

# GEORGIA STRONG

The Soldiers of the Georgia Army National Guard stand ready to protect citizens from emergencies and natural disasters at home and in neighboring States. They stand ready to defend our Nation, fighting our enemies on the ground and in cyber-warfare. In return, the Georgia Army National Guard serves these Soldiers with invaluable training, education benefits and life-long relationships.



A Georgia Guard Soldier with the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team provides security during a consulate meeting as part of a Joint Readiness Training Center scenario in Fort Polk, La.

Georgia Army National Guard Photo by JRTC Operations Group PAO





# Georgia HERO Scholarship

Family and friends say farewell to Georgia Army National Guard Soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment in a send-off ceremony at the Burnt Hickory Baptist Church in Powder Springs, Ga.

Georgia National Guard photo by Maria Balderas

**THE GEORGIA HERO** (Helping Educate Reservists and their Offspring) Scholarship Program was created to provide educational grant assistance to members of the Georgia National Guard and U.S. Military Reservists who served in combat zones or the Children of such members and Reservists.

The grant offers a sum of \$2,000 per award year. The maximum benefit is for four award years for a total of \$8,000 toward tuition at an approved school.

## ELIGIBILITY

Qualifying students must meet all eligibility requirements including all of the specific requirements for one of the following categories of students:

### CATEGORY A:

The eligible student must be a member of the Georgia National Guard or be a U.S. Military Reservist who completed at least one qualifying term of service.

### CATEGORY B:

The eligible student must be the biological Child, adoptive Child or legal ward of a member of the Georgia National Guard or the U.S. Military Reserves who completed at least one qualifying term of service.

### CATEGORY C:

The eligible student must be the biological Child, adoptive Child or legal ward of a member of the Georgia National Guard or the U.S. Military Reserves who was killed or received 100 percent disability as a result of injuries received in an eligible combat zone.

### CATEGORY D:

Be a surviving Spouse of a member of the Georgia National Guard or U.S. Reserves who was killed in a combat zone or died as a result of injuries received in a combat zone.

For list of qualification details and contact information, visit

**[MyArmyBenefits.us.army.mil](http://MyArmyBenefits.us.army.mil)** and select Benefit Library, then select Georgia under the State/Territory Benefits menu item.





## Education Pays So Does the Guard

By CW2 Matthew R. Hanson

**N**eed more money for college? Georgia can help with that. July 2018 opened the new application period for members in good standing of the Georgia National Guard (both Army and Air) to apply for the Georgia National Guard Service-Cancelable Loan (SCL) program. What is a Service-Cancelable Loan? SCL is a loan that you pay off through service to the Guard. Instead of repaying the loan with money, your service cancels the loan.

SCL underwent a major revision during the last session of the Georgia General Assembly, which went into effect July 1, 2018. Starting in 2018, SCL now helps Guardsmen attain not only a technical certificate or undergraduate degree (bachelor's), but also

graduate degrees (master's, professional and doctorate). SCL pays up to 100 percent of the undergraduate tuition rate at all public State technical schools, colleges and universities (private schools are limited to \$2,174/semester), regardless of what degree level you are pursuing. So, for example, the rate per semester hour at Georgia State University (not counting Perimeter College) is \$291.00 per semester hour for the 2018-2019 school year. This means that a Georgia Guardsman can get up to \$291.00 per semester hour toward any degree at Georgia State – whether bachelor's, master's or doctorate.

Another significant change is that this benefit is exhausted once you reach 120 semester hours of study, regardless of whether or not you obtain a degree, regardless of the number or source of funding for any prior degrees.

Also starting this year, if a Guardsman has other education benefits available (e.g., Georgia HOPE Scholarship, Army Tuition

Assistance, untransferred months of the "Post-9/11" GI Bill[R]), then those benefits must be used first; SCL will make up the difference, up to the amounts identified previously.

Also starting in 2018, Guardsmen currently "paying back" the SCL through service in good standing with the Georgia National Guard must complete a Verification of Status form each year for two years following their last use of SCL. Guardsmen who do not complete this form, or who lose their good standing (such as going AWOL, or getting out of the Georgia Guard before the end of two years, or failing to maintain a 2.0 GPA or better) will have their SCL converted to a standard loan that is paid back in cash over time.

SCL is only available for fall, winter and spring terms (no summer terms), and applications are processed on a "first come, first served" basis. The 2018-2019 budget for SCL is about \$1.7 million.



## CROWS Landing in Georgia

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SSG R.J. Lannom Jr.

