

A Resource for the Soldiers and Families of the Army National Guard

CITIZEN-SOLDIER



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ON THE COVER: South Carolina Soldiers with the 118th Infantry Regiment, await orders between training scenarios during Operation Hickory Sting, an Exportable Combat Training Capability program held at Ft. Bliss, Texas, August 2018.

North Carolina Army National Guard photo by SGT Wayne Becton

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Idaho Army National Guard Soldier SGT Dallin Stout moves across an obstacle while competing in the National Guard Best Warrior Region VI 2018 competition held at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

U.S. Air Force photo by Alejandro Peña



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LENGTHENED LEARNING

NEW OSUT PILOT PROGRAM INCREASES INFANTRY TRAINING TIME

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

Big changes are happening in Army infantry training. The Army has extended its One Station Unit Training (OSUT) through a pilot program aimed at expanding initial entry training and, as a result, increasing Soldier lethality.

Part of the Soldier Lethality Cross-Functionality Team's (CFT) plan to maintain tactical advantage over the Nation's enemies, the new program falls in line with the Army Vision of 2028. That vision, announced by Secretary of the Army Mark T. Esper earlier this year, paves the way for enhancing the Army's capability over the next 10 years.

BG Christopher Donahue, Maneuver Center of Excellence Infantry School commandant and Soldier Lethality CFT director, announced this past spring that the pilot program would begin in July of this year. The new training initiative adds seven weeks to the current 14 weeks of OSUT training.

The pilot program consists of 21 weeks of training with an intensified

concentration on combative training, land navigation, vehicle employment, medical skills (including a 40-hour combat-lifesaver certification), battle drills and operations in urban environments.

"Extending OSUT is about increasing our readiness and preparing for the future," said SMA Daniel A. Dailey. "This pilot program is the first step toward achieving our vision of the Army of 2028. With more time to train on critical infantry tasks, we'll achieve greater lethality."

The added learning is intended to better prepare Soldiers for merging tactically with their assigned units, thus enhancing the opportunity for rapid deployment.

Due to worldwide advances in technology, the gap between the close-combat abilities of American Soldiers and those of our Nation's near-peer adversaries has shrunk in recent years, according to the Maneuver Center of Excellence, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.

To support the new training structure, the Army is also increasing the number of

battalions under the training brigades of the Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia – growing from five to eight battalions. The increase in manpower is intended to ensure the school's annual training of roughly 17,000 Soldiers is maintained in spite of the lengthened training format.

According to Army Infantry School Commandant COL Townley R. Hedrick, infantry Soldiers will see more training with M4 rifles, M240 machine guns and M249 light machine guns.

"Across all infantry weapons, they will get more bullets," he said. "And they will also shoot more at night, rather than just doing a day familiarization fire."

This OSUT pilot program will ultimately be used to refine the final application of changes for the permanent version of the new OSUT format. Conversion of all infantry OSUT instruction is expected to begin in October 2019 with a targeted completion date of October 2020. ●

ACCORDING TO THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY of the Army, other goals of the new Army Vision include growing the active duty component to over 500,000 Soldiers, raising enlistment numbers in the Army National Guard and Reserves and focusing training initiatives on high-intensity conflict, with an emphasis on operating in dense urban terrain and an electronically degraded environment, while under constant surveillance.



Soldiers from Montana National Guard's 3rd Platoon, A Company, 1-163rd Combined Arms Battalion, employ land navigation skills to orient themselves during an air assault training mission on the Orchard Combat Training Center, Boise, Idaho.

Montana National Guard photo by SPC Jonnie Riley

WHAT'S IN A BRAND? A NEW LOOK FOR A NEW GENERATION

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

PFC Hunter Christian of the 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Company (Mountain), Maine Army National Guard races through a 12-mile ruck march near the 240th Regiment Regional Training Institute in Bangor, Maine as part of the State-level Best Warrior Competition.

Maine Army National Guard Photo by SPC Jarod Dye



In December of 2018, the Army National Guard introduced a new brand identity and branding guidelines for all 54 States, Territories and the District of Columbia.

The most noticeable change is the new Army National Guard logo. The logo, which includes a customized version for every State and Territory, now displays a gold star on a black background and the words “Army National Guard.” If that sounds a bit familiar, it’s because it should. The new branding falls in line with the larger U.S. Army brand. In fact, a goal of the branding change was to better tell the story of the Army National Guard’s connection to active duty Army.

“Our new logo is more closely aligned with our associated brand, the Army,” explained LTC Stephen Warren, branch chief of marketing for the National Guard Bureau’s Strength Maintenance Division. “Research shows that the public, and even active duty service members, are often unsure of the Army National Guard’s relationship to the U.S. Army. The rebrand

makes it clear that the Army National Guard is part of the Army.”

The emphasis on the relationship between the Army National Guard and the U.S. Army serves to help promote the Total Army concept and the understanding that our country has just one Army, and that Army is made up of the active duty, Army National Guard and Reserve components.

“The Army National Guard is very proud of our community ties and our unique domestic and federal mission,” LTC Warren said. “But we all wear the U.S. Army patch on our uniforms. We attend Army schools. We live the Army values. Demonstrating our relationship to the Army through our new branding should result in a better understanding of our role within the Army and in more value being placed on the readiness, training and capabilities of the Army National Guard.”

A secondary goal of the rebrand is to create an image that is reflective of the modern Army National Guard. Along with the logo, the Army National Guard is rolling out a research-based value

proposition and themes for all States and Territories to help align local and national marketing strategies. This strategy was employed in an effort to better inform communities across the country of the Army National Guard’s unique role, while also engaging potential recruits.

“Not many people in the communities know the difference between the Coast Guard, the National Guard and the Army,” said LTC Warren. “Part of our rebranding deals with education. We believe telling a unique Guard story that resonates with potential Army National Guard Soldiers and their influencers will set us apart from the other components and help reconnect America with the amazing story of the Army National Guard.”

Roll out of the new brand and marketing changes began in January of this year and will continue throughout 2019.

“The Army National Guard is changing and we’re excited about it,” LTC Warren said. “I think we are going to see a lot of positive things for the organization. We have a great story to tell.” ●



A NEW WAY

46th Military Police Command Helps Pioneer Groundbreaking Training Format

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

The wave of the future for National Guard disaster recovery training is cresting today. As U.S. troops continue to battle our Nation's enemies in urban locations like Fallujah, Iraq, mastering what it takes to successfully navigate battlefields in densely populated environments has never been more vital. A new training system is directly responding to this need. In this new-age format, role players are out and real officials are in. This new format was demonstrated last August when the Michigan Army National Guard held its dense urban terrain (DUT) exercise in downtown Detroit, Michigan,

showcasing the execution of disaster recovery planning within a real-world urban setting, using real-world local and State officials as participants.

This first tabletop exercise was the initial phase of what is planned to be a three-year exercise effort. The Michigan Army National Guard's 46th Military Police Command, one of three Army-wide command elements responsible for responding to chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) attacks on the homeland, is leading the DUT initiative. In responding to a real attack, the 46th would be tasked with

coordinating with civilian agencies to protect lives and initiate recovery efforts.

"There are certain artificialities – role playing – that occur when you go to training installations," said MG Michael A. Stone. MG Stone is commanding general of the 46th Military Police Command as well as assistant adjutant general of the Michigan National Guard and deputy director of Michigan's Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

"Where this is different and unique is in the sense that we are working with the actual people in Detroit that would actually be responding. It translates better.

We are not role-playing, where you are walking up to a building and pretending someone is the mayor. We actually sat down with the mayor of Detroit. It presents the problem differently when you have to interact with the real players.”

MG Stone cited three improvement factors involved with this new modality of training in comparison to traditional training with role players at fixed training installations.

The first notable improvement was that civilian organizations and first responders were included in the prior planning leading up to the exercise. Together, the civilian teams and Michigan Guard teams negotiated the training scenario to fit existing emergency response plans within the city, MG Stone said.

“Often the military will come in and say, ‘Hey, we’re doing an exercise. Do you want to play with us in this situation?’”

In contrast, this new process interweaves the civilian agencies into the exercise development so the resulting training builds on the actual requirements of civilian first responders, while also remaining aligned with National Guard requirements.

A second improvement noted by MG Stone is the time given for civil agencies to back-brief the Army National Guard planners on the local agency capabilities.

“We have this national-response framework that we work within when an incident happens, but the locals are the ones who know what their capabilities are. Many times, our senior leaders and our Soldiers in uniform are not

briefed on what those capabilities are,” MG Stone noted.

The third improvement was the introduction of academic experts into the overview and analysis of the exercise.

“We brought a lot of brainpower,” MG Stone noted. That brainpower included experts and Ph.D.s from Michigan University, Michigan State University and U.S. Army Training and

detonated in the Detroit area.)

SFC Joseph Paul Fry was one of 200 participants at Michigan’s DUT and one of the developers of the training scenarios. As a first-time scenario writer, SFC Fry said he really enjoyed the undertaking, though a hefty amount of preparation and discovery went into the process. That preparation included six meetings with local partners in Detroit where SFC Fry and other team members reviewed each scenario, assessed local capabilities and discussed the local government’s current readiness factor for an actual incident.

“Something that surprised me at the exercise was the willingness of our civilian partners to roll up their sleeves and get in right next to a Soldier and figuring out the problems,” SFC Fry said.

He went on to note that he was impressed by the synergy between the first responders and the Guard Soldiers, which enabled the many organizations to come together and build momentum in a very short period of time.

MG Stone noted some unexpected outcomes on his end as well.

“There were a few surprises [in regard to] capabilities from both the city and the State of Michigan for emergency response to a chemical attack,” he said.

“For instance, the amount of atropine that public health [agencies] could deliver to citizens was well beyond what I thought the limits would be.”

According to MG Stone, the response from the community hospital and the coordinated response from the local Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) agency were also revealing. Though he had been briefed on local CDC capabilities in the past, MG Stone said the organization had continued work toward resiliency, and he was pleasantly surprised by the progress made.

MG Stone also noted surprise when learning how often the Detroit first responders actually train on



Doctrine Command, all of whom “added a lot to the intellectual capacity of the learning experience,” said MG Stone.

Twelve Army National Guard units from seven States – Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina and Tennessee – and units from both active duty and the Reserves participated in the 2018 DUT exercise. Also participating, and vital to the overall success of the exercise, were 28 government and civilian agencies and organizations, including several Canadian agencies. (As Detroit shares a border with Windsor, Ontario, Canada, citizens in the southern regions of Ontario could be affected by a biological or chemical attack

LEFT: Members of the 46th Military Police Command are given a safety brief at the entry point to one of the steam tunnels located under the city of Detroit during a dense urban training – a new format exercise focused on disaster recovery techniques that are tailored for densely populated environments and held in urban settings, using actual State officials as participants instead of role players.

ABOVE: Members of the 46th Military Police Command descend into one of the steam tunnels located under the city of Detroit during the Michigan Army National Guard’s dense urban terrain training, held in August 2018.

Michigan Army National Guard photos by
MAJ Charles Calio



ABOVE: Standing on the rooftop of a Detroit skyscraper, civil authorities discuss the challenges of operating within an urban environment during a task force conference hosted by the 46th Military Police Command as part of the unit's larger dense urban training.

Department of Defense photo by Lt Col Karen Roganov

BELOW: MG Michael A. Stone, commander of the 46th Military Police Command, and members of his staff complete a terrain analysis of the Detroit River and shoreline from a U.S. Coast Guard response boat during the dense urban training conducted in August 2018.

Michigan Army National Guard photo by MAJ Charles Calio

disaster response efforts. While the training is often on a smaller scale, the general acknowledged, "Their exercise frequency was more robust than I expected."

In fact, the collaboration with the civilian groups was so well-aligned that the main training scenario was developed based on a suggestion given by one of the civilian agencies – the Detroit Fire Department.

"The specific scenario was a complex attack from the Universal Opposition Collective," SFC Fry said. "That's the [fictional] group we created. It was set to be a complex attack, including a biological assault, a chemical assault and a cyber assault."

"The exercise itself began with the attacks," said COL Chris A. McKinney with the 46th Command and Control CBRN Response Enterprise-B, Michigan Army National Guard. "The attacks were a combination of a cyberattack on the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System, a biological attack on an all-day, widely attended 4th of July concert, and an explosive attack on four railcars [carrying] a toxic chemical. We broke out into work groups to address the different scenarios by emergency support function."

Those involved in the response conducted terrain walks that took them through the areas of the city directly affected by the hypothetical man-made disaster. Those areas included the riverfront of the Detroit River, the roofs of the Renaissance Center – a group of seven interconnected skyscrapers in Downtown Detroit – and the steam tunnels running under the city.

COL McKinney said climbing a ladder down into the city steam tunnels felt like entering a "full body hair dryer set on high-hot."

MG Stone described the layout of the tunnel system. "[In some places,] they are 7 to 8 feet tall," he explained. "In other places, they are like small caverns. They run all throughout the city. [The



city workers took the temperatures] down for us to about 110 to 120 degrees. It's made of about four layers of brick that were laid in the 1920s. People don't realize how much subterranean infrastructure there is."

According to MG Stone, the planners initially discussed scenarios with workers being trapped underground. The possibility of using the tunnel system to evacuate people out of a hot zone and to a safer place for decontamination was also considered. These considerations stemmed from training in a real-world environment. Such options would not have been possible in the mock environments available at most traditional training centers.

MG Stone commented that in exercises held at traditional facilities, certain levels of friction are often removed from the training scenarios to allow participants to reach objectives within expected timeframes. In this new modality, designers have begun to understand that the friction was, in fact, the crux of the training. Immersing Soldiers in a real-world disaster environment offers both a broader range of variables to confront and requires a more detailed understanding of participating organizations' capabilities.

This shift may be considered groundbreaking by some, but in actuality it has been moving towards development for some time.

"It started with a relationship with COL [ret.] Kevin Felix," MG Stone revealed. "When he was still on active duty, he wrote white papers on megacities and the complexities of the future for the Department of the Army. I've pretty much picked up the pieces where other people had the idea, and I think COL McKinney and I were the two that figured out how to operationalize it."

The future of this new DUT training template looks bright. Tentatively scheduled is a command post exercise in the spring of 2019, which will follow up on the August 2018 event with more complicated simulated mission parameters and a fuller exercise of the 46th Military Police Command's capabilities and personnel. Then, during a mid-2020 field training, a culminating event is expected for the DUT that would include a full complement of the command's mission personnel, with more complex and elaborate mission-enhancing activities. ●



TOP: Members of the 46th Military Police Command tour the steam tunnels located under the city of Detroit during the unit's 2018 dense urban training.

Michigan Army National Guard photo by MAJ Charles Calio

MIDDLE: Civil authorities meet during the dense urban training held by the 46th Military Police Command to develop methods for mitigating friction and increasing unity of effort between military, local and State organizations during a response to a complex catastrophic crisis in a highly populated environment.

Michigan Army National Guard photo by MAJ Charles Calio

BOTTOM: State officials receive a briefing from a member of the 46th Military Police Command during a walking tour of Detroit during the 2018 dense urban training, hosted by the 46th in August 2018.

Department of Defense photo by MC3 Michael Redd



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OPERATION HICKORY STING

Intense Exportable Training

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

The mountainous desert terrain of Fort Bliss, Texas, set the scene of Operation Hickory Sting – a brigade-level exercise consisting of more than 4,000 National Guard Soldiers. The operation was an Exportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) exercise for the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), which is made up of units from the North Carolina, South Carolina and West Virginia Army National Guards.

Soldiers from the Minnesota Army National Guard and North Carolina's State partner country, Moldova, also participated in the XCTC as support to the 30th.

The Army National Guard's XCTC program, coordinated and managed in conjunction with First Army and the National Guard Bureau, provides a

combat-training-center-like experience, but at a home station or regional training center. The program is designed to certify platoon proficiency and brings full training resource packages to National Guard and active duty bases around the country. XCTC exercises challenge and prepare Soldiers across all military occupational specialties (MOSs) to be more lethal, effective and tactically proficient.

The 30th ABCT's XCTC exercise gave Soldiers an opportunity to conduct combined arms maneuvers focused on company-level armor and infantry situational training exercises. Soldiers from West Virginia's 1st Squadron, 150th Cavalry Regiment – a sub-unit of the 30th – conducted Table XII platoon gunnery, a combined arms live-fire exercise and participated in platoon and troop-level,

reconnaissance-focused situational training exercises.

Taking place in August of 2018, Operation Hickory Sting served to prepare the entire 30th ABCT for a successful completion of an upcoming 2019 training rotation at the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California. Following their NTC rotation, the 30th ABCT will be validated for a potential deployment overseas.

"We have a lot of MOSs present," said CPT Ronald Colvin, commander of Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 113th Field Artillery, when speaking about the Hickory Sting exercise. "Field artillery, logistics and supply elements, maintenance, fire control specialists, medics, the list goes on."

"We are here shooting in support of the 1-252nd [Armor Regiment], which is part

Members of the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) fire a M109 Howitzer during Operation Hickory Sting – an Exportable Combat Training Capability exercise designed to train the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team in combined arms maneuvers.

National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohl



A M88A2 Heavy Equipment Recovery Combat Utility Lift Evacuation System utilized during operation Hickory Sting

National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohl



of the 30th ABCT,” CPT Colvin went on to say. “We’re practicing maneuver concepts, which is something we don’t always get to do. Some days go really well, some days are really good training days. It’s an opportunity to learn. As the commander, I am looking out for my Soldiers and training young officers to take my place one day.”

In addition to enhancing the skills of the individual Soldiers, Operation Hickory Sting offered a rare opportunity for the unit to train as a complete brigade. This brought unique advantages to the training field.

“Our primary mission is to develop

a picture of the battlefield and provide recommendations to the brigade commander to assist him in deploying his assets to defeat the threat,” explained SSG Chad Blair of the 1st Squadron, 150th Cavalry Regiment. “Working together as a brigade allows us to enhance this capability. By having the rest of the brigade in the same training area, we were able to start implementing that tactic more proficiently.”

During the XCTC, Soldiers were evaluated by Observer Coach (OC) trainers, who evaluated the 30th’s tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) to examine how well the unit performed

during the multiple training lanes and live-fire exercises, and ultimately determine if the Soldiers were meeting the commander’s training objectives.

“We had OCs evaluating us all the way down,” explained SFC Timothy Collins of the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 113th Field Artillery. “They give us things to work on to set us up for our NTC rotation.”

As the largest maneuver training site in the U.S. Army, Fort Bliss was the perfect setting for the 30th ABCT’s XCTC. With more than 965,000 acres, 54 training areas, 29 villages and towns, 58 live-fire ranges, 1,700 miles of tank trials and 343 million cubic acres of airspace, Fort Bliss



A Soldier of the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team checks his orders before entering the firing line with his team in their M109 Howitzer as part of a live fire exercise during Operation Hickory Sting.

National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohl



ABOVE: Members of North Carolina Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 113th Field Artillery Regiment, prep the fire direction controls of a M109 Howitzer/Paladin during a live fire exercise as part of the unit's Exportable Combat Training Capability event, held at Ft. Bliss, Texas, this past August.
National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohl



Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 113th Field Artillery Regiment, North Carolina Army National Guard set a M109 Howitzer/Paladin on the firing line, as they prepare for live fire at a training area near Ft. Bliss, Texas in support of Operation Hickory Sting.

North Carolina Army National Guard photo by SGT Odaliska Almonte

is one of the few locations with more than adequate land and infrastructure to meet the robust standards necessary to fulfill the training requirements of the 30th ABCT.

"The good thing about [Fort Bliss] is the terrain is so open," said SFC Collins. "At Fort Bragg, you don't get that. This area gives us a great opportunity to train in a more realistic [environment]."

SFC Collins went on to explain how the setting pushed the units by presenting challenges necessary to test and develop

the Soldiers' skills.

"It does cause a strain on logistics and support, but that is what it's designed to do," SFC Collins said. "It's designed to stress us out at every level to see how we perform. It allowed Soldiers to gain valuable training and develop confidence in their equipment and abilities."

The combination of the advanced-level XCTC regimen and the advanced Fort Bliss maneuver field environment allowed participating Soldiers to take advantage

of heightened training that, for many, was unique to any past experience.

"As a National Guard unit, we rarely have the opportunity to utilize a training area of that size," said SSG Blair. "It allowed us to have a level of freedom in maneuver that we normally do not have. This allowed us to implement TTPs and use equipment that we had trained on in the classroom, but had not been able to implement in an operational situation due to the limitations of other training areas."



A M109 Howitzer/Paladin crew moves into position during live fire exercises on a Fort Bliss, Texas-training area during the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team's Exportable Combat Training Capability event, Operation Hickory Sting.

National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohl

While the vast Fort Bliss training area was beneficial for Soldiers on many levels, it was not without its challenges.

“The terrain offered several challenges, both logistically and operationally,” said SSG Blair. “Most Soldiers had not experienced the challenges of operating tracked vehicles in that type of environment in both day and night and inclement weather.”

Fort Bliss is also characterized by its intense temperature and a hazardous location. Soldiers were encouraged to take precautions in order to perform effectively and efficiently in the extreme conditions.

“The altitude and heat were challenging,” noted CPT Colvin. “We had to get acclimated. We encouraged our Soldiers to stay hydrated, eat and check on their battle buddies regularly. We had never operated in that type of terrain. It was excellent training just getting there.”

PFC Enrique Cabellero, a medic with the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 113th Field Artillery, noted

“
***Our goal was to
make sure we
worked together
as a team and were
competent in what
we were doing. It
was challenging,
but it challenged us
to do better.***
”

— 1LT Carolyn Horton

how his role was to ensure the medical conditions were safe for the Soldiers.

“We check on Soldiers and make sure everything is okay,” he explained. “We are constantly reminding Soldiers to hydrate, eat and watch out for the wildlife like snakes, scorpions and spiders.”

As preparation for potential medical issues that may have arisen, PFC Cabellero and other participating medics were also tasked with researching the climate and wildlife of the area prior to the training. PFC Cabellero said the entire experience left him feeling more prepared for major missions in the future.

“This is my first time at XCTC,” he noted. “It’s really good, high-speed training. It’s preparing us for deployment.”

SGT Scott Edwards of Alpha Battery, 1-113th Field Artillery, acted as a motor sergeant with the Maintenance Support Team during the training. Because it was his first time acting as a motor sergeant, SGT Edwards said he walked away with a



1LT Carolyn Horton of North Carolina's 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team directs Soldiers conducting a dry fire exercise during Operation Hickory Sting.

National Guard Bureau photo by Luke Sohl

greater understanding of the importance of the role.

“I learned a lot being in the day-to-day of a field environment,” he said. “We are here to support, repair and diagnose vehicles and equipment. Our role is very vital when things start to break. It is very important to properly maintain equipment or it won’t last. The fight won’t continue without it.”

As with the maintenance support team, the nature of the XCTC forced every Soldier of the 30th ABCT and the supporting units to think fast on their feet. A breakdown or hindrance of any nature was no excuse to leave the job undone.

“You just had to make it happen. We were outside of the traditional supply chain, so out there we had to make it happen no matter what came up,” noted SGT Edwards.

SGT Brandon Baker of Alpha Battery, 1-113th Field Artillery, expressed a similar sentiment. “As a first-time section chief, new stuff happened every day. Some

equipment issues caused us to go with a different method to fire and get rounds on target. This helps us in our military career. It’s the best training you can get.”

The XCTC exercise proved to be an excellent opportunity for the Soldiers of the 30th ABCT to enhance their skills and become more developed Soldiers. Each Soldier was able to walk away from the exercise with a unique set of lessons learned and perhaps a few new goals.

“The biggest takeaway is we get to see where we can improve,” said SGT Lionel Vico of Charlie Battery, 1-113th Field Artillery. “I learned that it’s important to have spare parts, that communication is key and everything is a learning process.”

Also participating in the XCTC exercise was SGT Jeff Gilbert, a gunner of the 1-113th Field Artillery, who said he learned tips to improve his technical skills and to help prepare for a future leadership role.

“The training helped me learn how to be more proficient as a gunner and

exposed me to more about convoy movement. I also learned more about the chief position, which is my next step.”

Overall, Operation Hickory Sting was a success for all Soldiers involved. By the end of the exercise, platoons were certified through gunnery and maneuver tables and Soldiers walked away having gained necessary training that challenged them both as a brigade and as individuals.

“It was great training,” said 1LT Carolyn Horton, executive officer for the 1-113th. “Our goal was to make sure we worked together as a team and were competent in what we were doing. It was challenging, but it challenged us to do better.” ●

FOR MORE INFORMATION

on the Army National
Guard Exportable
Combat Training
Capability program, visit
XCTC.org



BORN in NEED:

The Army National Guard's First Muster

BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER MAJ Darrin Haas

The oldest component of the United States Armed Forces, the Army National Guard, has always been the cornerstone of our Nation's defense. "Always Ready, Always There," is more than just a motto – it's the foundation for the role Citizen-Soldiers have played starting with the Nation's early colonial beginnings up to today's Global War on Terror. Whether serving during a natural disaster or civil disorder or fighting enemies at war, the Army National Guard has a long and proud history of being there whenever needed. This is not surprising since the force was created, out of necessity, by citizens to protect citizens.

"The First Muster," a painting by Don Troiani, depicts the first official drill of the East Regiment of Massachusetts in Salem, Mass., 1637.

Image courtesy National Guard Bureau

The Army National Guard, originally known as the militia, began in the 1630s. Originally, British settlements in North America were primarily limited to areas along the Atlantic coast. As colonists expanded west into the interior of the country, they often faced armed conflict with local Native American tribes.

Colonists were generally responsible for their own defense, so they organized into separate militia companies made up of the colony settlers in the region.

Because most of the colonists were English settlers, they were influenced by the British militia system and adopted it in the North American colonies. The English believed that every free man that was capable had a duty to defend their country. The colonists, adopting this same mindset, would require all males between the ages of 16 and 60 to possess arms and be prepared to participate in the defense

of their communities. Many of the early colonial militias would even drill once a week. Some settlements often provided guards with instruction in the evenings to sound the alarm if the militia was needed.

In the area of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, conflict between the settlers and Native Americans steadily increased, particularly with the Pequot tribe. By 1636, the town militias and the colonial government began enhancing military readiness. The colonial militia forces in Massachusetts consisted of only 10 infantry companies that ranged from 60 to 200 men per unit. With the conflict growing, the General Court in Boston, Massachusetts – which functioned as the colony's legislature – ordered the militia companies around Boston to form militia "regiments" on Dec. 13, 1636. While most British colonies had organized militia companies before 1636, Massachusetts

was the first to organize companies into regiments. The enhanced organization increased the efficiency and responsiveness of the Massachusetts militia.

The Massachusetts General Court created the North, South and East Regiments, organizing units by geography for easier command and control covering the colony. The “regiment” would later become the basic unit structure for the Continental Army and all other colonial military organizations. Today, the lineage of four Army National Guard units can be traced back to those original regiments, and they are the oldest units in the United States military. All still assigned to the Massachusetts Army National Guard, they are the 101st Engineer Battalion, the 101st Field Artillery Regiment, the 181st Infantry Regiment and the 182nd Infantry Regiment.

The Act legislated on Dec. 13, 1636, by the Massachusetts General Court, is widely considered the birth of today’s Army National Guard, and it is the date we officially celebrate.

After the Act became Massachusetts law, the regiments were formed and the first regularly scheduled militia drill, known as the “First Muster,” took place in 1637. Although the exact date is not known, the First Muster of the East

Regiment occurred on the village green in Salem, Massachusetts, while the other regiments would also hold musters at later dates throughout the colony. The First Muster event is commemorated by the Massachusetts Army National Guard every year on the first Saturday in April.

At these musters, the colony leaders would teach the latest in military tactics, which the unit members would then

practice. The training and preparedness taught the settlements how to successfully war against the Pequot tribes. The regular musters for training also unified the citizens of the settlements under a common purpose, and it enhanced their cohesiveness.

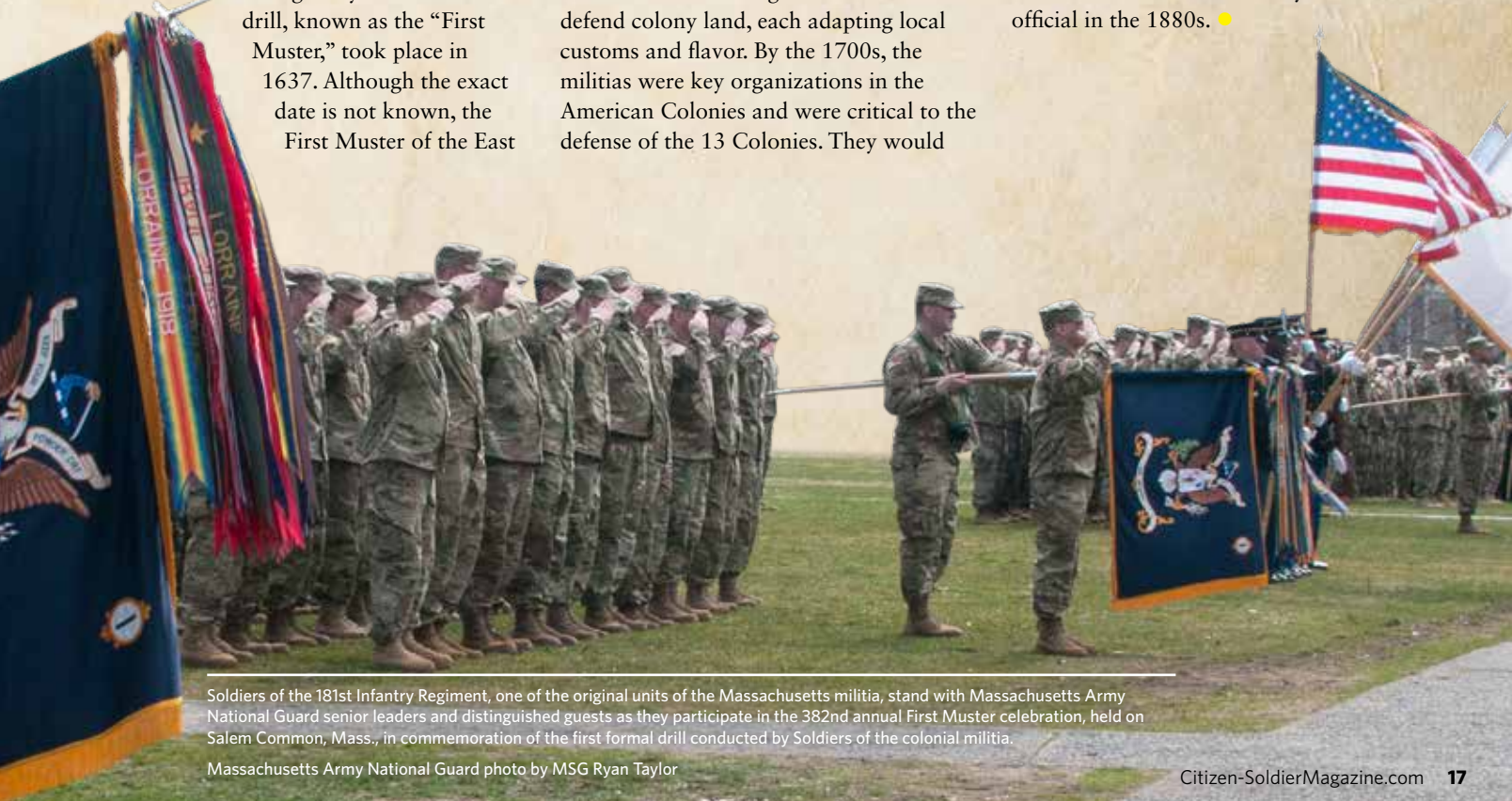
The militia system that began in Massachusetts soon spread to other colonies along the East Coast. Militias in Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maryland, Rhode Island and Virginia were used to defend colony land, each adapting local customs and flavor. By the 1700s, the militias were key organizations in the American Colonies and were critical to the defense of the 13 Colonies. They would

also make up the core of the Continental Army during the American Revolution.

