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CTARNG, KFOR Fights More Fires in Southern Kosovo

SGT. DAVID MARQUIS
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CAMP BONDSTEEL, Kosovo—Multinational Kosovo Force emergency response teams were activated to respond to continuing forest fire threats Sept. 5, in the mountains outside Dragash in southern Kosovo.

On the ground and in the air, forces from several nations came together to support local firefighters as they directed Slovenian, Swiss and U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard helicopters carrying Bambi buckets full of water toward the flames.

The response efforts came on the second weekend in a row that KFOR has supported Kosovo institutions fighting fires in the region. The weekend's response efforts included elements from Multinational Battle Group-East, Multinational Battle Group-West and Joint Regional Detachment-South.

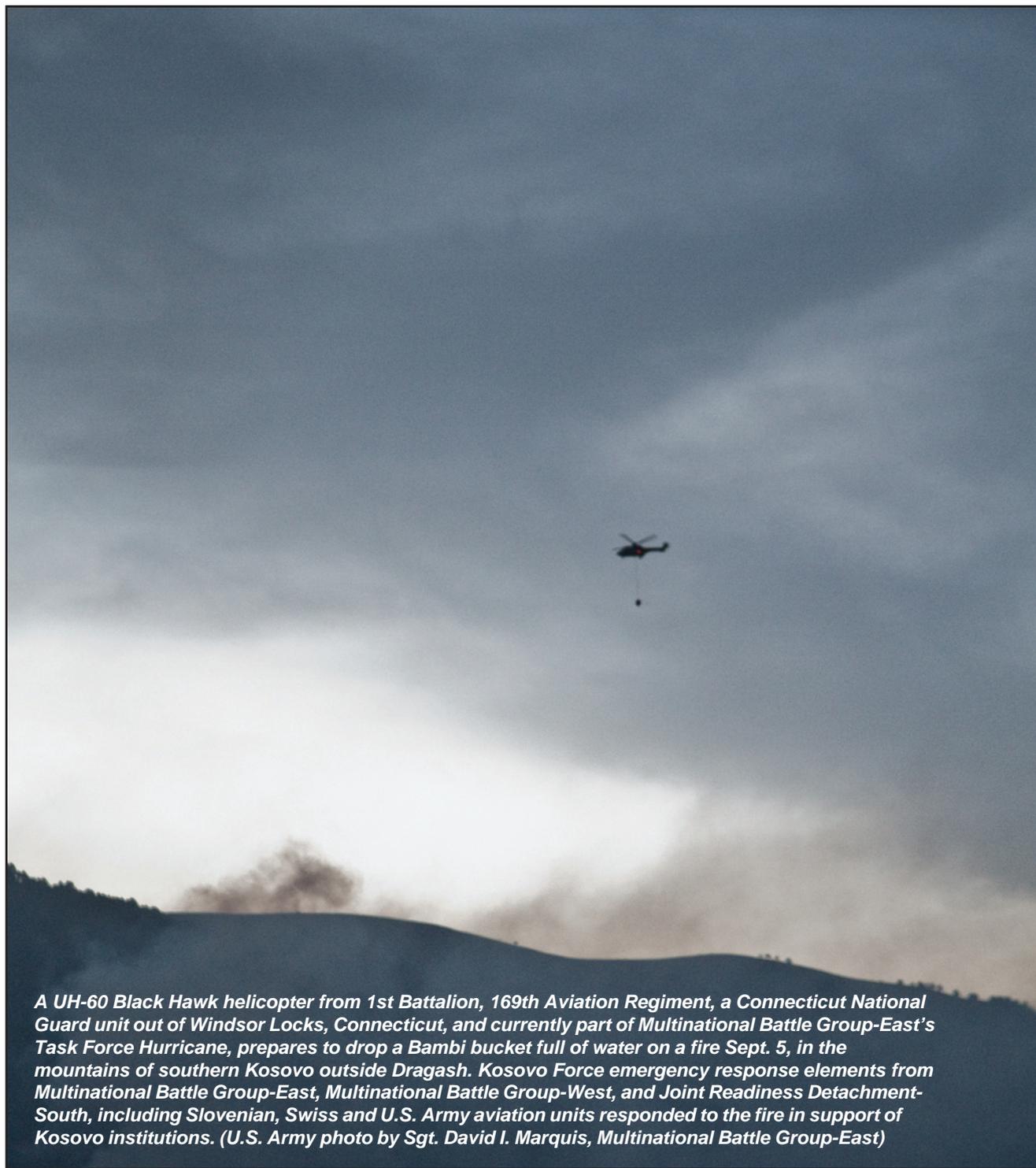
"Every time we dropped a Bambi bucket on the fire, every person on the ground would cheer," said U.S. Army Maj. Fred Keller, MNBG-E's deputy operations officer and an experienced helicopter pilot with the North Carolina National Guard. "All of KFOR came together to combat this fire."

"There was fantastic team work on the ground," Keller said. "The local institutions were very happy with how we performed."

Capt. Andrew O'Donnell, a Connecticut Army National Guard Soldier from 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, Windsor Locks, Connecticut, said letting the local Kosovo institutions lead the way in fighting the fire while KFOR acted as a support element, highlighted the capabilities of Kosovo's institutions, and their partnership with KFOR—NATO's peace support mission in the region.

"I think what we did today had a huge impact on the community," O'Donnell said. "The locals took control of the situation."

As the night went on, the local community, supported by KFOR, successfully extinguished the fires before any homes were affected or citizens were hurt.



A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, a Connecticut National Guard unit out of Windsor Locks, Connecticut, and currently part of Multinational Battle Group-East's Task Force Hurricane, prepares to drop a Bambi bucket full of water on a fire Sept. 5, in the mountains of southern Kosovo outside Dragash. Kosovo Force emergency response elements from Multinational Battle Group-East, Multinational Battle Group-West, and Joint Readiness Detachment-South, including Slovenian, Swiss and U.S. Army aviation units responded to the fire in support of Kosovo institutions. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David I. Marquis, Multinational Battle Group-East)

Senior Leader's Corner: General Reflects on Hispanic Heritage

SHANNON COLLINS DoD NEWS FEATURES,
DEFENSE MEDIA ACTIVITY

WASHINGTON - Education and mentorship helped a young Hispanic girl who dreamed of going to the U.S. Air Force Academy not only achieve her dreams, but earn the rank of major general and the position of deputy A2, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance for Air Force Headquarters at the Pentagon.

In honor of National Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, Air Force Maj. Gen. Linda Urrutia-Varhall shares her lessons learned at the U.S. Air Force Academy, at luncheons and at other events, hoping to pay it forward to junior enlisted and officers, especially those in the Hispanic community.

Role Models

Growing up in Pueblo, Colorado, Urrutia-Varhall said her biggest role models were her parents.

"My mom was a stay-at-home mom, and my father worked at the Pepsi Cola plant," she said. "My dad, I'm proud to say, came in as a janitor and by the time he retired in 39 years, he was running the plant in Pueblo."

She said she got her work ethic from her hard-working parents, adding that her mother is the smartest person she knows. Her relatives didn't really leave Pueblo but she wanted more. When she was 13 in 1974, she and her uncle went to visit the academy.

"I told my uncle, even though there were no women there, I would graduate from there," she said. "He said, 'Oh hija [little one], I know you say that, but they don't let women in here.' Little did I know I would graduate from there in 1984."

She said her parents told her she could be anything she wanted to be. Her other role model was Lt. Gen. Norma Brown, the first woman to command an Air Force wing in 1974.

Culture and Education

Urrutia-Varhall said her ancestors came up from Mexico

after arriving from the Basque region of Spain, settling in Colorado for a generation as pickers at a farm and then working long hours at the steel mill in Pueblo. She said the Air Force was an easy transition for her because the Spanish culture is all about family, and she gets that feeling with the military. The biggest challenge in the military is obtaining the balance of family and career, she said.

"I've been blessed to have met a great man who said he would follow me wherever I went and support me and my career," Urrutia-Varhall said.

The general encourages all Hispanics, as well as all children of all ethnicities, to stay in school and get their education.

"You've got to stay in school to at least have a chance at becoming an enlisted or an officer in the military and doing great things," she said.

"Get your secondary education. Some way, you'll make it. Whether you work a job, your mom and dad work, whether you get scholarships or grants, somehow, if you want to go to school bad enough, you can get there, and then all you need is somebody to open the door just once. And for each of us that is in some way successful or helpful, help that one person, just get one person's foot in the door and pay it forward."

Advice, Mentorship

The general said she wouldn't be in the position she's in today if it hadn't

been for mentors such as her parents, third grade teacher, air officer commander or husband.

To junior service members and civilians working their way toward leadership positions, she offered this advice: "You never know who you'll meet, where you'll get to go or what you'll get to do or see," Urrutia-Varhall said. "It really helped expand my horizons. Also, if you're an officer or senior enlisted, always look people in the eye and ask them how they're doing. Have empathy and don't become a non-person."

Finally, she said, "You belong in every room; learn to be comfortable in any room you walk in. You belong because of your hard work and everything you do. You belong there just as much as anybody else. And you can be whatever you want to be. The only one holding you back is you."

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(Front Page American Flag photo by Buddy Altobello)

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130th Public Affairs Trains with NATO in Hohenfels

CAPT. JOSEPH E. BROOKS
130TH PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT

HOENFELS, Germany- The 130th Public Affairs Detachment from Waterbury, Connecticut participated in a three-week training exercise in July and August at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, providing public affairs support in preparation for Exercise Allied Spirit II.

Working alongside NATO allies and multinational partners from Canada, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Serbia and the United Kingdom as well as Service Members from the United States stationed in Germany.

While deployed, the 130th PAD's mission was to provide public affairs, photo and video support to JMRC in order to tell the story of the exercise to both American and international audiences.

"As a brigade-level public affairs team, having the chance to work in a multinational, multi-level atmosphere is invaluable," said Sgt. 1st Class Jordan Werme, Public Affairs Operations NCO for the 130th PAD. "Not only were we able to cover training that we don't normally see in Connecticut, we were able to hone our skills as communicators across multiple chains of command and multiple languages. This is something that cannot be duplicated at home."

Allied Spirit II was part of a rotation of exercises designed to increase the interoperability of U.S. and NATO forces. This rotation was unique due to the Czech Republic Army's 7th Mechanized Brigade taking command of the brigade headquarters for the first time in a NATO-combined exercise.

"The Allied Spirit series is focused on allowing a multinational allied [or] partner brigade to serve as the mission command for the exercise," said U.S. Army Maj. Kirk Daniels, planner, JMRC. "We want them to be the brigade headquarters because it forces the interoperability that we're trying to build."

In addition to providing public affairs support for the buildup for Allied Spirit II, the 130th Public Affairs Detachment covered activities on post including the C-130 test landing at the Short Take Off Landing Strip at the Hohenfels Training Area. The landing strip was extended by the 201st Red Horse Squadron, Pennsylvania Air National Guard in June 2015 to support larger aircraft.

"It was the Air National Guard that did all the work. They did the design and then started the construction," said Maj. Charles A. Pinto, Texas Army National Guard, Troop Construction Program, JMRC. "JMRC brought them here and made sure they were supported. It was good to see all the hard work come together."

The 130th PAD also covered US Army Europe's Command Sgt. Maj. Sheryl D. Lyon's visit to Hohenfels to discuss Women's Equality Day, the Hohenfels safety program's disposal of unexploded ordinance and other Soldier stories and command information.

This opportunity to train overseas with NATO allies and partners gave PAD members the chance to learn about the challenges in interoperability and in the way

different ways public affairs is conducted between partner nations and different components of the Army.

The goals and audiences of USAREUR are very different from the goals and audiences covered back in Connecticut. As a public affairs unit that can be deployed into any brigade level operation, it is important for members of the 130th PAD to understand the differences in the goals and messages of a particular theater versus the goals and messages relevant to the Soldiers and Airmen of the Connecticut National Guard.

The 130th PAD's primary mission is to keep the American people informed, as well as members of the Army and Connecticut National Guard. The role of public affairs is to be a force multiplier by creating the conditions that leads to confidence in the Army through journalistic excellence and command information.

"JMRC does a great job providing a deployment simulation environment," Werme said. "Having the chance to practice our MOS skills in that type of environment is important."

The unit has won multiple awards for photography and journalism and has previously deployed to Kosovo as part of a multinational battle group during peacekeeping operations.

Think a mission like this appeals to you? The PAD is always looking for Soldiers to fill the unit's unique and demanding mission. If you are interested in print or broadcast journalism and are dedicated to telling the Army story, apply through your chain of command, or contact a local Connecticut National Guard recruiter. Applicants for the broadcast position need to be able to pass a voice audition and applicants for the print journalism position must be able to meet the education requirements to be a military journalist.

If you are interested in learning more about Army journalism, please contact Sgt. 1st Class Jordan Werme at Jordan.e.werme.mil@mail.mil.



Sgt. 1st Class Jordan Werme takes video of a C-130 test landing at the Short Take Off Landing strip at Hohenfels Training Area, July 29. The 130th Public Affairs Detachment provided public affairs support to the Joint Multinational Readiness Center at Hohenfels, Germany from July 25th to August 14th. (Photo by: Capt. Joseph E. Brooks, 130th PAD)



Staff Sgt. Jerry Boffen provides photo support to Exercise Allied Spirit II, which included more than 4,500 participants from eight nations, at the United States Army's Hohenfels Training Area in southeastern Germany. The 130th Public Affairs Detachment provided public affairs support to the Joint Multinational Readiness Center at Hohenfels, Germany from July 25th to August 14th. (Photo by: Capt. Joseph E. Brooks, 130th PAD)

Consistency, Confidence, Competition:

STAFF SGT. BENJAMIN SIMON,
JFHQ PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In September 2012, at the Montana Long Range Rifle Championship, Staff Sgt. John Coggshall began his shot process.

He picked up his Palma rifle, placed a firm grip on the buttstock, and moved the buttstock into his shoulder, where he had drawn a permanent ink mark. With his rifle barrel pointing up, he established his hand grips. He lowered his barrel down to his target, took two deep breaths, and began his trigger squeeze. After completing his third breath, he fired.

This is a condensed version of one of Coggshall's shot processes. He uses multiple processes for multiple firearms and multiple firing positions. If any part of his process does not feel right, or is interrupted in any way, he starts over again.

Coggshall calls it consistency - sticking to a shot process - and said that consistency is as important, if not more so, than the other marksmanship fundamentals spelled in the acronym (BAT), which U.S. service members memorize in basic training. For those who need a refresher, BAT refers to Breathing, Aiming and Trigger Squeeze.

"If you're not consistent with what you do each time you shoot, how can you know what adjustments to make in order to improve?" Coggshall asked. Consistency, he insists, can be the difference between scoring a 24 and scoring a 40 on a weapons qualification.

The OEF veteran, CTARNG Assistant Small Arms Training Instructor, and AGMT member, had an earlier start as a marksman than many. In the seventh grade he began shooting at Bell City Rifle Club in Bristol, Connecticut. What began with watching National Rifle Association safety videos and basic instruction on Remington .22 Bolt Action Rifles, quickly turned into matches and competitions. In 2003, he was named to the President's Hundred elite marksmanship list. Coggshall joined the National Guard with the President's Hundred tab already on his uniform, and has assisted in training his fellow Soldiers in marksmanship techniques ever since.

