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2015: It Was a Very Good Year

Part One of a Two-Part Series Looking Back

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The Connecticut National Guard was as busy as ever in 2015. The year started with one of the state's most involved events and finished with a unit returning from deployment to Afghanistan. In between, the Airmen and Soldiers of the Connecticut National Guard deployed around the world, supported their fellow residents in times of need and trained to defend the state and nation.

In this two-part series, we will look back at the stories and photos that defined the CTNG's 2015.

January

The year kicked off with a bang, as the William A. O'Neill Armory in Hartford hosted **Connecticut Governor Dannel P. Malloy's second inauguration**, Jan. 7. With hundreds of supporters in the crowd and a heavy Guard presence, Gov. Malloy swore in after his November 2014 re-election.



Members of the Connecticut Army National Guard fire blank rounds from a WWII-era model M101A1 howitzer as part of a 19-gun salute honoring Gov. Dannel P. Malloy's inauguration in Hartford, Jan. 7. Read more about the inaugural in the February 2015 issue of the Connecticut Guardian. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Boffen, 130th Public Affairs Detachment)



Soldiers of the 1-102nd Infantry Regiment attended Army Mountain Warfare School at Ethan Allen Firing Range, Jericho, Vermont in February. The soldiers spent two-weeks conducting basic winter mountain training and upon completion earned a certificate of training and the Ram's Head device. Read more about the infantry's winter training in the February Issue of the Connecticut Guardian. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class Michael Finnegan, A Company, 1-102nd Infantry Regiment UPAR)

"My fellow citizens," said Malloy during his inauguration speech, "let that be a badge of honor – that during difficult times, while others shied away from hard decisions, we made them. That in the face of fierce obstacles, we did not retreat. That during crises, we banded together."

The swearing-in was preceded by a parade through Hartford in bitter cold, but clear weather, and ended with a cannon salute on the grounds of the State Capitol.

That same day, in much warmer climates, two of the **103rd Air Wing's Flying Yankees** earned a unique certification as the Connecticut Air National Guard continued to expand its abilities as a C-130H Hercules unit.

Known as the "dirt cert," Lt. Col. Steve

Gwinn and Maj. Josh Panis were qualified to fly on short, unimproved landing strips after completing training at Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center in Garden City, Georgia.

"What pilot wouldn't want to land a big airplane on a piece of dirt? It's just fun," said Gwinn of the training.

To our north, on Jan. 8, the **1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain)**, conducted a 10-day annual training that was not for the faint of heart. The Iron Grays traveled to Jericho, Vermont and braved sub-zero temperatures in order to train as they fight – in the cold, and up in the mountains of Ethan Allen Firing Range.

After a three-week rotation at the sweltering-hot Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana in 2014, **Lt. Col. Robert Brafford and Command Sgt. Maj. Paul Vicinus** led the battalion through military mountaineer

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Senior Leader's Corner: Obama Calls on Americans to Reject Fear

BY JIM GARAMONE
DoD NEWS, DEFENSE MEDIA ACTIVITY

Every American has a role to play in defeating terrorist extremists like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, President Barack Obama said in his weekly address to the nation on Dec. 12.

Americans, the president said, must remain vigilant, but must not give in to the fear that would change what we stand for as a nation.

"In San Bernardino, even as the community continues to grieve, people are refusing to be ruled by fear," the president said, referring to the couple who opened fire at a holiday party, killing 14 and wounding 22.

"Faith communities have come together in fellowship and prayer," Obama said. "Families lined the streets for the annual children's Christmas parade—because we can't let terrorists change how we live our lives."

Service Members Doing Part

American service members are doing their parts to root out and kill the ideology. "Our men and women in uniform are stepping up our campaign to destroy ISIL," the president said. "Our airstrikes are hitting ISIL harder than ever, in Iraq and Syria. We're taking out more of their fighters and leaders, their weapons, their oil tankers. Our special operations forces are on the ground — because we're going to hunt down these terrorists wherever they try to hide."

It is not limited to Iraq and Syria. "In recent weeks, our strikes have taken out the ISIL finance chief, a terrorist leader in Somalia and the ISIL leader in Libya. Our message to these killers is simple — we will find you, and justice will be done," he said.

Across Government

The fight against ISIL is a whole-of-government effort, the president said. On Monday, he will review the military campaign against the group during a meeting at the Pentagon. Later, he will visit the National Counterterrorism Center, where he will review government

efforts to prevent attacks and protect the homeland. "This week, the Department of Homeland Security will update its alert system to ensure Americans get more information, including steps that you and your communities can take to be vigilant and to stay safe," he said.

But the effort cannot be limited to government or even a coalition of governments, the president said. "First, as always, we have to stay vigilant," Obama said. "If you see something that seems suspicious, say something to law enforcement. Over the years, plots have been uncovered because someone saw something and spoke up."

But the most important thing Americans can do is "stay true to who we are as Americans," he said. "Terrorists like ISIL are trying to divide us along lines of religion and background. That's how they stoke fear. That's how they recruit."

"Just as Muslims around the world have to keep rejecting any twisted interpretation of Islam, all of us have to reject bigotry — in all of its forms," the president said. "I'll say it again, prejudice and discrimination helps ISIL and it undermines our national security."

He said most Americans are supporting their Muslim neighbors. "Political leaders across the spectrum — Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives — are standing up, forcefully, for freedom of religion," he said. "Churches and synagogues are reaching out to local mosques—reminding us that we are all God's children. Grateful citizens are saying thank you to our patriotic Muslim American service members and veterans.

"That's the message I hope every Muslim American hears —

that we're all part of the same American family," the president said. "It's a message all of us can deliver — parents to our children, teachers to their students, leaders in politics and business and entertainment. Back in San Bernardino, people from across the community have joined in prayer vigils — Christians, Jews, Muslims and others. They've sent a powerful message — we're all in this together. That's the spirit we have to uphold. That's what we can do — as Americans — united in defense of the country that we love."



President Barack Obama

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(Front Page American Flag photo by Buddy Altobello)

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Active Shooter Drills – Do you know what to do?

LT. COL. DAN JANUSZ
103RD SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON

The 103rd Airlift Wing conducted a wing-wide active shooter exercise, Nov. 7. The objective was to educate and exercise the base populace in response to an active shooter event.

It is important to note that in an exercise, it is difficult to simulate the actual stress an individual may face in actual life and death situations. True instinctual “fight or flight” reactions are difficult to evaluate, however the value of training cannot be understated. When split-second decisions have to be made, situational awareness of your environment is the key to making a timely decision. Whether it is a clear route to escape, a place to barricade or a plan to fight, your chances are enhanced by prior mental preparation achieved through training. The training is not intended to make one paranoid, but to give an edge in a survival situation.

What is an Active Shooter? - An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people, most often in populated areas. Active shooters can use firearms with no pattern or method to their selection of victims. In some cases, active shooters have used improvised explosive devices to create additional victims and to impede first responders.

Active Shooter Facts - According to an FBI study conducted in 2014, there were 160 active shooter events that occurred in the United States between 2000-2013. An average of 6.4 incidents occurred in the first seven years studied and an average of 16.4 occurred in the last seven years. Nearly 70 percent of active shooter incidents occurred in either a commerce/business or educational environment. Nearly 60 percent of the incidents ended before law enforcement arrived on-scene. In terms of response time, 44 incidents ended in five minutes or less and 23 ended in two minutes or less. All but two incidents involved a single shooter. In at least six incidents, the shooters were female. In 64 incidents (40 percent), the shooters committed suicide; 54 shooters did so at the scene of the crime.

Know the Term LOCKDOWN - An announcement used on Air Force installations as a security measure to confine and restrict movement. Lock doors and windows (barricade room if possible), limit movement and turn off the lights to make the location appear unoccupied. All individuals on an installation are required to restrict their movement when lockdown is declared. During lockdown, no person may enter or exit the area until the all clear is broadcasted, unless movement is required to escape from a dangerous place or situation. Be patient and realize that you could be in lockdown for a long period of time. Lockdown does not mean you should gather building inhabitants into one area, like a room designated for



Members of the 103rd Security Forces Squadron, Connecticut Air National Guard, perform room clearing operations during a wing-wide active shooter exercise held at the Bradley Air National Guard Base, East Granby, Conn. on Nov. 7. The objective of the training was to educate the base population on how to react to an active shooter event. (Photo by Airman 1st Class Sadie Hewes, 103rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs)

sheltering in-place. Those rooms are selected for protection from natural and other man-made hazards, not hostile actions. An aggressor may gravitate toward large gathering areas, so if they are your last best option, secure them as best you can and be prepared to use secondary exits.

Actions to Consider Before an Active Shooter Event - Have a plan; be aware of your surroundings, possible dangers and escape routes. Take note of the two nearest exits in any facility you visit. Know the evacuation plan for your workplace. Leave an area if you feel uncomfortable or if something does not seem right. Develop a family communications plan and ensure all family members know how to use it if you were to become separated. Lastly, assemble an emergency supply kit for your vehicle and workplace.

Actions to Consider During an Active Shooter Event - How you respond to an active shooter will be determined by the specific circumstances of the encounter. If you find yourself involved in an active shooter situation, remain calm, quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life, and use these guidelines to help you survive.

Outside the immediate incident area - Stay away from

the incident area; there may be unknown dangers at or near the scene. Listen to local radio, television stations, and/or the installation’s warning and notification system for the latest information. If announced, execute lockdown procedures at your location. Do not allow individuals to enter or exit the area during lockdown until the all clear is announced. Use phone services sparingly so they remain open for emergency responders.

Inside the immediate incident area - Evacuate, Barricade, Fight! When faced with an imminent danger, the decision to escape, barricade or fight will be instinctive. Survivors instinctively find exits, hiding places or know when to take down the attacker. These decisions do not have to be left up to simple luck – enhance your chances of survival by considering these actions:

Evacuate - If an escape route is accessible, evacuate the immediate area and leave your belongings behind. Help others evacuate, if possible, but evacuate even if others will not agree to follow you. Call 911 when you are safe. Stay on the phone until the operator ends the call. Once evacuated, prevent others from entering the area. Follow any law enforcement instructions. If in view of or

Continued on Page 5 See Active Shooter

Eleven Elected to Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame

Two of Connecticut National Guard's Own Among the Inductees

CAPT. MIKE PETERSEN
STATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Over 100 family members, friends and fellow veterans turned out for the 2015 Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame induction at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, Conn. Nov 30.

Gil Simmons, WTNH/News8 meteorologist and six-year veteran of the United States Marine Corps, served as Master of Ceremonies, announcing the names and accomplishments of each veteran as they took center stage to be presented with their medal and plaque.

Presenting the awards were Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman, Commissioner Sean Connolly of the Department of Veterans Affairs and Maj. Gen. Thad Martin, Adjutant General of the Connecticut National Guard.

In a statement prior to the event, Lt. Governor Wyman thanked the inductees for their service to not just their country, but to their community as well.

"These 2015 Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame inductees served their state and their country honorably in the Armed Forces, and then on to do the same in cities and towns across the state," Wyman said in the statement. "They have dedicated themselves wholly to building thriving communities and a stronger nation."

Among the inductees were two faces familiar to those in the Connecticut National Guard: Master Sgt. (Ret.) Allen Lawton of the Army and Col. (Ret.) Thomas Heath of the Air Force.

According to his records, Lawton served nearly 14 years in the Connecticut National Guard, retiring in 1996

after spending the majority of his Guard career as an Infantryman. Lawton served as a first sergeant in the Headquarters and Headquarters Company of both the 1/169 Infantry in Manchester, Conn., and the 3/102 Infantry in New Britain, Conn., finishing his career as an operations sergeant for the 192nd Engineer Battalion.

"It was a significant honor to have personally served with one of the inductees, (Master) Sgt. Lawton," said Brig. Gen. Ron Welch, Director of the Joint Staff, Connecticut National Guard.

"I was the first platoon sergeant I had the privilege to serve with after attending Officer Candidate School. He was an expert in organizing, training, mentoring, team building and leading."

In 1992, Lawton started an office furniture business in Manchester, with friends and members of the Connecticut National Guard making up a portion of his workforce. According to the biography read at his induction, Lawton is now, "the proud employer of 45 employees of which 20% are Veterans and of those, 5% are Disabled American Veterans."

Heath has been active in the Guard community since his retirement. For nine years, he served as the State Military



Col. Thomas Heath of Somers, Conn. (right) poses with his medal and plaque upon induction to the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, Conn. Nov 30. Heath, a former member of the Connecticut Air National Guard, was one of 11 inductees in 2015. Also pictured are (from left to right) Maj. Gen. Thad Martin, Adjutant General of the Connecticut National Guard; Sean Connolly, Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman (photo by Capt. Mike Petersen, State Public Affairs Officer)



Master Sgt. (Ret.) Allen Lawton of Bolton, Conn. (center) shares a laugh with Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman as he accepts his medal and plaque upon induction to the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, Conn. Nov. 30. Lawton was one of 11 inductees in 2015. To Lawton's left is United States Marine Corps Sgt. (Ret.) Peter Galgano who escorted Lawton during the event. Lawton spent nearly 14 years in the Connecticut Army National Guard after leaving the USMC. (photo by Capt. Mike Petersen, State Public Affairs Officer)

Funeral Honors Coordinator in Connecticut, retiring in October 2015. According to his biography, "To date, [Heath] has seen overseen and ensured over 20,000 Veterans have received the military honors they deserve."

"I'm not surprised at all that Col. Heath was elected to this great honor," said Sgt. 1st Class Mike Cardozo, Noncommissioned Officer in Charge of Casualty Operations and Funeral Honors for the Connecticut National Guard. "You can tell how much he cares with the amount of effort he puts into helping the families of Connecticut's fallen veterans provide their loved one with the final goodbye he or she deserves."

After awards presentations, Commissioner Connolly and Maj. Gen. Martin helped Lt. Gov. Wyman unveil a new plaque, listing the names of every Hall of Fame member inducted since the program's inception in 2005. The plaque will be on display for all to see in the Legislative Office Building's Veterans Alcove, next to the Wall of Heroes.

The Hall of Fame class of 2015 is the largest class since an induction of 12 members in 2012's. To be eligible for the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame, "the nominee must have served their country honorably in a branch of military service and continued to serve their communities, state and nation after discharge," according to the evening's program.

The first class inducted was in November 2005, and included 41st U.S. President George H.W. Bush.

Active Shooter From Page 3

approaching law enforcement personnel, keep your hands visible. Do not attempt to move wounded individuals.

