ers and Families of the Army National Guarc

CITIZEN-SOLDIERMAGAZIN

ORIEN/ SHIELD

SOLDIERS OF THE 151ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, Indiana Army National Guard, travel to the other side of the world to work alongside Japanese soldiers during Exercise Orient Shield. TENNESSEE'S SSG PATRICK SHIELDS saves hundreds of lives when he takes down an active shooter at a high school football game.

ISSUE 4 // VOL 2

THE ARMY'S NEW SOLDIER PROTECTION SYSTEM is developed with the needs of female Solders in mind.

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

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ON THE COVER: Soldiers from the Indiana National Guard's 151st Infantry Regiment, 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team march to their position during the field training portion of Exercise Orient Shield 2018.

Department of Defense photo by MC 2nd Class Andrew P. Holmes

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SGT Corrius Poe of the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Tennessee Army National Guard, assigned to Task Force Raider Battle Group Poland, poses for a portrait at Bemowo Piskie Training Area, Poland, while the 278th is deployed heading up Battle Group Poland, part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)'s Enhanced Forward Presence.

Tennessee Army National Guard photo by SGT Arturo Guzman



THE SUPER STAR

A New Age of Public Affairs Soldiers

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

new military occupational specialty (MOS) is born. Effective Oct. 1, 2018, MOS 46Q, Public Affairs Specialist, and 46R, Public Affairs Broadcast Specialist, were combined and redesignated as MOS 46S, Public Affairs Mass Communications Specialist.

The transformation of the MOS comes as part of an effort to create more wellrounded public affairs Soldiers who are fluent in all pertinent aspects of media and public relations.

"This change results in public affairs Soldiers, with varied experiences, who can handle any operational task the command needs," explained Senior Enlisted Advisor, National Guard Bureau Public Affairs SGM Corine Lombardo. "From producing informational videos to climbing into a Bradley and following an infantry platoon out on a mission, the change results in better public affairs Soldiers who understand all of the Army's informational needs."

46S Soldiers will be trained to tell their fellow Soldiers' stories using a variety of media platforms, including writing, photography, videography, web design and graphic design. The new MOS produces public affairs Soldiers who have the skills to deploy anywhere and fill any available public affairs slot.

"Sometimes there is limited seating when we're going out on missions," explained SFC Michael Sparks, training developer for the Army Public Affairs Center. "We'd have to make the choice of whether to have a print or broadcast journalist. If we have one that can do both, limited seating is not an issue. And honestly, commanders don't want just a photographer or just a videographer anymore. They want somebody who can go out and do it all."

For incoming Soldiers assigned to the 46S MOS, the Defense Information School is launching the 108-day Military Communications Foundation Course where Soldiers will be trained to be well-versed in all aspects of public affairs and media.

Soldiers currently operating as a 46Q or 46R, with a rank of E-6 or below, have until Sept. 30, 2020, to transition to the 46S MOS. The Army Public Affairs Center has identified validation tasks required to transition into the MOS. Current 46Q Soldiers must produce and submit for review a non-narrative multimedia product, while 46R Soldiers must produce and submit for review a photojournalism series including photo cutlines. To prepare for the validation tests, Soldiers may either cross-train through distance learning or participate in home station training. All validation tests will be evaluated and assessed by a senior public affairs noncommissioned officer (NCO). Once a Soldier's test has been assessed and approved by the senior NCO, that Soldier's commander will validate the assessment deeming the Soldier fully MOS-qualified.

SFC Sparks encourages public affairs Soldiers to embrace this opportunity to expand their abilities and grow their knowledge base.

"Soldiers are going to come out able to do public affairs writing, photography and video," SFC Sparks remarked. "They will be able to produce everything as one Soldier instead of needing multiple Soldiers to complete the tasks. I call it the 46 Superstar, because [they] will come out as a well-trained public affairs machine."

SGT Harley Jelis, a public affairs specialist attached to the 138th Public Affairs Detachment, 53rd Troop Command, New York Army National Guard, shoots photos and video next to a local news cameraman during the 2017 New York Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition at Camp Smith Training Site, N.Y.

New York Army National Guard photo by SSG Michael Davis

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FEATURE

Paying Tribute to a Fallen Oklahoma Guard Soldier

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

fter a dedication ceremony in the summer of 2018, a New Kabul Compound (NKC) terminal donned a new name. The Hughie Terminal honors the life of Oklahoma Army National Guard Soldier SGT Buddy James "Doc" Hughie, a member of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 180th Infantry Regiment, who was killed in action in 2007.

> SGT Hughie's unit, now reorganized as the 1st Squadron, 180th Cavalry Regiment, deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan, in August 2018 in support of the NATOled train, advise and assist mission, Operation Resolute Support. The deployment marked the first time in 10 years the 180th had deployed to Afghanistan.

"What better way to really signify our 10-year return than to dedicate this to SGT Hughie," said LTC Michael Urrutia, commander of 1st Squadron, 180th Cavalry Regiment.

Ten years after making the ultimate sacrifice, SGT Hughie's service and spirit are still remembered. SGT Hughie was only 25 years old when he was killed in action in Afghanistan. His unit was conducting a joint mission with the Afghan National Army and the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division in Afghanistan's Nuristan province. On Feb. 19, 2007, the group came under enemy small-arms and rocket-propelled-grenade fire. Though SGT Hughie's vehicle was secure and out of danger, he left his position to provide medical attention to two Afghan soldiers in the group. On that day, he was shot and killed saving the lives of others.

The moment of heroism that ultimately led to his death was characteristic of SGT Hughie's selfless heart and dedication to service.

SGT Buddy James "Doc" Hughie, of the 180th Cavalry Regiment, Oklahoma Army National Guard, killed in action February 2007 in Kamdesh, Afghanistan. Pictured is SGT Hughie displaying his South Carolina 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade patch from a 2006 deployment.

Oklahoma Army National Guard photo by MAJ Geoff Legler

"He was a good Soldier and a good person. You can't beat that type."

CSM Walter Jolly

British Army Brigadier Simon Humphrey (left), commander of the Kabul Security Force, stands with members of the 180th Cavalry Regiment, Oklahoma Army National Guard, while observing a plaque of SGT Buddy James Hughie following a dedication ceremony at the remodeled New Kabul Compound flight terminal on Friday, Aug. 31, 2018, in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Oklahoma Army National Guard photo by CPT Leanna Maschino

"The whole story of how it all went down tells you what type of Soldier he was," explained CSM Walter Jolly of the Oklahoma Army National Guard's 45th Infantry Brigade. "He put his life at risk to save other people's lives. His not being on the ambush side, but putting himself there on foot and leaving the vehicle to take care of [fellow] soldiers, shows you a lot about him."

CSM Jolly was also deployed to Operation Resolute Support. Though he was in a different platoon, he had the chance to get to know SGT Hughie.

"He was really mature for his age," CSM Jolly said. "Everybody liked him. He could get along with anybody." The death of SGT Hughie had a lasting impact on the Soldiers of the 180th, leading to the naming of the Hughie Terminal.

"SGT Hughie had a special place in the heart of the 180th because he was the first Soldier to become a casualty for us," said CSM Robert Apala of the 180th Cavalry Regiment. "To keep his memory alive, we decided to name our flight PAX terminal after him so that no one would forget who he was."

On the wall of the terminal hangs a plaque with a photo of SGT Hughie and a short bio highlighting his contributions to the Army National Guard, the United States and, as allies of the United States, the Afghan nation.

"During his career, he served as an engineer, medic and infantryman," the plaque reads. "SGT Hughie lived the warrior ethos every day and served as a role model to his fellow Soldiers."

For his service, SGT Hughie earned the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal (1st Oak Leaf Cluster), National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with "M" Device, the Army Service Ribbon and the Combat Infantry Badge.

His numerous honors speak to his incredible service and character. Though

Hughie Terminal

We Can... We Will.



BUDDY JAMES HUGHIE

SERGEANT, US ARMY

BORN 23 OCTOBER 1981, CARLSBAD, NEW MEXICO

KILLED IN ACTION 19 FEBRUARY 2007, KAMDESH, AFGHANISTAN

SGT HUGHIE ATTENDED HIGH SCHOOL IN POTEAU, OKLAHOMA. HE KRINED THE OKLAHOMA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD AS A CARPENTRY AND MASONRY SPECIALIST ON 9 NOVEMBER 1998. IN 2002-2003, HE DEPLOYED TO AFGHANISTAN WHERE HE HELPED BUILD MANY FOBS. HE AGAIN DEPLOYED TO AFGHANISTAN IN 2006-2007 AS A MEMBER OF COMPANY C, 1ST BATTALION. 180TH INFANTRY REGIMENT.

DURING HIS CAREER, HE SERVED AS AN ENGINEER, MEDIC, AND INFANTRYMAN SGT HUGHIE LIVED THE WARRIOR ETHOS EVERY DAY AND SERVED AS A ROLE MODEL TO HIS FELLOW SOLDIERS.

SGT HUGHE WAS A TRUE FAMILY MAN. SGT HUGHE WAS A DEDICATED SOLDIER, FRIEND, HUSBAND, AND FATHER: HE IS SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE ALEXIS AND SON COOPER

SGT HUGHIE EARNED THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL, PURPLE HEART, ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL (ZND AWARD), NATIONAL DEFENSE SERVICE MEDAL, AFGHANISTAN CAMPAIGN MEDAL, GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL, ARMED FORCES RESERVE MEDAL WITH "M" DEVICE, ARMY SERVICE RIBBON, OVERSEAS SERVICE RIBBON, AND COMBAT INFANTRY BADGE CSM Apala had limited interactions with SGT Hughie, he said SGT Hughie's high character was apparent in every meeting.

"As a person, there was none better," said CSM Apala. "The love for his country and his Family was phenomenal. He was always worried about everybody else. He was the guy who went around the platoon taking care of people. He was a dedicated individual and he was really selfless."

SGT Hughie's love for his Family was obvious to many. During his last deployment, he spoke often of his wife, Alexis, and the approaching birth of his son Cooper.

Just two months before his death, SGT Hughie was granted leave to return home to witness the birth of his son. He had expressed his enthusiasm over becoming a father, a sentiment that would leave a lasting memory with the Soldiers who knew him.

"At the time I didn't have children either, but just to hear him and his excitement that his wife was pregnant and to see his joy and excitement to become a father told you a lot about him," said CSM Jolly. "He was a good Soldier and a good person. And it was obvious that he was a good father and a good husband. You can't beat that type."

Though SGT Hughie saw his son before he passed away, Cooper would have to grow up without the joyous and loving father the members of the 180th knew well.

"For me, February 19th was a very tough day, not only because we lost a fellow Soldier and friend, but like SGT Hughie, I had recently had my firstborn child," said SFC James Smith, who deployed to Afghanistan with SGT Hughie in 2007 and again in 2018 with the 180th. "February 19th was the day I realized the sacrifice that SGT Hughie and others like him make. It didn't seem fair that I was going home to my child and Family, but SGT Hughie wasn't."

"At least he did get to see Cooper and be there with Alexis when [the birth] took place," CSM Jolly noted. "But for Cooper to have to grow up and only have stories of his father and not have any remembrance of him is sad."

CSM Jolly recalled SGT Hughie's willingness to deploy with the unit during the mission that would ultimately lead to his death. The

Oklahoma Army National Guard photos by CPT Leanna Maschino

Signage and plaque marking the "Hughie Terminal" at the New Kabul Compound (NKC) in Kabul, Afghanistan.

deployment was SGT Hughie's second tour in Afghanistan. He had deployed once in 2002, and then again in 2006 when he volunteered to go with the 180th.

"He volunteered for the mission," CSM Jolly said. "He had already been to Afghanistan on a different deployment and went right back when he joined our unit. He didn't hesitate on whether he was going or not. He went with us."

SGT Hughie deployed as an infantry Soldier, but was often called on for another specialty. His civilian work with Emergency Medical Services and his commitment to taking care of every Soldier he could, earned him the nickname "Doc."

"Everybody went to him because they trusted him," CSM Jolly explained. "He was also a 68 Whiskey [Combat Medic Specialist] so that's the reason he was nicknamed 'Doc Hughie'."

SGT Hughie was a beloved Soldier who left a legacy of selflessness and courage that has had a great influence on the 180th.

"During our time in country, some of us had been under fire. [We were] hit with roadside bombs and came away with minor bumps and bruises," SFC Smith said. "Some of us had experienced seeing casualties from partner units and friendly forces, but on February 19th, 2007, we lost one of our own."

The dedication of the Hughie Terminal served as a fitting final tribute to SGT Hughie's valiant act.

"As a person, there was none better."

- CSM Robert Apala

"There's a lot of things Soldiers do, but when they give the ultimate sacrifice, I think we need to remember them," CSM Jolly said. "For him to lose his life in that country, and for the terminal in that country to be named after him for the sacrifice he [made for that nation], I think that speaks high on a lot of things."

"It was a great honor to be able to do that for him and his Family," said CSM Apala. "I think for me it's an honor because serving with that caliber of Soldier is just phenomenal. He was a very responsible, respectful and dedicated Soldier. He was willing to give everything. And it wasn't for an American Soldier—it was for one of our Afghan brothers."

SGT Hughie also had a Forward Operating Base named after him, as well as a memorial highway in Oklahoma. His extraordinary contributions to his unit, the Guard, his Nation and his Family are remembered through these memorials.

SGT Hughie's newest tribute, the Hughie Terminal, not only honors his honorable service and sacrifice, but it also acts as a reminder to always remember and honor the Soldiers who gave everything for their country, no matter how long ago that sacrifice occurred.

"Little things like that mean a lot to the Soldiers that served with him and also his Family," CSM Jolly explained. "It's easy to acknowledge it when it happens and move on, but I think it's good that we don't forget. For the younger generations and the Soldiers in the units now, I don't want them to forget. They might not know [the fallen Soldiers] individually like we did, but I don't want the Soldiers' stories to be forgotten."



Officials at New Kabul Compound (NKC) bow their heads alongside Oklahoma Army National Guard Soldiers of the 180th Cavalry Regiment during a dedication ceremony at the remodeled NKC flight terminal on Friday, Aug. 31, 2018, in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Oklahoma Army National Guard photos by CPT Leanna Maschino



Soldiers who serve in a combat zone can exclude certain pay from their taxable income.

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For more information about CZTE, go to MyArmyBenefits.us.army.mil, select Benefit Library from the main menu, then Federal-Benefits, Pay, Combat-Zone-Tax-Exclusion (CZTE).



Illinois and South Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers with Joint Task Force Marauders' Bravo Company, 238th General Support Aviation Battalion, transport personnel and supplies between locations in Afghanistan.

South Carolina Army National Guard photo by CPT Jessica Donnelly

FEATURE

is Back

Tennessee Army National Guard Represents America's Resolve to Ensure Eastern Europe's Security

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

278th Armored Cavalry Regiment's SGT Ryan Duginski, M1 Abrams Tank master gunner, assigned to Battle Group Poland, performs a remote-fire procedure to test the vehicle's proper firing capabilities at Bemowo Piskie Training Area, Poland, during the 278th's deployment to Poland in support of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence. Tennessee Army National Guard photo by 1LT Christina Shoptaw

ennessee Adjutant General MG Terry Haston was stationed near the Berlin Wall in 1989, when the wall came tumbling down. He said his State's current presence in Eastern Europe is not the same as it was for the American military in 1989, but it serves a similar purpose—to deter Russian aggression.

"I believe that our people are a visual deterrent," said MG Haston. "Sometimes, a big dog chained up in the backyard has a tendency to keep the burglars away. I think that's what this deployment is." According to MG Haston, several hundred Tennessee Army National Guard Soldiers are currently serving in Ukraine—mostly from the regimental headquarters of the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR)—to command the Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine. Several hundred more Soldiers from the 278th's Task Force Raider are in country heading up Battle Group Poland (BGPOL)—part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)'s Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP).

POLAND

Task Force Raider assumed control of BGPOL in September of 2018. In doing so, the unit is the first U.S. armored task force to provide a military presence along the eastern border of Poland while working under NATO.

"Our presence strengthens the defensive capability within Poland," said LTC Donny Hebel, commander of the Tennessee Army National Guard's 2nd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry



LEFT: Tennessee Soldier SPC Jesus Guerrero, a Soldier assigned to Battle Group Poland's Task Force Raider, reassembles an AK-47 rifle during a Polish "Tactical Loop" Uniformed Maneuver Competition, in Rajgród, Poland.

RIGHT: Soldiers with "Gunslinger" G Troop, 2nd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, operate an Abrams Tank, January, 2019, as part of training during Operation Raider Lightning, a winter operations training event conducted while the 278th was deployed to Poland.

Tennessee Army National Guard photo by SGT Sarah Kirby

Tennessee Army National Guard photo by SGT Arturo Guzman

Regiment (Task Force Raider), during an interview with Army reporters, "[It] is evidence of continued U.S. commitment to NATO, as well as to the deterrence of [foreign] aggression.

BGPOL is comprised of soldiers from Croatia, Romania, the United Kingdom and the United States, all serving with the Polish 15th Mechanized Brigade as a unified defense and deterrence force in northeast Poland.

> "The United States has not had heavy forces this far [into] Europe since November of 1989," emphasized MG Haston at the 278th's transition ceremony when they took

command of BGPOL last September. "We are bringing a lot of disciplined firepower here to Poland. This mission shows that we have not taken our eye off of our Eastern European allies. We are here in defense and deterrence against Russian provocation; it simply will not be taken lightly."

Soldiers on the ground offered a similar sentiment when speaking about the deployment. SPC Graham Binkley, a Dismounted Team Leader with Third Platoon, E Company of the 278th, echoed MG Haston's remarks and noted a secondary objective.

"Our primary mission here is to be a deterrent," he said. "Unfortunately, it's difficult to measure what doesn't happen, but I'm confident our presence makes any potential aggressors think twice. Our secondary mission is to continue to honor our NATO commitment and continue to foster goodwill."

Increasing interoperability is a major initiative on the agenda. "Every deployment results in not one, but two gains for the Joint Force," said Chief of the National Guard Bureau Gen Joseph Lengyel during a visit with the 278th last Christmas season at BGPOL. "The obvious gain is the mission gets accomplished. But also, with each deployment, we build readiness and lethality, a key objective of our National Defense Strategy."

As far as training goes, MG Haston said, it comes close to being an ideal situation. "While they're training, it's been a very valuable experience," he commented. "I've talked to several leaders there, and they say this is the best training we've ever had. It's like what Soldiering should be."

A Soldier from Tennessee Army National Guard's 278th Task Force Raider assigned to Battle Group Poland participates in Operation Raider Thunder, a company team-level live-fire exercise, while deployed in support of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence.

Tennessee Army National Guard photo by SGT Arturo Guzman



UKRAINE

In Ukraine, the 278th is assisting in the military training of Ukrainian forces as part of Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine (JMTG-U). This multilateral group is led by the Combat Training Center (CTC) branch, which is comprised of units from Canada, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine and the United States. JMTG-U is working to build up the training capabilities of the Yavoriv Combat Training Center. Over the years, several Army National Guard units have helped man JMTG-U, including troops from California, New York, Oklahoma and currently, Tennessee.

"All international units stationed in Ukraine are tasked with enhancing the capabilities of the training site, with the purpose of assisting the Ukraine military to create a sustainable training program for combat units," said the 278th's 2LT Richard Mayfield, who is serving as a mentor while stationed at the Yavoriv CTC.

At the CTC, a team of Ukrainian observer controllertrainers (OC-Ts) lead the training of rotational brigades of Ukrainian soldiers. The international Soldiers serve as mentors to the Ukrainian OC-Ts.

"The Ukraine military looks to us as an important support

to what they are trying to do. We assist by

Security Center in Yavoriv, Ukraine, as part of Exercise Rapid Trident, September, 2018.

Ukrainian soldiers operate in a contact zone during a combat tactics exercise at the International Peacekeeping and

means of coaching and teaching standards and best practices," noted 2LT Mayfield. "A lot of our current focus is on troop leading procedures, orders production and military standards. I have always wanted to be in a position to teach and coach, and this is certainly a chance to do that."

California Army National Guard photo by SPC Amy Carle

While it may be the U.S. Soldiers who are responsible for the day-to-day training of the OC-Ts, the benefits of the resulting interoperability are as significant for those mentors as they are for the Ukrainian student-Soldiers.

"Whether the Ukrainian OC-Ts are riding atop mechanized vehicles or walking alongside the training units during their tactical movements, you can usually find a U.S. mentor right there with them, regardless of rain, sleet or snow," said 1LT Logan Shrum of the 278th, who is also assigned as a mentor at the Yavoriv CTC.

"They say that adversity tends to build comradery," 1LT Shrum continued. "The

> adverse conditions under which the Ukrainian forces train certainly show that to be true. I consider many of Ukraine's OC-Ts, whom we work closely with, to be valued friends and partners."