He pointed out that there are multiple cases filled with trophies, plaques and pictures from the numerous marksmanship and shooting awards National Guard units have won on the first floor of the Hartford Armory. However, some of them are decades old.

Awards include, a Maj. Gen. RY Moore Pistol Trophy from 1957, an Eisenhower Marksmanship Trophy awarded to the old 712 HV Equip. Maint. Unit from 1967, a Small Bore Championship Trophy from 1956-57, won by the 169th Inf., and even an Indoor Meet Trophy from 1906, awarded in New Haven to the 1st Div. N.B. CNG.

The dates of these awards trail off in the 1990s, perhaps due to any number of reasons - like changes in training priorities.

Coggshall, said that it is time for Guard units to again add to its marksmanship trophy collection. He said there is a direct relationship between Soldier participation in marksmanship competitions and individual unit readiness levels.



Staff Sgt. John Coggshall fires from a standing position, at a Civilian Marksmanship Program, AIR-15 Offhand Shoot-off at Camp Perry, Ohio, in 2015. Coggshall placed second overall out of 200 competitors at the event. (Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. John Coggshall, CTARNG)



Staff Sgt. John Coggshall wears All Guard Shooting Team Gear to most competitions. He's traveled all over the United States for events, and has worked with hundreds of other marksmen, military and civilian. (Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. John Coggshall, CTARNG)

He's right.

Individuals from all walks of life take part in national shooting competitions, Coggshall said. It's not just members of the military, but many civilians bring new and unique shooting skills, techniques, and equipment to these events. During competitions, relationships among participants are made, and techniques and skills are shared. Soldiers then bring this information back to their units to share with and train their counterparts. Big Army receives feedback from these competitions as well, and makes recommendations to units on marksmanship training, and the utilization of new ammunition calibers

and weapon systems.

When Coggshall learns about a new shooting competition, he calls the All-Guard Marksmanship Team in Arkansas. Coggshall is such a talented marksman that the AGMT cuts orders for him so that he can take part in shooting events.

The Army and Connecticut National Guard benefit from his participation as well. Coggshall attends competitions as a representative of the military. His picture and stories have appeared in numerous publications and websites, and he, of course, brings the new techniques and information he learns back home to Connecticut.

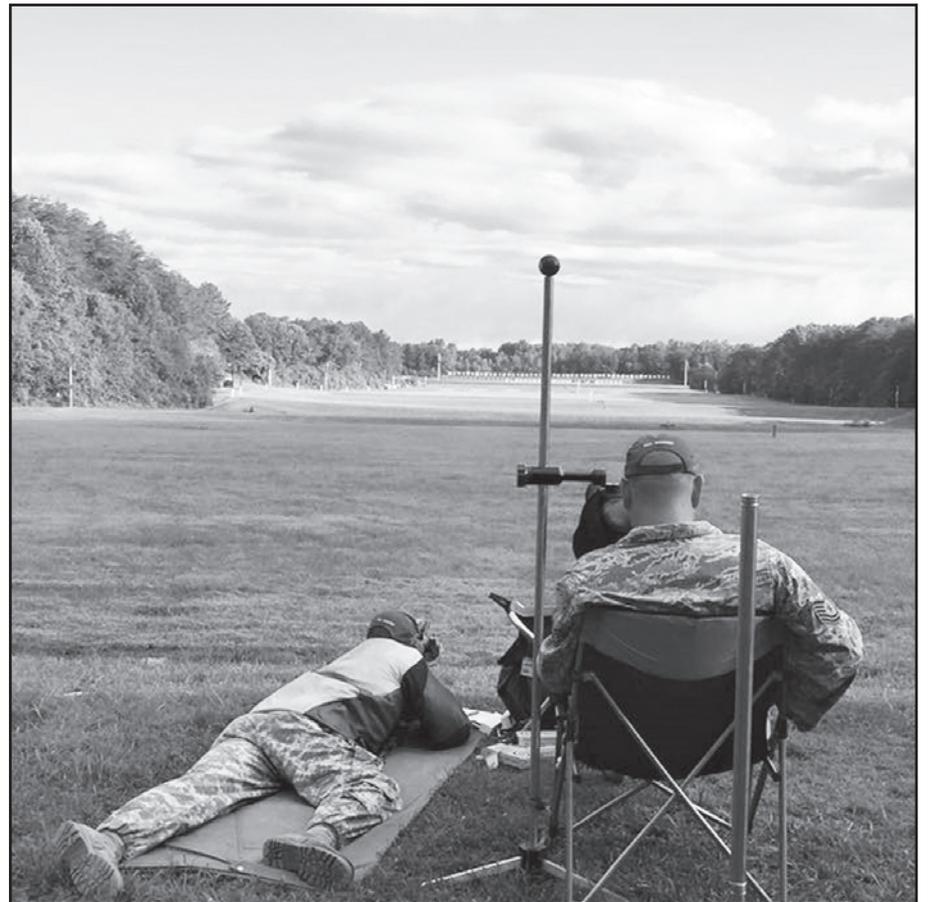
Coggshall on Championship Shooting



Staff Sgt. John Coggshall prepares for the NRA National High Power Rifle Long Range Championship at Camp Perry, Ohio in 2011. Coggshall was named to the President's Hundred, marksmanship list in 2003, prior to joining the Connecticut Army National Guard. (Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. John Coggshall, CTARNG)



Staff Sgt. John Coggshall was named the M-14 Service Rifle at 1000 yards, National Champion at the NRA National High Power Rifle Long Range Championship in 2009 at Camp Perry, Ohio. Coggshall is an instructor for the CTARNG Small Arms Training Section. (Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. John Coggshall, CTARNG)



Staff Sgt. John Coggshall prepares to fire, while teammate Tech. Sgt. Stuart Mackey, from Utah, keeps score at the 2015 Interservice Rifle Championships at Quantico, Virginia. Coggshall came in third place overall at the event. (Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. John Coggshall, CTARNG)

As an instructor for the CTARNG Small Arms Training Section, he helps teach annual unit marksmanship training courses. The Soldiers who attend are expected to return to their units to train their fellow Soldiers, and so on. Coggshall said attendance was extremely low at this year's course, but he encourages units to continue sending Soldiers who express interest.

"When you're a Soldier, what's more important than being able to shoot?" he said.

Coggshall picked up his Palma rifle, placed a firm grip on the buttstock, and moved the buttstock into his shoulder, where he had drawn a permanent ink mark. With

his rifle barrel pointing up, he established his hand grips. He lowered his barrel down to his target, took two deep breaths, and began his trigger squeeze. After completing his third breath, he fired.

His bullet hit an X on a target, 1000 meters away. He set a national record that day, and his victory was added to the many others he'd won, too numerous to list. Coggshall, who has remained on the President's Hundred since 2003, intends to be in the Connecticut Guard for a few more years, and his unique skillset should be taken advantage of. He said he's happy to help.

His advice to Soldiers interested in marksmanship is

to practice as much as possible, visit ranges, dry fire, and memorize processes. He said to be consistent, to talk to Training NCOs about the Guard SART program, and to reach out to him with any questions.

Imagine if new marksmanship trophies in the Hartford Armory were engraved with 1-102nd, 250th or 143rd unit names. Imagine being awarded a President's Hundred Tab, and being able to wear it on a uniform.

For more info, visit the All Guard Shooting Team, Civilian Marksmanship Program, and U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit Facebook webpages and websites.

Army Chief of Staff Milley Speaks

Sgt. 1st Class Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

Editors Note: The following four articles were written about comments made by the Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Mark Milley, at the National Guard Association of the U.S. annual conference in Nashville, Tennessee.

“There is Only One Army”

Want to avoid angering the new chief of staff of the Army? Make sure you include the National Guard and Reserve when discussing end strength.

“Much of America’s Army’s capacity is resident in the National Guard,” Army General Mark Milley said in remarks in Nashville, Tennessee, on Sept. 11. “I expect demand to increase in the future, and we must rely more heavily on our National Guard to meet that demand. ... I’ve only been on the job a couple of weeks, but it’s readily obvious to me that I need to employ more of the Guard, not less.”

The Army comprises three components: The regular, or active duty, Army; the National Guard; and the Army Reserve. But, General Milley said, “There is only one Army. ... We are not 10 divisions, we are 18 divisions. We’re not 32 brigades; we’re 60 brigades. And we’re not 490,000 Soldiers; we are 980,000 Soldiers.

“Every time I hear the word ... ‘490,’ I jump through the ceiling. If I hear the words ‘10 divisions,’ I lose my mind. It is one Army, and we’re not small – we’re big. We’re very capable. And we’re very capable because of the reserves, we’re capable because of the National Guard.”

Less than a month into his new assignment, just back from a multi-nation Middle East visit and a morning 9/11 memorial ceremony at the Pentagon, and about to leave for Indonesia, General Milley visited the 137th National Guard Association of the United States General Conference to deliver 34 minutes of remarks praising the National Guard’s service since before the nation was founded; highlighting the Guard’s response to the 9/11 attacks and its service since; lauding the National Guard State Partnership Program; citing the valor of some Guard members by name; emphasizing readiness; encouraging all Army leaders to question the status quo – and making it clear he sees the Total Force as one Army in which the National Guard plays a critical role.

“I think the world of the National Guard,” General Milley said, listing times he has served with and commanded National Guard members in multiple countries during his 35-year career. Referring to the organization of the first militia regiments in North America in 1636, to which the Guard traces its roots, the Boston native said, “It does my heart good ... to know that the United States’ National Guard was regimented as infantry and artillery with the purpose of defending the great colony of Massachusetts.”

The American Revolutionary War broke out in April 1775 at Lexington and Concord. “Those shots were fired not by the regular Army,” the general said. “Those shots



General Mark Milley

were fired by America’s militia – those shots were fired by America’s National Guard.”

To this day, “We cannot conduct sustained land warfare without the Guard and the Reserve,” the 39th Chief of Staff said. “It is impossible for the United States of America to go to war today without bringing Main Street – without bringing Tennessee and Massachusetts and Colorado and California. We just can’t do it.”

The dependence on the National Guard is deliberate, General Milley said, citing the design of General Creighton Abrams, the 26th Chief of Staff, whom General Milley called one of the Army’s best chiefs of staff.

General Abrams and others restructured the Army following the Vietnam War, which General Milley characterized as a defeat in which relatively few from the National Guard served, an exception to the Guard’s service in all other conflicts in American history.

“We lost the will,” General Milley said. “We lost the connective tissue with the American people.” General Abrams concluded, General Milley said, that, “Ultimately, war is about politics, and it’s about the will of the people.” And General Abrams, who died while still serving in 1974, made a vow, “Never again will I send or be part of sending America’s Army into conflict without Main Street USA.”

The Total Force was the result of Abrams’ vow.

“That’s when we began the concept of a Total Army,” General Milley said. “One Army. One Army made up of three components.”

Today, that force is unmatched, he said – and it must stay that way.

“We must remain number one in the face of challenges,” General Milley said. “That is why my number one priority ... is readiness. And it’s readiness

across the total force. It’s readiness for the entire Army.”

Maintaining readiness means exceptionally tough, realistic training based on warfighting fundamentals, he said. It means enhanced leader development at all levels to create tough, resilient, adaptive, agile, flexible, smart leaders of competence and character. And it means staying ahead of an enemy that knows how we fight and is embracing hybrid warfare that does not attack the USA head-on and threatens neighbors and allies.

General Milley challenged leaders to look beyond green, amber and red blocks on PowerPoint slides assessing readiness. Instead, look in the mirror and ask, “How ready are we – really?”

The Army’s success is, in part, measured by its ability to adapt, he said. Historical victories, such as at Normandy, are no guide to the future. “We must be ready today, and we must be prepared for tomorrow.”

Addressing an audience of several thousand senior National Guard officers and noncommissioned officers, General Milley said, “No American Soldier on our watch – or your watch, or my watch – must ever be committed to combat undermanned, untrained, poorly led or poorly equipped. That is the most grievous sin we can commit.”

“Nothing’s Sacred”

Leaders at all levels should question how the Army does business, General Mark Milley told National Guard members Sept. 11, offering examples of potential changes affecting the Guard, including increased training days.

“Nothing’s sacred,” the 39th Chief of Staff said. “Nothing about the Army or the way we do business is sacred. We must, all of us, collectively challenge how we fight; we must, all of us, collectively, challenge how we organize, how we train, how we equip.

“We must not allow ourselves to accept the status quo. The enemy is not static. We must adapt. ... I want to challenge everything; I want to overturn every stone.”

The general offered several examples of areas related to the Army National Guard that could change.

Training days

Traditional members of the Army National Guard have trained 39 days a year for the last century, since 1915, General Milley noted.

“Let’s not just say that a rule that’s been in place since 1915 – 100 years – is good enough for the next 100 years,” General Milley said. “It may not be.”

General Milley said he has asked Army General Frank Grass, chief of the National Guard Bureau; Army Lieutenant General Timothy Kadavy, director of the Army National Guard; and other Guard leaders to study potential changes to the number of training days.

For some missions, 39 days may be appropriate, he said. Units with other missions might be better served with 60 or 100 training days, he said.

“I don’t know what the answer is, but I don’t know if 39 is right,” he said.

to NGAUS Conference Attendees

Round-out units

The Marine Corps assigns active duty Marines to Marine Reserve units and vice versa, General Milley said. Decades ago, Guard members rounded out active duty Army units, a practice that has declined, he said.

“I want to look at round-out both ways, not just Guard members rounding out active units, but I want to take a look at active units rounding out Guard units,” he said. The goal is to maximize the Total Force’s capacity and capability.

“If we’re going to be one Army, we’ve got to be one Army.”

CTC rotations

After a deployment, a brigade combat training team gets a year to reset. A second year is spent focusing on individual training. In theory, the third year includes a rotation at one of the Army’s combat training centers before a culminating training event in year four and availability for deployment in year five.

In practice, only two National Guard brigades typically get CTC rotations in any given year, resulting in a training gap for some brigades. Milley said he wants to see that change, with up to four CTC rotations per year, double the current number.

“Over 50 percent of the United States Army is in the Guard and Reserve,” General Milley said. “All this combat power is in the Guard.”

Increased CTC rotations would give General Milley increased access to that combat power while also potentially decreasing mobilization and train-up time before deployments.

General Milley encouraged National Guard leaders at all levels to apply critical thinking to techniques, equipment, training methods and systems.

“I want you to have a spirit of innovation and enquiry,” he said. “I don’t want to accept just the status quo answer. ... I am willing to listen to anything about a new idea to make us a better Army.”

Praise for National Guard Partnership Building

The National Guard fights America’s wars, guards the homeland and builds partnerships – and the Army chief of staff praised the Guard’s emphasis on partnerships as part of the key to its success in all three pieces of this mission triad.

General Mark Milley singled out the 27-year-old National Guard State Partnership Program in remarks in Nashville on Sept. 11.

“Since 1991, America’s National Guard has been deterring aggression and building partnership capacity through the State Partnership Program,” General Milley said. The SPP, which pairs the National Guard in the states with foreign countries, started informally in 1991 before the first formal partnerships launched in 1993.

