

# Connecticut Guardian



VOL. 16 NO. 1

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

JANUARY 2015

## President Signs 2015 NDAA, Pay Raises Coming

FROM STAFF REPORTS

President Barack Obama signed the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act into law Dec. 19, one week after the Senate passed it. The House had passed the bill earlier.

"I have signed this annual defense authorization legislation because it will provide vital benefits for military personnel and their families, as well as critical contingency authorities needed to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and to respond to emerging needs in the face of evolving terrorist threats and emergent crises worldwide," the President said in a statement after signing the bill.

This is the 53rd consecutive year that the NDAA has been signed.

According to a statement issued by the National Guard Association of the United States, the defense bill "has much for National Guardsmen to like, including a change to how Guard members can receive early retirement pay."

Restrictions have been loosened on how a deployment is considered towards early retirement pay. Until this new 2015 NDAA became law, only time spent on deployment in one fiscal year counted towards the early retirement. The new law gives retirees the ability to collect their retirement pay 90 days early for every three consecutive months of deployment that cross two fiscal years beginning with deployments after Sept. 30, 2014. It is not retroactive to Sept. 11, 2001.

The Army's plan to move AH-64 Apache helicopters from the Guard and the planned A-10 retirement have been halted until at least 2016. Modernization plans for C-130 aircraft were also included in the law.

The NDAA also includes a 1 percent pay raise for service members, which is lower than the 1.8 percent some lawmakers wanted and puts the pay cap below the private sector for the second consecutive year.

Language authorizing the Chief of the National Guard Bureau the ability to nominate the people to serve as directors and deputy directors of the Air National Guard was softened to allow him to consult with the service secretaries on who should fill those positions.

The bill also includes \$1.25 billion for the National Guard

and Reserve Equipment Account and \$23 million for Army Guard combat training readiness rotations.

A statement released by Connecticut Gov. Dannel P. Malloy's office praised passage of the bill.

"I applaud passage of the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act and thank the members of our congressional delegation that worked so hard to pass a bill of critical importance to our nation and the State of



President Obama signed the NDAA into law on Dec. 19 funding the Department of Defense for the fiscal year. (File photo)

Connecticut," said the statement. "I particularly want to thank Senator [Richard] Blumenthal and Representative [Joe] Courtney who serve on the respective Senate and House Armed Services Committees and played key roles drafting and passing this vital legislation.

"In particular, this NDAA establishes a National Commission on the Future of the Army and preserves Army National Guard combat aviation, personnel and force structure, which was a matter of great concern to all Governors. Preserving the current structure of the Guard and establishing a commission has been a particular focus for those of us serving on the Council of Governors. The Commission will provide an independent strategic review of Army force structure, and prevent cuts that would strip states of the critical personnel and equipment governors rely on during times of public emergency."

Malloy was also pleased with the investments in national security, including continued procurement of various weapons systems that are built in Connecticut and contribute to the Connecticut economy.

"Passage of this bill removes uncertainty from these major defense acquisition programs and enables our defense industries to make capital investments and hire essential people to produce those products required by the nation's national security strategy," said the statement.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel welcomed the fiscal year 2015 National Defense Authorization Act in a statement issued Dec. 19, but he called on Congress to work with the department on several fronts.

"I remain concerned that Congress continues to prevent the Defense Department from pursuing many cost-savings measures that are essential to fielding a ready and capable force to meet today's challenges and prepare for tomorrow's threats," Hagel said.

The secretary noted that sequestration remains law. The budget mechanism that enacts across-the-board government spending cuts threatens the defense budget as well. Hagel warned that "if Congress allows sequestration to return in 2016, it will damage our military's readiness and threaten our ability to execute our nation's defense

strategy."

Congressman Joe Courtney, whose district includes many defense contractors, the Naval Sub Base in New London and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, also released a statement after the President signed the 2015 NDAA.

"The enactment of the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act...locks in two-a-year production of Virginia-class submarines, invests in research and design for the Ohio Replacement Program and funds hangar construction at Bradley Air National Guard Base," he said in the statement. "This law took a full year to pass, but the effort was well worth it - Connecticut's economy and our national defense are stronger because of this law."

The authorization calls for an end strength of 490,000 Soldiers, 323,600 Sailors, 184,100 Marines and 312,980 Airmen.

# Pentagon Leaders, Governors Discuss 2016 Budget Issues

ARMY SGT. 1ST CLASS TYRONE C. MARSHALL JR.  
DoD NEWS, DEFENSE MEDIA ACTIVITY

WASHINGTON - Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work held discussions Dec. 2 with members of the Council of Governors regarding the Fiscal Year 2016 budget and other fiscal initiatives, Pentagon Press Secretary Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby told reporters. Connecticut's governor, Dannel P. Malloy, sits on the Council of Governors.

"This morning, the deputy secretary, Bob Work, held a conference call with seven governors from the Council of Governors," he said.

"We also had about 10 or so representatives from the Department of Defense," Kirby said, "... to discuss Fiscal Year '16 budget preparations and the Army Aviation Restructuring Initiative."

Kirby said Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel also briefly attended the meeting.

The defense secretary, he said, stopped by for a little while to join in the conversation and emphasize the importance of the relationship between the Defense Department and the Council of Governors.

The Council of Governors is a 10-member bipartisan group appointed by the president to serve as a mechanism for governors and key federal officials to address matters pertaining to the National Guard, homeland defense and defense support to civil authorities.

Kirby said both representatives of both parties — DoD and the Council of Governors — agreed about the negative impact that the return of sequestration would have on the department and on some of the states.

This includes, he said, the possibility of further reductions in military force structure.

Regarding the Army Aviation Restructuring Initiative, Kirby said both groups also agreed that the process by which DoD took on the initiative was "objective and transparent."

A comprehensive look, he said, was also given to the cost and use of both active-duty and reserve component

AH-64 Apache helicopters, with both sides agreeing to keep the dialogue going.

"This is an important relationship that Secretary Hagel has worked hard at, and will continue to work hard at with the Council of Governors," Kirby said.

## Life Lines

CTNG Behavioral Health Help Line - **1-855-800-0120**

Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline - **1-800-984-8523**

Emergency - **911**

[www.armyfamiliesonline.org](http://www.armyfamiliesonline.org) - **1-800-833-6622**

[www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com) - **1-800-342-9647**

National Suicide Hotline - **1-800-SUICIDE**

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org) - **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

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(Front Page American Flag photo by Buddy Altobello)

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Deadline for submissions is noon on December 18 for the January Issue and January 22 for the February issue. Circulation: 7,800

# Craic Agus Ceol: A Return to Home

STAFF SGT. BENJAMIN SIMON  
JFHQ PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Readiness NCO, Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Michael J. Finnegan is a documentary filmmaker.

He is not a film-making enthusiast or hobbyist, or someone that just dabbles around in the art form. Finnegan already owns the title, and his deep-seated and seemingly intrinsic skillset is absolutely apparent in his short films.

His shot angles are unique, his scenes are well lit, his stories are dynamic, his audio is clear, his editing is precise and his timing is uncanny. There isn't much else to state further about his capabilities.

It is important to note, however, that he is currently a film video production major at Southern Connecticut State University, and began learning the art of film making just a relatively short time ago. He is modest about his abilities, but has already been invited to film festivals.

One of his short films appeared at the New England Underground Film Festival, held Oct. 11, in West Hartford.

"I love doing this," he said.

His passion is apparent.

## Craic Agus Ceol

*Craic Agus Ceol* translates roughly to *Fun and Music* in Gaelic. It's also the title of a short film Finnegan made about Christy's Irish Pub in New Haven and the traditional Irish music the pub routinely hosts.

Finnegan, of course, captures perfectly the soul of the pub, of its customers and of New Haven in a sparse few minutes.

How is it possible for an entire city to be captured through a portrait of Irish music, food and beer in a small pub?

Finnegan manages this feat. He makes Christy's feel like a home that all of its customers, musicians and neighbors have returned to following a long emotional absence.

In his short film, he makes Christy's Pub feel like everyone's home.

It should be noted that *Craic Agus Ceol* does not translate perfectly to *Fun and Music*. *Craic Agus Ceol* carries nostalgia, warmth and longing for familiarity and home—wherever home is: Ireland, New Haven, New Britain, or West Haven. There is sadness in those Gaelic words. It's this sadness that enriches Finnegan's films.

## To Touch a Nerve

Finnegan met the New Britain native, Michael Lexton Hawkins, through a fellow Soldier. Hawkins had recently published a book of poems titled, *To Touch a Nerve*.

Finnegan asked Hawkins to be the subject of his short

film, of the same title. He agreed, and the two began working.

Hawkins, a poet, musician, artist and a former addict, also suffers from HIV and Hepatitis C.

"My addiction, my affliction," Hawkins recites, during a Finnegan close up, which pans over the lower part of Hawkins' jaw.

Finnegan's shots, in the first seconds of this film, quickly become a montage and cut to different sections of Hawkins' well-illuminated profile while his poem is recited.

Hawkins then tells his detail-rich story, which is interspersed with his poetry and plenty of New Britain images. Finnegan layers the 12-minute film with a Hawkins guitar riff, which sounds intensely personal and spiritual.

The entire 12 minutes has an exceptionally strong

Finnegan said making movies is not cheap, but they are all worth his time and effort. He said it's what he is meant to be doing, his passion, and he appears to have attracted like-minded souls for his subjects.

## The Campaign

West Haven politician, Steve Mullins is a passionate politician who has unfortunately run a succession of unsuccessful political campaigns. This fact is not apparent in Finnegan's short documentary about Mullins' 2014 run for state representative.

"I asked him if I could follow him around on his campaign," said Finnegan.

Finnegan filmed hours and hours of door knocking, phone calling, speeches, meals, family gatherings and sign waving campaign events for the film.

Mullins appears as something akin to the president of the universe in Finnegan's documentary, and Finnegan sheds no light on the fact that Mullins is unlucky politically.

Most of his films share this vibe of emotional homogeneity. *The Campaign* follows this track until its conclusion. Mullins loses the election, and Finnegan conveys through his shots, music and lighting, that the universe has ended.

There is sadness and something peculiar about the end of this film. The emotional shift that Finnegan conveys has a depth that is rare in movies and rare in art in general.

It works extremely well.

## Michael J's Army

He doesn't sleep much. Finnegan's films take countless hours of editing and formatting to complete. He said after initial shooting, a 15-minute film could take 10 hours a week for four months to finish.

He spends most of his evenings in his upstairs studio office. It's filled with

cameras and lenses and computer monitors and books about filmmaking and child's toys. He's often joined by his two-year-old son, Michael. It's apparent that Finnegan feels at home and at peace in his home's upstairs studio.

Michael starred in one of his dad's recent films titled, *Michael J's Army*.

It's a joyful but slightly sad film about one of his family's recent and difficult endeavors.

His son smiles throughout its four minutes, and there is enough emotion in those four minutes and in those smiles to fill countless film hours.

This overflowing of emotion makes his films work. It's delightful to witness. It's like a return to home after a long absence.

Visit Finnegan's website at [michaelj.finnegan.com](http://michaelj.finnegan.com), and his YouTube channel, Michael J. Finnegan.



Sgt. 1st Class Michael Finnegan, A Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Readiness NCO, spends most of his evenings in his studio office upstairs in his home. The room is filled with cameras, lenses, computer monitors, books about film making and deejay equipment. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Simon, JFHQ Public Affairs)

soulful and emotional resonance that appears and sounds entirely natural and unforced. In *To Touch a Nerve*, Hawkins and Finnegan appear to have known each other for a hundred years, and Finnegan seems to have co-authored his poetry.

This is not the case, of course. They didn't know each other. But Finnegan has the ability to convey this sense of uncanny familiarity in his work, one of the many reasons his films work so well.

The popularity of documentary films has increased substantially over the past few decades. Finnegan said he has always enjoyed the art form.

Prior to working on his own films, Finnegan worked as a successful disc jockey at weddings, birthdays, school events and parties, but 'D.J. Finnz' is no more.

"I sold my DJ equipment to help pay for my film equipment," he said.

# Maintainers Complete First Aircraft Generation Exercise

MAJ. BRYON TURNER AND SENIOR AIRMAN JENNIFER PIERCE  
103RD AIRLIFT WING, PUBLIC AFFAIRS

BRADLEY AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE - East Granby, Conn. — Airmen in the 103rd Maintenance Group completed their first aircraft generation exercise with the C-130H Hercules, Oct. 31 and Nov. 1 at Bradley Air National Guard Base, East Granby, Connecticut.

“An aircraft generation is basically a sequence of events we follow to configure the aircraft for a particular mission within a specified timeframe,” said Master Sgt. Jonas Concepcion, production superintendent for the 103rd Maintenance Group.

The mission for the aircraft may involve transporting passengers, cargo, a combination of both, or flying through hostile territory. Based upon the type of mission, there is a particular sequence of events that would need to be completed for the aircraft to be ready for its mission, said Concepcion. Depending on the mission, the generation may include aircraft inspections and servicing, seating for passengers, cargo configuration, and loading armor or chaff flare.

The wing’s inspector general office inspected the

process with the help of three wing inspection team members with backgrounds in engines, environmental, electrical and radar from around the wing, including one from the 103rd Air Control Squadron.

“They were tasked with inspecting the generation with their subject matter expertise background. The goal for this inspection was to ensure regulation compliance—AFI’s, AWI’s, MXGOI’s and Technical Orders—within several areas,” said Senior Master Sgt. Kirkland Foran, from the wing’s inspector general office. “The areas primarily consisted of the processes to give a fully mission capable aircraft to operations flight.”

The exercise scenario challenged maintainers to produce two fully mission capable aircraft within specific parameters to enable members of the 103rd Operations Group to accomplish their flying mission. Inspectors leveraged a local aircraft generation flow chart and a checklist developed from discrepancies documented at similar units within several inspector general evaluation management system reports.

“The maintenance folks showed an outstanding attitude towards the inspection team and provided any

and all information asked for,” said Foran. “All maintenance troops were outstanding with honest replies to all inspectors; they showed the unvarnished truth with a desire to enhance the unit.”

This exercise allowed us to evaluate the sequence of events needed to get the aircraft ready and then make adjustments, said Concepcion. “For example, if a large number of aircraft were required for a mission, and we didn’t have the manpower to complete that many refuels on the aircraft at the same time, we would plot out all the requirements then make a predetermined sequence to stagger our aircraft configurations that wouldn’t affect our manpower.”

“The knowledge, dedication and willingness from the WIT members were instrumental to the success of this inspection,” said Foran, who also put his own combined 30 years of maintenance and quality assurance experience to work while facilitating the inspection.

This generation exercise will be the first of many for the maintainers as different types of generations for the aircraft are completed two to four times a year.



Lt. Col. William Daniels and Capt. Paul Bolduc, both pilots with the 103rd Operations Group prepare for takeoff at the controls of a C-130H Hercules aircraft assigned to the 103rd Airlift Wing, shortly after maintainers from the 103rd Maintenance Group prepared the aircraft as part of the unit’s first C-130H engine generation exercise, Nov. 1, 2014 at Bradley Air National Guard Base, East Granby, Conn. “An aircraft generation is basically a sequence of events we follow to configure the aircraft for a particular mission within a specified timeframe,” said Master Sgt. Jonas Concepcion, production superintendent for the 103rd Maintenance Group. (Photo illustration by Maj. Bryon M. Turner, 103<sup>rd</sup> AW)

# Remembering 2014: The Year That Was

COMPILED BY SGT. 1<sup>ST</sup> CLASS DEBBI NEWTON  
STATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS NCO

While deployments in the Connecticut Army and Air National Guard have slowed down in the past year, training, achievements and missions have not. It's been a busy 2014 for the men and women of the Connecticut National Guard. This look back at 2014 is a celebration of the men and women of the Connecticut Army and Air National Guard, our Retirees, Veterans and Families.

## Deployments

In January, three members of the **103<sup>rd</sup> Force Support Squadron**, Connecticut Air National Guard, deployed to Southwest Asia to serve in positions that would maintain and improve quality of life for other deployed Airmen. The three served in recreation, lodging and fitness positions.

The **242<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Detachment (Construction Management Team)** deployed to Afghanistan for the first time with nine Soldiers of the Connecticut Army National Guard. Finishing their training and validation early, members of the 242<sup>nd</sup> departed Fort Bliss Feb. 28 and arrived in Afghanistan 36 hours later. As part of Task Force Sapper, the 242<sup>nd</sup> supported an extensive effort to deconstruct and consolidate coalition operating bases to coincide with the scheduled drawdown of combat forces.

Enlisted members of the CMT also earned the prestigious German marksmanship proficiency award, the Schützenschnur, while deployed.

The 242<sup>nd</sup> CMT returned to Connecticut in December.

**Detachment 6, Operational Support Airlift Command**, a nine-member unit of the Connecticut Army National Guard, deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in May. The fixed wing airlift unit's mission while deployed is to provide aerial surveillance and intelligence support to U.S. commanders throughout Afghanistan to assist in ground mission planning.

While these units were deployed, Connecticut also honored Guardsmen returning from deployments with a Freedom Salute Ceremony in March. The **143<sup>rd</sup> Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Headquarters Company, 1048<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company and B Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 104<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment** were honored in a March 18<sup>th</sup> ceremony at the William A. O'Neill Armory where individual Soldiers received their deployment medals and units received their battle streamers. Twenty Bronze Stars were awarded, as well as the Purple Heart to then-Staff Sgt. Alex Seretny and Spec. Michael Peterson of the 1048<sup>th</sup>.

## Overseas Missions/Training

Though deployments in support of contingency operations were slowing down for the Connecticut National Guard, overseas missions were not.

Seven members of the **256<sup>th</sup> Engineer Detachment (Firefighter)** spent the month of February in Romania in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and the transition of MK Airbase into a fully operational U.S. transit station and hub for NATO military service

members and supplies. Upon arrival, the 256<sup>th</sup> was put to work ensuring the safety of the base's population in the deep ice and snow and temperatures of 20 degrees and below.

With many troops arriving on post, new buildings were constructed and the 256<sup>th</sup> was tasked with inspecting many of those buildings to ensure compliance with National Fire Protection Association code. In addition to taking part in joint training exercises, the 256<sup>th</sup> was responsible for emergency response, flight line monitoring and building inspection.