By the 1800s, militias remained a key component of our national defense, and eventually the term “Army National Guard” came to replace “militia.” The new name came as a tribute to Marquis de Lafayette, Gen. George Washington’s trusted confidante during the Revolutionary War. In 1825, Lafayette visited the United States and was greeted by many of the local militia units, including the 2nd Battalion of the 11th New York Artillery. Holding great admiration for him, the 11th New York decided to adopt the title of “National Guard” in honor of Lafayette and France’s “*Garde Nacional de Paris*.” The 2nd Battalion would later become

the 7th Regiment and was prominent in the line of march when Lafayette made his final visit to New York before returning to France. As he was leaving, Lafayette noticed that the unit was named after his old command. To honor this, he exited his carriage and shook the hand of each officer present as he walked down the line. The unit naming gained attention and as the United States continued to grow, several State militias adopted the name Army National Guard until it finally became official in the 1880s. ●

“Always Ready, Always There”



Soldiers of the 181st Infantry Regiment, one of the original units of the Massachusetts militia, stand with Massachusetts Army National Guard senior leaders and distinguished guests as they participate in the 382nd annual First Muster celebration, held on Salem Common, Mass., in commemoration of the first formal drill conducted by Soldiers of the colonial militia.

Massachusetts Army National Guard photo by MSG Ryan Taylor

Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program (**SHARP**)

You Have a Voice. You Have Rights. SHARP is Here to Help.

The Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) Program is an Army initiative dedicated to creating an Army free of sexual harassment, sexual assault and associated retaliatory behaviors.

SHARP has a team of certified Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and Victim Advocates who are available 24/7 to assist Soldiers both with reporting an incidence and supporting prevention, training and awareness efforts.

For more information about the SHARP program, go to SexualAssault.army.mil.

If you have experienced sexual harassment or assault and need to talk, call the Department of Defense's Safe Helpline at 877-995-5247 or chat online at SafeHelpline.org.

Counselors are available 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week and all conversations are anonymous and confidential.



PLATINUM Partnerships

Ohio Soldiers Display Interoperability at Platinum Wolf 2018

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins
Ohio National Guard photos by SMSgt Beth Holliker

Members of the Ohio and Tennessee Army National Guards spent two weeks this past summer in Serbia participating in Exercise Platinum Wolf – an annual, multinational peacekeeping exercise led by the Serbian Armed Forces.

Platinum Wolf consisted of scenario-based training focused on military operations on urban terrain, civil security and operations, crowd and riot control, public law and order and the use of non-lethal weapons. Platinum Wolf 2018 was Serbia's largest exercise to date.

With more than 500 participants, the exercise included members of the Ohio National Guard's 838th Military Police Company, members of the Tennessee National Guard's 269th Military Police Company and military service members from 10 partner nations – Bosnia, Bulgaria, Herzegovina, Hungary, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom.

Held in June 2018, initial planning for Platinum Wolf commenced in December 2017 and called for

SGT Joshua Stiles, assigned to the Ohio Army National Guard's 838th Military Police Company, instructs members of the Serbian Armed Forces on non-lethal weapons tactics during Exercise Platinum Wolf, a Serbian-led, two-week multinational peacekeeping training focused on enhancing military cooperation and interoperability held at Serbia's South Base and Borovac Training Area this past June.





As part of Exercise Platinum Wolf 2018, soldiers from the Armed Forces of Montenegro and Romanian Armed Forces practice dismounted patrol techniques for roadways, wooded areas and open fields.

Emphasizing the importance of strong relationships and teamwork with counterparts was not CPT Ducey's idea alone. It was in fact, a major theme of this year's exercise.

"The big thing is building partner capacity, and then security cooperation" CPT Ducey went on to say.

"By doing those two things, we create interoperability. In the event of a real-world crisis, if Serbia and Ohio are in the same environment trying to protect civilians or buildings, it could be a collective thing. We can go in there, and we can all be on the same page, achieving success and saving lives no matter what the mission is."

CPL Jennifer Seidel, a team leader with the 838th, said she believes the concepts of interoperability that are reinforced by exercises like Platinum Wolf are important for Soldiers to experience early on in their Army careers.

"In the military, some of the very first experiences that you get with other nations happen during deployment," she noted. "Some of the Soldiers we took [to Platinum Wolf] are new to the military, and I think this is a great opportunity for those Soldiers to actually interact with other nations."

CPL Seidel continued, "[Exercises like Platinum Wolf] allow us to build a foundation of respect and trust with other countries. We all develop a level of cultural understanding. I know that I've created relationships with people [in Serbia] and that's something that we can continuously build on for years to come."

The exercise was held at Serbia's South Base, a training center designed by Ohio Army National Guard personnel. The center was opened in conjunction with the first Platinum Wolf and is

input from all participating countries. Preparation consisted of three planning conferences, along with ongoing weekly dialogue between the military unit leadership of each country.

Ohio has partnered with Serbia for the past 12 years as part of the National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP) and has participated in the Platinum Wolf exercises for the past three years. This year, Ohio's CPT Trevor Ducey enlisted participation from the Tennessee National Guard to demonstrate to the Serbian troops the importance of collaboration.

"I just wanted to show our Serbian counterparts that while Ohio is a large State, we can't do everything," CPT Ducey explained. "I wanted to showcase the type of cooperation that exists between States, which can also be replicated with [other] countries. We're always pushing for multinational engagement exercises. I hope that we showed the Serbian Armed Forces and other countries participating that the United States and the National Guard rely on other Service components and other States, just like they do within their areas of the world."

Soldiers assigned to the Tennessee National Guard's 269th Military Police Company position across a field to observe soldiers of other participating nations conduct a mock air assault extraction during the military operations in urban terrain (MOUT) portion of Platinum Wolf 2018.

designed to emulate Ohio's Camp Ravenna Joint Military Training Center.

"National Guard engineers were responsible for designing a training center that meets the Serbian government's want for becoming a regional peacekeeping training center for all area countries, along with their own deploying forces," said CPT Ducey. "If you go look at Camp Ravenna, it looks just like South Base. We were happy to create an environment where people are able to train and safely deploy. It's beneficial all around."

During Platinum Wolf, soldiers from all participating nations had the opportunity to share best practices and learn new techniques that could be incorporated into their own forces.

"I personally loved going through with the Serbian counterterrorism unit and [learning] the room clearing techniques," said SGT Joshua Condon, squad leader for Ohio's 838th Military Police Company. "Their techniques are very similar to everything that we've trained on, but I loved watching them do it. That's all they trained to do, so they are very smooth. You can see how, by operating on such a small level with so much repetition, you can get very good at those tactics. Our guys got to learn how to better move and communicate in that small,

tight environment. I know they really enjoyed that."

Having a diverse set of participants created a few challenges when it came to communication. But in working closely



SFC Jason Molodec (right), assigned to the Ohio National Guard's 838th Military Police Company, and SFC Keith Fields, assigned to the Tennessee National Guard's 269th Military Police Company, review training plans during the MOUT portion of Exercise Platinum Wolf 2018.

together, participants were ultimately able to see how similar their communication tactics actually were.

"The biggest hurdle we overcame was the communication barrier," said 2LT Tim Kurfiss, platoon leader for the 838th. "There are a bunch of different countries sharing the same mission, but not necessarily speaking the same language. We had to make sure everyone had a good understanding of what was going to happen.

Many of the acronyms and words that we use to describe things are the same, so that helped a lot."

SGT Condon also commented on the units' ability to surpass initial challenges and successfully achieve the group's common objective.

"When we conducted cordon and search operations with the Romanians and Bulgarians, it was a big challenge," explained SGT Condon. "But it was cool to see all the groups come together and overcome. There was a language barrier and there's different opinions on tactics, but we were able to successfully coordinate the group training."

Platinum Wolf 2018 was CPL Seidel's second time participating in the exercise. She noted the importance of the soldiers having the opportunity to have down time together

and socialize.

"You would look out and see soldiers from a couple countries tossing the football or having a conversation," CPL Seidel explained. "By the very end of [Platinum Wolf], everyone was very comfortable with each other, and so when we had the different training, we were able to successfully complete them together."

Overall, Platinum Wolf was deemed a successful exercise that further strengthened the partnership between Ohio and Serbia, while also serving to develop



SPC Harrison Daniel (left) of the Ohio National Guard's 838th Military Police Company, works with a Serbian Armed Forces soldier learning proper armored personnel carrier gunner tactics as part of Exercise Platinum Wolf 2018.



SGT Lacy Littrell of the Tennessee National Guard's 269th Military Police Company trains with a soldier of the Serbian Armed Forces on proper armored personnel carrier gunner tactics during Exercise Platinum Wolf 2018.

the skills and bonds of the participating soldiers.

"It was a complete success in the sense that we trained and met the requirements that we needed as a platoon, but it also significantly furthered our relationship with Serbia, the host nation," said 2LT Kurfiss. "We accomplished what we needed to accomplish."

This year's Platinum Wolf exercise culminated with a distinguished visitors day,

where notable military and government officials from multiple countries came to watch the closing event. The event incorporated everything the participants learned over the course of the training and displayed the teamwork built by the soldiers during the exercise.

"It was essentially a big combined training event that showed how the interoperability had progressed throughout the training," explained 2LT Kurfiss. "It was teams from each country all working together with a different piece of the mission. It went over everything we had learned during the training."

For SGT Condon, the success of Platinum Wolf not only showcased successful interoperability among the participating nations, it reinforced his commitment to the Guard and reminded him of the importance of maintaining positive relationships with our Nation's partners.

"I talked to my command afterwards, because I was on the fence about [re-enlisting]," remarked SGT Condon. "After Platinum Wolf, I wouldn't consider resigning. I want to be there. I look forward to all the cultural experiences."

As plans for 2019's iteration of Platinum Wolf begin to form, CPT Ducey hopes to see the exercise continue to develop and evolve.

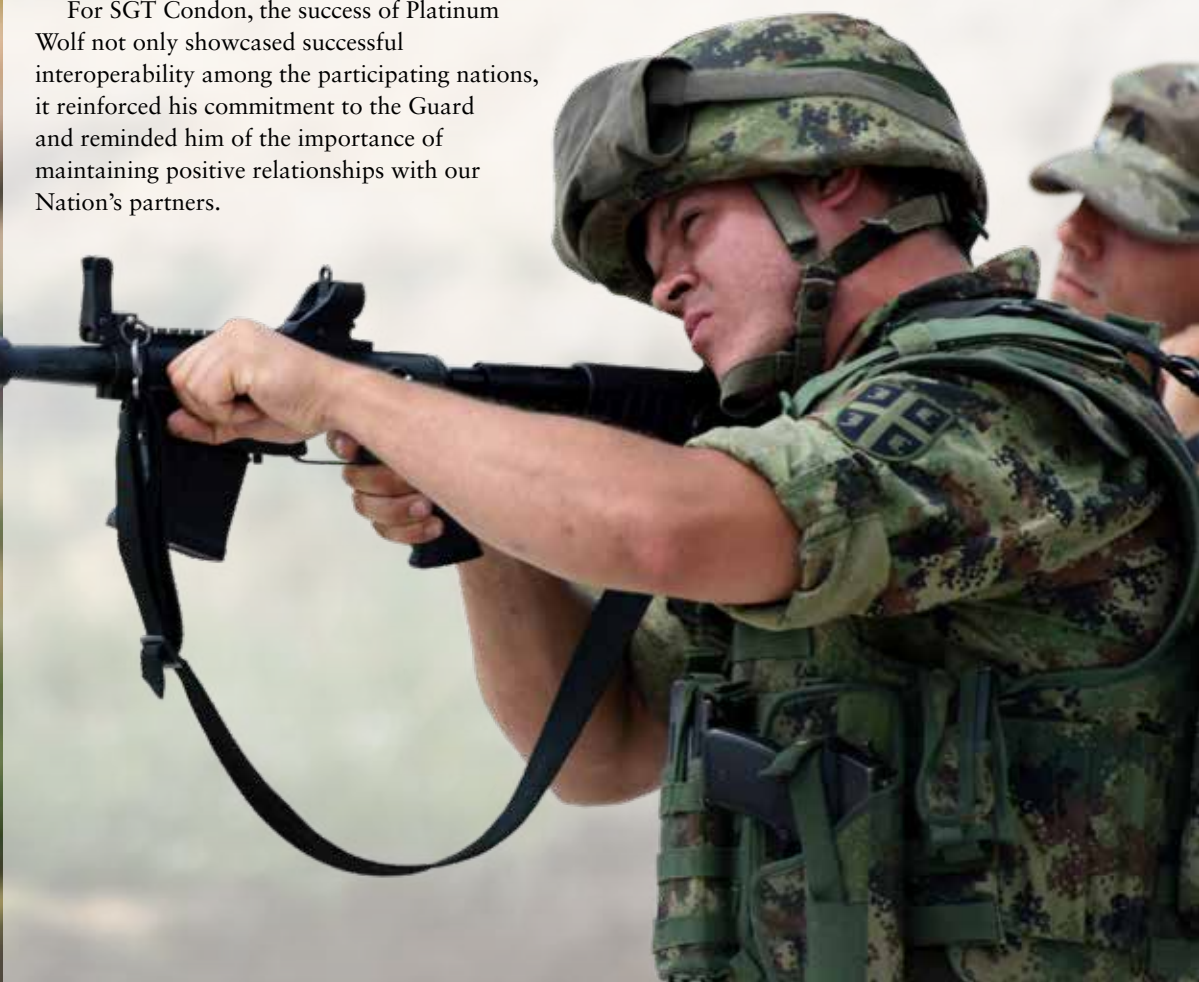
"We want to continue to expand and show continued growth in the exercise," CPT Ducey explained. "[For Platinum Wolf 2019] we've proposed a three-week engagement that includes night-time operations. It will include some medical scenarios and could also include some chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear scenarios and a cyber event as well."

Just as Ohio Army National Guard leaders look forward to the next Platinum Wolf exercise, CPL Seidel said she is looking forward to the continued positive impact the exercise has for the members of both the Ohio National Guard and the Serbian Armed Forces.

CPL Seidel noted, "It does not matter what rank you are, how long you've been in the military, or which country you serve for – everyone gets an equal chance to make the most out of the experience." ●




A member of the Serbian Armed Forces completes a training maneuver using a U.S. military M26 Modular Accessory Shotgun during the non-lethal weapons training portion of Exercise Platinum Wolf 2018.



Healthy Army Communities

Supporting a Fit and Healthy Force

A photograph of a soldier in camouflage uniform and a cap, acting as a goalkeeper for a child's soccer game. The soldier is crouched on a grassy field, ready to catch the ball. A young boy in a dark jacket is in the foreground, kicking the ball. In the background, there is a chain-link fence, a parked car, and a building.

Healthy Army Communities is an Army-wide effort that exists to support members of the Army community in achieving healthier lives. The program focuses on three core areas:

healthier options, active living and innovative initiatives.

Through these three tracks, Army members may access knowledge and resources needed to pursue a healthier lifestyle.

The site offers everything from healthy menu ideas, to information on local and national fitness activities and programs, to innovative concepts for creating healthier working and living environments.

SSG Joseph Mathias of the Washington Army National Guard's Medical Command plays as a goalkeeper during the Tillicum Elementary School field day, in Lakewood, Wash.

Washington Army National Guard photo by SPC Alec Dionne

For more information about Healthy Army Communities, go to
ArmyMWR.com/programs-and-services/resources/healthy-army-communities.

BATTLE IN THE OUTBACK

U.S. and Australian Forces Join for an Exercise Down-Under

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

The United States and Australian militaries are no strangers to one another. The relationship began when troops from both forces shared trenches in WWI, and continues to this day as they conduct joint patrols of the mountain passes of Afghanistan. Though the ties between our two nations remain strong, the need to maintain and grow interoperable skill sets never decreases, hence, the many joint-training initiatives that have occurred between U.S. and Australian forces over the years.

In June and July of 2018, roughly 800 American service members – including Soldiers from the Indiana Army National Guard – and 6,000 Australian soldiers trained together at Exercise Hamel. Designed as the Australian Defence Force's (ADF's) final event in the brigade

certification process, Exercise Hamel serves as an ongoing opportunity to evaluate the warfighting ability of Australian brigades, while also improving interoperability with American troops.

Exercise Hamel commemorates the WWI battle when, 100 years ago, U.S. and Australian forces first fought side by side as they defeated German troops in Le Hamel, France. The fields of battle have changed in the days and decades since that battle, but one thing remains the same – together, the United States and Australia make up a fine and formidable fighting force.

In the 2018 iteration of Exercise Hamel, Indiana Guard Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 293rd Infantry Regiment, 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), trained with soldiers from the

ADF's 7th Brigade at the Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area in central Queensland, Australia. The training would ultimately certify the Australian brigade for deployment, and also function as the annual training requirement for Indiana's 76th IBCT.

Also participating in the exercise were U.S. Soldiers from U.S. Army Pacific, including the 25th Infantry Division, based out of Hawaii, and the U.S. Army 10th Regional Support Group, based out of Okinawa, Japan. U.S. Marines taking part in Exercise Hamel included the III Marine Expeditionary Regiment, also based out of Okinawa, and the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, 5th Marine Regiment, based out of Camp Pendleton, California.

"It was truly an honor to integrate into one of our coalition partner's



Indiana Army National Guard Soldiers from A Company, 1st Battalion, 293rd Infantry Regiment, 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, advance towards the village of Raspberry Creek before beginning to clear the village as part of Exercise Hamel – a multilateral field training event held June and July 2018 in the Shoalwater Bay Training Area, Australia Exercise Hamel.

U.S. Army photo by SSG Keith Anderson

headquarters," said COL Robert Burke, 76th IBCT. "We were able to conduct a very challenging and worthwhile command post and field training exercise [that] achieved a higher level of readiness than I anticipated, while creating great relationships with the Australians during an historic time in our shared military history."

During the exercise, Indiana Guard Soldiers executed defensive tactical maneuvers, protecting the 7th Brigade's flanks with blocks and delays as the units moved west through a 1,754-square-mile training area.

"It was pretty unique," said CPT Eric Bolin, commander for Headquarters and Headquarters Command (HHC), 1st Battalion, 293rd Infantry Regiment. "We were kind of [operational control] to the 7th Brigade, Australian Defence Force, for the two weeks that we were in the field."

CPT Bolin went on to explain that control was accomplished by strategically positioning notional obstacles and ensuring those obstacles were covered by fire.

"We would block the road at key intersections and try to control those intersections. We were supported by Australian field artillery units as well as our internal fires and battalion mortars,"

he explained. "We had some engineer assets available to us – both American and Australian Defence Force. So, we placed obstacles such as minefields and integrated our direct and indirect fires plan and observations over those minefields."

Exercise Hamel involved a hearty scenario that delved into several different training areas. The 76th IBCT engaged in tasks that included guarding artillery and other logistical positions, clearing routes and performing area reconnaissance, as well as securing enemy prisoners and serving as a reserve force to the 7th Brigade.

"We had a number of great scenarios involved, from non-combatant evacuation operations to an amphibious tactical lodgment [landing], to population security operations and high-end joint land combat. On all accounts, it's been a fantastic get-out for our ADF," said ADF Brig. Gen. Ben James, director of General Training and Doctrine.

The mix of scenario types gave the U.S. and Australian participants plenty of opportunity to conduct joint field operations and share not only standard techniques, but also a few unconventional, yet highly effective, approaches.

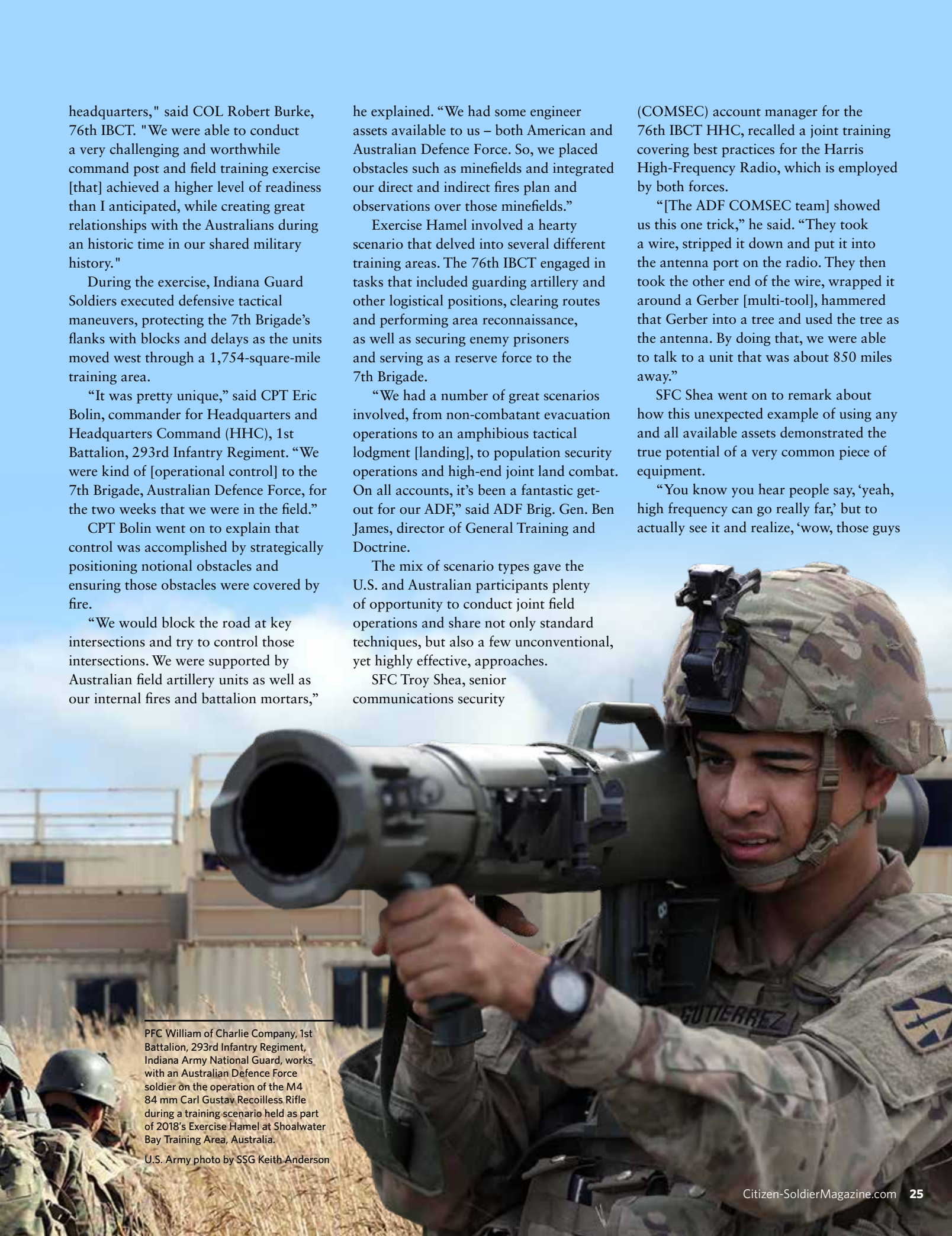
SFC Troy Shea, senior communications security

(COMSEC) account manager for the 76th IBCT HHC, recalled a joint training covering best practices for the Harris High-Frequency Radio, which is employed by both forces.

"[The ADF COMSEC team] showed us this one trick," he said. "They took a wire, stripped it down and put it into the antenna port on the radio. They then took the other end of the wire, wrapped it around a Gerber [multi-tool], hammered that Gerber into a tree and used the tree as the antenna. By doing that, we were able to talk to a unit that was about 850 miles away."

SFC Shea went on to remark about how this unexpected example of using any and all available assets demonstrated the true potential of a very common piece of equipment.

"You know you hear people say, 'yeah, high frequency can go really far,' but to actually see it and realize, 'wow, those guys



PFC William of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 293rd Infantry Regiment, Indiana Army National Guard, works with an Australian Defence Force soldier on the operation of the M4 84 mm Carl Gustav Recoilless Rifle during a training scenario held as part of 2018's Exercise Hamel at Shoalwater Bay Training Area, Australia.

U.S. Army photo by SSG Keith Anderson



TOP: Members of Indiana's 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team raise their right hands as their brigade commander, COL Robert Burke, leads them through a once-in-a-lifetime reenlistment ceremony held July 2018 in Yeppoon, Australia, while the unit was deployed to participate in the annual multilateral training, Exercise Hamel.

Indiana Army National Guard photo by SPC Joshua Syberg



LEFT: Australian Defence Force soldiers from Battlegroup War Horse take part in a notional assault on Williamson Airfield in the Shoalwater Bay Training Area, as part of Exercise Hamel, June 2018.

Australian Defence Force photo by Capt. Roger Brennan

are [that far away],’ ... it was really cool to see.”

At one point in the exercise, in the darkness of an early morning, Soldiers from Alpha Company of the 1-293rd, along with U.S. Marines from 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines and ADF soldiers from the 6th Royal Australian Regiment, played the role of the Blue Force (BLUFOR) and overtook an urban objective being held by soldiers playing the role of oppositional forces (OPFOR).

"They needed to clear a village with a mixture of insurgent forces, conventional forces and a significant number of civilians," said ADF Capt. Tom Patterson, who served as an observer and trainer for

the exercise.

That mission put participants to the test. It required infantry, military police with police dogs, engineers, air support and other forces to take the contested area. While acquiring the target was the main goal and focus, ensuring the welfare of civilians was also a responsibility of every participating service member. It was realistic training for real-world battles in urban areas where determining who is an enemy and who is a noncombatant can be a challenge.

Exercise Hamel culminated with a simulated battle where U.S. and ADF troops, playing the role of BLUFOR, took over an airfield held by elements from the

ADF's 3rd Brigade, who acted as OPFOR. The scenario played out as a large-scale, combined-arms battle employing tanks, dismounted infantry, air support, artillery and unmanned aerial vehicles to get the job done.

Hamel also gave the ADF the opportunity to demonstrate some of its newest equipment including their air force's C-27J Spartan, the LAND 121 protected mobility vehicle, three separate digitized logistics common operating picture systems, vehicle camera systems, a fuel distribution and monitoring system, an automated base refueling point, an expeditionary fuel installation system for aviation and a programmable or manual-control precision aerial delivery system.

"We've broken new ground in a whole range of areas," said Brig. Gen. James. "For the first time, we had a rotating





ground combat element—that is, the land element that’s embarked onboard our new navy amphibious ships, so we’ve broken new ground there. It’s the first time the army’s worked alongside the air force’s new C-27J Spartan aircraft, which has been fantastic. And also, there are a number of trials on our unmanned aerial systems in the training area as well. In a whole range of areas, new trials, new capabilities and new doctrine – it’s been really exciting.”

Ultimately, Exercise Hamel boils down to two things – increased readiness and interoperability. MAJ Michael Delp, senior administrative officer for the 76th IBCT, spoke about how Exercise Hamel helped the Indiana Guard Soldiers in these two areas.

“It was a great opportunity to be able to go to Australia,” he noted.

“It was really a great opportunity for Soldiers who have only

done their one weekend a month or two weeks out of the year, to be able to go and experience cultures outside of the United States and train alongside some of our coalition partners. It’s vitally important to have joint partnerships and cohesive working units, because [in the war on terrorism], we’re all fighting a common enemy. The more that we can train together and get to know each other’s strengths and weaknesses across formations, I think is only going to continue to improve our fight forward.”

As U.S. and Australian soldiers continue to train and fight together, they have become an example of what long-term, historic partnership looks like.

“You look back on these types of exercises and the relationships that we’ve built, and it only makes [you] more confident when you’re fighting,” CPT Bolin said. “Alongside to your left and right, you see that Australian uniform. You know, they’re confident – and they’re just as lethal as we are.” ●



U.S. Marine Corps pilots demonstrate an MV-22 Osprey landing for Australian Defence Force soldiers and military leaders during the 2018 iteration of Exercise Hamel.

U.S. Army photo by SSG Keith Anderson

FUTURE VERTICAL LIFT

Out with the Old, In with the New

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

V-280 Valor

Image courtesy Bell Helicopter Textron Inc.

Across the past few decades, the ongoing war against our Nation's enemies has taken its toll on the Army's helicopter fleet. Continued deployments and increases in combat and reconnaissance missions have long since begun to cause wear on the fleet. The National Guard alone has deployed more than 850,000 times since 9/11 to locations like Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait and Guantanamo Bay. To meet demand, in the past the Army has refurbished, remanufactured and upgraded the existing family of aircraft. Nevertheless, the U.S. vertical lift fleet is aging and fast approaching the platform lifespan of 40 to 60 years. Hence, the Department of Defense (DoD) has noted that the time has come for a new and improved platform of rotary wing aircraft.

"As the Department of Defense's current fleet of vertical lift aircraft become older, there is an inherent need to increase our capabilities while ensuring our global overmatch through newer aircraft designs," said COL Erskine "Ramsey" Bentley, Training and Doctrine Command capability manager for Future Vertical Lift, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence, Fort Rucker, Alabama. "Future Vertical Lift is a joint initiative to help begin a modernization of our current vertical lift fleet across the DoD enterprise."