“This low-cost, high-yield program operates globally

in 74 countries, synchronizing with all of our goals and all of our objectives, not only of the Department of Defense, but also the State Department and the [National] Guard Bureau, and it’s driven by the state adjutants general,” General Milley said. “It directly supports our combatant commands in their theater and security planning.”

Djibouti and Kenya have been added to the SPP in 2015 as engagement increases in Africa, General Milley noted.

The general also noted the National Guard’s domestic partnership building, including with homeland defense agencies, and cited the more than 2,000 Soldiers and Airmen supporting civil authorities fighting wildfires in five Western states even as he was speaking.

“Your ability to respond to these situations, both abroad and at home, is key to our overall national defense, and you have done that – all of you – with great personal courage and great personal sacrifice,” he said. “In every case, your response has been timely, and you have acted decisively.”

“America’s Army National Guard was Everywhere”

Most Americans can tell one story about where we were during the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, but the Army and the Air National Guard can tell thousands about where they were, General Mark Milley said Sept. 11.

“America’s Army National Guard was everywhere – not just in one place for one memory,” the Army Chief of Staff said.

And the National Guard has been everywhere ever since, he said.

Massachusetts Air National Guard fighters were headed to New York City within minutes, he said. North Dakota Air National Guard fighters scrambled to intercept an aircraft that might be headed to the Capitol. Guard members also were among the attacks’ immediate

casualties.

“In the days after the attacks, it was the Army National Guard which responded to New York, New Jersey and Connecticut; Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C.,” he said. “It was Guardsmen who were searching airports; securing our people at the bridges and seaports; and patrolling our Northern and Southern borders.”

When America took the fight to the enemy, the Army National Guard was there too.

“You grew from 351,000 to 362,000 at the peak, and you participated in every single significant engagement there was, and I personally was witness to your competence and professionalism,” General Milley said.

“Today, we have thousands of National Guardsmen deployed throughout the world on many critical missions, including, still today, Afghanistan, and many more deployed in every combatant commander’s area of responsibility – in Egypt, Iraq, Kosovo, Kuwait, across Africa, and in Europe, as well as many places in the United States,” he said.

The general said he recently presented Purple Hearts to Texas National Guard members wounded on the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. “Although they were injured, they were proud,” he said. “They were proud to be Texans, they were proud to be Guardsmen – and, most of all, they were proud to be Americans.”

General Milley used Oregon National Guard Specialist Alek Skarlatos, one of the three men who thwarted a gunman on a train in France in August, as an example of the readiness of all Guard members, even when off duty:

“Who hears gunshots and runs towards them? Skarlatos did. Who motivates others to follow him into a small battle where he could die? Skarlatos did. Who willingly puts his life in danger to protect others? Skarlatos did. He did it because he was a member of the United States Army. He did it because he was a member of the Oregon National Guard. He did it because he’s an American. ... Like Skarlatos – like the Guard that showed up in Lexington and Concord – you are ready, and the Army is ready.”

General Mark Milley, Chief of Staff of the Army, addresses attendees of the National Guard Association of the U.S. annual conference Sept. 11 in Nashville, Tennessee. (NGB courtesy photo)



Veterans Parade Update: Date, Schedule Announced

CONNECTICUT VETERANS PARADE
PRESS RELEASE

The 16th annual Connecticut Veterans Parade will step off on Sunday, Nov. 8 at 12:30 p.m. near the Connecticut State Capitol Building in Hartford.

Connecticut residents are encouraged to save the date to come, watch and cheer the largest Veteran's parade in New England and one of the biggest salutes to veterans in the nation. Organizers note that the parade will take the Sunday before the federal observance of Veterans Day on Nov. 11.

U.S. Veterans and active military personnel are encouraged to register now to march or ride in the parade. Any Connecticut resident who is an active, retired or honorably discharged member of the U.S. Armed Forces including commissioned officers, warrant officers and enlisted personnel of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, National Guard or Reserves are welcome to participate.

The Connecticut National Guard assists with the management of parade logistics, and the City of Hartford hosts the event.

Parade organizers seek Veterans groups, patriotic commissions, local municipalities, marching bands and

drill teams from colleges, high schools, middle schools,, bagpipe & drum corps and fife & drum corps from all over the state.

Parade organizers also need volunteers to help with a variety of responsibilities, before and during the parade. The event is organized by a nonprofit collaboration of Veterans groups, corporations, local municipalities, businesses and civic organizations. Many of the members of the Parade Planning Committee have been involved in the parade since its inception more than a decade ago.

Special event features will include a wreath-laying ceremony to remember Veterans at the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch at 11:30 a.m., one hour before the parade begins.

At 1:30 p.m., parade marchers will stop in-place for a Moment of Silence in observance of service members who died while serving their country. A tolling of church bells and singing of the National Anthem also marks the conclusion of the Moment of Silence.

Parade volunteers will hand out American flags to spectators and sell 2015 commemorative parade lapel pins for \$4 at booths on Atheneum Square near the Main Street reviewing stand. Proceeds from pin sales helps to pay for parade operations. The information booth also

will have materials that people can hold high as the parade marches by.

For the sixth consecutive year, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Veterans Day Committee has recognized the Connecticut Veterans Parade as one of the nation's official Veterans Day Regional Sites. The parade is the only event in our state to be recognized with this honor.

The Connecticut Veterans Parade will begin near the Connecticut State Capitol at the intersection of Buckingham St. and Washington St., and travel north up Trinity Street and through the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch. Marchers will then make a right onto Pearl Street, then make a right onto Main Street where it will pass a reviewing stand at the corner of Main & Gold Streets across from the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, and finally will make a right onto Capitol Avenue where it will end at Hudson Street. The event is expected to last for 2 hours.

To register to march or volunteer in the 2015 Connecticut Veterans Parade or learn more about becoming a parade sponsor, visit www.ctveteransparade.org or call the Parade Info Phone at 860-986-7254. Facebook: Connecticut Veterans Parade, and Twitter: CTVetsParade.

Connecticut National Guard 2015 Veterans Parade Grand Marshals

Command Sgt. Maj. Orlando A. Anderson
Command Sergeant Major, 143rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion
Served in the U.S. Army, currently member of the CT Army National Guard

Command Sgt. Maj. Orlando A. Anderson is Command Sergeant Major with the Connecticut Army National Guard's 143rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion. His 29 years of military service began when he enlisted in the U.S. Army after graduating from Weaver High School in Hartford. Trained as a Construction Equipment Repairer, he served in South Korea among other assignments. He left active duty four years later and joined the Connecticut Army National Guard. He deployed three times since 9/11, first from August 2001 through March 2002 with the 143rd Forward Support Battalion to Bosnia in support of the 29th ID and SFOR-10, then with 143rd Area Support Group from September 2004 through October 2005 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and most recently, from February 2013 through January 2014 with the 143rd CSSB to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. In addition to his active service with the CTNG, he is the recipient of many military awards and decorations is a Transportation Officer with the federal government's Defense Contract Management Agency.



Brigadier General (Retired) Joseph T. Perkins
Served in the U.S. Marines, CT Army National Guard

Brig. Gen. Joseph T. Perkins served his state and country for more than 34 years. He served on active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1962-66, including one year of combat duty in Vietnam. He later joined the Connecticut Army National Guard with senior Commanding Officer assignments that included the 85th Troop Command in New London, the 169th Leadership Regiment in Niantic, and the 143rd Area Support Group in Newington, retiring in 2003 as Brigadier General. In 1968, Perkins joined the Connecticut State Police and he served there for 22 years. His assignments included Resident Trooper for the Town of Montville, and Supervisor of the Eastern District Major Crime Squad overseeing the investigation of some 30 homicides and over 200 suspicious death cases. After retirement from the State Police, he worked as Manager of Security Services for Sikorsky Aircraft until 2009, overseeing Sikorsky's security forces and fire department, and the Government Security Compliance Group at all of Sikorsky's facilities around the world. In 2011, Perkins was appointed Deputy Commissioner at the State Department of Veterans Affairs and in 2014, named Acting Commissioner of that department when Commissioner Linda Schwartz left her position to become an Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. He was succeeded earlier this year by current Commissioner Sean Connolly.



Bondsteel Soldiers Prepare Kosovo Teens for English Certification Test

Sgt. DAVID MARQUIS
362ND MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT

CAMP BONDSTEEL, Kosovo - Language is a key to opening metaphorical doors that can lead to higher education, opportunities to travel, or a greater understanding of the world. Connecticut Army National Guard Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, out of Windsor Locks, Connecticut, are reaching out to the youths of Ferizaj, Kosovo, and helping them prepare to pass the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language test.

The 1-169th Aviation Regiment is one of several U.S. Army units currently deployed to Kosovo as part of NATO's peace support mission the region. The 1-169th serves as Multinational Battle Group-East's Southern Command Post headquarters, and is based out of Camp Bondsteel in southeastern Kosovo, just minutes down the road from Ferizaj.

"The TOEFL test is a certification accepted by over 9,000 English-speaking universities," said Sgt. 1st Class Steve Leach, an aviation mechanic shop noncommissioned officer in charge with the 1-169th. "Not only will this give the students the required certification to go to those schools, but the certificate is also accepted for many government positions."

"I can't even fathom the amount of doors this test opens," he said.

The TOEFL test gauges a student's understanding of English at the university level for individuals whose first language is not English. In this case, the students are native Albanian speakers, which is the majority language spoken in Kosovo.

"I've been studying English since the sixth grade," said Diellza Krasmigi, a 19-year-old student, currently studying law at Pristina University. "After passing the TOEFL, I will go to England, finish school, and then I will come home and go into politics."

"Politics is the fastest way that I can have an effect on things here," she said. "I will at least try."

Spc. Samman Schrestha, a 1-169th Aviation Regiment tech supply specialist, said the Soldiers teaching the class bring their own experiences into the instruction as well.

He can relate to students trying not only to speak in English, but also to think in English, because Schrestha's first language is Nepali.

"I understand where they are coming from," Schrestha said. "For example, when they are trying to saying something, it may start out in English, but then they get confused and in their head they are thinking in Albanian."

"I can relate to them and they can relate to me, because I had the same problems learning English," he said.

As each Soldier brings in different skills and backgrounds, so does each student. Leach says one of his students suffered from a birth defect until she was 12 years old, when a U.S. Army doctor saw her and performed surgery to heal her condition. That student now seeks to

pass the TOEFL exam so she can study in the United States with the final goal of becoming a surgeon to help people internationally.

"U.S. Army Soldiers and what they are doing is absolutely awesome for us," Krasmigi said. "I am extremely thankful because we need it."

"The TOEFL is really good, because if you finish it with high scores you can study abroad, gain knowledge, then come back and improve our country," she said.

The TOEFL program is improving the lives of everyone involved, from the students to the Soldiers instructing it, both groups taking pride in bettering themselves in a profound way.

"The program has had such an effect on not just Ferizaj, but all of Kosovo," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jay Soukiassian, a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot who coordinates the Soldiers' volunteer participation in the TOEFL program. "Just the knowledge that we are able to do something on a deployment that really impacts people, it's such an amazing achievement to be able to pull that off."



Spc. Samman Schrestha from 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, out of Windsor Locks, Connecticut, serving as part of NATO's peace support mission in Kosovo, engages with a Kosovar student during an improvised English speaking course where the students test their ability to speak and think in English, during a Teaching of English as a Foreign Language class Aug. 10, in Ferizaj, Kosovo. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David I. Marquis, Multinational Battle Group-East)



Sgt. 1st Class Steve Leach from 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, out of Windsor Locks, Connecticut, serving as part of NATO's peace support mission in Kosovo-leads an English class for Kosovar teenagers studying to take the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language exam, Aug. 10, 2015, in Ferizaj, Kosovo. The purpose of the class is to prepare students to take the TOEFL exam, which will assess their ability to read, write and comprehend English at a university level. The TOEFL exam is recognized by more than 9,000 English-speaking universities around the world. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David I. Marquis, Multinational Battle Group-East)

18th Annual NGACT Open a Day Full of Fun for Golfers



Staff Sgt. Joseph Colavito, 102nd Army Band, sings the National Anthem during Memorial Services honoring those killed on 9/11 and the four Connecticut Army National Guard Soldiers killed in action since then: Sgt. Felix Delgreco, Spc. Robert Hoyt, Staff Sgt. Joseph E. Phaneuf III and Staff Sgt. Edwin Rivera, before the start of the 18th Annual National Guard Association of Connecticut golf tournament on Sept. 11 at Hawk's Landing Country Club, Southington. F Company, 186th BSB provided a color guard which included the 102nd Infantry Battalion colors, and Chaplain, (Maj.) David Nutt provided the invocation and memorial service. (Photo by Debbi Newton, NGACT)



Sonar, the Hartford Wolf Pack mascot, made his third appearance at the NGACT Open, offering encouragement to golfers in between stealing their golf carts and other shenanigans designed to add fun and laughs to the day. (Photo by Troy Loosemore, NGACT)



Golfers and volunteers gather for dinner after completing 18 holes in the NGACT Open Sept. 11 at Hawk's Landing Country Club. (Photo by Troy Loosemore, NGACT)



Capt. Evan Lock (striped shirt), Master Sgt. (Ret.) Chris Nicholson and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Matthew Bergquist give words of wisdom and direction to Chief Warrant Officer 3 Eric Luke during the 18th Annual NGACT Open Sept. 11 at Hawk's Landing Country Club, Southington. (Photo by Troy Loosemore, NGACT)



Master Sgt. (Ret.) Chris Nicholson concentrates on a putt during the 18th Annual NGACT Open. The tournament benefits the NGACT Scholarship Fund, Connecticut Children's Medical Center and Friends of Fisher House – CT. (Photo by Troy Loosemore, NGACT)



Connecticut National Guard Assistant Adjutant General – Army Brig. Gen. Mark Russo (center) presents the TAG Cup to Lt. Col. (Ret.) Herb Ludwig (left) and Lt. Col. Glenn Sherman. Ludwig and Sherman, along with Lt. Col. Bill Neri and Lt. Col. Bob Feher represented the 103rd Airlift Wing, winning both the tournament, and the TAG Cup. (Photo by Troy Loosemore, NGACT)



Ashley Raphael lines up a putt during the 18th Annual NGACT Open as Capt. Mike Petersen, Sgt. 1st Class Mike Cardozo and Capt. Nick Raphael look on. (Photo by Troy Loosemore, NGACT)

Aviator Wins Custom Art at Ball

SGT. MAJ. TONY SAVINO
169TH AVIATION BATTALION

Connecticut National Guard pilot receives custom raffle prize, portraying his family and military history from artist and fellow Guardsman.

This past spring, the 1109th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group hosted an Aviation Ball at the Mohegan Sun Casino in Uncasville, Connecticut. During the event, a raffle was held for numerous prizes and gifts but the grand prize was a hand-crafted, wooden replica of a UH-1H Huey tail rotor blade.

This unique and well-designed piece of art was hand crafted by Sgt. 1st Class Willie Ortiz, 1109th TASMG. Ortiz is well-known throughout the CTNG for his numerous works of art, tail rotor blade paintings, as well as the Hartford Armory stairwell wall art. He also has art hanging in Nett Hall and the TASMG's Groton headquarters.