The **928<sup>th</sup> Military Working Dog** military police unit traveled to Uruguay to collaborate with the 1<sup>st</sup> Uruguayan Army Brigade in May. The Soldiers and their partner dogs spent five days working with Uruguayan dog



*Sgt. Colin Gruner from A Company, 1-102nd Infantry Battalion fires a FGM-148 Javelin anti-tank missile at a target during live-fire training at JRTC, Fort Polk, Louisiana, June 20. 1-102nd Infantry Battalion Soldiers trained with live ammunition against moving and stationary targets to hone weapons skills. (Photo by 1st Sgt. Dan Morgan, A Company, 1-102nd Infantry Battalion)*

handlers on certification, patrol, search and rescue, detection and obedience. Uruguay is the Connecticut National Guard's Partnership Program partner.

In July several senior leaders of the Connecticut National Guard traveled to Uruguay to further connections on behalf of the State Partnership Program. August saw members of the **1109<sup>th</sup> Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group** collaborating with Uruguayan Naval Aviation troops.

## News of Note

**Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel** proposed cuts in military spending that include further reductions in troop strength and force structure in every military service in the coming year as part of an effort to prioritize U.S. strategic interests in the face of reduced resources after more than a decade of war.

At a Pentagon news conference Feb. 24 detailing President Barack Obama's proposed Pentagon budget for fiscal year 2015, Hagel called the reductions — including shrinking the Army to its smallest size since before World War II and eliminating an entire fleet of Air Force fighter planes — “difficult choices” that will

change defense institutions for years to come, but designed to leave the military capable of fulfilling U.S. defense strategy and defending the homeland against strategic threats.

**Gov. Dannel P. Malloy** continued his active leadership role in trying to limit force structure cuts to the Army National Guard (ARNG) during a series of high-level meetings in the nation's capital.

Malloy is one of ten state chief executives who sit on the bipartisan Council of Governors established to advise the president on issues of national security and defense. The Council met during the recent National Governor's Association mid-winter conference held in Washington, D.C.

“We want to ensure that the broad capabilities of the National Guard, proven time and again over the last decade of war, are protected in our country,” said Malloy.

A new **Army Appearance Regulation** hit the streets March 30 and tightened tattoo, uniform, male and female grooming and many other policies. The number, size and placement of tattoos have been dialed back under revised Army Regulation 670-1, which governs the Army's grooming standards and proper wear of the uniform. The revised regulation was published March 30, along with Department of the Army Pamphlet 670-1, outlining the new standards.

## Training

In December 2013, the Airmen of the Bradley Air National Guard Base in Windsor Locks reached an historic milestone when they launched their first locally-generated sortie with the newly assigned C-130H Hercules aircraft, also launching a year of new training opportunities.

By February 2014, the Connecticut Guardsmen were flying solo, so to speak, with the first all Connecticut-crewed, locally-generated, C-130H flying sortie under the supervision of trainers from Air Force and Air Guard bases across the country.

“This is an incredibly important milestone,” said Col. Frank Detorie, 103rd Airlift Wing commander. “The fact that Connecticut Airmen have demonstrated the ability to generate and execute a successful C-130 mission just a few short months after taking delivery of our first airplane, is a remarkable achievement. It is clear evidence that we are making significant progress in our C-130 conversion,” Detorie said.

2014: The Year That Was

In June, Connecticut Airmen traveled to the Combat Readiness Center in Gulfport, Mississippi with the 123<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing of the Kentucky Air National Guard to participate in cooperative C-130H aircraft maintenance training. This training deployment marked the first opportunity to conduct an organic airlift mission with the C-130H for the men and women of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing.

By July, the Airmen were jettisoning two sets of container delivery systems from the C-130H as part of a training exercise over Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee, Massachusetts.

Airmen from the 103<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing also supported multiple joint Army air transportation training missions on Sept. 5 and Oct. 8, 2014.

The first Joint Airborne and Air Transportability Training (JAATT) mission supported by the Connecticut Air National Guard took place in the skies above Fort Benning, Columbus, Georgia, where members the U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force received hands-on paratrooper training while aboard a C-130H Hercules aircraft assigned to the 103<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing.

The Flying Yankees supported an additional JAATT mission the following month when a C-130H assigned to the 103<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing lifted 20 U.S. Army paratroopers alongside another Connecticut C-130H containing heavy equipment. The heavy equipment was a simulated tactical re-fueling station that held blivets full of water rather than actual fuel, and the necessary equipment to ensure the load would safely land on the ground.

In October, the 103<sup>rd</sup>'s eighth and final C-130H aircraft arrived, completing the fleet.

Soldiers of the **143<sup>rd</sup> Military Police Company and the 643<sup>rd</sup> Military Police Company** conducted detainee operations training at J.B. Gates Correctional Facility in Niantic during several drill periods in 2014.

This training is used to keep Soldiers familiar with detainee operations and to ensure Soldiers continue to use the proper procedures inherent in such operations, which include entering and running a correctional facility; dealing with unruly detainees; and the use of the proper level of force when dealing with detainees.

This training provided opportunities for select members of the 143<sup>rd</sup> to prepare themselves for a mission at Guantanamo Bay detention camp in Cuba, where they will augment the Joint Task Force there and oversee the running of the facility.

Members of the **141<sup>st</sup> Medical Company (Ground Ambulance), 142<sup>nd</sup> Area Support Medical Company, Connecticut Army National Guard and 103<sup>rd</sup> Medical Group, Connecticut Air National Guard**, participated in the Surgery in an Austere Environment pilot course with civilian medical staff and first responders at Hartford Hospital and at the New England Disaster Training Center, Camp Hartell, on April 11 and 12.

Service members worked together with civilian responders to train on performing surgery in an austere environment by simulating the aftermath of an explosion at a concert that resulted in multiple casualties requiring medical attention.

Two operations modules sit inconspicuously on top of a hill beneath the shadow of a skyward facing radar unit at the **103<sup>rd</sup> Air Control Squadron** in Orange, Connecticut. Huddled inside each module in March were air surveillance technicians, weapons directors, and a mission commander taking part in a joint training exercise. The airmen were communicating with the 255th Air Control Squadron out of Gulfport, Miss., all while



*One year after the arrival of the first C-130H Hercules aircraft at Bradley Air National Guard Base, East Granby, Connecticut, the eighth and final aircraft receives tail paint in the hangar, Oct. 17. The Fly Yankees' acceptance of the final aircraft assigned to the 1-3<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing on Oct. 15 marks an important milestone in the unit's conversion to the C-130H mission. (Photo by Master Sgt. Erin McNamara, 103<sup>rd</sup> AW Public Affairs)*

receiving their training simulation feed from the Air Force Distributed Training Operations Center in Iowa.

The **256<sup>th</sup> Engineer Detachment (Firefighter)** spent much of its May drill at a familiar location—the Connecticut Fire Academy—working on aircraft rescue firefighting and rescue skills.

Civilian and military fire departments from the region train at the state facility, which is quite familiar to firefighters from the 256<sup>th</sup> Eng. Det. The East Lyme-based Guard unit is part of the 192<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Battalion and the 143<sup>rd</sup> Regional Support Group.

The fire academy, located next to Bradley International Airport, offers a wide variety of training options. On Sunday, May 18, the 256<sup>th</sup> utilized the academy's aircraft prop, which is a simulated airplane fuselage with a doorway through which the firefighters can practice rescuing passengers using ladders and stretchers. The

training prop emits fire that is controlled by an instructor, allowing a variety of training scenarios under realistic conditions.

It's not just the variety of training available at the site that draw interest, it's the fact that firefighters can work on dangerous tasks in a controlled environment.

While the techniques of advancing hose lines as a team are pretty standard for attacking most fires, members of the 256<sup>th</sup> said the aircraft prop at the Connecticut Fire Academy allows them to train for scenarios that are not standard for training for firefighters.

"Any time you get to fight live fire around an aircraft, it's a good experience," Spc. Moe Remillard said. "There are hazards when fighting around an aircraft that are not present around ground vehicles. Also, firefighters don't often get to practice on aircraft, unless they work at an airport."

Soldiers from the **141<sup>st</sup> and 142<sup>nd</sup> Medical Companies and Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 169<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment** conducted a joint medical evacuation training event at Stones Ranch Military Reservation in East Lyme, Connecticut, May 17. The medics faced multiple scenarios in how to safely transport and treat casualties in a field environment, including transport casualties using both ground and air evacuation.

Members of the **1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 169<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 104<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment** conducted water bucket training at the Colebrook Dam in Colebrook on May 12. UH-60 Blackhawks and CH-47 Chinook helicopters took to the skies over the northwestern town to practice scooping up water then releasing it over a specified area in order to be prepared for possible wild fire missions.

The Connecticut National Guard, in partnership with 16 local, state and federal partner agencies, hosted a week-long homeland security exercise from April 28 through May 2 to evaluate emergency response coordination protocols and capabilities. Along with locally-based first responders, the exercise tested the capabilities of seven National Guard Civil Support Teams (CSTs) from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

The Connecticut National Guard's **14<sup>th</sup> CST**, based in Windsor Locks, coordinated this annual exercise to refine the support capabilities of those CSTs located in FEMA Region I. CSTs are designed to mutually support each other during emergencies that may exceed the capabilities of a single team.

The five-day training exercise was built around a notional scenario of an unnamed terrorist group taking advantage of overwhelmed first responder resources and stages multiple attacks throughout Connecticut to gain international media attention for their cause in the wake of a natural disaster.

Great Gull Island, located in Long Island Sound off the Connecticut coast, is a living monument to generations past.

The island, once a prized military outpost, is now prized for another reason: it is among the last nesting grounds in the Western Hemisphere for common and roseate terns, pigeon-size sea birds that come north during the summer and spend their winters in South America. While common

terns are, well, common, the roseate species has been on the federally recognized endangered species list since 1987.

When Superstorm Sandy struck the region in 2012, Great Gull Island was among the places that experienced the storm's devastating effects. Nearly all of the bird blinds, observations posts and tern nesting terraces were destroyed along with the island's only access point: a dock built in 2009.

The damaged dock, the amount of supplies needed to reconstruct the facilities, and the difficult coastal terrain of the island created a serious problem for Hays; how to get the needed lumber and supplies to the interior areas in time for the birds' arrival?

"It is the Connecticut National Guard policy to try to support other federal agencies to some sort of mutual benefit," said Lt. Col. Mark Strout, logistics manager, 1109th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group. When the United States Fish and Wildlife Service reached out to the Guard for help getting supplies to Great Gull Island, it was a great opportunity for the aviation community to get some valuable training while helping to ensure the continuation of a nearly 50-year environmental project.

On April 25, a CH-47 Chinook helicopter, with pilots and crew from **Detachment 1, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 104th Aviation Regiment**, carried pallets of lumber and supplies to the island, making three round trips from the TASMG facility in Groton. More than 13,000 pounds of lumber, along with additional supplies, went in each load; the total required for the rebuilding project exceeded 40,000 pounds according to Strout.

During their annual training in June, members of the **250th Engineers Multi-Role Bridge Company** spent much of their time training with bridges and boats. During the second week of training, Soldiers constructed a ribbon bridge on West Thompson Lake in North Grosvenordale, Connecticut and then used the floating bridge to bring equipment across the lake. This type of bridge is used when a body of water is too wide to accommodate a traditional bridge.

The efforts of the Soldiers assigned to the **247th Engineers (Well Drillers)** of the Connecticut Army National Guard have saved lives.

While deploying and traveling the world is part of being in the 247th, the 10-Soldier unit spent its annual training this year working on a well it had drilled near the rappelling tower at Stones Ranch many years ago.

The well had been intended for use by Soldiers and Airmen using the training facility, but it had never gone operational and needed to be rehabilitated according to detachment commander Sgt. 1st Class Ernesto Rios Soto.

The Soldiers, all heavy equipment operators, some with the well driller additional skill identifier, spent most of the first week of their annual training at the site using the LP12 Army Well Drilling rig to clean out the well. The rig has a 600-foot drilling capacity.

Members of the **143rd Military Police Company** conducted traditional riot control training at Camp Niantic in June. Sgt. 1st Class Jonathon Severence, a platoon sergeant with the 143rd, said this training was in part to help the military police be ready for their homeland

response force mission should they be called. Soldiers spent two weeks training for this and other missions at Camp Niantic and Stone's Ranch.

Joint Readiness Training Center rotations bring Soldiers as close to modern combat operations as possible outside of an actual combat zone. That's the point of it.

In June, the **1st Battalion 102nd Infantry Regiment**, with the 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, successfully completed a JRTC rotation.

The 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team was the only National Guard IBCT to complete a JRTC rotation in 2014.

More than 600 Soldiers in the 1-102nd and F Company, 186th Forward Support, left Connecticut for Fort Polk, Louisiana on June 1, joining the IBCT's 5000-plus Soldier



*Spc. Jonathan Perodeau, Spc. Josiah Burnham, and Spc. Justin Hareluk from the 256th Engineer Detachment (Firefighter), Connecticut Army National Guard, prepare to move a "critically injured casualty" during a training exercise conducted Feb. 22 2014, outside of MK Air Base, Romania. The 256th Fire Fighters worked and trained at MK Air Base from Feb. 1- Feb. 25, 2014. (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Maj. Michael Pintagro, 21t TSC Public Affairs)*

force, and its last elements returned to Connecticut on June 30.

JRTC has been in operation since 1993, and since 2001 has been instrumental in preparing U.S. military units for combat operations overseas.

1-102nd Infantry Battalion commander, Lt. Col. Robert Brafford, said JRTC presents to Soldiers the best possible training to prepare them for operations across the globe.

He said two types of training were emphasized: live fire training against moving and stationary targets to hone in weapon skills during maneuvers; and controlled force-on-force training using blank ammunition and laser engagement systems against threats ranging from small scale criminal and terrorist attacks to an armor equipped enemy force of similar size and capability to U.S. units.

Airmen from the **103rd Air Control Squadron** deployed to the National Guard Training Center in Sea Girt, New Jersey, June 8 - 18, where they established remote connectivity to specific simulation systems located in Connecticut, an achievement that, according to unit leadership, had never been accomplished before by any air control squadron.

Soldiers from the **118th Multi-Functional Medical Battalion, 141st Ground Ambulance Company and 142nd Area Support Medical Company** travelled to Camp Edwards, Joint Base Cape Cod, Massachusetts for two weeks of annual training, July 12 through 25.

During the training period, National Guard medics and medical support staff completed numerous training activities, including "Table VIII"; the medical community's annual task evaluation and certification course. In addition, the Soldiers of the 118th, 141st, and 142nd completed numerous Army Warrior Tasks and a 72-hour Field Training Exercise designed to test unit procedures and competencies.

Logistically supporting more than 5,000 Soldiers on a desert battlefield the size of the state of Rhode Island is not an easy task to execute.

That is exactly the point – and the training value – for Army sustainers who deploy to the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, CA.

The **143rd Regional Support Group Headquarters and Headquarters Company** met that challenge while leading a corps-level enabler task force assigned to support the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division during a three-week NTC rotation.

The RSG's 366-Soldier task force was comprised of multiple active duty and National Guard elements from all across the country, including 80 from Connecticut. Planning for the rotations in close coordination with the staff of the 1st ABCT began in earnest last January.

The RSG's official mission was to conduct and support reception, staging, onward movement and integration operations and provide battlefield sustainment support in order to build and maintain the combat power of the 1st ABCT's units. During their multi-week rotation, Task Force RSG provided daily fuel, food, ammunition, maintenance and transportation support to the rotational combat brigade through all phases of the training including live fire exercises, lanes training and a decisive action exercise "in the box."

The NTC is considered by many to be a “final exam” for units that may likely be called up in the near future to respond to national threats around the world. The Center’s goal is to provide the most realistic joint and combined arms training possible in a very demanding desert environment.

Soldiers from the **169<sup>th</sup> Regional Training Institute’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Military Police School**, sought to improve their skill sets by joining forces with Controlled Force, a civilian training agency, to conduct training on various law enforcement tactics, such as close range subject control and hand-to-hand protection, at Camp Niantic, Aug. 15-17.

There are ten Army National Guard Homeland Response Forces in the U.S. – one for each FEMA region. The Connecticut Army National Guard’s **643rd Military Police Company** currently helps to man the security support element of the **FEMA Region 1 HRF**, which covers all of New England.

On July 7, the Connecticut Air National Guard **103<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing** Small Air Terminal teamed up with CTARNG HRF CASE personnel at Bradley Air National Guard Base to conduct air load operations training. The Airmen walked HRF CASE personnel through every step of air load planning and loading the Wing’s recently assigned fleet of C-130H Hercules aircraft.

HRF CASE personnel learned to perform weight and balance calculations in order to maintain permissible centers of gravity limits in aircrafts throughout flights.

The Connecticut Army National Guard is preparing to receive a new medical evacuation unit.

One UH-60 M Black Hawk medical evacuation helicopter will soon be delivered to the Connecticut Army Aviation Support Facility from the New Hampshire Army National Guard. Two more UH-60 M’s will follow later in 2015.

The new **3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 126 Aviation Regiment Medical Detachment** – not even officially activated yet — already has three Soldiers attending the 68W Health Care Specialist School course and two Soldiers waiting to attend the Army Flight Medic Course.

#### Military Construction

On May 30, the **Danbury Armed Forces Reserve Center** was dedicated with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Also in May, the Connecticut Army National Guard propelled its ground maintenance repair capabilities into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by breaking ground on a new \$29

million **central repair facility located at Camp Hartell** in Windsor Locks.

#### Milestones

After a year of preparation and inspections, the **169<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Regional Training Institute** has been awarded a certificate of accreditation as an “Institute of Excellence” by the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command. In addition, subordinate units **1st Battalion Officer Candidate School** and **3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Military Police School** were designated as “Institutes of Excellence.”

TRADOC also looked at the **Warrant Officer School** offered by **1st Battalion and the 2nd Battalion Modular Training**, which hosts the **68W Health Care Specialist Transition Course** as part of the overall accreditation assessment process and found both schools to have met or exceeded all established standards.



Chief of the National Guard Bureau General Frank J. Grass conducts a town hall meeting, emphasizing the importance of being in the Guard for Airmen at Bradley Air National Guard Base, East Granby, Conn, Sept. 9, 2014. This was the first time a Chief of the National Guard Bureau visited the Flying Yankees. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Emmanuel Santiago)

The Connecticut Army National Guard’s **143rd Regional Support Group** held a change of command ceremony Jan. 11, as **Col. Alberto M. Higuera** relinquished command to **Col. John T. Wiltse**.

The ceremony took place at the Maj. Gen. Maurice Rose Armed Forces Reserve Center in Middletown. Wiltse assumed command of approximately 1500 Soldiers assigned to the state’s largest unit, which includes four subordinate battalions. He returns to a unit with which he has held several positions, including deputy commander.