> Last fall, the members of the 278th stationed at the Yavoriv CTC assisted in the multilateral training, Exercise Rapid Trident. Held at the International Peacekeeping and Security Center, also located in Yavoriv, Rapid Trident is an annual, two-week exercise that was created to enhance joint combined interoperability across allied and partner nations of Ukraine. The event primarily concentrates on defensive operations including



LTC Matthew Smith of the Tennessee Army National Guard briefs a Ukrainian soldier, via an interpreter, during Exercise Rapid Trident 18 held at the Yavoriv Combat Training Center, Ukraine.

Tennessee Army National Guard photo by SGT Timothy Massey



command post and field training exercises.

COL Timothy Cleveland, deputy commander for the 278th ACR, told Soldiers at the opening ceremony:

"During the exercise, units will have to overcome the opposing forces, time, the elements and their own tendencies in order to be victorious. In a world of constant conflict, nations are not alone, and Rapid Trident affirms this fact with 13 guest nations participating at all levels of the exercise from opposing forces to instructors and observers."

Rapid Trident also serves as the validation exercise for Ukrainian units that have completed a rotation at the Yavoriv CTC. During the event, exercises are completed only by the Ukrainian troops who are being observed for validation, while the international troops serve in support roles to include trainers, observers and mentors. The 2018 event hosted 2,200 participants from 14 nations— Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Georgia, Germany, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States. Training events included a brigade-level computer-assisted command post exercise, situational training lanes and a live-play field training exercise. SGT Burton Holloway of Tennessee's 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment demonstrates room clearing procedures as part of a training event at the Yavoriv Combat Training Center, Ukraine, November 2018. Tennessee Army National Guard photo by SGT Timothy Massey

"There is a tremendous amount of benefit for National Guard units to come over to Europe," said U.S. Army Europe's Army National Guard Deputy Commanding General MG John Gronski during a visit to the 2018 iteration of Rapid Trident. "First, it's important to develop those strong relationships with our allies and partners. Second, when National Guard units come to Europe and participate in exercises, they build a tremendous amount of readiness and it gives them an opportunity like no other training area does to train alongside allies and partners."

ALWAYS READY

The work being done by Tennessee Army National Guard troops as part JMTG-U, BGPOL and at exercises such as Rapid Trident all point to the fact that the United States remains committed to the defense of Eastern Europe. It is a commitment that has existed since World War II and remains strong today.

"You can't pay for the kind of relationships being built soldier-tosoldier right here," Gen Lengyel said. "This is the kind of exchange that cements enduring partnerships with our allies at the deepest level, through individual relationships at every rank." A NATO linguist translates for 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment Soldiers, 1LT Logan Shrum (second left) and 1LT Cruz Tomblin (far right) as they speak with a Ukrainian soldier during training at the Yavoriv Combat Training Center, Ukraine in November, 2018.

Tennessee Army National Guard photo by SGT Timothy Massey

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

VT Henry Johnson was the first American war hero of the war to end all wars, but his fight did not end in the trenches.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, over 100,000 Americans died in World War I, a war which started just over a hundred years ago. Henry Johnson, then of the 369th Infantry Regiment, New York Army National Guard, popularly known as the "Harlem Hellfighters," was not one of the many killed. However, he came very close to being added to the roll of the 16 million people worldwide that made the ultimate sacrifice during WWI.

The 369th was the best known African American unit of WWI. Though the Soldiers of the unit desired to get into the fight in Europe, these men

ABOVE: Soldiers of the "Harlem Hellfighters," 369th Infantry Regiment, New York Army National Guard, are depicted in a WWI battle scene as they advance on the battlefield during the Meuse-Argonne offensive in Sechault, France, Sept. 29, 1918.

RIGHT: SGT Henry Johnson

Images courtesy U.S. Army

were often relegated to manual labor duties because White Soldiers refused to fight with them. In spite of this, requests for Soldiers from French Allies convinced GEN John J. Pershing, Commander of the American Expeditionary Forces on the Western Front in World

War I, to detach the 369th to the battlefield under control of the French Fourth Army's 126th Division.

> "They were organized in 1916 as a New York State National Guard Regiment," said Courtney Burns, director of military history, New York State Military Museum. "They were anxious to prove that they were responsible citizens, that they were patriotic Americans and were willing to serve their part in [hopes of achieving] racial justice and equality."

> > It was on the night of May 15, 1918, after having endured combat patrols, raids and artillery barrages, that PVT Johnson, 26 years old at that time, and PVT Needham Roberts, only 17 at the time, were dispatched to guard a bridge over



the Aisne River in France. While the pair may have hoped for a mundane night of standing watch, the Germans had other ideas.

An enemy patrol with an estimated 20 to 24 troops had a mission to take out the outpost where the privates were stationed and bring them back as prisoners. When the clock turned towards 2:00 a.m., the German soldiers approached the position. Shots rang out and the sound of wire cutters put the two American privates on alert.

PVT Johnson opened a box of grenades and told PVT Roberts to run back and alert the main line of defense. At that moment, the first enemy grenades landed on their position. PVT Johnson threw grenades of his own, stalling the German patrol, but PVT Roberts was struck down with shrapnel wounds to his arm and hip.

Out of grenades, PVT Johnson took up his French rifle. According to Arthur Little, the commander of the 369th, who authored the 1936 book "From Harlem to the Rhine," the French rifles issued to the 369th only had three rounds per clip.

"Johnson fired his three shots," Little

Soldiers of the 369th Infantry Regiment, New York Army National Guard man a WWI trench on the battlefield in France.

Courtesy photo

wrote. "The last one almost muzzle to breast of the Boche [German] bearing down upon him. As the German fell, a comrade jumped over his body, pistol in hand, to avenge his death. There was no time for reloading. Johnson swung his

"Our men were unanimous in the opinion that death was to be preferred to a German prison. But Johnson was of the opinion that victory was to be preferred to either."

- ARTHUR LITTLE

rifle round his head, and brought it down with a thrown blow upon the head of the German. The German went down."

PVT Johnson looked over to assist PVT Roberts. He observed two Germans lifting the younger American Soldier up to carry him off towards the German lines. "Our men were unanimous in the opinion that death was to be preferred to a German prison," Little wrote. "But Johnson was of the opinion that victory was to be preferred to either."

PVT Johnson ran to the aid of PVT Roberts. He whipped out his Armyissued bolo knife and went on the attack. Little continued:

"As Johnson sprang, he unsheathed his bolo knife, and as his knees landed upon the shoulders of that ill-fated Boche, the blade of the knife was buried to the hilt through the crown of the German's head."

The threat to PVT Roberts was eliminated and PVT Johnson turned to deal with the rest of the enemy. But he was struck by a bullet from an enemy automatic pistol. Even this did not stop the Soldier. PVT Johnson lunged forward, stabbing and slashing at the enemy. His grim, relentless determination took the fighting spirit out of the enemy. The Germans panicked and retreated with the sounds of advancing Allied Soldiers drawing louder from the rear.

With the arrival of fellow Americans, at last, PVT Johnson's and PVT Roberts' struggle for survival was finished. PVT Johnson had sustained a total of 21 wounds in order to achieve his victory.

"Each slash meant something, believe me," PVT Johnson told a reporter, according to a Smithsonian article on the





historical events. "There wasn't anything so fine about it. Just fought for my life. A rabbit would have done that."

A 1920 New York Army National Guard report stated the German attackers had abandoned a considerable quantity of firearms, including automatic pistols at the scene. They had carried away their wounded and dead, but the report was able to draw some conclusions.

"He [PVT Johnson] killed one German with rifle fire, knocked one down with clubbed rifle, killed two with bolo, killed one with grenade, and, it is believed, wounded others," the National Guard reported.

Both privates received France's highest honor, the Croix du Guerre, after the battle. In 2015, PVT Johnson was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor by President Barack Obama.

"Bottom line, they had a great impact on America as a whole, because it is an American story," explained

President Barack Obama awards the Medal of Honor posthumously to PVT Henry Johnson for conspicuous gallantry during World War I, at a ceremony in the East Room of the White House, June 2, 2015. CSM Louis Wilson accepts the Medal of Honor.

Official White House photo by Pete Souza

Krewasky A. Salter, Ph.D., a military history curator at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African-American History and Culture.

Salter went on to note that PVT Johnson's action may have briefly unified the country because he was the first American Soldier of any race to be



recognized for conspicuous gallantry on the battlefield during WWI. But that unification did not last long. America's racial troubles would continue to bear down on the Nation.

"I think the key [term] is 'ever so briefly,' because that was in May of 1918," Salter said. "And then, of course, the war officially ends in November of 1918. Then, within six or seven months of the next year of 1919, we have this period that you may be aware of called the 'Red Summer.' "

Because of his fame, the war hero went on the lecture circuit to speak on his WWI experiences in 1919. That truth included statements that were critical of the treatment of African-American Soldiers by their White counterparts before and during the war. PVT Johnson was forced out of his lecture work as a consequence.

Many other African-American Soldiers who were returning from WWI also spoke out against the inequality they experienced as returning Veterans. They had bled for freedom on the battlefields of Europe and now expected their freedoms back home in America.

The Red Summer was a result of this societal unrest. During the summer of 1919, race riots broke out across the country leading to many deaths. But the Civil Rights movement was decades off and, sadly, newly promoted SGT Johnson would not be there to see it. The Red Summer was just a foreshadowing of the long journey ahead for Black America.

Before the Red Summer, and after the 369th had returned home, there was a major parade for the Harlem Hellfighters in New York City in which SGT Johnson rode at the head.

The regiment was lauded not only for PVT Johnson's fighting spirit, but for accomplishments of the unit as a whole. Soldiers from the 369th received 171 decorations of valor during the war and the entire unit was awarded the Croix du Guerre. It is said that not a single Harlem Hellfighter ever became a prisoner and that they never gave up a foot of ground during ABOVE: Crowds in New York City await the parading Soldiers of the 369th "Harlem Hellfighters" Infantry Regiment, New York Army National Guard, after the Soldiers returned home as heroes for victoriously serving as the first African American unit to serve as part of the U.S. expeditionary force in World War I.

National Archives photo by Paul Thompson

LEFT: SGT Henry Johnson riding in a car with fellow Harlem Hellfighters during a welcome home parade up Fifth Avenue upon their return from battle in WWI, February 1919.

Photo courtesy New York Division of Military and Naval Affairs

the war. The unit's band is also credited with introducing Jazz to Europe.

PVT Johnson did what he could. He sacrificed almost everything for his country. He bled in the trenches of Europe for the United States. He spoke out against racism in the military when he was given the rare opportunity for an African-American voice to be heard publicly.

After having given almost everything, he was left with almost nothing. He went back to his hometown of Albany, New York, to try to get work. Sadly, he could no longer hold the railroad porter position he had before the war because his combat injuries prevented him from doing the heavy lifting required as part of that job. He died destitute in 1929, but was buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full honors.

Today the 369th Sustainment Brigade and 369th Special Troops Battalion carries on the proud legacy of the Hellfighters as an Army National Guard unit out of Harlem, New York. 1040 U.S. Individual Income Tax Return

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SSG Patrick Shields



Guard Soldier Takes Down Shooter at High School Football Game

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

SG Patrick Shields of Detachment 1, 1175th Transportation Company, Tennessee Army National Guard, was clearing his tailgating gear after watching his son play in the annual homecoming football game at Haywood High School in Brownsville, Tennessee, on Oct. 5, 2018. It had been a good evening. His son's team won the game. The Tomcats overcame the Crockett County Cavaliers 41 to 14. By 9:30 p.m., the game was over and a couple hundred people were milling around the school parking lot celebrating the team's victory. A 1996 graduate of Haywood High School himself, SSG Shields was waiting outside the school to pick up his son and go home. It was then that the celebration turned to chaos.

SSG Shields heard what he said he thought might be fireworks going off. The school administrators had launched fireworks at the beginning of the game and he thought they might be setting off a second round. When he looked in the direction from which the noise came, he saw a crowd of people running toward him. In the midst of the crowd was an armed teen, running and shooting a pistol into the group. Fire could be seen blazing from the pistol barrel, SSG Shields recalled.

"I could not make out if he was shooting at one particular person or [randomly at] the group of people," said SSG Shields. "Then as they got closer, I was thinking to myself, reminding myself to grab this kid before he hurts someone,



SSG Shields' son, Taylor Shields (front right) is shown playing in the homecoming football game early on the night of the shooting. Haywood County Schools photo by Jonathan Pillow

or worse, hurts a lot of people. As they got closer—within two or three feet—I ran towards him and that's when I tackled with him up against the fence."

SSG Shields pushed his forearm into the shooter's neck and grabbed for the gun with his other hand as the pair collided into the fence. They came off the fence and on instinct the Soldier grabbed the shooter by the back of the shirt and threw him to the ground. He pulled the assailant's right hand, which held the pistol, behind his back. The gun was dislodged and SSG Shields' brother, Gregory Shields, quickly moved to secure the weapon. Officers from the Brownsville Police Department were quickly on the scene to take the shooter into custody.

SSG Patrick Shields poses at a ceremony held in his honor where he received a proclamation signed by the Mayors of Brownsville, Tenn., and neighboring Stanton, Tenn., for his heroic acts on Oct. 5, 2018.

SSG Patrick Shields (second left) and his brother Gregory Shields (far left) stand with SSG Shields' wife and children before the brothers begin to lead as grand marshals in the 2018 Brownsville City Christmas Parade, an honor bestowed on the Shields brothers for their selfless acts at Haywood High School.



Two victims, Demetrius Harper and Cameshia Murphy, were injured by the shooter's four shots, which had been precipitated by a fight. According to a report from the Brownsville Police Department, Harper was shot twice in the back and Murphy was shot in the foot. Both were treated at a local hospital for their injuries and then released. Thanks to SSG Shields' quick actions, no lives were lost during the incident. The 16-year-old shooter was charged with criminal attempt to commit firstdegree-murder, aggravated assault and reckless endangerment.

> While everyone else was running to get away from danger, SSG Shields said his military instinct took over. He recognized that someone had to do something to prevent bloodshed. He was the right person, at the right time to do what needed to be done.

> > The Army National Guard noncommissioned officer attributed his success at



RIGHT: Cameshia Murphy, who was shot during the school shooting, joins SSG Shields on the Steve Harvey Show to thank him for saving her life.

apprehending the shooter to the Army training he has received across his 22 years of service, which include three overseas deployments.

"I know especially during deployment [we train on] different techniques for close combat situations in case you have to come close and handle people," SSG Shields noted. "How to handle yourself, how to actually grab a weapon from someone, the technical things you need to do to protect yourself and take down the enemy."

"He literally went to a gunfight with nothing but his fists and that's crazy to me—in a good way," said SSG Michael Ryan, an assistant squad leader with the 1175th and friend of SSG Shields. "It's probably just ingrained in his personality, you know, that protective sense. Then he has that sense of duty that the military ingrains in you as well."

"Very respectful—that is my initial impression of him, you know—strong and respectful. I just enjoy being around him and enjoyed training with him," remarked SSG Ryan as we he went on to describe the level of dedication SSG Shields has shown for kids in the community in the past.

SSG Ryan's son was on a baseball team that at the time was selling barbeque meat as part of a fundraiser. In order to turn a profit for the fundraiser, the team had to sell the meat at a bit of an inflated price. But that did not stop SSG Shields from supporting the effort.

"He [SSG Shields] said, 'Man, I'll do anything to support the kids.' I know he could have gone to Kroger or any other grocery store and bought [the meat at half the price we were selling]," recalled SSG Ryan. "He did not have to buy that from my son, but he said, 'Anything to help the kids out.' That stuck in my brain."

Given SSG Shields' expressed commitment to doing "anything to help

the kids," his selfless actions on October 5, 2018, may not have come as a surprise, but the community showered him with praise and admiration nonetheless. The city of Brownsville recognized the courage shown by SSG Shields by presenting him with the key to the city, and both he and his brother were chosen to be Co-Grand Marshals of the Brownsville 2018 Christmas Parade.

For Guard Soldiers, being ready to defend country and community from enemies both foreign and domestic is part of the job, SSG Ryan said. In a very real sense, he lived up to the Guard commitment of being always ready and always there.

A statement put out by Brownsville Police Chief Barry Diebold summed it up simply, "Mr. Shields' quick thinking saved many lives."

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FEATURE

THEY WEAR THE GREEN. THEY WEAR THE BLUE.

Three Small-Town Americans Give Big-Time Service

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak Idaho Army National Guard photos by 1LT Robert Barney

Middleton Police photos courtesy Middleton Police Department

FROM LEFT: Pictured on duty for the Idaho Army National Guard are CPT Mike Barley, SFC Nathan Hilkey and CPT Haily Barley.

Thirty percent of Middleton Idaho's small police department is made up of Army National Guard Soldiers. Their skills are critically needed as the community experiences growing pains.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that as of July 2017, Middleton's population was 7,439. That's a 35 percent increase over the 2010 population and the local police department reports the community is continuing to expand.

"It's growing pains," said Middleton Police Department Chief Alan Takeuchi. "A lot of people are interested in the feel of the city. People feel safe. [It's] very family-oriented, when it comes to the way that the city is being designed."

The safeguarding of Middleton is a large responsibility for a department of just nine officers. The officers have a smorgasbord of law enforcement duties. Among the most common calls in Middleton are drug offenses, juvenile crime and traffic violations, the chief said.

"We see a lot of juvenile problems," he reported. "I think every town has a drug problem, but those two go hand in hand kids out doing what they're not supposed to be doing and getting into drugs. We [also] have a lot of traffic issues because more people are coming into a smaller, congested area of town." Since the department is small, its officers often have more than one role to fulfill. Having Idaho Army National Guard Soldiers as part of the police team is a force multiplier because of their military experience and ability to function effectively in many roles. Takeuchi said he believes the expertise of CPT Haily Barley, CPT Mike Barley and SFC Nathan Hilkey is invaluable to the department.

"They're leaps and bounds beyond someone that we would just hire and send to a police academy," he said.

The Soldier/Officers provided their perspective on their work and explained their attraction to public service.

CPT Haily Barley

"The first opportunity I got, I enlisted," CPT Haily Barley said. She went on to note that she has wanted to be both a police officer and a Soldier from the time she was a young girl. During her childhood, all the men in her family served in the military in some aspect. She decided then that military service was something she wanted to do too. CPT H. Barley was raised by her grandparents, who she said grew up during WWI and were very "old school." It was her grandparents who taught her about dedication to service, community and country.

"[After enlisting,] I got accepted to the University of Idaho. From there, I started studying Justice Studies for law enforcement, because that's what I wanted to do. And I did the military as I was going through school," CPT H. Barley explained.

She said she enjoys being both a Guard Soldier and a police officer, but there are ups and downs in each position. Currently she is the signal officer for the Idaho Guard's Cavalry Brigade Combat Team, 116th Brigade Engineer Battalion; however, she said it is hard to advance in her present field and would like to branch out to engineering. She added that she would like to be back working with the Soldiers.

POLICF

"I want to go engineer," CPT H. Barley remarked. "I love our engineers, because you're blowing things up. You're shooting big guns."

For the city of Middleton, she works as the school resource officer at four different Middleton public schools and also handles most of the sex abuse cases for the police department. She said she enjoys serving and especially loves working with the students.

"Helping someone getting the bad guy, or getting drugs off the street, making our community better— [that's a] huge reward," she said. "Being involved with the kids and making their day better, being someone they can confide in, those are wins. I have a goal—every day make at least three people laugh."

CPT H. Barley is well aware though that not everything is a laughing matter. She's been there for her neighbors, including Veterans, when the chips were down. Being a Soldier has helped her relate to Veterans in crisis and that has encouraged them to confide in her.

"There have been a lot of issues with suicidal subjects," she recalled. "We go out on those calls all the time and a lot of them are Veterans. They don't trust. You're a cop and automatically they kind of get a little rigid. There was a guy that held himself at gunpoint for a couple hours, and he would only talk to me and three other guys.

They're Vets too. He sat down for hours and just talked to us and just sobbed. He was experiencing a mental breakdown, but having that camaraderie [helped him]."

CPT Mike Barley

"I actually met my wife at my first drill," CPT Mike Barley recalled. "She was the cadet cadre and I was just a private. She's very social, very personable. I'm very logical. She's kind of the Captain Kirk to my Spock."

CPT Mike Barley is married to CPT Haily Barley. He is the personnel officer for the 2nd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment (Combined Arms Battalion) and also serves on the Middleton Police Department. He works as the police force's drug recognition expert, team lead and field training officer.

"I initially [joined the National Guard] mainly because they said they'd pay for my college," recalled CPT M. Barley. "It was as I went through ROTC, that I really became interested in the Guard. Then, I took a law enforcement job one summer while I was going to medical school and I loved it so much that I stayed with it."

POLICE

The Barley duo came to Middleton as a package deal. The community hired the couple together. CPT M. Barley was offered the job by Takeuchi, but he was hesitant to accept because his wife, CPT H. Barley, also needed to secure a position.

"My wife, she just happened to be third on the hiring list after me," he explained. "So, the chief went to the mayor and the mayor went to the city council. They approved to hire her too."

"It's been wonderful," said CPT M. Barley. "I love smaller departments because it gives you the freedom of doing almost anything you want to pursue. For me, I'm still interested in biology, so I became a drug recognition expert, which requires hundreds of hours of training and certification. But they let me do it. I'm also a phlebotomist with the department so I can take blood draws. They never said 'no' to me so it's been great. You don't get pigeonholed with this department."