On Sept. 12, Ortiz delivered the winning prize to Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jonathan Behuniak, a former aircraft mechanic and now a UH-60 pilot with Company C, 142nd Aviation. Behuniak was amazed with the presentation



Sgt. 1st Class Ortiz presents Chief Warrant Officer 2 Behuniak with the winning prize at the Windsor Locks Readiness Center Sept. 12. Photo by Sgt. Maj. Tony Savino, 169th Aviation Battalion.

and outcome of the blade.

When the raffle was initiated in April, the goal was to have the blade personalized. Behuniak shared some of his background and history for Ortiz to come up with the blade layout and design.

E-mails and pictures sent from Behuniak after the Aviation Ball resulted in Ortiz using his exceptional talent to put a collage of family history together.

Behuniak's grandfather was a U.S. Air Force Veteran who flew the F-86 Sabre in Korea and C-130s with the New York Air National Guard. His father, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Mike Behuniak, is a member of the 1-169 General Support Aviation Battalion currently deployed to

Kosovo, and a full-time UH-60 instructor pilot with the Army Aviation Support Facility in Windsor Locks.

A collection of family heritage, aircraft flown and overseas assignments were the right mix to depict Behuniak's third generation aviation family.

IT'S YOUR CALL

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

1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

Military Crisis Line

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

www.preventsuicide.army.mil

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Contact your ARNG Substance Abuse Program office if you believe you or a fellow Guardsman needs assistance with:

- Illegal drug use intervention
- Intervention with abusing prescribed/over the counter medication
- Intervention with alcohol abuse
- Self referrals
- Substance abuse education and training
- Administering the URI or R-URI survey to your unit

The ARNG Substance Abuse Program offers a new and unique training tool for our Army National Guard Soldiers in the realm of substance abuse prevention. "Strong Choices" is the primary tool for leadership to utilize as the Universal Prevention training, specifically created for the Army. This training covers high risk choices identifiers, a low risk choice guideline, tools to manage stress, and healthy relationship strategies.

Meet your Alcohol & Drug Control Officer
and your Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator

The ADCO and PC provide education and resources for Soldiers and Commanders. Their role is not to act as a counselor or provide treatment, but to provide information and referrals for assessment.

Alcohol & Drug Control Officer

Robin Tanguay
Office: 860-548-3291
Work Cell: 401-465-4947
robin.l.tanguay@accenturefederal.com

Prevention Coordinator

Jennifer Gonzalez-Smith
Office: 860-548-3291
Work Cell: 860-549-2838
J.m.gonzalez-smith@accenturefederal.com



01 JULY 14

Halloween Safety Tips

- S**tay in groups
- C**ostumes should be well fitting and flame resistant
- A**lways test makeup
- R**emember to look both ways when crossing streets
- E**xamine all treats before eating
- S**tay on sidewalks when possible
- A**void dark houses
- F**lashlights + glowsticks for visibility
- E**njoy with caution!

American Safety Council

Overcoming Stigma and Suicide in the Military: Maj. Gen. Mark Graham and Mrs. Carol Graham

YANIA PADILLA, MS.
CTNG BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TEAM

Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Mark Graham and his wife, Carol, have been forced to do something no parent should ever have to – bury their child.

Tragically, they had to do it twice in less than a year. The Grahams lost one son, Kevin, to suicide in 2003, and another, Jeffrey, to an IED while on a dismounted patrol in Iraq in 2004.

The Grahams spoke about their loss and their experiences since as the keynote speakers for Overcoming Suicide: Preventing Suicide in the Military, on Sept. 8 at the Middletown Armed Forces Reserve Center.

Kevin Graham was the youngest, and a senior ROTC Cadet at the University of Kentucky. Maj. Gen. Graham spoke about his goal of becoming an Army doctor.

“We always thought we had one of those Disney families,” said Maj. Gen. Graham. “But that can change with one phone call.”

On June 21, 2003, Kevin ended his life in the apartment he shared with his sister, Melanie. He battled depression, and used both holistic and conventional methods to heal, but was terrified to let anyone know how badly he hurt, according to Mrs. Graham.

“Depression is a deep, invisible wound and should be treated as such,” she said, as she recounted how she should have been able to see his pain.

The Grahams told a story about one of their nieces in the aftermath of Kevin’s death. She was in her 7th grade class when a fellow classmate ran late to class. When the teacher inquired about the student’s tardiness, the student responded saying, “I was going to kill myself.” Everyone took it as a joke, and started laughing, but not the Grahams’ niece. She immediately excused herself from class, told an adult what she had heard, and it led to the discovery of a loaded shotgun in her classmate’s closet.

The Grahams said that they don’t know if the student was ever planning on ending his life by suicide, but because of the efforts of their niece, they’ll never have to find out.

The Grahams continued to tell their tale - about the chapters in their story that they wished had never been written. Their oldest son, 2nd Lt. Jeffrey Graham, was tapped for a deployment to Iraq, but his commander gave him the option of staying back in the States given what the family was still dealing with, according to Maj. Gen. Graham.

Jeffrey felt the obligation to his Soldiers and to the mission to deploy. His father, a career Soldier, was never going to stand in his way.

In February of 2004, news reports started rolling in that there was an attack in a location near their son’s outpost. It turns out that an Improvised Explosive Device, had claimed the life of their oldest son. While on a dismounted patrol, Jeffrey halted his platoon to radio in a suspicious object when the device detonated. His actions saved the

lives of seven other Soldiers, according to Maj. Gen. Graham.

Graham emotionally recounted what it felt like to lose their last son. He said that losing both sons was like seeing the second tower fall on Sept. 11, 2001. “The terror of seeing one fall, and the tragedy and devastation, but to see both? That’s how we felt about our boys. We lost both our boys,” he said.

The Grahams spoke eloquently and lovingly about what they may have missed, and how little they knew about depression and its potential for lethality. Maj. Gen. Graham exhorted the crowd, as parents, Soldiers, caregivers, and as friends, to get educated about the signs and symptoms of depression, and mental health issues in general.

“Our friends’ children had birthdays, graduated, got married and had babies, which left us always wondering how the world could keep spinning without Kevin and Jeffrey in it,” Graham told the gathered crowd of more than 100.

Mrs. Graham spoke about making some sense out of the loss of their boys. “When your dreams have been shattered, life becomes about enabling the dreams of others.”

In their work as suicide prevention advocates, they have touched the lives of thousands. The Grahams both praised Connecticut for its efforts in collaborating with civilian subject matter experts, community stakeholders, survivors, and people with life experiences.

“We’ve come a long way, because we are talking about it. You invited us here today to talk about it, because you care,” said Mrs. Graham.

Maj. Gen. Graham continues his work as the senior director of the Rutgers National Call Center and VETS4WARRIORS, a free, confidential, private, peer-to-peer outreach program. Manned 24 hours a day,

seven days a week by Veterans, these trained specialists will work with callers on a range of issues, following up with them as they begin the job search, the fight for VA benefits, or just the need to talk to someone who has shared similar experiences, or has been to similar places.

VETS4WARRIORS can be contacted at 855-838-8255 or at <http://www.vets4warriors.com/>

The event was hosted by the Connecticut National Guard, in collaboration with the Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, The Military Support Program, Wheeler Clinic and the Jordan Porco Foundation.



Resilience:

“Skill of the Month”



October 2015
james.a.sypher.mil@mail.mil
 (860)524-4891

ACTIVE RESPONDING

Just The Facts

What is ACR or “Active Constructive Responding?”



There are **four ways people tend to respond** when others share good news or a positive experience, or describe a success.

Only **Active Constructive Responding** is shown to lead to stronger, longer-lasting relationships.

	Constructive	Destructive
Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic interest • Elaborates the experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Squashing the event • Negative focus
Passive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distracted, understated support • Conversation fizzles out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignoring the event • Changing the conversation to another topic

What is the skill?

Active Constructive Responding (ACR) is a communication method in which the responder conveys authentic interest and helps the person to relive the positive experience.

Key Principles

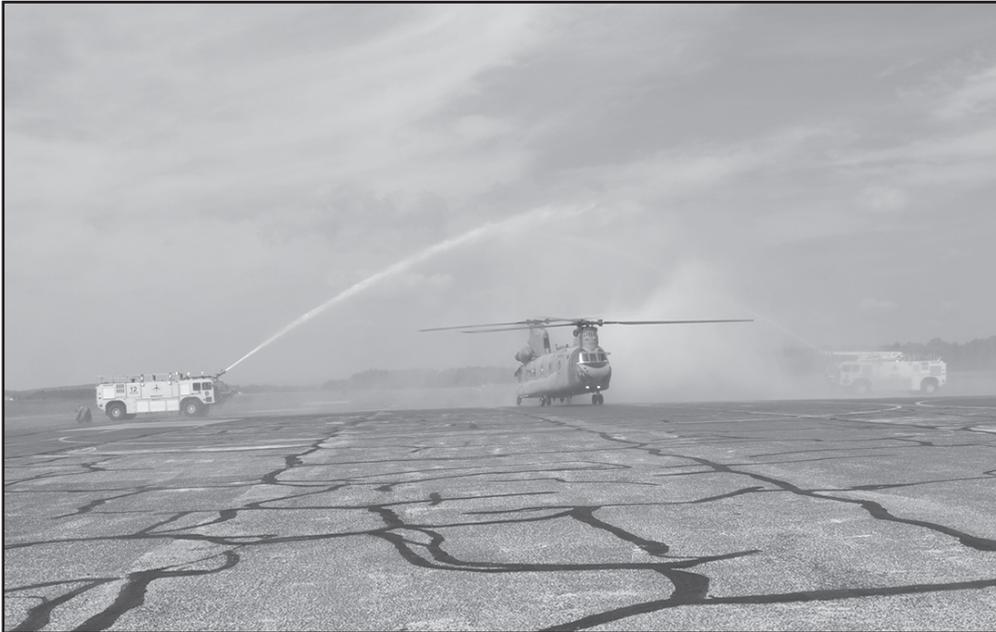
ACR conveys authentic interest, and the responder helps the sharer think more deeply about the positive experience.

Benefits of ACR: ACR leads to stronger relationships, belonging, well-being, and life satisfaction for both parties.

Connection is a primary target of ACR.

Around Our Guard

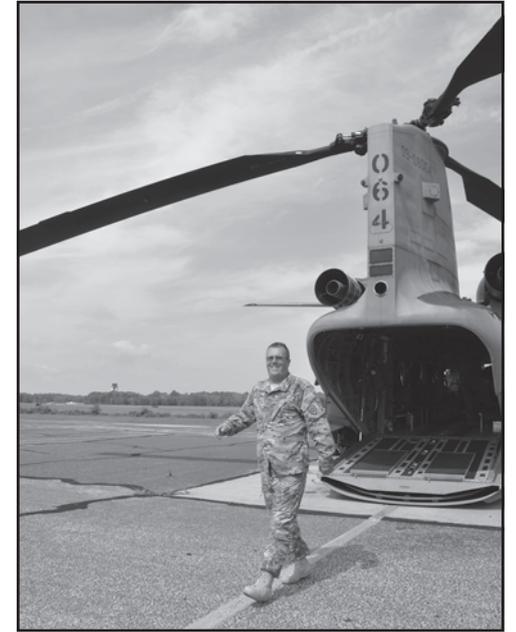
Hastings Celebrates Retirement with Fini Flight



After 38 years of military service, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Cooper Hastings completed his final flight in uniform at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Windsor Locks, Connecticut on Aug. 31.

(Left) Hastings lands a CH-47 on the flight line of the AASF honored with a water arch by the Bradley International Airport Fire Department.

(Right) Following his flight, Hastings makes his last exit as a CTNG pilot to a crowd of family, friends, and fellow Guardsmen. (Photos by Ms. Allison L. Joanis, CTNG Public Affairs Office)



TRUNK OR TREAT!

RSVPs REQUIRED FOR BASE ACCESS!

The Child & Youth Program will host their 2nd Annual Trunk or Treat event at the 103rd Airlift Wing Air National Guard Base!

Friday, October 23rd at 5:00 PM
100 Nicholson Road
East Granby, CT

Please join us for some ghoulish games, freaky fun and trunk to trunk treats!!

There will be prizes for best trunk in the following categories:

- Family Readiness Groups
- Community Organizations
- Army National Guard Units
- Air National Guard Units
- Military Families

To register your "trunk" please follow this link:
<http://tot-trunkreg.eventbrite.com>
 Password: TR15

To RSVP for the event follow this link:
<http://trunk-or-treat-2015.eventbrite.com>
 Password: TOT15




Aviation Reaches New Heights



Maj. Stephan Nowakowski, Executive Officer of Task Force Hurricane and member of the 1-169th Aviation Regiment, leads the way for a group of Soldiers as they make the trek to the 8,000-foot summit of Mt. Duke (Mt. Ljuboten) in Kosovo. The Soldiers who completed the climb are from the Task Force Aviation Southern Command Post, Multinational Battle Group-East. Led by German guides, the Soldiers made their way up the steep grade of the mountain and upon completion of the journey, received a certificate recognizing their "proved survivability under adverse conditions." (Photo by 1st Lt. Krista Yaglowksi, 1-169 Aviation Regiment, Task Force Hurricane UPAR)

CTANG Civil Engineers

SENIOR MASTER SGT. DAVID FRATES
103RD DEPLOYED CHIEF ENLISTED MANAGER

HATZOR AIR BASE, Israel — Connecticut Air National Guard civil engineers embarked on a Deployment for Training over 6,000 miles away to Hatzor Air Base, Israel, in support of Operation Juniper Cobra in July.

Over 19 days in the Mediterranean heat of July, 103rd Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force worked side-by-side with Airmen from the 200th Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers from Mansfield, Ohio and Navy Seabees with the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 11 from Gulfport, Miss.

The purpose was to construct four 10,000-square foot buildings for use during joint U.S. and Israeli exercises and as a base of operations for real-world contingencies. During the course of six to eight rotations, civil engineer squadrons from the 169th, 103rd and 122nd continue the work of the previous squadrons to keep project goals on target.

The 103rd's part in this \$3 million construction project consisted of preparing walls for a concrete pour in one building, bracing and pouring walls for the second, raising the walls on a third, and marking the wall locations for a fourth, all the while ensuring the walls were square and true using the latest engineering practices.

“As with any project of this scope, there were challenges along the way but the joint teamwork was amazing—and they offered solutions to every problem,” said Master Sgt. David Surprenant, the 103rd's Project Manager.

The hours were long, hot and full of sweat and sore muscles. Despite the hard deadlines and humid climate, the CTANG's engineers focused on collaboration, safety and quality. The results were truly amazing.

“A project of this magnitude really gave our teams an opportunity to show their capabilities. We are very pleased with the teamwork and especially the absence of preventable injuries,” said Maj. Henry Chmielinski, 103rd Civil Engineer Squadron commander.

In many respects, their deployment resembled precisely the type of environment Connecticut's Airmen have faced in the austere conditions of a combat zone.