In 2009, **Master Sgt. Claude Campbell** was offered a high salary position with Verizon Wireless in Atlanta, Georgia. He refused this position, however, to become the Connecticut Army National Guard Regional Training Institute Prevention Coordinator. Campbell said that he made the right decision.

For his service as a Prevention Coordinator he was presented a National Guard Bureau award for his work in Nov. 2013.

A trio of female Soldiers stepped into the Connecticut Army National Guard’s history books as they became

battalion commander, battalion executive officer and headquarters company commander with the 143rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (CSSB). **Maj. Lesbia Nieves, Maj. Dawn Works-Dennis and Capt. Lee Ann Thompson** assumed their duties in March.

April is **Sexual Assault Prevention Month** in the Department of Defense. The two young women whose stories were told stepped forward with the goal of giving other victims the courage to do so as well. *The Connecticut Guardian* changed their names in order to protect their privacy.

We’ve all heard the adage “no means no.” For two Connecticut Guardswomen, the opportunity to say no didn’t happen. But that did not stop them from fighting back after their attacks. The two women were open in telling their stories of rape and sexual assault and the assistance they received from the Guard in fighting for themselves afterwards. They hoped that by telling their stories, others who had been assaulted would come forward.

Soldiers from across the state gathered at Camp Niantic, Niantic, Connecticut to compete in the annual Best Warrior competition held March 27-30. Select Soldiers and non-commissioned officers (NCO) from units throughout Connecticut came to test themselves during an intense weekend full of challenges designed to push the competitors to their limits both mentally as well as physically.

At the end of the weekend, **Sp. Stephanie Landry, 143<sup>rd</sup> Military Police Company** was named the Connecticut Army National Guard’s Soldier of the Year after beating out several other competitors in the state-wide competition.

**Sgt. Johnny Peralta, Headquarters/Headquarters Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry** once again proved victorious earned the top position. He took top honors as Soldier of the Year in the 2012 Best Warrior Competition, came back to take top honors as NCO last year, and repeated the feat this year.

Both went on to compete in the Regional Best Warrior Competition in Vermont, where Landry finished third in the eight-state Soldier competition.

**Senior Master Sgt. Curt Robichaud, Chief Master Sgt. Greg Boswell, Master Sgt. Jonathan Shepard, Tech. Sgt. Angel Santos, Col. James Galloway and Tech. Sgt. Anthony Gagliardi Jr.**, 103<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing, are credited with saving the life of Chief Master Sgt. Kevin Salsbury, using an automated external defibrillator when Salsbury collapsed after completing self-paced physical fitness training at the Bradley Air National Guard Base in East Granby, Connecticut.

After more than 30 years of service, **Command Chief Master Sgt. John Carter III** retired from the Connecticut Air National Guard May 4. Carter had served as the state command chief for several years, advising the adjutant general on matters concerning the welfare, health, morale, proper utilization and progress of the Air enlisted force. He also retired after 26 years from the Connecticut State Police where he served as a polygraph examiner and legislative liaison.

**Maj. Katherine Maines**, Connecticut National Guard Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, was awarded the

2014 DoD Exceptional Sexual Assault Response Coordinator Award. One award was presented per military branch, and Maines was the award recipient for the entire National Guard.

On May 1, the **Connecticut National Guard Behavioral Health Team** was recognized by the Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board for its outstanding service in suicide prevention and mental health promotion. The CTSAB is a community based advisory board sponsored by Department of Children and Families and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. The Connecticut National Guard has been an active member of the board since 2012. The mission is to support suicide prevention and mental health initiatives to the entire State of Connecticut. The CTNG BH Team also received coins during the Medical Treatment Training Conference at Camp Dawson, Virginia for best practices and excellence from a representative of the National Guard Bureau, Office of The Chief Surgeon, and from the assistant surgeon general, Joan Hunter.

The **103rd Airlift Wing's Base Honor Guard Program** was recognized as the Base Honor Guard Program of the Year for the region by Hanscom Air Force Base.

Soldiers and Airmen from several units throughout the Connecticut and Rhode Island National Guard came together to test their team and individual marksmanship skills during the Connecticut Adjutant General's Marksmanship Competition at the East Haven Rifle Range here, Aug. 1-3. The individual winners of this year's Connecticut Adjutant General's Marksmanship Competition were: first place, **Tech. Sgt. Chris Sixt, 103rd Security Forces Squadron, CT Air National Guard**; second place, **Staff Sgt. Keith Riendeau, Rhode Island Army National Guard**; third place, **Staff Sgt. John Mcaulay, 169th Regional Training Institute, CTARNG**. The top two teams that qualified to move on to the regional competition were: first place, the team from the **169th RTI, comprised of Sgt. 1st Class Damon Matus, Spc. Ryan Maynara, Staff Sgt. John Mcaulay and Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Walsh**; and second place, **Team B from the 103rd SFS, comprised of Staff Sgt. Aaron Jerolmon, Tech. Sgt. Jerry Lashway, Master Sgt. James Reynolds and Staff Sgt. Michael Stearns**.

Connecticut Guardsmen fared well in the 10th Annual SWAT Challenge hosted by the West Hartford Police Department. The Connecticut Army National Guard was represented again this year by members of the **1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry**, who train on their own and compete on their own time. The Air Guard was represented by the **103rd Security Forces Squadron** whose team boasted the only female to compete this year. The Security Forces Team from the Connecticut Air National Guard finished sixth overall in the 28 team field. The team from A Co, 1-102nd Infantry finished 18th overall.

Ten years after Company C, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry deployed to Iraq, three members: **Sgt. 1st Class Mark Stuart, Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Eichner and Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Ramos** shared their memories of the deployment, the two Soldiers who were killed: **Sgt. Felix DelGreco and Spec. Robert Hoyt**, and how they have survived the past ten years. They said they wanted to share their stories about what they went through and they help they

sought in hopes that other Soldiers and Airmen would also seek help if they needed it.

**Maj. Matthew D. Wilkinson** assumed command of the Recruiting and Retention Battalion from **Lt. Col. Michael Falk** on Oct. 5.

**Col. Francis Evon** relinquished command of the 85th Troop Command to **Lt. Col. Daniel Spinetti** during ceremonies held on Nov. 1.

**Col. Ralph Hedenberg** assumed command of the 169th Regiment, Regional Training Institute from **Col. Gerald Lukowski** on Nov. 16.

**Lt. Col. Lesbia Nieves and Sgt. 1st Class Alex Seretny** served as Honorary Marshalls in the 2014 State Veterans Parade in Hartford, Nov. 2.



*A competitor in the State Best Warrior Competition takes a step off the high platform at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy pool while blindfolded. The water survival tasks were new to the competition in 2014. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, 130th PAD)*

**Former Adjutant General Maj. Gen. (Ret.) David W. Gay and 1st Sgt. (Ret.) Gerald B. "Gerry" Wright** were inducted into the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame Class of 2014. Both men, who served extensive military careers on active duty and in the Connecticut Army National Guard, were recognized for their community volunteerism and support to fellow Veterans and families outside of their military service.

Several senior leaders visited the Connecticut Army and Air National Guard in 2014 with the intent of learning more about what the men and women who serve here do and to get the chance to talk to some of them.

In March, the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief, National Guard Bureau, **Chief Master Sgt. Mitch Brush**

came to Connecticut and learned about some of the successful resilience, suicide prevention and behavioral health programs the state has implemented and toured some of the command's more unique facilities. While here, he held two town hall meetings with Airmen and Soldiers where he fielded questions about computer based training, suicide rates, the defense budget, downsizing and funding for schools. He discussed the importance of communication and knowing your Soldiers and Airmen. His visit also brought visibility to the 928th Military Working Dog Detachment, which he called "the best kept secret in the Guard."

**Command Sgt. Maj. John F. McNeirney**, Military Police Regimental Command Sergeant Major, visited with Connecticut National Guard military police units for two days in May before attending the 192nd Military Police Ball where he was the guest speaker. During his visit, McNeirney received a tour of the 928th Military Working Dog facility and watched a demonstration of their training, received briefings on the capabilities of the 192nd Military Police Battalion and the Military Police School run by the 3rd Battalion (MPT), 169th Regional Training Institute. He also addressed students in the 31B advanced leadership course at Camp Niantic, Niantic, Connecticut. McNeirney stopped by the classroom during his visit to Connecticut and took the opportunity to address the students on various military police-related topics, including the need for active and reserve component MPs to continue to work and train together despite the drawdowns in overseas missions and manning. He was also able to visit the students in the as they worked an active shooter training scenario at Stones' Ranch training facility in East Lyme, Connecticut.

Finally, the **Chief of the National Guard Bureau, Gen. Frank J. Grass** visited the members of the 103rd Airlift Wing at Bradley Air National Guard Base, East Granby, Connecticut, Sept. 6.

During his visit he toured the base and received an update on the Flying Yankee's ongoing conversion to the C-130H Hercules aircraft. The day ended with a town hall discussion where Grass had an opportunity to talk to a gathering of the wing's Airmen.

Grass also met with Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, who is a member of the Council of Governors.

The council is a mechanism for governors and key federal officials to address matters pertaining to the National Guard, homeland defense and defense support to civil authorities.

# Building Camaraderie Their Way

**Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Michael Finnegan**  
Co. A, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 102<sup>nd</sup> Inf.

What do units do together when they are not at drill? Alpha (“Apache”) Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 102 Infantry plays laser tag – as a start.

Tucked away in a small warehouse in Waterbury, home to Laser Planet, a group of infantry men and their families battle each other in a dark maze of barriers and ramps using the latest laser tag equipment. Competitors low crawl from wall to wall, move swiftly at the high and low, ready for attack, as they call out commands and targets.

Sound like a shoot house? No, it is a well-trained group of infantry Soldiers playing laser tag for fun, not to train.

The idea was masterminded by the unit’s newly appointed Morale, Welfare and Recreation non-commissioned officer, Staff Sgt. Ronald Pitcher. The idea of participating in MWR is new to the unit but a welcome change after Apache Company suffered through some tough times. Since returning from Afghanistan in 2010

and mourning the loss of Staff Sgt. Edward Rivera, multiple deaths and suicides have loomed heavy on the minds of Alpha’s Soldiers.

The training hasn’t slowed down since deployment. Several important inspections, an armory relocation from Norwalk to Danbury and a stressful training rotation at JRTC this summer drove the full-time support personnel at Apache Company to determine the unit’s morale was in desperate need of a boost.

Apache’s leadership developed a strategy in hopes to build cohesion, camaraderie and esprit de corps within the unit. The plan provides NCOs additional leadership responsibilities beyond their assigned MTOE role. It incorporates duties like the MWR NCO, historian NCO and recruiting and retention NCO, just to name a few.

This month starts a new beginning with the first Apache Company social or MWR event in years.

“Laser tag - it was a great time,” according to Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Michael Finnegan, the unit’s Readiness NCO. “It

really brought the unit together and gave us something to talk about that wasn’t military, plus it was good to all be together in an environment where rank didn’t matter but having a good time did.”

Pitcher really enjoys his additional duty and plans to organize a MWR event on a monthly basis. He wants the Alpha Company’s Soldiers to feel they are a part of something larger than a military unit. When Soldiers leave drill, they are often tired and drained from the intense training or sometimes disconnected during drills focused on administrative tasks. This doesn’t always present the best opportunities for bonding as a unit. Activities outside of drill really give everyone, from Soldiers to family members and friends, the opportunity to get to know each other on a personal level.

The idea is to keep Soldiers engaged during drill and on a larger scale, encourage them to stay in the National Guard.

*Staff Sgt. Ronald Pitcher (facing front) and Spec. Joe Millo come face-to-face during a game of laser tag during a unit camaraderie building event. Pitcher is the newly appointed Morale, Welfare and Recreation NCO for Company A, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry and the day of laser tag was his brainchild. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Finnegan, Co. A, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry)*



*Inset: Members of A Company, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry and their family members who participated in the unit’s first MWR event. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Finnegan, Co. A, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry)*



# Apache Hosts Family Holiday Fun, Building Unit Morale, Cohesion

SGT. 1<sup>ST</sup> CLASS MICHAEL FINNEGAN  
CO. A, 1<sup>ST</sup> BATTALION, 102<sup>ND</sup> INF.

Two previous deployments and a demanding training schedule have made it difficult for the units of Connecticut's 1-102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion to bring Soldiers and Families together for the holidays. This year, Alpha (Apache) Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry prioritized a revitalized Family Readiness Group (FRG) to best serve Soldiers around the holidays and beyond.

Scheduling the holiday party of the Sunday of December drill helped motivate Soldiers to accomplish all required training on Saturday. More than 200 members of the company's Leadership, Soldiers and Families gathered together at the Danbury Armed Forces Center for one of the company's largest holiday events ever.

Upon arrival, guests were greeted by Apache Soldiers tasked with orientation, coat check and keeping the food and drinks coming. As holiday music and videos played in the background, there were bounce houses, arts and crafts, cupcake decorating, story time and a colorful kids' parachute serving as a wide range of entertainment.

There certainly was no lack of food; a potluck breakfast was followed by a catered lunch buffet from the Westport VFW. Santa also made an appearance, and gifts were given to Soldiers who brought children.

Special guests included the Nancy Cummings of the Family Readiness Group program, along with members of the unit's FRG, and contributed to the party's success.

"I think we really met the commander's intent. Capt. [Steven] MacSweeney and I spent Christmas in Afghanistan together on our first tour to Afghanistan, and I think part of this was our way of making up for that humble holiday we spent in the tents," said the unit's Readiness NCO Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Michael Finnegan.

MacSweeney and 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Daniel Morgan are pushing the NCO Corps to lead on all fronts and this holiday party was successful largely due to NCOs empowered to own the event. Morgan started his morning at Camp Niantic, welcoming new Soldiers from Battle Hand-off, but drove from one end of the state to the other for the party, saying he "wouldn't miss it for the world."

Included during the day were a handful of re-enlistments and farewells to a few Soldiers. The event organizers hope this was a fitting farewell and retention tool that will keep the extensions coming.

Apache also has an event planned for January: a post-annual training formal. Apache is scheduled to conduct a split Annual Training this year, one in the winter and one in summer. The unit will celebrate the last day of winter AT by holding a holiday formal at the Westport VFW.

Organizers are excited to conduct after action reviews on these events with the unit and the FRG in order to continue to provide well-planned, well-executed events that get better each time as the unit strives to provide the most rewarding unit experience to Soldiers and their Families.



Children, and the young-at-heart Soldiers of A Company, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry Regiment play parachute games during the unit's family holiday fun day. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Finnegan, Co. A, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry)



Families of A Company, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry Regiment eagerly await whose name Santa will read next as gifts are distributed during the unit's holiday family fun day. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Finnegan, Co. A, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry)

# Resilience Center: *Know Yourself – Detect Those Icebergs*

SGT. MAJ. JAMES SYPHER  
STATE RESILIENCE COORDINATOR

**Detecting icebergs** is a resilience skill that relates to an individual's self-awareness in terms of core values and core beliefs. These values and beliefs are engrained in us at a young age by influential people in our lives such as parents, teachers, coaches and clergy. Significant emotional events can also influence our core values and beliefs.

When a situation occurs that involves an iceberg, you typically respond disproportionately to the event. Here is an example: consider an adult who is in the middle of a conversation and is repeatedly interrupted by a child asking for a snack. If the adult has an iceberg about children respecting their elders or children being seen and not heard, they may overreact and yell at the child. The key to detecting icebergs is to recognize the ones

that apply to you and work to prevent these types of negative reactions.

The resilience skill of detecting icebergs is used to identify and evaluate deep beliefs and core values that drive your emotions and reactions. Use this concept when your reaction seems out of proportion or is undermining your performance and effectiveness.

#### Resilience Tip of the Month:

Take charge of the day by controlling your thoughts. A day is filled with events, so make it a choice to determine how those events will impact the rest of your day. Optimistic thinking allows us to remain realistic, maintain hope and on focus on solutions when change is possible.

#### Resilience Resources:

BH Helpline: 855-800-0120

Strong Bonds: Chaplain Nutt: 800-858-2677

Connecticut VA: Newington: 860-666-6951, West

Haven: 203-932-5711

Military One Source: [www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil)

Per Army Regulation 350-53, all units of company size or larger are required to have at least one Master Resilience Trainer. If you are interested in helping your fellow Soldiers become more resilient and earning this qualification that can benefit your career both in and outside the military, talk to your readiness or training NCO.

The next Resilience Trainer Assistant course will be conducted March 17-20, 2015 at Camp Niantic. Current members of the Connecticut National Guard can contact their chain of command for more information on how to enroll.

In next month's issue we will cover assertive communication. Until then Connecticut, stay resilient!

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Call Toll-Free at 855-838-8255, visit [Vets4Warriors.com](http://Vets4Warriors.com), or email: [Info@Vets4Warriors.com](mailto:Info@Vets4Warriors.com)



- Vets4Warriors provides Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve Service members, transitioning retirees, and military families worldwide with peer-to-peer support.



- Peer-to-peer support is available 24/7, and it is toll-free throughout the U.S.

- The Vets4Warriors peers are Veterans who have been there and understand the problems unique to military life and know your challenges.

- Your call is confidential. Vets4Warriors does not discuss your call with anyone and, if callers choose, they can remain anonymous.

- The Vets4Warriors call center is staffed with Veterans and family members representing all branches of the Service.



- Vets4Warriors will collaborate with you in setting a plan to achieve your goals, manage stress, and build resilience.



- The call center's Veterans provide information and referrals as needed.

- Vets4Warriors provides peer support and follow up for those with ongoing concerns. For those in crisis we will connect you to the Military Crisis Line.

- Vets4Warriors is available via telephone, on-line chat, or e-mail.

- For more information visit [www.vets4warriors.com](http://www.vets4warriors.com).

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855-838-8255 [vets4warriors.com](http://vets4warriors.com)



## Hagel Releases Progress Report to the President on Sexual Assault in the Military

DoD PRESS RELEASE

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel released a report Dec. 4 on the Department of Defense's recent progress in addressing sexual assault in the military, and announced four directives to further strengthen the department's prevention and response program.

Sustained senior leadership engagement over the past three years including 41 Secretary of Defense initiatives has changed how the military works to prevent, respond to and effectively adjudicate sexual assault crimes.

"Eradicating sexual assault from our ranks is not only essential to the long-term health and readiness of the force; it is also about honoring our highest commitments to protect our fellow Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines," Hagel said.