The Georgia Army National Guard is getting a new generation of Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station (CROWS) instructors and operators. After-action reviews following two Georgia Garrison Training Center (GGTC) Machine Gun Leader Courses suggested there was a knowledge gap and a lack of qualified CROWS operators throughout the State. GGTC instructors searched for CROWS courses of instruction, but were unable to find training opportunities for new operators beyond the initial fielding class.

"There wasn't any sustainment training available through the Army training system," said SFC Matthew G. Hersey, a senior

instructor with the Georgia Army National Guard Pre-Mobilization Training Assistance Element, Fort Stewart, Georgia. "So we decided to make one."

After identifying the need, the Georgia Department of Defense's Joint Force Headquarters and GGTC came up with a solution.

"We coordinated to have the [U.S. Army's] CROWS fielding team conduct another training class," said SGM Joseph Shirer, operations and training sergeant major for the Georgia Army National Guard. "After training the new instructors, our intent is for those instructors to hold operators' classes for the [Georgia Army National Guard], other states and even the active component."

The CROWS initiative will add to the list of training events and courses supported by the GGTC. These courses include the Machine Gun Leaders Course, Small Arms Leaders Course, Physical Readiness Training,

and Raven Unmanned Operators Course.

Increasing readiness across the State is the overall goal of the training innovation.

"We are moving the readiness meter in the right direction," said MAJ Robert M. Walker, commander of the Fort Stewart-based Georgia Regional Training Site, Maintenance.

The M153 CROWS is an externally mounted weapons control system that allows the gunner to remain inside the vehicle, protected by armor, while firing the various crew served weapons it supports. The system can support the Mk-19 automatic grenade launcher, M2 .50 caliber machine gun, M240 machine gun and M249 squad automatic weapon.

The CROWS provides gunners the ability to traverse 360 degrees and elevate weapon systems up to 60 degrees while using the latest sighting technology to greatly improve first round burst hit probability against stationary and moving targets.





“This system improves the safety and lethality of our Guardsmen,” said Walker. “The ability to get the gunner inside a protected space and improve shots is a no-brainer.” ●

TOP LEFT: SSG Christopher Robinson, Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 121st Infantry, and SGT Bradley Sherman, Charlie Company, 12nd Battalion, 12st Infantry, install the barrel of a CROWS mounted M2A2 .50 caliber machine gun during the CROWS Operator Instructor course held at the Georgia Garrison Training Center in Fort Stewart, Ga.

TOP RIGHT: The Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station.

BOTTOM RIGHT: SSG Christopher Robinson, Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 121st Infantry, and SGT Bradley Sherman, Charlie Company, 12nd Battalion, 12st Infantry, perform pre-system checks on the CROWS weapon system.





CPT Elijah Carroll.

University of North Georgia photo by Peggy Cozart

## Leading from Experience

By Edie Rogers,  
University of North Georgia

**C**PT Elijah Carroll, who earned a bachelor of business administration in management from the University of North Georgia (UNG) in 2008, wears a number of hats in his return to work at his alma mater.

CPT Carroll, who commissioned into the Georgia Army National Guard upon his graduation, serves as the commander for the National Guard detachment on UNG's Dahlonega Campus, is the National Guard liaison to UNG, Georgia Military Scholarship committee member, faculty adviser for the Corps of Cadets' Hotel Company, and an assistant professor of military science.

One thing all of those roles have in common, however, is helping to mold future leaders — just as he was prepared for leadership during his four years at UNG.

"It kind of sounds cliché, but honestly it's the leadership training that sets UNG apart," CPT Carroll said. "The Corps of Cadets does an excellent job of getting cadets out of their comfort zone and putting them in a position where you have to lead. From speaking in front of large audiences to having

to make rapid decisions, the experience and knowledge that I gained here provided a good foundation for all of the military training that came later, such as the Basic Officer Leadership Course and Ranger School."

Growing up in Jackson, Georgia, a small town between Macon and Atlanta, CPT Carroll knew he wanted to serve in the military and earn a college degree. When he was accepted at UNG and offered the UNG Georgia Military Scholarship, "It was a done deal at that point."

While a cadet at UNG, CPT Carroll deployed to Iraq with his National Guard unit and received the Purple Heart for wounds to his leg. Dedicated to returning to the Corps of Cadets, CPT Carroll completed rehabilitation for his injuries and returned to school to complete his degree and commission.

From platoon leader to company executive officer (XO) to battalion plans officer to troop commander, CPT Carroll has steadily climbed the ranks in the National Guard, where he has served full time since October 2012. In May 2017, when he became eligible for promotion to major, he was surprised with the opportunity to return to his alma mater.