The compound housing the Airmen consisted of shelters surrounded by concrete barriers, and the entire site was riddled with bunkers for use during the potential attacks by militants' rockets. A marked difference from the typical alert and warning system found in the U.S. was the Israeli's use of a smartphone app called “Red Alert” which sends notifications when rockets are inbound. On July 16, our app informed us of an attack and we were able to see smoke rising from Ashqelon just 10 miles away.

Nearing the end of the deployment, there was a swell of pride when the totality of the labor came into view on the construction site – cleaned and ready for the next rotation.

All understood the purpose these buildings would serve and the historic partnership fostered between the two nations. The fruits of their efforts carry on the tradition of cooperation between these two countries and solidify the resolve to protect these hallowed grounds for generations to enjoy.



Get it Done Overseas

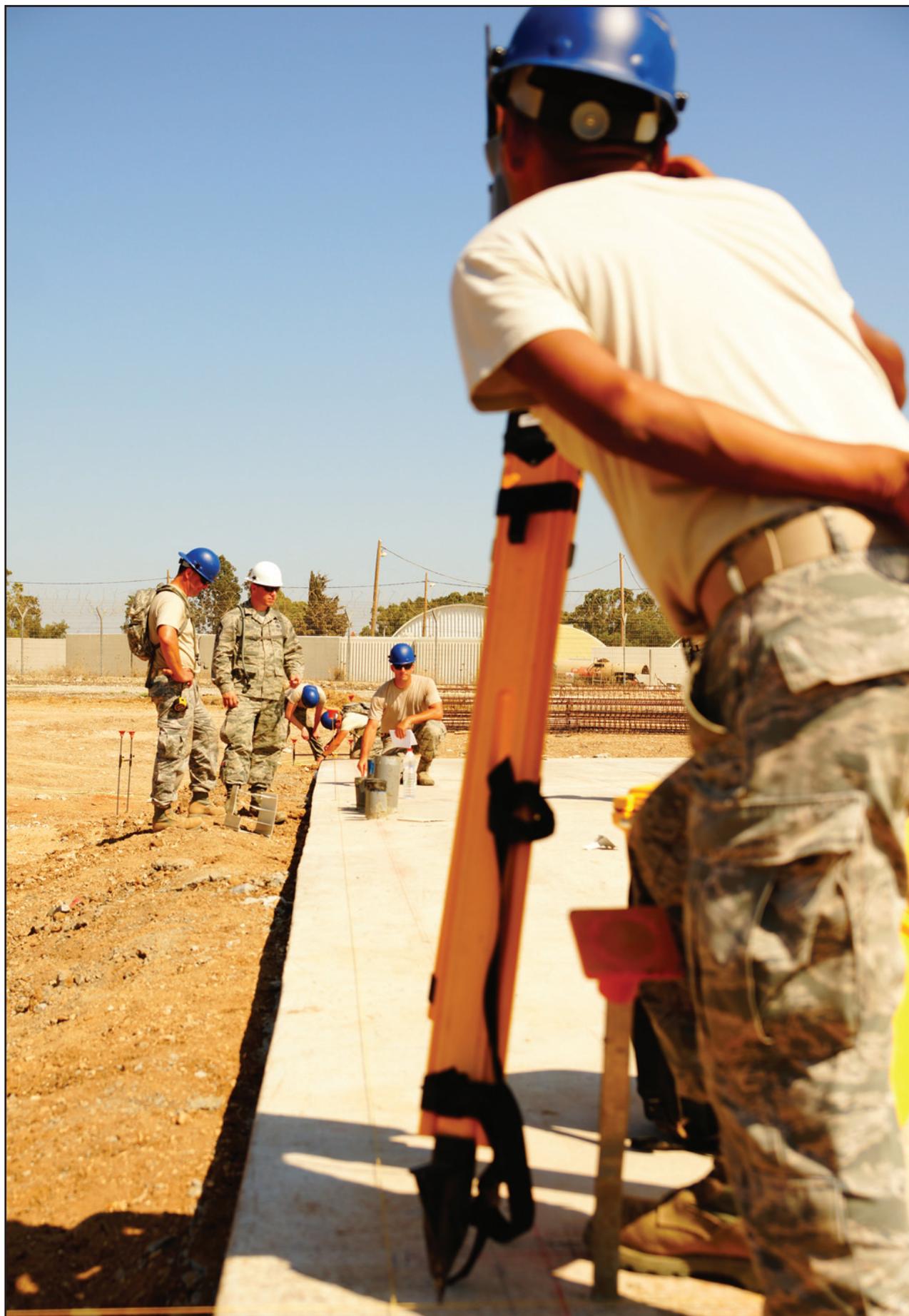
(Right) Members of the 103rd Civil Engineer Squadron utilize Trimble instruments to ensure square marks for future wall locations July 16, 2015, at Hatzor Air Base, Israel, in support of Operation Juniper Cobra. (U.S. Air National Guard photos by Master Sgt. Robert Armstrong)



(Left) Deployed members of the 103rd Civil Engineer and 200th Red HORSE Squadrons move a concrete pumper hose down interior walls using ladders and scaffolding to avoid wall braces at Hatzor Air Base, Israel, in support of Operation Juniper Cobra July 20, 2015. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Robert Armstrong)



(Left) Members of the 103d Civil Engineer Squadron and 200th Red HORSE Squadron gather on the last day of pouring. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Robert Armstrong)



NCOER/OER Changes in Effect For 2016

STAFF SGT. BENJAMIN SIMON
JFHQ PUBLIC AFFAIRS

HARTFORD — Get ready to become more involved in your military career development.

The focus on the U.S. Army's revamped Non-Commissioned Officer Evaluation Report will be counseling and mentorship. According to Sgt. First Class Amy Beaudoin, Connecticut Army National Guard Senior Human Resources NCO, as of January 1, 2016, Soldiers and their evaluators will have to invest much more energy into evaluation processes than ever before, and it will all be done online.

Evaluated Soldiers will be required to submit support forms stating their professional goals for the following year. Progress made in reaching these goals will play a strong role in yearly evaluations.

The Army will have three new NCOER forms, one for E5, one for E6-E8, and one for E9 Soldiers. There will be more room for narrative entries on the new forms, as opposed to the old versions which leaned heavily on short, succinct bullet points.

Soldiers will have to now take on more ownership of their career trajectories, Beaudoin affirmed.

Beaudoin's office is scheduled to begin teaching classes on the new evaluation formats for Connecticut Army National Guard units beginning this month.

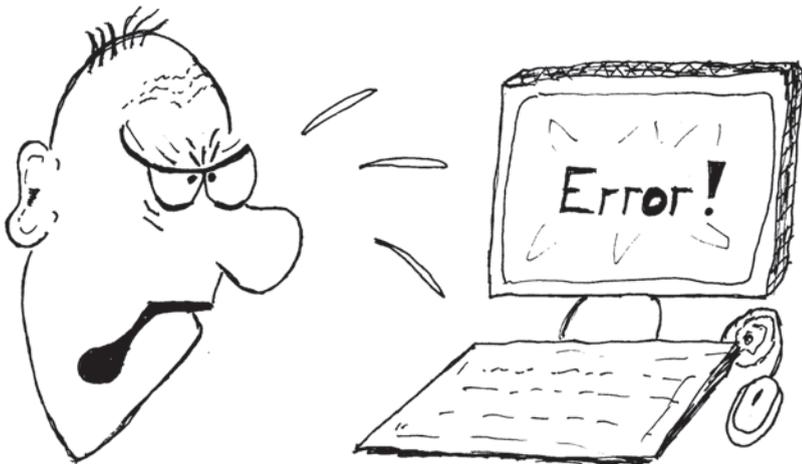
She said that there will undoubtedly be a learning curve at first, but it will not take long for everyone to acclimate to the new system. However, there will be more eyes on the new NCOERs as Human Resources Command now has to review all of them before they are approved, according to Beaudoin.

The new NCOER changes are part of an Army-wide implementation of the new NCO professional development system. In addition to these changes, Warrior Leader Course is scheduled to be renamed (Basic Leader Course) and a new Master Leader Course is scheduled to be added for E8 Soldiers.

Interested in learning more about the new NCOERs and changes to NCOES? Visit hrc.army.mil for online trainings courses, points of contact and virtual forms. Sgt. First Class Amy Beaudoin and Sgt. Maj. George Barrow can be reached through the chain of command at: ng.ct.ct.armg.list.g1/ncoer.

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1st Battalion (OCS/WOCS), 169th Regiment (RTI)

Officer Candidate School

OCS & WOCS OPEN HOUSE

Information Brief

November 21, 2015

Report Time: 9:00 a.m.

RTI Building, Camp Niantic

Uniform: ACUs 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:

Capt. David Lord david.m.lord.mil@mail.mil

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Michael Mottolo michael.v.motollo.mil@mail.mil



COMMAND SGT. MAJ.
JOHN S. CARRAGHER

Happy New Year! - It is hard to believe that we have completed another successful fiscal and training year. I hope each of you has taken the opportunity to look

back on training year 2015 and with an eye toward making 2016 even better.

What did we do well and what could we have done better? Did I do everything I could to make my organization the best? What could I do better or more efficiently to improve my piece of the organization? Am I ready to lead my Soldiers into harm's way?

When you have answered those questions, take the time to do the hard part - establish and execute a plan to make yourself and your unit better than it was the day before. If we all do our part, in our own segment of the organization, we will continue to excel.

There are two big changes on the horizon that will significantly impact our enlisted Army force.

The first is the relinking of formal military education to promotion.

The second is the new NCO Evaluation system. These changes will fundamentally alter (for the good, in my opinion) enlisted personnel management and professional development.

I would like to talk first about military education. About 10 years ago, the Army made the decision to delink completion of professional military education (PME) from the promotion system. In essence, we dropped the formal schools requirement down one level. Instead of training our Soldiers how to be NCOs in a formal setting BEFORE we promoted them, we promoted them and hoped that experiential learning would be enough. We made professional military education a requirement to be considered for the next grade.

The decision to change the requirements was made because there was not enough time in the deployment cycle to get Soldiers to school and back to their unit in time to deploy again. At the time, it was a sound decision.

But that same decision has cost us dearly in readiness. The obvious (and correct) answer to many of the issues we face today is to push implementation down to the lowest level. We ask our youngest of leaders to fix the hardest issues we have, yet we do not formally train them to do so. It is time to change that. Our Soldiers need and deserve the very best trained leaders we can give them.

Another casualty of delinking PME from promotion, especially at the Sergeant level, is intangible, but crucial. At the risk of dating myself, at one time it was a very big deal to be promoted from Specialist to Sergeant. He or she was no longer a simple Soldier, but a Non-commissioned Officer and a leader. He or she was

expected to lead other Soldiers, set the example, make things happen.

He or she was also given the respect that came with that additional responsibility. When a Soldier was promoted to Sergeant, his or her entire life changed. I fear we have lost that. It is time to get it back.

The new policy has not yet been signed, but I do not expect substantial change. The policy will be effective on January 1, 2016 for the upcoming board cycle. In a nutshell, Soldiers will need the required time in service, time in grade, and have completed the corresponding Structured Self Development course to be considered (boarded) for promotion to the next rank. Soldiers will be selected based on the board results and assigned to the higher graded position. If they have not completed the required PME, they will have 120 days to enroll in the course and 24 months to complete the course. Additional time is allocated for PME courses of three or more phases. Soldiers are promoted upon completion of the required PME. Soldiers failing to complete the required PME in the allocated time at the fault of the Soldier will be transferred back to a lower-graded position.

This new policy will create some turbulence in our Guard. If not managed aggressively by commanders and enlisted leaders, it may create significant readiness shortfalls. In the end however, our Soldiers will have what they deserve: a balanced, well rounded leader. It is incumbent on every leader to invest the time and resources in our Soldiers to ensure success. It is up to our Soldiers to rise to the challenge and accept the responsibilities of leadership.

The second thing I want to discuss is the new NCO Evaluation Report. We have been using the same form and process for evaluating the performance and potential of our NCOs since 1989. The system has become bloated to the point that almost everyone receives at least a "good" evaluation and most exceed established standards.

The new system will go into effect and is mandatory of all evaluations with a thru date of January 1, 2016 or later. Evaluations prepared under the new system are directly related to doctrine. I urge every Soldier that is an NCO, a rater, or a senior rater to review ADP 6-22 and ADRP 6-22. These two publications are the foundation of the evaluation process. Both are available from the Army publishing Directorate at www.apd.army.mil in both PDF format and e-book format.

The most significant problem with the current system is that promotion boards have no way to tell the very best. In order to "keep honest people honest," several new features have been incorporated into the system. First, there are three different forms used to evaluate NCOs. One form for NCOs at the direct (Sgt.) leadership level, one for the operational (Staff Sgt. to Master Sgt./

1st Sgt.) level, and one for the strategic (Sgt. Maj./Command Sgt. Maj.) level. This change will allow us to better tailor the evaluation to the expectations of NCOs at that level of leadership.

The introduction of rater tendencies and senior rater profiles for NCO evaluations will help to send a clearer picture to our selection boards. Rater tendency is the numerical report of how a rater rated NCOs in a particular grade. The senior rater profile will reduce evaluation inflation and clearly identify the very best for promotion selection. Senior raters will be limited to 24 percent of their evaluations being "most qualified."

The new system is entirely online. Soldiers can access the system from any CAC-enabled computer. The feature of the new system that will be most beneficial is the built-in functionality to enable the counseling process. The NCO support form is built into the system and drives the process. The online system allows leaders to look at subordinates counseling to ensure that it is completed and documented.

There will be growing pains with the new system. Each member of the rating chain must take responsibility for preparing and managing the evaluation of their Soldiers. Training has been ongoing. If you require additional training, please route your requests through S-1 channels to the G-1.

As always, thank you for what you do for our Soldiers, Airmen, and Families every day.

Quote of the month:

"When you pin that first stripe on, you're going to have to make a mental adjustment. You're going to have to weigh being a good friend on the one hand with being a good leader and dispatching your duties and responsibilities on the other. When you do, I think your peers must understand, "He was selected to be a leader." I think most of them do. Sometimes you're tested by your peers. That's when you have to let everybody know: "Look, I was selected and I'm going to be the best possible leader that I can be. If I have to get on you now and then, that's the way it's going to have to be. I'm going to make you be good soldiers. At the same time, I'm going to develop you and give you a chance to be leaders, too."

-Sgt. Maj. of the Army Glen E. Morrell
"Soldiers Deserve the Best Leaders."
Soldiers, Dec 1985, p. 8

News From The Governor's Horse and Foot Guards

2nd Company Governor's Horse Guard March in Newtown Parade

The Second Company Governor's Horse Guard participated in the annual Newtown Labor Day Parade on Sept. 7. The parade marched down Newtown's historic main street to the cheer of thousands. The Second Horse took position in the First Division, escorting the Governor and other visiting dignitaries kicking off the festive event.

(Photo by: Private 1st Class Jodi Fay, Second Company Governor's Horse Guard)



Important News from TRICARE

TRICARE PRESS RELEASE

Starting October 1, 2015, a new law requires all TRICARE beneficiaries, *except*

Active Duty Service Members, to get select brand name maintenance drugs through either TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery or from a military pharmacy. Beneficiaries who keep using a retail pharmacy for these drugs will have to pay the full cost. Maintenance drugs are those you take regularly for a long time, such as drugs to control blood pressure or cholesterol. The law does not apply to drugs you take for a short time, like antibiotics, or generic drugs.