CPT M. Barley said he attributes a large part of his success in the Middleton Police Department to his experience with the Army National Guard—most notably his leadership skills. His work as the team lead for the police force relates quite a bit to his work in the Idaho Army National Guard.

"I help the [police] chief make decisions about personnel and training for the department," CPT M. Barley said. "I actually line out our training very similarly to how we do it in the Guard."

The Middleton Police Department Photo courtesy Middleton Police Department

POLICE



SFC Nathan Hilkey

Like fellow Middleton police officer CPT H. Barley, SFC Nathan Hilkey said he has wanted to serve since he was very young—five-years-old to be exact. His favorite toy was a GI Joe military police officer, complete with K9 companion, he recalled.

"It's what I've always wanted to do. My mom's entire side of the family was cops," he said.

Today, SFC Hilkey is working to build the Middleton police department's canine program. One hundred sixty hours of training are required to develop a qualified police dog, he said. SFC Hilkey hopes to partner with his Chocolate Labrador for the role, which would streamline the process since the dog is already owned by an officer and housing is provided.

In the Guard, SFC Hilkey filled a wide variety of roles working as a military police officer with the Idaho Army National Guard's Installation

Support Unit. A Guard Soldier for 19 years, SFC Hilkey has been deployed four times and was assigned diverse tasks during each deployment. He said his first deployment was to Kirkuk, Iraq, where he was "bagging and tagging bad guys," and taking them back to the main base for interrogations. During his second deployment he worked out of Camp Liberty in Iraq performing convoy security. On his third deployment at Camp Eggers in Afghanistan, he was in charge of the gate guard for force protection. Lastly, he was appointed to the personal security detail for celebrities and generals at the New Kabul

Compound in Afghanistan, where he also helped train Afghan police officers.

SFC Hilkey retired from the Army National Guard at the end of last year, but says he'll continue to serve with the Middleton Police Department until, "they tell me to leave." He remarked that he knows the training, command structure and sense of responsibility he learned in the Army will continue to serve him well in his career as a police officer.

> "The rewards [they bring to the police department are] the experience, the confidence and the leadership—hands down," said Takeuchi. "Those are things that you just can't teach to a brand new officer. I feel like they bring a lot to the table with those kinds of qualities."

GEAR + TECH

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New Technology for Recoilless Rifle Leaves the Enemy with No Place to Hide

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak

ficials at Program Executive Office (PEO) Soldier have reported work on a new integration of systems that will make a significant impact for infantry Soldiers on the ground today and well into the future. With the introduction of a fix for a well-known limitation of the M3 Multi-Role Anti-Armor Anti-Tank Weapon System—more commonly referred to as the Carl-Gustaf Recoilless Rifle—a formidable weapon system has been made even more lethal.

"We had a capability gap in that we could not effectively engage targets at night with the [Carl-Gustaf Rifle]," said CPT Alex Stewart of the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment. "I expected our Soldiers to learn how to mount, operate and make adjustments to the ITWS [Integrated Thermal Weapons Sight] to give us that capability."

Last year, Soldiers of the 2-22nd had the opportunity to test PEO Soldier's latest aiming technology firsthand during a livefire exercise at Fort Drum, New York.

New equipment trainers from two of PEO Soldier's sub-divisions, Project Manager Soldier Sensors and Lasers (PM SSL) and Project Manager Soldier Weapons (PM SW), worked with the 2-22nd to teach the Soldiers how to use the ITWS on the M3 Carl-Gustaf Recoilless Rifle. By using the ITWS in conjunction with the Carl-Gustaf rifle, the rifle can now be relied upon to accurately target not only during the day, but also at night and in limited-visibility conditions. The ITWS combines the advanced technology of the AN/PAS-13E Thermal Weapons Sight (TWS) and the AN/PSQ -23A Small Tactical Optical Rifle Mounted-Product Improved (STORM-PI) with the might of the Carl-Gustaf rifle to get the job done.

The TWS is an advanced infrared weapon sight and was co-developed by the U.S. Army and Raytheon. It requires no visible light to operate, unlike image intensifiers that require low levels of light for effective operation. The TWS does not shut down when hit by direct light and its operation is virtually undetectable as it operates silently without any heat or radio frequency emissions. The unit boasts a 3X electronic zoom, which allows it to be used as either a weapon-mounted sight or hand-held imager. Due to its electronically programmable reticles, the TWS is compatible not just with the Carl-Gustaf rifle, but with a wide range of weapons. It also offers a multi-function digital input/ output port for remote operation and emits a video signal for external viewing and recording. The sight can recognize a human at over 1,000 meters and weighs just over 2 pounds with batteries installed.

The STORM-PI, developed by Insight Technology, is a weapon-mounted, battery-operated laser rangefinder that

AN/PSQ -23A Small Tactical Optical Rifle Mounted-Product Improved (STORM-PI)

Image courtesy L3 Warrior Mission Solutions

Image courtesy Raytheon Company

AN/PAS-13E Thermal Weapon Sight (TWS)

A Soldier of the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, tests a new integrated thermal weapons sight as an enhanced

employs in its functionality integrated infrared illumination, aiming lasers and a digital magnetic compass. When used together with a global positioning system, the unit can display target locations as geo-spatial coordinates. When mounted, the unit's aim lasers can be co-aligned with existing weapon optics, and the infrared illuminator facilitates targeting in lowlight conditions. Weighing in at just over 1 pound, the STORM-PI has a battery life of six hours and its rangefinder has a maximum range of 10,000 meters.

Photo courtesy PEO Soldier

targeting system for the Carl Gustaf Recoilless Rifle, at Fort Drum, N.Y.

According to PM SSL's Special Operations Training Instructor Lead Lonnie Schnepp, the TWS/STORM-PI combination provides Soldiers with "a new level of lethality." When coupled with the STORM-PI, the TWS supplies Soldiers with precise range and aiming calculations. Moreover, the TWS enables Soldiers to detect and engage targets at all times of the day and night, including in limitedvisibility situations.

"The ITWS allowed us to detect, aim and fire on a target that could not be seen with the naked eye," said CPT Stewart. "The tank hulk was obscured by overgrown vegetation, but when viewed through the [TWS], it was glowing. Anytime Soldiers get to shoot high explosives at a target they would not normally be able to see, is a good day."

GEAR + TECH



BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

Images courtesy PEO Soldier

D ptimizing Soldier protection serves to improve the lethality and mobility of our Soldiers. When individual Soldiers experience improvements, the entire force benefits and improves as a whole. In keeping with its mission of supporting the Department of Defense (DoD)'s ongoing Soldier protection and modernization efforts, last year Program Executive Officer (PEO) Soldier, based out of Fort Belvoir, Virginia, developed the new Soldier Protection System (SPS). The system offers a multitude of equipment advances, including some that are particularly beneficial to female Soldiers.

In recent years, body armor has become more conducive to the needs of women. This is because women are better and more capable Soldiers when they are given equipment developed specifically for their needs. That was the message delivered by LTC Ginger Whitehead, product manager for Soldier Protection and Individual Equipment at PEO Soldier, during a meeting last June with the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS)—a committee composed of civilians appointed by the Secretary of Defense to offer advice and recommendations on matters related to female military professionals.

The designs for the new SPS continue in the trend of gear developed with features that facilitate optimal performance for male and female Soldiers alike. Among other features, the new system includes a unisex mandible and a new retention strap mechanism that replaces the old X-formation retention strap that was uncomfortable for female Soldiers wearing a hair bun, which is required for female Soldiers with long hair. The new system uses an H-back that fits around the bun, allowing for greater comfort and maneuverability.

Beneficial to all Soldiers is the SPS' significant weight reduction when compared to older systems. The SPS optimizes Soldier protection while effectively reducing weight by using the

latest technologies in personal protective equipment. SPS' Vital Torso Protection (VTP) variants include lighter weight Enhanced Small Arm Protective Inserts/ Enhanced Side Ballistic Inserts (ESAPI/ ESBI) as well as the X Threat Small Arms Protective Inserts (XSAPI) and X Threat Side Ballistic Inserts (XSBI) for deployers. The new Torso and Extremity Protection (TEP) is comprised of multiple components, including the Modular Scalable Vest (MSV) that is now 5 pounds lighter and less bulky than the previous version. SPS replaces the capability of multiple current systems to provide Soldiers with an overall 10 percent weight reduction, helping to increase mobility and effectiveness.

The Ballistic Combat Shirt (BCS) is made of breathable fabric and has small ballistic protection integrated into the fabric. The reconfigured Blast Pelvic Protector is worn over combat pants to protect against threats like improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The new Ballistic Battle Belt (B3) allows for Soldiers to strap certain gear to the hip instead of their vest, alleviating weight from the shoulders. These improved aspects of the SPS promote a better range of motion.

"Mobility equals survivability," said LTC Whitehead. "If you're mobile and have greater range of motion, you can move faster when you need to, and that's the approach we've taken with body armor – driving the weight down."

The new SPS features a new Integrated

LTC Ginger Whitehead, product manager for Soldier Protection and Individual Equipment at PEO Soldier, shows members of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services some of the new Soldier Protection System's more female-friendly components.

U.S. Army photo by Debra Dawson

H-back Retention Strap

Modular Scalable Vest (MSV)

Ballistic Combat Shirt (BCS)

Ballistic Battle Belt (B3)

Head Protection system (IHPS) that includes a 5 percent lighter weight helmet system composed of helmet/maxillofacial and passive hearing protection with increased blunt impact performance. Resembling a motorcycle helmet, add-on items like a now unisex lower jaw protector, a visor, a protective layer on top for highthreat situations and head-mounted night vision goggles can be attached to the helmet.

To ensure the improvements in equipment were suitable for women, female Soldiers were included in a five-week test group that performed platoon and squad operations, including individual movement tactics, urban operations, live-fire tests, marksmanship comparisons and obstacle course maneuvers to assess the performance of the new personal protective equipment in tactical environments.

LTC Whitehead emphasized the importance of user evaluation, and the need to incorporate the appropriate demographic in those evaluations when developing new equipment.

"User evaluation is critical to implementing changes [that] have better form, fit and function," LTC Whitehead explained. "We are heading in an exciting direction, especially now with new Futures Brigades standing up and these cross-multi lethality teams, who are starting to have a lot of say in how we do body armor. I see them as part of the driving force in helping represent the user community in where we put our developmental efforts for future equipment, integration and use."

Blast Pelvic Protector

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Guard Soldiers often travel long distances to perform drill duty. **Soldiers who travel more than 100 miles for drill** may subtract travel expenses off their annual income when filing an income tax return.

Qualifying Soldiers may deduct expenses for mileage, lodging, meals, parking fees and other incidentals from Army National Guard income.

If using a professional tax preparer, Soldiers should make sure the preparer understands and reports in the return that these expenses are not itemized deductions. To receive free tax preparation and counseling, including information on subtracting travel expenses when filing your tax return, go to **www.MilitaryOneSource.mil/Tax-Services**, call **800-342-9647** or go to **MilitaryOneSource.mil/vita-location-lookup** to find the nearest Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) office.

PFC Kylandra Grixgby (left) and PVT Dayjarae Stubblefield, both of the Arizona Army National Guard, prepare for a driving test using the M1097 Humvee at Papago Park Military Reservation in Phoenix, Ariz. Arizona Army National Guard photo by SSG Brian A. Barbour





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AS CPT KYLE BENNETT, 2nd Battalion, 151st Infantry Regiment, looked up at his fellow Indiana Army National Guard Soldiers, he was duly impressed. The terrain he watched them climb was slick and the effort it took to ascend it CPT Bennett described as "slip and slide." Typhoon Jebi, the strongest typhoon to hit Japan's mainland in 25 years, loomed near and rain inundated the Japanese countryside where the Soldiers were training. In spite of a pending natural disaster, Exercise Orient Shield would not be delayed. Soldiers pushed through, not allowing themselves to be deterred.

Soldiers of the Indiana National Guard's 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team move through smoke at Ojojihara Maneuver Area, Japan, during a mock assault as part of Exercise Orient Shield 2018, an annual, bilateral field-training exercise co-hosted by U.S. Army Pacific Command and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force.





ABOVE: A Soldier of the Indiana Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 151st Infantry Regiment, takes a moment during a ceasefire while participating in a live-fire event at Exercise Orient Shield 2018.

BELOW: Indiana Soldiers of the 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team advance on an objective during a notional assault as part of Exercise Orient Shield, an annual tactical field training co-led by U.S. Army Pacific Command and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force.

> Participating Soldiers had to haul not only themselves, but also heavy machine guns up the slippery slope, which at times

exceeded a 45-degree angle. The troops pounded the ground and overcame each obstacle, bringing the weapons up with ropes and brute strength.

> "You knew you weren't in Kansas anymore, that's for sure," said SSG Randy Jackson with Alpha Company, 2nd Platoon, 2nd Battalion, 151st Infantry Regiment. SSG Jackson and his fellow Indiana Army National Guard Soldiers advanced up that hill three

times in the midst of a pre-typhoon downpour: once as a dry-fire run, once using blanks and once as a live-fire run. The risk of falling was real. Several Soldiers tumbled as they made their way up, but they took it in stride. SSG Jackson said the squad just laughed off the adversity.

"We all knew what we were there to do—just get the job done," he said.

Exercise Orient Shield began in 1985 and is now an annual bilateral exercise co-sponsored by U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF). The exercise serves to enhance combat readiness and interoperability at the battalion level between Japan and the United States. Orient Shield is a part of the larger regional event Pacific Pathways, a series of consecutive exercises all held in East Asia and conducted as collaborations between the United States and its allies and partners in the Asia-Pacific region. The exercises included in Pacific Pathways 2018 were Exercise Garuda Shield (Indonesia), Exercise Hamel (Australia), Exercise Hanuman Guardian (Thailand), Exercise Keris Strike (Malaysia) and

Exercise Orient Shiled (Japan). Units from the Indiana Guard participated in three of the five exercises—Exercise Hamel, Exercise Keris Strike and Exercise Orient Shield.


Soldiers of the Indiana National Guard's 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team maneuver from a Japanese helicopter Chinook during a training assault as part of Exercise Orient Shield 2018 held at Ojojihara Maneuver Area, Japan.

Orient Shield's 2018 iteration took place at Ojojihara Maneuver Area in northeast Japan in September 2018. Participants conducted three live-fire exercises, dismounted movements and command post exercises, which the brigade headquarters took part in, that were heavy on computer simulations.

CPT Bennett noted that for him, watching the Guard Soldiers work together to get up that hill and assail the bunker on top was perhaps representative of the long climb it took for him and his Soldiers to get to Orient Shield in the first place.

"Two years ago, we did an XCTC [eXportable Combat Training Capability]," he explained. "Then last year, we did JRTC [Joint Readiness Training Center], which is the big exercise at Fort Polk, Louisiana, for units preparing usually to deploy. This year was supposed to be a year we would deploy.

"Pathways came instead. We were given the Pathways mission to train with our allies instead of deploying. So, this was a capstone for [several] long years of training and preparing."

Then COL, now BG Robert Burke was commander of the 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Indiana Army National Guard, under which the 151st falls, during Orient Shield 2018. He spoke about the level of planning that went into executing Indiana's overall participation in the three Pacific Pathways events.

you knew you weren't in Kansas anymore, that's for sure.

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- SSG Randy Jackson

"We were selected in about March of 2017, to do this exercise, [while we] simultaneously prepared for JRTC last summer," BG Burke said. "We took a lot of the AARs [after-action-reviews] that we received [from JRTC] and we focused on the areas where we needed to improve—some of the tasks that we didn't do so well at JRTC. We decided to build those training objectives into our Pacific Pathways planning to help our overall training readiness.

"We started our initial planning for the entire Pacific Pathways exercise, " he recalled. "That took us into the fall and winter of 2017 in really breaking out these three different exercises [Hamel, Keris Strike and Orient Shield], which were really very intense."

Four planning conferences took place for each subordinate exercise under Pacific Pathways. Each conference ran CSM Kelley Kelly of the 2nd Battalion, 151st Infantry Regiment, consults with his Japanese counterpart after a mock assault conducted as part of Exercise Orient Shield 2018, a bilateral, tactical field-training event held between U.S. Army Pacific Command and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force.

three to five days and included four to six personnel from the 76th, usually including a trainer, a logistician or communications planner, a senior representative and one administrative person. From the conferences, a common set of training objectives was created for all 2018 Pacific Pathways exercises.

CPT Bennett described himself as a "go between" during the planning process. He was involved in coordinating operations during the planning conferences and also worked on overall planning in between drills back home in Indiana. He attended three of the conferences, where he helped coordinate events for Orient Shield that included functional training, a platoon live-fire event and a battalion field training exercise.

Plenty of face-to-face interaction took place between the Guard Soldiers and the soldiers of the JGSDF to increase interoperability. Functional training is just one example.

"The way it was supposed to work is our platoons would match up with a partner—a counterpart platoon in the Japanese Defense Force," CPT Bennett explained. "Then both platoons from both countries would provide some level of training for the day in the functional training lanes. They would train together and then share techniques and tactics with their platoon counterparts."



BG Burke said he felt the Indiana Soldiers did extremely well in their overall performance during Pacific Pathways. One of the objectives that he noted the members of the 76th executed well during Orient Shield was the pushing and processing of internal communications.

Forecasting, planning logistical support, generating reports and submitting pertinent information in a timely manner were all vital components of the exercise. During the exercise's simulated warfighting scenarios, information needed to be transmitted quickly and accurately from the lowest levels in the platoons and companies all the way up through the brigade and to division head.

"I think we did pretty well at that," BG Burke said. "I think we got better as a staff in [working with] the subordinate units when reporting to us." He also noted an area of improvement for the troops—the synchronization of fires, that is the coordination of multiple sources of fire onto a target area to increase lethality and achieve synergistic results. Already thinking ahead to future participation in Orient Shield, BG Burke said additional training in this area could be incorporated into upcoming exercises in Japan.

The one event the Soldiers could never have planned for was Typhoon Jebi. It forced the Indiana Soldiers to work with their Japanese counterparts on a completely unanticipated mission—one with which Guard Soldiers are more than familiar—disaster response.

"We actually had a typhoon come through and had to shut down, pack up everything and then set it all back up after the typhoon," said BG Burke. LEFT: Soldiers of the Indiana Army National Guard's 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team rehearse clearing techniques at Ojojihara Maneuver Area, Japan, as part of a simulated ground assault during Exercise Orient Shield 2018, a bilateral tactical field training under the larger regional event Pacific Pathways.

BELOW: A Japanese CH-47 Chinook lands next to a U.S. Army UH-60 Black Hawk as part of a training assault event during Exercise Orient Shield 2018.

"At the time, we were sleeping in tents," added CPT Bennett "We didn't know if those tents were going to be there after [the storm]. We had to work very quickly, but we were able to make it happen. Thankfully, no one got hurt, and by the time the typhoon got to us, it was just a bad thunderstorm."

After the storm, the Soldiers picked up with Orient Shield right where they had left off a couple days earlier. The missions were accomplished as intended, but not before the events had left an indelible impression on those involved.

As if to illustrate the esprit de corps exemplified by the Soldiers of the 151st and their ability to rise to the occasion and get the job done no matter the circumstance, CPT Bennett recalled once more how those Soldiers powered through that climb up a muddy, rain-soaked hillside. They made it up, engaged the enemy and took their objective.

"They did a hell of a job," he said. "That was pretty impressive."

All in a day's work for the Indiana Guard Soldiers at Exercise Orient Shield 2018.

Blend Your Pay Raise with Your Retirement

A great way Soldiers can utilize their 2019 pay raise is by investing it in their future. By using the **BLENDED RETIREMENT SYSTEM (BRS)**, a modernized retirement plan that combines the traditional legacy retirement pension with a Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), Soldiers can contribute to a retirement-specific TSP and receive matching government contributions to that TSP account.

BENEFITS OF BRS INCLUDE:

- Government retirement benefit for serving at least two years, even for Soldiers who do not qualify for full retirement benefits
- Automatic 1 percent Department of Defense (DoD) contribution and up to 4 percent additional DoD matching
- Carryovers on TSP elections-meaning Soldiers do not need to re-elect TSP percentages with every pay status change

For more information on BRS and specifics on enrollment qualifications, go to **MilitaryPay.defense.gov/BlendedRetirement.**



ENTERTAINING Mary Community

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins Photos courtesy Army Entertainment

CAREER

he U.S. Army Entertainment Program is dedicated to producing and delivering diverse and relevant entertainment to Soldiers, Family members, retirees and civilians both at home and abroad.

Started in 1940, Army Entertainment manages unit entertainment activities, events, shows and performances around the world. The entertainment programs support the mission of improving and enriching the quality of life for the U.S. military community.

Originally inspired by the tradition of Civil War camp shows and military shows like Yip Yip Yaphank during World War I and This Is the Army, written and directed by then SGT Irving Berlin during World War II, Army Entertainment is now a formalized program dedicated to supporting Soldiers through various methods of entertainment.