"It was a complete surprise to me," CPT Carroll said. "I'm absolutely pleased that I got to come back and definitely honored to be here."

While his role as commander of UNG's

National Guard detachment means he drills the members of his unit, his interaction with cadets encompasses the larger Corps of Cadets as well.

"As instructors, we put them in a position to gain as much experience and knowledge as possible before they're out in the force," CPT Carroll said. "This is their time to learn and learn from others and make mistakes. Once they get out to the force — and this holds for National Guard or active duty — the margin for mistakes isn't as forgiving as it is here. It's giving them the opportunity to learn and make mistakes and give them constructive feedback, and that's very important."

As a former member of UNG's Corps of Cadets, CPT Carroll said he can relate to the issues and struggles that cadets face.

"I've been in their shoes and I can definitely relate to what they're going through, and it hasn't changed all that much since I graduated. It's a challenge balancing Corps life with academics and saving time for friends and family," CPT Carroll said. "I tell them that if I can do it, they can do it."

As an alumnus, CPT Carroll is gratified to see his school push the bar higher.

"Some of our cadets absolutely impress me with their GPA and PT scores, and it's very encouraging to see the future generation of Army officers and how well they perform," CPT Carroll said. "As an alumnus, it makes me proud of my alma mater." ●





# Considering Going Back to School?

## **Georgia has some of the Nation's top ROTC Programs and Military Colleges.**

Take advantage of the wealth of educational and financial aid opportunities offered through the State of Georgia and the Georgia Army National Guard.

Use your federal and state tuition assistance, plus your GI Bill benefits, to pay for school while you earn your degree and your commission.

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University

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**Learn More about Georgia's State Military Student Financing Programs at:**

[www.GaFutures.org/Hope-State-Aid-Programs/Military](http://www.GaFutures.org/Hope-State-Aid-Programs/Military)



## Georgia National Guard Aviators Deploy in Support of Operation Spartan Shield

By Desiree Bamba

Family, friends and colleagues gathered at the Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah June 8, 2018, to honor the Soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 169th General Support Aviation Battalion (GSAB) and Company B, 935th Aviation Support Battalion, Georgia National Guard.

The Savannah-based helicopter units deployed in support of Operation Spartan Shield, a contingency operation within Central Command's area of responsibility. Their primary mission was to build partner

capacity in the Middle East to promote regional self-reliance and increase security.

"These Soldiers are the very best the nation has to offer," said COL Dwayne Wilson, commander of the 78th Aviation Troop Command, Georgia National Guard. "They have worked hard and are prepared for the deployment ahead."

Over the past 22 months, Soldiers have trained and prepared for the deployment, focusing on warrior tasks, air support missions and aircraft maintenance. Members of Company B, 1-169th GSAB recently conducted disaster relief missions following Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria.

"It is an honor, privilege and awesome responsibility to lead these Soldiers," said CPT Brandon Long, commander of Company B, 1-169th GSAB. "The unit is fully prepared to [provide] unrivalled support to the ground forces in theater."

Originally designated the 1160th Transportation Company, Savannah's helicopter units have their history rooted in Savannah since the late 1970s. In 2006,

the unit was reorganized into separate detachments, which included Company B, 1-169th GSAB. In 2012, 1-169th Soldiers fielded the Army's most modern heavy lift helicopter, the CH-47F Chinook.

In 2006, the Georgia Army National Guard stood up an element of the 935th Aviation Support Battalion (ASB), designated Detachment 2, Company B, 935th ASB. Their mission in Savannah is to provide aviation intermediate maintenance (AVIM) support and back-up aviation unit maintenance (AVUM) support, including aircraft armament and avionics equipment repair.

"The Soldiers in front of you today have worked and trained hard," said CW4 Duane Sandbothe. "I look forward to working with each and every one of them as we move ahead."

During the year-long deployment, the Soldiers of 1-169th GSAB will conduct aerial missions for support and stability operations, while the Soldiers of the 935th ASB will conduct maintenance on all aircraft while deployed. ●





TOP: Members of Company B, 1-169th General Support Aviation Battalion and 935th Aviation Support Battalion, Georgia Army National Guard participate in a send-off ceremony before deploying in support of Operation Spartan Shield.

BELOW: MG Joe Jarrard, adjutant general of Georgia, speaks to the Soldiers of Company B, 1-169th General Support Aviation Battalion and 935th Aviation Support Battalion, June 2018, during the units' send-off ceremony at Hunter Army Airfield.