The TRICARE pharmacy contractor, Express Scripts, is sending a letter to beneficiaries taking an affected drug, explaining their options. Beneficiaries can contact Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303 to see if they are affected. After October 1, beneficiaries still filling an affected drug at a retail pharmacy will receive another letter informing them of the change to the benefit. After that, beneficiaries have one final "courtesy" fill at a retail pharmacy. If they fill at a retail pharmacy again, they have to pay 100 percent of the cost of their medication. TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery is a safe, convenient and low cost option to get maintenance drugs. You can get up to a 90-day supply, as opposed to a 30-day supply from a retail pharmacy. You save up to \$176 a year for every brand name drug you switch to Home Delivery. Military pharmacies offer up to a 90-day supply of drugs at zero copay, but not all drugs are available. For more information about this change to TRICARE's pharmacy benefit, visit www.tricare.mil/RxNewRules.



Family
Family Safe is Family Strong!

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

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG

U.S. ARMY
U.S. ARMY CENTER FOR MILITARY SAFETY CENTER
<https://safety.army.mil>

Who is a victim?

- 1 out of every 5 American women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime
- 1 in 7 will be raped by her husband
- About 10% of victims are male
- 1 in 6-8 males will be a victim of sexual assault
- 78% of victims know their attacker
- In the Military, 90% know their attacker
- 75% of male and 55% of female between 18-24 involved in acquaintance rape had been drinking or using drugs
- In the military, 80% involve alcohol or drugs
- Only 16% of rapes are ever reported to police (1 in 10 women/1 in 25 men)
- Studies show sexual assault as the most under-reported crime

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Click www.SafeHelpline.org Call 877-995-5247

Text* 55-247 (outside the U.S.) 202-470-5546 (outside the U.S.)

*Text your location for the nearest SARC

Key Terms

Sexual Violence

Sexual Violence is a crime and will not be tolerated in the Connecticut National Guard. Both sexual harassment and assault have a devastating and lasting impact on victims. They undermine unit cohesion and combat readiness, and have no place in the Connecticut National Guard.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is defined as a form of gender discrimination that involves unwelcomed sexual advances and attention; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal, physical, or written conduct of a sexual nature that creates a hostile work environment or makes someone's job or career advancement a condition of their participation in the request for sexual favors.

Sexual Assault

Sexual Assault is defined as intentional sexual contact characterized by the use of force, physical threat or abuse of authority, or when the victim does not or cannot consent. Sexual Assault includes rape, nonconsensual sodomy, indecent assault (unwanted, inappropriate sexual contact or fondling), or attempts to commit these acts. Sexual assault can occur without regard to gender, spousal relationship, or age of victim. A current or previous dating relationship or the manner of dress of the person involved with the accused in the sexual conduct at issue shall not constitute consent.

Read More in AFI 36-6001 or AR 600-20 Chapter 8

Leadership Actions

When leaders become aware of sexual assault the following actions must be taken:

- Ensure safety of victim!
- Inquire if victim needs medical attention or desires a victim advocate
- Separate the alleged offender from the victim
- Contact the SARC immediately
- Contact the first O-6 in command
- OCIR to include O-6, chief of staff and SARC
- Inform victim of their rights
- Create a policy regarding alcohol and fraternization

Victim's rights

Victims have a right to:

- Receive medical treatment
- To be treated with respect
- Be offered a victim advocate
- Request in writing an expedited transfer, if one works with the alleged offender
- Receive a civilian and or military no contact order
- Request a civilian and military protective order
- File a restricted or unrestricted case

Reporting Options

Restricted Report

Enables military members to report allegations of sexual assault to specified personnel, without triggering an investigation. Specified personnel include the SARC, a healthcare provider, trained Victim Advocate or chaplain.

Provides confidential reporting. Allows access to medical care, counseling and a victim advocate but does not initiate the investigative process. Intended to give the victim additional time and increased control over the release and management of the victim's personal information.

Empowers the victim to seek relevant information and support to make an informed decision about participating in the criminal process.

Family members, civilians and retired members are not eligible to make a restricted report.

Unrestricted Report

Any report of a sexual assault made through normal reporting channels which includes the victim's chain of command, law enforcement, and or other criminal investigative service.

The SARC will be notified and assign a victim advocate to the individual. Details of the allegation will be provided only to those personnel who have a legitimate need to know.

Independent Report

Information about a sexual assault is disclosed to command from an independent or third-party source.

Connecticut Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

HURTS ONE. AFFECTS ALL.



JFHQ SARC

Major Katherine Connors-Maines
860-613-7611 Mobile: 860-883-4798



Alternate JFHQ SARC

Major Kristina Garuti
860-613-7610



Wing SARC

Major Jefferson Helland
860-292-2506 Mobile: 860-883-2546

Support Services

Victim Advocates

Victim Advocates provide essential support, liaison services and care to a sexual assault victim.

Victim Advocates are active-duty military personnel and DoD civilian employees selected by the SARC and who have completed a 40-hour training, and for Army guard the additional 80 hour SHARP Specialist Class.

Victim Advocates are volunteers who must possess the maturity and experience to assist in very sensitive situations.

Responsibilities include:

- Providing crisis intervention, referral and ongoing non-clinical support.
- Providing information on available options and resources to assist the victim in making informed decisions about the case.
- Services will continue until the victim states support is no longer needed.
- Does NOT provide counseling or other professional services to a victim.
- May accompany the victim, at the victim's request, during investigative interviews and medical examinations

Diversity: "So....When's it going to be Polish Americans Month?"

BY: MAJ. VALERIE SEERY,
HUMAN RESOURCES/EQUAL
OPPORTUNITY (HR/EO)

"So.....When's it going to be Polish Americans Month?" one of my fellow soldiers asked me recently. He's got a very good question. So far this year we have celebrated MLK day in January, Black History month in February, Women's History month in March, Holocaust Remembrance Day in April and Asian America and Pacific Islander Heritage in May.

But did you know that we are currently celebrating Polish American Month?

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan signed a House Joint Resolution originally identifying August as the month

of celebration, but it was moved to October in 1986 to mark the occasion during the school year.

There are approximately 10 million Polish Americans in the USA today and they make up about 3% of the total U.S. population. They first started immigrating to this country in 1608 as skilled craftsmen and continued over the years, often taking manual labor jobs such as mining, heavy industry, and starting small businesses.

Polish Americans have contributed to American history and culture in many ways. A notable Polish American hero of the Revolutionary War was Commander Casimir Pulaski who rose to the rank of General. Pulaski was known as one of the "fathers of the cavalry" who once saved the life of George Washington.

Scarlett Johansson, William Shatner, and Gwyneth Paltrow are but a few of many Polish American actors.

Polish Americans have also contributed to music: Michael Anthony, bassist for Van Halen and Pat Benatar are a couple you may know, just to name a few.

Polish Americans may best be known for their contribution to American cuisine. Who can resist the wonderful creations that Polish American cooks have shared with our culture? Pierogis (pasta stuffed with potato and cheese or onions), galumpkis (stuffed cabbage rolls), punchkis (Polish doughnuts), kielbasa and sauerkraut are to name just a few.

Dla zdrowia! (To your health!)



The USS Quincy: From it's Beginning in the Great Depression to the Battle of Savo Island

September 30th, 2:00 p.m. at the Hagan Memorial Library 227 Main Street, East Haven. Naval historian, Bob Begin will take us on a tour of the history of the heavy cruiser, the USS Quincy, sunk in August, 1942. The Quincy's story is also the story of America working out from under the Great Depression to the country's descent into global war. The program is a WWII Veterans Discussion Group presentation, which is free of charge and open to all.

For more information or to receive our veterans group newsletter contact Fawn Gillespie at fgillespie@hagamanlibrary.org or call 203-468-3890.



Photo: Wikipedia



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November 13-14, 2009

Connecticut State Library
Governor William A. O'Neill State Armory
Manchester Community College

Legal: When You May Wear Your Uniform Off-Duty

CAPT. ERICH HEINONEN AND
CAPT. KYLE B. WILKINSON
CTNG OFFICE IF THE STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE

Thinking of wearing your military uniform for Halloween this year? Not so fast! Army Regulation 670-1, "Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia," prescribes the appropriate times when Soldiers of the Connecticut Army National Guard may wear their uniforms. Wearing the uniform to an off-duty Halloween celebration is not one of them. Soldiers are not simply allowed to wear their uniforms at their own discretion. Both the time of wear and a Soldier's personal appearance in uniform must be in accordance with Army regulations.

CTARNG Soldiers are required to wear the appropriate duty uniform of the day for any form of paid or unpaid inactive duty training, active duty, annual training, full-time National Guard duty, or AGR duty as prescribed for personnel in the Active Army. This article addresses those gray areas, when you may wear your uniform when not on official duty under appropriate orders.

The regulation provides a handful of obvious instances such as participating as a cadet in an active ROTC unit,

ARNG military technicians who are required to wear the uniform as a condition of their employment, when performing state active duty or when otherwise authorized by the Adjutant General. However, it is the authorization to wear the uniform "when attending social functions or informal gatherings of a military character" that requires some thought as no further regulatory guidance is provided.

Soldiers should seriously think about the circumstances of an event and seek the opinion of an experienced NCO, Officer, or servicing Judge Advocate before deciding to wear the uniform when not on duty. Gaining authorization from command prior to wearing the uniform is advisable.

Some events clearly fit this criteria. Military balls, military parades, weddings, and military funerals and memorial services are explicitly listed as such events. When considering whether the event is of a military character, you should determine if the audience is composed largely or entirely of current or honorably discharged Veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States, or if some prominent aspect of the event is sufficiently military in character as to warrant the wearing

of the uniform.

For instance, what about wearing your uniform as a spectator to a patriotic parade, such as one on the Fourth of July? While not technically a military parade, there will likely be some significant portion of the event that is in honor of veterans and the United States Armed Forces. As such, it would be an acceptable time and place to wear your uniform. Each event must be evaluated on its own facts and circumstances. The key consideration is always whether some significant aspect of the event is related to honoring the Armed Forces so as to justify the wearing of the uniform.

If wearing your uniform to an event while off-duty, you must ensure that you represent the CTARNG and the Army in an honorable fashion and uphold the integrity of the uniform. This not only means you must conform to the Army's wear and appearance standards found in Army Regulation 670-1, but that you also behave and hold yourself in a respectable and honorable manner. Misconduct while off-duty – especially while in uniform – may result in adverse administrative action.

HERE IT COMES Are you ready to pull the trigger?

- Always point the muzzle in a safe direction.
- Never point a firearm or bow at anything you do not intend to shoot.
- Always keep the safety on until you are ready to fire; however, the safety should never be a substitute for safe firearm handling.

READY ... OR NOT?

Ready ... or Not is a call to action for leaders, Soldiers, Army Civilians and Family members to assess their "readiness" for what lies ahead—the known as well as the unknown.

Throughout our professional and personal lives, events happen all around us. We are often able to shape the outcome of those events, but many times we're not. Navigating life's challenges is all about decision-making.

So are **YOU** ready ... or not?

<https://safety.army.mil>

1st BATTALION 102ND INFANTRY MOUNTAIN
HOSTS THE
2015 CONNECTICUT MILITARY DEPARTMENT OFFICERS' DINING-IN
AQUA TURF CLUB, SOUTHTON, CT
DATE: 05 November 2015
TIME: 1800-2200

IF YOU HAVE ALREADY PAID AND RSVP'D AND PLAN ON ATTENDING NO ADDITIONAL RESPONSE REQUIRED, IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND AND WANT A REFUND PLEASE CONTACT CPT ALLEN DIAMOND at allen.m.diamond2.mil@mail.mil or CPT PEDRO CONCOLINO at pedro.h.concolino.mil@mail.mil

ALL CURRENT AND FORMER ARNG, ANG, MILITIA OFFICERS, CSM, SGM, and CMSgt ARE INVITED
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COST IS: \$60.00

Make Checks Payable to 1-102nd INF Officers' Dining-in Fund
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87 Montowese St
Branford, CT 06405

Guest of Honor: Lieutenant General Herbert Raymond McMaster, Deputy Commander, Army Training and Doctrine Command and Director, ARCIC

Uniform: Army Service Uniform, Army Dress Blues, Army Dress Greens, Air Force Mess Dress
Retirees may wear a uniform or appropriate civilian attire
Point of Contact: CPT Allen M. Diamond
Phone: 860-883-6146 | Email: allen.m.diamond2.mil@mail.mil

Please Return NLT 09 October 2015
Rank _____ Name: _____
Organization _____
Mailing Address _____

Meal Choice (circle one) Prime Rib Chicken Salmon Vegetarian
Make check payable to: 1-102nd INF Officers' Dining-in Fund



National Guard Association of Connecticut (NGACT)



Master Sgt. Kendra Ross, Staff Sgt. Andrew DiSilvestro and Sgt. Troy Loosemore served as Connecticut's delegates during the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the U.S. annual conference Aug. 9-12 in Indianapolis, Indiana. (Photo by Debbi Newton, NGACT)



Left to right, back to front) Staff Sgt. Andros X. Thomson III, Airman 1st Class Aaron LaPorte, Tech. Sgt. Liz Toth, Sgt. Troy Loosemore, Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton and Master Sgt. Kendra Ross spend time with Chief Master Sgt. Chris Muncy who served as the 10th Command Chief Master Sergeant of the Air National Guard during the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the U.S. Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana in August. (Photo courtesy NGACT)



Membership numbers are posted with state names for all to see during the National Guard Association of the United States annual conference held in Nashville, Tennessee in September. (Photo by Fran Evon, NGACT)



Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster, director, Army Capabilities Integration Center and Deputy Commanding General, Futures, US Army Training and Doctrine Command, addresses attendees of the National Guard Association of the United States annual conference last month in Nashville, Tennessee. (Photo by Fran Evon, NGACT)



Dan Reilly (far left) is sworn in with the rest of the newly elected members of the EANGUS Executive Council during the EANGUS national conference in Indianapolis, Indiana Aug. 12. Reilly was re-elected Area I Director representing the eight New England states, New York and New Jersey. (Photo by Debbi Newton, NGACT)



Lt. Col. (Ret.) Nicole Karalli, Col. Robert Nugent and Lt. Col. Anthony Beatman attend the All States Banquet at the National Guard Association of the United States annual conference last month in Nashville, Tennessee. (Photo by Fran Evon, NGACT)



The Connecticut National Guard was well represented at the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the U.S. Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana Aug 9-12. From left: Master Sgt. Dan Reilly, Tech. Sgt. Liz Toth, Sgt. Troy Loosemore, Airman 1st Class Aaron LaPorte, Staff Sgt. Andros X. Thomson III, Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, Command Sgt. Maj. John S. Carragher, Master Sgt. Kendra Ross and Staff Sgt. Andrew DiSilvestro get together during the All Area Hospitality Night event. (Photo courtesy NGACT)



Area I Directors Dan Reilly (CT), Mike Rice (NH) and Area I Chairman Claude Imagna (NY) are ready to work in the delegate area during the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the U.S. conference in Indianapolis, Indiana. (Photo by Debbi Newton, NGACT)

Save the NGACT Date

Oct. 21
NGACT Executive Board Meeting
NGACT Office
Hartford Armory
5:30 p.m. Open to All

Nov. 18
NGACT Executive Board Meeting
NGACT Office
Hartford Armory
5:30 p.m. Open to All

Feb. 13
NGACT Annual Conference &
Military Ball

Inside OCS: Quality Training Exceeds Expectations

OC EDWIN ESCOBAR
OCS CLASS 61

There are always certain decisions in life that we are able to look back on and appreciate because of the impact they made on your life.