Army Entertainment is the official agency for producing and delivering unit entertainment, including comedy shows, musical and theater productions, talent competitions, tournaments, award shows, special events and celebrity appearances at Army installations and events worldwide. Well-known performers over the years have included Dick Van Dyke, Carl Reiner, Sammy Davis Jr., Clint Eastwood, Jean-Claude Van Damme, Arsenio Hall, Gary Sinise and NFL legend Tony Gonzalez.

More recently, the Army Entertainment Program partnered with Alpha Warrior, a

program providing training and obstacle fitness to service members and civilians around the world. The partnership helped bring the Entertainment Battle Rig, a specialized obstacle course similar to the well-known American Ninja Warrior obstacle courses, to 10 military installations around the Nation.

The Army Entertainment program has a goal of enhancing resiliency and readiness, fostering positive personal interactions, friendships and relations, and increasing social awareness among Soldiers, their Family members and Army civilians. The success of the program relies heavily on volunteer participation. About 2,000 Soldiers, civilians and Family members

ABOVE: Soldier volunteers performing during the Army Entertainment Soldier Show in June 2015.

donate over 300,000 volunteer hours each year to put on the live shows and events held at U.S. Army garrison communities around the world.

Volunteering with the Army Entertainment program allows service members to be a part of a community proven to help reduce isolation, stress and anxiety for Soldiers. The program presents its audiences with entertainment and activities that allow Solders to connect and relax, which often offers much needed comfort to Soldiers while they are away from their Families. Additionally, the program's overseas component also provides unique opportunities to help secure strategic bonds between the Nation and its allies.

Volunteer opportunities, including the opportunity to perform as an entertainer, are currently available to Guard, active duty and Reserve Soldiers. Army Entertainment offers multiple avenues for Soldiers to showcase their talents, either in the spotlight or behind the scenes. The Army Entertainment community is a great place for service members to foster new friendships with a variety of people from around the world.



Army Entertainment has become a morale booster amongst Soldiers and a significant component in contributing to the overall well-being of the Army community. Get involved with a great program benefiting Soldiers around the world. Go to www.armymwr.com/ programs-and-services/entertainment-anddining/entertainment to find out how to participate with the program and to learn about upcoming events. Oklahoma Soldiers at Fort Sill work out on an Entertainment Battle Rig brought to the base through a partnership between Army Entertainment and fitness training group, Alpha Warrior.



Army Entertainment volunteers read to children at the Thomas Lee Hall Library on Fort Jackson, Columbia, S.C.

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Development Planning Made Easy

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

he Department of Defense (DoD)'s Army Career Tracker (ACT) is a convenient leadership development portal for Soldiers seeking a resource to build and track a personalized career development plan. With more than one million users, ACT integrates training and education tools in a tailored, easy-to-use website.

The ACT website offers Soldiers an avenue for tracking and planning their career progress as they move through the Soldier life cycle. Users are able to search a variety of Army education and training resources, create professional and personal goals, receive personalized advice from leaders and mentors and enroll in courses and training events.

Soldiers can view their career-related data through an integrated hub on the website, which interfaces with more than a dozen DoD and Army personnel source systems to provide data such as Soldier assignment history, training history, educational history and certifications.

ACT's My Career Dashboard allows Soldiers to view and update their personal profile and administrative data, plus check the status of their Professional Military Education (PME) and professional goals – including civilian education and career goals. The dashboard also includes access to Soldiers' required Structured Self Development (SSD) modules.

Soldiers can utilize ACT to establish short- and long-term goals, and then set a pathway to achieve those goals. The My Planner section of the website helps Soldiers create professional and personal goals to add to their Individual Development Plan (IDP). Under the IDP tab, Soldiers can create, view and edit their IDP and then, using the website's collaboration feature, submit it to their leader for review. The website uses individual Soldier data to create a personalized view of a Soldier's Professional Development Model (PDM) and monitor career progression. Soldiers can use the planner section to map out events, decision points and outcomes. Additionally, they can track their progress against known career benchmarks and view recommendations for Institutional Training, SSD, Guided Self Development and Credentials/Certifications. PDM recommendations are available for a Soldier's current level and two skill levels higher.



The Guided Self Development section lets Soldiers view MOS-related degree options, self-development resources, credentials and certifications. The section also allows Soldiers to select goals that automatically populate into their IDP. Users also have access to a consolidated course catalog – accessible using the website's search tab. Soldiers can choose from the Featured Courses portal to select courses recommended by their advisor based on their MOS and grade.

In addition to tracking and organizing personal development information and resources, ACT also offers collaboration tools that promote communication between Soldiers and leaders. Leaders can receive and accept leader/mentor requests in the My Notices section located on the ACT homepage and use the website to support the development of their Soldiers. Using ACT, leaders and mentors may view and monitor their Soldiers' education, career and goal status. The Leader Dashboard gives access to reporting Soldiers' PME, civilian education, professional goals, Global Assessment Tool (GAT) results and reenlistment status. The My Soldiers section allows leaders to conveniently view all of their subordinates' and mentees' data in one place.

Leaders and mentors can also use the ACT to enhance personal counseling. Under the My Soldier Details section, leaders can access pertinent information about individual Soldiers and use the information to conduct personalized counseling sessions. Leaders can create, send and track recommendations to one or more of their subordinates by using the site's Recommendation Kit.

For more information or to start using ACT to efficiently track your or your Soldiers' career development, use your Common Access Card (CAC) or Department of Defense Self-Service Logon (DS LOGON) to log in at ACTNow.army.mil/.

From Finance to the Field

New Jersey Finance Units Complete Challenging MOBEX

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

A New Jersey Army National Guard Soldier with the 350th Financial Management Support Detachment provides suppressive fire during a live fire drill held as part of the unit's mobilization exercise conducted May-June 2018 at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

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fter designation as Focused Readiness Units (FRU), the New Jersey Army National Guard's 250th and 350th Financial Management Support Detachments replaced their traditional annual training at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, with a dynamic mobilization exercise (MOBEX) at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, in the summer of 2018.

In 2017, the 250th and 350th were notified that they would be identified as FRUs—units required to maintain a higher readiness level and status and, when called upon, must be ready to mobilize and deploy quickly. FRUs are tasked with rapid response to real-world domestic and overseas operations, thus enhancing the Army's ability to respond to national security threats.

To ensure the newly designated FRUs were prepared to meet their added responsibilities, the Army proposed a two-week MOBEX at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, commonly referred to as Fort Dix. The MOBEX would be a comprehensive training event focusing on the lethality and survivability of the two FRU finance detachments.

For annual training, New Jersey's finance units usually travel to Fort McCoy to participate in Diamond Saber, a joint training exercise focused on individual and collective finance skills. But with their new FRU label and its associated responsibilities, MAJ Douglas Coppola, commander of the 50th Financial Management Support Unit-commanding unit for the 250th and 350th-saw the mobilization exercise as a more suitable exercise to meet detachments' new needs. According to MAJ Coppola, it was a difficult, but necessary decision.

"We've always done the cantonment finance operations and now I'm asking my Soldiers in my unit to go out into the field with no tents, no electricity, no power, no nothing and just survive in the field at Fort Dix to prepare us for I don't know what," MAJ Coppola said. "It was a tough pill to swallow for myself and for the unit."

The MOBEX was evaluated by the 174th Infantry Brigade, a multicomponent training unit headquartered in New Jersey that provides operational training readiness for units in the continental northeast. From January to May of 2018, the New Jersey National Guard partnered with the 174th to plan the extensive MOBEX.

The exercise focused on operations in an austere environment, employing Soldier fundamentals and Army initiatives.

"It's the shoot, move and communicate," explained MAJ Coppola. "But the Army said it's not only shoot, move and communicate, you have to decontaminate, medicate, sustain and retain."

The MOBEX proved to be a win-win for all involved, as it allowed the finance units to gain insightful training while also acting as an assessment of what Fort Dix could offer.

"This was a test pilot to determine whether or not a mobilization could be facilitated at Fort Dix," MAJ Coppola said. "We were ideal. We were small companies located right here at Fort Dix. It was a win-win for New Jersey because we got some very 'hooah hooah' training and that's something we haven't done since I've been in finance and I've been in finance for 15 years."

The MOBEX consisted of a Soldier Readiness Program, a

TOP: SPC Alexander Flores administers first aid to a Soldier of the 350th Financial Management Support Detachment during convoy operations conducted in support of the unit's mobilization exercise.

MIDDLE: Soldiers of the 350th Financial Management Support Detachment rehearse bounding and 3to 5-second rushes during a two-week mobilization exercise at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

BOTTOM: SSG Bryn Mandl conducts a mock medical evacuation on SFC Roberto Ramos, while PFC Alfonso Alicia provides cover as part of a training simulation during the 350th Financial Management Support Detachment's mobilization exercise.







records review, a gear showdown and gear withdrawal, individual weapons qualifications, convoy operations and a live-fire exercise.

"The training that our Soldiers [underwent] was the most unique they've ever experienced," said 1LT Michael Daly of the 50th Financial Management Support Unit. "It was [in line] with the Army's initiatives of survivability and lethality. It put into perspective how quick the timeline would be in a deployment type of environment."

Approximately 40 Soldiers from the 250th and 350th participated in the unexpected and challenging MOBEX.

"Going from a National Guard status to full-on mobilization status in two weeks was intense, mentally and physically," SSG Jonathan Cohen of the 250th Financial Management Detachment said. "I believe that our Soldiers, including myself, were not sure how to prepare for that. It was tough going from zero to 100 so quickly."

As Soldiers accustomed to reviewing contracts, assisting with military pay operations and conducting other aspects of financial management, the MOBEX placed Soldiers out of their comfort zone and required them to go back to the basics.

"When you haven't done something for a long time, you kind of don't know what you don't know," explained LTC Ed Dowgin, deputy commanding officer of the 42nd Regional Support Group, New Jersey Army National Guard and one of the planners of the New Jersey finance units' MOBEX. "Soldiers had to get back into the frame of mind of living in the field environment and conducting basic soldiering skills. When you don't do those little things for some time, it can become problematic for you."

While the MOBEX may have presented challenges for the Soldiers, the chance to participate in the vigorous training was an incredible learning opportunity.

"You're talking about finance Soldiers that are typically not in austere environments and all of a sudden being thrust into basic soldiering skills," said LTC Dowgin. "They learned a lot of things that they could do better, but they did a very good job. They'll carry those lessons learned going forward and they'll continually get better and more efficient."

The challenges of the exercise allowed the Soldiers to hone-in on their strengths and build camaraderie amongst the unit.

"The morale didn't break," MAJ Coppola said. "I think the most rewarding thing was how motivated [the Soldiers] were throughout the MOBEX."

"It comes down to the old adage of

'embrace the suck'," SSG Cohen added. "We came together as a unit. As difficult and challenging as it was, it allowed us to lean on each other to work as a team. Through that teamwork, we were able to overcome every obstacle that came before us."

For SSG Cohen, the challenges were the highlight of the MOBEX. "That was my favorite part of the exercise," he said. "We are a support unit so we don't exercise a lot on infantry tasks. Getting back into this field, going back to the range, sleeping outside, going back to the basic training mentality was difficult and challenging, but a lot of fun. We got to experience things we don't normally do on a drill weekend."

SSG Cohen went on to describe one particular phase of the MOBEX that required the Soldiers to use their new, yet growing, infantry skills—the Base Defense exercise.

"We had to dig holes and our commander had to strategize on where to place us and how we were going to repel an enemy attack. We did it in multiple stages: crawl, walk and run. And we did both night and daylight. It was very interesting to experience something that we hadn't done before."

Another event was the convoy operation, which required

SFC John Vasquez conducts patrols during a dismounted situational training lane conducted as part of the 350th Financial Management Support Detachment's training at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

2LT Katty Vellida waits for an all-clear while rehearsing nuclear, biological, chemical attack procedures during the 350th Financial Management Support Detachment's mobilization exercise.







Soldiers of 250th Financial Management Support Detachment pose for a group photo after a day of training at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

Soldiers to utilize their skills in a collaborative fashion.

"It actually allows multiple Soldiers to participate," 1LT Daly said. "We had Soldiers that were acting as drivers, that were talking on the radios. We had a convoy commander so the entire detachment as a whole had to be involved. When they would add an aspect of injuries and casualties, everyone had to participate in order for the whole group to be successful."

SPC Vanessa Mendoza of the 350th Financial Management Detachment noted how the new experience showcased the unit's ability to rise to the occasion and work together to get the job done.

"I was one of the drivers and we had to wear the gas mask at one point," SPC Mendoza said. "I've never done that before so that was a pretty nice experience. We had an outline of what was going to happen [during the MOBEX], but we didn't know exactly what to expect." She continued, "It was a nice experience because we learned our weaknesses and strengths as a unit. Communication was key and one of our strengths was working together. From our senior leaders to the lower enlisted, we were all there helping each other out and that was amazing."

The MOBEX proved especially useful in that it not only prepared the Soldiers on a physical and tactical level, but it also alleviated some of their concerns related to the "unknown" factor that comes with deploying for the first time.

"A lot of us have never deployed before so we really didn't know what a MOBEX was," SPC Mendoza said. "Now that we've had this experience, we have knowledge of what to expect. It was great training for us."

MAJ Coppola noted the importance of all Soldiers, regardless of military occupational specialty, getting the training that will keep them prepared to join the fight, ready and able to win. "I think every unit, not only finance, should have the opportunity to really get back to the roots and understand what it's like if power goes down or if there's no electricity," said MAJ Coppola. "How are you going to operate? What are you going to do if you are dropped in the middle of the field and you're being overrun? Are you going to be able to survive?"

Soldiers of the 250th and 350th had an opportunity to answer those questions. The MOBEX prepared the units for what their duties as FRUs may entail and gave them a stage to prove themselves as lethal and deployable Soldiers.

"Finance Soldiers aren't necessarily seen as door kickers or as the tip of the spear," said LTC Dowgin. "They're typically in an office environment processing pay vouchers and such. For them to be able to do a typical infantry-type exercise and perform it just as well, if not better than some of their counterparts, was a true success story for the finance Soldiers." •

WELLNESS

representative parachutes to the ground after skydiving at Walterbord Airport. SPC Moore organized the skydiving trip for single Soldiers.

RIGHT: SPC Kiara Richardson, a participant in the BOSS skydiving event, rehearses exiting procedures during skydiving training at Walterboro Airport.

LEFT: SPC Keinan Moore an Army

human resource specialist and

BOSS

U.S. Army photos by SPC Wyatt Davis

Army Program Bolsters Single Soldiers

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins

Live Like a

B etter Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS) is a program dedicated to the success of single Soldiers in the Army. Focusing on enhancing morale, sustaining combat readiness and increasing retention, the BOSS program provides a space where the voices of single service members can be heard and where commanders can address the well-being and morale of those Soldiers.

The BOSS program was founded in 1989 as a way to support the overall quality of life for single Soldiers. It is one of more than 200 Army Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs delivered by the U.S. Army community. The BOSS program has grown to include 74 BOSS communities Army-wide that serve single Soldiers. The communities include Army National Guard, active duty and Reserve members plus members from other branches of military service and foreign service members.

The program acts as the collective voice of single Soldiers through the chain

Soldiers help place SHARP- [Sexual Harassment and Assault Response and Prevention] themed artwork on easels, during the Teal Wheels automobile show at Fort Benning, Ga., held in support of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month and co-sponsored by the Fort Benning BOSS community.

U.S. Army photo by Bryan Gatchell

of command, serving as a tool for commanders to gauge the morale of single Soldiers regarding quality of life issues. BOSS programs are managed by a Senior Enlisted Advisor, MWR Advisor and the BOSS President. The program works to create a forum for the Army to tackle tough issues by encouraging peerto-peer leadership. Single Soldiers assist the chain of command in addressing items that are raised as a concern or need by the single Soldier community.

Every BOSS community focuses on the program's three core components, which are geared at maintaining a balanced life: leisure and recreation, community service and quality of life. To address leisure and recreation, a BOSS council works in conjunction with an MWR Advisor to

plan engaging activities that are geared towards the wants of the Soldiers from each specific BOSS community. Through the program, single Soldiers can participate in community service by volunteering for rewarding opportunities to work on projects and at events in their local community. To maintain quality of life, the program addresses issues that







RIGHT: The 2018 winners of the Army's BOSS Strong competition— Team Able, the Vicenza BOSS Strong challenge team. U.S. Army photo by Laura Kreider

BOSS CORE COMPONENTS

Quality of Life

Quality of Life includes those issues that Soldiers can directly or indirectly influence or enhance their morale, living environment or personal growth and development. Issues raised during BOSS meetings will be directed to the appropriate command or staff agency for resolution on the installation. Army-wide issues are forwarded to the Army Family Action Plan Conference for possible Department of the Army resolution.

Recreation and Leisure

Recreation and leisure activities include a wide range of entertainment events that are specific to each BOSS community. These events are geared towards the expressed desires of the single Soldiers on a particular installation.

Community Service

BOSS members make a difference by volunteering in community projects and events. This is always voluntary in nature, and Soldiers find this to be personally rewarding.

A BOSS volunteer moves a banner into position in preparation for a 5k fun-run held at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, in support of Breast Cancer research. U.S. Army photo by SGT Alex Skripnichuk

ASTRONO

Soldiers can directly or indirectly influence to enhance their living environment, moral or personal growth and development.

The BOSS program also sponsors a variety of activities before, during and after deployment to assist single Soldiers affected by increased operational tempo and deployment stress. The program gives Soldiers access to travel opportunities, service projects and recreational activities. For instance, the BOSS Strong Championship is open to single Soldiers across the country and internationally to team up for a demanding training competition that is often hosted by celebrity fitness trainers.

BOSS also gives Soldiers the opportunity to assist in planning and executing activities within their BOSS community.

For more information about the BOSS program, go to ArmyMWR.com/programs-and-services/boss. •

WELLNESS

PHYSICAL READINESS is Functional Fitness

SOURCE: Army Public Health Center

S trength. Endurance. Mobility. These are three traits that are key to a Soldier's physical effectiveness and, on a larger scale, their success in the U.S. Army.

Physical readiness is the ability to meet the physical demands of any combat or duty position, accomplish the mission, and continue to fight and win.

The Army's Physical Readiness Training (PRT) system creates a daily opportunity to build the valuable soldiering skills of strength, power, speed and agility required to help Soldiers meet their mission. PRT is rooted in established principles of exercise

science designed to build the Soldier Athlete and includes training activities that directly support warfighting tasks within the full spectrum of operations. As a result, the program is essential to individual, unit and force readiness.

Army PRT is guided by three principles of readiness training:

- Precision: ensures all PRT activities are executed using proper technique in order to reduce injury risk
- Progression: gradually increases the intensity and duration of PRT activities to allow the body to properly adapt to the stresses of training
- Integration: includes a variety of training activities (such as conditioning, climbing and movement drills) in the program to achieve a balanced development of strength, endurance and mobility

Army PRT incorporates three components of training:

- Strength: the ability to overcome resistance
- Endurance: the ability to sustain activity
- Mobility: the functional application of strength and endurance for movement proficiency



- Acquiring and engaging targets
- Conducting individual movement techniques in full combat gear
- Walking long distances under extreme conditions in full combat gear
- Sending and receiving communications during physical exertion

Functional Fitness

The Army's physical training doctrine includes training for functional fitness. Functional fitness training uses drills, exercises or activities that are specific to movements, skills and physical demands needed for a given task. For example, performing single leg squats, lunges, crunches and medicine ball throws requires the physical skills needed to react to manto-man contact. Functional fitness is composed of strength, endurance and movement skills (agility, coordination and balance), which will physically equip Soldiers for their missions and reduce the risk of injury.

Shoot. Move. Communicate.

Oregon Army National Guard's SGT Dane Moorehead of the 82nd Brigade Troop Command, highcrawls to shore in full battle gear as part of the Omaha Beach event during the 2017 Oregon Best Warrior Competition at Camp Rilea, Ore.

Dregon Army National Guard photo by SFC April Davis

PRT is designed to:

- Minimize injuries commonly sustained in fitness training
- Prepare Soldiers for the Army Physical Fitness Test
- Train using activities that will increase skills related to warrior tasks and battle drills (such as jumping, crawling, lifting and negotiating obstacles)
- Use aerobic (cardio) and anaerobic (lifting and sprinting) exercises to optimize performance
- Include a four-phase training cycle to move Soldiers from recovery-from-deployment (or extended absence from unit PRT) to deployment and/or combat readiness
- Include a reconditioning program for Soldiers recovering from injury

For more information on the PRT system or to download training materials and/or apps, visit ArmyPRT.com/downloads. Watch PRT videos at YouTube.com/user/ArmyPhysicalFitness.

MILITARY ONESOURCE

Featured Podcast

MANAGING DEPLOYMENT PAY

During a deployment, setting and sticking to a budget plan is always best. For single Soldiers, homecoming is also fraught with spending temptations that could quickly lead to unnecessary debt. Families should remember that any deployment-based special pay or allowances will end when your service member returns home.