Future Vertical Lift (FVL) is the DoD's plan for the development of a next-level generation of military helicopters for the

U.S. Armed Forces. Begun as an initiative in 2009, and later becoming a strategic plan in 2011, FVL will replace aging helicopters with a new fleet of manned and unmanned rotary wing aircraft that improve aircraft performance and survivability while significantly reducing operating costs. In doing so, the DoD will be providing aircraft that are able to fly farther and faster, carry heavier payloads, perform optionally piloted missions and reduce logistical footprints. The helicopters are also expected to be more reliable plus simpler and less expensive to maintain.

Through the implementation of FVL, DoD leaders hope to provide U.S. forces with the speed, range, payload and mission systems critical for success in future operational environments. FVL will create greater capability to overcome the constraints of complex terrain, higher altitudes, extreme temperatures and extended distances. The integration of manned and unmanned teaming and optionally piloted vehicles will provide new options for security, reconnaissance and logistics.

The FVL fleet is planned to consist of several aircraft, the first being an advanced unmanned aerial system platform capable of delivering targeting data for long-range precision fires and electronic attacks on enemy radar systems.

"We want to be able to spoof those radars, jam those radars, hunt those radars and kill those radars," explained 7th Infantry Division Deputy Commanding General and Future Vertical Lift Cross-Functional Team Director BG Walter Rugen.

An attack reconnaissance aircraft is also in the early plans for development. According to BG Rugen, the aircraft will be optionally manned and "sized to hide in radar clutter, [meaning] to operate in the urban canyons of megacities."

According to BG Rugen, these two aircraft form the FVL "advance team," and their development is geared at deepening the interoperability between the ground force and fire teams to better detect and deliver lethal effects, assess those effects and then re-attack if necessary.

Set for later in the FVL development process is a long-range assault chopper that will possess significantly upgraded protection features and be capable of "exploiting windows of opportunity," BG Rugen said.

In 2014, the Army selected two firms to develop FVL demonstrators. As part of a joint initiative, Boeing and Sikorsky –



Defiant Features

X2™ Technology
Advanced Drive System
Active Vibration Control

Advanced Rigid Rotor System
Manual Blade Fold
Pusher Prop with Clutch

Lift Offset Co-Axial Rotor
Active Rudders and Elevators
Retractable Gear

Fly-by-Wire Flight Controls
Cabin for 12 Combat Troops
Crew of Four



Sikorsky Defiant

Image courtesy Sikorsky Aircraft

Lockheed Martin's rotary wing aircraft expert division – and Boeing together built the SB<1> Defiant. The Defiant is a medium-lift chopper based on Sikorsky's X2 coaxial design. The SB<1> Defiant was designed to provide the right combination of speed, lift and range for Army attack and assault missions. Its design increases overall maneuverability and agility while reducing development and life-cycle costs.

Textron Inc.'s Bell Helicopter is developing the V-280 Valor tiltrotor chopper. Designed to offer twice the speed and range of current helicopters, the V-280 promises to support ground maneuver and will be purposely built for squad plus enablers. The chopper is set to feature integrated cabin armor, fly-by-wire component redundancy, airborne battle boards that track mission updates in real time and an equipment package that will

enable en route situational awareness through digitally fused reconnaissance, surveillance, intelligence and friendly force information.

The Army National Guard has a direct role in the outcome of FVL through Tennessee Army National Guard's LTC Jay Deason. As the flight facility commander of the 1-107th Airfield Operations Battalion, LTC Deason is one of only four U.S. Army Soldiers selected nationwide to participate in the FVL program study, which took place in the early spring of 2018 in San Jose, California.

To be eligible for the study, candidates (preferably pilot instructors) were required to possess a minimum of 500 rotary wing flight hours. Participants of the study operated NASA vertical motion simulators with the intent to operationally assess the maneuverability and agility of FVL technologies.

According to COL Bentley, the study will help determine how "en route speeds

and long-range requirements affect low-speed maneuverability and agility during the transition from en route speed to altitude."

COL Bentley also noted that the results of the study will not be visible for 12 to 20 years.

"There is a lot of work going on now to ensure we get it correct and have the most effective designs we can get within that timeline," COL Bentley explained. "Our study will feed any new start designs as a primary function; any effect on the current fleet will be through secondary effect of changes to advanced flight controls or human system interface data points collected during the study."

While FVL systems are not expected to begin fielding until the 2030s, according to COL Bentley, progress is being made at rapid speed and "the program is moving along with good progression towards new aircraft in our DoD fleet," soon making FVL a reality. ●



Sikorsky Defiant

Image courtesy Sikorsky Aircraft

ON POINT AND ON TARGET

South Carolina Leads the Way with Virtual Marksmanship System

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak
Photos courtesy of Laser Shot Simulations

Marksmanship. Few skills are more critical to a Soldier's lethality and overall survivability on the battlefield than marksmanship. This essential skill becomes even more crucial when considered within the framework of ARNG 4.0 – the Army National Guard's newest framework, which requires enhanced combat readiness for all Soldiers.

As the Guard progresses in the move to a more operational and readily mobilized force, innovative training opportunities are becoming more common. One such opportunity that the South Carolina Army National Guard has employed is through use of the Mobile Marksmanship Training Simulator (MMTS).

“Our success depends on the readiness of each individual fighting Soldier,” said

CSM Russ Vickery, South Carolina's Command Sergeant Major. “Although relatively successful over the years, the need for enhanced marksmanship capabilities on the individual level has increased, requiring leaders to think of innovative ways to get weapons into the hands of Soldiers throughout the year to increase confidence, accuracy and ultimately readiness for battle.”

Developed by Laser Shot, Inc., the MMTS system is billed as a multi-functional firearms simulator designed to address both basic and advanced firearms training requirements for both combat and combat support units. Used in conjunction with on-screen targets and virtual training vignettes, the system's hit detection camera technology employs visible and infrared



Laser Shot's Mobile Marksmanship Training Simulator (MMTS)

lasers that are read by a proprietary sub-pixel laser tracking algorithm. This allows the Laser Shot detection cameras to identify the location of the lasers emitted from the firearm and transmit the recorded data to the computer system, which then displays the precise location of impact on screen. The uniquely advanced camera technology suite gives Laser Shot's MMTS what the manufacturer describes as the fastest and most accurate tracking method available for simulated firearms on the market today.



Laser Shot's Mobile Marksmanship Training Simulator (MMTS)



The MMTS is capable of providing immediate feedback to both the Soldier and instructor. For example, the system's responsive Location of Misses and Hits indicator can be seen in the peripheral view of the shooter and displays instant shot placement without interrupting the Soldier's sight picture.

The MMTS is compatible for use with both simulated and actual firearms. Simulated weapons are available in a wide range of both handgun and rifle options. These true-to-life replicas mimic the size, weight and recoil of the real weapon version to allow for the most realistic experience possible. Soldiers also have the option to convert individual firearms into simulated weapons by inserting a dry-fire laser into the barrel or chamber. By using the laser insert, when the firing pin makes contact with the primer cap, an infrared laser is emitted rather than a bullet.

Perhaps the MMTS's most beneficial feature, a feature that sets it apart from other similar systems, is its portable nature.

"The old systems are tethered to one location and make it difficult for commanders to get their Soldiers to it, along with [the added difficulty of] competing for time on the systems," said CSM Vickery. "With enough of these portable systems, we could potentially get every Soldier in the South Carolina

Army National Guard hands-on weapons training for at least 30 minutes each quarter without impeding other training requirements."

Soldiers from the 108th Public Affairs Detachment, South Carolina Army National Guard trained on the MMTS at the Bluff Road Armory in Columbia, South Carolina, in May of 2018. The MMTS provided the troops with several training scenarios from its Primary Marksmanship Instruction (PMI) course. Specifically designed for small arms skill development, sustainment and qualification, the course is based on fundamentals pulled straight from the Army field manual. When using 12-foot portable screens, the program can simultaneously simulate up to three lanes, and additional lanes can be added by networking together multiple MMTS units.

"The realism you experience on this system is incredibly beneficial to building Soldier confidence and skills with weapons," said SSG William Cox, a member of the South Carolina Army National Guard Marksmanship Training Unit and PMI instructor. "The visual feedback provided through this system relates directly to what the Soldier will experience – from the dirt that flies up from the ground if the Soldier is shooting too low, to the dirt smudges on the edge of the zeroing target card. It looks and feels like you are on the ranges we use."

A South Carolina Army National Guard Soldier with the Marksmanship Training Unit demonstrates how to use the Mobile Marksmanship Training Simulator to Soldiers of the 108th Public Affairs Detachment while training at the Bluff Road Armory, Columbia, S.C., in May of 2018.

South Carolina Army National Guard photo by SSG Jerry Boffen

The members of the 108th used their time on the MMTS to prepare for the unit's upcoming small arms and crew-served weapons qualifications, which would be held at live ranges later that summer. The unit completed training scenarios including a zero range, which concentrated on shot groups and technique, and a pop-up M4 qualification range.

"The system provided realistic training scenarios, using real weapons," said SFC Joe Cashion, the 108th's readiness noncommissioned officer. "It's always good to get marksmanship training with our individual weapons and the simulator is about as close to the real thing as you can get. The marksmanship training team was very knowledgeable and what we all learned will undoubtedly help us on the actual qualification range."

In 2018 the South Carolina Army National Guard was the only State in possession of a Laser Shot simulator available for use by Guard Soldiers for the improvement of marksmanship skills. ●



Joint Family Support Assistance Program

THE JOINT FAMILY SUPPORT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (JFSAP) embodies the Department of Defense's vision to provide high-quality, mobile Family services to augment Family programs in meeting the needs of Active Duty, Guard and Reserve Family members who are geographically dispersed from a military installation and who might otherwise be unable to access much needed support.

For information on specific JFSAP programs and offerings, contact your State's Family readiness office. Contact information can be found at

JointServicesSupport.org/spn

Unity in Crisis

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

When Hurricanes Florence and Michael struck the southeast coast of the United States late in the summer of 2018, Army National Guard Soldiers, civilian first responders and everyday residents banded together to offer shelter, food and aid to those most impacted by the storms' devastation.

Hurricane Florence

Over 6,600 National Guard members, sent from at least 28 States, were sent to support the States of North and South Carolina in recovery from Hurricane Florence. That type of unity is what South Carolina's Adjutant General MG Robert Livingston described as the most effective tool in alleviating the destruction of hurricanes. "Everything is unified," he said.

Landfall

At a quarter after seven o'clock in the morning on Sept. 14, 2018, the eye of Hurricane Florence made landfall on the coast of North Carolina, near Wrightsville Beach. The storm lingered. It crept over the landscape at just 6 miles-per-hour (mph), but with maximum sustained winds estimated at 90 mph – making it a slow-moving, yet deadly, Category 1 Hurricane, according to the National Hurricane Center.

Thirteen States were unified in sending service members to join the more than 3,000 North Carolina National Guard

members activated in response to the massive storm. Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Wisconsin National Guards sent Soldiers and Airmen to support North Carolina's recovery effort. Air support vehicles included CH-47 Chinooks sent by five States; Black Hawk helicopters sent by 11 States; additional helicopters sent by the U.S. Coast Guard and other rotary wing aircraft sent by the North Carolina State Highway Patrol.

"I would put it right up on the scale with Hurricane Matthew. Along the coast, there was a lot of surge and wind damage. Then, once the storm stalled a little bit, the rain just heavily impacted southeastern North Carolina," said SGM Robert Bowen, acting command sergeant major of 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team,

ABOVE: Florida National Guard Soldier SPC Logan W. Miller, of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package team, checks a damaged vehicle, Oct. 16, 2018, in Port St. Joe, Fla., while conducting welfare checks using GPS technology to find, search, clear and document the locations of homes damaged during Hurricane.

Florida Army National Guard photo by SGT Leia Tascarini

RIGHT: North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers with the 252nd Armored Regiment and 230th Brigade Support Battalion drive through high flood waters while shuttling residents displaced by Hurricane Florence.

North Carolina Army National Guard Photo by SGT Odaliska Almonte



North Carolina Army National Guard.

At the height of the relief effort, 50 aircraft were used in 346 missions, resulting in the rescue of over 440 citizens and 127 animals. National Guard members and first responders moved more than 685,000 pounds of supplies and equipment during the response.

"We switched over during the storm to what we call "all-purpose support packages." That's [when we] go out and do multiple different things, rather than

just specializing in one area. That allows the State counties and the National Guard the flexibility to do anything from food distribution, to security, to transportation needs, to even flooded-area rescue."

Of the missions completed by the North Carolina National Guard, most were east of Interstate 95 and included search and rescue, swift-water rescue support, sandbag

National Guard was still working on their behalf.

"Remember, no mission is complete until you are returned to the arms of your loved ones back home," he said in a video posted on the North Carolina National Guard Facebook page.

As their neighbors to the north worked hard to mitigate storm damage, South Carolina

was responding to its own challenges from Florence. To meet the impending danger, the South Carolina National Guard mobilized 2,200 Soldiers and Airmen in advance of the storm making landfall. "Team South Carolina," as it was named, also included 3,000 Department of Transportation workers and hundreds of State police and public safety officers. By the time Florence reached the shores of South Carolina, 35 emergency shelters were already open and taking in residents. During the response, South Carolina Guard Soldiers filled and delivered sandbags to several counties in the northeast region of the State to protect infrastructures in advance of flooding after Hurricane Florence downgraded to a Tropical Storm. One-ton sandbags were applied to prevent flooding in the

operations, commodities distribution, evacuations and support to local law enforcement and first responders.

Days after the storm had passed, North Carolina's State CSM Russell Prince assured citizens that the

ABOVE: Soldiers of B Company, 236th Brigade Engineer Battalion, North Carolina Army National Guard operate a food and water distribution station in front of South Brunswick Middle School in Southport, N.C., where Soldiers supplied more than 410 families with food and water over the course of two days in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Florence.

North Carolina Army National Guard photo by SGT Joe Roudabush

RIGHT: South Carolina National Guard Soldiers from B Battery, 1st Battalion, 178th Field Artillery Regiment work to support the South Carolina Highway Patrol at a traffic control point in Conway, S.C. during the Myrtle Beach area evacuation in advance of Hurricane Florence, Sept. 11, 2018.

South Carolina Army National Guard photo by SSG Erica Knight





North Carolina Army National Guard's 449th Theatre Aviation Brigade flight operations team provides missions information to flight crews on standby in Morrisville, N.C. in the aftermath of Hurricane Florence, Sept. 22, 2018.

North Carolina Army National Guard photo by SGT Odaliska Almoante

Pee Dee Region in the northeast. Soldiers from the 218th Brigade Support Battalion worked day and night to fill, load and move more than 1,500 sandbags to Lake Busbee in Conway, South Carolina, to assist with flood prevention along federal Highway 501. In all, over 10,000 linear feet of barrier material and 126,000 sandbags were positioned within the larger Highway 501 corridor, according to an Army report.

The South Carolina Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team (SC-HART) was a critical asset on duty in response to Hurricane Florence. SC-HART is a mixed team made up of rescuers from South Carolina's Urban Search & Rescue Task Force 1 along with pilots and aircrew from South Carolina Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 151st Aviation Unit.

"We have been able to combine State

and National Guard capabilities to not only support the citizens of South Carolina, but of the [entire] Nation as well," CW4 Tripp Hutto told fellow South Carolina Army Guard photojournalist SGT Brad Mincey. "This is why we have the HART team, to provide a capability to the State of South Carolina that didn't [previously] exist to our citizens. We blend

our aviation expertise and military assets with civilian first responder expertise and assets and we have a well-oiled, all-purpose search and rescue capability."

MG Livingston recognized the contribution of the HART team during the Hurricane Florence response and went on to emphasize the level of integration the South Carolina National Guard has with civilian counterparts.

"If you look at our HART teams," he said, "[There are] military aircraft, military operators and civilian swimmers. They come out to the fire departments in South Carolina. If you look at my sandbagging operations, we've got locals, we've got Guard Soldiers, we've got contractors. That partnership comes from years of rehearsal, years of planning, and unfortunately for us, years of actually going through these disasters."

Hurricane Michael

Different from Hurricane Florence, Hurricane Michael came fast and furiously into the Florida Panhandle as a Category 4 storm. It did not linger, but moved quickly, ravaging the land over which it passed. Hurricane Michael made landfall between St. Vincent Island and Panama City, Florida, early in the afternoon of Oct. 10, 2018. With winds reaching 155 mph – just 2 mph shy of a Category 5 hurricane, the highest possible hurricane classification – Hurricane Michael was the strongest hurricane to come ashore along the Florida Panhandle going back over 150 years.

Landfall

Over 3,700 Soldiers and Airmen were mobilized in response to Hurricane Michael – with over 1,000 being mobilized prior to landfall. Service members included 148 personnel from eight States – Alabama, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, New York and Ohio.

All combined, the out-of-State units brought five Chinook choppers, six Black Hawk choppers and 36 tactical vehicles for use in the response effort. Operations included search-and-rescue, boat teams, transportation, logistical support and aviation support.

Florida National Guard's Dual Status Commander BG Rafael Ribas spoke about his directive to Soldiers to keep the essentials properly prioritized as they approached the disaster response.



A reconnaissance team with the Florida National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package, prepares Zodiac boats to survey damage caused by Hurricane Michael on the coastline of Port St. Joe, Fla., and surrounding areas.

Florida Army National Guard photo by SSG Carmen Fleischmann



“Number one with everything we do, of course, is safety,” he said. “As [Soldiers] began search and rescue, the next [priority] was to assist our citizens. Subsequent [to that] was establishing points of distribution and the security element. Finally, [our priority] was to remain in constant contact with the local leadership. That is so important because it ensures unity of effort.”



That unified effort included support from active duty units working in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Before the hurricane made landfall, 2,216 active-duty personnel – responding with 32 helicopters, 240 high-water vehicles and 32 swift-water boats – were in position, ready to begin mitigation tactics.

“We are surrounding the storm,” said Gen Terrence J. O’Shaughnessy, commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command. “This is no small feat given the unprecedented size and strength of [Hurricane] Michael.”

The storm soon entered the State of Georgia. Nine hundred Georgia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen from 38 separate units participated in the relief effort. While early on, Mitchell and Seminole Counties in the southwest region of the State were some of the hardest hit by the storm, Baker County, Calhoun County, Decatur County, Dougherty County, Miller County, Lee County and Terrell County were also impacted by the hurricane.

“We ran PODs [points of distribution] for the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and FEMA” said LTC John Low, deputy commander for the 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. “We ran nine across southwest Georgia. We also took trailers from metro Atlanta with FEMA supplies and ran those down to the PODs. We had a transportation company doing that. And then our engineer battalion did a lot of route clearance.”

Units also used High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles as “mobile PODs,” delivering supplies to rural areas where farmers were trapped by downed trees and smashed farm vehicles.

In addition to running PODs, Georgia National Guard members conducted route clearance, traffic control and movement operations to and from locations in southwestern Georgia where most of the damage in the State occurred.

“We had more than enough Soldiers answer the call. In the end that was a good news story, that we had more than enough people to do what we needed to do,” remarked LTC Low. “We got down into the affected areas really before any other assets could be down there. I think it was a Guard success story – helping the civil authorities help the citizens in their time of need. And then as they got on their feet, we were able to roll back and head back home. So I think it’s a good success story for the Guard.” ●

ABOVE: Soldiers of Alpha Company, 753rd Brigade Engineer Battalion, Florida Army National Guard, clear roadways in Panama City, Fla., of debris left behind by Hurricane Michael, Oct. 13, 2018.

Florida Army National Guard photos by PFC Arcadia Jackson

LEFT: Crews with the Florida National Guard’s Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package, along with members of the Urban Search and Rescue Florida Task Force 8, board a chopper as they begin search and rescue missions during the State’s Hurricane Michael response effort.

Florida National Guard photo by David Sterphone

ARMY VOLUNTEER CORPS

Support Your Army Community

The **Army Volunteer Corps (AVC)** helps Soldiers and their Families find local volunteering opportunities with organizations that benefit the Army community.

Volunteering with AVC gives Soldiers the opportunity to:

- Create bonds and foster change within their communities
- Learn new skills and build upon old ones
- Gain work experience
- Make a positive difference in the lives of others



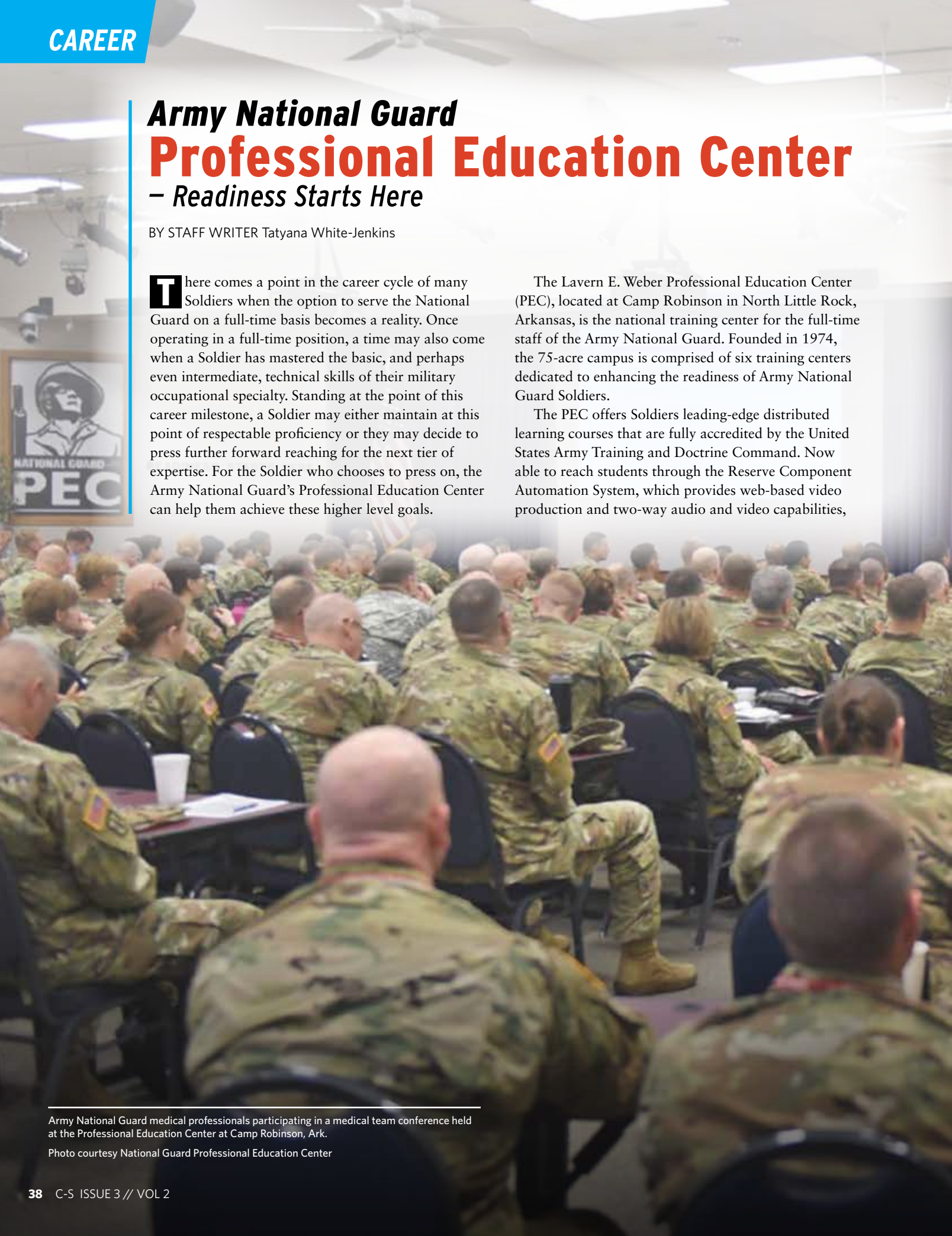
To register or learn about volunteer opportunities across the Army,
contact your local Army Volunteer Coordinator within
your Army Community Service Center.

To find the **AVC** nearest you, go to [ArmyMRW.com/communities](https://armymrw.com/communities).

Army National Guard Professional Education Center

– Readiness Starts Here

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins



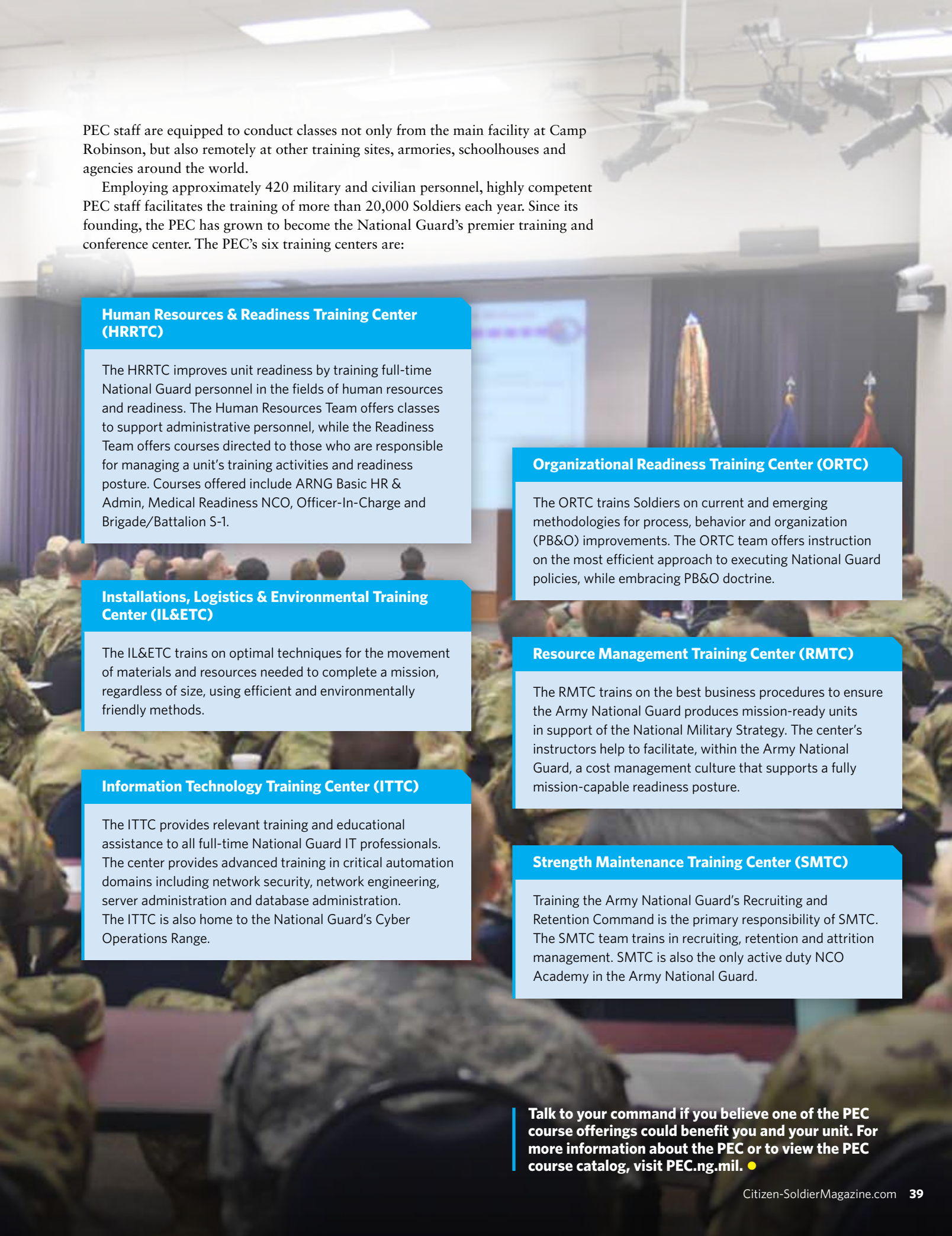
There comes a point in the career cycle of many Soldiers when the option to serve the National Guard on a full-time basis becomes a reality. Once operating in a full-time position, a time may also come when a Soldier has mastered the basic, and perhaps even intermediate, technical skills of their military occupational specialty. Standing at the point of this career milestone, a Soldier may either maintain at this point of respectable proficiency or they may decide to press further forward reaching for the next tier of expertise. For the Soldier who chooses to press on, the Army National Guard's Professional Education Center can help them achieve these higher level goals.

The Lavern E. Weber Professional Education Center (PEC), located at Camp Robinson in North Little Rock, Arkansas, is the national training center for the full-time staff of the Army National Guard. Founded in 1974, the 75-acre campus is comprised of six training centers dedicated to enhancing the readiness of Army National Guard Soldiers.

The PEC offers Soldiers leading-edge distributed learning courses that are fully accredited by the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command. Now able to reach students through the Reserve Component Automation System, which provides web-based video production and two-way audio and video capabilities,

Army National Guard medical professionals participating in a medical team conference held at the Professional Education Center at Camp Robinson, Ark.

Photo courtesy National Guard Professional Education Center



PEC staff are equipped to conduct classes not only from the main facility at Camp Robinson, but also remotely at other training sites, armories, schoolhouses and agencies around the world.

Employing approximately 420 military and civilian personnel, highly competent PEC staff facilitates the training of more than 20,000 Soldiers each year. Since its founding, the PEC has grown to become the National Guard's premier training and conference center. The PEC's six training centers are:

Human Resources & Readiness Training Center (HRRTC)

The HRRTC improves unit readiness by training full-time National Guard personnel in the fields of human resources and readiness. The Human Resources Team offers classes to support administrative personnel, while the Readiness Team offers courses directed to those who are responsible for managing a unit's training activities and readiness posture. Courses offered include ARNG Basic HR & Admin, Medical Readiness NCO, Officer-In-Charge and Brigade/Battalion S-1.

Installations, Logistics & Environmental Training Center (IL&ETC)

The IL&ETC trains on optimal techniques for the movement of materials and resources needed to complete a mission, regardless of size, using efficient and environmentally friendly methods.

Information Technology Training Center (ITTC)

The ITTC provides relevant training and educational assistance to all full-time National Guard IT professionals. The center provides advanced training in critical automation domains including network security, network engineering, server administration and database administration. The ITTC is also home to the National Guard's Cyber Operations Range.

Organizational Readiness Training Center (ORTC)

The ORTC trains Soldiers on current and emerging methodologies for process, behavior and organization (PB&O) improvements. The ORTC team offers instruction on the most efficient approach to executing National Guard policies, while embracing PB&O doctrine.

Resource Management Training Center (RMTTC)

The RMTTC trains on the best business procedures to ensure the Army National Guard produces mission-ready units in support of the National Military Strategy. The center's instructors help to facilitate, within the Army National Guard, a cost management culture that supports a fully mission-capable readiness posture.

Strength Maintenance Training Center (SMTTC)

Training the Army National Guard's Recruiting and Retention Command is the primary responsibility of SMTTC. The SMTTC team trains in recruiting, retention and attrition management. SMTTC is also the only active duty NCO Academy in the Army National Guard.