Barricade - If evacuation is not possible, find a place to create a barricade between you and the active shooter. Your barricade location should be where you are less likely to be found by the active shooter, provide you protection, and not restrict your options for movement. If possible, lock the door and/or block the door with heavy furniture. Turn off any lights and cover windows. Remain quiet and silence any devices (e.g. a cell phone) that may give away your hiding place. If safe to do so, call 911 to alert law enforcement. Stay on the phone until the operator ends the call.

Fight - As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the shooter. Personnel should use whatever means possible to overpower the subject to save further lives. Use the minimum force necessary to subdue the shooter, however, deadly force is authorized when an individual reasonably believes they or others in the area are in immediate danger of death or serious bodily harm.

What to do When Law Enforcement Arrives? - Law enforcement's purpose is to stop the active shooter as soon as possible. Officers will proceed directly to the area in which the last shots were heard and will not stop to help injured persons until the shooter is neutralized. Remain calm and follow instructions. Place any items in your hands on the ground. Immediately raise your hands and spread your fingers. Keep hands visible at all times. Do not impede law enforcement officers' movements, such as holding on to them for safety. Provide any information that may assist them in countering the threat. Avoid pointing, screaming, and/or yelling. Do not stop to ask officers for help or directions when evacuating, just proceed in the direction they instruct you to go. Move quickly to the assembly point. Expect to stay at the assembly point until the situation is under control. Know that you might be interviewed by law enforcement. Do not leave the assembly point until instructed by law enforcement.

What to do After the Active Shooter Incident has Concluded? - Stay away from the incident area. Listen to local radio, television stations, and/or the installation's warning and notification system for the latest information. Notify your friends and/or family of your condition. Use phone services sparingly so they remain open for emergency responders. Know and recognize the signs of incident related stress. Seek assistance as needed.

Statistically, as stated above, active shooter incidents are on the rise in the United States. Given the unexpectedness of most active shooting incidents, the need for awareness training and exercises is critical to improve the skills needed to prepare for, respond to and recover from these types of events. I encourage each of you to share this information with your friends and family. Understanding the active shooter threat along with the risk and options available during these types of events can not only keep you out of harm's way, but also may save a life.

Veteran Unemployment Rate Lowest in Nearly Eight Years

TERRI MOON CRONK
DoD NEWS, DEFENSE MEDIA ACTIVITY

A concerted national effort to hire veterans, coupled with their sought-after essential skills training, likely had an effect on making October's veteran unemployment rate the lowest since April 2008, a Defense Department official said Nov. 30.

Susan S. Kelly, who leads DoD's Transition to Veterans Program Office, spoke to DoD News about the October Bureau of Labor Statistics Report published by the Labor Department, which indicated that veteran unemployment has been lower than the rate of nonveteran unemployment for 23 consecutive weeks. In October, the veteran unemployment rate stood at just 3.9 percent, while nonveteran unemployment was 5.4 percent.

Kelly said she believes the drop in veterans' unemployment stems from several factors, such as the economic upturn across the country, as well as the many layers of effort in the public and private sectors to hire veterans.

In addition, she said, employers are seeking the professional "essential skills" ingrained in every veteran.

"Employers have been telling us the last 18 months, 'We can train them in technical skills, but the [other skills] take years to develop,'" Kelly said.

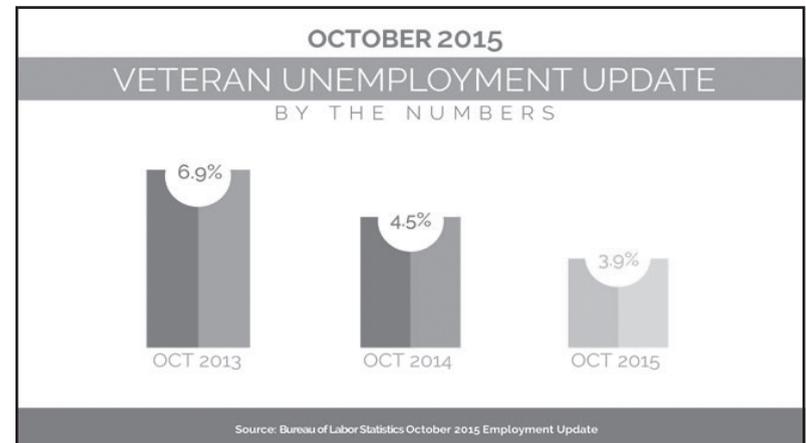
Those "essential skills" include leadership, ability to handle work stress, persistence, attention to detail, interpersonal skills, teamwork and team-building, oral and written communication, decision making, training people, supervising, critical thinking and project planning, she said, adding that the philosophy behind hiring veterans has evolved from the "right thing to do" to "the smart thing to do."

"The heads of corporations say they spend millions of dollars every year teaching their managers leadership skills," she said, and employers have learned that veterans arrive at the workplace already equipped with these skills.

Veteran Hiring: A Snowball Effect

Not long ago, veteran unemployment among young veterans ranged in the double digits. When the White House's Joining Forces initiative began in 2011, it called on all sectors of society to hire veterans and spouses and "opened avenues for veteran employment," Kelly noted.

At DoD, with the help of several federal agencies, Kelly led the transformation of the Transition Assistance Program into weeklong, mandatory training for transitioning service members, giving them the skills and knowledge necessary to secure jobs, seek education and pursue optional training, such as how to start a business.



Bureau of Labor statistics show the unemployment rate among veterans has declined steadily since October 2013. (Department of Labor graphic)

More federal agencies, corporations and nonprofit organizations joined the hiring effort and sought veterans for employment. For example, national retailer Wal-Mart launched the "Greenlight a Vet" campaign to shine a light on how veterans enrich communities and to encourage hiring veterans, who are known to take action quickly, show great leadership skills and "represent the best of America," an organization statement noted.

Several organizations, including the Institute for Veterans and Military Families; Team Red, White and Blue; Team Rubicon; Blue Star Families; and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Hiring Our Heroes program have also joined the effort.

"Each one brings us a unique contribution to veteran unemployment," Kelly said.

Rand Corp. Endorses Veteran Skillset

While it was understood veterans had strong work ethics and skills, Kelly said, those basics weren't "codified" until DoD enlisted the Rand Corp. to study the combat arms profession — the field with the fewest technical skills transferrable to civilian employment.

Since Rand's study this year, it has endorsed hiring veterans and illustrated how veterans' essential skills line up "very well" with what the Labor Department, academia and economists named as necessary in the 21st century workforce, she said.

The professional standards taught to troops are an asset to the civilian workforce during a time when the nation is challenged to fill what Kelly calls "a gap in workforce skills." She said that while DoD is "delighted" with the drop in veteran unemployment, the turnaround is an ongoing effort that is continually adapting to new lessons learned.

"We look at these skills as an asset for the workforce, but our veterans have an incredible amount of attributes that can be used in all aspects of community life," Kelly said. "They can be leaders, and in [those] I meet, I tell them to run for public office, because our nation needs leaders, and they have what it takes ... for the betterment of all of community life."

Students Bring Their A Game to School with the CT Army National Guard

Ms. ALLISON L. JOANIS
CTNG PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

In the age of cell phones and electronic devices, it isn't easy to capture the attention of the average high school student.

Give them an adrenaline-pumping performance consisting of seemingly impossible stunts happening over the heads of their teachers and peers, and you just may pique their interests.

On Nov. 20, the Connecticut National Guard presented "Bring Your 'A Game' to School," to an energetic crowd of 10th and 11th-graders at Howell Cheney Technical High School in Manchester.

"Bring Your 'A Game' to School," is a National Guard-sponsored, travelling assembly series that showcases action sports athletes who perform technical tricks and stunts while reinforcing powerful, positive messages about success in life and in the National Guard.

"This event is a great way to break through to high school students," said Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Caron, a Connecticut Army National Guard recruiter assigned to Cheney Tech. "It's always good to bring something that excites [students] so we can spread the message about the National Guard."

During the event, two Adrenaline Games Alliance (AGA) Nation BMX bike riders performed high flying stunts on two ramps set up in the school gymnasium, while host and rider, Andrew Fox, explained the key attributes of bringing your A Game using the AGA Nation core 'A's':

Alliance: Forge the right friendships; run with the right

crowd.
Attitude: Bring a positive mental attitude every day to family, friends, work and school.
Authentic: Never sell out; be your own person.
Ability: Maximize your ability to the fullest. Enjoy varied interests and be well rounded.
Active: Keep fit and exercise. Stay off the couch and be part of a team.
Anti-bullying: Treat others as you would want to be treated. Establish an environment of acceptance, tolerance and respect.



BMX bike riders and members of Adrenaline Games Alliance (AGA) Nation perform stunts at the "Bring Your 'A Game' to School" event held on Nov. 20 at Howell Cheney Technical High School in Manchester, Conn. "Bring Your 'A Game' to School" is a National Guard-sponsored, travelling assembly series that showcases action sports athletes who perform technical tricks and stunts while reinforcing powerful, positive messages about success in life and in the National Guard. (photo by: Ms. Allison L. Joanis, CTNG Public Affairs Office)



Wesley Hark, Adrenaline Games Alliance (AGA) Nation member and BMX rider, performs a stunt over a faculty member at the National Guard "Bring Your 'A Game' to School" event held at Howell Cheney Technical High School on Nov. 20 in Manchester, Conn. "Bring Your 'A Game' to School" is a National Guard-sponsored, travelling assembly series that showcases action sports athletes who perform technical tricks and stunts while reinforcing powerful, positive messages about success in life and in the National Guard. (photo by: Ms. Allison L. Joanis, Connecticut National Guard Public Affairs Office)

Achieve: Reach your goals every day in life, schoolwork, athletics and family.

Fox said, bringing your A Game also aligns with the National Guard's Core Values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. Fox asked for student volunteers to recite what one core value meant to them in their day-to-day life.

"The Bring Your 'A Game' theme is awesome," said Command Sgt. Maj. George Barrow, Command Sergeant Major of the Connecticut Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion. "It aligns with Army values and addresses everyday civilian life mantras that set a strong

foundation for high school students to strive for to become a responsible adults."

Members of the student body as well as a faculty member also became part of the show, bravely positioning themselves beneath the BMX riders as they executed their choreographed stunts.

"This event was a perfect balance of visual engagement and sending a positive message about the National Guard," said Laura Blake, an English as a Second Language teacher at Cheney Tech. "Bringing together a popular teenage activity and important core values makes a meaningful connection."

Representatives of AGA Nation and the Connecticut National Guard handed out t-shirts, raffled a pair of headphones, and made information available to students who are interested in learning more about the Connecticut National Guard.

"We want to break the barrier with these kids - get them excited about what the Guard stands for," said Caron. "Let them know that we are more than just a uniform, that we are here for them, and we are here for our state."

This year, AGA Nation has been contracted by the National Guard to perform 350 free shows at high schools nationwide. On Nov. 20, they also traveled to Vinal Technical High School in Middletown. Schools interested in hosting the program should communicate their interest through their guidance counselors and the Connecticut Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion.

Home Sweet Home

CTNG Retiree Buys Home From Habitat for Humanity

MASTER SGT. (RET.) FRANK ALVARADO
NGACT BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven has a reputation for doing some great work in the past.

This time, they wanted to focus their efforts on helping Connecticut's veteran community.

After meetings in 2014 between members of the Habitat board, representatives of Liberty Bank and the OEF/OIF Coalition, a plan was hatched, and money was set aside to get to work.

As the Veterans Affairs Officer for the U.S. Small Business Administration and a member of the NGACT Board of Directors, I wanted to help find a veteran to purchase this new home – the efforts of what is known as a “veteran build.”

By September of 2014, Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven had received a grant of \$25,000 from Liberty Bank (President Chandler J. Howard is a Vietnam Veteran). Other grants to support the build came from Medtronic Corporation in New Haven (\$25,000) and Travelers Insurance (\$10,000). Once Habitat was able to secure the property from the City of New Haven for \$1,000, they could start to take applications from veterans and start to build what would ultimately be a 1,400-square-foot, Energy Star-certified home with three bedrooms, one and half bathrooms, located in the Fair Haven Heights section of New Haven.

The veteran who would ultimately purchase this home would receive a 25-year mortgage at 0% from Habitat. The project was completed in November 2015.

Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven selected Master Sgt. (Ret.) Cheryl Eberg, who along with daughter, Alyssa, and son, Navy veteran Brett, were required to perform 400 hours of work on building the house and making it their new home.

Master Sgt. Eberg had a long and distinguished military career, serving on Active Duty, in the Army Reserves and in the Connecticut Army National Guard. In 2006-2007, Cheryl spent 18 months in Iraq where she worked in logistics. Cheryl is currently employed by the West Haven Veterans Affairs as a Peer Specialist.

During the dedication ceremony on Nov. 19, Habitat personnel made it clear that this veteran build was just

the first, and work would continue to make other veteran builds possible in their service area.

“We at Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven are honored that a veteran like Cheryl chose to partner with us,” said Bill Casey, Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven Executive Director. “It was a privilege to work alongside the Eberg family to help them build their own home.”

“It has been an amazing experience learning how to build a home of my own,” said Eberg.

While this was the first full build project for a veteran, Habitat had previously rehabilitated a home for a wounded veteran in West Haven. For more information on the whole Habitat for Humanity process please visit their website www.habitatgnh.org or call their office in New Haven at 203-785-0794.

(Left) The “veteran build” home is a 1,400-square-foot, three-bedroom house. Located in the Fair Haven section of New Haven, Conn. Selected by Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven, Master Sgt. (Ret.) Cheryl Eberg and her two children, Brett and Alyssa, were required to perform 400 hours of work to make the house their home. The Greater New Haven Habitat chapter hopes to continue to make other veteran builds possible in their service area. (Photo courtesy of Master Sgt. (Ret.) Frank Alvarado)



Master Sgt. Cheryl Eberg purchased a 1,400-square-foot, three-bedroom house from Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven. Eberg has had a long and distinguished military career, serving on Active Duty, in the Army Reserves and the Connecticut Army National Guard. In 2006-2007, Cheryl spent 18 months in Iraq, working in logistics. Cheryl is currently employed by the West Haven Veterans Affairs as a Peer Specialist. (Photo courtesy of Master Sgt. (Ret.) Frank Alvarado)



Selected by Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven, Master Sgt. (Ret.) Cheryl Eberg (center) and her two children, Brett and Alyssa, were required to perform 400 hours of work to build a 1,400-square-foot, three-bedroom house located in the Fair Haven section of New Haven, Conn. The Greater New Haven Habitat chapter hopes to continue to make other veteran builds possible in their service area. (Photo courtesy of Master Sgt. (Ret.) Frank Alvarado)

Looking Back on 2015

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training, weapons qualification and other mission-essential tasks.