## Georgia Guard Conducts 2nd NCO Induction Course

Story and Photos by SGT Moses Howard II

**N**early 20 Georgia Guardsmen from various units across the State participated in the Georgia Army National Guard's Noncommissioned Officer Induction Course last fall at Fort Stewart, Georgia.

The NCO Induction Course expands the knowledge of young NCOs who have graduated the Basic Leadership Course (BLC). The course serves as a bridge between the skills young NCOs learn in the schoolhouse and what's needed to be effective team leaders in their units.

Senior noncommissioned officers trained and mentored junior NCOs at the team leader level. The goal of the training is to provide the best Noncommissioned Corps for unit commanders.

Soldiers are trained in the enlisted promotion system, counseling, junior soldier evaluations and documenting NCO development. The documentation classes train NCOs how to track their development as well as that of their Soldiers.

"Overall, it will be a bridging between BLC and when they return to their units and teaching those intangibles, which they're not getting at BLC," said MSG Cory Dial, the senior operations NCO for the Georgia Garrison Training Center.

In addition, the course implemented team leadership skills in the field to include: fire team maneuvers, patrolling, establishing a patrol base, react to contact and squad maneuvers.

The students learned advanced map

reading, plotting locations in a tactical environment, and knowing the difference between true north, grid and magnetic directions. Students conducted daytime and nighttime land navigation while in a tactical environment.

During the three-day field training exercise (FTX), students honed tactical skills on Army battle drills, to include squad attacks, ambushes and break from contact. On the final day of the FTX, students conducted an eight-mile road march. They wrapped up the week-long course with live-fire weapons qualification and advanced marksmanship techniques.

This is the second NCO Induction Course the Georgia National Guard has conducted in as many years. While it does

SPC Markis Jones, a unit supply specialist assigned to the Headquarters, 110th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion, holds a security position while training on react-to-enemy-contact and squad tactics at Fort Stewart, Ga., September 2018.





SPC Ricktavious Anderson, an infantryman with Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment, holds the ready position during contact drills at Fort Stewart, Ga., September 2018.



not replace BLC, it does serve as an additional training tool for junior NCOs to be successful.

"This is only the second iteration of the course and we can expect, from something that's new, that there are going to be some changes coming," said MSG Dial. "Based upon feedback from the students and cadre, we'll come together and continue to refine the training to improve the knowledge of our junior NCOs." ●

SGT Pierce T. Franklin, an infantryman assigned to Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment, briefs his squad prior to conducting field operations during the Georgia Army National Guard Non-commissioned Officer Induction Course at Fort Stewart, Ga., September 2018.





## Georgia Army National Guard Soldier Assists Fire Department During Hurricane Relief Operations

By MAJ William Carraway

**A** Georgia Army National Guard Soldier participating in relief operations following Hurricane Michael was credited with helping firefighters extinguish a house fire last fall in Seminole County.

"Honestly, I was just doing what I was trained to do," said Georgia Army National Guard SGT Blake Mote, a military policeman with the Kennesaw, Georgia-based 190th Military Police (MP) Company. "It all falls back on doing what's right."

SGT Mote, when not drilling with his unit, is a firefighter and advanced emergency management technician with the Clayton County Fire and Emergency Management Services (EMS).

On the night of Oct. 17, 2018, SGT Mote was participating in a presence patrol with the

ABOVE: Georgia Army National Guard SGT Blake Mote of the 190th Military Police Company emerges from a burning house after assisting members of the Donalsonville Fire and Emergency Services Department in extinguishing the fire.

Georgia Army National Guard photo by SPC Kaitlin Weiss shirt

RIGHT: Donalsonville Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department Chief Dean King addresses the members of the 190th Military Police Company as he formally thanks SGT Blake Mote of the 190th for his actions on Oct. 17, 2018 when he assisted firefighters in suppressing a house fire in Seminole County, Ga.

Georgia Army National Guard photo by MAJ William Carraway

190th MP Company in support of Seminole County law enforcement officials when the call for assistance with a structure fire went out over the radio.

"Mote was the right person in the right place at the right time," said LTC Copeland Rowell, commander of the Decatur-based 170th MP Battalion.

Soldiers participating in the presence patrol followed Seminole County police officers to the scene. Upon arrival and linkup with the Spring Creek Volunteer Fire Department (VFD), SGT Mote assessed the situation and assisted with suppression of the fire.