Talk to your command if you believe one of the PEC course offerings could benefit you and your unit. For more information about the PEC or to view the PEC course catalog, visit PEC.ng.mil. ●

COLORADO TRAINING SITE

Takes Pilots to New Heights

BY STAFF WRITER Drew Lansbury

The High-Altitude Army National Guard Aviation Training Site (HAATS) is providing unparalleled aviation training to pilots around the world. Located in Gypsum, Colorado, and operated by the Colorado Army National Guard, HAATS is the only Department of Defense schoolhouse geared specifically towards teaching high-altitude, power-management, environmental training to military rotary-wing pilots.

There are four Army National Guard aviation training schools in the country, but HAATS is considered the only site able to provide a graduate-level training course. According to HAATS commander LTC Anthony Somogyi, HAATS strives “to be the best aviation training site in the Army.”

HAATS, which celebrated its 30th anniversary last year, trains more than 380 pilots a year. The site is renowned not only in U.S. military aviation, but also in the military aviation of allied forces. HAATS has hosted and trained helicopter pilots from all over the world, including pilots from Denmark, Germany,

the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Georgia and Slovenia.

The training site began in 1985 and was then known as the Colorado High-Altitude Site (CHATS). The flight course was initially created solely as a Colorado Army National Guard training facility. The program gained popularity after National Guard units in North Dakota and West Virginia requested to train at the site in preparation for upcoming deployments to Honduras and other nations with terrain similar to the mountainous high-altitude regions of Colorado.

HAATS utilizes a training area of over one million acres. The Colorado landscape included in that training area offers a variety of natural landing areas such as bowls, pinnacles, ridgelines and confined areas. The region’s predictable wind patterns make it an ideal learning environment for experienced pilots with varying levels of expertise.

“We don’t teach people to fly; we teach them to fly at altitude,” said LTC Somogyi. “The more

experience you have, the more you’ll get out of the course and the more concepts you’ll understand.”

Pilots training at HAATS experience flight altitudes ranging from 6,500 feet to 14,000 feet. The typical cruising altitude for a helicopter is between 2,000 and 5,000 feet.

“We can get students to 12,200 feet in a very short flight,” LTC Somogyi explained. “We can get them to pretty much any type of landing zone that they’re going to face anywhere in the world within a matter of minutes.”

In 1991, CHATS became a federal training site, and in 1995 was renamed HAATS. Funded by the National Guard Bureau, HAATS falls under the command of Adjutant General of Colorado, Maj Gen Michael A. Loh. In 2010, HAATS became an official joint school with the addition of a full-time Coast Guard instructor pilot.

“Our instructors are some of the best mountain pilots in the

A Soldier of South Carolina Army National Guard’s Company B, 2nd Battalion, 238th General Support Aviation Regiment, steps off his CH-47F Chinook helicopter after landing on a Colorado mountaintop while participating in flight operations training at the High-Altitude Army National Guard Aviation Training Site near Vail, Colo.

Alabama Army National Guard photo by SSG Roberto Di Giovine

world, but that is not what makes them great teachers,” LTC Somogyi said. “They have the ability to read a student in a short amount of time and determine what training needs to take place. The training area is intimidating, so our instructors tailor the training to challenge the students without exceeding their limitations.”

In addition to training Army National Guard pilots, it is not uncommon for HAATS instructors to be called to duty for search and rescue missions in Colorado’s mountainous national parks. Rescue efforts are coordinated through the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC), and HAATS is the second busiest AFRCC location in the United States.

“[We] can’t peg a metric to how many lives we have saved,” said CW4 Darren Freyer, Colorado Army National Guard pilot and HAATS instructor. “[We] generally get a call once or twice a week, especially during the summer – the weekends are very busy for us. There’s always someone running around up in the mountains that needs to get help.”

The HAATS training course is designed to train pilots from all branches of the military. The facility can accommodate training classes of about 25 pilots per week. The site employs OH-58 Kiowas, CH-47 Chinooks, UH-60 Black Hawks and LUH-72 Lakotas. Soldiers, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen also have the option of bringing their own aircraft.

HAATS uses a unique training methodology that is based on aircraft

power and designed to dramatically increase individual and crew situational awareness. Pilots spend one day of the week-long course in a classroom learning the foundational concepts of power management in high altitude, mountainous environments. The power management methodology requires pilots to account for their chopper’s power in all flight regimes, thus giving pilots greater insights into how

to respond to situations that arise while flying.

While other mountain training methodologies focus on the environment, HAATS training focuses on what the aircraft can do, then factors in the changing environment into each scenario. Shifting the focus off of the environment and onto the aircraft teaches pilots to execute maneuvers using the appropriate amount of power.

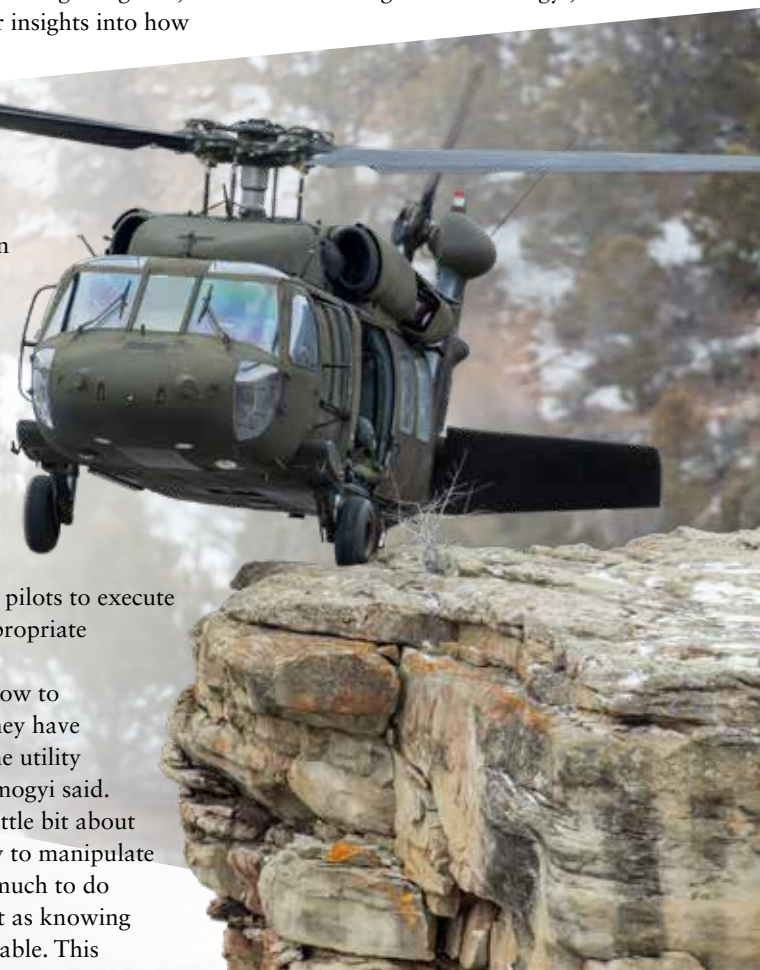
“We teach students how to manipulate the power they have available to maximize the utility of the aircraft,” LTC Somogyi said. “We also teach them a little bit about themselves – their ability to manipulate the controls has just as much to do with power management as knowing how much power’s available. This power-based model is more applicable to military rotorcraft aviators and centers around aircraft torque which makes for a more objective-based training.”

After the in-class session, pilots spend the remainder of the course flying in and out of Colorado’s Rocky Mountains.

“The training area in this course is really phenomenal,” said CW2 Mary Jo Kraft, a student from the

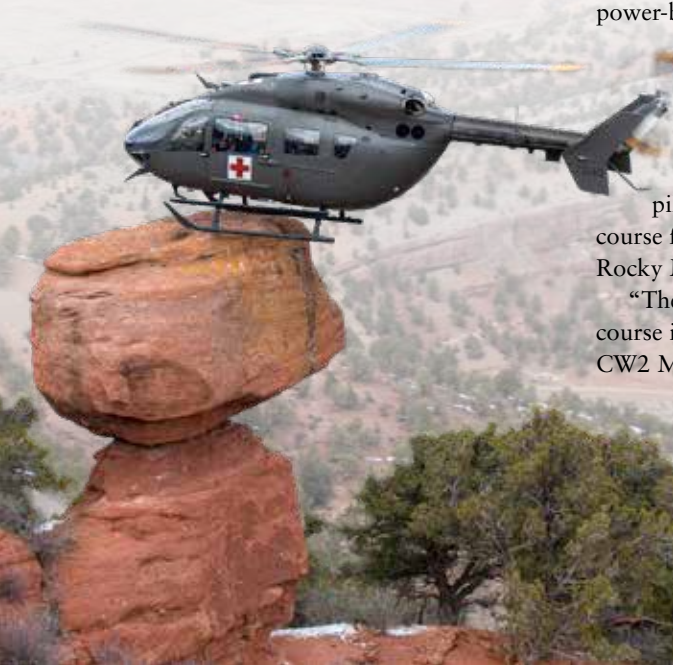
Montana Army National Guard. “There are so many different varieties of areas you can go and practice your power management techniques.”

Upon completion of the course, pilots leave with an in-depth understanding of power management and the skills needed to operate their aircraft on an advanced level. According to LTC Somogyi, the



site’s results have proven that no other place in the United States can replicate the superior-level training offered at HAATS in as short a period of time.

LTC Somogyi continued, “The tenets that make HAATS the benchmark for training are the training area, the methodology and the instructors. Our training techniques have been proven over time and are the reason why they are imitated worldwide.” ●



ABOVE and LEFT: Colorado Army National Guard Soldiers use Black Hawk and Lakota helicopters to demonstrate power management techniques learned during their training at the High-Altitude Army National Guard Aviation Training Site.

Photos courtesy Frank Crebas

A Golden DATE

Golden Coyote Exercise Benefits Soldiers and Communities

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins



The South Dakota Army National Guard hosted the 34th iteration of Golden Coyote, a long-running National Guard exercise held in South Dakota's Black Hills National Forest and Custer State Park.

Inaugurated in 1984, the exercise began as a small training exercise solely for the South Dakota Army National Guard. Over the years, it has grown into an annual event garnering thousands of participants from multiple States and countries.

"It initially started to ensure that our State units had an opportunity to fulfill their annual training requirements," explained Golden Coyote exercise planner MAJ Lew Weber of the Joint Force Headquarters G3, South Dakota Army National Guard. "It has grown into a multi-state, multi-national, multi-component exercise.

We definitely have the foundation of Golden Coyote set. Now it's just [about] tailoring it each year to the units that are going to participate."

Held this past June with close to 2,200 participants, Golden Coyote 2018 included involvement by the U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force with service members hailing from 13 States, one territory and five countries.

The Golden Coyote exercises are opportunities for service members to train in combat support and combat service support missions using the Decisive Action Training Environment (DATE) format. DATE is an intense and true-to-life training environment created to mimic actual threats occurring across the operational environment. Each year's exercise scenario, or DATE, is created with great consideration given to the needs of the particular units participating in that year's event.

"In a Decisive Action Training Environment, it is truly based upon the

commander's training objectives," MAJ Weber explained. "What [skills] does that commander want [the Soldiers] to gain during our exercise? If they want to see more proficiency at x, y and z, we put that in the environment and shape it so they can accomplish those training objectives."



Golden Coyote 2018 focused on stabilization operations, overseas contingency operations and homeland defense. It also included several real-life projects that doubled as training and community assistance missions.

Golden Coyote participants conducted timber hauls, repaired and upgraded roads and buildings, and identified hazardous wilderness areas that needed to be made safe for public use.

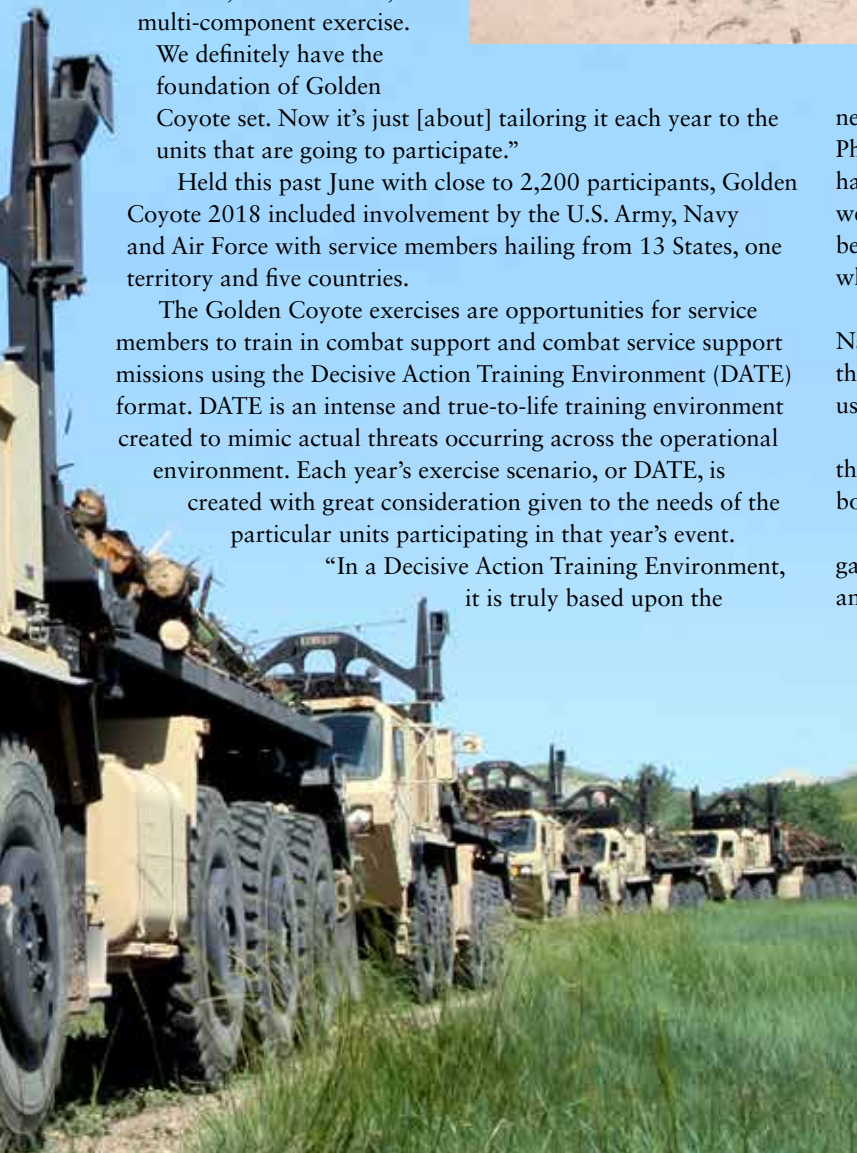
"It was nice to get out of our State, go somewhere we hadn't been before, get

new experiences and see how we work as a company," said SGT Philip Funk of Kansas' 731st Composite Truck Company. "We had training for reacting to IEDs [improvised explosive devices], we had haul missions and we had people who were brought in to be an oppositional force against us. It gave us real-life training on what to do when non-friendly people encountered us."

Working closely with federal agencies like the Black Hills National Forest and Custer State Park, participants were given the chance to support the local community while gaining useful training.

"[Federal agencies] provide the opportunity; we provide the labor and equipment," said MAJ Weber. "In the end, we both gained."

A timber haul operation in the Black Hills National Forest gave participating transportation units hands-on training loading and hauling more than 200 loads of timber to be delivered



ABOVE: Soldiers from Kansas Army National Guard and Kansas Reserve units work with soldiers from Task Force 38 of the Canadian Army loading timber onto trucks in preparation for the timber haul segment of Golden Coyote that would deliver lumber to Native American reservations across South Dakota.

South Dakota National Guard photo by SSgt Jorrie Hart

LEFT: Soldiers from the 137th Transportation Company, Kansas Army National Guard, convoy to Red Shirt, S.D., delivering timber to local Native American reservations during the 2018 humanitarian support portion of Golden Coyote - a combat support and combat service support training initiative that uses the Decisive Action Training Environment (DATE) format.

South Dakota Army National Guard photo by SGT Kristin Lichius



SGT Luke Whalen (left) and SGT Joseph Cuka, both of the 155th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, lay new roofing at the Black Hills Playhouse as part of the humanitarian support portion of the Golden Coyote exercise held last June in South Dakota's Black Hills National Forest and Custer State Park.

South Dakota Army National Guard photo by PFC Alexis Stevens

throughout South Dakota.

"Those federal entities will go into the forest, make sure it's healthy and start timber stacks in big piles that eventually need to be hauled off," MAJ Weber said. "The transportation units love coming because it is great loading training. We go into the National Forest and it's good training for the drivers because it's not just going down the interstate – sometimes you are on back roads. Then, they have to do the loading part of it and make sure it's secure."

As part of the timber haul, Golden Coyote exercise planners partnered with several Native American tribes in South Dakota and organized for the delivery of the timber to the tribes' various reservations. Native Americans use the timber not only for firewood, but also for teepee building and use during sacred ceremonies.

"It was awesome getting to go down there and use our trucks and haul wood to the reservations," noted SGT Antonio Turner of Kansas' 731st Composite Truck Company. "It helped [the Native Americans] because we're able to deliver the wood. Whatever they needed it for, they were able to have it provided through our training. It benefited us as Soldiers, not only from the training aspect, but also from the aspect that we got to help out someone else."

SGT Turner went on to note that the haul added even further value in that it provided a first-time training opportunity with what was new equipment for the unit.

"Our trucks are new to us, so that was the first time I got to actually see what they can do. I learned a lot about our trucks and their capabilities. I really needed that training," he said.

For some Soldiers, the entire operation

was a first-time experience.

"It was the first time a lot of our newer Soldiers had a chance to actually be out on the roadway outside of our area in the State of Kansas," said SGT Funk. "It was the first long haul they had ever been on. It gave them a taste of what they are actually going to experience in a deployed situation."

Based on their commander's training objectives, some units were put under duress during the haul to simulate realistic difficulties that could arise when deployed.

"We [sometimes] have protesters out there – all OPFOR [opposition force] role players – and the Soldiers must react to that," MAJ Weber said. "They must respond to the actual environment they could be in if they went to another country to provide the same type of haul mission."

In addition to testing the Soldiers' driving and loading skills, exercise

Soldiers assigned to the 200th Engineer Multiple Roll Bridge Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, move vehicles across the Missouri River on an Improved Ribbon Bridge as part of Exercise Golden Coyote.

U.S. Army photo by SPC Jeffery Harris



Soldiers with the 211th Engineer Company (Mobility and Augmentation Company), South Dakota Army National Guard, detonate an explosive charge at the North Training Area of Camp Guernsey, Wyo. as part of a training scenario during Golden Coyote 2018.

U.S. Army photo by SPC William Ploeg



planners also incorporated scenarios that tested the transportation units' combat skills.

"They would simulate our FOBs [forward operating bases] getting hit and we would have to use our trucks and pull security on the FOBs," SGT Turner explained. "We got to practice communication with the radios and working as a team to make sure everything got done. It was great training."

One of Golden Coyote's engineering missions included a construction project at the Black Hills Playhouse, a nonprofit community theatre. Soldiers helped build a new deck, staircase and doorway for the theater – improving both the theatre and the National Guard's relationship with the community.

"This is just an all-around great training environment for us to work in," said SGT Jay Carroll of South Dakota's 155th Engineer Company. "Not only as carpenters, but as Soldiers as well. It's nice to work out here and form camaraderie between the public and the unit as we improve the building."

Engineering units also assisted in building a road at Wind Cave National Park. By helping to expand and reinforce the road, the Soldiers helped provide the community with easier access to the park.

When developing the training activities for Golden Coyote, MAJ Weber ensured challenges were created throughout the exercise to emphasize the reality of obstacles faced in the real world.

"I think we do a really good job of making it as realistic as possible," MAJ Weber said. "It's not just get up in the morning, go to engineer projects and go to bed at night. The

bad guys don't care if you are sleeping at night, so we make sure Soldiers stay on their feet, stay sharp and have some situational awareness."

To create that awareness, as with the hauling missions, the planners strategically injected OPFOR and other obstacles into the

engineering missions.

"The engineer company might have to do worksite security because there might still be some bad guys that don't want you working there on that road," explained MAJ Weber. "We might send protesters out there or a farmer who says, 'I want you to work on my road!' Soldiers have to understand how to respond to that. How they share that information and react to the situations they are put in all tie into the scenario."

Having the opportunity to work side by side in large groups helped to illuminate the strong collaboration between the participating Soldiers.

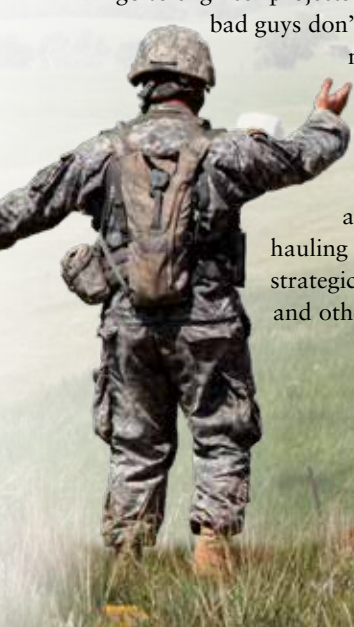
"This mission has improved our unit cohesiveness," said SPC Isaac Grassel of South Dakota's 842nd Engineer Company. "Normally, our platoons have to work on smaller projects throughout the year. This project has given us the opportunity to work together on a much larger scale."

"I learned that our people as a whole work very well together," said SGT Funk. "No matter what was thrown at them, they overcame it very easily. It gave me more trust in our people."

After the closing events, the 2018 Golden Coyote exercise garnered praise for its accurate training environment and its dedication to the development of its participants.

"For being a small exercise, and even a small State for that matter, I think it's a great thing for our organization to hang our hat on," MAJ Weber said. "We have built some great relationships with all the other components and allied countries that have come to participate."

"Soldiers love it," he continued. "I hardly ever hear anything negative. We've had some commanders that wish we could have had more of this or more of that. That's where we adjust and do things a little differently the next year. It's a great exercise." ●



ABOVE: Kansas Army National Guard Soldiers of the 1077th Medical Company (Ground Ambulance), provide security during a mock mass casualty event as part of the 2018 Golden Coyote training.

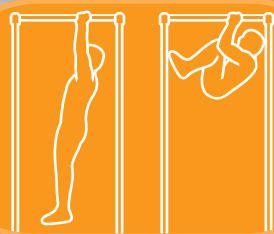
U.S. Army photo by SGT Gary Silverman

LEFT: South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers of the 842nd Engineer Company, 153rd Engineer Battalion, repair a road in Wind Cave National Park, S.D., as part of the 2018 Golden Coyote training event.

U.S. Army photo by PFC Christopher Martin

PT TIPS — TOTAL-BODY WORKOUT

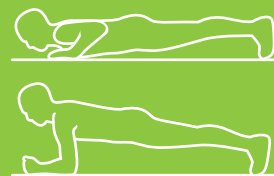
BY STAFF WRITER Ruth Ann Replogle



LEG TUCK: As many repetitions as possible in 2 minutes

Hang from a pull-up bar with feet parallel to the ground, then pull the knees up to meet the elbows. Return to starting position and repeat.

PLANK: Hold for 1 minute. Repeat as many times as possible



Face down on the ground in push-up position. Lean on the forearms, squeeze the glutes and abs and raise the body off the floor while balancing on the tips of your toes. Be sure to keep the body parallel to the floor. Do not arch the back or raise the buttocks above the head. Keep knees slightly bent, being careful not to lock or hyperextend them. Keep the neck and spine steady by looking at a single spot on the ground about a foot beyond your hands. Lower the body back to the starting position.

In the previous two issues of Citizen-Soldier, we reviewed both upper and lower body workouts, respectively. In this issue, our PT Tips focus on the total-body workout.

Total-body workouts allow you to build strength and flexibility faster than targeted workouts alone. Full-body exercises call for complex, multi-joint movements that simultaneously engage several muscle groups. For example, while bicep curls may be a sure-fire ticket to the gun show, chin-ups will target the same muscle group, while also working the back and abs.

Whether your goal is building strength and speed or shedding pounds to become compliant with Army physical fitness standards, increasing the complexity of your exercise movements can result in greater muscular and cardiovascular fitness in a comparatively shorter amount of time. ●

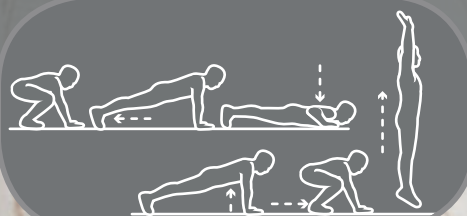
REVERSE CRUNCHES: As many repetitions as possible in 2 minutes

Start on the back with knees bent, arms at sides and palms facing the ground. Bend the legs up to a 90° angle keeping the feet together. Move the knees toward the chest while rolling the pelvis and raising the hips off the ground. The knees should be above the face when in the finishing position. Lower the hips and then knees back to the starting position.



BURPEE: As many repetitions as possible in 2 minutes

Stand with arms over the head. Lower the body into a squatting position, until able to place your hands on the ground in front of you. Kick the feet back so you are in push-up position. Do one push-up. Bring the feet back to squatting position, stand up and jump into the air with arms reaching overhead.



SPRINT-DRAG-CARRY: 5 times in 4 minutes

Start by lying in the prone position, then stand up and sprint 25 meters out and back. Take the first lap as a sprint, the second dragging a sled, the third running a lateral shuffle, the fourth carrying two 40-pound kettlebells and finally, the last as a sprint.



BLOOD SUGAR BATTLE



BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER CH (CPT) J. Randolph Hall

CPT Hall reporting to the President of the Board as ordered, Sir!” This was part of the etiquette I had to follow when standing before the Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) in early 2018, as I fought for my career.

In early 2017, after taking a routine Periodic Health Assessment (PHA) exam, my blood sugar and A1C levels were found to be astronomically high. So high, in fact, that not only did my primary care provider at the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) Meharry Clinic sit down with me for a serious talk, the matter also went before the State levels of Army Medical Command. The gravity of the situation truly dawned on me when I was handed a glucometer. I was now battling diabetes.

When my father died a few years ago, I did not inherit a wealthy estate. What I did inherit for sure was the family tendency towards diabetes, which he inherited from his father before him. The Tennessee Army National Guard was beginning to move towards involuntary separation, as displaying anything over 7.0 on an A1C test is grounds for separation. Though the National Guard is in great need of adding numbers to its ranks, greater is the need to ensure the Soldiers that make up those ranks, regardless of MOS, are physically and mentally fit and deployable. I love my job as a military Chaplain, and I had to fight to continue to do what I love. I owed



it to myself, my Family, my Soldiers and my God to finish strong rather than be medical-evaluation-board'ed out early.

I had to make a radical change in my diet. No more eating like a teenager (especially at a half century old). In addition to cutting out sweets (and I have always had quite a sweet tooth), I also had to reduce my carbohydrates. No more large amounts of pastas or breads. No more consuming an entire meal-ready-to-eat (MRE) in one day. I was also advised to eliminate processed foods.

Meat is a major source of protein, and for me, is certainly acceptable as long as it "swam, crawled or flew."

However, there is no such animal as a bologna. I also had to visit the gym more frequently. A mixture of cardio and upper body exercise helped take down the weight, which in turn brought my blood sugar down to a more reasonable level. Reducing weight is crucial in controlling blood sugar. In addition to all this,

I followed the Army cliché of, "drink water." Within one year, I brought my A1C from a level over 11.5 down to a 6.4 reading.

I am also blessed with a loving wife and a knowledgeable mother who have kept me accountable. Further encouragement came from members of my church who

**THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT WE
CAN WORK TO PREVENT DIABETES,
FIGHT IT, OVERCOME IT AND
CONTINUE ON TO A FULFILLING
CAREER IN THE SERVICE.**

understand diabetes; they have given me encouragement and support as did my Endorsing Agent, retired CH(LTC) Bob Collins. I also found that as I increased my time of fellowship with them, my stress levels and blood sugar went further down.

Even with the work of diet reform, increased physical training (PT) and community support under my belt, I still had to prove that I was fit to remain in the military and that I was deployable. After a couple of "bad news" letters from the State Medical

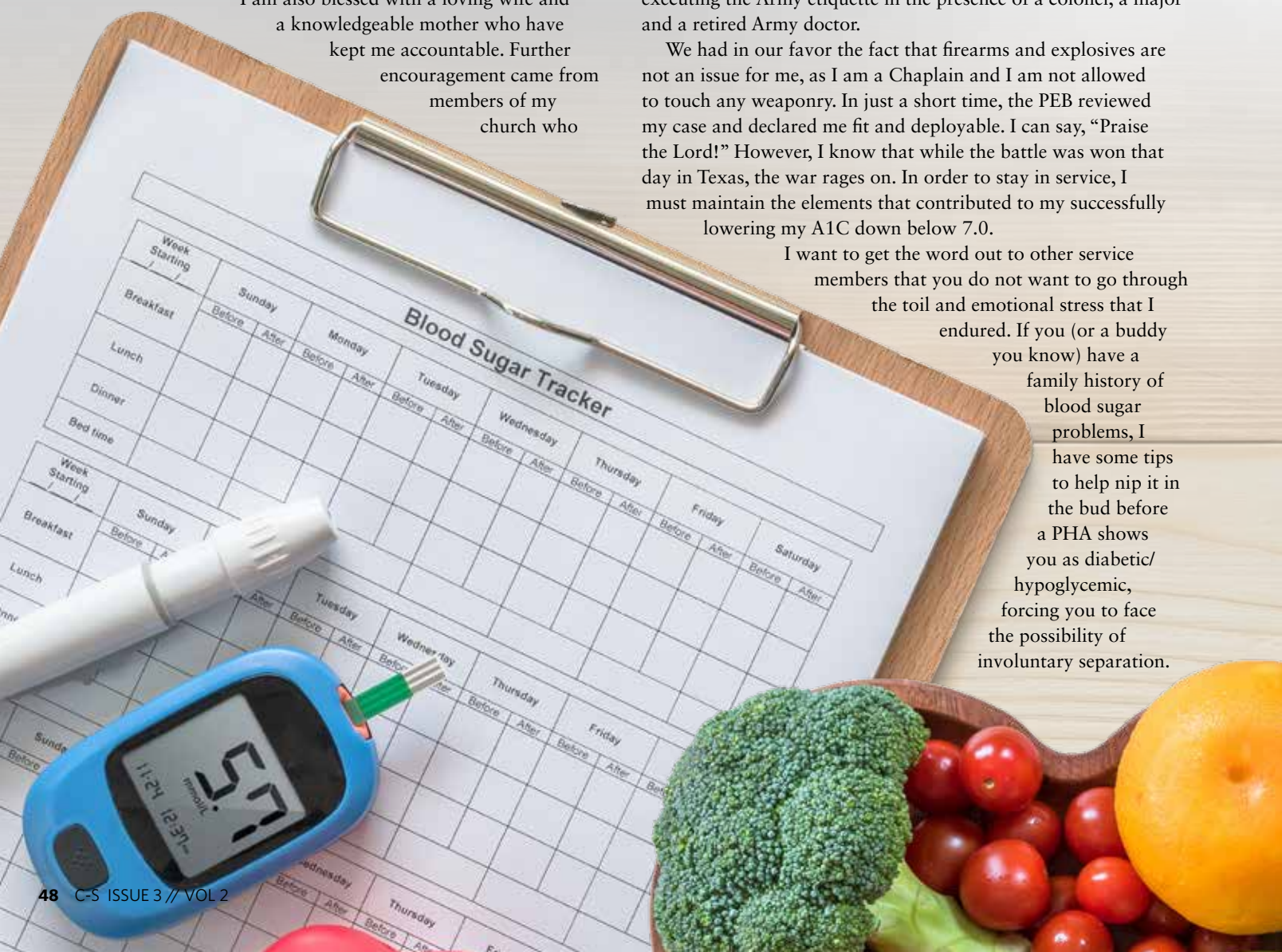
Review Board, I opted to go full blast: appeal my case to the Fort Sam Houston PEB, appear in San Antonio, Texas, in person and receive an appointed representative.