The state of Connecticut managed to escape Mother Nature's wrath to this point, with cold temperatures failing to bring significant snowfall for much of December and January. She had other plans, however, late in the month, when **Winter Storm Juno**, also known as the "Blizzard of 2015," dumped up to three feet of snow in some towns.

Gov. Malloy issued a travel ban and activated the Connecticut National Guard to assist with cleanup efforts in Stonington. Southeastern Connecticut saw an unusually startling amount of snow, as the storm moved east before making landfall, softening the blow on western Connecticut and New York.

February

The month was marked by changes in leadership at the federal, state and CTNG levels. **The 85th Troop Command** kicked it off on Feb. 7, as **Col. Chris Egan** assumed command of the Major Subordinate Command from **Col. Dan Spinetti** during a ceremony at the Camp Niantic Readiness Center. Egan previously served as commander of the 1-102nd Infantry Battalion, and currently serves as the full-time J-33. Spinetti now serves as the commander of the 143rd Regional Support Group.

Ten days later, **Ash Carter** took the oath of office and became the 25th secretary of defense in a White House ceremony.

In Connecticut, Gov. Malloy nominated **Sean Connolly**, an Army Reserve lieutenant colonel and senior Pratt and Whitney employee, to succeed Linda Schwartz as the Commissioner of Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs on Feb. 26. Connolly was later confirmed to the position.

On Feb. 22, **Pvt. Zachary Marchand** of the 142nd Area Support Medical Company was driving home from drill when he watched a vehicle careen off the highway at a high rate of speed. Marchand instinctively made his way to the vehicle, and helped all four passengers escape as gasoline leaked.

For his bravery and willingness to put the needs of others in front of his own, he received an Army Commendation Medal from his unit leadership, with Danbury Deputy Fire Chief Bernie Meehan in attendance. Meehan, one of the first on the scene, said Marchand, "was certainly instrumental in caring for these victims while awaiting resources."



In January, Winter Storm Juno, also known as the "Blizzard of 2015," dumped up to three feet of snow in some towns across the state. Governor Dannel P. Malloy issued a travel ban and activated the Connecticut National Guard to assist with clean-up efforts in Stonington, Connecticut. (Read more about this storm in the February 2015 issue of the Connecticut Guardian. (Photo courtesy of the Connecticut National Guard Public Affairs Office)



A C-130H Hercules aircraft assigned to the 103rd Airlift Wing pre pares to take off from Ramagen dirt strip, Bryon County, Georgia, Jan. 7, 2015. The aircraft was piloted by Lt. Col. Steve Gwinn and Maj. Josh Panis, who were qualifying for a special certification that permits them to land on short unimproved runways. Read this full story in the February 2015 issue of the Connecticut Guardian. (Photo by Senior Airman Emmanuel Santiago, 103rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs)

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March

Snow continued to fall deep into March, but it didn't deter the CTNG's finest from competing for the title of "Best Warrior." Junior Soldiers and NCOs alike strapped on their cold weather gear and were tested in a number of disciplines to determine Connecticut's finest.

On the Army side, **Spc. Jessica Abu-Hijleh** of the 142nd ASMC and **Staff Sgt. Andros Thomson** of D Company, 2nd Battalion, 104th Aviation Regiment took home the honors, besting fields of 11 and nine, respectively. Both fought hard and did their state proud as they represented the CTNG during May's Regional Best Warrior Competition at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts.

In the Air Guard, four titles were given out, as **Senior Airman Aaron LaPorte** of the 103rd Civil Engineer Squadron won Airman of the Year, **Tech. Sgt. Darrel Hanrahan** of the 103rd Medical Group won NCO of the Year, **Master Sgt. Nicole Thomas** of the 103rd Airlift Wing won Senior NCO of the Year and **Capt. Jessica Herndon** of the 103rd Medical Group was named Junior Officer of the Year.

March also saw the first two Army units deploy to support operations around the world, as 30 members of the **143rd Regional Support Group** and 50 members of the **192nd Military Police** boarded a plane bound for Texas, where they completed training prior to deploying to Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, respectively.

Commanded by Col. John Wiltse, the 143rd RSG deployed in an unprecedented fashion. With less than two months' notification, the unit trained together, overcame numerous obstacles, and deployed to provide command and control of a base in Afghanistan.

Lt. Col. Paul Deal and the 192nd MPs were already



Soldiers and NCOs competing for the title of Best Warrior step off on a 10-kilometer ruck march at the Connecticut Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition held at Camp Niantic and Stones Ranch Military Reservation in March of 2015. The falling snow made an already stressful event even more so, but the competitors dug deep inside themselves and finished the course. After the four-day Best Warrior Competition, Spc. Jessica Abu-Hijleh of the 142nd ASMC and Staff Sgt. Andros Thomson of D Company, 2nd Battalion, 104th Aviation Regiment took the top honors as Soldier and NCO of the year. The two went on to compete in the Regional Best Warrior Competition in Massachusetts in May. Read more about Best Warrior in the May and June 2015 issues of the Connecticut Guardian. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) Debbi Newton)



The traditional presentation of the State of Connecticut flag is made by (from left) Command Sgt. Maj. John S. Carragher, state command sergeant major, Maj. Gen. Thaddeus J. Martin, adjutant general, and Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, to Lt. Col. Paul Deal and Command Sgt. Maj. Boyd Dunbar of the 192nd Military Police Company. The unit deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to support detainee operations in March 2015. Read more about this send off as well as the send off of the 143rd RSG in the April 2015 issue of the Connecticut Guardian. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) Debbi Newton)

scheduled to leave around the same time as the RSG, but it worked out where both units were able to say goodbye to family and friends together, boarding a plane on Mar. 15 for Texas.

April

April saw the third CTARNG unit deploy as the **1-169 General Support Aviation Battalion** sent off 90 of its members to train in Texas before heading to Kosovo on April 22. The 1-169 GSAB, commanded by Lt. Col. Jeffrey LaPierre, was charged with providing aerial medical evacuation, transportation

support and fuel testing alongside Army Reserve units from California and Florida.

It isn't often the CTNG gets the opportunity to travel to tropical climates, but six members of the **1109th Theatre Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group** were given the chance to travel to **Christiansted, St. Croix** to retrieve two UH-72 Lakota helicopters for maintenance April 13.

Led by **Sgt. 1st Class Ray Rivera**, Component Shop Supervisor for the 1109th, the helicopters were loaded on C-17s and brought back to Groton for repairs and inspections, according to Lt. Col. Robert Burnside, TASM-G Executive Officer.

"It is an honor and privilege to have this opportunity," said Burnside. "Working with the Virgin Islands Guard to repair and maintain the Lakotas back in Connecticut shows the versatility and skill sets of the maintainers in the TASM-G."

The mission is crucial, according to **Maj. Gen. Thad Martin**, Adjutant General of the CTNG.

"As the National Guard seeks solutions for the next phase of Lakota maintenance, the 1109th TASM-G has welcomed this new challenge," said Martin. "With the current maintenance contract due to expire next year, we want to show that the Soldiers of the Connecticut aviation maintenance community are up to the task."

The National Guard saw big changes at the top, as
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(left) Soldiers of the 1109th Theatre Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group offloads a United States Virgin Islands National Guard UH-72 (Lakota) helicopter from a C-17 at the TASMG facility in Groton, Connecticut, April 13. The TASMG traveled to Christiansted, St. Croix to retrieve the aircraft to return home in order to perform repairs and inspections required by The Virgin Islands National Guard. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class William Ortiz, 1109th TASMG UPAR)

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Army **Lt. Gen. Timothy Kadavy** received his third star and was sworn in as the 20th director of the Army National Guard April 14.

“Lt. Gen. Kadavy’s experience is unparalleled,” said Army Gen. Raymond Odierno (Army Chief of Staff at the time of his quote). “I am very proud of the fact that he is going to run the Army National Guard.”



Members of 1-169th Aviation Regiment perform their mobilization training at Ft. Hood, Texas before they deployed to Kosovo in May. At their mobilization station, they met up and trained with another National Guard unit from Louisiana, and two army reserve units from California and Florida. The group is currently deployed to Kosovo as Task Force Hurricane with the Multinational Battle Group-East. Read more about their mobilization in the July 2-15 issue of the Connecticut Guardian. (Photo by 1st Lt. Krista Yaglowski, Task Force Hurricane S2; 1-169th UPAR)

May

As the weather became warmer and the snow finally melted, the **1048th Medium Truck Company** headed south for a 15-day, 50,000-mile mission at the Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point, North Carolina May 2.

Hauling nearly 1.5 million pounds of ammunition on their fleet of M915 tractors, the 1048th impressed Army Sustainment Command leadership with their abilities according to Capt. Giancarlo D’Angelo, training officer for the 143rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion – the 1048th’s higher headquarters. The unit travelled between MOTSU, Crane Army Ammunition Depot in Indiana and Letterkenny Army Depot in Pennsylvania.

CTNG members continued to put the wellbeing of others in front of their own, as **Staff Sgt. Brian Davies** and **Staff Sgt. Steven Young** of the 103rd Security Forces Squadron encountered a car accident on a lunch break from training May 2. They assessed the injuries and provided assistance to first responders, before returning



Spc. Daniel Ferreira performs preventative checks and maintenance on his M915A5 prior to heading out on a convoy back to Connecticut following a 15-day, 50,000-mile mission at the Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point, North Carolina. (Photo by Capt. Giancarlo D’Angelo, 143rd Combat Support Sustainment Support Battalion)

to work without saying a word to their fellow airmen.

“I didn’t feel what I did was anything above and beyond what anyone else in our unit does every day in their civilian careers,” Davies said.

Lt. Gen. Stanley Clarke, Director of the Air National Guard, dropped by the Bradley Air National Guard Base in East Granby May 11 for a visit with members of the

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103rd Air Wing and a facility tour.

May also marked a yearly tradition, as the CTNG held the 66th annual **Armed Forces Day Luncheon** at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville, Conn., May 15. Joined by **Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman**, keynote speaker **Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy**, TAG of the New York National Guard, Maj. Gen. Martin and a host of other elected officials, a member of each branch of service was honored.

May also marked the beginning of a six-month long project to replace the William A. O'Neill Armory's skylight. The project was marked by a massive 200-foot crane towering above the armory for months as a construction crew worked tirelessly to replace over 60 tons of asphalt and the old glass with energy efficient, blast-proof glass and water-resistant shingling.

June

The month kicked off with a bang, as one of Connecticut's own was named Commandant of the Air Force First Sergeants Academy at Maxwell Air Force Base, Gunter Annex, Alabama, June 3.

Chief Master Sgt. Danny Doucette served in both the New York and Connecticut Air National Guards, and is now the first Air National Guardsman to be named commandant.

"My selection doesn't change anything," Doucette said in a June interview with The Connecticut Guardian. "Everything is going as planned."

That same day, members of the **192nd Military Police**, led by **1st Sgt. Jimmie Smith**, completed a Law Enforcement Torch Run for the Special Olympics in an event that covers more than 500 miles. Running alongside members of East Lyme law enforcement, the MPs

completed about four miles before handing the torch off to students and staff of Waterford High School.

"It was a great opportunity to be part of the Law Enforcement Torch Run," said Smith. "As a representative of law enforcement in the CTARNG, I felt great pride in not only representing the CTARNG, but running together with the community of East Lyme."

June also marked the continuation of a very busy annual training season, and **Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania**, welcomed three of the CTARNG's units. **The 143rd Regional Support Group, 118th Medical Battalion and 192nd Engineer Battalion** worked together to improve the post and improve their skills in a field environment.

Medics operated out of a field hospital while engineers dug culverts and ditches, drilled wells and helped build a runway for drone operators. The RSG, with half the unit still deployed, served as the higher headquarters while utilizing simulated exercise training for the staff.

Other annual trainings on the Army side took place at



Sgt. Victoria Tuttle of the 248th Engineer Company, supervises scraper work as part of a trench digging operation for a new range being built at Ft. Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. The unit traveled to FIG for their 2015 Annual Training in June. Read more about their mission and the other units who completed AT at FIG in 2015 in the July issue of the Connecticut Guardian. (Photo by Spc. Melody Lorello, HHC 192nd Engineer Battalion)

West Point (192nd MPs) and Stones Ranch (**Joint Force Headquarters**).

The **New London Armory** also saw upgrades in anticipation of a new unit moving to town in 2016. **Charlie Company, 572nd (Signal) Brigade Engineer Battalion**, is expected to occupy the armory, which required major renovations to include a new drill shed floor, ceilings, air conditioning, and latrines.

Check the February Issue of the Guardian for Part Two of this series including highlights from July through December of 2015!



Members of the 192nd Military Police Battalion participated in the 2015 Special Olympics Torch Run as part of the local law enforcement community. The MP's ran a four-mile leg of the race that spans more than 500 miles before passing the lit torch off to students and staff at Waterford High School in Waterford, Connecticut. (Photo by Spc. Julissa Perez, 192nd Military Police Battalion UPAR)



Members of the 247th Engineer Detachment (Well Drillers) work to drill a well during their two weeks of annual training at Ft. Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania in June of 2015. The well drillers drilled down more than 400 feet to provide a permanent well to assist fire-fighting at the installation for fire prevention at the mass casualty training area at FIG. Read more about their mission and the other units who completed AT at FIG in the July 2015 issue of the Connecticut Guardian. (Photo by Maj. George Duggan, 143rd Regional Support Group Public Affairs)

Health & Fitness

New Year, New You - Get Back on Track With Your Diet

1ST SGT. COREY LEWIS
D COMPANY, 1-102ND INFANTRY BATTALION

Are you one of 49,843,834 Americans who are considering a diet in order to lose weight?

Stop before you spend one dime on any pills, potions, or other magic formulas promised by the multi-billion dollar diet industry. Your long-term weight loss plan can be as simple as implementing some healthy eating habits into your lifestyle. Here are some answers to the most basic questions about how you can lead a healthier life with a slimmer waistline.

How often should I eat?

Eat three to four times per day, and stop when you are 80 percent full. It is a myth that eating more frequent small meals speeds up your metabolism. What it will do is help you to avoid the evil snacks at night-time, a time of weakness, when we all tend to fail. If you need to eat more than the three to four times, be sure it is only when you are hungry and reach for whole foods like proteins and vegetables. Starving yourself will not only fail you in the long-term, it can lead to serious health issues, and drastically cutting calories can lead to bingeing or over compensating the next time you eat.

When I make my meals, what should be on my plate?

For the best portion sizes, look no further than your own two hands as a unit of measurement.

