care benefits** through TRICARE Select, TRICARE Reserve Select or TRICARE's Transitional Assistance Management Program, if the sponsoring Soldier qualifies. Qualifying Soldiers may also extend benefits to Family members for **dental coverage** through the TRICARE Dental Program and **vision coverage** through the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP).

**Life insurance coverage** is available to Families through the Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance.

National Guard Soldiers who qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill have the option of **transferring education benefits** to a spouse or child, and an array of scholarships, grants and professional opportunities are available to spouses and children through the National Guard Family Readiness Group, the U.S. Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Program and partnering organizations.

**For detailed information about the exact benefits for which your Family qualifies, talk to your command, your State Education Service Officer, your State Family Program Director or an official TRICARE representative.**

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

Submit questions to  
[Editor@Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com](mailto:Editor@Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com)

Or online at  
[Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com](http://Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com)

A Soldier of the 230th Signal Company, Tennessee Army National Guard, reunites with his son upon return from deployment to Kuwait.

Tennessee Army National Guard photo by SGT Sarah Kirby

# NEXT LEVEL TRAINING

This past August, **NORTH CAROLINA'S 30TH ARMORED BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM** traveled to Fort Bliss, Texas, to conduct eXportable Combat Training Capability. Training to certify platoon proficiency and working in coordination with First Army, these North Carolina Guard members were put to task and pushed to become more effective Soldiers.

In the upcoming issue of *Citizen-Soldier*, learn how the 30th ABCT met the challenge of this next-level training that includes everything from battlefield effects to foreign national role players and cutting-edge FlexTrain tracking technology.

An M109 Howitzer is positioned on a dirt path in a desert landscape. The background shows rolling hills under a clear blue sky. The terrain is arid with sparse, dry vegetation.

An M109 Howitzer moves into position during a live fire exercise at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., during 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team's eXportable Combat Training Capability exercise held at Fort Bliss, Texas.

National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohl



# Recommended Podcast

## Programs to Help Service Members Stay Financially Fit

Readiness applies to all areas of your life that could distract you from executing your mission. Organize your finances with programs tailored to the military community that keep money off of your mind and in your savings account.

[MilitaryOneSource.mil/Podcasts](https://MilitaryOneSource.mil/Podcasts)

### Military One Source Podcast Series

*Military OneSource podcasts are a simple way to connect you to your best MilLife. With these short podcasts, you can navigate through topics important to military life including deployment, recreation, casualty assistance, relationship health, money management, parenting resources and more. Expand your skillset in a matter of minutes.*

Podcast recommendations are provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or an approval by the Army National Guard or Schatz Strategy Group of any products, services or opinions of any corporation, organization or individual. The Army National Guard and Schatz Strategy Group bear no responsibility for the accuracy, legality or content of the podcast. Contact the developers of the podcast for answers to questions regarding its content.

Schatz Strategy Group  
11950 W. Highland Ave.  
Blackwell, OK 74631

PRSR STD  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Owensville, MO  
Permit# 100



# CITIZEN-SOLDIER

[magazine.com](http://magazine.com)

*About Soldiers and Their Families,  
For Soldiers and Their Families*

*Join us in achieving our mission of providing useful and engaging content in every issue!*

If you have a story or photo that you would like to see in the magazine, send us an email at [Editor@Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com](mailto:Editor@Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com)



[Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com](http://Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com)