Weeks before I arrived in Texas, my representative contacted me. I was blessed to have Sharon Ackah, who is very knowledgeable in her field and whose advice was quite valuable, working with me. We gathered documents and evidence, which Ackah

assembled into a well-organized case for presentation to the board. I went through the ritual of knocking and entering when executing the Army etiquette in the presence of a colonel, a major and a retired Army doctor.

We had in our favor the fact that firearms and explosives are not an issue for me, as I am a Chaplain and I am not allowed to touch any weaponry. In just a short time, the PEB reviewed my case and declared me fit and deployable. I can say, "Praise the Lord!" However, I know that while the battle was won that day in Texas, the war rages on. In order to stay in service, I must maintain the elements that contributed to my successfully lowering my A1C down below 7.0.

I want to get the word out to other service members that you do not want to go through the toil and emotional stress that I endured. If you (or a buddy you know) have a family history of blood sugar problems, I have some tips to help nip it in the bud before a PHA shows you as diabetic/hypoglycemic, forcing you to face the possibility of involuntary separation.



1. Monitor your blood sugar regularly. Record all progress, spikes and even drops (some diabetics may experience sudden hypoglycemic episodes). Your medical provider and/or a medic can help with this. We are created in the image of God and our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit; we owe it to ourselves to properly maintain them.



2. Proper diet is essential. First, watch the sweets and carbohydrates. Have a unit physician assistant or VA dietician help with a diet plan. MREs are chock full of sugar and carbs—which can be a good thing when you need to keep your energy up while out in the field, but they should be avoided outside of those times. If possible, avoid all processed foods. Remember, if the meat swam, crawled or flew, it's a great source of needed protein. However, there is no such animal as a bologna.



3. Make time for PT regularly. Our civilian jobs may not make it easy to fit PT into a daily schedule, but finding the time will not only help with passing the Army Physical Fitness Test, it will also help in regulating your A1C. You can ask your buddies or leaders how to fit PT into your busy life. Physical Readiness Training (PTR) is also becoming more common on drill weekends.



4. Consider joining a local fellowship or attending a Chapel service. Numerous studies have shown positive correlations between religious fellowship and mental resiliency and health.



5. Should you face the possibility of involuntary separation and a medical evaluation board, begin PT regularly and get your diet in line. If you ultimately must go before a PEB, listen to your appointed representative. Whatever counsel they offered you, it is in your best interest to follow it so your representative can put your best case forward. Deviating from your representative's advice will make their job harder and your case weaker.



I certainly don't want to see other service members go through the tribulation I went through. Even though I was victorious in the end, the stress and jeopardy were real. While the bad news is that diabetes can be a career ender, the good news is that we can work to prevent it, fight it, overcome it and continue on to a fulfilling career in the Service. ●

Dear *Citizen-Soldier* magazine,

How do I explain my upcoming deployment to my kids?

Although reactions will vary based on a child's personality and age, a parent's deployment will be a confusing time for most children. It's best to begin communication about the deployment early. Take small steps. Instead of concentrating on the total length of deployment, break up the time into manageable chunks. Military leaders and family readiness groups suggest speaking about deployments in three stages:

Pre-deployment: receiving orders to day of departure

Deployment: day of departure to homecoming

Post-deployment and reunion: homecoming and reunion

During pre-deployment, do things to make sure your kids fully understand the idea of deployment. Get maps and show your children where in the world their Soldier parent will be while away. Spend as much time with them as they need to grasp this idea.

Once deployed, do fun activities like keeping track of the days to post-deployment with a calendar and construction paper chain where they can rip off a piece for each day the parent is gone. The excitement of seeing the pieces disappear can make the passing of time a bit easier.

The DoDLive website offers more tips for preparing children for deployment at **DoDLive.**

mil/2011/08/12/family-focus-friday-preparing-children-for-deployment, and Sesame Street for Military Families offers a host of resources for helping young children deal with parent deployments at **SesameStreetForMilitaryFamilies.org/topic/deployments.**

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

Submit questions to
Editor@Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com

Or online at
Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com



WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

U.S. and Malaysian Forces Train in Disaster Relief at Exercise Keris Strike

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

Washington Army National Guard photos by SPC Alec Dionne

Picture it: Malaysia, summer, 2018. An earthquake registering 10.0 on the Richter Scale has occurred just off the coast of the country's main island, causing destruction across the country. The ripple force of the earthquake has caused a deadly tsunami to come crashing in on the shores of the island, destroying parts of the island completely and upheaving the lives of Malaysian citizens.

This horrific event was the scenario for Keris Strike 2018, an annual bilateral exercise focused on disaster relief efforts. Held this past summer at Camp Senawang, Malaysia, and hosted by the Malaysian Armed Forces, the exercise included participants from the Washington Army National Guard, U.S. Army Pacific Command, I Corps, U.S.

Army Alaska and the U.S. Army Reserves. The Washington Army National Guard's 96th Troop Command took the lead in the training exercise that served to improve interoperability and trust between the U.S. and Malaysian armed forces.

"Our job was to develop a combined solution to assist the population and work on the recovery aspect of the disaster so [the people of the country] could get back on their feet," said COL Anthony Lieggi, commander of the 96th Troop Command.

This year's Keris Strike included

RIGHT: Malaysian Warrant Officer 2 Rajd Zukepli, with the Malaysian Engineer Regiment, Defense Nuclear Biological Chemical Section, wears protective gear as he participates in training with U. S. Soldiers on decontamination procedures during Exercise Keris Strike, held last summer at Camp Senawang, Malaysia.

BELOW: SSG Scott Salmon, 540th Chemical Detachment, 420th Chemical Battalion, 96th Troop Command, Washington Army National Guard, helps a Malaysian soldier from the 15th Royal Malay Regiment secure his head gear during Exercise Keris Strike 2018, an annual bilateral, disaster relief training.



a field training exercise, a command post exercise and several live-fire exercises. The exercise also included a subject matter expert exchange where participants trained on medical aid, criminal investigation and techniques for responding to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear contaminants.

The exercise is conducted as part of Pacific Pathways, a U.S. Army Pacific-led initiative that sends U.S. Army troops to several countries in the region to train with foreign militaries under an expeditionary-style deployment. Pacific Pathways functions as an ongoing opportunity for Soldiers to practice vital skills and contribute to the building of foreign partner interoperability.

“We’re here to show that we have a joint multinational relationship and that our presence matters in Southeast Asia,” COL Lieggi said.

The two-week-long exercise was considered a success by most, garnering noted praise from members of the participating forces. The members of each force gained insight into the importance of bilateral disaster relief efforts and building relationships.

“It was an incredible experience for all participants,” said MAJ Joel Berkowitz, brigade logistics officer from the 96th Troop Command. “I know we all came out the other side much richer from the experience.”

**“IT WAS A GREAT
OPPORTUNITY TO
GO IN THERE AND
SHOW WHAT THE
GUARD CAN DO.”**

— SFC Omar Trujillo

MAJ Berkowitz went on to note the personal benefits he found from participating in the exercise.

“Being able to learn some of the doctrine and TTP [tactics, techniques and procedures] that go along with this type of mission-set was an eye-opening experience,” he said. “It will equip me for a wide array of future assignments.”

During the exercise, there was an emphasis on blending forces together to foster relationships and create mutual understanding. COL Lieggi noted that when conducting backbriefs at Keris Strike, half of the brief was done by a U.S. officer and the other half was done by a Malaysian officer. In doing so, both forces had to work collaboratively and depend on one another’s skills.

“It forced both entities to really interact together and get to know each other,” explained COL Lieggi. “When you’re working with somebody for that length of time, you get to see their strengths and weaknesses and they get to see yours. Then together, you’ve developed products that are very well done.”

The fast pace of the exercise was challenging for some Soldiers, especially those experiencing an overseas deployment of this type for the first time.

“For some Soldiers, it was their first experience traveling outside of the continental United States,” explained MSG Travis Bassett, operations noncommissioned officer for the 96th Troop Command. “It’s long, uncomfortable and it can be chaotic moving that many people and that much equipment thousands of miles away.

When we touched base in Malaysia, there was really no [time] to rest. We had to immediately start the planning phase of the exercise, roll right into the exercise itself, then prepare to come home. That was a tremendous challenge for many Soldiers.”

SSG Mark Geohrs, 540th Chemical Detachment, 420th Chemical Battalion, 96th Troop Command, Washington Army National Guard, speaks with a Malaysian soldier about preparations for a disaster relief-related class SSG Geohrs will administer at Camp Senawang, Malaysia, during Exercise Keris Strike 2018.





ABOVE and BELOW: COL Anthony Lieggi, 96th Troop Command, Washington Army National Guard, observes as Malaysian Army soldiers with 3rd Division, Criminal Investigations Branch, Royal Military Police, investigate a simulated car bombing during Exercise Keris Strike 2018.

The extreme Malaysian climate also proved to be a challenging factor for the Washington Soldiers who are mostly accustomed to the much cooler climate of the northwest United States.

“The environmental factors were certainly challenging,” explained MAJ Berkowitz. “Malaysia is a very hot and humid part of the world.”

SFC Omar Trujillo, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 96th Troop Command, commented on the unique mix of would-be obstacles.

“It was challenging fitting everything in the schedule, including travel, a CPX [command post exercise], dealing with networking issues, language barriers, the heat and other obstacles,” he explained. “It was a huge exercise. It was a lot, but it was a success.”

Despite time constraints, communication challenges and intense climates, the Soldiers pushed through, all the while keeping the end goal as their highest priority.

“It was way outside of everyone’s



comfort zone,” explained MSG Bassett. “We had to overcome and still accomplish the mission at hand, which was to move through the military decision-making process with our Malaysian counterparts. The mission was a success.”

The success of the exercise showcased the Washington Army National Guard’s flourishing partnership with the Malaysian Armed Forces. As part of the State Partnership Program, Washington has partnered with Malaysia since 2017. The Keris Strike exercise further strengthened the young and budding partnership between the two nations.

“There was already a good foundation

[between us] and we were able to build on that,” said MSG Bassett. “I think overall the relationship between the United States, the Washington Army National Guard and the Malaysian forces improved over the couple of weeks that we were there.”

“It was a great opportunity to go in there and show what the Guard can do,” SFC Trujillo said. “It’s important not only for the State, but for the U.S. military in general. Keris Strike

was a good opportunity to build on those perceptions and relationships.”

MAJ Berkowitz said he enjoyed the opportunity to work closely with his Malaysian counterparts and learn more about their military.

“My favorite aspect of the exercise was syncing our processes, systems and decision-making methodology with the Malaysians and learning how they conduct business,” he noted.

Several Soldiers noted feeling honored to be a part of the exercise and to receive such a warm welcome from the Malaysian forces.

“I have nothing but great things to



Soldiers from the U.S. and Malaysian armies pose for a photo at the closing ceremony of Exercise Keris Strike 2018.

say about the Malaysian army and the hospitality they extended to us,” said MAJ Berkowitz. “The extent to which the Malaysians went to ensure that we walked away from that experience with fond memories was incredible.”

Towards the end of the exercise, the Malaysians hosted a cultural day for the participants. The day provided U.S. Soldiers with a look into the Malaysian culture and proved to be one of the highlights of Keris Strike.

“My favorite aspect of the overall exercise was just being in another country and working with a diverse group of individuals from other forces to reach a common goal,” said MSG Bassett. “It was very interesting to see parts of the Malaysian culture come through as [the Malaysian soldiers] demonstrated their capabilities and what they bring to the table.”

“The cultural day with the Malaysians was amazing,” said SFC Trujillo. “It was great to see the camaraderie and the effort they put into the different party events, the

music and the food. They had a concert, some of their dancers performed and we got the chance to go out to Kuala Lumpur and Malacca.”

A major goal of Keris Strike was to build and foster relationships between the U.S. and the Malaysian forces. Participants accomplished this goal by working closely together to develop and understand each other as soldiers.

“The greatest lesson was the interoperability between our forces,” said COL Lieggi. “Watching our Soldiers and their soldiers grow together as this exercise started to mature and seeing the sections get refined was very rewarding.”

MSG Bassett highlighted the importance of developing interoperability between forces.

“With as many things that are going on throughout the world today, it’s important to have allies,” explained MSG Bassett. “We need to be able to build relationships and reach a common goal and understanding to get

through things as they arise.”

Soldiers walked away from Keris Strike having experienced valuable training and, hence, feeling better prepared for the possible day the United States is called to help Malaysia during a disaster.

“When you’re talking disaster relief and recovery, time is essential,” COL Lieggi said. “There are people whose lives are in trouble and we’re there to get them out of harm’s way.”

“Every time we do rehearsals and practice [in Malaysia], it benefits both militaries,” he continued. “It allows us to do reconnaissance rehearsals and enhance our relationships. If we were to really be called into something over there, we have a better understanding of them, and they have a better understanding of our capabilities.” ●

MAJ Johnny Walker, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 96th Troop Command, Washington Army National Guard, heads up a formation of U.S. and Malaysian soldiers during the closing ceremony of Exercise Keris Strike 2018.





A RESOURCE FOR RESILIENCY

Community Resource Guides

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

Where can you turn to find a place to go for a swim while at Fort Meade, Maryland, or to get help dealing with separation from family and friends while deployed to Camp Red Cloud, Korea? Thanks to the Army's online Community Resource Guides (CRGs), finding the 25-meter indoor pool at the Gaffney Fitness Center on Fort Meade or the Military and Family Life Counseling Center at Camp Red Cloud, Korea, is as easy as the click of a link.

Established by the Army Public Health, CRGs serve to make vital information from critical health and resiliency resources readily available to Soldiers and their Family members. CRGs were developed as part of an initiative to facilitate resiliency and increase Soldier and Family member access to healthy lifestyle options. To date, 48 Army installations around the world have developed CRGs. Housed together on one convenient website, the CRGs combine to create a directory of programs and services that span the globe.

CRGs also serve to foster awareness among installation leaders and service providers relating to the services their

communities may be requesting. Feedback through the CRG website may also reveal services that are lacking and provide insight as to how they can be improved upon.

The CRG website and mobile app are a one-stop shop for information on medical, mission and garrison activities, benefits and providers. The directory stores information for more than 7,500 resources from across the Army. Services can be searched based on the installation location or on the service type. The guides include a list of programs that support each particular installation and are organized alphabetically, by topic area and by agency. Available resources cover 13 subject areas. Common service categories include Behavioral Health, Education, Families and Healthy Living.

The CRGs exist to serve and support the resiliency needs of Soldiers and their Families. Operating with this in mind, the Army has continued improvements planned for the CRG website and mobile site. Early in fiscal year 2019, CRG website user behaviors were analyzed by Army researchers. Results from the analysis,

including search function patterns, will be provided to installation leaders as a means for tracking the resources most in demand by Soldiers and their Families. Additional resources will be brought to bear to promote the top identified resources. CRG improvement efforts are also noted to include an interactive map for locating services, links to related search fields and integration with existing Army information systems. ●

Explore the resources available on the CRG website by visiting:

CRG.amedd.army.mil

SGT Gary Bennett, 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion, poses with his Family following the unit's farewell ceremony at Stewart Air National Guard Base, March, 2018. Approximately 300 members of the battalion departed for further mobilization training at Fort Hood, Texas, before heading overseas in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. New York Army National Guard photo by SGT Jeremy Bratt

VA Guaranteed Home Loan

Putting Home Ownership Within Reach

BY STAFF WRITER Pamela DeLoatch



FOR MANY PEOPLE, buying a home can be the realization of a lifelong dream. If you are an active National Guard Soldier, you may qualify for a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Guaranteed Home Loan, which carries benefits that can help make your home purchase experience stress-free.



What is a VA Guaranteed Home Loan?

The VA itself does not offer home loans. Loans are made by traditional lenders, such as private banks, mortgage companies or credit unions. The VA provides assistance by guaranteeing a portion of the loan against loss – meaning, the VA will cover part of the loan in the event the borrower cannot repay the loan. The guarantee enables lenders to offer service members loans with more favorable terms, such as (in many cases) no down payment, no mortgage insurance, limits on closing costs and possible assistance to borrowers having difficulty making payments.



Program Eligibility

The VA Guaranteed Home Loan is an option for both active and former Guard members. Guard Soldiers who are not otherwise eligible for loan guarantee benefits are eligible for a VA Guaranteed Home Loan after completing six years of service, unless released sooner because of a Service-connected disability. Soldiers must have received an honorable discharge, unless in inactive status awaiting final discharge or still serving.



Program Qualifications

The VA outlines additional requirements for qualifications to include a good credit rating, sufficient income to support the loan and a valid Certificate of Eligibility (COE). Applicants must also agree to personally live in the property, as VA guarantees do not apply to loans used to purchase rental property.



How to Use the Guarantee

A VA guarantee may be used to obtain a loan to buy or build a house or manufactured home and/or lot or a residential condominium. The loan may also be used to repair or remodel a service member-owned and occupied residence, refinance a current home loan, install solar heating/cooling or make other energy-efficient improvements.



The Application Process

Qualifying applicants must confirm eligibility with a valid COE. The purchase-property is then appraised by a VA-assigned fee appraiser. Note that this is not the same as a home inspection, which determines if the property has any significant defects. An appraisal solely estimates the value of the property. The VA does suggest having a reputable home inspection company complete a thorough inspection that includes a check of the plumbing, heating, electrical and roofing components.

Although the VA guarantee requires participating lenders to reduce or dispel certain fees, some fees are still paid by the borrower. Closing costs – such as VA appraisals, credit reports, loan processing fees, title searches, title insurance, recording fees, transfer taxes, survey charges or hazard insurance – must be paid in cash for home purchase loans. For refinance loans, closing costs may be included in the loan, as long as the loan amount does not exceed the reasonable value of the property. Borrowers must also pay a VA funding fee, which may be paid in cash or included in the loan.

For most service members, the choice of a VA Guaranteed Loan over a conventional loan will save thousands, if not tens-of-thousands, of dollars. Begin to take advantage of this phenomenal benefit by visiting [Benefits.va.gov/HOMELOANS](https://benefits.va.gov/HOMELOANS) for more detailed information or to begin the application process. ●

Family Readiness Groups

Connecting Your Family to Your Unit

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

When a unit deploys, it's a well-known fact that Soldiers and their Family members often struggle with the separation and feeling of disconnectedness from one another. What may not be so well known is that the Army has an entire program dedicated to supporting Soldiers and Families during times of separation. Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) provide a vital support service by acting as a bridge between deployed unit members and their Families.

FRGs are official command-sponsored organizations with the goal of developing friendships, sharing support and providing information among a unit's Soldiers, their Family members and extended Family members. FRGs provide an avenue of mutual support and assistance, and a network of communications, helping members better cope with deployment and become more self-reliant. Initiated by the unit commander and led by a capable volunteer-spouse, each individual

FRG consists of National Guard spouses, parents, siblings, friends and others who are close to Guard Soldiers.

"[Membership] depends on who the Soldier wants to have involved and if those individuals want to be involved," said Jessica Koch, FRG coordinator for the Oklahoma Army National Guard's Alpha Troop, 180th Cavalry Regiment.

Each FRG is unique and its activities depend on its leadership and member requests. Generally, groups will provide

Family members of Arizona Army National Guard Soldiers from Detachment 1, 856th Military Police Company participate in a send-off ceremony at Allen Readiness Center, where they say goodbye to the Soldiers who are deploying to Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

Arizona Army National Guard photo by SSG Adrian Borunda

an array of activities that keep members connected and involved. Koch's FRG holds monthly conference calls, sends newsletters and holds social events like attending baseball games and going blueberry picking.

FRGs provide Family members with a connection to their Soldier's unit directly through the commander. The feeling of connection helps Family members maintain a positive outlook about the unit and its mission.

"[Speaking] as a Family member during my brother's three deployments and now my husband's first deployment, FRGs are extremely helpful because you feel like you are supported by a group bigger than yourself," Koch said. "Deployments tend to be a very lonely time. But when you have an immediate connection with people who are going through the same thing, it definitely helps."

The groups also provide comfort to the

Soldiers by allowing them to feel reassured that while they are deployed, their Family members have a positive environment with access to helpful resources and reliable information about the unit. This can be a meaningful stabilizer for Soldier performance in the unit, and an enhancer of psychological readiness to fight.

Through FRGs, Family members are also exposed to benefits options and programs that may be lesser known in the National Guard community at large.

"It gives us an opportunity to share information and opportunities with Family that they may not otherwise receive," explained Koch. "For example, information about TRICARE or just the fact that during deployment, Families can be members of the YMCA for free."

For Family members wanting to get involved with their unit's FRG, Koch recommends speaking with their Soldier first to find out the best method of

contacting the unit command.

Koch explained, "I've heard of units that do not have an FRG and if they don't, people can step up and form an FRG. We started our FRG from scratch last year."

For those worried about a time commitment, Koch emphasized that the level of involvement is completely up to the individual member.

"It does not have to be time consuming," she explained. "You get out of it what you put into it. And that goes for whether you are just participating or you are part of the leadership side."

Koch said she hopes every Family member who wants to join an FRG gets to experience the worthwhile benefits the groups provide.

"I had one mom who teared up telling me that she is grateful to be a part of this Family," Koch recalled. "I wish for everyone to have that same connection."



Young Lives, BIG Stories

Army National Guard Youth Honor Parents with Winning Creativity

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

The Young Lives, BIG Stories contest is an annual competition that gives Army youth the opportunity to tell their own unique stories. In the month of April – the Month of the Military Child – children submit drawings or essays that answer the question “What does it mean to you to be a military child?”

Submissions may be entered by children of current or retired Army National Guard, Active Duty and Reserve Soldiers. Participants may range in age from three to 18. Entries are judged on presentation of the main idea and level of creativity. Essay submissions are also judged on content and grammar.

For the 2018 Young Lives, BIG Stories contest, two Army National Guard youth won top prizes. Courtney Jones won the 3- to 5-year-old category for her heartwarming drawing about her paratrooper father. Sydney Heuer won as the overall winner from all categories for her essay about her father, Illinois Army National Guard's CW4 Mike Heuer. As prizes, Heuer received an Apple MacBook Air laptop and Jones received a LeapFrog LeapPad Platinum tablet. Both winners received certificates of achievement for their winning entries. ●

Winning Entry from Sydney Heuer

In my normal life, around 5:30 a.m., I would hear Dad putting on his flight suit for work. He'd come to my room, give me a kiss, and tell me to get ready for school, which I never did. Later Mom would get me up and soon I'd be out the door. At school I'd think of Dad at the Peoria National Guard facility, and I'd wonder if his big Chinook helicopter would fly over my school today.

After school Mom picked up my sister Grace and I from the babysitters to head home and get ready for soccer, dance, music, or swimming. Often dinner was without Dad because he was working. Sometimes when his evening flight brought him near our neighborhood, the helicopter noise caused quite a commotion. Mom, Grace, and I would run outside and wave like crazy! Eventually our neighbors learned it wasn't a disaster, but just their local guardsman. Later Dad would come home, tuck me in, and I would know he was home safely.

Dad was deployed for a year twice before – in 2008 and 2012. My biggest memory of those times is his surprise homecoming at the 2013 Holiday Spectacular when I was 7. Dad, Grace and I had been in that Christmas show for several years, but when he was gone, we carried on. During the show's finale, my friend pointed and said, “Look who it is!” and there was my dad coming up on the stage in his uniform. I ran into his arms and hugged him as hard as I could. My only memory of “deployment” was just those few moments of the happiest reunion I've ever known.

Then things changed again! Last year when Dad found out that his unit would be deployed to Afghanistan again I was in 4th grade. As we looked at the calendar and I realized that he would be gone for my whole 5th grade school year, my birthday, and even Christmas I was so sad I was in tears. We packed a lot of meaningful activities into our summer, but this time I realized what was about to happen. We made good memories on our trips with family and friends but soon it was time for the Deployment Ceremony. Six helicopters lifted off in formation and flew toward Texas where Dad and his buddies would prepare to leave the USA. We were lucky to go visit Dad in Texas just before he left for many months away.

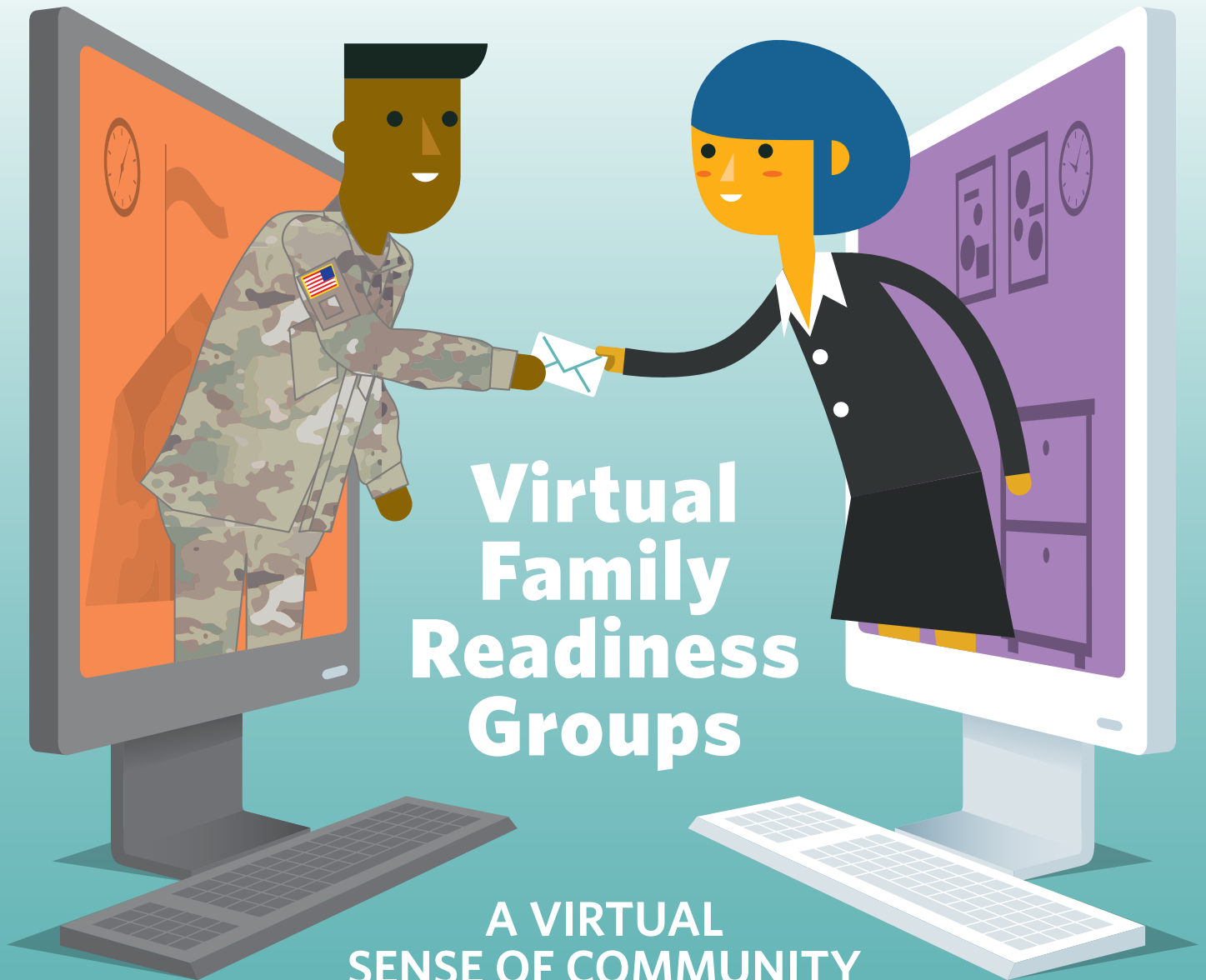
Now it's just about 66 more days until we expect to see Dad walking through our front door. I'm proud of his service, and so happy that we have been able to face time often and send many care packages, but nothing will be better than the big hug I'm waiting for. So...What does it mean to be a military child?... is a question I understand more fully now. When Dad serves, the whole family serves, and I am proud to do my part to support my soldier.



Winning Entry from Courtney Jones



For information on entering the 2019 Young Lives, BIG Stories contest, visit ArmyMWR.com, click on the magnifying glass in the main menu and type Young Lives in the search field.



Virtual Family Readiness Groups (vFRG) offer functions similar to a traditional Family Readiness Group, but in an ad hoc and online setting that can meet the needs of geographically dispersed units and Families.

The vFRG provides a secure means for commanders to communicate information to their unit's Soldiers and Family members at any time from anywhere in the world. vFRGs serve to instill a sense of community within disseminated units by providing an online space that is customized for the unit and includes content controlled by the unit's command and Soldiers.

For more information about vFRGs and how to join or create a group for your unit, go to www.armyfrg.org.

SHACKLES AND SHRAPNEL

Western Strike Explodes over the Wyoming Horizon

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

Arkansas Army National Guard Photos by SSG Kelvin Green

Operation Western Strike was not your average artillery exercise. It was in fact a 20-year first for the Arkansas Army National Guard's 142nd Field Artillery Brigade. According to COL Nicholas Jaskolski, commander of the 142nd, the unit's five battalions each transported one dozen pieces of heavy artillery and supporting equipment via railway to Wyoming National Guard's joint training center, Camp Guernsey – a task the entire unit has rarely executed.