Preliminary survey data indicate that our efforts are driving progress. Service members experienced fewer sexual assaults in fiscal year 2014 than in fiscal year 2012 an estimated 19,000, down from 26,000. Although this is a reduction, there is clearly more work to be done.

In addition, the number of service member victims choosing to report these crimes has increased by more than 50 percent over the same period of time. This indicates an increased confidence in the department's ability to support victims, and adjudicate these crimes.

While signs of progress are encouraging, the mission is far from complete.

The secretary announced today four directives intended to further improve the department's sexual assault prevention and response programs by: (1) creating a pilot program for select installations that will customize prevention efforts (2) requiring commanders to identify and prevent retaliation, (3) training first-line supervisors to lead sexual assault and prevention programs, and (4) further publicizing resources for victims.

"DoD will continue its strong and committed efforts to pursue comprehensive and dynamic approaches to fighting sexual assault in the military. President [Barack] Obama and all of DoD's leaders, both military and civilian, are committed to doing whatever it takes to stamp out this scourge," said Hagel.

The department is committed to eradicating sexual assault in the ranks, and will continue our focused, transparent, collaborative approach to further ensure that each service member is treated with dignity and respect.

The report is available online at: [http://sapr.mil/public/docs/reports/FY14\\_POTUS/FY14\\_DoD\\_Report\\_to\\_POTUS\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](http://sapr.mil/public/docs/reports/FY14_POTUS/FY14_DoD_Report_to_POTUS_Full_Report.pdf)

The directives are available online at: [http://sapr.mil/public/docs/reports/FY14\\_POTUS/FY14\\_DoD\\_Report\\_to\\_POTUS\\_SecDef\\_Initiatives.pdf](http://sapr.mil/public/docs/reports/FY14_POTUS/FY14_DoD_Report_to_POTUS_SecDef_Initiatives.pdf)

More information about the department's sexual assault prevention efforts can be found at [www.sapr.mil](http://www.sapr.mil)

Survivors are encouraged to contact the Safe Helpline at 877-995-5247 or visit [www.safehelplin.org](http://www.safehelplin.org) for confidential and anonymous crisis intervention services.

# Intelligence Oversight Protects Constitutional Rights of Our Citizens

MAJ. BRYON TURNER  
103RD AIRLIFT WING, PUBLIC AFFAIRS

BRADLEY AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE - East Granby, Conn. — Members of the 103rd Operations Support Squadron's intelligence office were examined by the 103rd Airlift Wing's inspection team during an intelligence oversight by-law inspection, Dec. 16 at Bradley Air National Guard Base, East Granby, Connecticut.

"The oversight program is directed in the law, and as with many other wing programs the IG conducts an annual by-law inspection to ensure our personnel are trained and working an aggressive oversight program meeting the intent and spirit of that law," said Lt. Col James Guerrero, inspector general for the 103rd Airlift Wing.

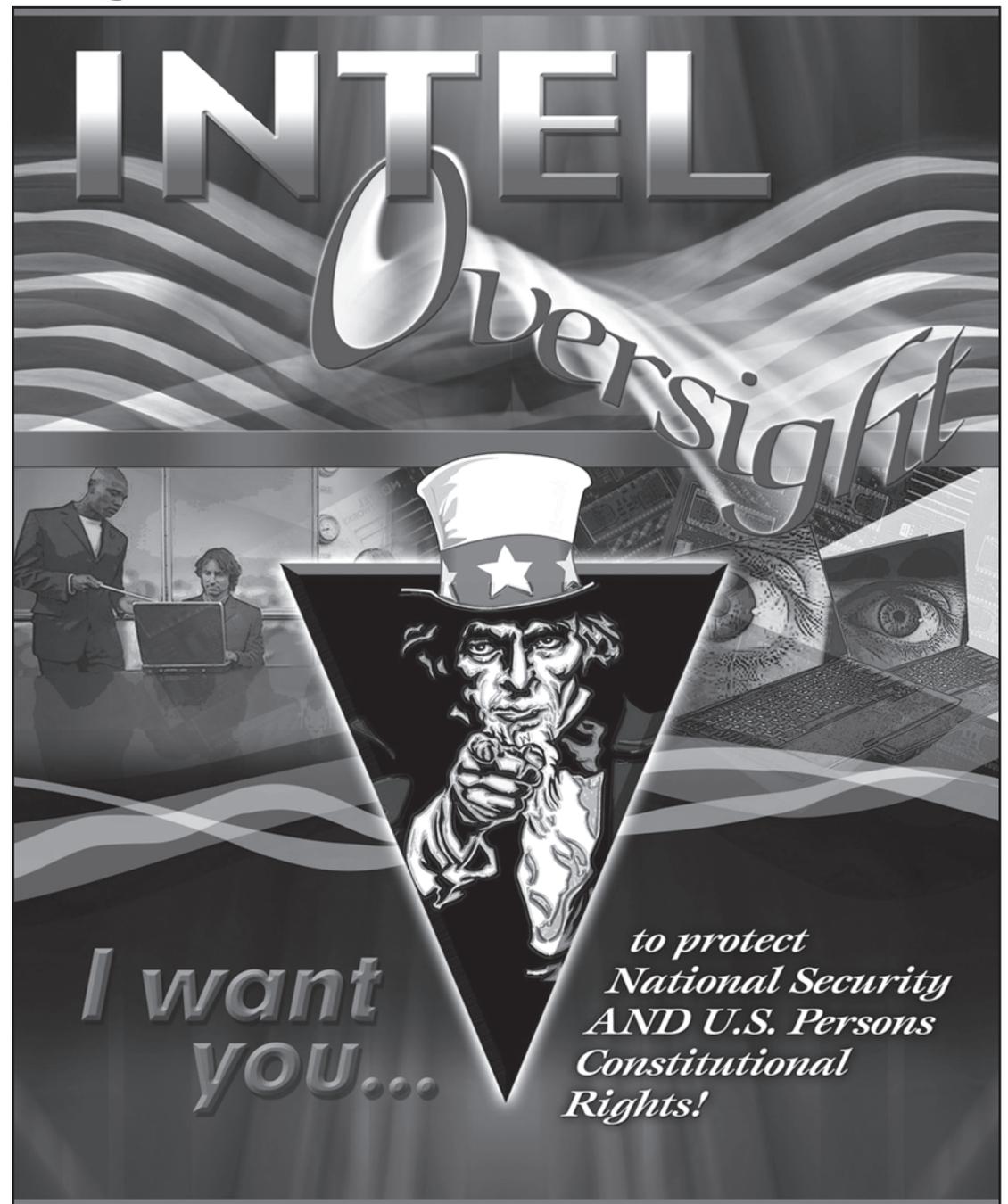
"Intelligence oversight involves a balancing of two fundamental interests, obtaining the intelligence information required to protect national security while protecting individual rights guaranteed by the Constitution and outlined within the laws of the United States," said Senior Master Sgt. Peter Martucci, wing inspection team member with a background in intelligence. "The primary objective of the program is to mitigate infringement upon the rights of U.S. persons."

To accomplish that objective, wing inspection team members work to verify and ensure all intelligence analysts know their responsibilities and make sure they know they have an avenue to report any possible violations.

"My focus is to maintain the integrity of the Intel shop by ensuring we have the proper authority and mission to collect and retain all information that we use on a daily basis, or in the support of antiterrorism and force protection, as well as with joint missions like we had during Hurricane Irene and Storm Sandy," said Senior Master Sgt. Matthew LeMasters, who serves as an intelligence oversight monitor for the unit.

"In that respect, an analyst needs to be very cognizant of their responsibilities," said Martucci. "It is critical to our mission to ensure each analyst knows the boundaries and has an avenue if an instance occurs where information collected may infringe on the constitutional rights of our citizens."

*The Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Agency Interlligence Oversight Training program balances intelligence gathering for national security with protecting the rights of all U.S. persons. (Graphic by Gloria Vasquez)*



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- Don't post Personal Identifying Info
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Facebook will launch new Privacy Tools January 1, 2015.  
Be sure to check and adjust your settings!

# Hawaiian Luau Theme Brings Smiles to Children



Hula 'Ohana of Connecticut, from Glastonbury, had children and volunteers on their feet dancing during Operation ELF Dec. 19. The Glastonbury Ukele Band was also on hand to provide entertainment. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Public Affairs NCO)



Children of deployed or recently returned Guardsmen were able to choose several gifts from amongst those donated by Connecticut residents. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Public Affairs NCO)



Visiting with Santa brought smiles to children, including Caolan C... grandmother works for the C... and Family Support Center. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Public Affairs NCO)



Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman thanks a young volunteer for his work during Operation ELF at the William A. O'Neill Armory, Hartford, Connecticut Dec. 19. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Public Affairs NCO)



Several bicycles were given away during the annual Operation ELF party Dec. 19. Families received tickets as part of their welcome bags and were able to put the tickets in for a chance to ride off with one of the donated bikes. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Public Affairs NCO)



Sisters, Samantha (red dress) and... moment together while waiting for... Operation ELF party Dec. 19. The... Sgt. Jamison and Andrea Lathrop... Newton, State Public Affairs NCO)

# Children, Adults at Annual Operation ELF Party



Smiles to the faces of many children, whose parents and family members were able to spend special moments together during the annual Operation ELF party at the William A. O'Neill Armory in Hartford, Connecticut. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Public Affairs NCO)



Family members were able to spend special moments together during the annual Operation ELF party at the William A. O'Neill Armory in Hartford, Connecticut. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Public Affairs NCO)



Facepainting was just one of many activities to keep children happy and occupied as they waited for the jolliest of elves to arrive during the Operation ELF party Dec. 19 and Liberty Mae Cummings could not wait to show off her wearable art. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Public Affairs NCO)



Two-year-old Lexi Mae Forman, daughter of Mitch Foreman, Servicemember and Family Support Center, looks around in awe during the Operation ELF party Dec. 19. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Public Affairs NCO)



Two-year-old Lexi Mae Forman, daughter of Mitch Foreman, Servicemember and Family Support Center, looks around in awe during the Operation ELF party Dec. 19. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Public Affairs NCO)



Families took the opportunity to have family photos taken with Santa during the annual Operation ELF party at the William A. O'Neill Armory, Hartford, Connecticut Dec. 19. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Public Affairs NCO)

# Around Our Guard

## Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Gay Inducted into Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame

COL. JOHN T. WILTSE  
STATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

The Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame was established in 2004 to honor and recognize the extensive contributions Veterans make to their communities and state after their active military service. Each year an executive committee nominates for induction those Veterans who have most demonstrated in their lives the principle of selfless service to others.



Maj. Gen. (Ret.) David W. Gay (center) is congratulated by Maj. Gen. Thad Martin, adjutant general of the Connecticut National Guard, and Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman after being inducted into the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame during ceremonies held at the William A. O'Neill Armory, Hartford, Connecticut Dec. 12. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Public Affairs NCO)

On Dec. 20, Maj. Gen. David W. Gay, former adjutant general of the Connecticut National Guard, was inducted into the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame.

Gay began his 46-year military career when he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1953. He joined and began his full-time career with the Connecticut Army National Guard in 1960, rising through the ranks to become Connecticut's top National Guard officer, serving as Adjutant General from 1992 to 1999.

During his service in uniform and after his retirement General Gay's commitment to public service never faltered. He has been a long-time supporter and member of the Manchester American Legion, Post 102, and the Army Navy Club of Manchester. In 1994, the General was asked by then-Governor Lowell Weicker to assist in the operations planning and execution of the 1995 Special Olympics World Summer Games held in New Haven with more than 7,000 athletes from 143 countries competing in 21 sports.

From 1995 through 2005, the General held executive volunteer positions with the Nutmeg State Games, including service as president. The Nutmeg State Games is the largest amateur, multi-sport sporting event in Connecticut dedicated to providing a forum that encourages camaraderie and sportsmanship through athletic competition.

Gay has demonstrated a keen interest in the welfare and development of young people his entire adult life. He was a key supporter of the Character Counts program, serving on the Character Counts State Advisory Board and receiving the national Character Counts Centers of Influence Award. In 1995, he recognized the emerging computer technology field and developed "Computer Camp for Kids" to benefit the children of Guard members.

And from 2002 to 2007 the General served as a member of the Board of Trustees for Connecticut's Community Colleges.

Of all his many accomplishments and contributions to others, none is more significant – or remembered more fondly in this organization – than his ... and of course, his wife Nancy's ... long commitment and support to the Connecticut National Guard Family Program. Even as the Guard's senior officer, General Gay always took the time to become personally involved in the joys and sorrows, successes and failures of his National Guard family and in doing so, he earned the respect and loyalty of all Guardsmen who served with and for him.

## 242nd CMT Returns from Deployment



Sgt. Maj. David Moorehead is reunited with his children after a nine-month deployment to Afghanistan. (Phot by Allison Joanis, State Public Affairs Office)

The 242nd Engineer Detachment (Construction Management Team) returned from a nine-month deployment to Afghanistan on Dec. 9. Family, friends and members of the Connecticut Army National Guard were on hand at the Windsor Locks Army Aviation Readiness Center to welcome home the nine-member detachment. The unit's mission was to provide project management and technical support to deconstruct and consolidate coalition operating bases within the theater of operations. This was the first deployment for the 242nd Engineer Detachment, which received its federal recognition as a unit in September 2011.



Spec. Ricardo Reyes-Scheiner is greeted by members of his family upon his return Dec. 9 from a nine-month deployment in Afghanistan. (Photo by Allison Joanis, State Public Affairs Office)



CHIEF MASTER SGT.  
EDWARD GOULD

## Enlisted Update

Greetings and welcome to 2015. I hope you all had a joyful holiday season and were able to spend quality time with family, friends and loved ones.

Wow, 2014 sure passed by quickly! With the New Year will come new challenges for the Connecticut National Guard. It seems over the past several years the only thing that has been constant is change. I am sure that this year will prove to be much of the same.

As the 103<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing continues its progress to become a fully-operational airlift squadron, many challenges lie ahead. Training will be of upmost importance. Several of Connecticut's C-130H Hercules aircraft and many of the personnel needed to support operations will train at the Georgia Combat Readiness Training Center in Savannah this month. These exercises and training periods provide Airmen with the type of deployed training and team building needed as the 103<sup>rd</sup> continues to hone its skills necessary for execution of the new C-130 mission.

So what lies ahead for you in the New Year? Have you resolved to make your own changes? Have you made resolutions? Are you going to finally kick some nasty habit? Are you going to set your goals on those last few pounds? Are you going to re-commit yourself to the warrior ethos? Are you making the commitment to be a better battle buddy? Or, maybe you are committing yourself to be a better Wingman? Are you making a commitment to improve your resiliency? How about committing to the completion of those last course requirements for your degree?

This could be the year you recognize the importance

of supporting the professional military organizations working hard to obtain and secure the benefits we have all become accustomed to. Maybe you will commit to completing more professional military education, or engaging in deliberate development opportunities. How about delving into those suggested reading lists? Is this the year you step out of your comfort zone and cross-train into a different AFSC or MOS?

Whatever lies ahead for you this year I encourage you to be the best Soldier or Airman you can possibly be. It is important to keep moving forward and avoid becoming stagnant. Every time I have the opportunity to interact with Connecticut's Airmen and Soldiers I learn something new and I hope that you have this experience as well.

If you are at the entry levels of this great organization you should be working hard to become as technically and technically proficient as possible. If you are in the middle of the rank structure, you should be working to maintain your technical proficiency and expand your tactical supervisory skills.

If you are in the highest ranks of the organization you should be expanding your strategic level thinking abilities *and* working hard to deliberately develop your subordinates to the point where they are ready to replace you. As much as we all treasure our personal positions in the organization, we must all work towards the future success of the entire enterprise.

With that in mind, let's do our best in 2015 to improve the enterprise that is the Connecticut National Guard.

BECOME A LEADER AND  
**TECHNICAL EXPERT**  
AS A WARRANT OFFICER



TAKE THE CHALLENGE TODAY, CONTACT:

**CW3 JOHN NERKOWSKI**

WARRANT OFFICER STRENGTH MANAGER

**203.410.0828**

john.v.nerkowski.mil@mail.mil

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**Thank you to all of our  
Connecticut National Guard  
Families for all that you do  
and all that you sacrifice**

## Governor's Horse and Foot Guards

### 1st Company GFH Band Entertains Veterans

*The First Company Governor's Foot Guard Band, under the command of Capt. David Carlson, performs a concert of seasonal and other selections at the Connecticut Veterans Home in Rocky Hill, Dec. 8. (Photo courtesy Sgt. 1st Class Mark Boudreau, 1GFG)*



## Connecticut Community Colleges Offer Support to Veterans

ERICA P. SMITH  
ASSISTANT RESEARCH SPECIALIST  
CONNECTICUT HEALTH & LIFE SCIENCES CAREER INITIATIVE  
BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Connecticut's Community Colleges have long been places where Veterans can find much-needed support as they pursue higher education. Community colleges recognize the unique challenges facing Veterans and are dedicated to offering support to ensure their success.

Veterans find welcoming environments and support at the Operation Academic Support for Incoming Service Members (OASIS) Centers where Veterans can come together to study and make connections with peers who understand where they have been and what transition is like. Veterans' Clubs provide a community within the college to share experiences, take part in both on and off campus activities and get involved in the local community.

The Connecticut Health and Life Sciences Career Initiative is an initiative funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Through the initiative, a variety of new certificate and associate degree programs of likely interest to Veterans have been developed at Capital Community College (Hartford), Gateway Community College (New Haven), Manchester Community College, Middlesex Community College (Middletown) and Norwalk Community College. These programs include paramedic studies, firefighter, veterinary technician, biotechnology, group exercise science and many others.

In addition to these new and challenging programs, each college has a Veterans' associate dedicated to recruiting and supporting Veterans in these programs. The associate is someone who understands the needs of Veterans and can help make their time at college productive and meaningful. Each of the consortium

colleges also has a full-time recruitment and placement coordinator serving as a career pathway advisor, tracking students from their initial contact through their coursework. It is another way to ensure students make effective course selections to prepare them for life beyond the classroom.

Below are some highlights from each of the five colleges participating on the HL-SCI grant:

#### **Capital Community College:**

Recognized as a "military friendly school" which honors the top 15 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools in the country that are doing the most to embrace America's military service members, Veterans, and spouses as students and ensures their success on campus. Capital Community College's Veterans Club is organizing a college-wide project to collect bottles to fund a "Bottle House" to be built for a needy family. The college also hosted its annual Veterans Day Luncheon on Nov. 11 to honor student Veterans. For more information about Capital Community College please contact: Margaret Abraham, Veterans' affairs associate, at 860-906-5044 or mabraham@capitalcc.edu.