For lean sources of protein like beef, chicken, fish, lamb, or even beans, a healthy portion is the size of your palm. If you are training hard at the gym, add another half portion or "half-palm" to your meal.

For vegetables like green beans, broccoli, or cauliflower, a good portion would be one or two fist sizes.

Servings of healthy fats like avocado, almonds, or olive oil should be about the size of your thumb.

What should I avoid eating or drinking?

Avoid processed foods that are high in preservatives and sugar. Try to stay away from starchy carbohydrates like rice, pasta, cereal and white potatoes. Junk foods such as pizza, fries, all soda, sugary drinks, and candy are also on the no-no list. Lastly, limit your alcohol consumption to two to three drinks per week or eliminate it all together.

What are some other helpful tips?

Enjoy your meals. Take 15-20 minutes to eat and set your fork down in between each bite. When eating your meal, do not multi-task, focus on eating alone. This will help you from mindlessly overeating.

Make sure you drink plenty water. Black coffee in limited amounts is okay, but green tea would be the preferred hot beverage.

These tips and helpful hints are a healthy, sustainable way to help you lose weight and keep it off, not to mention the all of the other health benefits that go along with eating a healthy diet. Fad diets and short-term calorie restrictions do not work and will only set you up for long-term failure.

Sample Meal Plan

Breakfast (8-9 a.m.) - Two eggs and two egg whites, mushrooms, broccoli, and one ounce sharp cheddar cheese.

Lunch (12-1 p.m.) - A large salad with balsamic vinegar, topped with a healthy protein like tuna, chicken or cottage cheese.

Afternoon Snack (3-4 p.m.) - Protein shake or bar or one half portion of a protein like Greek yogurt, a hardboiled egg, cottage cheese, or even broccoli.

Dinner (6-7 p.m.) - A portion of a healthy protein like chicken, a portion of green beans, a portion of cabbage, and 22 almonds, which generally equates to one ounce of almonds.

Losing the weight and maintaining the weight loss is a life long journey. Find the foods you enjoy, and live a leaner, healthier you.

1st Sgt. Corey Lewis is a 20-year veteran of the Connecticut National Guard, currently assigned as the First Sergeant for D Company, 1-102nd Infantry Battalion. Following his 2010 deployment, he wrote a book about getting fit by focusing on nutrition.

He has a Facebook fan page where he helps his more than 22,000 followers get into shape using body weight exercises, resistance bands, kettle bells and other home gym equipment.

For fitness questions, Lewis can be contacted at corey.a.lewis3.mil@mail.mil.

Editor's Note: The opinions in this column belong to the writer based on his experience. Always consult your doctor before drastically altering your diet and exercise habits.

CT Soldiers Host Manchester Run Road Race Shadow Run in Kosovo

Members of the 1-169th Aviation Regiment did not let their deployment keep them from participating in a time-honored Connecticut Thanksgiving Day tradition, the Manchester Road Race.

At 10 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day, thousands of runners gathered on Main St. in Manchester, Conn. for the start of the race. At the very same time, 4 p.m. local time at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, members of the 1-169th, along with more than 30 other soldiers prepared to run the very same race.

The shadow run was organized by 1st Lt. Benjamin Sullivan, and Staff Sgt. Brian Koehler of the 1-169th, both who have run the Manchester Road Race numerous times in the past. To make the run official, Sullivan and Koehler plotted the 4.748-mile course with a GPS device and worked alongside organizers of the MRR. For the race, all registered overseas participants were sent official MRR number bibs, shirts, and they will be recognized as having completed the 2015 MRR for longevity purposes.

Sullivan also helped to organize the Army 10-Miler shadow run in September 2015.

Members of the 1-169th Aviation Regiment are deployed to Kosovo with the Multinational Battle Group - East, Task Force Hurricane. The task force mission is to provide aerial medical evacuation, transportation support and fuel testing.

(Photo courtesy of 1st Lt. Krista Yaglowksi, 1-169th Aviation Regiment UPAR)



AROUND OUR GUARD

*A Glimpse at Connecticut
Guardsmen and Events*



Connecticut Celebrates the National Guard's 379th Birthday

The 169th Regional Training Institute celebrated the Army National Guard's 379th birthday at the RTI's dining facility, with a cake, Dec. 13, in Niantic. From left to right, RTI Regimental Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Roy, Private Hailey Ballou (the Recruit Sustainment Program's youngest soldier), Master Sgt. Timothy Harrison (the Regiment's oldest soldier) and Col. Ralph Hedenberg, Regimental Commander. (Photo courtesy of Maj. Chris Strong, 169th RTI)

Germanese Takes Command of the 1-169th RTI (OCS)

(left) Col. Ralph Hedenberg, commander of the 169th Regional Training Institute, passes the guidon to Lt. Col. Frank Germanese, incoming commander of the 1st Battalion, 169th RTI (OCS). Lt. Col. Richard Leydon (left) relinquished command at a ceremony held Dec. 13 in Niantic. (Photo courtesy of Maj. Chris Strong, 169th RTI)



Connecticut Guardsmen Receive State Police Award for Heroic Act

(bottom right) Sgt. Kyle Fijalkowski (right) and Sgt. Andrew Sthilaire, both of the 1109th TASMG, were presented the Commissioner's Recognition Award at a Connecticut State Police Service Award Ceremony on Nov. 10 at the State Police Training Academy in Meriden, Conn. The ceremony honored troopers and civilians who demonstrate exceptional service. Fijalkowski and Sthilaire were recognized for providing immediate emergency response to motorists involved in a motor vehicle accident on Route 2 in Glastonbury on May 24. According to Police reports, they extracted a trapped driver out of a smoking vehicle, and treated her for shock until EMS arrived to provide assistance. (Photo courtesy of the Connecticut State Police)



(bottom left) Sgt. Andrew Sthilaire and Sgt. Kyle Fijalkowski accept the Commissioner's Recognition Award at a ceremony held by the Connecticut State Police on Nov. 10. (Photo courtesy of the Connecticut State Police)



Operation E.L.F. 2015

Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman & the Connecticut National Guard Host Holiday Party for Connecticut's Military Kids

CAPT. MIKE PETERSEN
STATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER &
MS. ALLISON L. JOANIS
CTNG PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Not even the Grinch himself could dampen the spirit of the holidays at the 13th annual Operation E.L.F. (Embracing Lonely Families) holiday party held at the William A. O'Neill Armory in Hartford on Dec. 19.

Nearly 120 family members, to include over 70 children of deployed military members attended the event that was run by the Connecticut National Guard Service Member and Family Support Center.

"During the holidays and throughout the year, Operation E.L.F. is a great opportunity to give back to our military members and their families – and it is part of a broader statewide effort to ensure housing, jobs and a strong future for our military and veterans," said Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman. "We are so grateful for the volunteers and the donors who help support Connecticut's military families – especially during long deployments when their loved ones are far from home. We hope for their safe and speedy return."

The holiday party included games, activities and food all provided by donors and run by more than 40 volunteers.

Military kids were greeted by guests such as the Dr. Seuss characters, the Grinch, and Cindy Lou Who; Sonar, mascot to the Hartford Wolf Pack hockey team, and a special appearance by Santa Claus.

Following Santa's, military kids were presented with wrapped gifts and gift cards donated by Connecticut citizens and businesses.

Established in 2003, Operation E.L.F. helps to provide support to the state's military families to help deal with the stresses of separation due to deployment, and to ease financial hardships as a result of their call to active duty. Since its inception Operation E.L.F. has been expanded to serve as an annual assistance and gift drive to enable the Connecticut Service Member and Family Support Center to support military members during times of need.

"Although we highlight Operation E.L.F. through a holiday donation campaign, we want the military families of Connecticut to know that we are here to help all year long," Major Gen. Thaddeus J. Martin said.

"The goal is to help alleviate stress on those with a loved one answering the nation's call overseas, and that is a year-round effort – not just during the holidays."

The Connecticut National Guard currently has more than 240 service members deployed around the world.



Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman and Major Gen. Thaddeus J. Martin, Adjutant General of the Connecticut National Guard, welcome more than 120 military family members to the 13th annual Operation E.L.F. (Embracing Lonely Families) holiday party held at the William A. O'Neill Armory in Hartford, Conn. on Dec. 19. (Photo by Ms. Allison L. Joanis, Connecticut National Guard Public Affairs Office)



(left) The Grinch, and Cindy Lou Who, characters from Dr. Seuss' book, "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," made animated appearances at the 13th annual Operation E.L.F. holiday party at the William A. O'Neill Armory in Hartford, Conn. on Dec. 19. The party hosted more than 120 family members to include over 70 children of deployed military members. The Grinch was played by Sgt. Maj. Mark O'Donnell of the 1109th TASMG, and Cindy Lou Who was played by Emely Chenard, a military child and member of CT Operation Military Kids. (Photo by Ms. Allison L. Joanis, Connecticut National Guard Public Affairs Office)

(right) Sonar, the mascot for the Hartford Wolf Pack, attended the 13th annual Operation E.L.F. Holiday party at the William A. O'Neill Armory in Hartford, Conn. on Dec. 13. The party hosted more than 120 family members to include over 70 children of deployed military members. Sonar and members of the Hartford Wolf Pack donated more than 100 stuffed toys to Operation E.L.F. in 2015. (Photo courtesy of Aislyn Hedenberg)





(left) Santa Claus arrives at the Operation E.L.F. holiday party at the William A. O'Neill Armory on Dec. 19. His visit came in time to make sure that all of the military children were good in 2015. Following their meeting with Santa, each child received a bundle of wrapped gifts donated by citizens and businesses of Connecticut. Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Kent Carlson played Santa this year, as he has for each year of Operation E.L.F. (Photo by Ms. Allison L. Joanis, Connecticut National Guard Public Affairs Office)

(below) Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman visits with a military family at the 13th annual Operation E.L.F. holiday party held at the William A. O'Neill Armory in Hartford, Conn. on Dec. 19. The party hosted more than 120 family members to include over 70 children of deployed military members. Operation E.L.F. was established in 2003 to provide support to the state's military families to help deal with the stresses of separation due to deployment, and to ease financial hardships as a result of their call to active duty. Since its inception, Operation E.L.F. has been expanded to serve as an annual assistance and gift drive to enable the Connecticut Service Member and Family Support Center to support military members during times of need. (Photo courtesy of Aislyn Hedenberg)



(above) A military child gets her face painted at the Operation E.L.F. holiday party at the William A. O'Neill Armory in Hartford on Dec. 19. Face painting was one of the activity stations set up for the military kids to enjoy. Other stations included arts and crafts, reindeer games, bounce houses, a photo booth, and a viewing of, "How the Grinch Stole Christmas." The 13th annual Operation E.L.F. party hosted more than 120 family members to include over 70 children of deployed military members. All of the toys, gifts and food were donated Connecticut citizens and businesses, and the party was staffed by over 40 volunteers. (Photo by Ms. Allison L. Joanis, Connecticut National Guard Public Affairs Office)

(right) Kim Hoffman, Director of the Connecticut National Guard Service Member and Family Support Center, presents a military child with a bundle of gifts following his visit with Santa at the Operation E.L.F. holiday party at the William A. O'Neill Armory on Dec 19. Citizens and businesses of Connecticut donated hundreds of toys and thousands of dollars in gift cards to the Operation E.L.F. program this year. The 13th annual Operation E.L.F. party hosted more than 120 family members to include over 70 children of deployed military members. All of the toys, gifts and food were provided by Connecticut citizens and businesses, and the party was staffed by over 40 volunteers. (Photo courtesy of Aislyn Hedenberg)



Enlisted Update



CHIEF MASTER SGT.
EDWARD GOULD

Greetings Airmen and Soldiers, and welcome to January 2016. Where does the time go? It seems like only yesterday we were ringing in 2015.

In my January 2015 column, I posed many of the same questions I will ask you again. As this new year begins, we can look back on our accomplishments

of 2015 and look forward to the challenges of 2016.

This year the Flying Yankees will continue their efforts to become a fully-functional airlift wing. Our Yankee watch brothers and sisters of the 103rd Air Control Squadron will prepare for their deployment in support of our national security interests. In February, our Airmen will welcome the 11th Command Chief Master Sergeant of the Air National Guard, Chief Master Sgt. James Hotaling.

The Airmen of the Connecticut Air National Guard will have a chance to hear Hotaling's inspiring perspective on the enlisted force structure as it is outlined in Air Force Instruction 36-2618, also known as, "The Little Brown Book."

In March, we will have our annual awards ceremony and will celebrate the accomplishments of the Airmen of the 103rd Airlift Wing. This year, the award ceremony will need to deviate from the norm because the hangar will again be unavailable due to the construction.

In an effort to increase the reverence these awards

are due, we are planning to host the annual awards ceremony on the drill shed floor of the William A. O'Neill Armory in Hartford. This historic facility, built in 1909 and modernized in 1999, is the gem of the Connecticut National Guard's facilities. All Connecticut National Guardsmen should feel welcome there. More details on the award ceremony will be forthcoming.

As 2016 begins some of us have, or will, make resolutions of one kind or another, designed to improve ourselves in some respect. Sometimes these resolutions are for personal improvement. For example, maybe you are finally giving up that tobacco habit. In my personal experience, eliminating that one thing can do more to improve your physical resiliency than almost anything else you could do, which happened for me when I gave up my tobacco habit almost two years ago.

Sometimes the resolution involves professional accomplishment. Maybe this is the year you finish up those couple of classes to complete your degree program and improve your mental resiliency. Maybe this is the year you finally complete the Professional Military Education that you have been putting off. Regardless of the reason, PME is crucial to your career, and should always be a goal.

Maybe 2016 could be the year that you commit to improving your physical resiliency by improving your physical fitness scores. These days, there are technologies that can be leveraged and support systems in place to make this the year you make this resolution stick. Recently, the Army National Guard launched a web site, "Guard your Health." This web site, found at <http://www.guardyourhealth.com>, contains an abundance of information for soldiers regarding topics such as, improving APFT results, do-it-yourself health challenges and a leadership toolkit to name just a few.

According to the web site information, "Guard Your Health is a resource for Army National Guard Soldiers and family members. Find health-related tools and information. Hear from fellow Soldiers and Families. Make medical readiness part of your personal mission." Products like this prove how seriously your National Guard cares about you, its most important asset.

Airmen should already be very familiar with the "Ready Airman" website established by the Air National Guard. It can be found at <http://readyairman.org> and has mobile apps that can be downloaded. Similar to the Army's "Guard Your Health," it is packed with resources to help you assist you in many ways. Ready Airman also links to other sites that can also provide assistance and resources for whatever topic you have in mind.