Check out the Military OneSource podcasts below for smart tips on keeping finances on track both during and after a deployment.

Single Soldiers Listen at:

Download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Podcasts/ PFM/oc-managing-deployment-pay-singles.mp3 Families Listen at:

Download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Podcasts/ PFM/oc-managing-deployment-pay-families.mp3

Or go to, **MilitaryOneSource.mil/training-resources/podcasts** to view the full podcast library.

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Montana MP Unit Trains with U.S. Army Garrison Italy

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins Montana Army National Guard photos by CPT Mat Poe

ore than 40 Soldiers from Montana's 143rd Military Police (MP) Detachment had a unique annual training (AT) experience last August when they traveled to the Veneto and Tuscany regions of Italy to train alongside active duty Soldiers with U.S. Army Europe.

Spending close to three weeks in Vicenza and Camp Darby, located near the famous city of Pisa—home of the Leaning Tower of Pisa—Soldiers worked directly with members of the 529th MP Company, a U.S. Army Europe unit based in Wiesbaden, Germany, and Vicenza, Italy.

"Our mission was to go and support the 529th Military Police Company and help them with law enforcement functions," explained CPT Jon Poe of the 143rd MP Detachment. "[The 529th] went on basic patrol with their shifts and we integrated with them and took calls. The objective was for my Soldiers to get real-world experience and more exposure to law enforcement activities."

ALON

The Soldiers of the 143rd were divided amongst two locations in Italy, each location providing a different, but beneficial training experience. Two squads worked side-by-side with Soldiers from the 529th MP running actual missions on Caserma Carlo Ederle, the Italian military complex in Vicenza where U.S. Army Garrison Italy is based. Two other squads participated in scenario-based training at Camp Darby, also with units from the 529th.

The Soldiers who worked alongside the 529th in the field assisted in responding to multiple calls, including basic alarm calls, traffic accidents and thefts.

A Montana Soldier of the 143rd Military Police Detachment, Montana Army National Guard, conducts law enforcement operations on-post at Camp Darby, Italy while embedded with the 529th Military Police Company, U.S. Army Europe.

"I worked as a desk sergeant and patrol supervisor," said SSG Effie Orser of the 143rd. "The whole thing was such a good experience. My favorite part was being able to go do an actual mission for our AT. I felt like we were actually accomplishing something where we were helping [people] instead of doing scenario training."

For SPC Tre McMillan of the 143rd MP Detachment, the training in Italy served as his first hands-on experience with MP work.

"I got to work with the traffic guys down there writing tickets and monitoring traffic around posts," said





SPC McMillan. "I also got to sit in on sworn statements and I had the chance to sit at the desk and see how the desk worked during certain situations. It was my first real-life experience with it."

The scenario-based training in which the Soldiers in Vicenza participated incorporated various aspects of potential MP situations. Soldiers took part in multiple scenarios focused on room clearings, active shooter training, domestic violence scenarios, high-risk traffic stops and traffic accidents. They also trained on communication and interview skills, as well as physical fitness.

The active shooter training was a highlight for SGT Bret Haux of the 143rd due to the realism of the scenarios.

"I really enjoyed the active shooter

portion because we were clearing buildings we've never seen before so that was super realistic," he explained.

SGT Haux went on to note that in addition to learning techniques from the 529th, the Guard Soldiers were also able to share some Guard best practices with their active duty counterparts.

"Alongside active duty, it was awesome to see how they did things and they got to see how we did things," said SGT Haux. "That was a cool experience to see both sides of the fence on those scenarios."

Though the 143rd Soldiers mixed well with members of the 529th, it was at times a challenge to adjust to different operating procedures in a condensed amount of time.

"The most challenging aspect of it I think was probably integrating yourself into that



new environment in that short of period and being able to learn everything quickly while you're there, but all of our Soldiers transitioned very well," said SFC Ryan Baldry, detachment sergeant for the 143rd.

"Trying to work with a group of people that we didn't know and going to a place where we didn't know what their SOPs [standard operating procedures] were and how they basically run their operations there was challenging," SSG Orser explained. "It's always a little challenging trying to meld in with the way they do things and making sure our work is conducive."

In addition to getting to know the Soldiers of the 529th, the training proved to be an opportunity for Soldiers of the 143rd to get to know each other better and bond as a unit.

"I learned a lot about how the National Guard and active duty think and do things differently," SGT Haux explained. "I also learned a lot about my unit. It was a good time getting to know everyone really well [and being able to] feed off how each other works in an actual real-world training environment."

Whether Soldiers were in the field or participating in the training scenarios, every Soldier walked away with beneficial training and unforgettable experiences.

"[The best] part was hearing the Soldiers come back from the streets talking about the different calls they responded to and the experiences that they were getting," CPT Poe said. "They got a lot of real-world experience and it was an eye opener to hear their stories about what they got to do."

The 143rd's 2018 AT served as an opportunity for the Soldiers to put their past training to use in a new and challenging environment. Newer Soldiers, for the first time, had the opportunity to take their lessons from drill weekends and apply them to real situations. SFC Baldry noted how that practical application will yield tenfold for the Soldiers in the future.

"It shows Soldiers what's expected of

them in a real-life mission when they're called to serve overseas, whether it be a deployment or just for an annual training like this," he explained. "It lays out the expectations and the training requirements that are needed to get them from point A to point B and complete the mission."

SGT Haux echoed this sentiment when he commented on the importance of this type of real-life training, which places Soldiers in a unique environment requiring them to work each day with experienced Soldiers to get the job done.

"From the National Guard side, I think it's important to go to a real-world activity post and actually do the job," SGT Haux said. "It's an amazing opportunity to learn a lot in a short amount of time with people that [perform the tasks] every single day."

Perhaps as important as the hands-on training and building up of practical skills

A Military Police officer with Montana's 143rd Military Police Detachment, conducts law enforcement operations on-post at Camp Darby, Italy, as part of the 143rd's Annual Training.





Montana Soldiers from the 143rd Military Police Detachment train on room clearing maneuvers during the unit's Annual Training held at Camp Darby, Italy.

INSET: Military Police officers with Montana's 143rd Military Police Detachment, detain a civilian while embedded with the 529th Military Police Company, U.S. Army Europe, on-post at Camp Darby, Italy, as part of the 143rd's Annual Training.

is the encouragement a unique training experience can bring to Soldiers, both enlisted and officers alike.

"I absolutely think [this training] was important," said SSG Orser. "I think it's great for morale and great for retention. It gives the Soldiers an opportunity to see what active duty military does and it's an opportunity to travel and go to places like Italy. That's a huge morale booster for units."

"[Newer] Soldiers got to learn how to better do their job," said SFC Adam Olsen of the 143rd. "They got to do what they would do if they were deployed and experience it all start to finish. And those of us as leaders, we got to experience mentoring the Soldiers, and being with them through their learning phase. It was nice to go through that and to experience it together as a unit – that was a huge takeaway."

The overseas AT also served as an

opportunity for the unit's leadership to observe their Soldiers in the field and, based on that observation, determine ways to better train the unit in the future.

"There was a lot of feedback on just going back to the basics," CPT Poe explained. "Sometimes when we train at home, we tend to kind of get ahead of ourselves and try to force a lot of stuff into our training program. A lot of Soldiers said it was nice just getting back to the basics about how to do basic report writing and basic investigations because they found when they actually started doing these realworld investigations, there were a couple things that they just weren't quite sure about or comfortable with. It really helped us look at our training and adjust towards that."

The Soldiers of the 143rd are certain to have plenty of opportunity to put the experience they gained during their training in Italy to good use back home in Montana and elsewhere when deployed again.

"No matter where it is, anytime we as a whole unit get to go and demonstrate our capabilities, and then learn from anyone else that's doing the job on a day-to-day basis, it builds a tremendous training database for us to pull from for future training events," SFC Olsen said. "It's great overall, for leaders and the Soldiers themselves, and the location and the sightseeing of course – it all just adds so much. You can ask any of the Soldiers at any time, 'Hey, would you want to go to Italy for your AT?' and they would say yes. It was a great experience."



4 VA Home Loans to Know and Understand

BY STAFF WRITER Pamela DeLoatch

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides several options for eligible military members to obtain loans when buying or refinancing a home. In most instances, the VA does not provide loans directly. Instead, it backs loans by offering a guarantee to lenders ensuring that if the borrower is unable to pay the loan, the VA will cover the losses. That guarantee makes banks, credit unions and mortgage companies more comfortable with providing loans to service members who are seeking loans through the VA, allowing them to offer those service members more favorable terms.



If you want to buy a house, a VA Home Loan can help you make that purchase sooner.

Key advantages of the VA Home Loan include:

- The VA loan does not require a down payment, as long as the sales price is not higher than the appraised value.
- The VA loan does not require that borrowers have a minimum credit score, although some lenders may have their own requirements.
- The VA loan does not require private mortgage insurance (PMI), which is usually charged when a down payment is less than 20%.
- The VA loan limits how much borrowers can be charged in closing costs. Closing costs usually vary from 2% -5% of the purchase price.
- The VA loan allows closing costs, which are normally paid by the buyer to instead be paid by the seller.
- The VA loan has no penalty if borrowers pay the loan off early.

Service members do not need to be first-time home buyers to be eligible for the VA loan program, and even if the benefit has been used before, it can be used again. Most VA home loans may only be used in the purchase or refinance of a service member's primary residence. The loans may be used to buy or build a home, buy a condominium in a VA-approved project, buy a manufactured home or lot and complete home renovations that include energy-efficient upgrades.

Below are a few of the specialty loan types that are included under the VA Home Loan Program:



If you own a home and want to borrow from the money you've invested in your home, you can take out a Cash-Out Refinance Loan. With this loan, you can refinance your current mortgage with a loan amount that is more than you owe on the house and "cash-out" the difference. Homeowners typically use cash-out refinance loans to make long-term investments, such as to pay tuition, pay off a credit card debt or to reinvest the money back into the house with home improvements/renovations.

Since this type of loan ultimately increases your loan balance, which will result in a higher mortgage payment, it should never be used simply as a way to get extra cash. It should instead be used to make smart investments that offer a reasonable return.

Interest-Rate-Reduction Refinance Loan (IRRRL)

The IRRRL is only used to refinance an already owned property. It cannot be used to purchase new property. Additionally, in order to refinance with an IRRRL, the original loan must also be a VA loan. The IRRRL is a VA to VA only refinance. You may want to consider this type of loan if mortgage interest rates have significantly decreased from the time your current loan was initiated, and you want to potentially reduce your mortgage payment by taking advantage of the lower rates. Many borrowers also choose this loan when they want to switch from a VA Adjustable Rate Mortgage (ARM)—where the interest rate may change from month-to-month, resulting in a constantly changing mortgage payment—to a fixed rate loan with a steady payment amount. While the IRRRL offers several advantages, borrowers should be aware of some important points highlighted below.

Advantages of the IRRRL include:

- No appraisals or underwriting package to assess credit worthiness are required.
- A new Certificate of Eligibility (COE) is not required.
- No out-of-pocket cost is required. All fees may be rolled into the new loan.
- Unlike other VA loans, the property does not need to be the service member's primary residence. Borrowers need only certify that they previously occupied the home.

Keep in mind these points about an IRRRL:

- Unlike the Cash-Out Refinance loan, you may not receive any cash from the IRRRL.
- If refinancing from an existing VA ARM to a fixed rate loan, the interest rate may increase.
- The VA does not set a cap on how much service members can borrow; however, the amount it will guarantee is capped at \$36,000.
- The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the VA caution Soldiers with VA home loans to be aware of unsolicited offers to refinance mortgages from lenders that may use misleading advertising and sales tactics. For more information on how to assess if a refinance offer is "too good to be true," visit Blogs.va.gov; search: VA and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.



The NADL is a loan for eligible Native American Veterans who want to purchase, build or improve property that is on Federal Trust Land. The NADL may also be used to refinance a previous NADL to reduce the interest rate. Unlike most VA loan programs that simply provide a guarantee to outside lenders, under the NADL, the VA is the direct lender for the loan.

To qualify for an NADL, the applying service member's tribal government must have a signed Memorandum of Understanding, which spells out how the program operates on trusted lands, on file with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Service members must also have a valid COE, occupy the property as the primary residence, be a good credit risk and have a high enough individual and/or household income to meet mortgage payments and specified other costs.



For more information on VA loans or to assess which loan best fits your needs, go to Benefits.va.gov/homeloans

BENEFITS

LOOKING TO BUY A HOME ? The HUD Good Neighbor Next Door Program Can Help

BY STAFF WRITER Pamela DeLoatch

or many Guard Soldiers, working for State or local government is not limited to their military service but is also a part of their civilian occupation. Those wanting to buy a home, who also make their civilian living making a difference for good in the community, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s Good Neighbor Next Door (GNND) program offers an unmatchable opportunity.

The GNND program allows for the purchase of a home at a 50 percent discount through HUD's supply of previously foreclosed single-family homes. Soldiers who are employed full time as a law enforcement officer, firefighter, emergency medical technician or a Pre-K – 12 teacher in a public or private school may qualify for the program.

The program, which began in its current form in 2006, is specifically for community service employees who want to both become homeowners and improve the quality of life in a revitalization area deemed by HUD as a distressed urban community. The idea behind the program is that those receiving the benefit should be the same people already working in occupations that serve important needs of the community.

WHAT ARE REVITALIZATION AREAS?

According to the U.S. General Services Administration's Data.gov website, revitalization areas are HUD-designated neighborhoods in need of economic and community development, and where local government has already made a commitment to revitalization efforts. Three aspects are considered when designating an area for revitalization: household income, homeownership rate and the Federal Housing Authority (FHA)-insured mortgage foreclosure activity.

HUD has identified revitalization neighborhoods throughout the country, so program recipients are not limited to any specific area or region of the country.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Firefighters and EMTs must serve in the jurisdiction where the house is located. Teachers must work in a school in the neighborhood boundary where the house is located. In addition, homeowners must commit to living in the new home as their sole residence for at least 36 months, and must complete a signed certificate each year, verifying to such. New homes are listed on HUDHomeStore.com each week. Homes are sold "as is," with no warranty. For those who qualify, applying for a home is as simple as bidding the asking price by the posting deadline. If more than one potential buyer bids on the same property, the ultimate homeowner is selected by lottery.

11 1 11

The program requires buyers to sign a second mortgage and note for the amount discounted off the original price of the home, but no payments are made on the second mortgage if the homeowner follows all program requirements. As long as the homeowner fully complies with the rules of the program, the second mortgage is completely forgiven after the first 36 months in the home.

Recipients do not need to be first-time home buyers to be eligible for GNND, but they are not allowed to own, or have owned, residential property for at least a year before submitting a bid for property.

> For more details on the Good Neighbor Next Door program, visit HUD.gov/program offices/ housing/sfh/reo/goodn.

SAVING NOW FOR A PROSPEROUS FUTURE

The Thrift Savings Plan

BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER Craig Ekman and STAFF WRITER Tatyana White Jenkins

re you taking advantage of one of the most important benefits offered through your service in the Army National Guard?

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a long-term retirement savings and investment plan for federal employees and members of the uniformed services. Established by Congress under the Federal Employees' Retirement System Act of 1986, the TSP offers similar savings and tax benefits that many private corporations offer their employees under 401(k) plans.

With the recent pay raise for uniformed personnel, now is a great time to join the TSP and get serious about long-term finances. In the last five years, the average military pay raise averaged 1.5 percent. Effective Jan. 1, 2019, service members received a pay raise of 2.6 percent. The remarkable raise for service members creates a great opportunity to invest more toward the future.

The TSP is a defined contribution plan, which means the income received from a TSP during retirement is dependent on how much participants (and their agency, if they are eligible to receive agency contributions) put into the account during their working years and the earnings accumulated over that time.

The TSP has numerous benefits, including:

- · Low administrative and investment expenses
- Automatic payroll deductions
- A diversified choice of investment options, including professionally designed life-cycle funds
- A choice of traditional (pre-tax) contributions or Roth (after-tax) contributions
- Catch-up contributions, if you are age 50 or older
- A beneficiary participant account established for your spouse in the event of your death
- A variety of withdrawal options

- Under certain circumstances, access to your money while you are still employed by the Federal Government
- Agency/Service matching contributions, if you are an employee covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) or a member of the uniformed services covered by the Blended Retirement System (BRS)

Investing the pay raise in the TSP is a great way to improve long-term finances and secure a financially stable future. If Soldiers split their raise between their wallet and their retirement, they can take a 1.3 percent pay raise while still investing in their future. For example: an active duty E5 with eight or more years of service will receive a raise of about \$80 per month or \$960 for the year. The same reserve component member can expect an extra \$10 for a weekend duty, depending on the number of duty days. If the Soldier puts half of their raise towards their TSP, that adds up to \$480 each year. Continuing that process will create a large TSP balance from which Soldiers can withdraw funds to ensure continuing financial stability once they retire.

Service members and federal citizens have the opportunity to participate in the TSP at any time. Service members who joined after Jan. 1, 2018, and those in the BRS are automatically enrolled in the TSP. Other service members may enroll through myPay or the TSP website.

The TSP website provides support to participants through various planning and informational tools, such as program tutorials, investment strategies and online calculators that help service members and federal civilians plan for a comfortable retirement. The Department of Defense also has financial counselors at most active duty locations, who are also available to reserve component service members through Military OneSource.

Go to www.tsp.gov for more information or to enroll in TSP today.



Teen campers at the Virginia National Guard Teen Wilderness Adventure Camp participate in a team-building exercise at Eagle Landing in New Castle, Va. The Virginia National Guard Youth Program partnered with Operation Military Kids to provide 60 Virginia National Guard youth four days of outdoor adventures including mountain biking, kayaking, inner tubing, navigating ropes courses and zip lining.

Virginia Army National Guard photo by MSG A.J. Coyne

SUMMER'S HERE! MILITARY YOUTH ADVENTURE CAMP TO THE RESCUE

BY STAFF WRITER Pamela DeLoatch

ondering what kinds of summer vacation activities will keep your child or teen busy, active, learning and having fun? A military youth adventure camp could be the answer. A variety of programs are available throughout the country, and many camps offer free and reduced cost programs for military children.

Here are several great camp possibilities for Guard Families to consider:

Military Teen Adventure Camps are for military teens ages 14 to 18 and include a variety of outdoor fun activities. Taking place in several States throughout the country, these free camps are funded by a collaboration between the Department of Defense, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s National Institute of Food and Agriculture and Purdue University.

Each teen adventure camp offers something unique:

Colorado Rocky Mountain Adventure Camps offer high-level adventure—9,000 feet high! Strength-based leadership training, whitewater rafting, hiking and a challenge course create an unforgettable experience.

Florida Water Adventure Camps teach survival skills and team building while campers traipse through the swamps or glide through the cool, clear springs. Teens will kayak, hike and snorkel along the way. **Georgia's Joint Reserve Component Teen Leadership Summit** is a 6-day, 5-night program that is designed to help military teens develop leadership skills. Teens enjoy whitewater rafting, rappelling, climbing and high-rope events as part of this summertime adventure.

Kentucky administers several week and weekend camps that are intended for parents or legal guardians to attend together with their teens, ages 14 to 18.



Teen campers at the Virginia National Guard Teen Wilderness Adventure Camp prepare to go tubing down a river in New Castle, Va.

Virginia Army National Guard photo by MSG A.J. Coyne



Photo courtesy Virginia National Guard Youth Program

Big South Fork Whitewater Canoeing and Backpacking Expedition is action-packed with whitewater canoeing and camping. Teens and their parents will enjoy the scenic bluffs and learn backcountry cooking skills.

Red River Gorge Vertical Experience focuses on rock climbing and rappelling. Campers will enjoy a canopy tour and underground kayaking adventures.

New River Whitewater Rafting Extreme Adventure is where campers can enjoy a 5-day camp filled with zip lining, mountain biking, rock climbing and whitewater rafting in West Virginia.

Ocoee Whitewater Rafting and Rock Climbing Adventure is a 4-day camp held in the great outdoors of Tennessee. With the hallmark of good food, great camaraderie, whitewater rafting and rock climbing, this camp focuses on reconnecting and teambuilding between parent and youth.

Life Adventure Center Extreme Quest is a weekend adventure with a high ropes course, zip line and an activity known as a Leap of Faith. After-dark explorations and evening campfire programs round out the journey.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on military adventure camps or for registration information visit: AG.Purdue.edu/Extension/AdventureCamps.

Operation Purple Camp

Operation Purple Camp (OPC) is a National Military Family Association-sponsored program that offers military kids a free week of camp. Children between the ages of seven and 17 who have a parent returning from a deployment, gearing up to deploy, or finding a new normal after an injury have the opportunity to connect with other military kids just like them. OPC, which gets its name from the symbolic color representing the mix of Service branches: Army green, Air Force blue, Navy blue, Coast Guard blue and Marine Corps red, has hosted nearly 62,000 military kids since its inception in 2004. Kids never forget this amazing experience.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on OPC or for registration information visit: MilitaryFamily.org/ Programs/Operation-Purple

With so many opportunities, it may be hard to choose. However, registration for many camps begins in April, **so don't delay**.