"I realized there was smoke coming out of the house and asked my leadership if I could help," said SGT Mote. "Initially, I was carrying tools for the firefighters, giving them tools to pull the ceilings."

SGT Mote advised the firefighter who

was spraying water, then offered to enter the house to assist.

"I went in with a hose line to attack the fire in the ceiling and work my way through the house," said SGT Mote.

Lt. Michael Smith of the Donalsonville Fire EMS recalled his surprise when he arrived on scene.

"I responded and was told that an MP was inside fighting the fire. I proceeded to enter the building to relieve him and found a Soldier in camouflage with a breathing apparatus."

SGT Mote explained to Smith that the fire was in the attic and directed Smith to the source. Through the efforts of the Spring Creek VFD and Donalsonville Fire and EMS, the fire was successfully suppressed.

Speaking to an assembly of Soldiers of the 190th MP Company Oct. 18, 2018, Donalsonville Fire and EMS Chief Dean King







credited SGT Mote's actions with saving the structure.

"His willingness to step forward and do what he knows how to do to help his fellow man kept that situation under control," said King. "I want to thank him personally and I want to thank you for what you have done for us.

More than 900 Soldiers and Airmen of the Georgia Army and Air National Guard from nearly 40 units across the State have mobilized to render assistance to counties impacted by Hurricane Michael. ●

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Chief Dean King of the Donalsonville Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department, shakes the hand of SGT Blake Mote of the Georgia Army National Guard's 190th Military Police Company during an assembly of Soldiers from the 190th, held Sept., 18, 2018.

Georgia Army National Guard photo by MAJ William Carraway



CSM Shawn Lewis, senior enlisted advisor to the Georgia Army National Guard congratulates SGT Blake Mote of 190th Military Police Company after he was formally thanked by the Chief of the Donalsonville Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department on Sept., 18, 2018.

Georgia Army National Guard photo by MAJ William Carraway







## Georgia Guardsmen Pitch in to Build Vet's Home

By CPT Charles Emmons

**T**wenty-eight volunteers that consisted of Georgia Army and Air National Guardsmen, family members and civilians donated their time and effort to work on a new home for former Marine and Purple Heart recipient, Brian Quinones.

In the eighth week of a nine-week project, the volunteers painted and caulked surfaces, applied trim around cabinets and fitted molding on baseboards of the structure. The Austell, Georgia, residence is one of the Northwest Atlanta Habitat for Humanity "Houses for Heroes" projects that provides a house for an eligible veteran.

"It's amazing," said Quinones, an Iraq and Afghanistan war veteran. "People are giving up their Saturday to build a house for someone they've never met before."

The experience levels of the volunteers on the site ranged from skilled craftsmen to some individuals that were picking up a tool for the first time. For those in attendance, reasons for helping varied as well.

"I have always enjoyed working on houses, and this is an opportunity to come and do some good for a veteran," said Georgia's Deputy Adjutant General Joe Ferrero, who was on his second home build project with the team.

SFC Jason Behret, a platoon sergeant in the Columbus-based 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade headquarters came with his wife Shelby to pay it forward to the veteran community in response to the past assistance they've received from Georgia Guard organizations.

"The [Georgia National Guard] Family Support Group and yellow ribbon have been incredible the past couple years for us," said Behret. "We wanted to give back and this seemed like a perfect opportunity to come and help out another vet."

In addition to the day's volunteers, the program requires homeowners to spend at least 100 hours of "sweat equity" in building their house, said house leader, Tom Simcox,

a Habitat for Humanity volunteer. The homeowner is also required to complete specialty courses and pay an interest-free mortgage on the home.

"It's been a really cool experience for me to be a part of the build as well as being able to own a home," said Quinones, who has also been working on the 1,400 square foot home for more than four weeks. "It's a lot of work, but it's definitely worth it."

During week eight, the build day was sponsored by Lockheed Martin, while Georgia National Guard and Immediate Credit Recovery provided volunteers to join the Habitat for Humanity project.

The new three-bedroom, two-bath home joins three other houses on the street built for veterans as well, which provides an additional sense of security for former service members like Brian.

"I know somebody in this community has my back and they know I have their back," said Quinones. ●





ABOVE: Iraq and Afghanistan war Veteran, Brian Quinones (center) stands with Georgia National Guard volunteers in front of the Habitat for Humanity home building project that will soon become his home in Austell, Ga.

RIGHT: Georgia Army National Guard Soldier, SFC Jason Behret of the 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, paints the outside trim of a home being built for a Georgia Veteran through the Habitat for Humanity home building project in Austell, Ga.





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