Is this the year you improve your financial resiliency. This is another arena where technology and support systems exist today that just a few short years ago were unheard of. One example of technology that exists to help you achieve your goals is MilitaryOneSource.com, This one website has numerous areas of information that all military personnel, and their families, can use to help them find help for a variety of topics, including ways to improve your financial resiliency.

In 2015, I challenged all airmen and soldiers alike to strive to be the best airman or soldier that you could be. To maintain your technical proficiencies, maintain your physical and mental readiness, and work to develop the talents and skills that make our National Guard's great. In 2016 the National Guard will continue to be protect the homeland, fight America's wars and build global partnerships.

Make 2016 Your Best Year Yet

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- Turn off Geotagging on your devices
- Don't post Personal Identifying Info
- Watch for OPSEC violations
- Post with common sense!

Be sure to check and adjust your settings!

INSIDE OCS:

Conquering the Mountains of Officer Candidate School

OFFICER CANDIDATE MELISSA MACIAG
OCS CLASS 61

Everyone experiences a moment in their daily routine when, for a split second, they are completely relaxed with a feeling of accomplishment running through their mind.

As an officer candidate of Class 61, this moment is felt after successfully completing each required milestone of the intense program. Specifically that of passing the various tests, whether a written test in the classroom or a physical test in the field and if not for these reasons, then the moment is felt as soon as you exit the gates of Camp Niantic having completed one more month of Officer Candidate School.

This past month, the officer candidates of Class 61 completed their fourth month of Phase 2, and there were a few moments where the candidates experienced a feeling of accomplishment. Candidates were focused on long hours of classroom instruction, followed by a mandatory exam and a 10-mile ruck march.

The first deep exhale came after the candidates learned that, as a class, they received a 100 percent go on their exam, which included topics of Staff Structure, Operational Terms and Graphic Organizations and Platoon Operation Orders. This exam marks a halfway point with five exams completed, and only five exams remaining.

The second came after candidates finished a 10-mile ruck march, carrying a 35-pound pack around Camp Smith, N.Y., in less than three-and-a-half hours. Prior to this, the candidates were required to successfully complete both a five and seven-mile ruck march in and around Camp Niantic and Stones Ranch. A ruck march at Camp Smith, however, is a whole different experience and the candidates were told there was no comparison to the intensity of the ruck march they were about to embark on.

Portions of the ruck march took candidates through Camp Smith's hills, some with a 23-percent incline in elevation. An incline of this magnitude means nothing until you are at the base of the hill and look up at the loose gravel and sharp bends. Less than half way up the hill, it requires a conscious effort to put one foot in front of the other as the gravel gives out from beneath the footing and the beads of sweat change from droplets to a continuous flow.

Climbing this hill at Camp Smith can be related to a candidate's climb through Officer Candidate School. The obstacles and challenges of the program come in various sizes and magnitudes, just as the hills from this ruck march. Just as when climbing the hills, the candidates are reminded to put one foot in front of the

other as each obstacle is presented. It is key to set goals for yourself, especially personal "mini" goals that help to keep the mind focused and the body moving. Without these personal goals, the OCS program would be even more difficult.

During Phase 1, I was asked of my opinion of the program. I stated that the program is intense, and is comprised of 90 percent mental determination and 10 percent physical ability. Having successfully completed four months of Phase 2 and this 10-mile ruck march, I firmly stand by this statement. No matter the elevation of the incline or the physical demands, it all comes down to mental stamina. If the mind can stay strong and focused then the body will follow suit. As candidates, we are regularly told that the mind will quit before the body does and once the mind quits, you have failed yourself and most likely your soldiers.

As my fellow officer candidates and I continue through this program, the challenges and hills ahead will increase in difficulty to test our perseverance. After successfully completing this past drill I feel that we have added to our foundation; the foundation that will make the candidates of Class 61 strong, determined and successful officers of the Connecticut Army National Guard.

Become an Officer in the CTARNG

CAPT. ULRICK BRICE
CTARNG RECRUITING AND RETENTION



For more than 200 years, the U.S. Army has trained some of the world's most renowned leaders. From captains of industry to presidents of the United States, many begin their paths as Army officers. Today, that same world-class training is creating the next generation of leaders and is available to those individuals who are

looking to increase their leadership role in the Connecticut Army National Guard.

Rising through the ranks, commissioned officers become managers and problem-solvers. They maintain a commitment to excellence, make critical decisions, lead missions, and guide soldiers. The program through which many of them are forged is the CTARNG Officer Candidate School.

OCS is an intense leadership training program. It is both physically and mentally challenging and not for everyone. However, those who are accepted and make it through the program often agree it is one of the most

rewarding experiences of their lives. Whether you are a new soldier or have prior military experience, OCS will help transform you into a leader.

The basic requirements for Officer Candidate School are:

- **Be a US Citizen**
- **Completed Basic Training**
- **Have at least 90 college credit hours**
- **GT Score of 110 or higher (Non waiverable)**
- **Chapter 2 Physical**
- **Current passing APFT and within height/weight standards**
- **Able to obtain a secret security clearance prior to commissioning**
- **Not older than 41 years 364 days old at commissioning for prior service / 35 for non-prior service**
- **Have a demonstrated potential for leadership at higher levels**
- **Recommendation from chain of command and State OCS Board**

The State OCS program is a 15 to 18 month course of instruction conducted from March to August of the following year. OCS candidates are attached to the 169th Regional Training Institute and conduct all drill weekends

at Camp Niantic, as well as complete two separate annual training periods.

Upon completion of OCS, you will attend the Basic Officer Leadership Course (BOLC). The location and duration of the course depends on your assigned branch. The majority are roughly 16 weeks in duration. The following branches are available to officers in the CTARNG:

- **Infantry**
- **Adjutant General**
- **Aviation**
- **Chemical**
- **Engineer**
- **Military Police**
- **Medical Services**
- **Ordnance**
- **Quartermaster**
- **Signal**
- **Transportation**

In addition to the pride you'll feel becoming an officer has many other benefits. For more information on the OCS Program please contact your chain of command, or the RRB Officer Strength Manager, Capt. Ulrick Brice, at Ulrick.g.brice.mil@mail.mil.

VA Connecticut - Another Resource For Suicide Prevention

CHRISTINA ALLEN, LCSW
SUICIDE PREVENTION COORDINATOR

One veteran suicide is too many.

Veterans Affairs is committed to ensuring the safety of our veterans, especially when they are in crisis. We aim to do this by raising awareness of services for veterans in crisis and at risk for suicide. The Suicide Prevention Program assists in providing connection to mental health care services which are supplemented by programs designed to help individuals and families engage in care.

Suicide Prevention Coordinators are available as a resource for all veterans who may be struggling with a wide array of mental health and access issues. Veterans who have been identified as high risk receive an enhanced level of care, including missed appointment follow-ups, safety planning, and increased frequency of contact during vulnerable periods. VA has resources to get veterans on the road to recovery, but we need the help of our community to make sure our veterans know support is there.

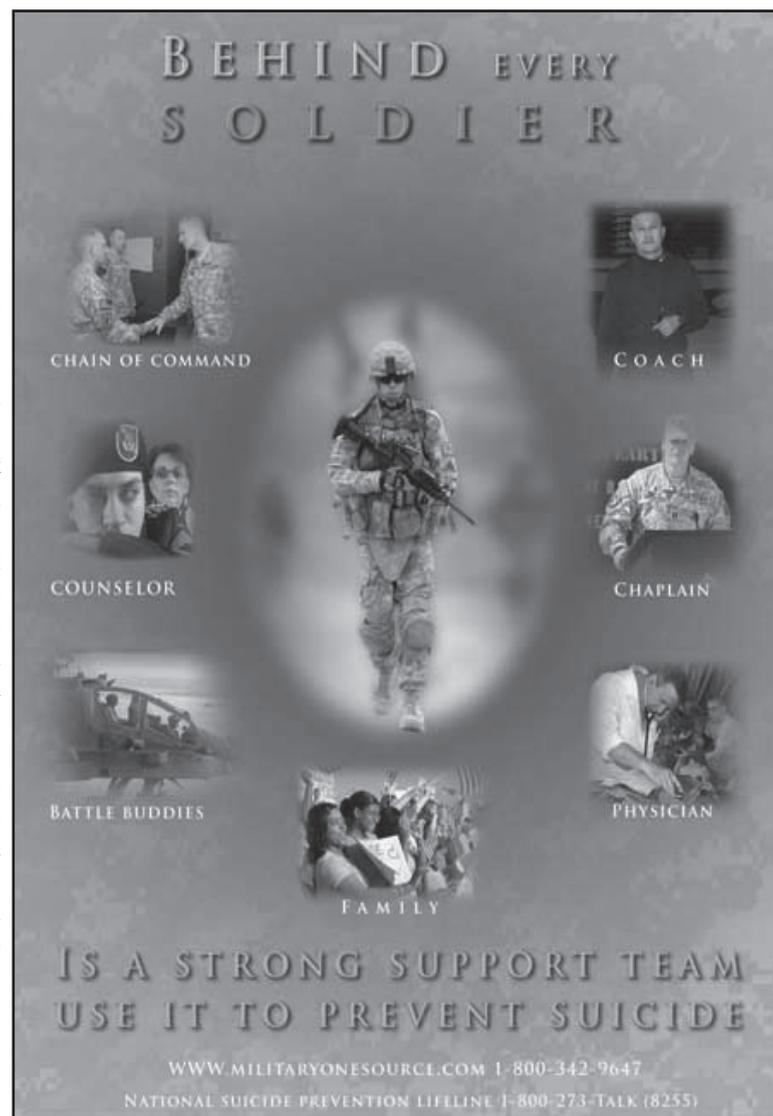
Veterans are often referred to Suicide Prevention Coordinators by responders staffing the Veteran's Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255, then press 1 for veterans). The Veteran's Crisis Line is a free, confidential, and anonymous source of support with options to text, chat online, or speak to a responder. This resource operates

24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please visit www.veteranscrisisline.net for more information.

The Suicide Prevention Program also seeks to develop community partnerships and provide outreach at events where Veterans are likely to be in attendance. Education programs such as Operation S.A.V.E. (Signs of Suicidal thinking, Ask the questions, Validate the experience with the veteran, and Expedite help) are offered to veterans and VA employees because we believe that suicide prevention is everyone's business.

VACT has three Suicide Prevention Coordinators who are available to provide consultation, outreach, education, and training.

If you, your organization, or a veteran you know would benefit from these services please contact: Mark Lawless, LCSW (203-932-5711 ext. 7294), Latonya Harts, LCSW (203-932-5711 ext. 6893) or Christina Allen, LCSW (203-932-5711 ext. 2550).



RETIREE VOICE:

SGT. 1ST CLASS (RET.) STEPHANIE CYR
RETIREE AFFAIRS COLUMNIST

November's article focused on phone and email scams. This month we will focus on three consumer frauds that are more sophisticated and equally dangerous.

Reverse mortgage advertisements appear everywhere, and though a viable option for some seniors, they can be a scam. A reverse mortgage is a legitimate tool that allows those 62 and older to convert their home equity into cash. Seniors on a fixed income, are "house-rich," as Consumer Reports describes them, and are able to turn this equity into cash.

However, they can also be most vulnerable to reverse mortgage fraud. One scam, "Turn Around Mortgages," promises to stop foreclosures. Another common scam known as an Equity Theft Scheme sells a new home and gives the individual a property deed, and then has the deed owner obtain a reverse mortgage. The scammers steal the proceeds.

Seniors considering a reverse mortgage can check the Housing and Urban Development website for a list of

Consumer Scams Continued

approved lenders. Always do your research. Be suspicious of being able to purchase a home without a down payment, and never sign documents for property you didn't buy.

Self-directed-IRA scams are widespread. It allows individuals to place unconventional assets like physical gold or real estate into self-directed-IRAs. There is more paperwork and a custodian is usually needed to manage such an account, but there is a serious lack of oversight and quality control. Be aware of self-directed plans asking for money immediately in order not to lose the opportunity. When considering a self-directed-IRA, use the Financial Industry's Regulatory Authority's Broker Check to find a reputable adviser.

Beware of lottery scams, like the 876 scams named for the Jamaican area code from which they originate. A solicitor informs the target about a large sum of money won, but requires a "process fee" be sent. These scams come usually by phone or mail. If you don't remember entering a contest, chances are you didn't, and you should ignore the call or throw away any mail.

Remember, if it is too good to be true, it probably is.

Always be suspicious and be safe, rather than sorry.

TRICARE Beneficiaries Update:

Beginning December 1, TRICARE beneficiaries may be able to pay less for select brand name maintenance drugs. If prescriptions are filled at a retail pharmacy, you may need to move your prescriptions to a military pharmacy or TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery. If this is not done, individuals may have to pay the full cost of their prescriptions. Prescriptions can be moved by contacting TRICARE pharmacy contractor, Express Scripts (ESI) at 1-877-363-1303 or using ESI's secure online portal.

It allows for two 30-day refills from a retail pharmacy. However, if the refills run out in December, the next refills will need to be through home delivery or military pharmacy. Affected participants should have received several notifications from ESI. Using TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery is safe, low-cost, not to mention convenient option for maintenance drugs, saving up to \$176 yearly for each brand you switch to home delivery.

Off the Bookshelf: The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader: *Becoming the Person Others Will Want to Follow*

STAFF SGT. BENJAMIN SIMON
JFHQ PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Successful leadership is not quantifiable.

Yes, a leader can be measured by the productivity and the success rates of his team and subordinates, but the intangible qualities that act as an adhesive in keeping teams together and motivating individual members are not easily identified. In fact, it's probably much easier to describe poor leadership traits than great ones.

As an exercise, think about the drill sergeants you considered to be good in basic training. Think about your great teachers in high school and college. Think about the supervisor at work that influenced you positively. Think about the employee at your local hardware store who taught you how to use a tool or how to get started on a home improvement project without making you feel bad. These people all possessed the types of effective leadership qualities that, as military service members, it would behoove us to emulate.