Share Your Ideas Make a Change

Army Community Service representative, Jennifer Rodriguez (left, standing) works with Army Family volunteers serving as Army Family Action Plan delegates to develop proposed family initiatives to send to the Installation Management Command at U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii.

U.S. Army photo by Christine Cabalo

THE ARMY FAMILY ACTION PLAN (AFAP) helps Army leaders address the needs and concerns of Army Family members. The AFAP gives Soldiers, retirees, civilians and Family members from National Guard, active duty or Reserves a platform to identify issues and concerns that have a direct impact on their standard of living.

Since 1983, Army Family member submissions through the AFAP have led to 128 legislative changes, 186 Department of Defense or Army policy changes and 210 improved programs or services.

AFAP submissions have made a meaningful difference to the Army community, including the creation of the Military Thrift Savings Plan, extended education benefits to spouses and TRICARE for Life for eligible retirees.

To submit an issue or suggestion, go to your local Army Community Service office. To find an office near you, go to **ArmyMWR.com/communities**





qually important to the completion of U.S. military missions as allterrain vehicles, advanced weaponry and cutting-edge communication systems, renewable energy has been identified by the Department of Defense (DoD) as a vital resource in securing our nation.

The growth of renewable energy in the Oregon National Guard began in 2011 when Oregon was the first State chosen to participate in the Army's "Net Zero Pilot Program." The funding and resources made available allowed armories around the State to dramatically reduce their energy cost.

"When awarded the Net Zero Program, Oregon became the first and only National Guard site in the overall DoD [Net Zero] initiative," said Kenneth Safe, construction and facilities management officer for the Oregon Army National Guard. "To reduce energy and produce energy on the site was the goal of becoming sustainable and [thereby] increase security."

The Oregon Army National Guard maintains 46 armories and is present in 37 communities throughout the State of Oregon, functioning as readiness centers for Soldiers to train, house their gear and shelter essential equipment. Several of these facilities are securing a reliable and affixed energy source by harnessing the power of the sun, all while saving taxpayer dollars.

"The cost savings is only part of the benefit to the Net Zero program," Safe explained. "It also allows these armories to be self-sufficient facilities and function for up to two weeks, if necessary, from their own power."

When looking, for example, at forecasting potential devastation from activity by the Cascadia Subduction Zone —a 600-mile fault line that runs from northern California up to British Columbia—maintaining the sustainability of the armories around the State will be of utmost importance. Having selfsufficient facilities will enable the Oregon Army National Guard to respond to vital community needs, operating as distribution hubs, medical response sites and critical ongoing communication centers.

Generating electricity directly from sunlight, solar photovoltaic systems are easy to maintain and can be located almost anywhere, with no need to be refueled. The first Oregon armory to have solar panels installed was the Captain John W. Brown Armory in Ontario, Oregon, in 2010. Other solar panel projects quickly followed suit to include larger projects at Pendleton, Roseburg, Dallas, Camp Withycombe and most recently, at the new MG George A. White Joint Force Headquarters building in Salem.

"The biggest project we have done to date is at Camp Withycombe," Safe explained. "We're installing panels that are 300 watts, or approximately three panels per kilowatt, for a total of 750 panels on the Armed Forces Reserve Center [AFRC]."

Drivers for Change Resulting in Net Zero Program

- Energy security, surety and reliability
- Water scarcity
- Increasing energy prices/ Fully Burdened costs of fuel
- Foreign energy sources
- Environmental concerns
- Federal and DoD mandates
- Improved operational capabilities
- Risk education

FROM LEFT: Robert Johnson, supervising electrician for Sunlight Solar, briefs James Odan, operations facilities specialist; Eric Manus, Oregon military department project manager; Mark Williams, Oregon military department project manager; and Steven Roche, operations facilities specialist on a then-newly installed photovoltaic solar panel system at the Roseburg Readiness Center, Ore.

Oregon Army National Guard photo by SSG Anita VanderMolen

When the AFRC was first constructed in 2011, the original installation was 18.8 kilowatts, Safe remarked when breaking down the numbers. In September of 2018, an additional 249.6 kilowatt array increased the projected production of 320,233 kilowatt-hours-per-year. The life cycle of these solar projects is rated for a 25-year span, factoring in about a 10 percent degradation over this life span.

"In 2015, when Executive Order number 13693 was written [by the DoD], it specified that there were targeted goals for renewable energy savings through 2025, increasing efficiency at around two percent and compounded every year after," Safe said.

The DoD and the Department of the Army have recognized the importance of these renewable energy projects and have set up their own funding stream.

"That's how we are funding our solar projects," Safe emphasized. "The disposition of the funds to the States helps award future projects and it is why we in Oregon have been as successful with other [renewable energy] building projects."

By working with local utility companies, the Oregon National Guard armories are factoring in reliable, long-term standards, which will help with project operating costs and long-term budgeting.

"Under the Net metering agreement with other power utilities, it helps balance the books. We can produce up to as much as we use and if we overproduce, the utility just gets to keep it," said Safe.

The impact on the environment for solar collection is minimal as the panels are mounted on rooftops, not taking up land space with "Solar Farms" of panels.

"Where we have gone to some nonrooftop installations has been over parking lots, which have provided car cover too," said Jeff Mach, natural resources conservation manager for the Oregon National Guard.

An important consideration with renewable energy outside of the cost savings and sustainability are the impacts on the environment. Switching from coal and natural gas to renewable energy will help reduce carbon pollution and provide healthy habitats.

In a 2015 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency report, the study found that in the new Clean Power Plan, renewable energy sources of wind and solar will play an expanded role in the next decade, and by 2030 could generate well over 400 billion kilowatt hours of electricity annually.

"Reducing our impact on the



IN 2008, DoD and Department of Energy defined a joint initiative to address military energy use by identifying specific actions to reduce energy demand and increase use of renewable energy on DoD installations. The Army Net Zero Initiative is built upon the Army's long-standing energy efficiency and sustainability practices. It is a strategy for managing existing energy, water and solid waste programs with the goal of exceeding minimum targets, while remaining fiscally responsible and increasing operating flexibility by providing greater energy and water security.

environment is a driving factor with energy, water usage and other resources, and also fits into a broader aspect of resiliency," said Mach. "If there was a natural disaster, it would be easier to 'get back on your feet quicker,' so having resources already in place serves both desires."

In a much larger sense, solar energy is now fully capable of reducing the U.S. military's reliance domestically on foreign sources of fuel. When strategically planning operations outside of U.S. bases and armories, having renewable resources will augment overseas mission requirements for sustainable energy.

According to a Defense Science Board report in 2017, "Army installations consume an average of 21 million barrels of petroleum a year." The DoD's move toward energy security has invigorated programs like Net Zero, and is part of the Army Energy Security Implementation Strategy moving into the future.

In the past, American service members deployed and established positions to secure and defend gas, oil and other fuel sources needed in an area of operations. Having renewable sources in place will provide units in the field with the energy they need and can control. This alone will save lives while managing renewable resources in the field.

"That's where we're headed next—we are going to be looking at what we can do that will build in this type of selfsufficiency," Safe said, as he summarized the continuing plans. "If we are faced with a situation where we can benefit with a large installation training site, like Umatilla [Army Depot], we may want to do a combination of solar and battery storage at the same time." Not every training site or armory in the State is ideal for using and installing solar panels, but by reducing the cost across the State and using resources efficiently, this will help meet the 2025 goals set by Congress—where military facilities must get 25 percent of their energy from renewable sources.

"When looking at the cost per kilowatt hour and the levelized cost of electricity [LCOE], this gives us a clear gauge for the overall value in these solar projects," said Safe. "Moving forward, we want to be as efficient as possible and get the best return on investment for everyone involved."

Over the long run, these savings will support all parties looking to plan, budget and offset the cost. In the end, having a reliable and predictable energy resource for Oregon Guardsmen to use in response to future public emergencies is invaluable.

CYBERSPACE

TEACH THEM HOW TO

BY STAFF WRITER Matthew Liptak North Carolina Army National Guard photos by David McLean

wo North Carolina Army National Guard cyber warriors traveled to Chisinau, Moldova, in July of 2018 to help members of the Moldovan National Army train in cyber defense operations.

"What we're doing is teaching them how to fish," said CW4 Donald Champion, senior information systems officer of the North Carolina Army National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) as he described the goals of the joint-training initiative.

The nation of Moldova has had more than its share of cyberattacks. With Russia—a country notorious for its use of aggressive cyber warfare—as its neighbor, the tiny nation is under constant threat of attack.

"Just looking at their position, with them being near Russia, they are right in the heart of a large, large cyber threat," CW4 Champion explained. "So, they are mostly concerned with the governmentside threats, but then the business [threats] as well."

The young nation of Moldova, with a gross domestic product of only \$8 billion and a total population of only 3.5 million people, has limited resources to address the problem. Enter the North Carolina Army National Guard. North Carolina is State partners with the nation of Moldova through the National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP). The two groups have been partners since 1996, just five years after the country became an independent republic following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The North Carolina National Guard has been running this current series of cyber training for the last three years. The July 2018 training was the fourth in a series of trips undertaken by North Carolina Soldiers to help their Eastern European partner stand up a capable cyber defense force.

"We are limited in what we can share with them. Everything has to be open source. So, a lot of what we are doing is teaching them how to fish versus giving



them fish for a day. We are there for a couple weeks a year. Then we leave them with a list of resources to use and they take advantage of it," said CW4 Champion.

He went on to share that what the Moldovan military lacks in resources, it makes up for in its dedication to meeting a challenge.

"They are so hungry for knowledge, and that's why I continue to volunteer for these exercises," he said.

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A chief information security officer for a research company and a part-time university professor in his civilian career, CW4 Champion speaks as someone who knows what enthusiasm for learning

FRONT ROW, FROM LEFT: SGT Jacob Voss and CW4 Donald Champion,, both of the North Carolina National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters, stand with soldiers of the Moldovan Armed Forces who participated in a cyber defense course taught by CW4 Champion and SGT Voss as part of the National Guard's State Partnership Program.

BELOW: CW4 Donald Champion leads members of the Moldovan Armed Forces communications staff through a table-top training scenario as part of cyber defense training in Chisinau, Moldova, July 2018.



technology looks like. He described the level of motivation displayed by the Moldovans as "encouraging."

"They pay attention and ask smart questions," he said. "They come back each day with questions based on the things we talked about the day before. Even out of class, they're learning and wanting to learn more. Whenever we have an audience that wants to be there, it just makes the whole experience that much easier."

CW4 Champion and fellow North Carolina JFHQ Soldier SGT Jacob Voss together conducted table-top exercises with 20 of Moldovia's soldiers. Because the Moldovan National Army is still ramping up its cyber resources, table-top exercises that require only a whiteboard and critical thinking skills have been the preferred training format for the SPP interactions thus far. That is expected to change, though. The Moldovans have plans to procure hardware that will allow them to execute their own hands-on-keyboards exercises. For now, they are making considerable progress using the means currently available, said CW4 Champion.

"It's good to see that the work that we've done on the previous engagements [is] reflected in how they're progressing," he said. "Their cyber capabilities now are definitely in a better place than when we started with them three years ago."

Using the preferred format of whiteboard, table-top exercises, the pair of North Carolina Soldiers kicked off the training with the introduction of a scenario revolving around an email containing malicious coding. That scenario acted as the catalyst for a series of decisions participants were required to make concerning how to react and mitigate the situation including:

- How to best decipher the email's origin
- How to best communicate the threat to the rest of the staff
- How to best conduct forensics
- How to best leverage the communications team and military public affairs officers
- How to best message the situation
- How to best determine when to share the situation with outside parties

"We had this whole mix of managerial and technical pieces that played on to this bigger scenario," CW4 Champion explained. "It starts off with a simple email, but the scope then expands greatly. You see where they go and sometimes have to nudge them in the right direction if they don't get there themselves."

CW4 Champion loosely compared this process to the old "Choose-Your-Own-Adventure" book series, where readers would choose an action for their character to take at the end of a chapter and it would direct them to a page that explained the consequences in the storyline.

CW4 Champion went on to note that the Moldovan teams have learned the basics well enough using this approach, but they expect to accelerate pace and level of training once the Moldovan National Army acquires its new hardware.

"The hardware purchases they just made are going to be a great step for them where they can start to really practice," CW4 Champion said. "This is definitely a perishable skill. If you are not doing it all the time, you will definitely lose something. Once they get a lab where they can have their guys train a normal cadence, that's going to help."

There may also be bigger engagements on the horizon. The North Carolina Army National Guard plans to do two more cyber training events with the Moldovan National Army in 2019. Multinational cyber conferences could also be in the works, where cyber forces from around Eastern Europe will practice, share and perfect training and operational techniques with one another.

CW4 Champion said that ideally the North Carolina Army National Guard would participate in these conferences alongside their State partners, which could enhance interoperability between all the involved nations.

He also noted his enthusiasm for a sustained and productive cyber partnership with Moldova.

"I think it's only going to continue to grow throughout the years as their capabilities increase and our ability to share what we are doing with them increases as well," he affirmed. •







A LAKOTA IN A LAKOTA IN THE SKY AND THE SKY AND THE HEART

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins Photos courtesy CPT Kevin King hen reflecting on his service in the Guard, CPT Kevin King said, "I feel like I'm fulfilling the calling that my ancestors had."

CPT King is currently a member of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 151st Aviation Regiment, Florida Army National Guard. He is an Army aviator who flies the UH-72 Lakota helicopter—perhaps a karmic assignment given that CPT King is also a member of the Oglala Lakota Native American tribe.

CPT King joined the Army National Guard in 2007, after seeing the many benefits his college roommate gained from membership in the Guard.

"I noticed in him a lot of discipline and good character, so his example was something I wanted for myself," said CPT King. "I told him I was going to have a hard time paying for college using student loans and he asked me, 'Have you considered joining the National Guard? They could help pay for your education."

CPT King's roommate then accompanied him to an Army National Guard recruiting office to discuss his options.

"By the end of that day, I had decided to enlist in the Army National Guard and it's been the best decision of my life so far," CPT King said. "I always knew I was searching for something, but I couldn't put it into words. When I went to basic training, for the first time in my life, I had drill sergeants who said, 'We don't expect you to be good, we expect you to exceed even your own expectations and be great. You are going to serve your country and defend the defenseless.' To have someone seriously expect that from me changed my life."

After joining the Guard, CPT King earned his bachelor's and master's degrees and also graduated from flight school. He said flying had always appealed to him, but it wasn't something that seemed realistically attainable.

"I always wanted to fly," CPT King explained. "It was one of those things where I thought 'that'd be really nice,' but I never thought of it as a serious opportunity."

It wasn't until he heard about the inclusion of a specific helicopter that CPT King became especially driven to become an aviation officer.

"It wasn't until I heard that the Army had [added] the UH-72 Lakota helicopter [to its fleet] that I really got motivated to pursue flight school as a real opportunity because I'm a member of the Lakota tribe," he said.

When a seat for flight school opened up, CPT King's commander and officer strength manager encouraged him to pursue the opportunity. He went before the flight school selection board and, when asked if he wanted to share anything not covered in the interview, CPT King made sure to mention his passion for flying the Lakota helicopter as a Lakota tribe member.

"I told them I'd be honored to fly any helicopter, but if they got me into the Lakota helicopter, I'd really, really like

CPT Kevin King, UH-72 Lakota helicopter pilot and member of the Lakota Native American tribe.



that," CPT King laughed. "I got selected for the slot and I went to flight school. I graduated in April 2012 as a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot and then I was led to go to the UH-72 Lakota helicopter course in June 2012. I've been very blessed to fly the Lakota helicopter ever since."

For CPT King, flying the Lakota helicopter for the Guard as a Lakota tribe member is symbolic of the connections between his two cultures.

"I am really honored and blessed to be a part of two great warrior cultures," said CPT King. "The Lakota tribe was a warrior society and the National Guard is a great warrior society as well. The fact that the U.S. Army honors my tribe by naming the helicopter after them, I think it's recognizing that warrior spirit that both cultures share. I'm very honored to be in the National Guard and also be a Lakota member."

CPT King has also experienced instances where Guard and Lakota cultures have intersected with other Guard Soldiers contributing to Native American reservations. CPT King was originally



THE LAKUTA TRIBE was a warrior society and the National Guard is a great warrior society as well. The fact that the U.S. Army honors my tribe by naming the helicopter after them, I think it's recognizing that warrior spirit that

both cultures share.

- CPT Kevin King

a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard before undergoing an interstate transfer to the Florida Army National Guard in 2014. Golden Coyote, an exercise hosted by the South Dakota National Guard, includes a timber haul that directly benefits the reservation on which CPT King grew up.

"The National Guard has done a lot of work and held missions directly assisting Pine Ridge Indian Reservation where I'm registered," explained CPT King. "Golden Coyote is an annual event where States come from all over the U.S. to do a variety of missions. They've done construction projects and timber hauls where they [deliver] cut trees that are used for firewood in the winter to the reservation."

Now as a member of the Florida Army National Guard, CPT King has flown the Lakota helicopter to respond to the host of hurricanes that have hit the State since his transfer, including Hurricanes Matthew, Irma and Michael. He said that his proudest moment of service in the Guard thus far came from his response to Hurricane Irma in 2017.


LEFT: CPT Kevin King sits in the back of his UH-72 Lakota during down time while on duty at Annual Training.

While responding to the hurricane, CPT King landed a Lakota helicopter on Summerland Key, which was completely shut off from the mainland at the time.

"They had no water or electricity," CPT King said. "The roads had been shut down and no one could go in or out. Boats couldn't even get there because of the debris in the canals and waterways."

CPT King and his fellow Soldiers were able to land and unload cases of water for the trapped residents. One resident, in particular, struck a chord with CPT King.

"There was a young man about my age who came up to get some water," CPT King said. "He looked dirty and had some white around his lips like he was dehydrated and probably hadn't had clean water in days. As I'm handing him the case of water he said 'Thank you. There's people on the other side of the Key that are in worse shape than we are—can you bring more water for them?' And I assured him that we would bring them water.

"You could see the appreciation on his face, which meant more to me than any awards or recognition," he continued. "I could see the person I was helping. And there were no cameras or reporters. No one else saw that interaction except for me and him. I knew that I was positively impacting his life and that meant a lot to me."

The encounter exemplified what CPT King said is what he loves most about being a Soldier in the Army National Guard.

"My favorite aspect by far is being able to reach people that no one else can reach," he explained. "It's having that long reach of assistance and going out to people to not only help them and give supplies, but to let them know that they're not alone."

CPT King went on to note the significance of the connections he sees between his service as a pilot in the Guard and the values of his tribe.

"I look at the societies, the behaviors, the things that are valued by my tribe, and the qualities that are valued by the National Guard, and they may call them different things, but they are almost identical," CPT King said. "The Army and my tribe share values of honesty, integrity, courage and selfless service."

CPT King said he is thankful to be part of two similar warrior societies with supportive members and important values.

"I feel like if we were back in the old days with my tribe, a lot of my fellow National Guard Soldiers would be considered Lakota because they are warriors," he commented. "What made someone Lakota was more of what they had in their mind and in their heart. A lot of people in my unit are as much Lakota as I am."

"I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the instructor pilots who taught me how to fly, the crew chiefs that make sure my helicopter is safe for me to fly every day and the other pilots who sit in the seat with me and put their lives on the line as much as mine is," he continued. "They're courageous and they have that warrior's heart. They serve their communities just as much as I do. I feel incredibly honored to be a part of both the National Guard and Lakota cultures."

Adoption Support for Service Members

For service members expanding their Families through adoption, assistance is available to ease the financial costs associated with the process.

Eligible service members serving on active duty orders may be reimbursed a maximum of \$2,000 per child for gualifying expenses related to the adoption of children under age 18, up to a maximum of \$5,000 per calendar year for multiple adoptions.

For more information about adoption assistance eligibility and gualifying expenses, go to **MyArmyBenefits.us.army.mil**, select Benefit Library from the main menu, then Federal-Benefits, Family Services, Adoption Assistance.

MyArmyBenefits.us.army.mil

From Perfect Strangers to Perfect Partners

Oklahoma Soldiers Earn Gold at International Military Competition

BY STAFF WRITER Tatyana White-Jenkins Photos Courtesy Oklahoma Army National Guard

hen four Soldiers from Oklahoma's 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) first met last fall, it was just days before they were to begin competing as a team in the Altcar Challenge, an international competition held at the Altcar Training Camp in Merseyside, England. To the group's surprise, they gelled together quite well—well enough to bring home the gold.

Hosted by the United Kingdom Reserve Forces Association (UKRFA), an organization dedicated to providing opportunities for education, personal development and international experiences to promote the efficiency of the reserve forces, the Altcar Challenge is a three-day, international competition designed to bring together reserve component soldiers from around the world and test them on a variety of advanced military skills.

Oklahoma's participating team was made up of SSG Jonathan Cody, CPL Kyle Foor, SPC Durham Chilcoat and SPC Brandon Widman. The Soldiers were chosen to compete based on their achievements as some the brigade's topperforming Soldiers.