The event was an emergency deployment readiness training and field artillery gunnery exercise that took place early last year. It involved all 1,200 of the personnel that make up the 142nd's five battalions – consisting of three battalions from Arkansas, one battalion from Alabama and one battalion from Tennessee.

In addition to personnel, the training required hundreds of vehicles, including 12 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRSs), brought by the 142nd's 1st Battalion; 12 M777 towed Howitzers, brought by the 142nd's 2nd Battalion; 12 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems

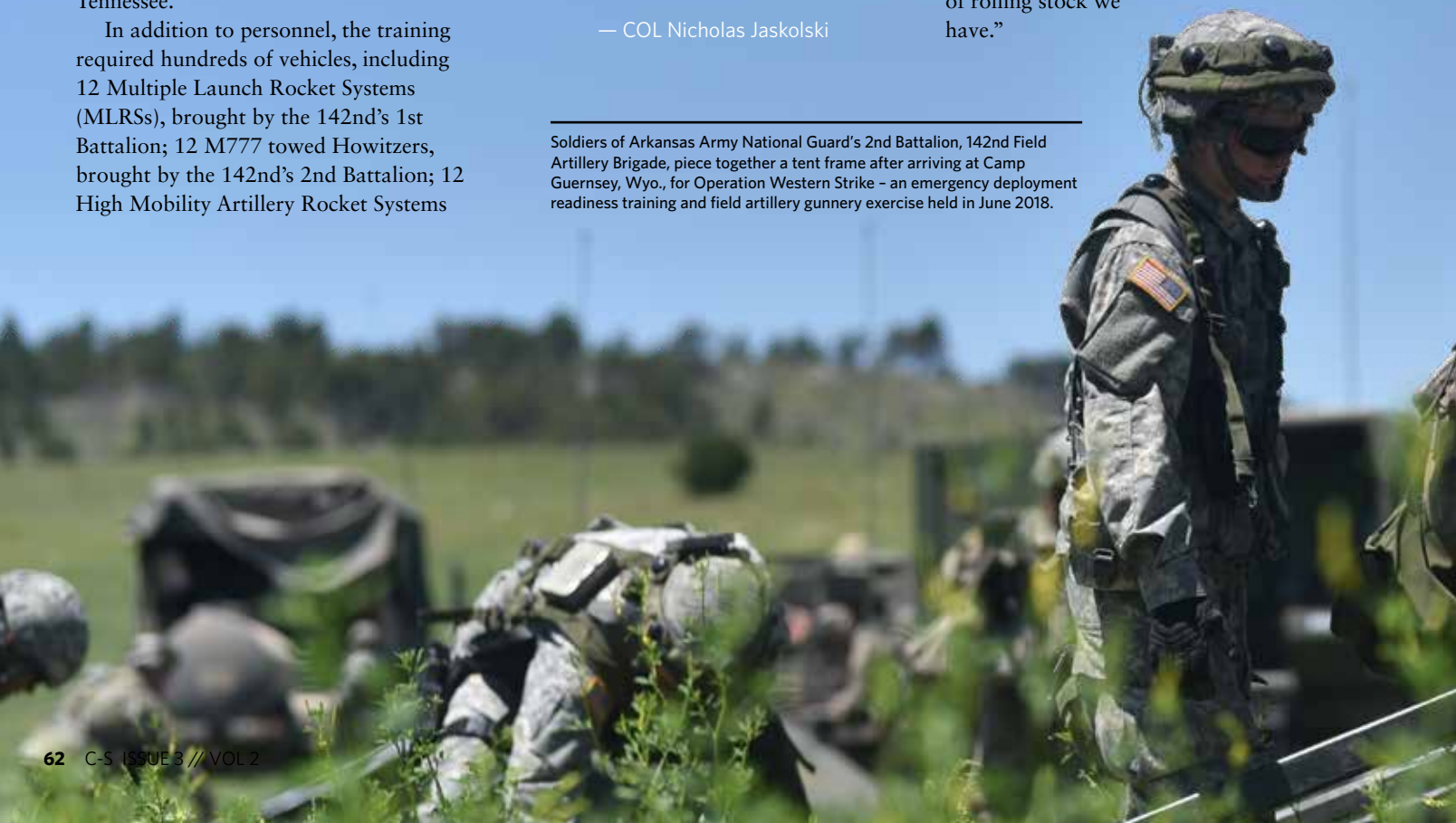
“
The last time the
brigade executed
a movement of
this sort was more
than 20 years ago
when the brigade
deployed in support
of Operation
Desert Storm.”

”
— COL Nicholas Jaskolski

(HIMARS), brought by the 1st Battalion, 181st Field Artillery Regiment, Tennessee Army National Guard; a dozen Paladin Howitzers, brought by the 117th Field Artillery Regiment, Alabama Army National Guard; plus high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles, light medium tactical vehicles, ambulances, fuelers and gun trucks brought by a combination of the participating States.

“You know the last time the brigade executed a movement of this sort was more than 20 years ago when the brigade deployed in support of Operation Desert Storm,” said COL Jaskolski. “I think this is the first time in recent history that we've actually used the complete railhead facility there at Fort Chaffee [Maneuver Training Center, Arkansas,] in order to deploy every single piece of rolling stock we have.”

Soldiers of Arkansas Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 142nd Field Artillery Brigade, piece together a tent frame after arriving at Camp Guernsey, Wyo., for Operation Western Strike – an emergency deployment readiness training and field artillery gunnery exercise held in June 2018.





Soldiers of the 142nd Field Artillery Brigade conduct rail operations to load tracked and wheeled vehicles onto rail cars and transport them to Camp Guernsey, Wyo., for Operation Western Strike.

Arkansas Army National Guard images by SSG Jim Heuston

SHACKLES

Getting the equipment to Camp Guernsey was no small feat. Units from all three States performed extensive railroad operations as part of the initial leg of Western Strike. A total 150 Soldiers moved over 950 pieces of equipment, using 270 railcars on five trains. Working together, using knowledge and ingenuity over the course of four days, the Soldiers delivered all equipment to Camp Guernsey without mishap.

“So, if you've never rail-loaded, it is one heck of a job, I will tell you!” said LTC Anthony Sanders, battalion commander for the 2-142nd Arkansas Army National Guard. “The 2-142nd had about 214 total pieces of equipment that we moved from Fort Chaffee and home station locations to Camp Guernsey, Wyoming. The most difficult part of the task was not necessarily putting the vehicles on the railcars, but chaining them down and making sure they were secure before the train pulled off. That's a lot of work and a very taxing job – a very dangerous job.”

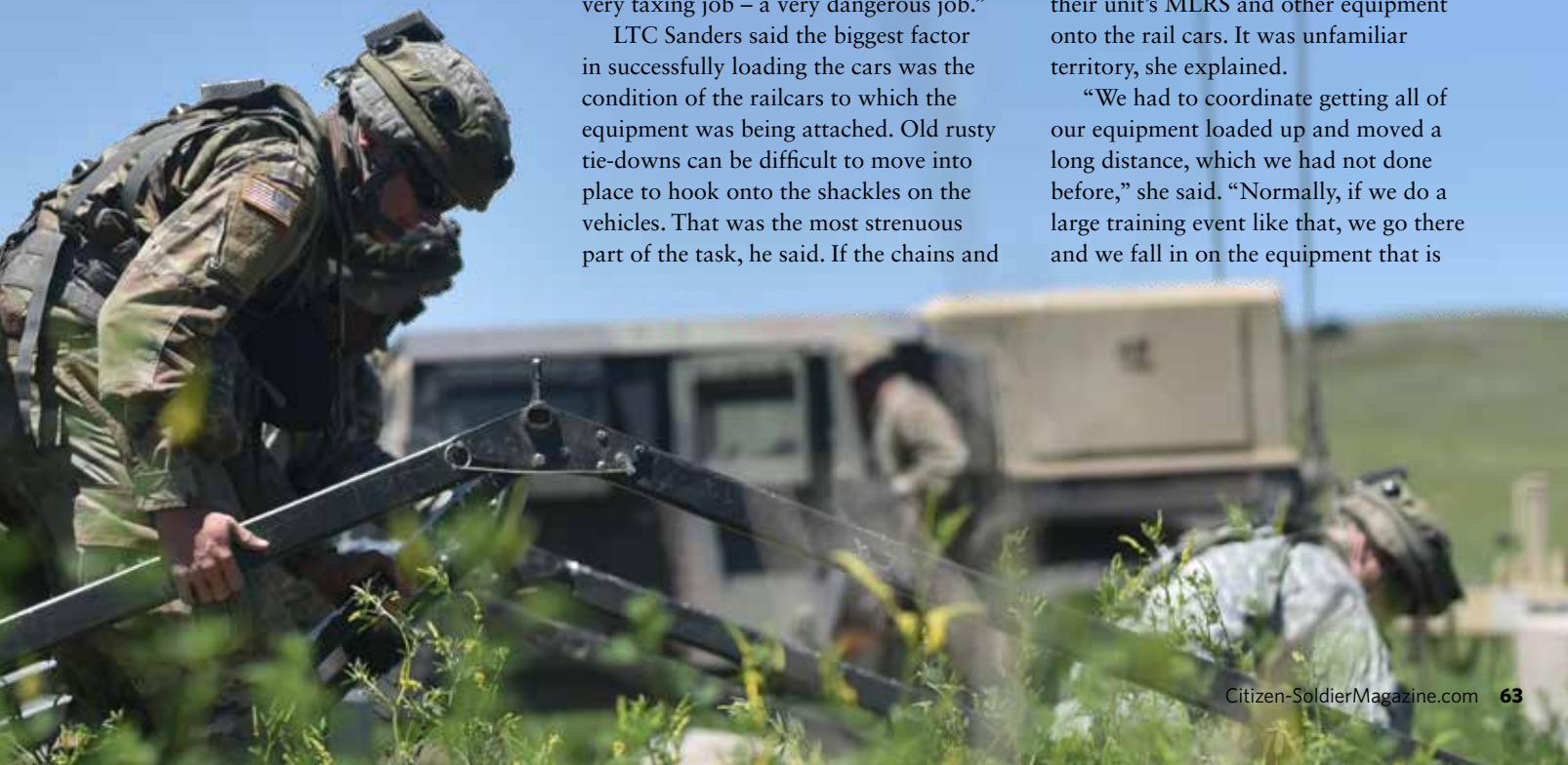
LTC Sanders said the biggest factor in successfully loading the cars was the condition of the railcars to which the equipment was being attached. Old rusty tie-downs can be difficult to move into place to hook onto the shackles on the vehicles. That was the most strenuous part of the task, he said. If the chains and

shackles were in good condition, the chains could be easily moved up and down the train cars and into position, which makes the process go a lot smoother. But if they are not in good condition – what then?

“Brute strength, WD40 and a large ball-peen hammer,” said LTC Sanders. “Sometimes you might even have the railway folks take the shackles off the track on the car if was not cooperating.”

2LT Leynna Ottenbacher is platoon leader for Alpha Battery of the 1-142nd. Her Soldiers were tasked with moving their unit's MLRS and other equipment onto the rail cars. It was unfamiliar territory, she explained.

“We had to coordinate getting all of our equipment loaded up and moved a long distance, which we had not done before,” she said. “Normally, if we do a large training event like that, we go there and we fall in on the equipment that is





ABOVE: A group of Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 117th Field Artillery Regiment, Alabama Army National Guard – which is assigned to the 142nd Field Artillery Brigade – prepare to fire an M777 Towed Howitzer during Operation Western Strike 2018 at Camp Guernsey, Wyo.

LEFT: BG Troy D. Galloway, deputy commanding general, Army National Guard Combined Arms Center out of Fort Leavenworth, Kan., awards a coin to SPC Kaileigh Hamilton of the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 142nd Field Artillery Brigade, for exceptional work, going above expectations while participating in this Operation Western Strike 2018.

[already] there. We don't normally bring our own."

The Alpha Battery, 1-142nd Soldiers did their work in coordination with civilian contractors, some of whom were prior military. Working with former military helped operations quite a bit, according to 2LT Ottenbacher. The contractors' past service experience made them familiar with Army terminology and requirements, which made communication between the groups – a vital component to executing the mission – much easier.

SHRAPNEL

Once all equipment and Soldiers were accounted for onsite at Camp Guernsey, the brigade began the core work of the operation. Live-fire exercises dominated the two-week exercise, with all five battalions completing Table XVIII artillery certifications. The Arkansas Army National

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 ”

— 2LT Leynna Ottenbacher

Guard's 217th Brigade Support Battalion participated in the training, providing transport fuel and ammunition. To bring a level of realism to the exercise, Arkansas Army National Guard's Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment, played the role of the opposition force during Western Strike; and the 213th Medical Company provided medical support. Operation Western Strike would be the 213th's last operation before being disbanded.

2LT Ottenbacher noted that much of the operation's benefit came from the opportunity to perform live-fire exercises in a new location. The units of the 142nd have executed live fire at Fort Chaffee so many times that the repetition of doing the same tasks in the same places has begun to create complacency within troops, she explained.

“When we train at Fort Chaffee, we've been out there for so long, it's just a matter



of saying ‘Hey we’re going to fire port 13,’ and people already know automatically how to get out there,” 2LT Ottenbacher commented. “We’ve been out there so often, we already know where all the fire ports are.”

She continued, “[We didn’t have] that at Guernsey. It forced us to break that level of comfort. It forced us to do prior planning. I loved it. It was a really good experience and we were very successful, which put us into high morale. We had a good time with it.”

SSG Joseph Capps is a section chief for Bravo Battery of the 2-142nd. He oversees the operation of one of the battery’s Paladin Howitzers and its accompanying ammunition carrier. He too noted that Wyoming was a welcome change of scenery.

“The learning curve involved with figuring out where things are was a really

good challenge for most of our sections,” he said.

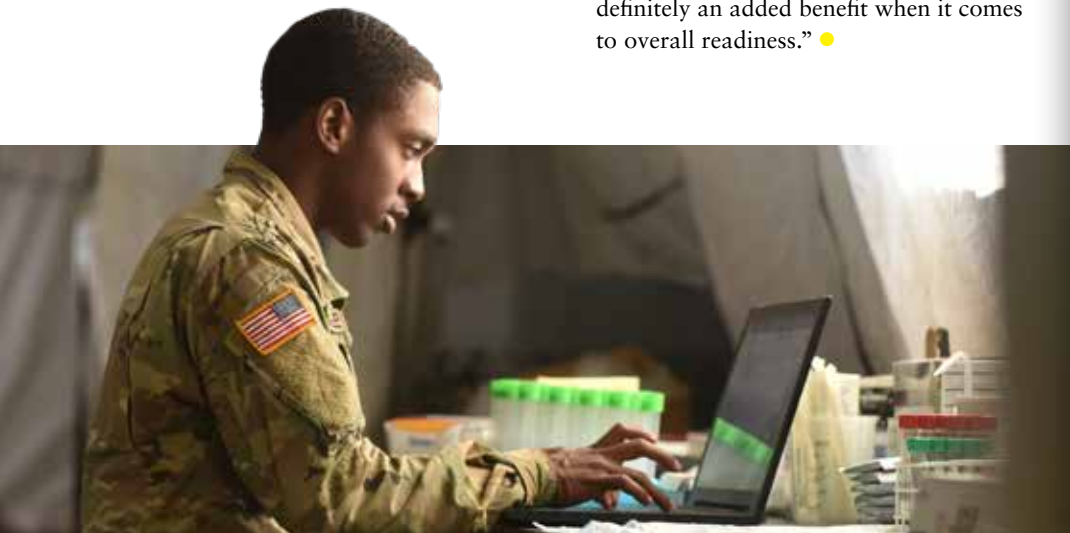
SSG Capps is not faint of heart when it comes to pushing his skills and the skills of Soldiers. He said that his favorite part of training for live fire is practicing degraded operations – that is, directing the fire of a Paladin without the analyzing power of a computer. All one has in a degraded situation is any manual equipment on hand and the human computer between one’s ears. It’s old school “artillery-ing,” hearkening back to Vietnam and World War II, SSG Capps said.

Under normal circumstances, an automated computer provides the heading. Then, based on mission objectives’ input by the unit’s command, the computer may send updates and adjustments to that heading. Manual gunnery requires setting the position with a compass, ground stakes and engineer tape to mark the azimuth of fire on the ground. The gunnery sergeant uses basic survey equipment to confirm the pointed direction for the azimuth, SSG Capps explained.

“It’s a method to keep the howitzer in the fight,” he said. “[At Camp Guernsey,] a couple of the crews were able to fire rounds in a degraded mode, which is something that doesn’t happen very often. It was a great training opportunity.”

From rail loading to raining artillery shells on target, Operation Western Strike abounded with training opportunities for the Soldiers of the 142nd. It served the Soldiers well, helping to improve readiness, cohesiveness and proficiency.

“Leaving Arkansas and getting an opportunity to go train at an installation in another State was awesome,” said LTC Sanders. “Being able to see different terrain and training in that unfamiliar terrain is definitely an added benefit when it comes to overall readiness.” ●



THE BIG GUNS OF THE 142ND FIELD ARTILLERY BRIGADE

1-142 Field Artillery Brigade, Arkansas Army National Guard and 1-181st Field Artillery Regiment, Tennessee Army National Guard

- Together the MLRS of the 1-142nd and the HIMARS of the 1-181st fired over 100 rockets during Western Strike. That included both guided and unguided munitions with a range of up to 26 miles. Guided by the Army’s Tactical Missile System, these munitions can range up to 190 miles.

2-142nd Field Artillery Brigade, Arkansas Army National Guard and 1-117th Field Artillery Regiment, Alabama Army National Guard

- Together, the Paladins of the 1-142nd and M777 towed howitzers of the 1-117th fired over 2,400 155 mm rounds during Western Strike. These munitions can travel over 18 miles using rocket assistance.

217th Brigade Support Battalion, Arkansas Army National Guard

- To keep the 142nd’s artillery properly functioning and firing through the duration of Western Strike, the 217th completed over 80 supply distribution missions – including 40,000 gallons of fuel and approximately 500,000 small arms rounds.

SGT Dakori Lee of the 213th Area Support Medical Company keys in patient information after giving a medical exam during field training held as part of the 2018 Operation Western Strike.

Army Careers in the Newest Domain of Warfare

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

Are you, or someone you know, interested in the cyber field? With the ever-growing presence of cyber adversaries, the Army National Guard is committed to building a powerful cyber force manned with Soldiers capable of thwarting our Nation's enemies.

For those with an interest in cyber and information technology (IT), the Army National Guard has incredible opportunities to develop and utilize Soldiers' cyber skills. Cyber-related military occupational specialties (MOSs) are available to place Soldiers on the frontlines of the digital domain. By joining the cyber force, Soldiers become trained to execute offensive cyberspace operations, detect malicious activity on the electromagnetic battlefield, conduct computer network defense and use advanced military networks and cyber weapon systems. Cyber Soldiers also gain certifications in networks, security and ethical hacking – credentials that are highly valuable in the civilian sector.

Army National Guard Cyber MOS Options:

Enlisted MOS Options

17C Cyber Operations Specialist

Cyber operations specialists execute defensive and offensive cyber operations. They are dedicated to ensuring the freedom of maneuver within the cyberspace domain and denying the same to adversaries.

Soldiers who choose this MOS will be trained to conduct defensive cyberspace operations (DCO), to conduct offensive cyberspace operations (OCO) and to analyze information. Duties of a cyber operations specialist include performing cyber attacks and defenses, conducting network terrain audits, penetration testing and software threat analysis. Soldiers with this MOS must also react to cyber events, employ cyberspace defense infrastructure capabilities, collect basic forensics data and software threat analysis.

SPC Sunia Laulile, Alpha Company, 156th Information Operations Battalion, 56th Theater Information Operations Group, Washington Army National Guard, plays the role of an opposing force as he attempts to breach a network during the 2018 International Collegiate Cyber Defense Invitational held at Highline Community College in Des Moines, Wash.

Washington Army National Guard photo by SPC Alec Dionne

25D Cyber Network Defender

Cyber network defenders perform specialized computer network defense duties, including infrastructure support, incident response, auditing and managing. It is their duty to protect against and detect unauthorized activity in the cyberspace domain and use a variety of tools to analyze and respond to attacks.

Cyber network defenders are tasked with testing, implementing and deploying infrastructure hardware and software. They respond to crises and urgent situations within the network to alleviate immediate and possible cyber threats. As cyber network defenders, these Soldiers must use defensive measures and information collected from a variety of sources to identify, analyze and report events that occur or may occur within the network to protect information, information systems and networks from threats. They must also conduct assessments of threats and vulnerabilities and provide detailed reports if necessary. If needed, these Soldiers will use mitigation, preparedness, and response and recovery approaches.

29E Electronic Warfare Specialist

Electronic warfare specialists advise and assist the commander on electronic warfare operations. They make use of electromagnetic and directed energy to control the electromagnetic spectrum (EMS) and defeat the enemy through planning, coordination, integration and execution of electronic attack (EA), electronic protection (EP) and electronic support (ES).

Electronic warfare specialists must test, implement and deploy infrastructure hardware and software. They respond to crises or urgent situations within the network to mitigate immediate and potential cyber threats. These Soldiers use defensive measures and information collected from a variety of sources to identify, analyze and report events. Soldiers with this MOS will learn radio wave theory, how to plan and execute electronic warfare operations and how to determine proper frequencies.

Officer MOS Options

17 Cyber Operations Officer

Cyber operations officers lead, plan and direct both defensive and offensive cyberspace maneuvers and effect operations in and through the cyberspace domain.

These officers conduct OCO by using cyber capabilities in and through cyberspace to target and neutralize threats. They must also conduct DCO by protecting networks, data, net-centric capabilities and other designated systems through detection, identification and response actions to attacks against friendly networks. Cyber operations officers execute mission command of cyber maneuver forces during DCO and OCO missions in support of joint and combined arms operations.

Warrant Officer MOS Options

170A Cyber Operations Technician

Cyber operations technicians are the subject matter experts and advisors to the commander and staff regarding the use of offensive and defensive cyber operations assets and personnel. They direct, plan, administer, manage, integrate and assess cyberspace operations. They develop policy recommendations and provide technical guidance regarding the operation and management of Army, Joint, intergovernmental, interagency and multinational cyberspace assets and personnel.

These technicians integrate cyberspace effects into warfighting functions in an effort to optimize combat effectiveness. They are tasked with leading, training and mentoring cyber personnel through individual and group instruction, as well as the establishment, direction and evaluation of standard operating procedures (SOP) and job qualification standards.

If you know someone you think would be a good fit for a cyber career in the National Guard, advise them to visit www.nationalguard.com/careers/cyber-careers to learn more about these opportunities. ●

TRAINING OFFICERS AND BUILDING COMMUNITY

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

Oklahoma Army National Guard's MSG Nikki Shultz helps form Soldiers into officers. She can also form turkey slices into a mean club sandwich.

Lead instructor for the Officer Candidate Preparation Course (OCPC) at the Oklahoma Regional Training Institute (OKRTI) in Oklahoma City, MSG Shultz is a woman of many talents. She faithfully executes her duties at the OKRTI not only as the lead instructor and planner for the OCPC, she is also the institute's lead medic and heads up the team of medics that accompany Oklahoma Guard Soldiers on training missions.

"I love helping people," remarked MSG Shultz. "With the officer [candidate] program, if they make it through, they'll actually lead companies, and these medics help save people's lives. I love knowing the fact that I am training other Soldiers to [do those things]. I take a lot of pride in that. It means a lot."

While MSG Shultz may be driven by her need to help others, she's also no-nonsense.

That was noted by fellow Soldier and former co-worker, SSG Stephanie Foster. The two no longer work in the same unit, but have remained friends. SSG Foster described MSG Shultz as easygoing, but very disciplined.

"She's been a great example," SSG Foster said. "She's just very much on it. She has a lot of discipline in herself and she expects that from her Soldiers too. She's not a pushover by any means, but she's not just a complete hard case either. It's right in the middle of that."

SSG Foster was assigned to the OKRTI when MSG Shultz was tasked with ramping up the OCPC. MSG Shultz was responsible for structuring the program from the ground up. She took full ownership of the program's creation and formed it to be what it is today.

MSG Nikki Shultz.

Photo courtesy MSG Nikki Shultz



**"She really is
an example
of what right
looks like."**

— SSG Stephanie Foster

MSG Nikki Shultz briefs Soldiers during field training at the Oklahoma Regional Training Institute.

Photo courtesy MSG Nikki Shultz

"She did a fantastic job with it," SSG Foster said. "[Before she took over] it really was just kind of cobbled together. She took it and made an SOP [standard operating procedure], organized it, made a training schedule and really made it into a true training program."

Outside of the Guard, MSG Shultz displays the same level of focus and discipline she displays within the Guard. Discipline is the only way to manage a lifestyle as busy as hers. She is a wife, a mother of five – with ages ranging from 10 years to nine months – the owner of three businesses, a city council board member and the chairman of her town's Parks and Recreation committee.

It is an impressive amount to juggle, but it's the lifestyle she and her husband of 10 years, Chad Shultz, enjoy. She laughed when asked about the balancing act and made a simple statement.

"Well, we're busy all the time," she said.

When managing her businesses, MSG Shultz admits that she uses many of the same leadership qualities required to perform her job in the Army National Guard. In her hometown of Tonkawa, a small community of about 3,000 people

in north-central Oklahoma, MSG Shultz and her husband used their combined entrepreneurial spirit to create Heartland Real Estate and Auction, Heartland Tee's, and Alewa Deli – a real estate company, t-shirt production business and deli, respectively.

"We've got good hours," MSG Schultz said "We chose businesses that would still give us time with our children, because we like to coach their sports and spend a lot of time with them taking them to do things."

MSG Shultz's first business endeavor was starting the real estate company.

"It's Tonkawa," MSG Shultz noted. "It's so small. We're a family realty [company]. We're not a Century 21 or a Coldwell Bankers. It's kind of up and down. We're busy for a couple of weeks and then we'll go for a couple months and we won't be busy."

Heartland Tee's was something the couple started about six months after starting the real estate company. It just kind of exploded, MSG Shultz said.

"For the shirt [production], I ended up picking up all the athletic teams' jerseys and shirts," she explained. "I supply for

all the local Little League teams. I supply for basketball, baseball, football and soccer teams."

MSG Shultz commented that only Alewa Deli has set hours – 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The deli was originally purchased by Chad Shultz's parents in 2004. When the parents were ready to sell, the younger Shultz couple was not ready to buy. MSG Shultz was still serving what would ultimately be 12 years as an active duty Soldier, and they were living out of State in Missouri. By 2018, things had changed. MSG Shultz had separated from active duty and transitioned her service to the Oklahoma Army National Guard. She and her family were back in Tonkawa with two successful businesses – they were finally in a position to buy the deli from the people who had bought it from Shultz's parents.

According to MSG Shultz, Alewa Deli is their busiest business, with about 50 customers a day. She said the deli provides customers with a "cool, clean, mellow atmosphere." Various road signs hang on the wall and sometimes the older kids help out with clearing and wiping down the tables.



Signage for the "Heart in the Park" community labyrinth, a public park developed through the Tonkawa Parks and Recreation Department, where MSG Shultz volunteers as chair of the advisory committee.

Photo courtesy Tonkawa Chamber of Commerce

MSG Shultz's initiative and drive have served her well in building her multiple businesses. Her Family is slowly growing those endeavors and she wants that trend to continue. Her businesses and the Guard, however, are not the only areas into which she places her initiative and drive. She also works hard giving back to her community by volunteering on Tonkawa's Parks and Recreation advisory committee.

"I'm actually the chairman of the Parks and Rec and we just built a new huge splash pad for our town," MSG Shultz remarked. "It's pretty awesome. We're working on a swimming pool. It's really growing. When I talk to people in real estate, most people ask, 'How are the schools and parks?' I'm involved in both."

SSG Foster said she believes MSG Shultz's professionalism and organizational skills are two of the traits

that make her a great asset both inside and outside the Army National Guard.

"She's very fair and extremely professional," SSG Foster commented. "Her top [trait] is professional above all else. She definitely cares a lot about the Soldiers underneath her, around her, above

her. Whatever position she's in, she wants to make it better."

Like many of her fellow Soldiers, MSG Shultz wears many hats serving in the Guard, in her family and in her community. She believes in contributing to the world around her.

With the help of her Family, MSG Shultz continues to give back to the community she calls home. Whether she is supplying a local sports team with new team shirts, making citizens mouthwatering turkey sandwiches, building playgrounds, helping local families buy new homes or teaching Soldiers how to lead in protecting those same families and their homes from disaster, MSG Shultz is always ready and always there.

It is something that has not gone unnoticed by those around her. As noted by SSG Foster, "She really is an example of what right looks like." ●



Storefront of the Alewa Deli, owned by MSG Shultz and her husband Chad Shultz.

Photo courtesy Deskgram.net



The Shultz Family

Photo courtesy MSG Nikki Shultz



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PUSHED TO THE LIMIT

JRTC Readies 48th IBCT Soldiers

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins
Photos courtesy Georgia Army National Guard

To say that the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT)'s Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation was challenging would be a drastic understatement. The close to 5,000 Georgia Army National Guard Soldiers faced three weeks of grueling training that pushed them to the limits of their abilities. Located on Fort Polk, Louisiana, the JRTC is the Army's premier combat training center (CTC).

This past May, the 48th IBCT was the first of two Army National Guard brigades to conduct rotations at the JRTC during the 2018 calendar year. It was the first brigade-sized rotation for the Georgia Army National Guard since 2009.

The rigorous training was completed in preparation for the combat team's upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. It was designed to push Soldiers, both physically and mentally, by testing their high-stress, decision-making skills.

"It's a high-intensity training environment. [It] stresses you out to the max on your systems," said SGT William McInnis, an electronic warfare specialist with the 48th IBCT. "It ensures you can handle a combat scenario."

The rotation garnered visits from Georgia Governor Nathan

Deal and MG Joe Jarrard, adjutant general of the Georgia Department of Defense. They witnessed firsthand the strength and perseverance Soldiers displayed throughout the taxing exercise. "It was a true honor and privilege to visit with the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team as they prepare to mobilize to Afghanistan," said Deal. "From the commanders to the youngest members of the brigade, I've seen firsthand how tough and intelligent these extraordinary individuals are...our Soldiers are mission-ready and prepared to face any

Soldiers assigned to C Battery, 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery Regiment, 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team conduct live-fire rehearsal at Peason Ridge Training Area during the 48th's Joint Readiness Training Center rotation in May 2018.



adversary that poses a threat to our Nation and people.”