#### **Gateway Community College:**

Gabe Kautzner, the OEF/OIF Outreach Counseling Tech from the New Haven Veterans' Center is available every Wednesday on the Gateway Oasis Center for conversation or to help with benefits. For more information about Gateway Community College please contact: Richard Palinko, Veterans' affairs associate at 203-285-2146 or rpalinko@gatewayct.edu.

#### **Manchester Community College:**

Manchester Community College was once again certified in 2014 as a military friendly school.

The school participates in an annual Veterans

Professional Development Day, which is dedicated to helping Veteran students with resume and interview workshops as well as the opportunity to network with Veteran friendly businesses in the area. For more information about Manchester Community College please contact: Jonathan Ramos, Veterans' affairs associate at 860-512-3375 or jramos@manchestercc.edu.

#### **Middlesex Community College:**

Middlesex Community College hosts an annual Hot Dog Fundraiser in October to help raise money for Veterans in need as well as Connecticut's Trees of Honor Memorial, which is a non-profit aimed at planting trees for every Connecticut Soldier who was killed in the war on terror.

The Veterans Club is building a sustainable Veterans Memorial Garden which will include circular stones cut for each branch of the service, a garden bench and a variety of plants and trees. The Middlesex Veterans Club is also working with a program called Give2TheTroops, which is an organization that gathers hygiene items to send to the troops overseas. For more information about Middlesex Community College, please contact: Jonathan "Scott" Smith, Veterans' affairs associate at 860-343-5855 or jsmith@mxcc.commnet.edu.

#### **Norwalk Community College:**

Norwalk Community College is sponsoring a Hire-A-Vet program with the Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce. The college also hosted a college Veteran's celebration on Nov. 10. The event featured a panel discussion of the challenges faced by Veterans transitioning from military to civilian life. For more information about Norwalk Community College, please contact: Erik Rambusch, Veterans' affairs associate at 203-857-7014 or erambusch@ncc.commnet.edu.

# Lincoln Scholar to Discuss Depression

FROM THE CONNECTICUT ARMY NATIONAL GUARD MEDICAL COMMAND

Former Rhode Island State Supreme Court Chief Justice (ret.) Frank Williams, one of the nation's leading authorities on Abraham Lincoln, will discuss how President Lincoln coped with depression at the 2015 Army Air Professional Medical Education Seminar, on Saturday, Feb. 21.

In his presentation, Williams will address three key points: successfully functioning and leading with mental illness; harnessing and controlling depression and other disabilities; and battling tedium, but being aware that one can still arise every day and "make the donuts."

Williams received the Bronze Star and Combat Infantryman's Badge during his service as a captain in the U.S. Army while serving in Vietnam. He later served as chief judge of the Court of Military Commissions Review.

The Seminar is jointly sponsored by the Recruiting and Retention Command and the Medical Detachment. All medical personnel, civilian and military, are encouraged to attend, free of charge.

The agenda includes discussions by leading experts on topics ranging from the recent Ebola outbreak to the harm cannabis can cause to individual wellness. Recruiting and retention in the military's medical and dental fields will also be covered, as well as the trends in substance abuse within the Connecticut National Guard.

Accreditation: This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the Essential Areas and Policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) by Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Connecticut Children's Medical Center designates this educational activity for a maximum of 5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits.

## USDA, National Guard Sign MOU to Assist National Guard Families

USDA PRESS RELEASE

CAMP DAWSON, W. Va. – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the National Guard Bureau (NGB) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in October that will link the two organizations and the Cooperative Extension System to better enhance the health and well-being of military families.

NIFA and NGB will provide joint programs to facilitate nationwide and state military community-based education and outreach for positive family development among National Guard families. NIFA, as the federal administrator of the Cooperative Extension System, will help identify appropriate personnel, financial, scientific and technological resources needed to develop these programs that will increase exposure to knowledge that will help families become resilient and healthy.

"The men and women who protect this nation should have access to as much information and resources as possible to help preserve the strength and well-being of their families," said Sonny Ramaswamy, NIFA director. "Members of the military, their spouses and children can utilize the education and assistance from these programs and universities, before, during and after deployments to maintain a healthy lifestyle, regardless of their mission or where they are stationed."

"The National Guard's partnership with the National Institute for Food and Agriculture positively impacts the lives of Guard members, Veterans and their families," said Army Gen. Frank J. Grass, Chief, National Guard Bureau. "This agreement continues a robust relationship with a partner who is committed to those who serve our nation."

Today's military families face a lifestyle that includes frequent deployments and increased family separations. These unique challenges can affect military readiness and family resilience. As service members transition into Veteran status, educational and career opportunities can take on even greater significance.

Through federal funding and leadership for research, education and extension programs, NIFA focuses on investing in science and solving critical issues impacting people's daily lives and the nation's future. For more information, visit [www.nifa.usda.gov](http://www.nifa.usda.gov).



### Connecticut National Guard AMEDD Professional Education Seminar

COL Robert Nett Hall, Camp Niantic, Niantic, Connecticut

Saturday, Feb. 21, 2015 \* 7:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Medics, Nurses, Physicians, Physician Assistants, Dentists, EMTs, Behavioral Health professionals, and all members of the Medical Community, Military and Civilian, are encouraged to attend.

Sponsored by:  
Recruiting and Retention Battalion  
CTARNG Medical Detachment

Accreditation: This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the Essential Areas and Policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) by Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Connecticut Children's Medical Center designates this educational activity for a maximum of 5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits. Physicians should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

NOTE: There is no cost to attend the Seminar.

For Information or to Register for this Program:  
Contact Staff Sgt. Peeler at [elizabeth.k.peeler.mil@mail.mil](mailto:elizabeth.k.peeler.mil@mail.mil)









### 1st Battalion (OCS), 169th Regiment (RTI) Officer Candidate School

OCS OPEN HOUSE

Information Brief

21 FEBRUARY 2015  
Report Time: 0900  
0900-1100 at The RTI, Camp Niantic

Uniform: ACU's with PC or Business Casual (Civilians Only)

Staff and Cadre will be on hand to answer questions and support administrative requirements.








Please RSVP through your chain of command and to:  
CPT David Lord [david.m.lord.mil@mail.mil](mailto:david.m.lord.mil@mail.mil)  
CW3 Michael Mottolo [michael.v.motollo.mil@mail.mil](mailto:michael.v.motollo.mil@mail.mil)



## Healthy Lifestyles: Feeling stuck?

Ms. LYNN BIELLA  
103RD AIRLIFT WING, DIRECTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

Do you find yourself stuck in a situation or pattern that you really want or need to change and don't know how?

If you are unsure if the situation warrants change, ask yourself what advice you would give to a friend if he or she were in the same situation. Typically, taking the personal connection out of the equation makes it much clearer.

Most times, we know what we need to do, but bringing ourselves to make the necessary changes is a challenge because fear stands in our way. You can take away some of the power associated with the fear by asking yourself, "What is the worst thing that could happen? And if that happens, what is the worst thing that will happen?" Chances are great the worst thing will not happen and if, it does, by giving it a little thought ahead of time you can develop a plan to deal with it. Talk yourself down from the fear-based place and understand that we all have to take action despite some fear.

Acceptance is the next hurdle to overcome. See the situation for what it is, not what you wish it was or what it was in the past. We tend to have glimpses of insight

we then talk ourselves out of. Try to take the emotional element out of it and don't overanalyze the situation. Making a list of pros and cons can really be helpful. Keep this list and if you find yourself waning, read the list repeatedly if necessary.

In most situations the action steps that need to be taken are clear. For example, if your job is making you miserable and you are unable to change the elements of it that are causing distress or you are unable to find a way not to be negatively affected then start looking for a new job. If you are in a relationship that is causing you harm and to change this requires your partner to make changes that they are unwilling to make, end the relationship. Take action, keep the resolve and manage your emotions.

Change is stressful. Commit to self-care measures to decrease the stress. Exercising is a great way to burn off anxious energy. Spending time with friends and people who love you also helps. Do not to spend the whole time talking about what is upsetting to you as that keeps you stuck in the same feeling state rather than changing it to something better. A healthy level of distraction is in order. Be mindful of your alcohol use. It can be tempting to tune it all out with significant intoxication but it signifies avoidance, not distraction. Avoidance interferes with

effectively dealing with the situation and can create new problems.

Sometimes stress escalates to significant symptoms of anxiety or panic. We tend to work ourselves up and worry about things that have not happened and may never happen. Take a deep breath in to the count of eight, hold it for a count of four and exhale for a count of eight. Do that at least five times and your body will begin to calm. Practice the deep breathing when you are less stressed. Like anything else, the more rehearsed something is the easier it will be to do during periods of stress. There are a number of other distraction techniques to de-escalate anxiety and panic. I would be happy to teach them to you and coach you on their use.

Finally, focus on what it is that you do want in a reality-based way. For example, if you are in a toxic relationship focusing on changing your partner is not realistic. We cannot change others. What is realistic is to desire a loving relationship that is nurturing and respectful to all involved. Your job is to be clear on your intention and be open to making that intention a reality.

## Education: Transfer Your GI Bill to Your Dependents Now

MAJ. DEREK J. MUSGRAVE  
EDUCATION SERVICES OFFICER

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is the only GI Bill that can be transferred to eligible dependents. The program has been available since 2009, but many Soldiers have not taken advantage of the transferability option. If you wait too long, it may be too late.

The law requires Soldiers to serve an additional four years after deciding to transfer these benefits to a family member. Soldiers who wait until they are too close to retiring or separating may find they are unable to commit to a four-year service obligation.

Unfortunately, this is the law and no exception to policy can be made. The law prohibits transferring the benefit to dependents once a Soldier retires or separates.

Any military member eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill who is currently serving on active duty or in the National Guard or Reserves can elect to transfer his or her educational benefits to eligible dependents as long as he or she meets specific service requirements.

The basic service requirements are that the service member must have at least six years of military service, and agree to serve an additional four years at the time of enrolling into the transfer program.

For traditional M-Day Soldiers, the four years of service must be served in an active drill status, as opposed to the Inactive National Guard or the Inactive Ready Reserve.

Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, members receive 36 months of education benefits. That's the equivalent of four nine-month academic years. Under the benefit transfer

program, all or a portion of the benefits can be transferred to a spouse, one or more children or any combination of dependents. The family member must be enrolled in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS), at the time of transfer to receive the benefits.

Even after transferring the benefits, they remain the "property" of the service member who earned them. He or she can revoke them or change who receives them at any time. The law states the benefits cannot be treated as "joint property" in the case of divorce.

To be fully eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill you must have three years of qualifying time.

But even if you only have one deployment you are still eligible for a huge portion of the benefit.

Soldiers often ask me when is the best time to transfer

their Post-9/11 GI Bill? My answer is always the same - as soon as you are eligible. The process is easy and will only take you a few minutes.

Visit <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect> on a CAC-enabled computer to get started.

If you have any questions about the process, please call the education services office staff at any time and we will be happy to assist you.

Maj. Derek J. Musgrave: Education Services Officer and GI Bill Manager at [derek.j.musgrave.mil@mail.mil](mailto:derek.j.musgrave.mil@mail.mil) or 860-524-4816.

Mrs. Mirza Henderson: Education Service Specialist at 860-524-4820 or [mirza.y.henderson2.civ@mail.mil](mailto:mirza.y.henderson2.civ@mail.mil)

Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Erika Thurman: Incentive Manager at 860-524-4809 or [ericka.g.thurman.mil@mail.mil](mailto:ericka.g.thurman.mil@mail.mil)

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**DoD**

# Safe Helpline

Sexual Assault Support for the DoD Community

Help is just a *Click, Call or Text* away!

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Click [www.SafeHelpline.org](http://www.SafeHelpline.org)    Call 877-995-5247

Text\* 55-247 (INSIDE THE U.S.)    202-470-5546 (OUTSIDE THE U.S.)

\*Text your location for the nearest SARC



## Legal: Why Should We All Have an Estate Plan?

CAPT. DONNIAL K. HINDS  
JA, 143<sup>D</sup> RSG

Estate planning is the process by which an individual or family arranges the transfer of assets in anticipation of death. The process involves legal documents, insurance planning, family planning, health and welfare planning and even retirement planning.

Although not required, drafting an estate plan can help to navigate complicated state and federal laws and provide for yourself and others as you choose, not as the government dictates. Without an estate plan, your property distribution and health care decisions will be made by operation of the state laws where you reside and not by not your stated desires.

A last will and testament is an important component of an estate plan that ensures your estate is settled at death. A properly drafted last will and testament specifically designates who will receive your assets and can prevent unanticipated disagreements after your death. In a will, you can create a trust for the benefit of your children or even make charitable donations upon your death. It can also designate a guardian for your children. For those

who choose to draft a will, there are many options available. Basic pre-printed and fill-in-the-blank wills are available, but quite often these documents will not provide you with the necessary level of customization and may not be valid if legal formalities are not respected. A last will and testament is an opportunity for you to decide upon the disposition of your assets, and a properly drafted will allows flexibility and assurance.

Always ensure you have enough life insurance and disability insurance to provide for lost income. Additionally, while reviewing your estate plan, it is imperative to examine beneficiaries of life insurance policies. Often times, the largest asset that a Soldier has will be their Servicemember Group Life Insurance (SGLI). Insurance is governed strictly by contract law. In other words, the individuals last specified as your beneficiaries on your DD93 or any insurance policy will be entitled to collect regardless of what your last will and testament states and regardless of your present family situation. For instance, if an ex-spouse is still designated on the DD93 but a Soldier has since remarried, the ex-spouse would still be entitled to the life insurance proceeds.

Thus, it is imperative that everyone review any and all life insurance beneficiary designations to ensure that they accurately reflect your wishes and intent.

Also included in your estate plan are documents prepared to cover situations when you cannot make decisions on your own behalf. These documents include: a living will, health care proxy, and on many occasions a durable or springing power of attorney. A springing power of attorney is a specialized power of attorney which only becomes effective when you are incapacitated, so it is very limited in when it can be used unlike a general durable power of attorney.

Drafting and maintaining your estate plan is time well spent both for you and your family. After creating an estate plan, it is important to keep it current and update your documents when changes in your life occur. Marriages, children, divorces and major increases or decreases in your net worth are all reasons to revisit and possibly revise your existing documents. If you need assistance with your estate planning needs, contact your local judge advocate through the chain of command to assist in the preparation of these legal documents.

## Diversity: Connecticut Leaders Attend 2014 NGB Diversity Conference

MAJ. KRISTINA L. GARUTI  
SEEM/SARC CONNECTICUT NATIONAL GUARD

In December, the National Guard Bureau hosted the first in-person Diversity Conference since the 2010 conference in Atlanta, Georgia. This year's conference took place at the Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC) in Savannah, Georgia and was attended by each State's National Guard leadership. Connecticut sent four attendees: Brig. Gen. Peter Siana (CTANG), Command Sgt. Maj. John S. Carragher (CTARNG), Master Sgt. Felix Ortiz (CTANG), and Maj. Kristina L. Garuti (CTANG).

Gen. Frank Grass kicked off the conference with a speech discussing the role diversity and inclusion could play in the future solution to many of the world's current conflicts. He signed the NGB Diversity Strategic Plan at the conference and talked about NGB winning the third place award in the nation in 2014 for Excellence in Diversity.

The next speaker was Mr. Andres Tapia who proposed freshening up the definition of diversity to be the following: "diversity is a mix; inclusion is making the mix work." The bottom line message of his brief was to look at the whole person for strengths rather than looking at a person's differences for weaknesses.

Dr. Steve Robbins highlighted the physical and psychological effects of inclusion and exclusion on the human brain. Dr. Vu Pham engaged the audience in a number of interactive activities involving personality traits and leadership styles.

Brig. Gen. Linda Singh spoke on the lack of diversity in National Guard leadership positions, challenging the audience to be "color-bold, gender-bold and capability-bold."

Mr. Bruce Stewart discussed IQ, referring to it as the,

"inclusive quotient." The focus was not to consider how smart an individual is, but how smart can you make the team you work with.

Mr. Philip Berry spoke about forming employee resource groups also known as affinity groups. Maj. Gen. Donald Reisch stressed the need for a plan for change, discussing the key goals of the 2014-2016 NGB Diversity Strategic Plan. "The only way you become responsible for the shortcomings of others is if you find yourself in a position to correct them but neglect to do so," he said.

Chief Warrant Officer Four Lisa Bryan discussed the social media and networking activities that NGB utilizes for recruitment. Then Lt. Gen. Sam Cox explained that the National Guard needs to look like and represent the people we defend. He said NGB would be introducing a mentoring database in spring 2015. Ms. Donnielle DeMesme provided recommendations on how the National Guard promotes recruitment to the general eligible population. Mr. Skip Gallo discussed leadership in a "lean environment," referring to budgeting limitations currently felt by the military and federal government.

The last speaker was Mr. Alvin Law. In the early 1960's, his mother took the drug Thalidomide while pregnant with him, and as a result he experienced a birth defect and was born without arms. His message was more about the fact that everyone has life challenges that you cannot always see on the surface. He stressed inclusion by saying not to look at people's differences but look for commonalities with people. For Law, being born without arms was not a tragedy or error of nature, it was a blessing that made him the resilient and capable human being he is today.

Brig. Gen. Ondra Berry from the NGB Diversity Office

closed the conference by talking about upcoming diversity and inclusion products being rolled out by NGB.

"To whom much is given, much is required," he ended by saying asking attendees to take what they learned at the conference back to their home states and share with their Soldiers and Airmen.

If you are interested in getting involved with diversity in the Connecticut National Guard, please contact Maj. Kristina L. Garuti at (860) 613-7610 or via email [kristina.l.garuti.mil@mail.mil](mailto:kristina.l.garuti.mil@mail.mil). There are a number of opportunities militarily and within your local communities.



Maj. Kristina Garuti, Mr. Alvin Law, Brig. Gen. Peter Siana and Master Sgt. Felix Ortiz at the National Guard Bureau Diversity Conference in Savannah, Georgia. The three Air Guardsmen attended the conference where Law was one of the speakers. (Photo courtesy Maj. Kristina Garuti)



# National Guard Association of Connecticut (NGACT)

## Nominations Being Accepted for Annual NGACT Awards Program

DAVID PYTLIK  
AWARDS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

The National Guard Association of Connecticut is again looking to award the best and brightest Soldiers, Airmen and officers of the Connecticut National Guard for their outstanding service.