With 18 teams and participants hailing from France, Denmark, The Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom and the

Oklahoma Army National Guard Soldiers (left to right) SPC Brandon Widman, SPC Durham Chilcoat, CPL Kyle Foor and SSG Jonathan Cody stand together while being briefed just after arrival to the Altcar Challenge 2018, an international military skills competition held at the Altcar Training Camp in Merseyside, England, and hosted by the United Kingdom Reserve Forces Association and the British Army Headquarters North West.





LEFT: The Oklahoma Guard team members ensure no man is left behind as they run an obstacle course as part of a team event during the Altcar Challenge 2018.

BELOW: Two Altcar Challenge team members from Oklahoma's 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, shoot the SA80 NATO firearm on the weapons qualification range as part of a shooting event during the Altcar Challenge 2018. United States, the competition tested soldiers' skills in multiple events, including dismounted close-quarter combat, land navigation, obstacle courses and casualty evacuation.

"The competition was fantastic," said SGM Calvin Tiffie of the 45th IBCT. "It was really interesting to meet reservist and guard soldiers from allied nations in Europe. The facilities were great and the quality of the training was great. It was just a real topnotch run event."

SGM Tiffie served as a coordinator for the 45th during the competition.

"I was the operations sergeant major," he explained. "I coordinated getting our people over there, getting the money and teams together. I traveled with the brigade commander, COL Chris Chomosh, as command observers just to see what it was all about."

COL Chomosh noted that in addition to being a forum for building relationships with allied soldiers, the competition was also an important opportunity to build interoperability.

"Everyone lived in the same barracks. Soldiers were telling jokes and trading patches. At the end of the day, it was a great



chance to work with our allies to build interoperability, friendship and comradery before we are in a deployed environment," he remarked.

The Oklahoma team members met for the first time just before the competition, leaving them little time to prepare as a unified group. Then SGT, now SSG Cody, acted as team leader during the competition. He said he felt his team members' individual preparations helped speed their cohesion when working as a team.

"We have to keep ourselves prepared at all times," said SSG Cody. "For the competition, we were just sent a packing list and a description of the stations and training events that would be there. We didn't even know each other until the day we were going to get on the airplane and go, so we didn't have much time to prepare as a team. But individually, we did what we could. You try to prepare yourself as best as you can."

Participants were given only one day to familiarize themselves with the lanes before beginning the challenge. Despite going into the competition with little knowledge of what to expect, and not knowing their teammates, the Oklahoma Guard team excelled in the challenging and competitive environment.

"We sent a four-man team [made up of] Soldiers from two different battalions," explained SGM Tiffie. "They got the letter of instruction, rehearsed and they just executed flawlessly."

The competition gave participants opportunities to work with and learn from their allied partners. During the competition, the Oklahoma team was paired with other foreign teams in order to complete certain challenges.

"Four Soldiers from Oklahoma, who had never worked with any foreign allies, [were thrown] into a squad with two Dutch national guard teams," said SGM Tiffie. "It was a challenge. There was a language barrier and a tactics, techniques and procedures barrier. That was the most interesting thing – to see how they all came together and figured it out pretty efficiently."

SSG Cody noted an event conducted with Lithuanian soldiers that he felt exemplified his team's ability to work well with their foreign counterparts.

"We were going door to door with two Lithuanian teams attached to us," SSG Cody explained. "They [manned]

"We sent a four-man team made up of Soldiers from two different battalions. They got the letter of instruction, rehearsed and executed flawlessly."

- SGM Calvin Tiffie



The 4-man, Oklahoma Guard Altcar Challenge team performs a recovery exercise where they were tested on patrolling, combat lifesaving, and egressing to a medical-evacuation location.

the station and you had to come up with a plan very quickly amongst the team leaders to see who was going to take which route. It was incredible how much we could accomplish together in a really short amount of time."

The various events left the Oklahoma Soldiers with plenty of useful techniques and lessons-learned to apply to future missions.

"It was great seeing the different ways our allies work," said Oklahoma team member CPL Foor. "I will definitely be bringing these techniques home. [For instance], using mils over degrees for land navigation to be more accurate and having an emphasis on mission planning."

The British Royal Navy ran teams through sea training and sea survival courses. As the Oklahoma Soldiers had never done that type of training before, it was a new and exciting learning experience.

"We enjoyed their lessons, for sure," SSG Cody said. "They had a short course on underwater mine sweeping. However, due to weather conditions, they didn't actually have us underwater. They had a great scenario where you were blindfolded and had to feel your way around and try to describe what a possible bomb or IED [improvised explosive device] felt like. Then you had to report back based on how you dimensioned it with your hand or arm. That was really neat."

SSG Cody went on to comment on how the competition demonstrated the importance of adaptability in being successful in any mission.

"Being adaptable and flexible was the best thing to take away from the competition," SSG Cody said. "We can train all day here at home. But when you are amongst foreign and international teams like that, you have to stay adaptive. They have a different way of doing things just like we do."

The team's adaptability and dedication paid off as they were one of four teams to earn gold in the competition.

"We all worked very well together," explained CPL Foor. "Especially seeing as though it was the first time any of us had ever met. We were all hoping for [gold], but we weren't really expecting it since we had not done [the competition] before. We didn't think we were going to win at all so we were very surprised when we did. It feels awesome."

"We were very honored, surprised and pleased with ourselves that we could go over there and do this competition with little to no warning of what their stations and training requirements would be," said SSG Cody. "It was an amazing experience and I recommend any American [reserve component Soldier] to go through the Altcar competition."

RIGHT: The Oklahoma Guard Soldiers of the Altcar-Challenge team conduct minesweeping techniques en route to an urban operations course as part of the 2018 competition held at the Altcar Training Camp in Merseyside, England.

BELOW: SGT Jonathan Cody of the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Oklahoma Army National Guard, accepts on behalf of his team the winning medal for the Altcar Challenge 2018 from Maj. Gen. William O'Leary, deputy commander of the British Field Army and joint head of the British Army Reserve, on Sept. 9, 2018.



HEROES ON THE WATER is a Veterans charity that creates costfree, alternative therapeutic programs to serve Veterans, activeduty military personnel, first responders and their Families.

Services include therapeutic kayak fishing experiences. No experience or equipment is needed to participate. The organization encourages an accepting, pressure-free environment where participants can enjoy a peaceful and positive experience.

For more information about the organization and to find a chapter near you, go to **HeroesOnTheWater.org**











North Carolina Army

National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 690th **Brigade Support Battalion** recover a plow stuck in the snow during Winter Storm Diego, December 2018. As part of the storm response, 175 North Carolina Guard Soldiers were strategically placed across the State to augment emergency management personnel. Winter Storm Diego crippled parts of the Southeast when it dropped 34 inches of snow at its highest point Dec. 8-9, 2018, stranding motorists on highways and leaving more than 400,000 residents without power.

North Carolina Army National Guard photo by SGT Joe Roudabush









The sun rises above an

M2A3 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle at Al-Ghalail Range, Qatar, November 2018. The Mississippi Army National Guard Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 198th Armor Regiment, Task Force Spartan, spent the pre-dawn hours staging their Bradley in preparation for a combined arms live-fire drill held as part of Exercise Eastern Action 2019, a command post and field training exercise conducted in partnership by the U.S. Army and the Qatari Emiri Land Forces.

Mississippi Army National Guard photo by SPC Jovi Prevot





PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



A U.S. Army UH-60M

Black Hawk helicopter, copiloted by 1LT Vincent Sherrill of the California Army National Guard's 1st Assault Helicopter Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, flies through the Feather River Canyon in Butte County, Calif., carrying a water drop, Nov. 16, 2018, in support of the emergency response to the deadly Camp Fire. Also on board are pilot CW5 Rob Metoyer and crew chief SGT Gregory Fernandez.

California National Guard photo by SrA Crystal Housman









An Army National

Guard Special Forces Soldier with the 20th Special Forces Group, Massachusetts Army National Guard, surveils a target during a reconnaissance and surveillance exercise on Joint Base Cape Cod, Mass., June 2018. The highly trained Soldiers serve part-time but maintain their high level of combat capabilities.

Massachusetts National Guard photo by SPC Samuel D. Keenan









Army National Guard

Soldiers from New Jersey's C Troop, 1st Squadron, 102nd Cavalry Regiment, move tactically through woods en route to an objective as part of a training mission on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., June 2018.

New Jersey National Guard photo by MSgt Matt Hecht





PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Army National Guard

Soldiers with New Jersey's C Troop, 1st Squadron, 102nd Cavalry Regiment, prepare for night shooting during weapons qualifications on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., January 2019. The qualifications were held in advance of the troop's deployment to North Africa in support of Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa.

New Jersey National Guard photo by MSgt Matt Hecht









SPC Natalie Lajune,

a combat medic with Battle Group Poland's Task Force Raider, directs her firing squad toward their next maneuver during a care under fire training exercise at Bemowo Piskie Training Area, Poland, October 2018. Task Force Raider is a detached forward element assigned with the Tennessee Army National Guard's 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, headquartered out of Knoxville, Tenn.

Tennessee Army National Guard photo by SGT Sarah Kirby



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A District of Columbia National Guard Soldier directs fellow Soldiers preparing light medium tactical vehicles to be used as security barriers during the State funeral for the 41st U.S. President, George H.W. Bush, Dec. 5, 2018.

D.C. National Guard photo by SSG Anthony Small

STATES FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

- DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
- IDAHO
- ILLINOIS
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- MISSISSIPPI
- NEW YORK
- OKLAHOMA
- PENNSYLVANIA
- TEXAS
- VERMONT
- WYOMING

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

BY SSG ANTHONY SMALL, D.C. NATIONAL GUARD

D.C. Guard Supports Security Mission for Funeral of Former President Bush

istrict of Columbia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen provided security, transportation and disaster response capabilities during the state funeral held at the Washington National Cathedral Dec. 5, 2018, for former President George H.W. Bush.

The D.C. National Guard joined many agencies, including the D.C. Homeland Security Emergency Management Agency, FBI, Metropolitan Police Department, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services and the U.S. Park Police, to provide safety and security for people attending activities in and around the National Capital Region during the event.

"This joint mission is important because we provide unique force protection enhancements during the state funeral," said LTC Malik Freeman, the D.C. Army National Guard 74th Troop Command deputy commander. "Vehicle operators are driving 5-ton cargo vehicles to provide enhanced mobile force protection assets to assist with motorcade operations. Our team has the opportunity to be a part of history by ensuring that the state funeral is safe and secure."

As part of a governor escort mission,

members of the D.C. Guard's Multi-agency Augmentation Command (MAC) served as funeral escorts for 18 state governors who attended the state funeral.

According to MAJ Mark Ballantyne, operations officer and mission planner with the MAC, the governor escort mission is one of the national special security events the unit spends months preparing for to ensure its members are ready at a moment's notice.

"The goal is to make it look like it was easy ... because then that means we did our job right," MAJ Ballantyne said. "This is the culmination of planning over 18 months in preparation for a state funeral for a president if and when it happens."

Soldiers and Airmen from the D.C. National Guard's 33rd Civil Support Team (CST) joined the Virginia National Guard's 34th CST to support interagency teams throughout the District with chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive detection and response capabilities as part of the force protection package.

IDAHO

BY TSGT JOHN WINN, IDAHO NATIONAL GUARD Idaho National Guard Lends a Helping Hand to Nearby Tribes

ituated about 150 miles south of Boise's Gowen Field and spanning more than 500 square miles along the Idaho-Nevada border is the Duck Valley Indian Reservation, home to the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes.

The tribes' location in a large, highdesert valley lends itself to one of their major industries: cattle ranching. However, the tribes have limited construction resources to maintain access to the cattle across the vast hills and valleys.

As part of its innovative readiness training (IRT) program, the Idaho National Guard offered its assistance September 2018 to repair several cattle roads on the reservation. Improving the rough roads was also an opportunity for members of the Idaho Guard to put their civil engineering skills to good use.

"The main purpose and reason for the building of this [road] is to enable tribal fire crews, which have a little bit older equipment, to get from the highway, over ridges and back into the pastures where all of the cattle graze," said Army National Guard 1LT Zebulon Struble, project officer in charge of the civil engineer tasking for the 166th Brigade Engineer Battalion.

The IRT was more than a matter of pouring pavement to create roadways. Crews navigated the effects of weather and existing trails to ensure durability and sustainability of the final product.

"Now that we've put all of the culverts in up to the top of the ridge, we've got a better idea of where the runoff goes from the snow," 1LT Struble said. "There are erosion paths and water trails, so we know where to repair, where to dig diversion ditches and where to dig water bars. The difference between what it was before and what it is right now is already [as different as] night and day."

An Idaho Guard Soldier with the 166th Brigade Engineer Battalion uses a bulldozer to help repair a cattle road on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation as part of an Innovative Readiness Training program held September 2018.

Idaho National Guard photo by TSgt John Winn



Along with providing heavy equipment and trail-building support, the Idaho Guard sent a team of medical professionals to the Owyhee Community Health Facility. The team lent its expertise and provided relief to staff members, allowing them to catch up on a significant backlog of paperwork.

"Within 15-20 minutes, we were hitting the ground running, getting things done," said COL Thomas Caldwell, the Idaho Army National Guard medical detachment chief of aviation medicine. "[The Facility staff members] have been wonderful, and they seem to appreciate us coming down."

COL Caldwell said the IRT also offered valuable opportunities for collaborative training. In addition to providing support at the medical facility, Idaho Guard members participated in health education programs with local youths and individuals at the reservation's Senior Citizens Center.

COL Caldwell said the experience was a plus for both the Shoshone-Paiute community and Idaho Guard members.

ILLINOIS

BY SFC BRYAN SPREITZER, ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD

Quake Exercise Prepares Illinois Guard, First Responders



An Illinois National Guard C-130 Hercules lands at Marion Airport during Prairie Assurance, a full-scale, Statewide, multi-agency emergency response exercise held November 2018.

Illinois Army National Guard photo by SSG Robert Adams

magine that a subtle shaking awakens you from a sound sleep. You step out of bed to investigate and, as you move through your house, the rumble intensifies to a shake, then a full roil.

The pictures on your walls crash to the ground; the ground beneath you lurches and heaves. You look out the window and see waves of earth travel down a nearby road.

This isn't a scene from the most recent disaster-themed movie. This is what it looked like in the Midwest between December 1811 and March 1812, when the frontier town of New Madrid in what is now Missouri – and the surrounding area – experienced earthquakes ranging in magnitude from 7.1 to an estimated 8.8 on the Richter scale.

The quakes were so intense that church bells ringing in Boston were attributed to the shaking.

The Prairie Assurance Exercise, which took place Oct. 31 - Nov. 4, 2018, at multiple locations in Illinois, focused on an event like this occurring along the New Madrid and Wabash Valley seismic zones. It's the same area where the series of quakes struck in 1811-12.

The mock earthquakes caused widespread damage across seven States, including southern Illinois. The full-scale, statewide exercise in preparedness tested the ability of the Illinois National Guard

Illinois Army National Guard photo by SFC Bryan Spreitzer

Illinois National Guard Director of the Joint Staff BG Michael Glisson addresses Illinois National Guard staff directors during the table-top exercise portion of Prairie Assurance.



to integrate with State and local emergency management agencies and first responders to react to an event like this.

Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard MG Richard J. Hayes Jr. opened the event by explaining the goal of the exercise.

"It's the planning and steeping yourself in the problems that allow you to be adaptive and creative when it actually occurs," MG Hayes said. "All of the effort we put into this is to understand the problem and recognize that when it hits, it's all going to change."

Darryl Dragoo, director of operations for the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) in Springfield, said exercises like Prairie Assurance are necessary to figure out what IEMA may need and how the Illinois National Guard can provide support.

"It's been awesome," Dragoo said. "The front end was great, and the operational communications piece exceeded everybody's expectations. Now we're working the finer points, which is where we need to be to coordinate mission sets and really decide the best use of the Guard's forces against the mission sets of the State."

Illinois National Guard Director of the Joint Staff BG Michael Glisson echoed Dragoo's sentiment and said in the six years he has been heavily involved in earthquake planning for the Guard, this exercise had the greatest level of participation.

"We've made more headway from a planning standpoint this week than we have in a long time," BG Glisson said. "I'm extremely pleased, and I know that the adjutant general is as well with what we've done this week. Continued integrated planning is critical in this world to ensure good interagency relationships and to make sure we always understand each other and make sure that we're not meeting for the first time during an event."

LOUISIANA

BY SGT NOSHOBA DAVIS, LOUISIANA NATIONAL GUARD

Louisiana Guard's Revamped Course Prepares Future Leaders

he Louisiana Army National Guard's Multi-Component Cadre Basic Leader Course (BLC) at Camp Cook in Ball implemented a new curriculum during the August rotation of the school. Soldiers discuss experiences and take notes during class at the Louisiana National Guard's 199th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) Basic Leadership Course at Camp Cook in Ball, Louisiana.

Louisiana Army National Guard photo by SGT Noshoba Davis

The revamped BLC is part of the Army's Noncommissioned Officer 2020 initiative, released by the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command in 2015. The NCO 2020 will develop the next generation of professional NCOs who can thrive in chaos and ambiguity, as well as adapt and win in a complex world by being provided with appropriately designed learning experiences at each level of leadership.

The BLC focuses on the Six Leader Core Competencies – readiness, leadership, training management, communication, operations and program management.

In 2016, the Louisiana Army National Guard's BLC became one of two multicomponent course locations, along with Fort Carson, Colorado. The academy is led by a National Guard commandant and has cadre assigned from all three components.

This fiscal year, the BLC is prepared to train a combined 1,760 Soldiers from the National Guard, active duty and Army Reserve.

"When you have people from all different backgrounds, it really pushes

everyone to expand beyond their own experiences," said SPC Shelby McCloudrey of the Army Reserve's 409th Engineer Company at Fort Collins, Colorado. "The group discussions help us build social relationships and really improve as communicators with other Soldiers."

During the 23-day course, Soldiers write an informative essay, two reflective essays, a resume and a Sexual Harassment Assault Response and Prevention essay. Soldiers are also evaluated on public speaking, physical readiness training instruction and squad drills.

"The essays help me see what is expected of me as a noncommissioned officer because I know there is a lot of writing involved," said SGT Andrea Keiter of the Army Reserve's 282nd Engineer Company, based in Colorado. "The essays are a foundation ... something to build on in the future."

These assignments help teach Soldiers how to write professionally and communicate effectively, using basic English and grammar. As Soldiers progress through the years in their professional military education, the writing will increase in difficulty.

"Soldiers come in knowing how to shoot, move and communicate, but we throw in writing essays and grammar," said SSG Timothy Bouyea, a facilitator at BLC. "A Soldier can give you an amazing brief and be able to completely explain everything, but [can] often go blank as soon as you tell them to put it to paper.

"It's our job to make sure they are able to convey information in a professional manner."

CSM Howard Ivory, the Louisiana Army National Guard's logistics senior enlisted advisor, was the guest speaker for the class graduation Aug. 30, 2018, at Camp Beauregard in Pineville, Louisiana. He spoke with the 157 graduates about what it means to be an NCO.

"Graduates, give yourself a round of applause," CSM Ivory said. "Now I don't want to burst your bubble, but you're going to get very few of those in your future as a leader. We don't do what we do for the applause or awards. We do it because we love it, and it's the right thing to do."

MARYLAND

BY MAJ KURT RAUSCHENBERG, MARYLAND NATIONAL GUARD

Maryland Information Ops Battalion Makes Key Contributions

Maryland Army National Guard's 110th Information Operations (IO) Battalion

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showcased unique capabilities commonly integrated into today's operational environments – now referred to as a "multi-domain battlefield" – Nov. 18, 2018, at the Annapolis Readiness Center in Annapolis, Maryland.

Dozens of interested military members and civilians attended the 110th Information and Cyber Operations Symposium to learn from presentations led by unit members and guest speakers.

The symposium provided an optimal opportunity for Maryland experts who serve in these technical fields to share information and build relationships.

CSM Thomas B. Beyard, the Maryland National Guard's senior enlisted leader, addressed the audience with his firsthand knowledge of the invaluable capabilities the 110th IO Battalion brings to the Army.

"There's no [Maryland Guard] unit that's deployed more times, more places than the 110th," CSM Beyard said. "We do a lot of things to support the warfighter all over the world, but sometimes we have to use those same capabilities to support the state of Maryland and our homeland as well."

Symposium topics included experiences acquired through dynamic exercises involving the application of information operations and cyber support, both domestically and abroad.

MAJ John Rodriguez, an experienced IO officer who was one of the presenters, touched on the unification of informationrelated capabilities in a multi-domain battlefield environment, as demonstrated in an exercise known as Cyber Blitz 2018.

He described how the exercise provided U.S. Army Cyber the opportunity to test new concepts, capabilities and techniques in offensive and defensive cyberspace operations, electronic warfare and IO.

"Be an advocate to break down stovepipes and fully integrating the various capabilities related to communication," MAJ Rodriguez said.

Soldiers at the Louisiana National Guard's 199th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) Basic Leadership Course participate in a class using a new curriculum that is set be rolled out Army-wide by January 2020.