For me, one such decision was pursuing Officer Candidate School through the Connecticut National Guard. The training that I have received to date has truly been first class, with a lot of anticipation for what the future holds as I only am just beginning Phase Two. I have much to look forward to and expect the quality of training to continue to stay high.

I came into the National Guard as a Commissioned Officer Candidate. I went to college first, then enlisted to attend OCS. With no prior military experience to draw on, it has made OCS even more of a challenge. Standing in front Soldiers, giving commands with no prior experience can be nerve-wracking, but I am excited to get the practice and lead platoon-sized missions.

I anticipated this program to be physically demanding from the beginning. I expected it to mold the skills that I already had, and to better them in order to make me a good leader. I also expected the program to be mentally

rigorous.

Now that I have completed both phase zero and phase one, I can state that my expectations have been met and then some. The reality is that I am working towards filling a position where I may have to make life-changing decisions at the drop of a dime, for not only myself but for others as well. I will be leading men and women who will look to me for guidance, and for that reason, this training must be what it is. I knew it would be difficult, but you can't let that get to you or scare you. You have to take it one meal at a time and pay close attention to everything you are being taught.

When I think of the training and the way the cadre disciplines us, I think of my father. He was very strict and disciplined me regularly. Although I hated it growing up, I appreciate it greatly now as an adult. I see the OCS cadre in this same perspective. They are tough on us only because they want us to learn, grow, and develop. They are tough on us only because they want us to be great at what we do.

With a small class, the cadre can watch us closely and although it makes me nervous, I know that it is putting us ahead of the curve compared to being in larger classes.

I look forward to making mistakes, being corrected, and trying to correct my mistakes until I get it right. No one is going to jump into a leadership position and do everything correctly, and we are expected to make mistakes, but the point is to correct them now so that we have experience to draw on when we are in charge of a platoon or company.

This has been one of the best decisions I have ever made in my life. Not only because I simply wanted to be an officer but because what I have learned and will learn. These skills don't just pertain to the military, but translate into being a good leader in the civilian world. Our troop leading procedures, for example, can be drawn upon as a manager in the civilian world to enhance our managerial skills.

The Connecticut Officer Candidate School has so much to offer us as candidates but it is up to us to learn it and use it. Moving forward I look forward to becoming even more physically fit and perfecting my leadership skills so that one day I may stand in front of men and women of the United States Army and set the example of what it is to be a good leader.

If you are interested in the Connecticut National Guard's OCS Program, contact your chain of command.

Military History: The British Attack Danbury

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

While Connecticut did not experience the brunt of the War for Independence like its sister colonies of Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey and Virginia, there were a number of important engagements in the "Provisions State."

The first was an attack on Danbury in April 1777. Danbury, Connecticut was a significant manufacturing center in the mid-18th century. In late 1776, it was chosen as an important supply depot for the Continental Army because of its strategic location, between the Hudson River Valley and Long Island Sound. Also, an exceptional road network connected Danbury with the Hudson Valley, Long Island Sound and central Connecticut. This made Danbury a lucrative target.

On Friday, April 25, 1777, General William Tryon's fleet anchored at noon off of Compo Beach near the mouth of the Saugatuck River, between Norwalk and Bridgeport. At the time of the Revolution, this was part of Fairfield. Residents of this area were no strangers to the sight of British ships moving in Long Island Sound. The British landed approximately 2,000 troops, composed of regulars and Provincials or Loyalists. As they moved inland, seventeen militia soldiers from Wilton established an ineffective blocking position just north of the beach on Compo Road where it met Kings Highway. They fired on the larger enemy force and quickly withdrew.

After stopping for the night near Redding, the British continued through Bethel and on to Danbury. There, General Tryon's raiders burned 19 dwellings and twenty-two barns and storehouses. Gen. Tryon claimed that the

homes were near the magazine and "unavoidably burned." Although the irreplaceable medical supplies were saved when they were quickly moved to New Milford, the Patriots lost 1,700 critically needed tents to the enemy's torches. The full effects of the loss of these tents and other provisions would be felt by the Continental Army the following winter at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. The raid also destroyed 1,600 bushels of corn, 700 bushels of wheat, 1,700 barrels of pork and 50 barrels of beef – all provisions that the Continental Army desperately needed. It was reported that so much meat was burned that a three inch river of fat flowed down Main Street.

The attack on Danbury was not without the loss of life. Four young men fired on the British as they marched into the town from the windows of a home near the

courthouse. The incensed enemy rushed the house and killed the patriots inside, then set the house on fire.

Patriot forces led by Generals David Wooster, Benedict Arnold and Gold Selleck Silliman failed to prevent the burning of Danbury, but caught up with the invaders as they attempted to return to their ships, waiting off the coast of Westport. A running battle through the center of Ridgefield was costly for the British – with 90 of their number killed. The action was also very costly to the Patriots – General Wooster was shot by a Loyalist at the beginning of the Battle of Ridgefield and died of his wounds a few days later.

Brig. Gen. (CT-Ret) Cody may be reached at rmcody@snet.net for comments or article recommendations.

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 - **1-800-833-6622**

www.militaryonesource.com - **1-800-342-9647**

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

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org - **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

Off the Bookshelf: Fingerprints of the Gods

STAFF SGT. BENJAMIN SIMON
JFHQ PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

In the 1990s, I read almost every issue of *The Source* magazine. The magazine (of “Hip Hop Music, Culture, and Politics,” according to its tagline for those who may be unfamiliar) was edited during those years by Selwyn Seyfu Hinds, a Princeton graduate, and former *Village Voice* writer.

My favorite parts of the magazine were his monthly letters to readers. Hinds’ ability to insert ideas resembling extra-conscious motifs about rap music into his writing was uncanny. He made the music relatable, and his descriptions seemed better fit for literature and art than rap music.

In 1998, when discussions about the new millennium were intensifying, Hinds saw fit to include a brief section on reading suggestions for the year 2000. One of the first books on the list was Graham Hancock’s, “Fingerprints of the Gods.” I was surprised to see this on Hinds’ list, even considering his individuality as a writer and editor, due to the polarizing nature of Hancock’s ideas.

Contemporarily, Graham Hancock is considered extremely vanilla when compared to current alternative history authors, but in the ‘90s, before the internet made everyone a writer, he was considered fringe and dangerous to the world of established and conventional

ideas.

In “Fingerprints of the Gods,” Hancock asks the questions, who built the pyramids and other ancient mysterious monolithic monuments and why? Again, our world is now acclimated to shows like “Ancient Aliens,” so this question isn’t as radical as it was in years past. But, using lots of math, astronomy, hieroglyphic interpretations, and empirical evidence, Hancock concludes in his 1995 text that we really don’t have any idea who built these structures.

Unless you are retired, have a lot of deployment time to kill, (or a long wait time at MEPS, like I did) there really isn’t a good reason to wade through 500 pages of Hancock’s writing, (even though it is wonderful and captivating for its entirety). It’s now simple to find thousands of websites and videos online devoted to similar topics.

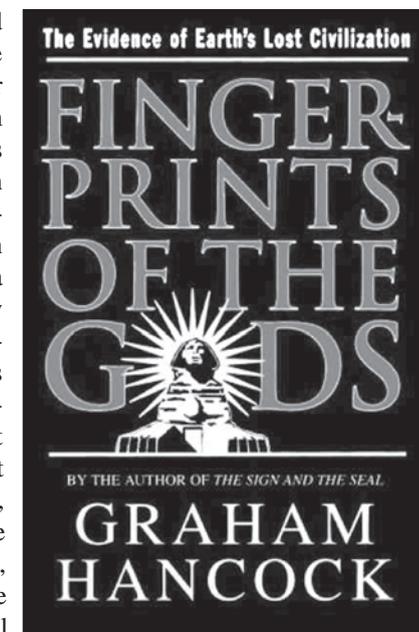
However, reading this as a teenager, based on Hines suggestion, changed the path I would take for the next 15 years as a reader. I had never considered that there really was any world history besides what was printed in encyclopedias and school textbooks. Perhaps, there were other things in the world that were not so cut and dry as well. Perhaps it was ok to be different, to be unconventional, to be a free thinker.

The *Source Magazine* lost its flair and uniqueness as a publication when Hinds left. Not coincidentally, hip hop

music changed for the worse as well. Poor Graham Hancock is now often called a disinformation agent and a shill (by today’s superfringe writers and anti-establishment theorists) but without him, and without the freethinkers, like the unconventional Selwyn Seyfu

Hines, many of us would not have truly opened our eyes to the mysteries of the world, for which there really aren’t any answers.

The key is accepting that there are no answers—and accepting that wisdom can come in funny shaped rap magazine packages.



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



Retiree's Voice: Survivors Eligible for Retired State Tax Break

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

By now, I'm sure that everyone has heard the Connecticut State Legislature increased the tax exemption on military pensions from 50 percent to 100 percent exempt from state taxes during this past legislative session. What some may not be aware of, however, is there are conflicting reports of whether or not this exemption applies to the beneficiaries of deceased service members/retirees.

Curious myself as to what the law actually is, I contacted the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services on September 4th to ask their opinion of the law. The representative that I spoke with at DRS took the time to review the law, consult with her colleagues and also refer me to DRS Information Publication 2012(15) (IP 2012(15)). The bottom-line is that the exemption does apply to beneficiaries upon a retiree's death (with a few exceptions).

The representative at DRS told me that it is important to understand IP 2012(15). She stated that the change in legislation did not change any of the wordings in IP 2012(15), other than to increase the exemption from 50 to

100 percent. Below is the section from IP 2012(15) that applies to veterans and the tax exemption:

"Veterans: Disability pensions and any other benefits granted for relief of injuries or disabled veterans, as well as tuition payments, subsistence allowances, and any other benefits paid to or on account of a veteran or beneficiary under the laws relating to veterans are treated the same for Connecticut income tax purposes as for federal income tax purposes. If these amounts are excludable from gross income for federal income tax purposes, they are not subject to Connecticut income tax."

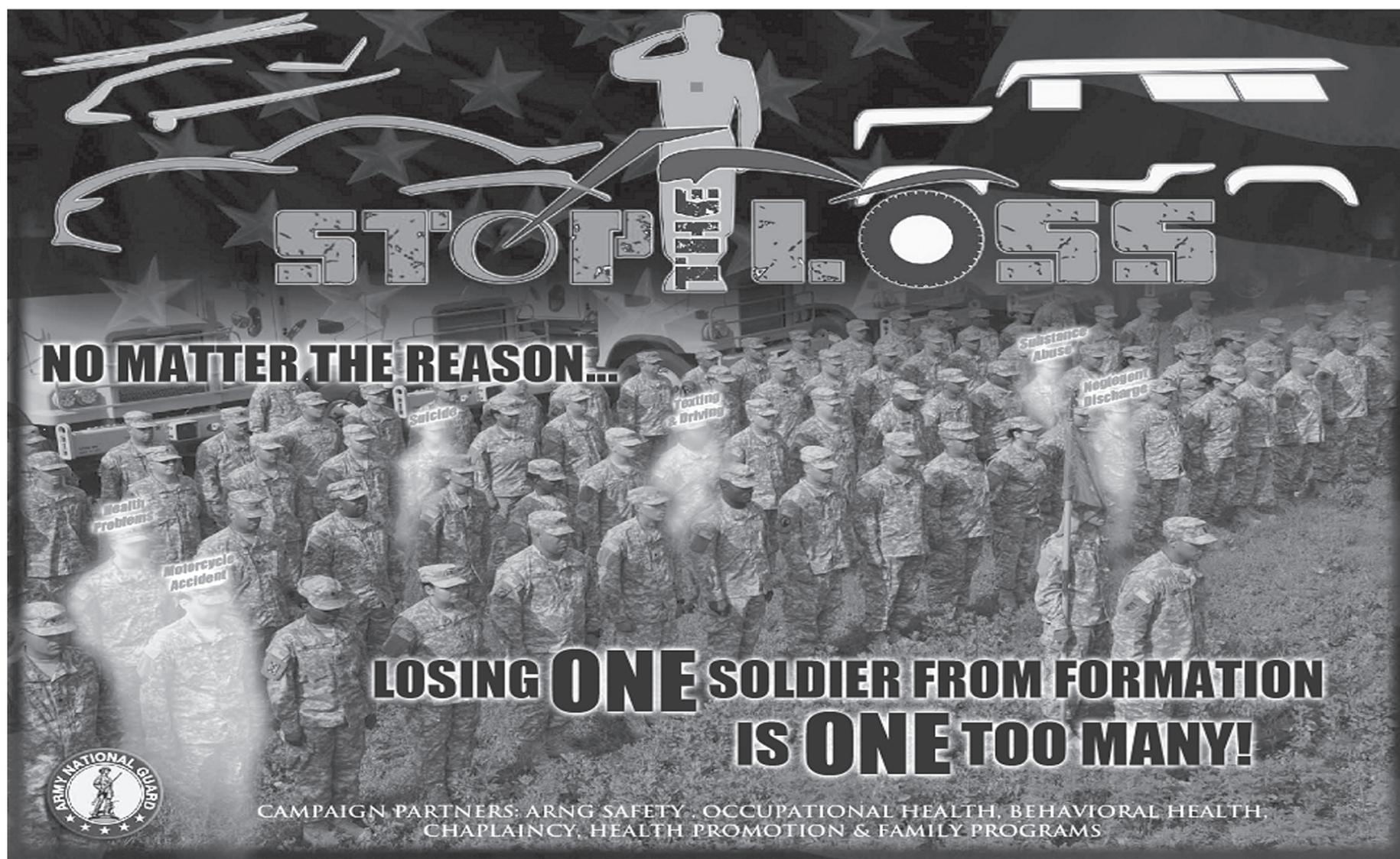
"Connecticut law allows a retired member of the armed forces of the United States or National Guard – to the extent retirement pay from the U.S. government is properly includible in federal adjusted gross income (AGI) – to subtract from federal AGI 50 percent of the income received from the U.S. government as retirement pay when computing his or her Connecticut AGI."

"Survivor benefits received by a beneficiary under an option or election made by a retired member, and that began upon the member's death, are also covered by this modification."

"Payment received by a former spouse of a retired military member, under a final decree of divorce, dissolution, annulment, or legal separation or a court ordered, ratified, or approved property settlement incident to a decree dividing military retirement pay, do not qualify for the 50 percent retirement pay exclusion. If you are a nonresident of Connecticut, your armed forces pension is not Connecticut-sourced income."