We understand that our organization's success isn't solely fueled by men and women wearing the uniform; outstanding spouses, corporations, individuals and Retirees who have made exceptional contributions to the organization are also eligible for awards.

Anyone can submit an award recommendation. The deadline for submissions for this year's awards program is Feb. 6, 2015. Leaders at all levels are encouraged to look to their formations and consider submitting recommendations for anyone they believe fit the criteria below. Also, please consider those businesses, companies or others supporters that have gone above and beyond for the Connecticut National Guard. Winners will be invited to an awards ceremony during the March NGACT Conference.

For more information about the NGACT awards

program, please contact Dave Pytlik at david.c.pytlik@outlook.com.

**The Minuteman Award:** The highest honor bestowed on a member of the Association. It recognizes exceptional achievement, a patriotic act, highly distinguished service and/or an outstanding contribution to a military organization, community, the State, the Nation or the National Guard Association of Connecticut. Posthumous awards may be made to the next of kin.

Eligibility: Member or former member of the military and NGACT.

**The NGACT Leadership Award:** Recognizes a company grade officer who epitomizes the loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage exemplified in the Officer's Creed.

Eligibility: Company grade officer, member of the Connecticut National Guard, Member of NGACT and recommendation endorsed by the respective chain-of-command.

**The Commander Sergeant Major Anthony V. Savino Award:** Recognizes a noncommissioned officer who

epitomizes the loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage exemplified in the NCO Creed.

Eligibility: NCO and member of the Connecticut National Guard, member of NGACT and recommendation endorsed by the respective chain-of-command.

**The Meritorious Service Award:** Bestowed on an individual, firm or organization for outstanding service to the Connecticut National Guard and/or NGACT.

Eligibility: Any individual, firm or organization; military or civilian.

**The President's Corporate Member Award:** Recognizes a corporate member that distinguishes itself through noteworthy contributions in furtherance of the purpose, goals and objectives of NGACT.

Eligibility: Current corporate member of NGACT.

**The President's Retiree Award:** Recognizes a retiree member who distinguishes themselves through noteworthy contributions in furtherance of the purpose, goals and objectives of NGACT.

Eligibility: Current member of NGACT.

National Guard Association of Connecticut  
2014-2015 Awards Program Nomination Form

The National Guard Association of Connecticut (NGACT) recognizes outstanding achievement or service in keeping with the purpose, goals, objectives and policies of the Association through its annual Awards Program. We will recognize recipients at the NGACT Annual Conference and Awards Luncheon on **Saturday, March 28, 2015**.

The NGACT Awards Committee is now accepting nominations through **Feb. 6, 2015**. All nomination forms must be received **NO LATER THAN Feb. 6, 2015** to be considered.

Please complete the and forward it with any supporting documentation to: NGACT Awards Committee, 360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105-3795 or email to [david.c.pytlik@outlook.com](mailto:david.c.pytlik@outlook.com). Questions can be addressed to [ngactexecutivedirector@gmail.com](mailto:ngactexecutivedirector@gmail.com) or [david.c.pytlik@outlook.com](mailto:david.c.pytlik@outlook.com)

Name of Person being Nominated: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the Person a current member of the Connecticut National Guard? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Is the Person a retired member of the Connecticut National Guard? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Is this a posthumous award? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Nominee's Unit: \_\_\_\_\_ Nominee's Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Nominee's Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Award being Nominated For: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide as detailed a description as possible of why this Nominee is deserving of the Award: (Use a separate sheet if necessary)

Name of person making the nomination: \_\_\_\_\_ Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit of person making the nomination: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Your E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Awards

The Minuteman Award

The NGACT Leadership Award

The Command Sergeant Major's Award

The Meritorious Service Award

The President's Corporate Member Award

The President's Retiree Award



21st Annual NGACT  
Conference  
and Awards Luncheon



Saturday, March 28th 2015  
Conference Registration: 7:00 a.m.

Connecticut's State Veterans' Home  
287 West Street  
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

NGACT 21ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ RANK: \_\_\_\_\_ UNIT: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Conference Registration	\$30.00	_____
(\$40.00 at the door)		
NGACT Annual Dues	11.00	_____
NGACT Lifetime Dues	110.00	_____
EANGUS Annual Dues	11.00	_____
NGAUS Annual Dues —Based on Chart Below		_____
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED:</b>		_____
WO1	\$26.00	01 \$30.00
CW2	\$35.00	O2 \$45.00
CW3	\$46.00	O3 \$59.00
CW4	\$59.00	O4 \$72.00
CW5	\$73.00	O5 \$85.00
		O6 \$108.00
		O7 \$123.00
		O8 \$139.00

Make checks payable to "NGACT" and send to NGACT Conference, 360 Broad Street, Hartford CT 06105-3795  
Email questions about conference to: [ngactexecutivedirector@gmail.com](mailto:ngactexecutivedirector@gmail.com)

# Plan - Prepare - Execute: *Unit Training Plan*

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY LT. COL. PAUL THOMPSON  
STATE TRAINING OFFICER

*Editor's Note: This is the ninth part of a multi-part series.*

The Unit Training Plan is the unit's over-arching plan to attain key collective task proficiency in the time allotted to train (planning horizon). Commanders, leaders and training managers plan-prepare-execute and assess each training event as the UTP progresses.

Each training event is planned and coordinated in detail prior to execution. This is done during company-level training meetings using the "T-Month" construct. This process has to start early enough in the planning cycle to ensure all required resources are present and accounted for as training begins. Unless this is done, training proficiencies the commander envisions will not happen.

Each unit has to have a deep understanding of the local and installation-level resources available. This also includes understanding training resource cycles and conferences to ensure the unit can influence these cycles early enough to get the resources needed to train.

The following is a breakdown of major T-Month activities to use as a guide for units to follow in the development of training events. Keep in mind that each major training event would fall into the T-Month concept at different points in time on the training calendar.

## Month T-3: Conduct Rehearsals

Prior to conducting a rehearsal, it is necessary to conduct the final reconnaissance of the training site. The initial reconnaissance was completed at T-8 (five months previously). Since that time, changes may have occurred, causing possible alterations to the tactical plan, such as changing the location of the assembly area, or the route to the training area. The new timings and/or graphics are

published in a Fragmentary Order, or FRAGO.

Rehearsals are conducted before training events and must be scheduled early enough to allow for multiple rehearsals, if necessary.

They provide an invaluable means of ensuring actions during training are synchronized and executed to standard. Rehearsals also provide a mechanism for leaders and Soldiers to visualize what is supposed to happen, and to correct deficiencies during subsequent rehearsals.

Next month will feature Month T-2: finalize administrative support requirements and conduct opposing force (OPFOR) rehearsals.



## Connecticut Military History

### Connecticut's Military Museums

BRIG. GEN. (CT-RET.) ROBERT CODY  
HISTORICAL COLUMNIST

The Constitution State has a long and proud military history. Fortunately, historians and archivists in Connecticut have preserved much of this heritage for future generations. Connecticut is home to many museums and historical holdings, from the nationally recognized Submarine Forces Library and Museum adjacent to the U.S. Navy Submarine Base in Groton to the Military Museum of Southern New England in Danbury.

While not all inclusive, this short article will highlight some of these museums and hopefully inspire a day trip.

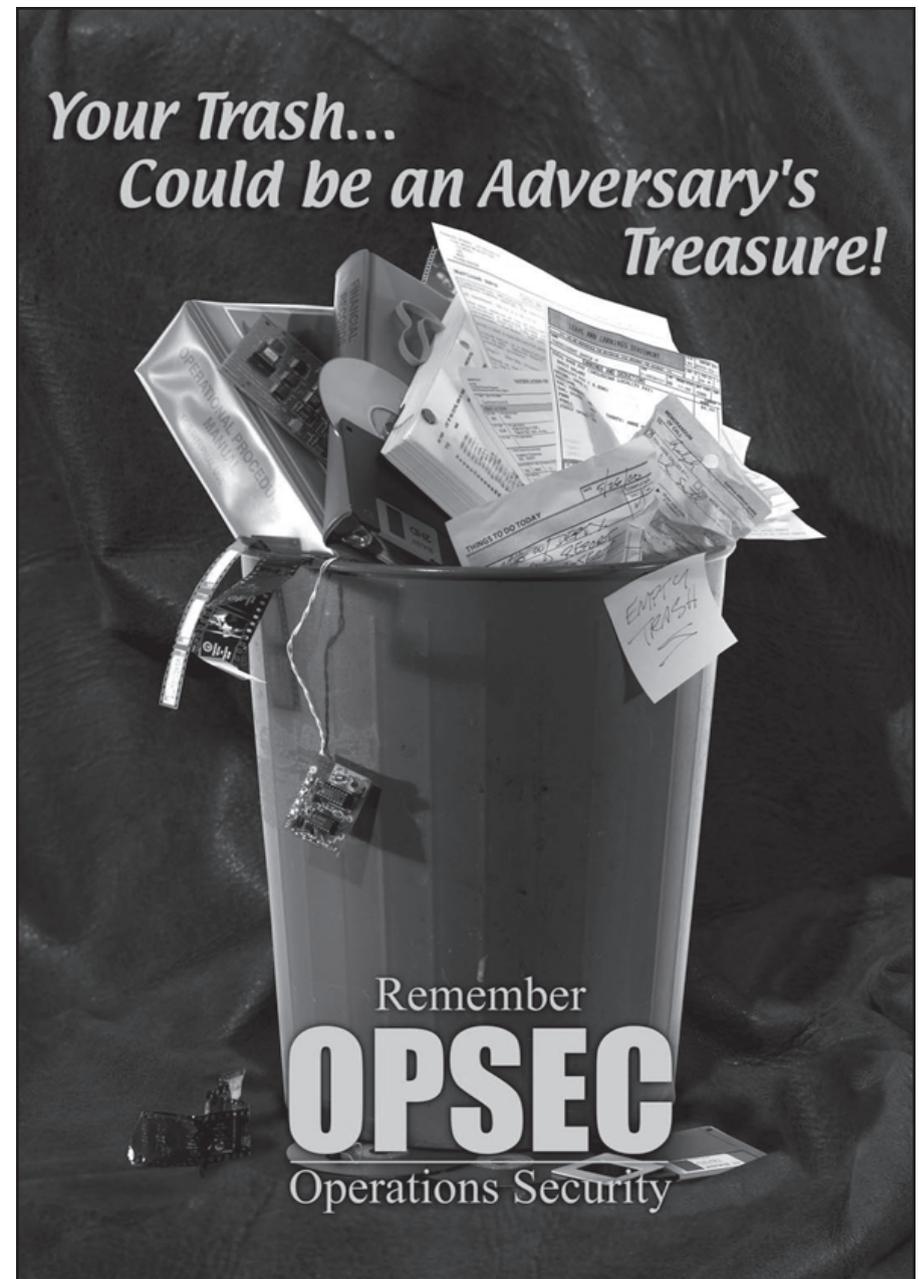
The Submarine Forces Library and Museum is operated by the U.S. Navy and is the only one dedicated to the "Silent Service." It began in 1955 as a research library by the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics, but donated the holdings to the U.S. Navy in 1964. The crown jewel of the museum's holdings is the USS Nautilus, the world's first nuclear powered ship, moored at the museum and is open to visitors. Find more information on the museum's website at <http://www.usnautilus.org/>.

The Military Museum of Southern New England is located at 125 Park Avenue in Danbury, not far from the Connecticut National Guard's newest readiness center. Boasting a collection of more than 40 vehicles and artillery pieces in their indoor and outdoor exhibit areas, the museum often schedules "open turret" days where visitors can climb in and on the vehicles. Find out more at <http://www.usmilitarymuseum.org>.

Another outstanding collection of military artifacts from the Revolutionary War to the present is the West Haven Veterans Museum and Learning Center, located at 30 Hood Terrace. The museum is housed in a large metal building painted in a woodland camouflage pattern near the West Haven train station. The museum's website is <http://www.whmilmuseum.com>.

Westbrook is home to the Military Historian's Museum on North Main Street. They have a collection of American military uniforms as well as vehicles from a World War II Weasel to a truck from Desert Storm.

The New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks has more than 70 aircraft on display in three large exhibit hangars and in an outdoor display area. The collection covers all eras of aviation from the first pioneers to the jet age. The museum schedules monthly "open cockpit" days. More information can be found at the museum's website: <http://www.neam.org/index.php>.



## Off the Bookshelf : Taking Heat

### 2001-2003 Through the Eyes of Ari Fleischer

STAFF SGT. BENJAMIN SIMON  
JFHQ PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

On Sept. 11, 2014, former White House press secretary, Ari Fleischer, recounted the events of Sept. 11, 2001, in a series of tweets.

His tweets begin with his arrival at Emma E. Booker Elementary School in Sarasota, Fla. with the President's motorcade at 8:40 a.m. The tweets end at 1:00 p.m., and recount the President's phone calls to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and incoming Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Dick Myers, stating that 'the ball' would soon be in their court.

Everyone knows the rest of the story, and everything in between.

On Sept. 11, 2001, Ari Fleischer became a household name. Prior to the horrible events of 9/11, it's safe to say that most Americans did not know what a White House press secretary was, or what the job entailed. Following 9/11 everyone learned, and Ari Fleischer's duties transformed substantially.

In his autobiography "Taking Heat," Fleischer details his very difficult position as President George W. Bush's press secretary from 2000-2003. Humble throughout his book's 300 pages, he does not give himself credit for climbing the long professional ladder leading to the most prestigious position in the public affairs and communications world.

He does not credit himself, either, for being the first White House press secretary to address the media on television following an attack on the United States, and the subsequent U.S. military action taken in response.

Prior to his media briefs, most Americans did not know where the country of Afghanistan was located.

Most had never heard of the Taliban.

Most had never heard of Al-Qaeda or Osama Bin Laden.

Most had never thought twice about anthrax.

In his hundreds of White House press conferences, Fleischer delivered this information to America. His mannerisms were always relaxed and his words clear. Thousands of Americans were dead and the United States was heading to war, but Fleischer, who has a nurturing, pediatrician-like quality to his personality, conveyed calm.

## Connecticut National Guard HELPLINE

**In an effort to support the needs of our service members and their families, the Connecticut National Guard now has a 24-hour HELPLINE.**

**If you or someone you know is struggling with the stressors of life, please contact us at 1-855-800-0120.**

**Your call will be answered by a behavioral health professional. You will receive information and referrals to community resources to support you and your family.**

**HELPLINE  
1-855-800-0120**

In addition to briefing the media of the White House Press Corps, his duties included advising the President and acting as a communications advisor. This meant travelling everywhere with the President and acting as his eyes and ears for communicating to the American people.

What does a President say, for instance, after the United States is attacked?

Fleischer tweeted what he advised President Bush on 9:10 a.m. Sept. 11, 2001:

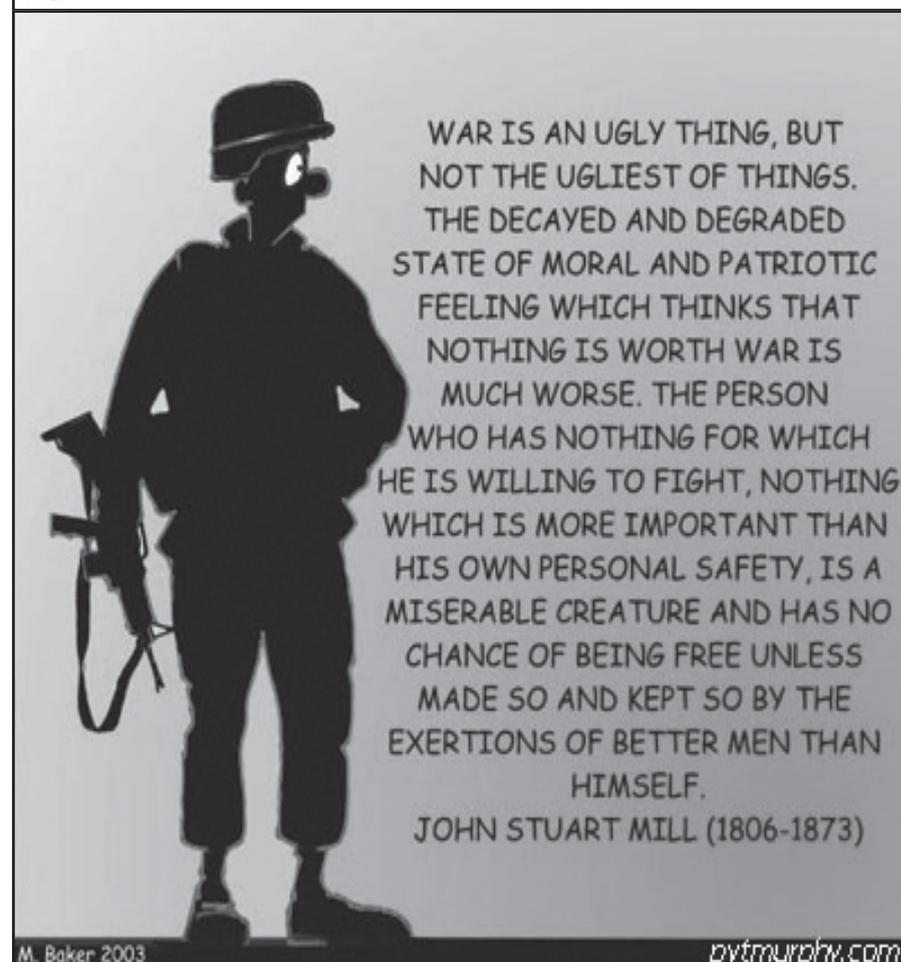
"I wrote on back of a legal pad "DON'T SAY ANYTHING YET". I wanted him 2b briefed b4 talking. I put my back to the press & held up the sign."

After a rigorous tenure as White House press secretary, Fleischer left the Bush Administration in 2003 to spend more time with his family.

"Taking Heat," his account of his time as press secretary, is extremely historically informative and well worth reading.

Fleischer brings to light an extremely difficult time in U.S. history, and details the hard work involved in delivering difficult information to the American public.

Fleischer's position was not easy.



# Retiree's Voice: COLA, NDAA, Legislation Changes

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER FOUR (RET.) JOHN GODBURN  
RETIREE AFFAIRS COLUMNIST

This month's article contains some follow-up to my November article, as well as topics and legislative updates that I hope will be of interest to Retirees and current service members. As I write this article, some of the topics covered in this article are pending legislative or agency approval, but may well be approved by the time this article is published.