John C. Maxwell has published a number of books on the importance of effective leadership and practices to use to develop it. His texts have sold millions of copies, and he tours the world delivering lectures at colleges and conventions. In "The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader," Maxwell lists a number of traits that he believes are compulsory of good leaders to cultivate. Most of these traits are, of course, also referenced in military leadership guides and courses:

Character, Charisma, Commitment, Communication, Competence, Courage,

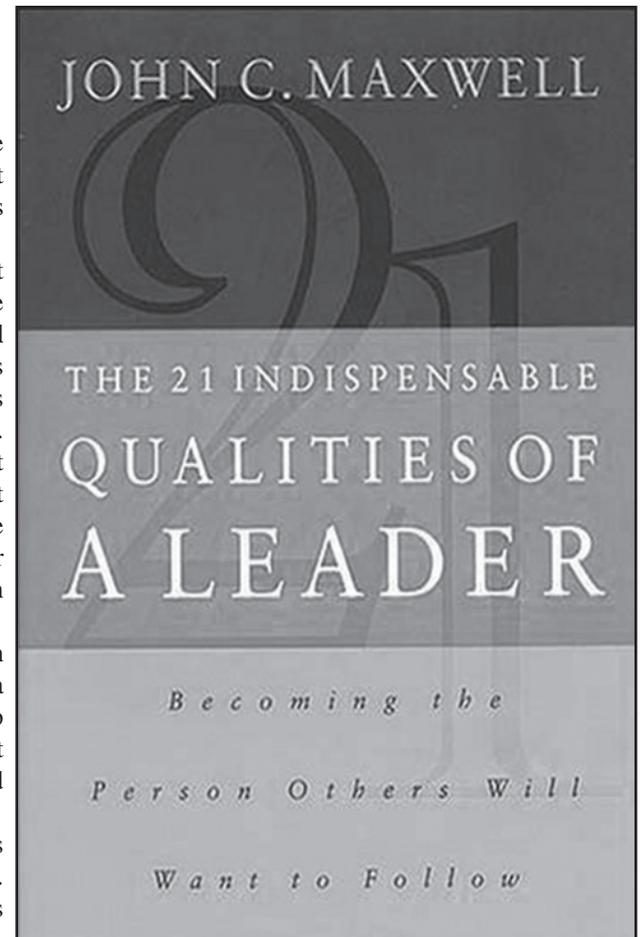
Discernment, Focus, Generosity, Initiative, Listening, Passion, Positive Attitude, Problem Solving, Relationships, Responsibility, Security, Self-Discipline, Servanthood, Teachability, Vision

Learning and implementing these traits is 60% of the leadership battle, according to Maxwell. If you perfect these 21 items, your team will succeed and your results will be quantifiable.

Maxwell, however, doesn't define the most important attribute of leadership success. It doesn't exactly have a name: **it's the innate and intuitive drive to be successful while simultaneously assisting subordinates.** This is exemplified by the hardware store employee who sells concrete mix while teaching customers how to use it. This is exemplified by the drill sergeant who doesn't just yell at soldiers who fail to shave properly, but actually takes the time to teach them how to do it the right way. This is the professor who stays late after classes to help students solve complicated math equations.

Maxwell's books are extremely cheap online and can even be viewed for free on some sites. He offers a tremendous amount of insight into effective leadership cultivation, and his work can truly serve as a great starting point or refresher for both new and experienced leaders.

For quantifiable leadership results, read Maxwell's books and power your way through tasks and missions. For optimal leadership results, read Maxwell's books and then give a helping hand to your subordinates.



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Military History: Connecticut Fights - The Story of the 102nd Regiment

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

Thanks to the University of Michigan, a digital copy of Capt. Daniel Strickland's 1930 chronicle of the early exploits of the 102nd Infantry Regiment is available for every past, present and future member of the regiment to read.

I have searched for years for an original hard copy of this book without success, now it is just a click away. Fans can also find a 2010 reprint available from most online book sellers.

This extremely well-written and exhaustively researched book highlights the regiment from the colonial period through the end of World War I, with the bulk of this work focusing on the unit's preparation and participation in World War I.

Daniel Walter Strickland was born in Haverstraw, New York in July of 1891. He enlisted as a private in the 6th Illinois Infantry in May 1912 and was discharged in June 1913 for "non residence," due to the fact he had enlisted in Company D of the 2nd Connecticut Infantry in April of that year. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in May 1914 and promoted to first lieutenant in April 1915.

Strickland served four months on the Mexican border before deploying to France with the American Expeditionary Force. He was promoted to captain in May 1918, was wounded at Chateau Thierry and awarded the French Cross. He also spent five months as a German prisoner of war.

After WWI, Strickland got married, attended the Yale Divinity School and was ordained a minister in April 1922. He served at the Howard Avenue Congregational Church in New Haven, Conn.

That is where his story goes cold. With the exception of a newspaper article from the Bridgeport Post in 1959, where he was the guest speaker at a veteran's event, there are no further references to the author of *Connecticut Fights*.

"Such has been the steadfast spirit of the sons of Connecticut in every hour of peril. Marching in company with the heroic past let us, in this untoward hour of world agony, face unflinchingly the menacing tide of events."

-Governor Marcus H. Holcomb, in an address before the State Legislature in 1917.

Link to Connecticut Fights – The Story of the 102nd Regiment is at <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015062807360;view=1up;seq=13>.

-Brig. Gen. (CT-Ret.) Robert Cody



ESPRIT DE CORPS



Resilience: "Social Dimension"



January 2016
james.a.sypher.mil@mail.mil
(860)524-4891

RELATIONSHIPS

** Adherence to the Army Values and other beliefs embodied in the Army profession and ethics help form and strengthen bonds of trust and esprit de corps that promote strong relationships and enhance resilience.



SELFLESS RESPECT LOYALTY INTEGRITY HONOR DUTY COURAGE

LOYALTY DUTY RESPECT SELFLESS SERVICE HONOR INTEGRITY COURAGE

Social Dimension

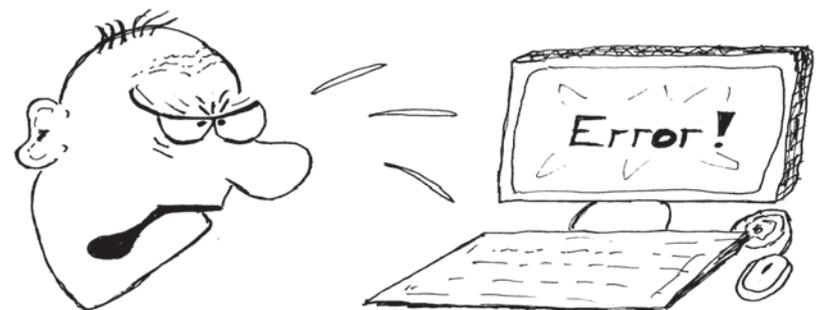
Developing and maintaining trusted, valued relationships and friendships that are personally fulfilling and foster good communication, including a comfortable exchange of ideas, views, and experiences.

Most people think that an individual's resilience does not substantially vary from one situation to the next. Similar to the different states of matter in science, a person's resilience can change depending on the setting and situation. Just like H2O changes depending on the temperature.

Socially resilient people recognize that diverse skills and perspectives are essential to the group's success. Similar to a baseball team that needs pitching, hitting, and defense in order to win, we need to surround ourselves with people who compliment our individual strengths.

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**Please contact Brig Gen. (CT-Ret.) Cody at rmcody@snet.net
for comments or article recommendations.**

National Guard Association of Connecticut (NGACT)

2016 NGACT Awards Recommendations

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL GUARD
ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT

The National Guard Association of Connecticut is once again looking to identify the best and brightest Soldiers, Airmen, and officers of the Connecticut National Guard and award them for their outstanding service. Our organization's success isn't solely fueled by men and women wearing the uniform; outstanding spouses, corporations, individuals, and retirees who have made exception contributions to the organization are also eligible for awards.

Award recommendations are due January 19, 2016 and can be submitted by anyone. Leaders at all levels are encouraged to look at their formations and consider submitting recommendations for anyone they believe fit the criteria below. Also consider any businesses, companies, or others that have gone above and beyond for the Connecticut National Guard. Voting will be conducted by the NGACT Awards Committee and awardees will be invited to the February 13, 2016 NGACT Conference to be honored.

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

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

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

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

The Command Sergeant Major Anthony V. Savino Award: Recognizes a noncommissioned officer who epitomizes the loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage exemplified in the NCO Creed.

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

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

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

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

Eligibility: Current corporate member of NGACT.

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

Eligibility: Current member of NGACT.



National Guard Association Of Connecticut
360 Broad Street. Hartford, Ct 06105-3795
www.ngact.org

Nov 15th, 2015

Dear Friend of the Guard,

The National Guard Association of Connecticut's 22nd Annual Conference and FIRST ever military ball committee is asking you for your support. We are requesting raffle prizes in an effort to increase our donations to the National Guard Association of Connecticut Scholarship program. Because of supporters like you, we are able to make sizable contributions to this cause.

The event will be held on **February 13th 2016** at The Sheraton Hartford South Hotel, 100 Capital Blvd. Rocky Hill, CT.

The National Guard Association of Connecticut Scholarship program began several years ago to assist National Guard members and their families in their pursuit of higher education. The fund was established by initial contributions from USAA and USBA, who share our charter to support the Soldiers and Airmen of the Connecticut National Guard.

NGACT is a 501(c)19 organization and your contribution is tax deductible.

This year's committee thanks you for your support of this worthwhile event and has included a conference registration form. Should you have any questions please contact committee chairman Kendra Ross at 860-986-1591 or kendra.ross@yahoo.com

Thank You

The 2016 NGACT Conference Committee

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Visit the NGACT Website at www.ngact.org



**22nd Annual
Connecticut National Guard Association
Conference & Ball**



**Saturday, February 13th, 2016
Sheraton Hartford South Hotel, 100 Capital Blvd, Rocky Hill
Conference 4pm-6pm & Ball 6pm-11pm
Dress to Impress! Civilian Attire!**

\$55 Per Person. Includes Conference, Ball, Buffet Dinner & Dancing

Register Online at WWW.NGACT.ORG or Complete Registration Form Below:
Email questions about conference to: ngactexecutivedirector@gmail.com . \$55 per person

22nd ANNUAL NGACT CONFERENCE & BALL REGISTRATION

Mail in form and check or Visit our website at www.NGACT.org

Name: _____ RANK: _____

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Name: _____

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Name: _____

Name: _____

Must Register by 13 Feb 2016

Make checks payable to "NGACT" and mail to: NGACT, 360 Broad Street, Hartford CT 06105-3795

Hotel room reservations can be made by calling 888-627-8263 (ref: NGACT). NLT 13Jan2016 to lock in \$117 rate

Email questions about conference to: ngactexecutivedirector@gmail.com

Legal Issues and Aging: Plan in Advance

MAJ. JOSEPH T. CORRADINO
COMMAND JUDGE ADVOCATE, 143RD RSG, CTARNG

Frequently, adult children are called upon to deal with legal issues that arise in the care of aging parents or other relatives. Planning in advance can reduce many of the legal difficulties family members encounter when dealing with emergent or chronic medical conditions of aging loved ones.

Often, older family members become unable to handle their financial affairs because of long-term medical problems or an extended hospital stay. Other times, an emergency interferes with their ability to handle their affairs. In many cases, no one is familiar with the older person's assets or liabilities or even how the paperwork is organized. Individuals should consider preparing a financial inventory before their health impedes their ability to manage their affairs.

Financial inventories are forms that list all of a person's or couple's bank accounts, retirement accounts, brokerage accounts, insurance policies, credit card accounts, and other assets and liabilities. These forms

provide space for the account name, number, location and financial institution. Sometimes these documents include the location of the person's will and advance directives, prepaid funeral plans, product warranties, and other important information needed to manage affairs. Various versions of this type of document exist and many have been developed by financial services firms. Financial inventory forms are easily found via an internet search.

Powers of attorney and health care agent appointments are other methods for assisting older persons in managing their affairs. Powers of attorney can be made durable and survive the incapacitation of the principal. This allows for a seamless continuity in the management of the person's affairs and can avoid the cost and complexity of seeking a conservatorship in the probate court. A health care agent can make medical decisions for someone who is temporarily or permanently unable to do so. This can be an important factor in managing care for an older person.

Another method for managing the affairs of an older

relative is the use of a trust. Trusts can be complicated, especially when a person has significant assets, and should be prepared in consultation with an attorney.

One method of management that should be used only with great care is the creation of joint accounts. Joint accounts present significant ownership, tax, and estate planning issues and can be a particular problem in the case of a spendthrift or dishonest joint account holder.

In choosing trustees, attorneys-in-fact, health care agents, or any other person to assist in managing one's affairs, an older person should pick someone who is trustworthy and reliable. Such a person should be financially stable and possess good judgment. There is always a danger that a person placed into a position of trust will betray his responsibility, so precautions should be taken to ensure oversight by others.

Any advanced planning should be done in consultation with appropriate professionals such as lawyers and accountants. Good and effective advanced planning will aid elderly persons and their families in managing financial issues in times of need.



Montgomery GI Bill: Selected Reserve Chapter 1606 (MGIB-SR)

1. What is it?

- The MGIB-SR is a benefit administered by the Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA) that provides basic educational assistance for traditional/M-day Soldiers actively serving in the Selected Reserve. (Reference: Title 10 USC Chapter 1606; DoDI 1322.17)

2. How Do I Qualify?

- Sign a six-year service contract or Officer Service Agreement in the Reserve Component on or after 1 July 1985
- Complete a High school diploma or equivalent
- Complete IADT or Officer Branch Qualification
- Continue serving in an active drilling status
- Not be AGR or on Active Duty
- Not be flagged for AWOL
- Not be using a Dedicated Army National Guard ROTC Scholarship

3. What Do I Get?

- \$368 per month for full-time enrollment (Effective 1 October 2015)
- Payment made directly to you each month
- In most cases your eligibility begins once you complete IADT
- Cannot be combined with Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) for the same course
- May be combined with State Tuition Assistance subject to State law/rules

4. How Do I Apply?

- ✓ Contact your State Education Office and ask for your Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE)
- ✓ Go to <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/> and submit the Veterans Online Application
- ✓ Notify the VA Certifying Official at your school so they can certify your enrollment
- ✓ Continue to verify your enrollment each month online at: <https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave>

For More Information:

- ❖ Visit www.benefits.va.gov/gibill
- ❖ Visit us On-Line: www.nationalguard.com/education
- ❖ Contact your State Education Services Office:
 - Available at www.nationalguard.com/contacts/eso



Montgomery GI Bill "Kicker"

1. What is it?

- The Kicker Incentive is an additional education payment to encourage Soldiers to enter into specific units or skills to meet and sustain ARNG readiness requirements. There are Enlisted, Officer Candidate and Officer specific Kicker Incentives available – each having specific criteria and rules. (Reference: DoDI 1322.17)

2. How Do I Qualify?

- Be eligible for either Chapter 1606, Chapter 30, or Chapter 33 GI Bill
- Agree to serve in a critical skill/critical unit or enter an officer commissioning program
- Enlisted must sign a six year reserve service contract on or after 1 July 1985
- Complete IADT or Officer Branch Qualification
- Not be on Military Technician, AGR, or Active Duty Status
- Not be flagged for AWOLs
- Not be using a Dedicated Army National Guard ROTC Scholarship

2. What Do I Get?

- \$200 or \$350 per month depending on contract, in addition to GI Bill payment
- Can use with any GI Bill

3. How Do I Apply?

- ✓ Contact your State Education Office to validate eligibility
- ✓ Go to <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/> and submit the Veterans Online Application. Be sure to include a copy of your Kicker contract
- ✓ Notify the VA Certifying Official at your school so they can certify your enrollment
- ✓ Continue to verify your enrollment each month online at: <https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave>

For More Information:

- ❖ Visit www.benefits.va.gov/gibill
- ❖ Visit us On-Line: www.nationalguard.com/education
- ❖ Contact your State Education Office:
 - Available at www.nationalguard.com/contacts/eso

 Follow us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/arngeducation

Editor's Note: The NGB Education Services Branch updated and published 17 flyers designed to help you better understand your education benefits for FY 16. The flyers are a great resource for units and the Soldiers they serve. Each month the Connecticut Guardian will run one flyer, as seen above. To receive copies of each flyer, contact the State Education Services Office, 860-524-4962.