Louisiana Army National Guard photo by SGT Noshoba Davis

MAJ Rodriguez recently returned from a nine-month deployment leading the information operations directorate, known as the J39, in the Horn of Africa. The directorate supported U.S. Africa Command operations to set conditions for continued partnerships while helping African partner nations build needed capacity to secure the region.

"Conducting IO in one part of the world is very different than how you would apply it in other parts of the world," he said.

Another presenter and fellow IO officer, CPT Lesley Dowdle, spoke about her experience serving as a member of the J39 in Maryland's Vigilant Guard 2018 exercise last May.

"We got to integrate with the [Maryland Air Guard] 175th Cyber Operations Group and learned how to collectively apply both cyber and IO capabilities simultaneously," CPT Dowdle said. "It took understanding joint doctrine

and knowing what resources the Air Guard cyber could provide as well."

CPT Dowdle said the general public's typical impression of domestic operations is seeing National Guard members work with emergency managers in conducting rescues. But in this exercise, their expertise in IO was used differently as they worked with public affairs officers (PAO)s to help support the overall emergency situation.

"IO and cyber, along with PAO, were [utilized] while conducting key leader engagements as a means to effectively use our direct capabilities involving communications," CPT Dowdle said.

In closing remarks, COL Julie M. Minde, 58th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade (EMIB) commander, emphasized the need to continue building the IO and cyber capabilities through enduring partnerships in and out of the State of Maryland.

"I'm proud of this organization, its extensive experiences and its people," COL Minde said. "I know we will move forward with great professionalism to make this battalion the role model unit for IO and cyber capabilities in the future."

During federal missions at home and abroad, the 110th is subordinate to the 58th EMIB in Maryland and the Washington National Guard's 56th Theater Information Operations Group.

MISSISSIPPI

BY SGT CHRISTOPHER LINDBORG, MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD

Mississippi Guard Medic Advises Deployed Soldiers on Importance of Super Foods

roper nutrition and a balanced diet are vital components to Soldiers completing a strenuous course like the Air Assault School at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

SFC Richard Monroe, a combat medic assigned to the 198th Armored Regiment, Mississippi Army National Guard, stresses to Soldiers the importance of consuming plenty of salty foods before physically strenuous events.

SFC Monroe's own experiences at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, which is located in a hot and humid climate, prepared him for his current mobilization.

"I've seen Soldiers go into [stages] of heat stroke at Camp Shelby," said SFC Monroe. "It's dangerous."

In February of this year, SFC Monroe was assigned to provide medical coverage to Soldiers enrolled in Air Assault School at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. On day two of classes, the Soldiers participated in a six-mile ruck march. SFC Monroe said a Soldier, who was healthy and muscular, came in from the march blacking out.

"His eyes were rolling to the back of his head," said SFC Monroe. "He was having muscle spasms in his legs."

The medic team first treated the Soldier and ensured he was no longer in danger. Then SFC Monroe, who noted that one of his strong suits is teaching Soldiers about proper nutrition, offered the Soldier further advice to eat more salt.

"A lot of people will tell the Soldiers to drink water, but [after a certain] point, you are drinking [so much] water that you are flushing salt," SFC Monroe explained.

SFC Monroe recommends eating a healthy breakfast at the start of the day. He said if Soldiers only have access to the dining facility, then they should eat peanut butter to help sustain them during physically demanding work throughout the day.

"Peanut butter has salts and sugars in it," he noted. "It's a superfood."

SFC Monroe offered further advice to Soldiers going on early morning events. He

Information Operations Officer, CPT Lesley Dowdle of the Maryland Army National Guard speaks on her experience serving as a member of the J39, an information operations directorate in the Horn of Africa.

Maryland Army National Guard photo by MAJ Kurt Rauschenberg

recommends eating foods on the go, for example, a pop tart.

"Look, you have to eat salts," said SFC Monroe. "Your heart and all your muscles run by salts, sodium and potassium. If you deplete them, your heart is going to stop."

SFC Monroe is the noncommissioned officer in charge of the medics assigned to the Air Assault school. He explained how the school and its events are staffed. He said there are four medics assigned to the school, which started with 240 students. Each event is staffed according to physical layout and the likelihood of injuries.

"Two medics can't cover all the way to the other side of the base," he said, referring to the school's six-mile ruck march.

The standard operating procedure requires two medics on hand and four medics for major events. There are seven medics assigned to this school, allowing students to take solace in knowing there are plenty of medics present.

"I've seen one injury in each event," noted SFC Monroe. "The time of the year is nice, but you don't know how badly [the warm weather can affect unprepared Soldiers]."

SFC Monroe said he plans to stay committed to leading his medics and offering nutrition advice to Soldiers as often as he can.

NEW YORK

BY SSG MICHAEL DAVIS, NEW YORK NATIONAL GUARD

New York Guard CST Trains Local Fire Department

he scene in Kingston, New York, was like something out of a zombie apocalypse movie. There was a large 150-year-old alms

SFC Richard Monroe, a combat medic assigned to the 198th Armored Regiment, Mississippi Army National Guard, talks with Soldiers during a seven-day Air Assault School class at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

U.S. Army photo by SGT Christopher Lindborg

house that was in obvious disrepair, unmarked blue trailers with satellite dishes around the perimeter, and people in bright orange HAZMAT suits waving handheld scanners and speaking in muffled voices.

The Kingston Fire Department HAZMAT Team truck was parked near a blue sedan that had what looked like a lifeless body in the driver's seat. Moments later, several firemen were taken to the hospital exhibiting symptoms of what appeared to be toxic inhalation.

The next call was to the New York National Guard's 2nd Weapons of Mass Destruction - Civil Support Team (WMD-CST).

That was the scenario given to the Scotia-based WMD-CST (CST) during its joint training event with the Kingston Fire Department HAZMAT team on Nov. 28, 2018.

The CST has 22 full-time Soldiers and Airmen from the New York National Guard and supports local civil authorities during chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) events throughout the State (except for Long Island, New York City and Westchester County).

"We're always looking for an opportunity to train with local fire departments," said LTC Aron Sacchetti, commander of the CST.

LTC Sacchetti is committed to enhancing the interoperability between military and local agencies during CBRN responses. His goal is to train in advance of an event and not meet for the first time when lives are on the line.

Since the CST trains with the newest equipment and procedures, the local agencies gain hands-on experience before an actual emergency arises.

SSG David Hansen, the CST's training noncommissioned officer, said a big selling point for local agencies to engage in the joint training events is learning the newest methods for decontamination.

"These events become a 'train-thetrainer' opportunity for smaller agencies that might not have the resources available to send their people across



Survey Team Chief SSG Kristin Northrup, and survey team member, SPC Sean Murray, both assigned to the 2nd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team (CST), New York Army National Guard, move to inspect, scan and catalog the contents of a simulated bomb maker's vehicle during a hazardous materials exercise with the City of Kingston Fire Department in Kingston, N.Y., Nov. 28, 2018.

New York Army National Guard photo by SGT Harley Jelis

the country every year to learn the newest techniques," SSG Hansen said.

The CST members used Class A HAZMAT suits, which provide the highest level of protection available. The suits include a 25-pound breathing apparatus that supplies four hours of clean air, two-way radios and heavy duty chemical resistant gloves.

One of the new techniques practiced during the training was the use of a recently developed commercial decontamination agent for scrubbing the Class A suits after possible exposure to a contaminant. This replaced the previous method that included only water and bleach.

Not only did this training event showcase new decontamination techniques, but it also marked the first time this CST had a civilian CBRN training company facilitate the exercise.

OKLAHOMA

BY CPT LEANNA MASCHINO, OKLAHOMA NATIONAL GUARD

Oklahoma Guard CST Trains on Rope Rescue

escuer on the ground!" shouts a Soldier with the Oklahoma National Guard's elite 63rd Civil Support Team as he safely reaches the surface.

"Up on main!" the rest of the 63rd CST members reply as the rescuer prepares and pulls up a simulated injured person from a dangerous and confined area during the unit's ropes rescue technician training Jan. 9 at the High Plains Technology Center in Woodward, Oklahoma.

"Our main mission is to learn how to be able to lower someone down using ropes from a high point, and also to be able to raise them back up," said CPT Aaron Dougherty, operations officer with the 63rd CST. The weeklong training

is part of an annual

refresher and recertification for members of the 63rd CST, who continually train on all tasks needed to successfully complete their mission as the Oklahoma National Guard's team of first responders. The event included the basics of rope rescue, from knot tying to the more advanced portion of rappelling down and up a steep, simulated cliff.

"Most of what we do will be in an emergency setting," CPT Dougherty said. "If for some reason during our normal mission we need to rescue one of our own people, we have the ability to rescue them. Another time we would use this training would be to augment a search and rescue team, like

Oklahoma National Guard Soldiers of the 63rd Civil Support Team, conduct ropes rescue technician training at the High Plains Technology Center in Woodward, Okla., as part of an annual refresher and re-certification for unit members.

Oklahoma Army National Guard photos by CPT Aaron Dougherty and Leanna Maschino

[Oklahoma] Task Force 1, throughout the Oklahoma region."

The 63rd CST is filled with highly trained and educated Soldiers and Airmen, dedicated to their mission and the community. Their mission includes: supporting civil authorities during incidents, with the ability to identify chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive agents or substances; assessing current and projected consequences; advising on response measures; and assisting with appropriate requests for additional State support.

Another crucial benefit the 63rd CST brings to a real-world situation is its mobile command center and mobile communications center, both of which allow the unit to develop products at the incident location and integrate communications systems with civilian authorities.

For the 63rd CST to be at the top of its game, the unit requires frequent training – such as the ropes rescue course – both internally with team members and

Father and son COL Howard Lloyd (right) and 1LT Ian Lloyd, both of the 28th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, pose in front of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter at Muir Army Airfield.

Pennsylvania Army National Guard photo by Ian Lloyd

externally with other State agencies. The external training allows each entity to understand each other's lingo and standard operating procedures, all to be better prepared if a real-world emergency occurs.

"You're always training and preparing for anything that could happen," CPT Dougherty said. "The things that we do are such a broad spectrum, and so any given moment you're given a situation [in which] you really have to think critically on how to solve that problem."

PENNSYLVANIA

BY CPT TRAVIS MUELLER, PENNSYLVANIA NATIONAL GUARD

Pennsylvania Guard Father and Son Become Co-pilots

o many Soldiers, serving alongside their child in the Army seems inconceivable. But for COL Howard Lloyd, commander of the Pennsylvania National Guard's 28th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade (ECAB), that dream has become a reality. He and his son, 1LT Ian Lloyd, serve together as pilots in the 28th ECAB.

1LT Lloyd is a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot with A Company, 2-104th General Support Aviation Battalion, 28th ECAB. To him, COL Lloyd is his father, mentor and brigade commander. Recently, however, he added "co-pilot" to that lineup.

On Oct. 9, 2018, the father-son duo had the opportunity to fly a Black Hawk together – as pilot and co-pilot – on a training flight in central Pennsylvania.

"This was the first time that we had the opportunity to fly since he graduated from flight school as the Distinguished Honor Graduate in April," COL Lloyd said. "Since he learned how to fly the UH-60M model down at Fort Rucker [Alabama], he had to go through a readiness level progression into the UH-60A/L model here in Pennsylvania."

The Lloyds share many interests besides flying, most notably outdoor recreation activities and family time. What is particularly special for COL Lloyd is that his son always wanted to be a police officer and fly helicopters and now has accomplished both. In addition to his position as an Army aviator, 1LT Lloyd is a Pennsylvania State Trooper. "How many fathers get

"How many fathers get the opportunity to fly a military aircraft with their son, to experience the joy of doing something you love, like flying, with your son?" COL Lloyd said. "To experience flight school again, but through your son's eyes, and to plan, file and fly together is really a truly proud moment and indescribable."

TEXAS

BY SFC SUZANNE RINGLE, TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD

Texas Soldier Donates Life-saving Stem Cells to Cancer Patient

exas Army National Guard SPC Akeem Martin began his journey to save a life nearly five years ago when he was a freshman at Central Texas College.

"We were going to lunch one day and they [Be The Match] were having a drive, giving away pizza," he said.

Be The Match is a nonprofit international organization that matches stem cell and bone marrow donors with recipients inflicted with certain cancers. The matches are based partly on ethnicity, and often the match will come from outside one's family.

"I signed up, they took a mouth swab and that was the last time I heard anything," SPC Martin said. "Then last year (2017), I got a call from Be The Match saying that I had been matched with a person with leukemia and asking would I like to donate for them."

SPC Martin could have said no, but that is not in his character. "Because I signed up for it, just like any other commitment you make, you did the paperwork, you said you were gonna do it, so"

SPC Martin leaves the statement hanging as if the conclusion is obvious: You do what you say and say what you do; no more discussion needed. This attitude serves him well in both his military and civilian careers.

A 23-year-old from Houston, SPC Martin has been a firefighter for two years with the South Montgomery County Fire Department. In the Texas Army National Guard, he is a chaplain's assistant deployed to the southwest border for Joint Task Force Guardian Support with the El Paso-based 3rd Battalion, 133rd Field Artillery Regiment.

As a chaplain's assistant, he has many opportunities to counsel service members and help them on an emotional level. "These [Guard members] have lives going on back home, and life happens every day," SPC Martin said. "I am just glad I can help."

Four months after LaShonda Goines, a cancer nurse from Houston, was diagnosed with two different forms of cancer, she wrote a touching letter that was addressed to "My Donor" and received by SPC Martin. At the time, she knew for certain only two things – there was a perfect 10-out-of-10 match for her, and, without a doubt, everything was going to be OK.

"I never asked for the odds of survival – I would not accept them anyways," Goines said. "I just knew that God was going to bring me out of this. I knew I was going to beat it."

SPC Akeem Martin Texas Army National Guard photo by SFC Suzanne Ringle After Goines received SPC Martin's stem cells, the good news came over the phone just 30 days later. "I am cancer free," Goines said. "Hearing those words was awesome."

SPC Martin and Goines were invited to meet for the first time in Minnesota at the annual Be The Match Council Meeting. That contact occurred on stage in front of more than 2,000 people.

"I can't even describe how amazing that moment was – it was so precious," SPC Martin said.

He attempted to describe the event, seemingly at a loss for words, then shrugged his shoulders and said: "I was really anxious and super excited. I was just really happy to get to that point. Just seeing her and being able to say that we got to that point because she made it, she was a fighter. It was something really special."

Goines went from a double cancer diagnosis to cancer free in seven months because SPC Martin decided to make a difference and see it through. "Sign up for

Be The Match," she urged. "It doesn't matter if you are Black, White, Hispanic. Just sign up."

> SPC Martin said his experience doesn't make him a hero, but does make him want to share his story. "It is really important to educate people on the Be the Match program or any marrow donor

method any way an a

program because it does save lives. It does make a difference."

For more information on the program, visit bethematch.org. •

VERMONT

BY SGT BARBARA PENDL, VERMONT NATIONAL GUARD

Vermont Guard Soldier Rescues Citizen from Deadly Fire

fter dropping his son off at daycare on Dec. 28, 2018, Vermont Army National Guard SFC Damien Larose noticed plumes of smoke coming from a residence on Vermont Route 15 in Underhill.

He immediately called 911 to report the house fire. The dispatcher prompted him to check if anyone was inside.

"Adjacent to the garage, there was a car parked in the driveway with no snow on it," SFC Larose recalled. "That made

me think there's probably someone inside."

SFC Larose said he knocked on doors while calling out to see if anyone would respond. Smoke continued to pour from the structure through broken window glass.

He pushed an unlocked door open, and deep, black smoke rolled out, causing him to think no one could be alive inside.

He smashed a window with a snow shovel to increase ventilation and looked through the door again. This time, he noticed a woman on the floor. "I basically took a big breath of air, ran in and just grabbed her by the arm and pulled her out," he said.

SFC Larose described the woman – June Collins, 60, of North Hero, Vermont – as unresponsive while he carried her outside. He was surprised by what happened next. "As soon as her back touched the ground, she just had this gasp of air like she had been underwater," he said.

He monitored Collins' pulse as she continued to gulp fresh air. He remained with her until emergency responders arrived to transport her to the University of Vermont Medical Center, where she received treatment for severe smoke inhalation and burns.

SFC Larose has deployed twice to Iraq and once to Afghanistan. He said those experiences helped him stay composed during this emergency. "As an infantryman, I have been in some pretty tense situations," he said. "So here, I could think a little more clearly and react with a cooler head."

He also served as a law enforcement professional before earning a full-time

position as an incentives manager for the Vermont National Guard.

Looking back on the rescue, SFC Larose said, "It's just something we need to do for each other. For me, it's a no-brainer: just help people."

He was thankful for a text message he received from Collins. "So sorry that I can't see you and thank you in person as I can't even talk at the moment," she wrote. "Thank you for saving my life. … I'll see you when I am well again."

WYOMING

BY SFC JAMES MCGUIRE, WYOMING NATIONAL GUARD

Wyoming National Guard Soldiers Gear Up for Combat Lifesaving

n preparation for their deployment overseas this year, about 40 artillerymen in the Wyoming Army National Guard's Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion (HHB) 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery Regiment, spent time in January learning how to keep one another alive in the event of a combat casualty.

All Soldiers are taught basic first-aid skills during their initial entry training, but Combat Lifesaver Training raises the training level while refreshing the basic skills.

When the unit deploys to Central Command this spring, Soldiers will be ready to perform their standard High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) mission. To simulate a realworld scenario and gain familiarity with rescuing a comrade from a launcher or an HMMWV, the Wyoming Soldiers extracted mock casualties from those vehicles as part of the training.

Most of the Soldiers described the training aids as "realistic, useful and important."

SFC Damien Larose

Vermont Army National Guard image by SPC Gillian McCree PFC Tyler Pope, a wheeled vehicle mechanic, said he felt empowered by the training. "It feels like a really important mission-essential task," he said. "We got a lot of hands-on training, so it was really helpful, and I really enjoyed it. I feel like I could make a difference."

SGT Matthew Iffert, a medic with the HHB and the course noncommissioned officer in charge, said he and a group of other medics put in a lot of hours preparing for the class while maintaining the format of the Army's Combat Lifesaver Course (CLS) training doctrine.

"It's a big deal to the medical personnel that they go out the door prepared, so we wanted to give them the most realistic training we could," SGT Iffert said. "They are not just helping each other, but also the medical personnel that will follow them [in treating casualties]. With them trained properly, it takes some pressure off of us."

Part of that mission is ensuring the newly CLS-certified Soldiers have the equipment and supplies needed to get the job done – and making sure they know where to find those things in their first aid bag.



Following lengthy classroom training, the Soldiers were issued bags containing essential tools such as tape, gauze, tourniquets and other lifesaving devices for the practice exercise. SGT Iffert told them afterward that the bags were intentionally disorganized to add stress during the evaluation, when Soldiers extracted mock casualties from vehicles and treated gunshot wounds on a roadside, among other scenarios.

One of the few in the class to deploy before, SGT Mark Zollinger received CLS training before his earlier deployment. He came away impressed by this course.

"It was a good refresher for me, for sure," said SGT Zollinger, a gunner. "It was really good training. I feel really comfortable with these skills. Last time, we didn't have any medics assigned to us, so SGT Matthew Iffert, course noncommissioned officer in charge, assigned to the Wyoming Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery Regiment, demonstrates the features of a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HUMVEE)-based Field Litter Ambulance during a 40-hour Combat Lifesaver course at the 213th Regional Training Institute at Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center, January 2019.

SPC Michael Maycock and SPC Colt Parris, fire direction operators assigned to the Wyoming Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery Regiment, inventory and organize their CLS bags during a 40-hour Combat Lifesaver course at the 213th Regional Training Institute at Camp Guernsey JTC, January 2019.

Wyoming Army National Guard photos by SFC Jimmy McGuire

everyone that deployed was CLS-certified. Now we have about five medics going and a good group of us that are CLS-certified. We're in good hands." •



Cartoon by SSG C.F. "Arik" Grant

HAVE A FUNNY CARTOON THAT YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE?

If you have a knack for drawing and would like to see your original cartoon or illustration published in *Citizen-Soldier* magazine, send your drawing to *Editor@Citizen-SoldierMagazine.com*.

DOWN THE PIKE

SHARPSHO@TING DEFINED

Soldiers from the Mississippi Army National Guard helped spark a significant change for soldiers on the ground fighting The War on Terror.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF CITIZEN-SOLDIER, you'll read about the vital marksmanship training conducted by Mississippi's Task Force India Bravo that led to a 75 percent improvement in the shooting proficiency of approximately 500 Iraqi soldiers.

SPC Matthew Driskill (left), a Mississippi Army National Guard cavalry scout assigned to Task Force India Bravo, assists an Iraq soldier with a dime/washer drill as part of a primary marksmanship instruction course at Camp Taji, Iraq, December 2018. Mississippi Army National Guard photo by SPC Jovi Prevot

Schatz Strategy Group 11950 W. Highland Ave. Blackwell, OK 74631

PRSRT STD U.S. Postage Paid Owensville, MO Permit# 100

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