## It's Official – Final COLA Announced

The 2014 COLA for military retired pay, Survivor Benefit Plan annuities, Social Security checks and VA disability and survivor benefits will be 1.7 percent, effective Dec. 1, 2014. It will first appear in January 2015 checks.

There are, however, two categories of Retirees who will *not* receive a 1.7 percent COLA in 2014.

**2014 Retirees:** Some service members who retired during calendar year 2014 will receive a partial COLA for this year, only because you were not in a retired status for the entire year.

January to March Retirees - 1.7 percent

April to June Retirees - 1.3 percent

July to September Retirees - 0.1 percent

After October 1, 2014 Retirees - no COLA

All members who retired during 2014 will receive full COLAs in future years (whatever that may be).

**REDUX Retirees:** Service members who entered military service after Aug. 1, 1986, and who accepted a

\$30,000 career retention bonus at the 15 years-of-service point, agreed to accept reduced retired pay and COLAs as a trade-off for the bonus. REDUX Retirees' COLAs are depressed 1 percent below the normal COLA rate, so they will see a 0.7 percent COLA for this year.

## Military Personnel Alert

The FBI is advising current and former members of the military, as well as military Retirees and spouses, to review their social media accounts to avoid postings that might attract attention from the group calling itself the Islamic State and its supporters.

A recent bulletin from the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security notes that the Islamic State group already has publicly encouraged attacks against law enforcement and military service members.

The FBI bulletin states that it has information suggesting that the Islamic State is looking for "like minded" individuals in this country who would be willing to carry out such attacks.

The bulletin cites the October attack by a gunman who killed a soldier at Canada's national war memorial and then stormed Parliament. It goes on to say such attacks might embolden violent extremists in this country.

## Pending Legislation Worth Watching

House Resolution 303 (H.R. 303) – Retired Pay Restoration Act

· Permits additional military retired members who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability

compensation from the VA for that disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation.

· Eliminates the phase-in period under current law with respect to such concurrent receipt.

· Bill currently is with the Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committees.

House Resolution 690 (H.R. 690) – Reserve Retirement Deployment Credit Correction Act

· Modifies the calculation of days of active service used to reduce the minimum age at which a member of the National Guard or Reserve may qualify for non-regular (reserve) retirement.

· This legislation would modify the law so that the active service used to reduce the minimum age could occur in any two consecutive fiscal years (under current law, the service is in the same fiscal year).

· Update: The FY 2015 National Defense Authorization Act passed by the House and Senate and signed by the President included the key provisions of H.R. 690. Restrictions have been loosened on how a deployment affects a Retiree's ability to receive retirement pay. Under current law, a Guardsman is able to receive retirement pay 90 days early for every three months spent deployed. But current law recognizes only time spent on deployment in one fiscal year. The new law will honor time spent on a deployment that crosses two fiscal years and would begin with deployments after Sept. 30, 2014.

## Retirement Service Officer Notes: TRICARE Benefits

SGT. 1<sup>ST</sup> CLASS REBEKAH AVERY  
RETIREMENT PROGRAM MANAGER

Are you missing out on your TRICARE health insurance benefits?

Are you age 60 and currently collecting your retirement pay? If you are, then you are automatically eligible to use your TRICARE medical benefits.

To ensure your eligibility, you, your spouse and dependent children must have current Retiree ID cards and all your information updated in your DEERS account.

If you have no other health insurance, TRICARE is a valuable benefit you have earned. If you do have other health insurance coverage, TRICARE will act as a secondary payer and will pay any co-pay costs from doctor visits and tests for both you and your spouse. All you have to do is show your ID card to your health care providers and your pharmacy.

When you reach age 65 you become eligible for TRICARE for Life. Even when you are covered by Medicare Parts A & B, you can still use TRICARE for Life. Medicare will be your primary insurer but TRICARE is the second payer, so your out-of-pocket expenses are less.

TRICARE benefits include covering Medicare's co-insurance payments and deductibles.

If you are turning 65, but you still have family members under age 65, they can continue to use TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Standard and Extra, or whatever plan they are

using now until they also become eligible for Medicare Parts A & B.

You can obtain proof of your TRICARE coverage online. The "proof of insurance" feature on MilConnect lets you generate, save and print an eligibility letter that provides proof of current health care coverage under TRICARE. Sponsors can access eligibility letters for themselves and for their eligible family members. Family members can access only their own eligibility letters. For online requests, log into MilConnect at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect>.

Click on "health care", from the drop-down menu; select "proof of insurance"; check the box or boxes for yourself and all family members then click the "generate" button.

The letter will only reflect current TRICARE eligibility for all family members selected. To log-in to MilConnect, you'll need a Common Access Card, DFAS (MyPay) Account, or a DoD Self-Service Log-on (DS Log-on).

You can also mail or fax a written request to the DMDC Support Office containing the following information: sponsor's name and social security number, name of all family members to be included on the letter, name and address of the person the request should be sent to and signature of the requestor.

Fax the request to 1-831-655-8317 or mail it to the Defense Manpower Data Center: DMDC Support Office, 400 Gigling Road, Seaside, CA 93955

All information for this article was found on the TRICARE and MilConnect websites.

## Upcoming Events:

· 5th Annual AUSA and OEC Charity Golf Tournament: Friday, June 5, 2015 at Tower Ridge Country Club, Simsbury.

## Point of Contact for Air National Guard Retirees:

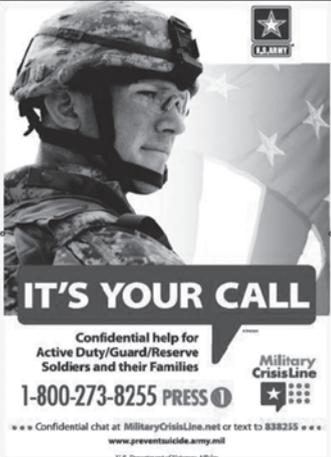
Retirees from the Air National Guard can contact the full-time POC for traditional Air-Guard Retirees, Master Sgt. Lisa Todaro at [lisa.todaro@ang.af.mil](mailto:lisa.todaro@ang.af.mil) or (860) 292-2573; or the part-time (drill weekend) POC, Master Sgt. Diana Nelson at [diana.nelson@ang.af.mil](mailto:diana.nelson@ang.af.mil) or (860) 292-2366.

Often times, Air Guard Retirees will be referred to the Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC) in Colorado: 1-800-525-0102; website portal at: [www.mypers.af.mil](http://www.mypers.af.mil); HQ ARPC/DPTTR, Retirement Division, 18420 E. Silver Creek Ave., Bldg 390 MS68, Buckley AFB CO 80011.

## Point of Contact for Army National Guard Retirees:

Retirees from the Army National Guard can contact the Retirees Service Officer, Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Rebekah Avery (860) 524-4813 or e-mail at: [rebekah.j.avery.mil@mail.mil](mailto:rebekah.j.avery.mil@mail.mil).

**Guardian Address Changes:** Army and Air Guard Retirees, please e-mail Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Avery if you would like to update your address, make any corrections to your name or rank, if you would like to be removed from the retiree database, or if you have any questions.



**"WE STAND FOR LIFE"**

The Army Suicide Prevention Office is not a crisis center and does not provide counseling services. If you are feeling distressed or hopeless, thinking about death or wanting to die, or, if you are concerned about someone who may be suicidal, please contact Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

**IT'S YOUR CALL**

Confidential help for Active Duty/Guard/Reserve Soldiers and their Families

1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

Military CrisisLine

\*\*\* Confidential chat at MilitaryCrisisLine.net or text to 838255 \*\*\*

www.preventsuicide.army.mil

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



**Engaged Families**

The strength of our Soldiers comes from the strength of their Families.

Family *Family safe is Family strong!*

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG

U.S. ARMY ARMY STRONG

U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS SAFETY CENTER <https://safety.army.mil>

## Connecticut National Guard Foundation Inc

The Connecticut National Guard Foundation Inc announces its 2015 scholarship program. This year the foundation will award a total of **Ten** scholarships.

- Two \$4000.00 scholarships honoring Sgt. Felix Del Greco Jr. will be awarded to a son or daughter of a member of the Connecticut ARMY National Guard. Please note that a special application is required for the Del Greco scholarship which may be obtained from: <http://www.connctf.org>. No other application will be accepted.
- One \$2000.00 scholarship and Seven \$1,000.00 scholarships will be awarded to Connecticut National Guard and Organized Militia members or their sons, daughters or spouses. Application forms may be found on the Foundations web site at: [www.ctngfoundation.org](http://www.ctngfoundation.org)

Additional Information:

- Complete application packets must be postmarked no later than **March 15, 2015**.
- The selection committee will choose students based on achievement and citizenship.
- You must be enrolled in, or planning to enroll in a regionally or nationally accredited degree or technical program.
- Mail application form (CTNGFI Scholarship Only) and completed package to:

CTNG Foundation Inc.  
Attn: Scholarship Committee  
360 Broad Street, Hartford Armory  
Hartford, CT 06015

- Please contact the foundation at (860) 241 1550 or e-mail [ctngfi@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ctngfi@sbcglobal.net) for further details.



**The signs are all around**  
it's up to **YOU** to recognize and act on them

**PLS DNT TXT & DRV**

**KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT**  
**know the signs**  
**DO WHAT'S RIGHT**

**Training, Discipline and Standards**

Training, discipline and standards are the bedrock of our Army, and as Soldiers, you've been taught what right looks like. As leaders, you have a duty and a responsibility to maintain standards in your formation. You also have an obligation to your Soldiers and their families to manage risk and take action to correct problems. In our fight against accidental fatalities, knowledge is the weapon of choice.

U.S. ARMY ARMY STRONG

U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS SAFETY CENTER <https://safety.army.mil>

## THE 102D ARMY BAND



**WANTS YOU**

## TO AUDITION!

The 102d Army Band is looking for experienced musicians between the ages of 17 and 35 to audition now!  
**IMMEDIATE openings for:**

**French Horn • Clarinet • Guitar  
Bass Guitar • Trombone • Saxophone**

All other band instruments will also be considered!  
Get the chance to perform at Community and Guard events, honor ceremonies, concerts, sporting events and much more!

Contact a local recruiter or 102nd Army Band RNCO Staff Sgt. Tomasz Durnik [tomasz.d.durnik@mail.mil](mailto:tomasz.d.durnik@mail.mil) or (860)375-1801.

Find us on FACEBOOK! [facebook.com/102dArmyBand](https://facebook.com/102dArmyBand)

## Connecticut National Guard Promotions Army

### To Private 2

Hernandezfloran, Neil J.  
Eberhardt, Margaret R.  
Hamilton, Alexander S.  
LeBlanc, Nicholas F.  
Vazquez, Angel D.  
Virella, Joshua A.  
Boccuzzi, Thomas W.  
Sarrette, Mike D.  
Williams, Stephen L.  
Lee, John S.

### To Private First Class

Cristofano, Anthony J.  
Dandrade, Jeremiah.  
Kearney, Antonio D.  
Coons, Jordan T.  
Holmes, Karyna P.  
Plante, Adam W.  
Figueroa, Jarred E.  
Chavous, Olivia P.  
Nason, Kayla M.

Colonborrero, Luis O.  
Whalen, Scott P.  
Murillo, Jennifer  
Benton, David P. Jr.  
Oshima, Anna M.  
Purcell, Michael C. Jr.  
Cretens, Thomas A.

### To Specialist

Watton, David K.  
Perez, Julissa M.  
Trinidad, Reynaldo Jr.  
Ellis, Benjamin E.  
Desautels, Jeffrey A. Jr.  
Havens, Nathan P.  
Gutierrez, Fernando H.  
Edgar, Deanna R.  
Stark, Lucas A.  
Price, Brook A.  
Brown, Richard M.  
Robichaux, Melissa A.  
Bradley, Kenneth D. Jr.  
Martinez, Victor M. Jr.  
Herbert, Leo A.

### To Sergeant

Thomas, Jessica N.  
Palys, Joseph J. III  
Stuart, Kristin N.  
O'Connor, Thomas K.  
Lowell, Dustin D.  
Hettrick, Cody J.  
Strba, Kelly A.  
Fauchon, Lauren M.  
Taylor, Thomas G. III  
Kiekel, Matthew K.  
Terrenzi, Kristy A.  
Fernandez, Cesar F.  
White, Robert A. III

### To Staff Sergeant

Smola, James Z.  
Caven, Sean R.  
Simoneau, James M.  
Clarke, Crystal M.  
Flores, Kelvia A.  
Pierce, Christopher J.  
Gonzalez, Bethzaida

### To Sergeant First Class

Hauser, Robert F. Jr.  
Zamudio, Brian R.

### To Master Sergeant/First Sergeant

Rhynhart, Karl A.

## Air

### To Senior Airman

Cunningham, Andre C.  
Mills, Caitlin M.  
Berrincha, Daniel D.  
Juro, Luis E.  
Yoon, Minjong  
Rogers, Ryan P.  
Rossi, Tyler M.

### To Staff Sergeant

Dufour, Jason E.  
Kelley, Johnell P.

### To Technical Sergeant

Briere, John P.

### To Master Sergeant

Cloutier, Jeffrey J.  
Nardi, Nicola  
Sisco, Gerald R.

## Coming Events

### January

**January 1**

New Year's Day

**January 19**

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**Jan. 21**

NGACT Executive Board Meeting

**Jan. 22**

\*Guardian Deadline for February\*

### February

**February 12**

Abraham Lincoln's Birthday

**February 14**

Valentine's Day

**February 16**

Presidents' Day

**February 18**

Ash Wednesday

**February 18**

NGACT Executive Board Meeting

**February 19**

\*Guardian Deadline for March\*

**February 22**

George Washington's Birthday

### March

**March 8**

Daylight Savings Time Begins

**March 18**

NGACT Executive Board Meeting

**March 19**

\*Guardian Deadline for April\*

**March 19-22**

State Best Warrior Competition

**March 28**

NGACT Annual Conference & Awards Luncheon

**March 29**

Palm Sunday

**Deadline for the February Issue  
of the Guardian is Jan. 22  
Deadline for the March Issue of  
the Guardian is February 19**

# WEAPONS SAFETY

# THINK



**Treat every weapon as if it's loaded.**

**Handle every weapon with care.**

**Identify the target before you fire.**

**Never point the muzzle at anything you don't intend to shoot.**

**Keep the weapon on safe and your finger off the trigger until you intend to fire.**

In FY 2007 six Soldiers died in off-duty privately owned weapons handling accidents; alcohol was a factor in the majority of them.



ARMY STRONG



U.S. Army  
https://for.army.mil



OWI  
Leading on the Edge



# The Connecticut National Guard needs you to help tell the Soldier's story

The 130<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment is looking for qualified, motivated Soldiers interested in writing, photography, video production, or media relations.

For information on vacancies and requirements, please contact Staff Sgt. Jordan Werme  
[jordan.e.werme.mil@mail.mil](mailto:jordan.e.werme.mil@mail.mil) or (203) 568-1730



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# Connecticut FAMILY Guardian



VOL. 16 NO. 1

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

JANUARY 2015

## Officials Highlight Health, Wellness Resources for Military Families

AMAANI LYLE  
DoD NEWS, DEFENSE MEDIA ACTIVITY

WASHINGTON - As efforts continue to strengthen service members and their families, Pentagon officials held a Bloggers Roundtable to highlight the myriad resources available to tackle the unique military and transitional challenges those who serve may face.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy Rosemary Freitas Williams, Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Bryan Battaglia, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff senior enlisted advisor, and Navy Command Master Chief Petty Officer Terry Prince, Defense Health Agency senior enlisted advisor, discussed military family health and welfare and the value of Military OneSource.

"We are keen on having a safe and happy holiday season [but] there's a lot of stress around the holidays, which is unavoidable," Williams said.

### Military OneSource

She urged military families feeling such stress to look to Military OneSource, a call center and online resource that can assist with a range of issues and situations, regardless of base or status.

"It's for folks maybe having a difficult time, they could be caregivers, they could be [children], or maybe a spouse of a deployed person," Williams explained, adding that the toll-free 800-247-HELP line is available and comes with 12 free counseling sessions, per issue, per person. "Help is no more than an average distance of about 3.2 miles away," she noted.

Williams also said that job assistance and a range of resources are available to all types of DoD families, including same-gender couples.

"Every resource that's available to Lisa Battaglia [wife of Sgt. Maj. Battaglia] is available to our same-gender spouses," Williams said. "We've added a number of resources that pertain directly to same-gender couples in the military so they can help navigate military life and whatever unique challenges they face."

another track for those with a desire to enter the workforce and the newest track, which came from service members themselves, is entrepreneurship."

### Seeking Command Sponsorship Input

For those who still serve, especially in remote locales, Battaglia also pledged to help improve the command sponsorship process. He said he and his family have personally made 17 moves during his career.

"[Permanent-change-of-station] to us is a natural body clock ... versus Korea where it might be a junior enlisted person's first [permanent change-of-station] move," Battaglia said. "If we get it wrong, then it just means more stressors are placed on a family."

Battaglia said he plans to travel to bases in Korea and Japan in February to speak to troops in the field to gauge junior enlisted experiences and address their concerns.

"With the reshaping of our force, there can be some expectations now that some of the transfers and PCS

moving may not be as frequent as it used to be," Battaglia said. "I'm open to ideas as to how to make command sponsorship anywhere on the globe better."

### Operation Live Well

Meanwhile in health matters, Prince said the Defense Health Agency and Tricare has developed tools, resources and original content through its program, Operation Live Well, for service members and their families across the forces.

"We're focusing on integrative wellness, physical activity, sleep, nutrition, tobacco-free living and mental wellness," he said.



### Transition GPS Helps Separating, Retiring Troops

As advisor to both Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and the chairman, Battaglia said in addition to the health, welfare, and education of service members, he's also heavily engaged in helping them manage transition. The Transition GPS program, he said, will better prepare military members whether in separation or retirement.

"This will have a significant impact in setting successes for service members to become productive members of society once that reintegration takes place, regardless if they are active duty, Guard or Reserve," Battaglia said. "It leads them to three tracks: one for higher education,



CATHERINE GALASSO

## You've Come Too Far to Stop Now

All was quiet and still, as flakes of snow began to fall from the January sky. Hour by hour, the snow became heavier with masses of cold air causing freezing rain and sleet.