Celebrating the Life and Impact of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

SGT. 1ST CLASS TERRY MAHON
READINESS NCO, 143RD RSG

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

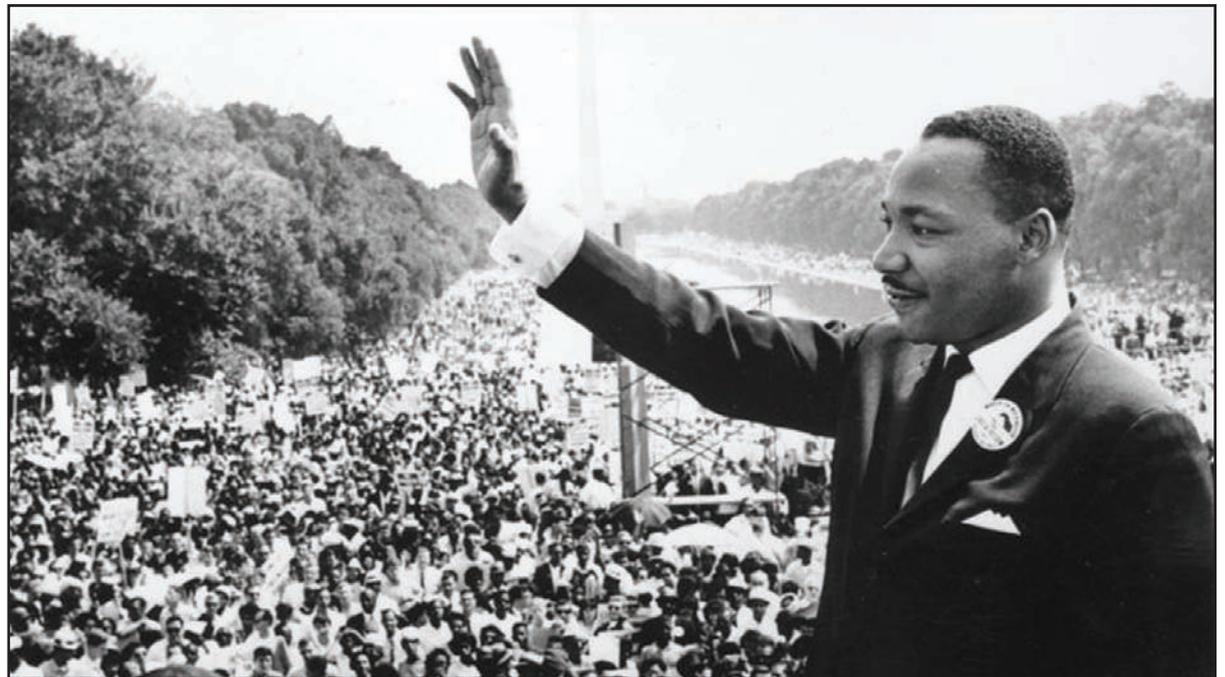
In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday, here are some of the career highlights that made him such an important figure in American history.

Martin Luther King, Jr., (January 15, 1929-April 4, 1968) was born Michael Luther King, Jr., but later had his name changed to Martin.

In December 1955, Martin Luther King, Jr. led a nonviolent, 382-day bus boycott, gaining national attention in the fight against segregation. The Supreme Court of the United States had declared laws requiring segregation on buses to be unconstitutional in December 1956, permitting all patrons to ride buses as equals.

For the next decade, King used ideals from Christianity and operational techniques from Gandhi in his leadership approach while serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. During his tenure, King traveled over six million miles and spoke over 2,500 times, appearing wherever there was injustice, protest, and action. He also wrote five books, as well as numerous articles in print publications.

King planned the drives in Alabama for the registration of Negro voters and directed the peaceful march on Washington D.C. of 250,000 people and the site of his historic, “I Have A Dream,” speech.



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. attends the historic March on Washington in Washington, D.C. on Aug. 28, 1968. It was here, where, in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial, in front of a crowd of more than 200,000 people, he gave his famous “I Have A Dream” speech. (source: www.biography.com/people/martin-luther-king-jr)

Dr. King was held in high regard by some of the country’s largest political figures. He held counsel with John F. Kennedy and campaigned for Lyndon B. Johnson.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was arrested over twenty times. He was awarded five honorary degrees and was Time’s Man of the Year in 1963. At age 35, he was the youngest

man to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. His accomplishments not only affected change in the United States, but made him a figure of peace globally.

Source: [Nobelprize.org http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/king-bio.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/king-bio.html)

Guard Foundation 2016 Scholarships

The Connecticut National Guard Foundation Inc announces its 2016 scholarship program. This year the foundation will award a total of **eight** scholarships.

- **Two \$4000.00 scholarships honoring Sgt. Felix Del Greco Jr.** will be awarded to the son or daughter of a member of the Connecticut Army National Guard.

Please note that a special application is required for the Del Greco scholarship which may be obtained from: <http://www.conncf.org>. No other application will be accepted.

- **One \$2000.00 scholarships and Five \$1,000.00 scholarships** will be awarded to Connecticut National Guard and Organized Militia members or their sons, daughters, or spouses. Application forms may be found on the Foundations web site at: www.ctngfoundation.org

Additional Information:

- Complete application packets must be postmarked no later than **March 15, 2016**
- The selection committee will choose students based on achievement and citizenship.
- You must be enrolled in, or planning to enroll in, a regionally or nationally accredited degree or technical program.
- Mail application form (CTNGFI Scholarship Only) and completed package to:
CTNG Foundation Inc.
Attn: Scholarship Committee
360 Broad Street, Hartford Armory
Hartford, CT 06015

- Please contact the foundation at (860) 241-1550 or email ctngfi@sbcglobal.net for further details.

CTARNG Safety Gram

January 1, 2016

Tune Yourself Up for Winter Walking

You wake up one morning to the heaviest snowfall of the season. You have to shovel the car out of the driveway. When you arrive at work, you realize no one has even cleared the snow away from the parking lot, walkways, or even building entrances. It's then that you realize that you should have worn snow boots.

With the impending onset of winter, many of us are focused on getting vehicles and driving habits tuned up for the next few months of snow, slush, and ice. That's great, but many people forget that they have to walk from public transportation or their cars to work and often as part of their job, too. Those who aren't prepared can put themselves at risk for not only hypothermia, but also nasty falls and other injuries.

Ensure you are aware of these winter walking hazards:

- ◆ Reduced hours of daylight make it much more difficult for drivers to see pedestrians.
- ◆ Even though they are called winter boots, some products are much more about fashion than safety. A boot with a smooth sole will increase the hazard of slipping on ice or snow.
- ◆ In areas that lack sidewalks, plowed roads are often much narrower in winter. That means approaching drivers have less room to maneuver around pedestrians.
- ◆ Many sidewalks aren't cleared of snow, which then hardens into ice and makes walking dangerous.
- ◆ If someone is underdressed for weather conditions and it's so cold that all he or she can think of is getting inside a warm building, that person's eyes might be averted to the ground instead of watching for traffic.
- ◆ When road conditions get treacherous – especially in a hilly city or town, pedestrians and drivers alike may find themselves unable to stop. Imagine a pedestrian sliding into a busy intersection.
- ◆ Avoid exhaustion or fatigue because energy is needed to keep muscles warm.

These winter walking tips can help keep you on your feet:

- ◆ Dress for the conditions. Ensure you are warm and visible to traffic.
- ◆ Wear footwear with slip-resistant soles. It may not be sexy, but it can help keep you upright.
- ◆ If sidewalks are impassible or there aren't any, walk facing traffic as close as possible to the curb.
- ◆ Try not to carry heavy packages, which can affect your balance on slippery streets/sidewalks.
- ◆ Just because you have the right of way doesn't mean that traffic will be able to stop in slippery conditions. Don't step onto a crosswalk until traffic has stopped.

◆ Taking shorter steps and bending your knees slightly will reduce your chances of falling.

- ◆ Wear bright clothing or reflective gear at night.

**Be prepared before you go to work in the cold.
That's the key to meeting the challenges of winter work.**



HERE IT COMES

Are you ready to hit the road?

- Accelerate and decelerate slowly
- Increase your following distance eight to 10 seconds to provide more room to stop
- Know your brakes
- Don't power up hills and don't stop while going uphill unless necessary
- Take a fully charged cellphone, food, water and warm clothing
- Don't go out unless absolutely necessary

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?

ARMY STRONG. <https://safety.army.mil>

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

Kyllonen, Tyler A.
Olivorodriguez, Yailyana
Sewpersaud, Michael
Bauza, Bernabe Jr.
Cutler, Tyler J.
Perkins, Robert A.
Tallis, Zackary J.
Charles, Edgar
Gaines, Devante R.
Monterio, Devin P.
Palmer, Kimani
Gonzalez, Angel
Melendezandrade, S.
Pastula, Christopher D.
Desmond, Paul G.
Suareztirado, Jesser J.
Pelletier, Nicholas D.
Estremera, Karina M.
Levine, Benjamin A.
Oquendo, David I.

To Private First Class

Johnson, Tyler Robert O.
Leblanc, Nicholas F.
Khadrany, Najoua
Perez, Samuel H.
Andersen, Nicholas A.
Salmon, Jevon A.
Burrell, Wayne C.
Correa, Damian

Drane, Joseph D.
Avery, Jacob G.
Sweikert, Samuel T.
McLeod, Keith E. Jr.
Kobialka, Valerie A.
Marcus, Xavier J.
Dossantos, Nicholas E.
Lundin, Hunter D.
Ansong, Maron A.
Riveralaracuento, Javier
Paige, Davonta S.
Cortes, Kenneth A.

To Specialist

Gondek, Brendan F.
Hovanec, Zachary B.
Phillips, Donnecia A.
Conway, Tyler E.
Gonzalez, Julio A. Jr.
Khon, Anthony D.
HereI, Collyn T.
Tomlinson, Brandon A.
Mcguinness, Sean T.
Pintosuy, Kevin A.
Williams, Terrance S.
Parker, Sydania
Figueroa, Monica F.
Phrathep, Outhisack L.
Facey, Kayla S.
Souri, Amath T.
Wolkowsky, Justin E.
Burnette, Laine M.
Christofani, David J.

Mckenna, Elizabeth M.
Vazquez, Christian

To Sergeant

Fulton, Tyler D.
Palmer, Zachary B.
Gaerner, Felisha
Stone, Dennis Jr.
Osmanu, Rashid
Nieves, Giovanni
Krug, David C.
Blodgett, Sarah
Lee, Ryan M.
Garafano, Thomas N.
Rouillard, Tyler A.
Quinones, Emanuel N.
Patel, Vishal V.
Currier, Lan M.
Farrier, Ancil B.
Howard, Kacey L.
Santiago, Douglas B.

To Staff Sergeant

Wilson, Derek J.
Gladu, Joseph G. Ii
Colacino, Eric C.
Gagnon, Andrew C.

To Sergeant First Class

Christensen, Robert H.
Martin, Andre E.
Hite, Brandon J.

To Captain

Nguyen, Loan T.
Brice, Ulrick G.
Giunto, Justin H.
Jackson, Douglas O.
Johnson, Shawn K.

To Lieutenant Colonel

Daugherty, William J.

AIR

To Airman First Class

Lacoille, Mark N.

To Senior Airman

Cassis, Christopher J.
Teeters, Douglas M.
Ofiara, Sean M.

To Staff Sergeant

Arzu, Raymond

To Master Sergeant/First Sergeant

Rodriguez, Frankie

Levasseur, Harry M.
Mcmahon, Ian P.
Williams, Robert J.

To Chief Master Sergeant

Smith, Kurt W.
Gasiorek, John M.



Coming Events

January

January 1

Happy New Year!

January 12

February Guardian Deadline

January 18

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 30-31

CTNG UPAR Training Course

Camp Niantic

February

February 7

Super Bowl Sunday

February 9

March Guardian Deadline

February 10

Ash Wednesday

February 12

Lincoln's Birthday

February 13

NGACT Annual Conference & Ball

February 14

Valentine's Day

February 15

Washington's Birthday (President's Day)

February 20

143rd RSG Yellow Ribbon Event

March

March 7

April Guardian Deadline

March 13

Daylight Savings Begins

March 19

192nd Military Police Company Freedom Salute (tentative)

March 17

St. Patrick's Day

March 27

Easter Sunday

March 31

CTARNG Best Warrior Competition begins

Deadline for February Issue of the
Guardian is January 12

Deadline for the March Issue of the
Guardian is February 9, 2016



Connecticut National Guard
UPAR Class 2015

Become a Unit Public Affairs Representative and Tell Your Unit's Story

WHO: Connecticut National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, and members of the State Militia who have an interest in working with the State Public Affairs Office in telling the Connecticut National Guard's story.

WHAT: Connecticut National Guard Unit Public Affairs Representative (UPAR) Training Course. Training will include classroom instruction and hands-on training with Public Affairs policies, dealing with the media, social media and basic photography and writing skills.

WHEN: January 30-31, 2016.

WHERE: Camp Niantic, Regional Training Institute Building

WHY: To train appointed UPARs to tell the Connecticut National Guard and Militia story by promoting "good news" events and recruiting opportunities for their units; by increasing the quantity and quality of news products available for distribution to print, radio, television and social media; to increase overall public awareness of the missions and members of the Connecticut National Guard and Militia.