Planning and preparation for the rotation started in November of 2016, calling for more than a year of logistical meetings and coordination.

“I think the biggest challenge was getting all our stuff there and then getting it back safely without anybody getting hurt, which we’re pretty proud of,” said COL Smith, brigade commander for the 48th IBCT. “We deployed roughly 5,000 people and about 2,000 pieces of equipment. We had no significant injuries getting stuff out and we had no significant accidents and likewise getting back home. It was a pretty big accomplishment and there’s a lot of training value in that.”

Participating Soldiers prepared for the rotation for almost two years, focusing on fundamentals and live-fire training.

“We did a lot of individual training and foundations, and then small unit training up to platoon level,” COL Smith said.

“We did two cycles of live-fire training, two cycles of artillery live-fire tables and other brand-specific, live-fire training. We also did a lot of situational training exercises to prepare.”

While lengthy, the in-depth preparation was vital to the success of the rotation. At Fort Polk, Soldiers trained in “the box,” a large training area where Soldiers are exposed to conditions and situations they might face during deployment.

The high levels of stress Soldiers experienced in “the box” were daunting, but beneficial to the growth of the Soldiers and

brigade overall.

The training exposed Soldiers to challenges they would not likely have been exposed to in any other environment – highlighting certain weaknesses within the brigade. By exposing those weaknesses, Soldiers could address them and leave the rotation stronger.

”

**From the commanders
to the youngest
members of the
brigade, I've seen
firsthand how tough
and intelligent
these extraordinary
individuals are...**

”

— Georgia Governor Nathan Deal

“It was a pretty brutal training,” said SGT McInnis. “But I walked out with a much higher level of competence.”

The rotation was a Decisive Action Training Environment (DATE), which allows Soldiers to use combat tools to solve tactical problems in a wide range of real-world scenarios. The scenarios are based on actual threats across the Army’s operational environment, rather than a

Soldiers of the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team approach a target during a live-fire drill as part of the unit’s most recent rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La.

training scenario derived from a known deployment location.

“DATE is more complex,” COL Smith said. “So it’s like practicing harder than you have to play on game day. There’s tremendous benefit in that, [as we] prepare for the known missions that we’re going to carry out at some point in the future.”

While the Soldiers may not have been excited to bear the increased level of training, its benefits were immediately discernable.

“I was quick to remind everybody that because this is harder, everything is directly applicable to being in Afghanistan,” COL Smith added.

“It prepared me,” explained SGT McInnis. “It throws you curveballs. You have to think outside the box, do critical thinking and be creative. That really helps you to adapt to each scenario dynamically.”

The rotation also gave some Soldiers the opportunity to experience brigade-level training that they may not have been exposed to in the past.

“It was high tempo,” said SFC Charles Lancaster, an infantryman with the 48th. “A lot of long days and long nights ran together. It was different for me, because I spent most of my career at the company level. Coming to the brigade headquarters, I got to experience how the brigade operates at the higher level. It was a learning curve for me. I learned



A Soldier with Georgia Army National Guard's 48th Infantry Brigade Combat team pulls security duty during the unit's Joint Readiness Training Center rotation at Fort Polk, La.

a lot about what a first sergeant does at the company level versus at the brigade headquarters level.”

SFC Lancaster said he appreciated the lessons learned from the JRTC rotation, as those lessons would inevitably translate into future deployments.

“It gives us an assessment of where we are individually and collectively as a group,” he explained. “We learned what [areas] we needed to work on as an organization and as individual Soldiers. It taught me how I needed to work on some things going forward, especially with a deployment on

the horizon. I have a whole book of notes that I took while I was there to look back on how I can improve, what worked and what didn't work.”

“
When deployment comes, I feel like we've got a head start on how to approach it, what obstacles we might run into and what things will help facilitate success much quicker and easier.
”

— SFC Jonathan McLaughlin

The extensive range of the exercise's training components not only exposed, but highlighted the potential for logistical challenges to arise. One such challenge is communication, which is common in terms of logistics and coordination, but COL Smith said he was impressed with the brigade's performance.

“We did a pretty good job on communications, which is one of the harder things we do,” he noted. “Our ability to maintain connectivity on our different systems, defend ourselves from [notional] cyberattack and electronic warfare, and remain functional against those enemy capabilities – it's complicated and we did okay at it. That was a proud moment for us.”

SFC Jonathan McLaughlin, an information technology specialist for the 48th, had the role of building the brigade-task-force-sized element with wide area network (WAN) and local area network (LAN) connectivity. Connecting and



integrating the various equipment was a difficult task, but SFC McLaughlin rose to the challenge.

“It went really well,” remarked SFC McLaughlin. “We validated how well our systems can work when maintained properly by trained operators. We definitely learned a lot when it comes to integrating other State’s equipment and what [happens when] equipment breaks down or is unavailable. Being able to take another unit’s or another State’s equipment and integrate it into our network was probably the best thing that came out of JRTC.”

SFC Lancaster noted a moment of personal pride during the exercise.

“Being out in the field, there were some challenges in picking a site,” he commented. “We had to pick where we were going to set up and we had to be camouflaged to not be found. The first couple of spots we picked were not so great. It was at the last spot that we ended up putting the technical operation center, and the enemy could not find it. I was recognized by the brigade commander for that.”

While tackling the ups and downs of the rotation, Soldiers received feedback and guidance from observer-controller-trainers who monitored the Soldiers’ performance. Overall, Soldiers walked away feeling as though they had become better Soldiers – fully equipped to handle their approaching deployment.

“When deployment comes, I feel like we’ve got a head start on how to approach it, what obstacles we might run into and what things will help

facilitate success much quicker and easier,” SFC McLaughlin said.

COL Smith commented with praise on the positive attitudes the Soldiers of the 48th displayed throughout the exhausting rotation.

“The morale of our task force right up through the end of the exercise was just fantastic,” explained COL Smith. “I always find it inspiring when I go out during battlefield circulation and see the companies out in the woods or fighting the enemy. Even though they were tired and hungry, the mentality of our Soldiers was just awesome. It was great to see.”

Keeping a strong mentality throughout the training was an important quality needed to perform well not only in the rotation, but also in their military careers.

COL Smith went on to explain why the mentality aspect of the Soldiers’ performance was so vital for the brigade.

“Fighting a near-peer enemy in that DATE environment is very hard and it requires a significant mindset shift or significant cultural shift that is going on right now within the Army,” COL Smith explained.

“Gaining that

perspective and coming away with a kind of ‘oh, man that was hard’ experience was probably the biggest takeaway, and maybe one of the most important ones for us long term.”

COL Smith also noted the importance of Soldiers gaining the experience of the type of high-stress, complex-environment training offered through a CTC.

“We as a National Guard cannot overstate the importance of going through a CTC experience,” he said. “Leadership says about 80 percent of [Soldier growth] comes from experiential development. Going through this experience is tremendously important in terms of making us better Soldiers and better organizations.”



Soldiers assigned to 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team seize a target as part of a live fire training scenario at Peason Ridge Training Area during the 48th’s 2018 rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center rotation at Fort Polk, La.



A TRIUMPHANT DESCENT

Maryland National Guard Soldier Takes Home Top Honor from International Competition

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

It's a tricky event," said SFC Nicholas Pitz of the Maryland Army National Guard, Special Operations Detachment (SOD)-North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO/OTAN). "You go from being a hero to being a loser in a couple seconds."

SFC Pitz is the assistant operations noncommissioned officer (NCO) for SOD-O. He was a member of one of the three Maryland National Guard SOD-O teams that competed at Leapfest 2018, a Department of Defense-sponsored static line parachute training event and competition held last summer in West Kingston, Rhode Island.

The Maryland National Guard teams finished with scores that placed the SOD-O in the top 10 finalists section. One team member in particular, MSG William Stout, claimed the title of Best Paratrooper in the World with the top individual score of the 2018 competition.

"At least for one day, I drove the parachute better than everybody else," MSG Stout said humbly. "All I really wanted to do was to go there and support my team and unit the best I could, and not be the guy they talk about next year for landing on the schoolhouse roof or something."

Though Maryland's SOD-O sends paratroopers to Leapfest every year, this year was MSG Stout's first time participating.

"We are very proud of him for winning," SFC Pitz said. "It's a tough event and it's a big deal."

Leapfest is the world's largest and longest running annual, international static line parachute training event and competition. Its stated purpose is to "promote the camaraderie and Esprit de Corps of the airborne Soldier through international competition." All branches of Service and several foreign teams usually

ABOVE: A Czech Paratrooper descends on the Castle Drop Zone as his team competes in Leapfest 2018, held August of last year in West Kingston, R.I.

U.S. Army photo by SSG Austin Berner

attend each year.

The 2018 competition included 350 of the world's top paratroopers hailing from 10 countries. Representing the United States were 28 U.S. Army teams – including 12 Army National Guard teams, six U. S. Air Force teams and five joint teams. Jumpers from Botswana, Canada, Czech Republic, Italy, Germany, Mexico, Netherlands, South Africa and the United Kingdom made up the total 31 international teams participating in the 2018 event.

Teams are made up of five members – four jumpers and one alternate jumper. Competitors jump from a CH-47 Chinook helicopter at 1,500 feet using an MC-6 static line, steerable, parabolic parachute. The competition consists of both an



With his MC-6 parachute still attached, a U.S. Army Paratrooper runs toward the X-mark in the Castle Drop Zone while competing in Leapfest 2018, a long-standing, international static line parachute training event and competition hosted by the Rhode Island Army National Guard.

U.S. Army photo by SSG Austin Berner

“No matter how well you do with landing, it still feels like you were in a minor accident every time you land.”

— CW4 John Olsh

individual and team event. Individual jumpers are required to complete two jumps, while teams are required to complete a total of eight jumps between the team members.

The goal of the jumps is to land as close as possible to a target area in the landing zone. After landing – using the proper parachute landing fall technique – contestants are timed by judges as they make their way to the final target area. The competitor(s) with the shortest combined time wins.

MSG Stout completed his winning individual jump with a two-second time to the target.

“You exit the aircraft and then look down to judge where the Xs are and what the winds are doing,” said CW4 John Olsh,

member of the 2018 Maryland SOD-O team. “The idea is to maneuver the chute in a bit of a circle, bringing yourself around the Xs and coming down using the wind to judge. It's pretty easy. What becomes more difficult is actually judging how far you are from the ground as you're coming in for the final entry. That's one thing Bill [MSG Stout] was able to do very well. It's kind of a guesstimate in your mind – how fast you're falling versus how fast you're moving [forward].”

To prepare for the competition, the Maryland SOD-O team took



MSG William Stout of the Maryland Army National Guard's Special Operations Detachment poses with his first-place trophy and plaque for the best individual jump during Leapfest with a time of two seconds.

Maryland Army National Guard photo by MAJ Kurt Rauschenberg



advantage of drill training, practicing core parachuting skills while the team members had access to available aircraft within the Maryland Army National Guard's Army Aviation command.

"As a unit, we are really set up well for an event like Leapfest," MSG Stout commented.

COL Ellis Hopkins, commander of the 56th Troop Command, Rhode Island Army National Guard – the host unit for Leapfest – remarked about the competition essentials outside of the actual jump.

"The jump is the easy part," he said. COL Hopkins went on to note that it was proper technique and safety that was a priority during the competition. Jumps were only conducted with winds of 13 knots or less and visibility of at least 2,000 feet, he said. Competitors were also required to demonstrate a firm knowledge of the five points of performance and three rules of the air (see sidebar) before being allowed to compete.

Landing is critical in the competition. Leapfest contestants are not timed for how long it takes them to get from the aircraft to the ground, but rather how long it takes them to get from the point of landing to the point of the target's center. That requires a lot of hustle and even some luck. If a jumper's parachute catches a gust of wind

and inflates with air while they are making their way to the target, they may be pulled backward. That can really mess with their time. If the wind is going with them where they land, they might have an advantage.

And even the best landing is no walk in the park.

"No matter how well you do with landing, it still feels like you were in a minor accident every time you land," remarked CW4 Olsh. "We jumped three times on that day and I was feeling it the next day waking up and moving around."

CW4 Olsh also commented on how he uses Leapfest, and other events like it, to challenge himself and face his fears.

"I'm scared to death of heights," he revealed. "But I've felt my whole career that ... what the military does is push you out of your comfort zone. And when you do stuff that pushes you out of your comfort zone, you grow as a person."

Although Leapfest is centered on the competition, the training portion of this annual event offers participants valuable collaboration opportunities. During the training component of the 2018 event, CW4 Olsh jumped with the jumpmaster of the Botswanan commando team. After working together, the two soldiers were later allowed to exchange wings.

"You can actually submit

documentation up through your [human resources] channels to be allowed to [wear the wings] on your service uniform," CW4 Olsh noted.

Over the years, Leapfest has proven to be an outstanding demonstration of airborne skills. It is also a critical opportunity for paratrooper soldiers from around the globe to build interoperability and increase readiness. ●

5 POINTS OF PERFORMANCE

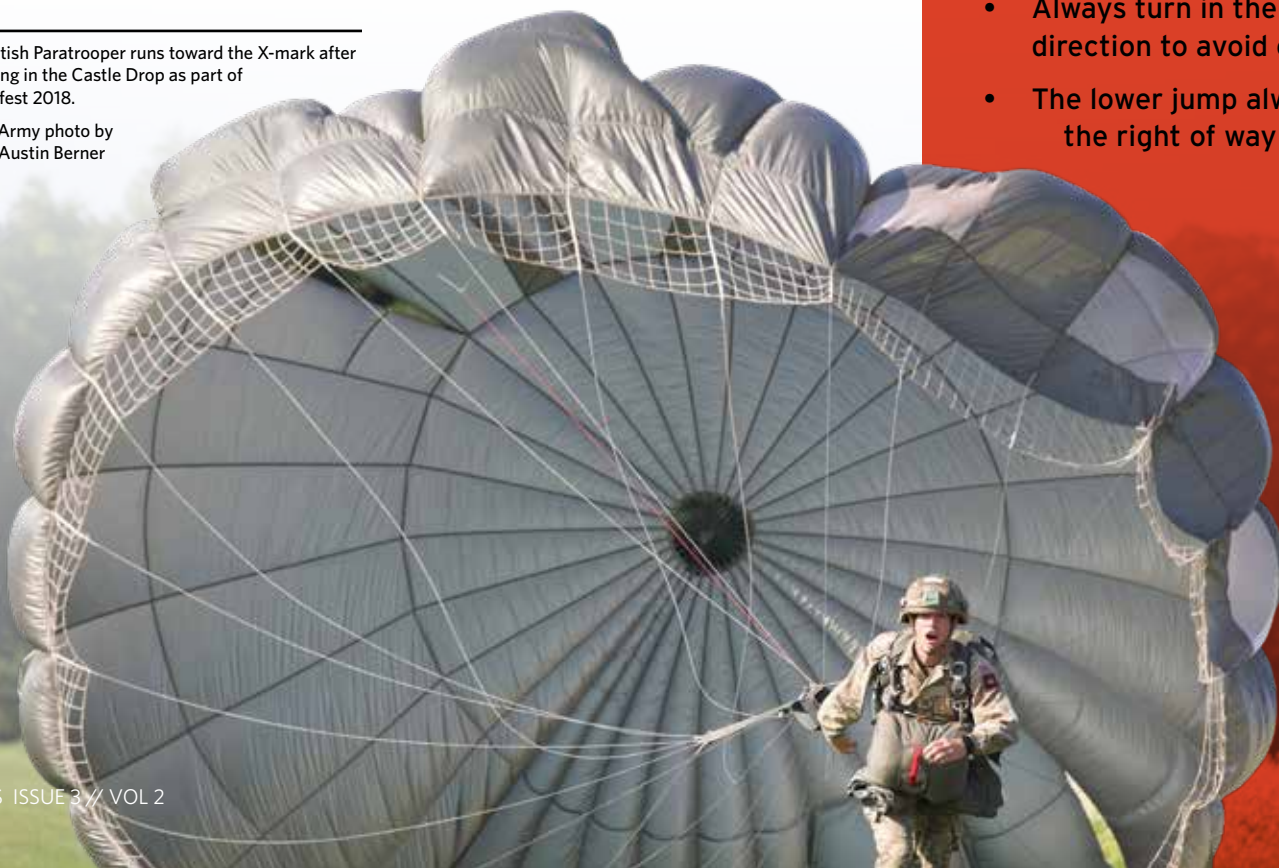
- Proper exit, check body position, and count
- Check canopy and gain canopy control
- Keep a sharp lookout during your entire descent
- Prepare to land

LAND 3 RULES OF THE AIR

- Always look before you turn
- Always turn in the opposite direction to avoid collision
- The lower jump always has the right of way

A British Paratrooper runs toward the X-mark after landing in the Castle Drop as part of Leapfest 2018.

U.S. Army photo by
SSG Austin Berner





Recommended Podcast

The Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS)

EANGUS represents the interests of over 400,000 National Guard members, Veterans and Families. Through its podcast, EANGUS shares discussions about relevant policy issues, answers listener questions and broadcasts interviews with today's leaders in government.

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PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Members of Alpha

Company, 1st Battalion,
161st Infantry Regiment, SPC
Marco Mayorquin (left) and
1LT Casey Thometz (right),
mock-fight a rancor in order
to save SGT Brandon Gray as
part of a spoof at the 2018
Washington State Toy and
Geek Fest in Puyallup, Wash.

Washington Army National Guard
photo by SGT David Carnahan





PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Oregon Army National

Guard Soldiers with 1st Squadron, 82nd Cavalry Regiment, conduct live-fire exercises late into the evening during their 2018 annual training (AT) at Orchard Combat Training Center near Boise, Idaho. The 2018 AT rotation marked the first time the 1-82nd Cavalry Regiment held a full series of live-fire qualifications using their new Stryker vehicles, which the unit received less than two years ago.

Oregon Army National Guard photo by SSG Zachary Holden





PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Members of the West

Virginia National Guard Army Interagency Training Education Center (AITEC) participate in a rope rescue course at the Hobet mine site in Madison, W. Va. The week-long course trains Soldiers on proper rope rescue techniques including repelling, ascending, and high rope rescue and leads to nationally recognized rescue technician certifications.

West Virginia National Guard photo by Edwin L. Wriston





PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



A Stryker crew with

Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania Army National Guard begin their patrol by heading deep in to the “box,” a simulated battlefield at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif.

Pennsylvania Army National Guard
photo by SGT Shane Smith







PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



SGTs Mauricio Caceres

and Cory Sweetman descend down air-stairs from an aircraft being used as part of a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense exercise held at Atlantic City International Airport, N.J., in November of 2018. SGT Caceres and SGT Sweetman are with the 21st Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team (21st WMD-CST), New Jersey National Guard.

New Jersey National Guard photo by MSgt Matt Hecht





PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



CPL Brandon

Chadwick, 44th Infantry
Brigade Combat Team, A
Company, 1-114th Infantry
Regiment, New Jersey Army
National Guard, fires a M240
machine gun during weapons
training on Joint Base
McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.,
in November of 2018.

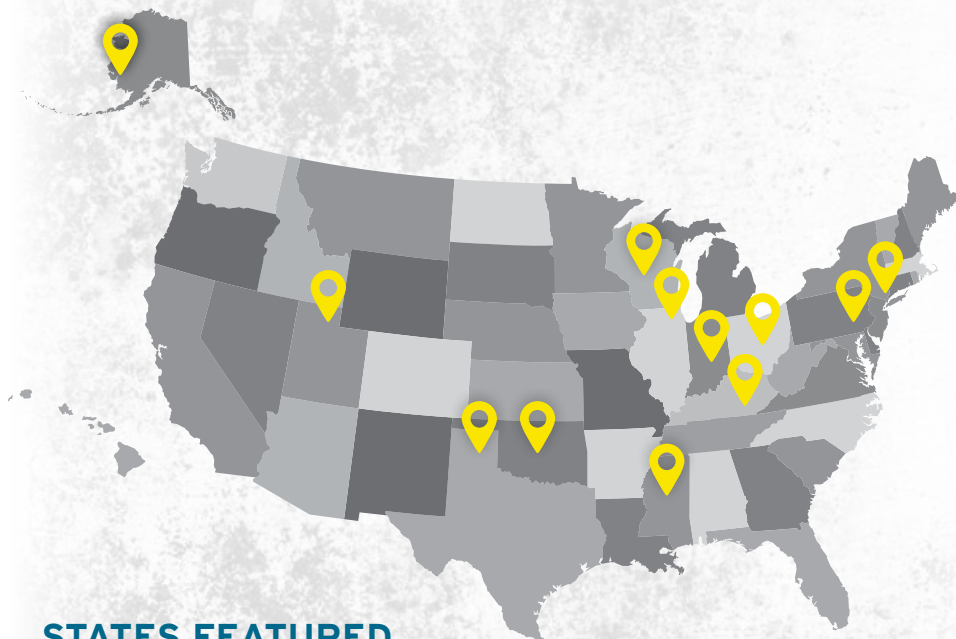
New Jersey National Guard photo
by MSgt Matt Hecht





An Alaska Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter approaches Malemute Drop Zone during airborne training at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, in May 2018.

U.S. Air Force photo by Alejandro Peña



STATES FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

- **ALASKA**
- **ILLINOIS**
- **INDIANA**
- **KENTUCKY**
- **MISSISSIPPI**
- **NEW YORK**
- **OHIO**
- **OKLAHOMA**
- **PENNSYLVANIA**
- **TEXAS**
- **UTAH**
- **WISCONSIN**

ALASKA

BY LTC CANDIS OLMSTEAD,
ALASKA NATIONAL GUARD

Alaska Aviators Rescue Three After Plane Crash

Soldiers with the Alaska Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment rescued two stranded men and a pilot on a moose hunting trip last fall after their plane crashed near St. Mary's, Alaska.

The Alaska Rescue Coordination Center (AKRCC) at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson was contacted by a commercial air taxi service after the pilot of the aircraft activated his SPOT personal satellite beacon and reported the crash. The AKRCC contacted the Alaska Army National Guard to request assistance from the aviation unit in Bethel.

A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter and

CPL Nathan Pratt Jennings (shown in the water, wearing orange), along with a group of Good Samaritans, pull Joanna Girmscheid from her water-submerged car after she was knocked unconscious when her car ran off the road and into a retention pond.

Photo courtesy Illinois State Police Department

aircrew from the 1-207th departed the Army National Guard's Army Aviation Operating Facility (AAOF) in Bethel around 9 p.m. on Sept. 3, 2018.

"The pilot had a SPOT beacon and satellite phone, which helped tremendously with finding their location and being able to help them out as quickly as possible," said CPT Andrew Adams, the Black Hawk pilot and commander of the AAOF.

CPT Adams said the AAOF was informed that the passengers had been moose hunting, and after harvesting the moose, they flew back to their vehicles to drop off their gear. They were headed back to pick up the carcass when the crash occurred.

"We found them on a hillside near the ridge line with the plane flipped over," CPT Adams said.

"They didn't have any of their gear, so they weren't prepared for the elements and had no source for a fire. They were huddled near the fuselage under a tarp or cover waiting for us, and it had become pretty dark at that point."

CPT Adams said the Guard team was able to communicate with the pilot en route to the accident location, allowing them to discuss protocols once the helicopter landed. The pilot agreed to flash lights from the plane headlamps when he and his passengers saw the incoming helicopter.

"It saved time, although we already had the exact coordinates," CPT Adams said. "It was just helpful to be able to see them as they waited for us."

Alaska State Troopers were waiting to assist the pilot and passengers after the Guard team delivered them to the AAOF.

The AKRCC requests that all pilots traveling in Alaska have an emergency locator beacon on their aircraft and supplies for long-term survival. A satellite phone is also highly recommended.

The AKRCC and the 1-207th Aviation Battalion were awarded three saves for this mission. ●



ILLINOIS

BY LTC BRADFORD LEIGHTON,
ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD

Illinois Soldier Rescues Woman from Sinking Car

An Illinois Army National Guard corporal helped save a woman's life last August by diving into the murky water of a retention pond in Huntley, Illinois, and pulling her from an overturned, sinking vehicle.

CPL Nathan Pratt Jennings, of Machesney Park, was one of 11 people who helped rescue the woman after her car flipped over and plunged into the retention pond off Interstate 90. CPL Jennings was driving home from work on Interstate 90 about 3 p.m. when he saw a "big splash" in the pond out of the corner of his eye. "I hunt geese, so I knew whatever made that splash had to be big," CPL Jennings said.

Jennings pulled off the highway and ran to the pond, where he saw the overturned car sinking into the water. A couple of other men were also on the scene. "I asked them if they saw anyone come out," CPL Jennings said. "They indicated that they hadn't. It was then that I realized that someone had to be in the car."

So he ripped off his suit jacket and

went into the dark water. "The water was up to my chest, and I'm 6-2," he said. "You couldn't see anything in the water, but I managed to get the passenger side door open."

Another man got into the water, and Jennings asked him to hold his feet while he entered the car. "I groped around looking for a seat belt thinking maybe they were strapped in. I couldn't see anything. It was like swimming in a big bowl of gravy. There wasn't anyone on the passenger side. Then my hands grazed something, and I realized it was someone floating in the car."

CPL Jennings managed to get his hands on the ankle of the driver, Joanna Girmscheid, and, with some difficulty, pulled the unconscious woman out of the car. Then, CPL Jennings and others were able to move her to the side of the pond. More people had stopped, and as soon as the accident victim was out of the pond, a woman started performing CPR on her. "I thought she was dead," CPL Jennings said. "It seemed like she was underwater for about five minutes."

As some people took turns performing CPR, others went back into the water to ensure no one else was in the car. After a little while, CPL Jennings said, Girmscheid started to moan and move. When paramedics arrived, they took over the emergency care. "One of the EMTs opened the door to the ambulance before they took off and yelled that she was conscious and knew who she was," CPL Jennings said. "I couldn't believe it."



PV2 Matthew Graham, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 151st Infantry Regiment, Indiana Army National Guard, conducts jungle warfare operations during Exercise Pahlawan Warrior held August 2018 in the Borneo Lowland Rainforests in the nation of Brunei.

Photo courtesy Royal Brunei Land Forces

Illinois State Police honored CPL Jennings and 10 others in a ceremony Aug. 29 at Illinois State Police District 15 headquarters in Downers Grove. Video from the ceremony showed Girmscheid hugging everyone who helped save her life. Illinois State Police presented CPL Jennings and the other good Samaritans with commendation letters.

"Everyone standing behind me is the true definition of a hero," Girmscheid said during the ceremony. "What happened to me ... could have ended very tragically. It could have ended in a funeral, and instead it ended in celebration, and my life will continue because of these people."

CPL Jennings credited his military training for his ability to respond to a stressful situation. "This weird calmness took over," he said. "One of the other guys there even said, 'Man, you were so calm.' I think the military training does help you keep your head in emergencies."

CPL Jennings is an intelligence expert in the military and a member of the Bloomington-based 176th Cyber Protection Team under the 65th Troop Command, Illinois Army National Guard. In his civilian life, he is a broker for U.S. Energy Company in Itasca, Illinois. ●

INDIANA

Indiana Guard Soldier Quickly Becomes Part of History

BY SFC COREY RAY,
INDIANA NATIONAL GUARD

When PV2 Matthew Graham enlisted in the Army from his hometown of Grand View, Indiana, in December 2016, he had no idea that just six months after joining his unit he would find himself halfway across the world making history in a country that he previously knew nothing about.

"I had never even heard of this country before," PV2 Graham said. "I immediately went to Google and started finding out where it was located, what the culture was like – just trying to get as much information about this country as possible."

PV2 Graham had volunteered to be part of a 24-member team from 1st Battalion, 151st Infantry Regiment, that would travel in August to the nation of Brunei Darussalam (after a training stop in Hawaii) to engage in the U.S. Army's first army-to-army exercise with the country.

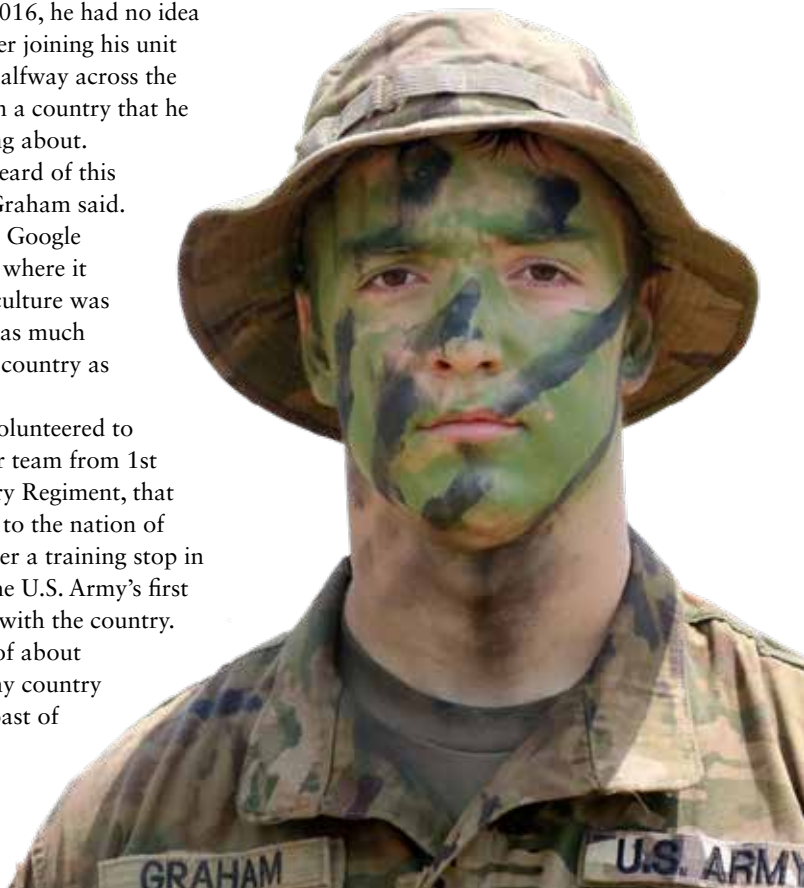
With a population of about 435,000, Brunei is a tiny country located on the north coast of

the island of Borneo in southeast Asia and shares a coastline with the South China Sea. Most of Brunei lies within the Borneo lowland rainforest region, and the Royal Brunei Land Forces (RBLF) have great experience operating in that environment.

PV2 Graham, who had recently

PV2 Matthew Graham, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 151st Infantry Regiment, Indiana Army National Guard, poses for a portrait following the closing ceremony for Exercise Pahlawan Warrior at the Penanjong Garrison, Brunei, August 2018.

U.S. Army photo by SFC Corey Ray



graduated as an infantryman from boot camp and Advanced Initial Training at Fort Benning, Georgia, had no jungle experience before the exercise.