The DRS representative reiterated to me that the new law did not change the wording of this provision of IP 2012(15), other than to increase the tax exemption for Connecticut AGI from 50 to 100 percent - as long as the survivor benefits election made by the retired member and received by the beneficiary, begin upon the service members death. As noted above, in cases of divorce, dissolution, annulment etc., the exemption does not apply.

I hope this has helped to clarify the recent change to the state statute and clear up any misunderstandings. I encourage anyone who may still have questions, either about the contents of this article, the law, or their own individual tax filing status, to contact an accountant or tax attorney to review their status under the law.



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.mil@mail.mil or (860)375-1801.

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

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

The 130th 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 Sgt. 1st Class Jordan Werme
jordan.e.werme.mil@mail.mil or (203) 568-1730



Veterans Services and Where to Find Them

Veterans of the United States armed forces may be eligible for a broad range of programs and services provided by the VA.

Eligibility for most VA benefits is based upon discharge from active military service under other than dishonorable conditions, and certain benefits require service during wartime. If you are new to the VA, the Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors booklet will help you get started.

http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/

Health Care

VA's health care offers a variety of services,

information, and benefits. As the nation's largest integrated health care system, VA operates more than 1,400 sites of care, including hospitals, community clinics, community living centers, domiciliaries, readjustment counseling centers, and various other facilities.

Benefits & Services

VA administers a variety of benefits and services that provide financial and other forms of assistance to Veterans, their dependents, and survivors. Major benefits include Veterans' compensation, Veterans' pension, survivors' benefits, rehabilitation and employment assistance, education assistance, home loan guaranties, and life insurance coverage.

Burial and Memorials

Burial and memorial benefits are available for eligible service members, Veterans, reservists, National Guard members, and eligible family members. Service include interment, headstones and markers, and Presidential memorial certificates. VA operates 128 national cemeteries in the United States and Puerto Rico, together with oversight and management of 33 Soldiers' lots, confederate cemeteries, and monument sites.

Veterans Benefits Fact Sheets

<http://www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/factsheets/#BMI>

Connecticut National Guard Promotions Army

To Private 2

Matos, Isiah A.
Spruielle, Janicia M.
Peters, Samantha M.
Malave, Joshua X.
Sheldon, Conrad T.
Anglisz, Damian S.
Dipietro, Kyle S.
Peters, Zachary M.
Johnson, Quhaanna Jr.
Suppa, John M. III
Sholes, Zachary L.
Dibernardo, Kelsey J.
Bermudezvalles, Jansel
Nolan, Kelly E.
George, Cleann L.
Langley, Nathaniel M.
Martin, Elizabeth M.
Sillah, Lamin S.
Wallace, Kaitlyn Q.

To Private First Class

Maconwells, Robert E.
Carranza, Maria E.
Poissonier, Joshua A.
Irving, Andrew T.
Grant, Stives R.
Wykes, Zachary R.
Werpachowski, Dawid
Lemay, Andrew J.
Sanchez, Luis A.
Kennedy, Maurice I.
Newell, Brian K.
Westphal, Gillian H.
McCauley, Andrew A.

To Specialist

Krysczynski, Joseph Jr.
Mora, Rafael Jr.
Ponce, Reyna
Andersen, Gunnar E.

Rioux, Chantalle E.
White, Michael A. Jr.
Marchand, Zachary S.
Wei, David D.
Lacour, Christopher D.
Vega, Luis A.
Gonzales, Josue J.
Lord, Mark J.
Sundry, Ryan T.
Lopez, Christina M.
Civitarese, Andrew P.
Myslak, Brian M.
Wills, Quentin E.
Coons, Jordan T.

To Sergeant

Howarth, Sam E.
Palmer, Jordan T.
Byrnes, Shane P.
Murphy, Michael N.
Bouteiller, Alex D.
Hernandez, Jorge L. IV

Banas, Keri M.
Kreder, John G.
Dejesus, Xavier
Fontan, Justin M.
Leonard, William A.
Brown, Devon L.
Mihai, Dan
Johnson, Travis L.

To Staff Sergeant

Bingham, Brandon S.
Smith, Joseph M.
Nolan, Michael J. Jr.
Daley, Matthew M.
McGugan, George B.
Skelly, Amanda L.
Beckloff, Dennis H.

To Sergeant First Class

Magliochetti, Timothy J.
Gray, Jennifer M.

Air

To Staff Sergeant

Allen, John W.

To Master Sergeant

Payne, Rachel M.

To Senior Master Sergeant

Hill, Jaunetta J.
Walsh, Ryan L.
Salas, Lorena C.
Duquette, Sara B.
Nonnamaker, Amber Y.

Coming Events

October

October 1

Senior NCO/CPO Dining-In

October 12

Columbus Day

October 20

November Guardian Deadline

October 21

NGACT Executive Board Meeting

October 23

Trunk or Treat

October 31

Halloween

November

November 1

Daylight Savings Time Ends

November 5

Officers' Dining-In

November 7

Freedom Run 5K

November 8

CT Veterans' Parade

November 11

Veterans' Day

November 17

December Guardian Deadline

November 18

NGACT Executive Board Meeting

November 26

Thanksgiving

December

December 6

Hanukkah Begins

December 7

Pearl Harbor Day

December 13

National Guard Birthday

Deadline for November Issue of
the Guardian is October 20
Deadline for the December Issue
of the Guardian is November 17



IS YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA SAFE?

- Check your Privacy Settings
- Don't post Personal Identifying Info
- Be selective who you connect with
- Watch for OPSEC violations
- Turn off Geotagging on your devices
- Post with common sense!

Facebook will launch new Privacy Tools January 1, 2015.
Be sure to check and adjust your settings!

COME AND SAY "THANK YOU" TO OUR STATE'S MILITARY VETERANS AND ACTIVE PERSONNEL

Honoring those who serve
CT VETERANS
PARADE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2015
Downtown Hartford

12:30 p.m.

**Steps off at Buckingham & Washington Streets
Near the State Capitol Building**

1:30 p.m.

Parade Stops for "Moment of Silence"

2015 Parade Marshals



BG (Retired)
Joseph T. Perkins
Marines, CTNG

CSM
Orlando A. Anderson
Army, CTNG

Former LT
Emily D. Trudeau
Navy

LtCol (Retired)
Kristopher E. Perry
Air Force/ Navy

Former LCpl
Paul Segarra
Marines

For PARADE ROUTE and MORE INFORMATION

www.CTVeteransParade.org or 860-986-7254



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Connecticut FAMILY Guardian



VOL. 16 NO. 10

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

OCTOBER 2015

Military Youth Celebrate Back to School with a Bash

MICHELLE McCARTY
LEAD CHILD AND YOUTH COORDINATOR
CTNG SERVICE MEMBER AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

In August, the Child and Youth Program hosted the annual Back to School Bash at the Southington Armory.

Operation Homefront was able to make a generous donation through the support of Dollar Tree customers providing school supplies such as: backpacks, notebooks, binders, folders, writing utensils, erasers, calculators, crayons, makers, planners, construction paper, glue, rulers, and many other items.

The event was open to school-aged children of service members and approximately 150 children attended and collected school supplies to begin the school year. Families visited provider tables to pick up resources and information while children enjoyed a bounce house, face painting, light snacks and refreshments.

Want to learn more about the Child and Youth Program? Contact Michelle McCarty, Lead Child and Youth Program Coordinator at michelle.m.mccarty4.ctr@mail.mil.



Children of service members collect donated school supplies at the Child and Youth Program's annual Back to School Bash at the Southington Armory in August. School supplies were donated by Operation Homefront through the generous support of Dollar Tree customers. (Photo courtesy of Connecticut Child & Youth Program)



School-aged children of servicemembers collected donated school supplies at the Child & Youth Program Back to School Bash. (Photo courtesy of Connecticut Child & Youth Program)



More than 50 children and their families attended the Connecticut National Guard Child and Youth Program Back to School Bash at the Southington Armory in August. While students collected donated school supplies, participated in activities and played at the event's bounce house, parents prepared for the school year by visiting provider tables to pick up resources and information about a variety of family support services. (Photo courtesy of Connecticut Child & Youth Program)



CATHERINE GALASSO

With God, You Can Overcome Anything

One summer afternoon, a little boy was flying a kite at the beach. A person walking by saw the child running back and forth on the sand and curiously asked, "What are you doing?" The boy, holding the kite's string in his hands, answered, "I'm flying a kite."

However, since the kite was so high in the air, the passerby could not see it. So he questioned, "But how do you know the kite is still there?"

Politely, the boy responded, "I know the kite is there, because I can feel the tug on the string."

Do you feel abandoned, lost or hopeless? Or, perhaps, are you consumed with worry thinking that your situation is without a solution.

But similar to this little boy flying a kite that a passerby couldn't see, feel the tug of assurance in your heart from God. For He is whispering to you today: "Do not fear. I am with you. And I will help you."

You're not alone. God is there for you. You may not see Him. Yet, God is with you every day; shielding, defending, delivering, and leading the way to victory.

"It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed." (Deuteronomy 31:8).

So, "Cast all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." (1 Peter 5:7).

Hence, do not be overtaken by challenges. With God, you can overcome anything. So keep your focus on Him and open your heart to what He can do.

God has dozens of ways to help you and to bless you, so leave the question of 'how' to Him. For God, "...who formed the earth and made it..." (Isaiah

45:18) "...who by himself spread out the heavens." (Job 9:8) and "...called out the stars, and they all appeared in order." (Isaiah 48:13) can reposition you and bring to you what you need the most.

A while ago, a dear reader wrote to me and described how he had overcome a serious illness. "I have learned many lessons. The most important being that God truly does care for me and for all of us."

Then, he recalled a miraculous experience, "One night, I was driving all alone, and I started thinking a lot about what was going on with my health. I was a little scared...a little sad...then, I thought of all the love and prayers people all have sent me. As silly as it may sound to some, I simply asked quietly, 'God, can you give me strength?'"

"Not even five minutes passed and my phone rang. The man on the other end said, 'Hello, a mutual friend of ours told me to call you.' He went on to tell me how he has been disease free for 17 years, and we talked for a long time. I felt great when we hung up the phone. So, 'just ask.' I did, and it worked!"

His letter continued, "God loves us, cares for us and He is with us every day, any time. All we have to do is seek Him, ask Him, and pray to Him."

God's eye is watching even the tiniest sparrow. Thus, surely, He will take care of you and supply your needs. In the Old Testament, it tells how King Nebuchadnezzar

threw Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in a fiery furnace since they stood up for truth, did what was right and wouldn't bow down to an image of gold. On the surface, it appeared as their situation was hopeless.

But they relied on God to give them strength, and believed for Him to do the impossible.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and He will rescue us from your hand, O king." (Daniel 3:16-17).

God honored their faith and they emerged from the furnace unharmed.

Nebuchadnezzar then set them free, and he declared the greatness of their God.

I think of Daniel in the Bible, a great man of patience, faith and prayer.

The Lord did not prevent the wicked plotting of his adversaries, as Daniel was thrown into a den of hungry lions. Yet, at all costs, Daniel kept his trust and loyalty to God, and God sent an angel to protect him all through the night. In the morning, the King came to the den and called out to him, wondering if he were alive. Daniel answered him saying, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me" (Daniel 6:22).

God moves in mysterious ways. His specialty is doing the impossible. No matter how small or large your needs may be, don't get discouraged. For God is getting you ready to take you into a new area of blessings. Trust His timing. And persevere onward with unshakeable faith. Soon, your prayers will be answered. Out of the blue, adverse circumstances will turn around.

Suddenly, everything can change for the better in your life. And you'll come forth stronger and better than ever.

If you were to close your eyes while you were flying a kite, holding the kite's string in your hand, you'd feel the tug of assurance on the string, so you would know that the kite was still there. Right now, feel the tug of gentle assurance in your heart from God that says:

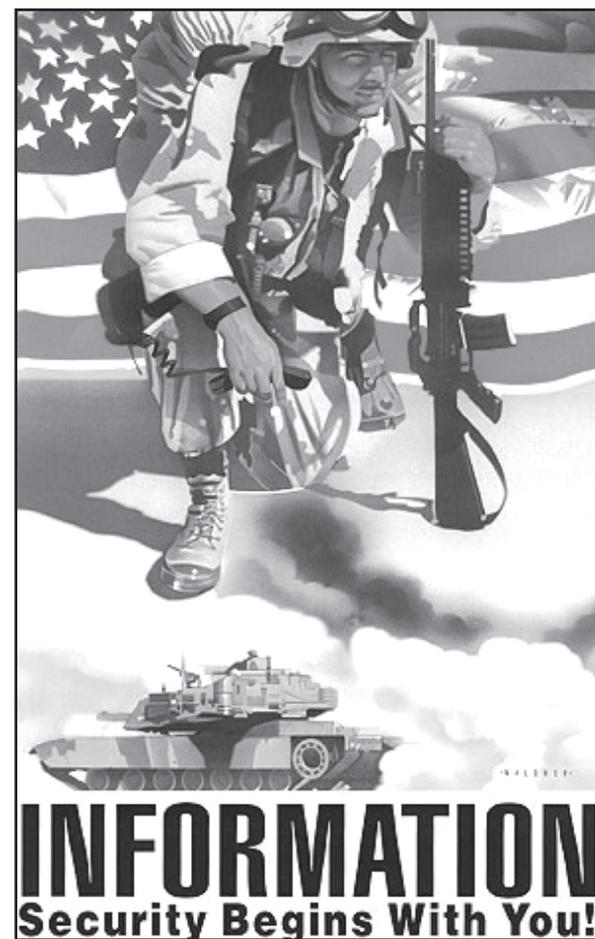
- "I am here. Leave your cares and worries with Me."
- "I have great plans for you."
- "Miracles are in your future."
- "New joys are just ahead."
- "And amazing opportunities are to come."

The sky is truly the limit where you are concerned. It is not over for you for anything. You have a lot of time and lots for which to look forward.

Only the best waits for you.

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. Visit her website at www.anewyouworldwide.com.

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

Family Resilience Protective Factors

SUBMITTED BY CHRIS ROULEAU
MILITARY ONESOURCE

Being a parent is the toughest job you'll ever love. For military parents, raising children can be challenging when you add in moving and deployments. Protective factors are conditions in families and communities that increase your family's health and well-being. From infants to teens, protective factors are good for every child and every family. These six protective factors build on your family's strengths and can easily be included in your daily routine:

- **Nurture and attachment** — Research has shown that simple acts of affection, such as hugs or loving words for younger children and listening to worries or being involved in their activities for older children, have a big impact on a child's growth and development.

- **Knowledge of parenting and child development** — Take some of the stress out of parenting. Stay up to date on parenting and child development information to help you recognize your children's capabilities and set realistic expectations for their behavior.

- **Parental resilience** — The ability to recognize stress and deal with it in a healthy way increases your well-being and shows your kids positive ways to cope.

- **Social connections** — Having a solid group of friends and family to help out and give you advice can take the edge off a rough day, and allow you to enjoy your family even more.

- **Social and emotional competence of children** — Your children's ability to interact with the world around them makes a big difference in how they form outside relationships.

- **Concrete supports for parents** — Every family needs a support network in the community and at home to help overcome challenges.

Protective factors can be part of your every day, hectic family life, and they can have lifelong effects on your family's happiness and well-being.