Interested? Contact your Chain of Command.
See CTNG Circular 350-16-09 or call the Public Affairs Office at (860) 524-4858

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Connecticut FAMILY Guardian



VOL. 17 NO. 1

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

JANUARY 2016

First Company GHG to Kick Off Horses for Little Heroes

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

What child doesn't love the chance to learn about horses?

The 1st Company Governor's Horse Guard thinks every child should get that chance, and will be kicking off a Horses for Little Heroes program in March of 2016.

As a small preview to the program, 1GHG paired with the Connecticut National Guard Child & Youth Program to host a meet and greet at their facility in Avon, Conn. in December. Children in attendance enjoyed a hot breakfast provided by 1GHG troopers and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Horses for Little Heroes will be a monthly program aimed at teaching military-connected youths the ins and outs of caring for horses. As a brief introduction, attendees groomed and tacked the horses, then helped prepare them for rides.

Paired with a more experienced rider, the children then explored the wood trails on the grounds by horseback, providing a small taste of what is in store for those who attend the program starting in March.

For additional information, or to be added to the email distribution list, contact the Child & Youth Program Coordinator, Michelle McCarty at michelle.m.mccarty4.ctr@mail.mil or 860-548-3254.



First Company GHG and the Connecticut National Guard Child & Youth Program host a preview for the Horses for Little Heroes program at the 1st Company facility in Avon, Conn in December. The Horses for Little Heroes program will kick off in March of 2016 and will be a monthly program aimed at teaching military-connected youths the ins and outs of caring for horses. (Photo courtesy of Michelle McCarty, Lead Child and Youth Coordinator, CTNG Service Member and Family Support Center)



(left) Military children and their families enjoyed a preview of the Horses for Little Heroes program at the 1st Company facility in Avon, Conn in December. The Horses for Little Heroes program will kick off in March of 2016 and will be a monthly program aimed at teaching military-connected youths the ins and outs of caring for horses. (Photo courtesy of Michelle McCarty, Lead Child and Youth Coordinator, CTNG Service Member and Family Support Center)

(right) Military children and their families enjoyed a preview of the Horses for Little Heroes program at the 1st Company facility in Avon, Conn in December. As a brief introduction, attendees groomed and tacked the horses, then helped prepare them for rides. The Horses for Little Heroes program will kick off in March of 2016 and will be a monthly program aimed at teaching military-connected youths the ins and outs of caring for horses. (Photo courtesy of Michelle McCarty, Lead Child and Youth Coordinator, CTNG Service Member and Family Support Center)

For more information on how you can participate in this program, please contact Michelle McCarty at michelle.m.mccarty4.ctr@mail.mil or 860-548-3254.



CATHERINE GALASSO-VIGORITO

Each Day is a New Beginning

Watching the heavy snowfall from her living room window, a woman was deeply discouraged. She had undergone numerous hurts, disappointments and unfair situations in the past. Nothing seemed to work out. And now,

feeling as though she were washed up, she was going to give up on some important work that she had wanted to do for God, tossing away her precious hopes and dreams for the future.

Trying not to cry, she uttered sadly, "It's too late for me," as tears rolled down her face. She defined herself, her worth, and her future based on difficulties of the past.

I wonder, "How many of us do the same?"

But that night, as the town was wrapped in a frigid blanket of snow, the woman had a dream. In it, an angel appeared to her. The angel took her by the hand and escorted her up to Heaven. There, far above the horizon, the woman looked down. After that, the angel began pointing to different locations below where there were spots. In some areas, there were bright white spots. Yet, in other areas, there were bleak, dark spots.

The woman's thoughts were swirling. Curiously, she asked the angel, "What are you trying to show me?"

Divinely, the angel smiled, but didn't answer right away. After a few minutes, the angel spoke, "The white spots are where you helped, prayed for and encouraged those who were hurting."

The angel's words struck profoundly into the woman's soul, as the angel continued, "The dark spots you see are where you are needed to bring light to others and to do God's work." Then, the angel whispered slowly, "You must not give up. God cannot do much with a discouraged heart."

Wide-eyed, the woman realized that regardless of what had happened in the past, that God still wanted to do

amazing things through her. And with the heart-thawing warmth of God's redeeming love, the woman turned to the angel and said, "Quick, I must go back." "There is much more for me to accomplish in service to God," she exclaimed, as the angel rejoiced.

The next morning when the woman woke up, she thought for a long time about her dream. Thereafter, she started to picture the new future that, with God's help, she was going to create. And with that vision, she began again.

Strength shows, not only in the ability to persist, but in the ability to start over.

Each day is a new beginning. So, let go of what didn't work out before and progress onward with the present and the future. Stop rehearsing and regretting the past, but rather, look to what can be. Don't be afraid; move forward to the new beginning that God has waiting for you.

God is a God of another chance. For God is saying to you today:

- I want you to have a fresh start. "God's mercies are new every morning." (Lamentations 3:23).
- It's not over; I have great plans for your life. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11).
- For I didn't bring you this far to leave you. "Be confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion." (Philippians 1:6).

Just as the people of Israel were trapped by the Red Sea and had nowhere to go, and God made a way for them, He is going before you and making a way for you to succeed. One door may have closed. Yet, in God's timing, a better door will open. Thus, don't give up on yourself.

A while ago, an automobile business owner wrote to me and told how years back he lost the nearly twenty-year-old company that he had founded. It was difficult to deal with the loss. It would have been easy for him to feel sorry for himself, throw his hands up in defeat,

thinking his best days were behind him.

Sometimes, we can be so focused on that one or two things that didn't work out, that we may miss all of the amazing things to come.

So, with a heart full of faith, this businessman didn't shy away from change. He was determined to try another endeavor. But while he was making future plans for a new establishment, some people ridiculed him. They murmured, "You have failed before," and "Things are going to get worse."

Rather than listening to negative forecasts and letting discouragement seep into his heart until he quit, this businessman persevered, believing in the abilities that God instilled in him. "You can be discouraged by failure, or learn from it," he wrote. "For people only fail when failure overtakes them." The businessman courageously acted upon his creative ideas. He prayed daily, asking God for wisdom and strength. Then, gradually, with a can-do spirit, from the ground up, he started again.

Today, the businessman described that his automotive repair shop is growing rapidly. Moreover, he has more time to spend with his loving family. He has created jobs, he helps others in his community, and he is blissfully contented, healthy and happy with his life.

No matter the circumstances you've faced, your past does not define your future. God wants to do new, exciting things for you. You're a bright light and have so much yet to give to the world. Thus, open your eyes to the possibilities around you. Right now, someone needs what you have to offer.

I like this poem that a reader sent to me. And as we welcome in the New Year, I pass it on and wish you:

*"Blessings in abundance,
Strength for every way,
Courage for each trial,
And gladness for each day.
Faith in Heaven's guidance,
A Hope that's firm and true,*

In 2016, may God give these gifts to you."

You are something special. God's light is shining upon you!

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

WE WANT YOU



The Connecticut National Guard Service Member and Family Support Center wants you!

Take a moment to rate your interactions with our Team using the link below or scan the QR code to be taken directly to our survey.



[http://www.ctpurplepages.com/
publications/forms/ctng-service-
member-and-family-support-center-
customer-feedback/](http://www.ctpurplepages.com/publications/forms/ctng-service-member-and-family-support-center-customer-feedback/)

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

Eleven Ways to Save on Entertainment

SUBMITTED BY CHRIS ROULEAU
MILITARY ONE SOURCE

A tight budget doesn't mean you have to sit home every night staring at the walls. You can have fun without busting your bank account. With just a little effort and investigation, you can find low-cost to no-cost fun for yourself and your family.

Check out these ideas for saving money while still having fun:

1. Take advantage of free outings. Local parks, waterfronts, memorials and art galleries offer scenic spots to spend an afternoon — usually for free — and they provide prime people-watching opportunities.

2. Go out to lunch. Skip dinner at a restaurant and go for lunch instead, when food is generally cheaper. Splitting an entrée with your partner or a friend also can trim the bill.

3. Travel off-season. Spend less and avoid crowds by traveling off-season. Just make sure your destination isn't off-peak because it's monsoon season or 150 degrees in the shade.

4. Travel with a group or check out a tour. Vacationing with a group of friends or family members is fun and can get you discounts on things like hotel rooms or transportation. If you're solo, tours are sometimes more affordable than piecing together everything yourself. Plus, you'll have instant travel companions.

5. Pick kid-friendly hotels. Stick to hotels that don't charge extra for your kids to stay in your room when you're traveling as a family.

6. Pitch a tent. Camping is a great alternative to hotels to have fun in the outdoors and explore a new area. Make your campground reservations early, especially in the summer, so you don't wind up camping in a not-so-scenic parking lot.

7. Get deals through Information, Tickets and Travel. Find out how the program can get you discounts on everything from museums to theme parks.

8. Throw a pot-luck dinner party. Having friends over for dinner doesn't mean you have to cook an expensive four-course meal. Go pot-luck style and have everyone bring a dish, but keep track of who's bringing what so you don't wind up with five macaroni salads. Shop for your own pot-luck ingredients at the commissary for major savings.

9. Use the library. You don't need to run out to buy the latest bestseller or download for your tablet. Your local library will have lots of books to choose from, and many libraries now offer downloads, audio books and "speed reads" that let you borrow that new bestseller for a week. Military OneSource's digital libraries are even more convenient, letting you access loads of free content without leaving home.

10. Join group-discount websites. These websites offer deep discounts on everything from flowers to concert tickets for a limited time, and will push the offers right to your inbox. But don't let the huge discount lure you into buying something you don't really want, no matter how good the deal is on that mime opera.

11. Shop online. Online shopping and auction sites can be a great way to save on new or used DVDs, board games, toys, sports equipment and more. Use only trusted websites, and watch out for online scams.

You don't have to miss out, even if you're on a tight budget. Just be a savvy shopper, and you can find fun at a discount. Go plan some entertainment today.



Martin Luther King Jr. Word Scramble

Martin Luther King Jr. believed in equal rights for all people, and he fought against racial discrimination and segregation until he was assassinated in 1968. Rearrange the letters in each word or phrase below to make a list of words related to Martin Luther King Jr. and his role in history.

LCVII GTSHRI	NOIVOCEELNN
_____	_____
RAEDM	EAERDL
_____	_____
ITATISCV	HBTOERODOHR
_____	_____
ECACDMYRO	REDOMFE
_____	_____
AEULIQYT	JUETCSI
_____	_____

KID'S CREATIVE CORNER

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



Service Member & Family Support Center Staff Directory



<i>William A. O'Neill Armory - 360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105 - Open Mon-Fri. Fax: (860) 493-2795</i>			
State Family Program Director	Kimberly Hoffman	kimberly.j.hoffman.civ@mail.mil	(800) 858-2677
Deputy Director	SSG Melody Baber	melodycheyenne.c.baber.mil@mail.mil	(860) 548-3276 (desk) (860) 883-2515 (cell)
Family Assistance Center Specialist	Rita O'Donnell	lerita.m.odonnell.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 493-2797 (desk) (860) 883-6949 (cell)
Family Assistance Center Specialist	Jessica Koehler	jessica.w.koehler.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 524-4969 (desk) (860) 883-6940 (cell)
Family Assistance Center Specialist	Jennifer Remillard	jennifer.m.remillard.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 524-4821 (desk)
Family Readiness Support Assistant	Linda Rolstone	linda.b.rolstone.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 524-4963 (desk) (860) 680-2209 (cell)
Family Readiness Support Assistant	Wendy Hagen	wendy.m.hagen.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 524-4920 (desk) (860) 881-4677 (cell)
ARNG Yellow Ribbon Program Coordinator	SSG Clint Shivers	clinton.r.shivers.mil@mail.mil	(860) 493-2796 (desk) (860) 538-5639 (cell)
Lead Child & Youth Program Coordinator	Michelle McCarty	michelle.m.mccarty4.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 548-3254 (desk) (860) 883-6953 (cell)
Survivor Outreach Specialist	Megan O'Shaughnessy	megan.l.macsata.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 548-3258 (desk) (860) 394-8748 (cell)
Military OneSource Consultant	Chris Rouleau	christopher.rouleau@militaryonesource.com	(860) 502-5416 (cell) (860) 493-2722 (desk)
State Support Chaplain	CH. (MAJ) David Nutt	david.c.nutt.mil@mail.mil	(860) 548-3240 (desk) (860) 883-7748 (cell)
Transition Assistance Advisor	Jay Braca	jonathan.j.braca.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 524-4908 (desk) (860) 748-0037 (cell)
Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve	Josh Mead	jmead.ctesgr@live.com	(860) 548-3295 (desk)
Military Relief Fund	Russell Bonaccorso	russell.bonaccorso@ct.gov	(860) 524-4968 (desk)
<i>Windsor Locks Readiness Center - 85-300 Light Lane, Windsor Locks, CT 06096 - Open Mon-Fri.</i>			
Family Assistance Center Specialist	Emely Chenard	emely.m.chenard.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 292-4602 (desk)
<i>Veterans' Memorial Armed Forces Reserve Center - 90 Wooster Heights Road, Danbury, CT 06810 - Open Mon-Fri.</i>			
Family Assistance Center Specialist	Nancy Cummings	nancy.a.cummings.ctr@mail.mil	(203) 205-5050 (desk) (860) 883-2746 (cell)
<i>New London Armory - 249 Bayonet Street, New London, CT 06320 - Open Mon-Fri.</i>			
Family Assistance Center Specialist	Van Nessa Foster	vannessa.n.foster.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 772-1422 (desk) (860) 883-2720 (cell)
<i>103rd Air-lift Wing - 100 Nicholson Road, East Granby, CT 06026 - Open Mon-Fri.</i>			
Airman and Family Readiness Program Manager	Donna Rivera	donna.j.rivera.civ@mail.mil	(860) 292-2730 (desk) (860) 462-0379 (cell)
Air Wing Integrator	Jessica Rawlinitis	jessica.l.rawlinitis.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 292-2730 (desk)
<i>Niantic Readiness Center - 38 Smith Street, Niantic, CT 06357 - By Appointment - (800) 858-2677</i>			
Family Assistance Center Specialist	Timothy Hesney	email forthcoming	
<i>103rd Air Control Squadron - 206 Boston Post Road, Orange, CT 06477 - By Appointment - (800) 858-2677</i>			
<i>Waterbury Armory - 64 Field Street, Waterbury, CT 06702 - By Appointment - (800) 858-2677</i>			
<i>Norwich Armory - 38 Stott Avenue, Norwich, CT 06360 - By Appointment - (800) 858-2677</i>			