"I've never been to a real jungle," he said. "It's very different. Everything is darker, and it is very humid. It's nothing like being at home, back in Indiana."

Half of the 11-day training event, Exercise Pahlawan Warrior, focused on jungle operations training led by the RBLF.

Once the U.S. Soldiers arrived in Brunei, they received much of their equipment from the Brunei Army. The Soldiers didn't pitch tents; instead, they set up hammocks, ponchos and mosquito netting.

Unfamiliar with the equipment, PV2 Graham needed assistance. Fortunately, the Bruneian Soldiers were eager to help. One Bruneian noncommissioned officer, Lance Cpl. Azhar Bin Haji Basri, ended up taking the young private under his wing and helped him build confidence.

"I had no idea how they set everything up, so immediately when we got to where we were going to sleep for the night, Lance Cpl. Azhar helped me set up everything," PV2 Graham said. "He showed me where I should put my equipment, which trees to tie my hammock to – everything I needed to know so I would not get wet if it rained at night. He was just extremely helpful."

During the exercise's closing ceremony, PV2 Graham was presented a coin of excellence from MG Timothy M. McKeithen, deputy commanding general, National Guard, U.S. Army Pacific, for a job well done.

Since PV2 Graham joined his unit, he has maintained a busy training schedule. From January through April, 2018, he went to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, to work on squad and platoon infantry tactics. That was followed by a 21-day training exercise with the brigade his unit is currently associated with – the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division – in Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

When he found out he was going to have his annual training in Hawaii, PV2 Graham said he was excited. "I mean, some people never even get to go to Hawaii, and I get to go for free and get paid to do, so it was really cool," he said. ●

KENTUCKY

Kentucky Guard Soldier's Discovery Leads to Improved Safety

BY STACY FLODEN,
KENTUCKY NATIONAL GUARD

CW2 Stephen Plouvier, of the Kentucky Army National Guard's 203rd Forward Support Company, discovered a defect in tires, leading to a potential life-saving safety directive last spring.

The Safety of Use Message (SOU) – which was sent out across all branches of service to include National Guard, active and Reserve – said: "Warning: death, serious injury or damage to Army

equipment will occur if actions specified are not implemented."

The safety message stated the tire defect was related to sidewall cracking in specified tires that could lead to tire failure. The message explained that the defect increased the risk of a "sudden blowout" and the potential for "an accident or rollover which could result in serious injury or death." The directive said the defective tires "must be removed."

Nationwide, numerous High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) accidents and blowouts had occurred and may have been attributed to the defect.

In the Kentucky National Guard alone, more than 1,200 tires were considered damaged and had to be replaced. Nearly 50 percent of HMMWVs were involved, and almost every National Guard unit in Kentucky was affected. Across the country, over 32,000 wheel-assemblies needed to be replaced on National Guard vehicles.

CW2 Plouvier was the first to recognize the issue. With his concern for Soldier safety, he identified tires with cracks, and nearly all of them were over five years old. He brought the concern to the Surface Maintenance Office (SMO).

The SMO staff began detailed research and took data findings to the U.S. Army Tank-automotive & Armaments Command (TACOM). TACOM then began its own research and determined all wheel assemblies and tires over five years old would need to be replaced.

SGT Rudon Gay inspects a tire prior to installation on a high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle (HMMWV) at Field Maintenance Shop #5 in Frankfort, Ky.

Kentucky Army National Guard photo by SFC Scott Raymond



Examples of defects found in HMMWV tires during safety inspection of vehicles in Kentucky.

Photo courtesy Kentucky Army National Guard

After the tire problem was discovered last April, the SOUM from TACOM was published in mid-May and Kentucky continued to move forward with the replacement of tires.

“The mechanics and employees turning the wrenches find a lot of these issues,” said CW2 Plouvier, surface maintenance mechanic supervisor. “It’s up to us as managers and supervisors to listen and look at the problems and weed through what they are telling us to find a solution.

“The way the tire blew out and pattern of damage that occurred just looked odd. After further inspection, I noticed some cracks in the tire that did not look right. I looked at a few more tires of the same make and found the same type of cracks occurring in other tires with similarities in the locations of the cracks.”

COL Jim Covany, director of logistics in Kentucky’s logistics office, was impressed by the findings and grateful for the concerns about safety in the field.

“I couldn’t be more proud of the way our SMO staff recognized the seriousness of this issue and pushed TACOM to look at the tires,” COL Covany said. “I am convinced by doing so they have saved lives and potential damage to government equipment, DoD wide.

“When I say SMO staff, I mean every Soldier in the maintenance community. We could not have accomplished this task without every single mechanic on board. What they did in a little over a month was change over 1,500 wheel-assemblies.”

The Kentucky Army National Guard requested shops to inspect all tires for dry rotting or cracking, similar to the cuts found in the blowouts. More than 150 mechanics and 14 shops across the State began the task of inspecting tires and replacing those deemed unserviceable.

LTC Steve Engels, surface maintenance manager, stressed the importance of the discovery and appreciated the results of a lot of hard work. “Ultimately, we’re talking about Soldiers’ lives,” he said. “I believe that two things were achieved in carrying out the plan that was put together – ensuring Soldiers were taken care of and that units were still able to train and maintain their readiness.” ●



MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi National Guard Announces Bulldog Free Tuition Program for Mississippi National Guard Members

BY MEGAN BEAN,
MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

The Mississippi National Guard and Mississippi State University (MSU) together announced a new program that will ensure free tuition for Mississippi National Guard service members enrolled full-time at MSU.

MSU President Mark E. Keenum and MG Janson D. Boyles, adjutant general of Mississippi, both signed a memorandum of agreement establishing the Bulldog Free Tuition program during a ceremony at MSU’s G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery Center for America’s Veterans. The Bulldog Free Tuition Program builds on current National Guard education benefits to

MG Janson D. Boyles, adjutant general of Mississippi, and Mississippi State University President Mark E. Keenum celebrate after signing a memorandum of agreement between MSU and the Mississippi National Guard to establish the Bulldog Free Tuition Program.

Mississippi State University photo by Megan Bean

create a unique opportunity for eligible Mississippi Army and Air National Guard members.

“Readiness is our force’s top priority and this tuition program will help to attract personnel who will staff our future State and federal missions,” MG Boyles said. “The students receiving this tuition benefit will contribute tremendously towards our preparedness and be among those ready to answer the call during State emergencies and overseas contingency operations.”

“We have a long, proud history as one of the Nation’s most military-friendly college campuses,” Keenum said. “Among our alumni are the late U.S. Sen. John C. Stennis, father of the modern nuclear Navy, and the late U.S. Rep. G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery, author of the modern G.I. Bill. This innovative tuition program we launch today with the Mississippi National Guard continues MSU’s pro-soldier legacy and directly invests in those brave, bright men and women who serve and protect our great nation.”

NEW YORK

New York Soldier Uses Medical Skills to Save Boy

BY SSG MICHAEL DAVIS,
NEW YORK NATIONAL GUARD

National Guard members spend countless hours every year training for the next big mission. For SPC Nicole McKenzie, that mission wasn't overseas – it was below an overpass in New York.

As she was driving home from the Yonkers Armory on Aug. 3, 2018, SPC McKenzie, a cable systems installer and maintainer with A Company, 101st Signal Battalion, New York Army National Guard, saw a flash of red going over a guardrail on the Saw Mill River Parkway. She immediately pulled her car to the side of the road.

"I saw what looked like the outline of a boy going over the side," SPC McKenzie said. "I knew something was wrong."

Her instincts had been sharpened by nearly six years of combined Army training, which erased all doubt and hesitation at the scene.

"Thanks to my Army training, it was all automatic; everything was fluid," SPC McKenzie said.

She ran to the edge of the bridge, where police officer Jessie Ferreira Cavallo of the

Hastings-on-Hudson Police Department was already assessing the scene.

When SPC McKenzie saw the 12-year-old boy lying on the rocks below, she shouted to Cavallo, "Let's go!" They both ran to the shallow end of the overpass, climbed over a fence, and dropped 10 feet to the jagged ground below.

The boy – a resident of the Bronx, New York – had ran away from the Yonkers, New York-based organization ANDRUS, a private, nonprofit organization that provides services to children who are vulnerable, special needs or suffer from severe emotional and behavior issues.

ANDRUS staff members had followed the boy and were speaking with him when he jumped from the overpass.

SPC McKenzie, who spent three years on active duty with the 168th Multifunctional Medical Battalion and had recently completed Combat Lifesaver (CLS) training with the National Guard, immediately began to assess the injuries the boy had sustained in the fall.

She used her cell phone flashlight to administer a concussion test, took his vital signs and kept talking to him so he stayed awake and alert.

Next, she shouted to a bystander above to grab the CLS bag from her trunk and throw it down. She and Cavallo then used splints from her bag to secure the boy's neck, arm and leg. They stayed with him until the medics arrived and took him to Westchester Medical Center.

The Westchester County Police records department confirmed the pivotal role that both SPC McKenzie and local police played in working together to assist the boy, who was hospitalized with a broken arm, broken nose and leg injuries.

SPC McKenzie doesn't think she's a hero. For her, it's all about loyalty to her unit and her community.

"I wear the uniform every day because I want to help Soldiers – I want to help people," she said. "This is my family." ●

SPC Nicole McKenzie of the New York Army National Guard.

New York Army National Guard photo by SGT Harley Jelis

Over 12,000 service members are in the Mississippi Army and Air National Guard's ranks. For the Guard, higher education is a critical component of efforts to improve service members' ability to solve complex problems at home and abroad. While the National Guard has a beneficial tuition program for eligible service members at all Mississippi colleges and universities, MSU support through the Bulldog Free Tuition program will make MSU the only State university where Mississippi National Guard Soldiers can attend college with no out-of-pocket cost for tuition.

To be eligible for the Bulldog Free Tuition program, service members must be full-time undergraduate students, in good standing with their unit and cannot be within a year of their expiration of term of service.

Through its Montgomery Center for America's Veterans and university faculty and staff, MSU supports National Guard service members as they navigate classes, basic training, drill and deployments. Approximately 650 U.S. Armed Forces Veterans and service members attend MSU, a population that increases to more than 2,600 when including dependents.

MSU is nationally recognized for its support of Veterans, service members and their dependents. In 2015, MSU was designated as a "Purple Heart University" by the Military Order of the Purple Heart for its support of the military community. For more on MSU's services available to Veterans, service members and their dependents, visit Veterans.msstate.edu. ●





Ohio Army National Guard 1LT Sara Stigler poses in her cap and gown with her newborn son for his 1-month photos.

Photo courtesy 1LT Sara Stigler



1LT Sara Stigler, still in her hospital gown and almost immediately after giving birth to her son, recites the oath administered by her mentor, retired COL Steve Ulrich, to become a field surgeon May 2018.

Photo courtesy 1LT Sara Stigler

OHIO

Ohio Soldier Swaps Cap and Gown for Hospital Gown

BY STEPHANIE BEOUGHER,
OHIO NATIONAL GUARD

In the span of a few hours one day last spring, Ohio Army National Guard 1LT Sara Stigler reached three major milestones in her life – all while wearing a hospital gown.

“It is definitely a day I will never forget,” she said.

It all began on Friday night, May 18, when 1LT Stigler went into labor with her first child. She texted her administrative officer, CPT Amanda Harder of the Ohio Army National Guard Medical Detachment (based in Columbus), with this message: “Definitely not coming to drill ... water just broke and we’re at the hospital now.”

“For her to contact me the day she was going into labor says a lot about her as a Citizen-Soldier,” CPT Harder said. “And it shows her loyalty to the Ohio National Guard and her duty as a Soldier to keep her unit and her first line leader informed of her situation.”

In addition to drill that weekend, 1LT Stigler was scheduled to graduate on May 19 from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. Instead of wearing a cap and gown, she was at Cincinnati’s Good Samaritan Hospital in a hospital gown.

At 3:14 a.m. May 19, just hours before her scheduled graduation, 1LT Stigler and her husband, Curtis Maples, welcomed their son, Blaise Carver Maples.

“Honestly, I wasn’t that disappointed to miss graduation,” 1LT Stigler said. “The thought of sitting through a long ceremony at nine months pregnant was not really appealing, and Blaise was a great graduation gift.”

1LT Stigler direct commissioned into the Army National Guard through the Medical and Dental Student Stipend Program when she began medical school. While in school, she drilled with the Ohio Guard Medical Detachment in Columbus, Ohio, enabling her to simultaneously learn to be a Soldier and medical professional. 1LT Stigler was paired with (retired COL) Dr. Steve Ulrich, a family practice doctor and retired colonel in the Ohio Army National Guard, who has served as her mentor throughout her journey in medical school and in the National Guard.

Ulrich and his wife, Terri had made the trip to Cincinnati from their home in Perry County, Ohio, to attend 1LT Stigler’s

graduation. They happily switched plans to visit the new mom and her baby in the hospital. Ulrich suggested that while he was there, he could swear her in as a field surgeon.

Just four hours after giving birth and still wearing a hospital gown, 1LT Stigler raised her right hand and took the oath while her husband, Terri Ulrich and three hospital security guards looked on as witnesses.

“It was a very special moment,” Ulrich said. “It is the unique blend of military tradition, adaptation to circumstance and flexibility. My wife and I were honored to be a part of the joy of the day and help a Guard Family celebrate both accomplishments.”

1LT Stigler will do her residency in family medicine at The Christ Hospital in Cincinnati while juggling duties as a new mom and a field surgeon. She said support from her husband and a great network of friends will help her find the right balance between work and family.

“Serving my county had always been a desire of mine, and I was really drawn to the Guard because of the idea of being able to help my local community in times of crisis,” she said. “Becoming a physician has also been a long-term dream of mine, and joining the medical corps was the perfect intersection of both of those goals.” ●

OKLAHOMA

NBA Players Help Guard Members Get Fit

BY MAJ GEOFF LEGLER,
OKLAHOMA NATIONAL GUARD

This past spring, players from the National Basketball Association team, the Oklahoma City Thunder, put their “Thunder Fit” program to work teaching Oklahoma National Guard members new ways to stay fit and healthy.

Players and trainers from the Thunder’s youth basketball program worked with 40 Guard members for 45 minutes of agility and endurance training.

The Thunder Fit event took place at The Hive Sports Complex in Edmond, Oklahoma. The circuit training consisted of basketball dribbling and shooting drills, sprints, knee lifts and other agility exercises to show the Guard members new, fun ways to exercise.

“I think it’s very important for us to host events for the military,” then-Oklahoma City Thunder player Corey Brewer said. “We should do this all the

time, just to say thank you.”

Thunder Fit, one of several community outreach programs run by the team, can be tailored for participants ranging from elementary school age to senior citizens.

“There is a great deal of respect, honor and joy from both sides – the Thunder players along with staff and from our Soldiers and Airmen,” said LTC Lindy White, the Oklahoma National Guard’s director of military and civilian relations. “This outreach opportunity is great for morale and continues to help build strong community ties. We appreciate the time the

OKC Thunder dedicated to this event.”

In addition to the workout opportunity, Guard members received advice from a nutritionist on the body’s nutritional needs and what foods they should eat to build strong bodies and minds.

SGT Brian Williams, a member of the 45th Field Artillery Brigade, was grateful for the opportunity to participate in the event. “I’m glad the Oklahoma Guard put this together for us,” he said. “It really put a smile on my face. ... I’m honored to be a part of this.” ●



NBA point guard, P.J. Dozier (left) discusses the benefits of a balanced diet with members of the Oklahoma National Guard during a Thunder Fit event held March 2018 in Edmond, Okla.

Oklahoma Army National Guard photo by
MAJ Geoff Legler



Members of the Oklahoma Army National Guard pose for a picture after a Thunder Fit event held March 2018 with then-Oklahoma City Thunder players Corey Brewer, Kyle Singler and P.J. Dozier.

Oklahoma Army National Guard photo by MAJ Geoff Legler



PENNSYLVANIA

28th ECAB, First Responders Train for Aviation Disasters

BY 1LT TRAVIS MUELLER,
PENNSYLVANIA NATIONAL GUARD

Soldiers with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's 28th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade (ECAB) joined civilian first responders from Dauphin and Schuylkill counties for a helicopter familiarization and emergency response drill this past summer.

According to ECAB staff, the goal of the training was to familiarize civilian emergency responders with helicopters used in the military and broader aviation community, and to instruct them on the special considerations that should arise during an aviation accident.

ECAB staff members went on to note that while ECAB leadership goes to great lengths to ensure the safety of the brigade's Soldiers while doing their jobs, if Soldiers are ever involved in an aviation accident, this training will help to ensure they are

under the best care possible and that first responders know how to handle the unique nature of military accidents.

The first responders were from Wiconisco Fire Company No. 1, Lykens Liberty Hose Company No. 2, Williamstown EMS, Wiconisco Township Police and Pennsylvania State Police.

Two helicopters operated by Soldiers from the 28th ECAB – a CH-47 Chinook and a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter – took off from Fort Indiantown Gap in the morning and landed near the Wiconisco Fire Company. Helicopters and flight crews from the Pennsylvania State Police, Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center and Geisinger Health System joined them.

The flight crews briefed the first responders on aircraft orientation, hazard identification, safety considerations, the removal of injured flight crew members from the aircraft, and emergency fuel and battery shut off procedures.

After the briefing portion of the event, the local first responders participated in a helicopter disaster

CW4 Jeff Hatt briefs civilian first responders on the CH-47 Chinook helicopter during an aviation disaster training held July 2018 in Wiconisco, Pa.

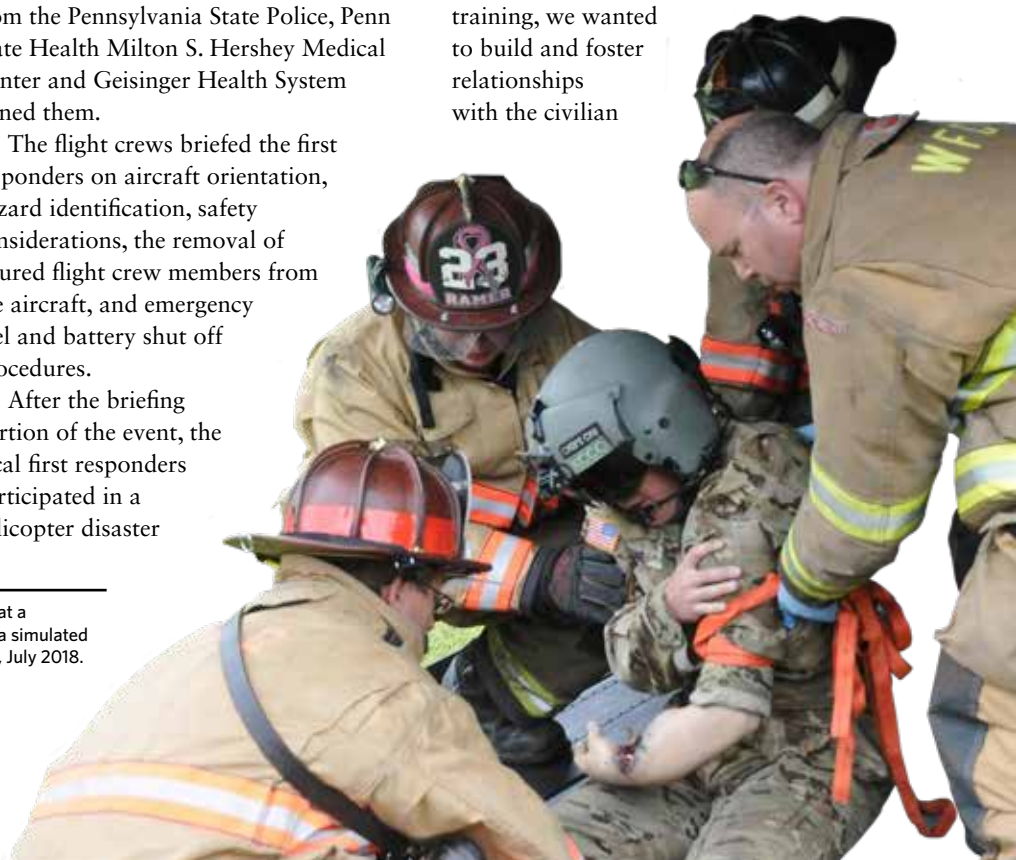
U.S. Army photo by 1LT Travis Mueller

drill. A flight crew from the 28th ECAB's 2-104th General Support Aviation Battalion landed a CH-47 on a field east of the fire company and simulated a crash scene with major injuries. Local first responders then rushed to the scene and performed triage and emergency medical care on the mock victims.

"Aside from the training, we wanted to build and foster relationships with the civilian

Civilian first responders from Dauphin and Schuylkill counties treat a Pennsylvania Army National Guard pilot for mock injuries during a simulated aviation disaster as part of a training event held in Wiconisco, Pa., July 2018.

U.S. Army photo by 1LT Travis Mueller



agencies,” said CW5 Joe Sandbakken, safety officer for the 28th ECAB. “We are all partners in assisting and protecting our community. The civilian responders here are experts at what they do, and after today’s training, we have no doubt that if anything were to happen to us that we’d be under top-notch care.”

The 28th ECAB, citing the value of training for their aviators as well as civilian first responders, hopes to expand this training in the future and include first responders from other communities. ●

TEXAS

Texas Counterdrug Soldier to Lead Panhandle Civil Operations

BY 1LT NADINE WILEY DE MOURA,
TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD

SPC Samuel Villa-Smith looked out over Lake Meredith – near the town of Fritch, about 35 miles north of Amarillo in the Texas Panhandle – with a pensive gaze. He clutched the only photo he has left of both he and his father, who died from an overdose in 2016.

“My father taught me everything I know about fishing and camping at this exact spot,” SPC Villa-Smith said.

“The last time I was here with him, I was 7 years old and found a Native American spearhead. My father had us turn it into the museum because it was the right thing to do. Memories like that remind me that he was a good man; he was just overcome by his addiction.”

SPC Villa-Smith, a Soldier with the 1st Squadron, 124th Cavalry

Regiment, Texas Army National Guard, was chosen in 2018 to lead Civil Operations in the Panhandle region with the Texas National Guard Joint Counterdrug Task Force.

The Panhandle, slightly larger in size than West Virginia, is a region rich in oil fields, agriculture and wind turbines, nestled among miles and miles of plains and geological formations like the Palo Duro Canyon.

For Panhandle natives like SPC Villa-Smith, the region is also known as a high-intensity drug trafficking area. Amarillo was ranked 13th among the top 25 cities in the United States for opioid abuse, according to a 2016 report by Castlight Health, a health care information company.

The Drug Enforcement Agency’s National Clandestine Laboratory Register indicated three of the top 11 counties in Texas for meth labs were in the Panhandle.

“This region is my home, where everything is for me: family, churches, schools,” SPC Villa-Smith said. “Civil Ops provides me with the opportunity to help fight this enormous battle that is taking this community over. This community has struggles with meth, cocaine, heroin, prescription addiction and alcoholism.”

As a Civil Operator, SPC Villa-Smith will coach, train, facilitate, lead and support coalitions and community-based organizations to impact substance abuse in his region.

For SPC Villa-Smith, the Counterdrug mission is personal. “Growing up with my father like that was a world of terror and a world of constant heartache seeing him sell everything he had to get his next fix,” he said. “It destroyed all of us.”

SPC Villa-Smith, who enlisted in 2011, said his father’s experience with

addiction is what motivated him to come back and contribute to Amarillo and the Panhandle region.

On Villa-Smith’s birthday in 2016, he received the phone call that his father had died of an overdose.

“You never think it will happen until it happens to someone you love, then you’ll wish that somebody had been involved,” he said. “Drugs affect so many of us.”

Not only is SPC Villa-Smith invested in impacting his community, but he is also pursuing master’s degrees in software engineering and business administration, with a focus in finance. These degrees, he says, will enrich his knowledge for every aspect of his Counterdrug duties.

“This is my passion, to assist in the reduction of demand and fighting drugs on the street today,” he said. ●



Texas Army National Guard SPC Samuel Villa-Smith.

Texas Army National Guard photo by 1LT Nadine Wiley De Moura



UTAH

Utah Guard's 85th CST Plays Role in Ricin Case

BY ILEEN KENNEDY,
UTAH NATIONAL GUARD

In support of an investigation conducted last fall by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the U.S. Postal Service, the Utah National Guard's 85th Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team (CST) facilitated the surveillance of a home in Logan, Utah, for hazardous materials.

The mission came after letters containing ground castor beans, the substance from which the deadly poison ricin is made, were allegedly mailed from the Logan home to President Donald Trump, Secretary of Defense James Mattis and Navy Admiral John Richardson.

"The 85th CST members conducted joint entries with FBI agents in order to provide atmospheric monitoring and assist with evidence collection," said the 85th CST deputy commander, whose name was withheld.

The 85th CST deployed with its full complement of equipment, including advanced communication, analytical, survey and medical gear and tools. The 85th CST donned protective hazmat

Members of the Utah National Guard's 85th Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team assist federal investigators in Logan, Utah, during a probe of ricin-tainted mail sent to U.S. officials in October 2018.

Utah Army National Guard photo by Ileen Kennedy

gear before entering the Logan residence to begin the investigation. Members performed the technical decontamination for all agencies and agents exiting the residence as well as the monitoring inside.

The FBI released a statement Oct. 3 about the homeowner and suspect in the case: "The Salt Lake City Division of the FBI has taken William Clyde Allen into custody per a probable cause arrest warrant authorized by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Utah. Per the USAO [U.S. Attorney Office], a complaint is expected to be filed in federal court on Friday (Oct. 5)."

Allen, a 39-year-old Logan resident, confessed to sending the letters laced with poison and was held in the Davis County jail on a threat of terrorism charge. He is a former member of the U.S. Navy.

"We had indication he may possess dangerous chemicals in the house," said Doug Davis, an FBI special agent from the FBI's Salt Lake City office.

"It was a good opportunity for us to participate in a high-visibility event and operate with multiple federal agency partners," the 85th CST deputy commander said. "The 85th CST was able to meet all of the objectives of the incident commander, and it was another successful support mission of the CST."

Ricin is a highly toxic compound

extracted from castor beans that has been used in terror plots and has no known antidote. It can be used in powder, pellet or mist form. If ingested, ricin can cause vomiting, bloody diarrhea, severe dehydration, internal bleeding, kidney and liver failure and then possibly death.

If inhaled, within a few hours, the likely symptoms would be coughing, fever, tightness in the chest, difficulty breathing and nausea. Heavy sweating may follow as well as fluid buildup in the lungs. Low blood pressure and respiratory failure may then occur, leading to possible death. ●

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Black Hawk Crew Rescues Stranded Kayakers

BY CPT JOE TROVATO,
WISCONSIN NATIONAL GUARD

A Wisconsin Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew rescued two men stranded in the Eldorado Marsh along the Fond du Lac River last Sept. 9 after the men became disoriented on a kayak trip.



The kayakers lost their way in the thick marsh and reached the point of exhaustion before calling 911 to seek help. The isolated nature of the marsh and its terrain made a land rescue nearly impossible, prompting local rescue crews to reach out to Wisconsin Emergency Management to seek assistance.

The Wisconsin National Guard was ready and had a helicopter in the air within 90 minutes of receiving the call. Fifteen minutes later, the West Bend-based flight crew was hovering over the Fond du Lac area searching for the kayakers, who had made cell phone contact with rescue crews on the ground.

With sunlight quickly diminishing and the kayakers stranded in a dark marsh, the crew asked first responders to relay a message to the kayakers to turn on their cell phone flashlight.

“As soon as they did that, we spotted them immediately,” said CW4 Jason Wollersheim, the pilot-in-command of the mission, assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation. “It stands out pretty good when you’re out in a marsh with no other lights around and you’re looking through NVGs [night vision goggles].”

Once the men were spotted, the pilots moved into position over them and lowered one of the crew chiefs into the marsh using a hoist and a jungle penetrator, also known as a rescue seat. The crew chief, SGT Caleb Estenson,



A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter operated by a crew with the Wisconsin Army National Guard flies over the Combined Arms Collective Training Facility as part of Exercise Audacious Warrior 2018, an explosive ordnance disposal training held June 2018 at Fort McCoy, Wis.

U.S. Army photo by Scott T. Sturkol

quickly realized the marsh’s surface was not suitable for using the jungle penetrator to extract the two men.

The darkness, lack of reference points, floating bogs, cattails and other marsh material made it difficult to find solid reference points from which the crew could maintain a steady hover over the marsh, said SSG Bobby Gibson, a crew chief and hoist operator with the 168th. Fortunately, the crew was able to overcome the obstacles and ultimately extracted the kayakers safely.

CW4 Wollersheim, a Fond du Lac native with more than 21 years of flight experience, said it was an honor to give back to the community in which he was born and raised. He noted that the training Wisconsin Army National Guard aviators have gained in recent years – in their federal mission as the Army’s primary combat reserve – has helped them fulfill their state mission as the first military responder. Three of the crew members aboard the rescue flight had returned from deployments to Afghanistan less than a year earlier, and the fourth returned from Kuwait less than two years earlier.

For SGT Estenson, it was a rewarding experience to put his training to use and drop into the marsh to assist the stranded men.

“You couldn’t really tell what the ground was like in this pond area where they were at,” he said. “But once I started to sink in right away when I first got in there, I was really nervous, honestly.”

According to the Wisconsin National Guard’s senior Army aviation officer, LTC Matthew Strub, the Sept. 9 rescue is likely the first real-world hoist extraction a Wisconsin National Guard crew has completed in the state.

“The training is universal,” LTC Strub said. “We train for the worst-case scenario so that no matter what mission is sent our way, we’re ready to execute.” ●



Bernie's

PEOPLE



Cartoon submitted by Bernard Hurlbut

Bernard Hurlbut of Rome, New York, is a Veteran of the 37th Infantry Division, Ohio Army National Guard. He was drafted during the Korean War and served between 1950 and 1953. Stationed in France during the war, he devoted many of his off hours to drawing. After the war, he moved to Upstate New York where he started a sign business that still exists today. Hurlbut said, like his love of the Guard, his passion for drawing continues to this day.

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.

HOMECOMING TAKEDOWN

Tennessee Guard Soldier Stops Active Shooter

When SSG Patrick Shields with Detachment 1 of the 1175th Transportation Company, Tennessee Army National Guard went to watch his son's homecoming high school football game this past fall, he probably thought all the heroic tackles would happen on the field. Yet, at the end of the night there was one tackle left to make.

It would be a potentially life-saving tackle and one that only he could make. Read how this Soldier protected hundreds of lives with one act of courage **IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF CITIZEN-SOLDIER.**

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