So early the next day, a man went outside and began shoveling the walkway and driveway in front of his new Victorian-styled home. He had recently purchased the large piece of property earlier that year. Thus, the man didn't realize how much snow there was to shovel.

Ninety minutes passed and the man began to get tired of shoveling as the task was daunting. Then, another half-hour went by, and drifts of glittering snow whirled around him in the wind. He looked up suddenly as if caught up in his own thoughts. "Maybe I should just stop now," the man uttered under his breath. "I have been working hard for so long. I'm tired, and it seems that I am getting nowhere," as he began to focus on his shortcomings and weaknesses. Is that the way you feel sometimes? For the closer the man got to finishing, it felt as though the chore became more and more difficult.

But he continued on. Subsequently, while the man was toiling, he saw two neighborhood boys walking through the swirling winter winds carrying shovels. The boys, bundled up in their ski jackets, approached him and questioned, "Sir, would you like us to shovel your driveway?"

The man shook his head, "No thank you." However, the boys persisted. "We will only charge \$20," they said firmly.

With his face half buried in his gray woolen scarf, the man thought to himself for a moment, "There is no way I am going to complete this undertaking." Yet, quickly, with a burst of confidence, the man declined by saying softly, "Well, I am halfway done, so I'm going to shovel the rest of the snow myself."

As the boys turned to leave the property, one of them declared slowly, "Actually, that is why we asked, because most of our business comes from people who are half through with their task and feel like giving up."

Is what you are striving for in your own life taking a long time to come to fruition? Has someone betrayed your trust? Or, because of a problem or disappointment, have you gotten sidetracked? After that, negative thoughts may overrun your mind as you start to talk yourself out of continuing to pursue your dreams.

Life has its share of challenges and it can be easy to allow adverse circumstances to keep you down and discouraged. But do not give in to doubt.

It is not time to recoil. It's time to persevere! You've come too far. You have worked too hard and sacrificed too much to give up on the desires of your heart now.

In the Bible, Exodus 16:4 tells us that the Lord said to Moses, "Look, I'm going to rain down food from heaven for you. Each day the people can go out and pick up as much food as they need for that day. I will test them in this to see whether or not they will follow my

instructions." The people of Israel had to trust God to provide for them, and God wants you to trust Him and rest in His sufficiency, too. No matter what your current situation looks like, regardless of people who may have deceived you or what has happened in the past, keep persisting with the assurance that God will come through for you. You're close to success, for the dreams of your heart can be a few steps around the bend.

· One plan might not have worked out, but God has better plans for your future. So each morning shift your thought process onto the positive and affirm, "My hope and faith is in you God. Thank you for doing great things in my future." Then, go on striving forward. Because, God is "able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us." (Ephesians 3:20).

· Maybe all the odds are against success. Yet, God can make a way, where there seems to be no way. Hence, pray, believe, and say by faith, "Thank you, God for giving me victory over this circumstance." Be strong, courageous and try again and again and again. You are close to your breakthrough. For, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." (Luke 18:27).

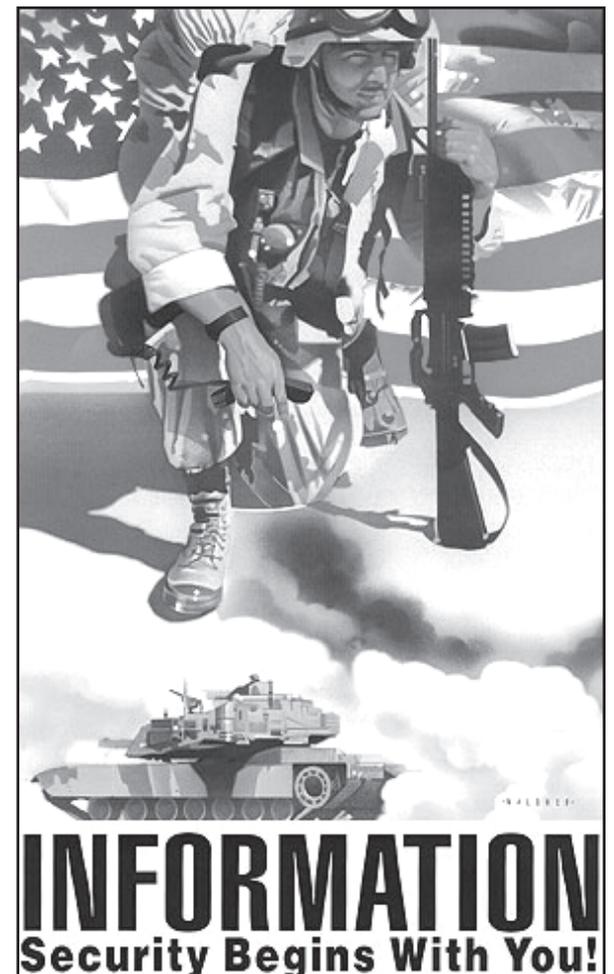
· Perhaps, you've been unjustly hurt. Well, God has seen what happened to you, so trust Him to make those wrongs turn out right. Thus, all through the day, declare, "God, thank you for turning this situation around." Soon, past unfair situations will change into upcoming blessings, and you'll be propelled way ahead. As, "The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace and remain at rest." (Exodus 14:14)

God is for you. He will never fail you, and He wants to bless all of your days in the most extraordinary way. We have so much for which to be grateful.

A few weeks ago, I read about a Marine who was running a 5k race. As the Marine was nearing the finish line, out of the corner of his eye, he noticed a young boy who had fallen back in the race. Not wanting to leave the boy behind, the Marine went back and ran beside the struggling boy and encouraged him onward. Before long, the Marine and the boy crossed the finish line together. Likewise, God wants to encourage and reassure you that 'everything is going to be all right.' Miracles will overflow in the New Year in the most surprising fashion. God is preparing you right now for the amazing experiences, joys and opportunities yet to come. So never, never, never give up. And as the Marine guided the boy, God is with you and is leading you to victory!

*Catherine Galasso-Vigorito is a nationally-syndicated columnist and author from Connecticut who donates a monthly inspirational column to demonstrate her appreciation of U.S. service members and their families. The content is her own and does not express the official views of the U.S. Government or the Department of Defense. You may write to Ms. Galasso-Vigorito in care of Connecticut Guardian, 360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06106-3795 or e-mail her at [cgv@anewyouworldwide.com](mailto:cgv@anewyouworldwide.com). Visit her website at [www.anewyouworldwide.com](http://www.anewyouworldwide.com).*

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The Official U.S. Army Flickr

 [army.mil/BLOG](https://army.mil/BLOG)  
ARMY | LIVE - The Official U.S. Army Blog

 [vimeo.com/USARMY](https://vimeo.com/USARMY)  
The Official U.S. Army Vimeo

 [slideshare.net/USARMYSOCIALMEDIA](https://slideshare.net/USARMYSOCIALMEDIA)  
U.S. Army Social Media Resources

 [socialmedia.DEFENSE.GOV](https://socialmedia.DEFENSE.GOV)  
Dept. of Defense Social Media Hub

 **Office of the Chief of Public Affairs**  
Online & Social Media Division

## Saving Money by Saving Energy

COMPILED FROM MILITARYONE SOURCE BY  
CHRISTOPHER ROULEAU

Although there's not much you can do about the price of fuel, there are ways to use less energy and lower your heating bills. Some of these changes may entitle you to federal tax credits that can add to your savings.

### Paying for fuel

The most obvious way to save on home heating costs is to shop around for the best price on fuel. Here are a few tips:

- If possible, lock in a lower rate when buying heating oil. Some companies allow customers to lock in a low rate in exchange for paying for all of their fuel up-front.
- Consider buying heating fuel in the off-season. If you fill up your tank during the spring or summer, you may be able to get a much better price per gallon than in the fall and winter when everyone is buying oil.
- If you're concerned about your ability to pay heating bills, contact your gas and other utility companies. You may be able to get "level billing," which stretches your heating bills throughout the entire year rather than just the winter season.

### Improving the overall energy efficiency of your home

Although it makes sense to look for good fuel prices, the very best way to save money on heating costs is to simply use less heat. Yes, you can start by turning down your thermostat (even just one degree when you're sleeping at night can make a difference), but there are many other easy, low-cost steps you can take to save energy and money.

- An energy audit will show you how much energy you use and pinpoint ways to improve energy efficiency. Find out if your utility provider can do a free or low-cost home energy audit. You can also do a self-audit. Visit the Department of Energy's Do-It-Yourself Home Energy Assessment.

- Service your heating system. Furnaces need regular service in order to run efficiently. An annual service call, which usually involves cleaning and changing the filters in your system, costs about \$100 but will probably save you much more over the course of the year in lower fuel use.

- Install a programmable thermostat. You can save up to ten percent a year on heating and cooling expenses by turning your thermostat back for eight hours. A new, programmable thermostat will automatically lower the heat when you're at work and bring it back up to ensure a warm home when you return.

- Make sure your attic and ceilings are adequately insulated. Heat rises, and if it's not stopped by insulation, it will escape through your roof. Hire a contractor to assess your insulation and replace or add to it if necessary.

- Install ceiling fans if you don't already have them, and use them throughout the winter. Running ceiling fans slowly and in reverse will keep warm air (which rises) circulating around a room rather than just collecting near the ceiling.

- Make sure that furniture isn't blocking floor vents or radiators. This simple step can help your heating system run more efficiently and make rooms feel much warmer.

- Heat only the rooms that you use. Close off rooms that you don't use, such as extra bedrooms.

- Buy energy efficient appliances whenever possible. Look for the Energy Star logo on new appliances.

- Consider replacing an old furnace or boiler. Newer models are much more energy efficient and will save you money in the long term.

- If you have a fireplace, make sure the damper is closed when it's not in use.

- Visit the Energy Saver website (<http://energy.gov/energysaver/energy-saver>) for more tips.

## Child and Youth Program, UCONN Extension Partner to Benefit Guard Children

MICHELLE MCCARTY  
LEAD CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The Child and Youth Program and the UCONN Extension Center for New Haven County have partnered together on a new grant to offer fun and exciting opportunities to military connected youth in New Haven County. The grant will consist of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programs, babysitting certifications, resiliency and leadership trainings. These programs will be offered for any military connected youth of school age (K-12<sup>th</sup> grade) and some programs may be geared toward specific age groups. Due to the large variety of programs, we are offering two days of open houses and invite you to learn more about what will be offered. The open houses will not only inform attendees about the programs offered, but will also offer fun events to include making candy and a photo booth. Please see the flyer below for more details. Registration is required through Eventbrite.com, and further questions or concerns can be addressed by reaching out to either of the following points of contact:

Michelle McCarty, Lead Child & Youth Program Coordinator at 860-548-3254 or [michelle.m.mccarty4.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:michelle.m.mccarty4.ctr@mail.mil) or

Margaret H. Grillo (Peggy), Cooperative Extension Educator 4-H Youth at 203-407-3158 or [margaret.grillo@uconn.edu](mailto:margaret.grillo@uconn.edu)

## 4-H CAMO KIDS

The CT National Guard in partnership with New Haven County 4-H is excited to announce they have received a grant to offer fun and educational programs to children who have family connected to currently serving Military Members and Veterans!

Please join us for an Open House to learn about 4-H and sign up your children for programs such as babysitting, leadership programs, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) and so much more!

Bring your children! Activities will include, candy making, photo booth, and make your own button/pin!

**This event will be offered 4 times! Please register your children for the date and time that works best for you! Each event will be held at the UCONN Extension Center for New Haven county—305 Skiff Street, North Haven, CT.**



**January 6th from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM**

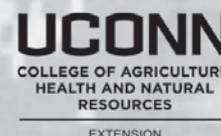
<http://4hcamokids6pm.eventbrite.com> password: 4hkids6p

**January 10th from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM**

<http://4hcamokids10p.eventbrite.com> password: 4hkids10p

Questions or Concerns please contact

Michelle McCarty— 860-548-3254 or [michelle.m.mccarty4.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:michelle.m.mccarty4.ctr@mail.mil)

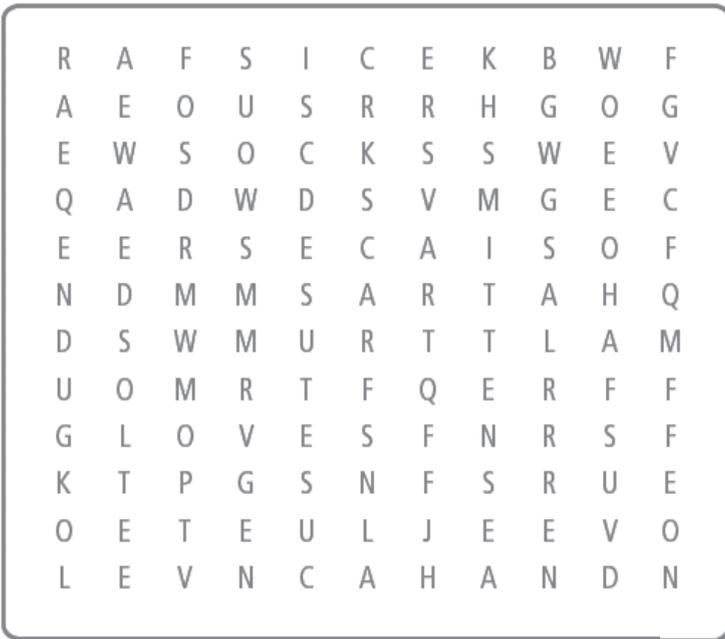


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### Winter Clothing Word Search

See how many winter clothes you can find hidden in this word search. The words can be horizontal or diagonal. Circle each word you find, then cross it off the list at the bottom.



- COAT
- EARMUFFS
- GLOVES
- HAT
- MITTENS
- SCARF
- SOCKS
- SWEATER
- VEST



## KID'S CREATIVE CORNER

A monthly feature of fun and educational activities for the children of the Connecticut National Guard by the Members of the Connecticut Youth Council (CYC)

### Service Member and Family Support Center Staff Directory

<b>William A. O'Neill Armory - 360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105 - Open Mon.-Fri.</b>			
State Family Program Director	<b>Kimberly Hoffman</b>	kimberly.j.hoffman.civ@mail.mil	<b>(800) 858-2677</b>
Lead Family Assistance Center Coordinator	<b>Andrea Lathrop</b>	andrea.e.lathrop.ctr@mail.mil	<b>(860) 524-4938</b>
Family Assistance Center Specialist	<b>Rita O'Donnell</b>	lerita.m.odonnell.ctr@mail.mil	<b>(860) 493-2797</b>
Family Assistance Center Specialist	<b>Mitch Foreman</b>	mittchell.d.foreman.ctr@mail.mil	<b>(860) 524-4821</b>
Family Assistance Center Specialist	<b>Jessica Koehler</b>	jessica.w.koehler.ctr@mail.mil	<b>(860) 524-4969</b>
Senior Family Readiness Support Assistant	<b>Joshua Hamre</b>	joshua.j.hamre.ctr@mail.mil	<b>(860) 548-3283</b>
Family Readiness Support Assistant	<b>Linda Rolstone</b>	linda.b.rolstone.ctr@mail.mil	<b>(860) 524-4963</b>
Family Readiness Support Assistant	<b>Wendy Hagen</b>	wendy.m.hagen.ctr@mail.mil	<b>(860) 524-4920</b>
ARNG Yellow Ribbon Program Coordinator	<b>Staff Sgt. Clint Shivers</b>	clinton.r.shivers.mil@mail.mil	<b>(860) 493-2796</b>
Lead Child & Youth Program Coordinator	<b>Michelle McCarty</b>	michelle.m.mccarty4.ctr@mail.mil	<b>(860) 548-3254</b>
Family Program Technician	<b>Staff Sgt. Melody Baber</b>	melodycheyenne.c.baber.mil@mail.mil	<b>(860) 548-3276</b>
Survivor Outreach Specialist	<b>Megan O'Shaughnessy</b>	megan.l.macsata.ctr@mail.mil	<b>(860) 548-3258</b>
Military OneSource Consultant	<b>Chris Rouleau</b>	christopher.rouleau@militaryonesource.com	<b>(860) 502-5416</b>
Military Family Life Consultant (Adult)	<b>Judith Charles</b>	nghartfordctsurge@magmflc.org	<b>(860) 471-7286</b>
Military Family Life Consultant (Youth)	<b>Pearl Pappas</b>	nghartfordctsurge@magmflc.org	<b>(860) 471-7133</b>
Personal Finance Consultant	<b>Ernie Lacore</b>	elacore@mflc.zeiders.com	<b>(860) 372-6404</b>
<b>Windsor Locks Readiness Center - 85-300 Light Lane, Windsor Locks, CT 06096 - Open Mon.-Fri.</b>			
Family Assistance Center Specialist	<b>Troy Walcott</b>	troy.a.walcott.ctr@mail.mil	<b>(860) 292-4602</b>
Family Assistance Center Specialist	<b>Michael Cortes</b>	michael.cortes1.ctr@mail.mil	<b>(860) 292-4601</b>
<b>Veterans' Memorial Armed Forces Reserve Center - 90 Wooster Heights Road, Danbury, CT 06810 - Open Mon.-Fri.</b>			
Family Assistance Center Specialist	<b>Nancy Cummings</b>	nancy.a.cummings.ctr@mail.mil	<b>(203) 205-5050</b>
<b>New London Armory - 249 Bayonet Street, New London, CT 06320 - Open Mon.-Fri.</b>			
Family Assistance Center Specialist	<b>Van Nessa Foster</b>	vannessa.n.foster.ctr@mail.mil	<b>(860) 772-1422</b>
<b>103rd Airlift Wing - 100 Nicholson Road, East Granby, CT 06026 - Open Mon.-Fri.</b>			
Airman & Family Readiness Program Manager	<b>Donna Rivera</b>	donna.rivera.civ@ang.af.mil	<b>(860) 292-2730</b>
ANG Yellow Ribbon Program Coordinator	<b>Rick Uliano</b>	richard.uliano.ctr@ang.af.mil	<b>(860) 292-2730</b>
<b>103rd Air Control Squadron - 206 Boston Post Road, Orange, CT 06477 - Open Mon. &amp; Fri. - (203) 795-2961</b>			
<b>Niantic Readiness Center - 38 Smith Street, Niantic, CT 06072 - By Appointment - (800) 858-2677</b>			
<b>Waterbury Armory - 64 Field Street, Waterbury, CT 06072 - By Appointment - (800) 858-2677</b>			
<b>Norwich Armory - 38 Stott Avenue, Norwich, CT 06360 - By Appointment - (800) 858-2677</b>			