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Joint Staff Key Leaders Embark on Exchange to Uruguay

CAPT. MIKE PETERSEN
STATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

In a reciprocation of an August 2015 exchange that saw the top military officials from Uruguay tour Connecticut during a week-long visit, key leadership from the Connecticut National Guard Joint Staff accepted an invitation to travel to Montevideo to see firsthand the Uruguayan Armed Forces' capabilities, political-military policy and emergency preparedness.

Brig. Gen. Ron Welch, Director of the Joint Staff, and Col. Gerald Lukowski, Chief of the Joint Staff, spent five jam-packed days in the South American nation's capital city, May 8-12, as part of the State Partnership Program.

This isn't the duo's first exposure to Uruguayan leadership, as the two played a heavy role in hosting the Uruguayan leaders in 2015. They also took part in a Joint Staff visit to the Department of State in February, where perfect timing allowed for newly-confirmed Ambassador to Uruguay Kelly Keiderling to make time for the group. Ambassador Keiderling's nomination was confirmed by the U.S. Senate, May 17.

The SPP is a program that is unique to the National Guard. Connecticut's relationship with Uruguay is one of more than 70 partnerships across the 54 states and territories.

"It was an incredible learning and cultural experience," said Welch, who had never visited Uruguay prior to this trip. "To not only have the opportunity to meet with the

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Connecticut NCO of the Year Takes Regional Title

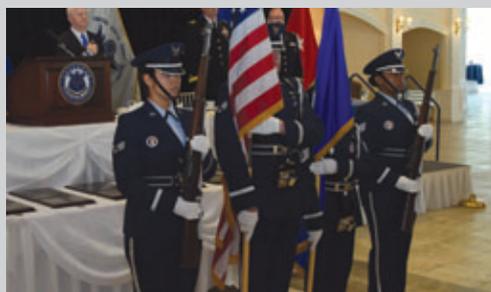
Sgt. 1st Class David Earle of the Connecticut Army National Guard 1-169th Regt., (RTI), completes the 12-mile road march with the support of his fellow Soldiers, 1st Lt. Ross Alexander and Staff Sgt. Reinaldo Barrera, at the Region I Best Warrior Competition at Stones Ranch Military Reservation, East Lyme, Connecticut, May 4. Earle earned the title of Region I NCO of the Year after besting NCOs from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, New York and New Jersey. He will join the Region I Soldier of the Year, Spc. Joseph Garback of New Jersey to compete in the National Best Warrior Competition at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts in June. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Boffen, 130th PAD, CTARNG)

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Fresh Check Day and MRT Course Highlight CTNG Mental Health Initiatives

CAPT. MIKE PETERSEN
STATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Regardless of the demographic, suicide is a topic that tends to turn heads.

Since 2008, the military suicide rate has consistently exceeded the civilian rate, and the most at-risk group is 18-35 year olds, according to Meagan MacGregor, Suicide Prevention Program Manager for the Connecticut National Guard.

“The National Guard has the highest rate of suicide of any branch of the military,” said MacGregor. “Statistically, the majority of National Guard suicides occur within the population that has never been deployed or has more than a year since deployment.”

The statistics, no matter how you look at them, tend to lead to one conclusion: one suicide is one too many.

This is a sentiment that is echoed by leadership at all levels of the Connecticut National Guard. The priority placed on the mental health of the nearly 5,000 Guardsmen that make up the organization has led to a plethora of resources available to them: internally, thanks to assets assigned to the Behavioral Health Team, and externally through state and federally-funded programs like the Military Support Program and Military OneSource.

As the State Resilience Coordinator, Command Sgt. Maj. James Sypher is responsible for ensuring the CTNG has certified Master Resilience Trainers – individuals who are capable of leading blocks of instruction on resilience classes that take place over drill weekend and annual training. Resilience focuses on developing coping skills and behaviors while promoting help-seeking behavior.

“Resilience is about teaching soldiers how to bounce back,” said Sgt. 1st Class Crissy Lussier, MRT for Joint Force Headquarters of the Connecticut Army National Guard, “When we teach resilience, we aren’t just focusing on military issues, but civilian ones as well. We’re looking



Maj. J. Alvarado, Behavioral Health Officer for the Connecticut National Guard, talks to members of the Recruit Sustainment Program about the importance of mental health and participation in events like Fresh Check Day at Camp Niantic, May 22. (U.S. Army Photo by Capt. Mike Petersen, State Public Affairs Officer)

at the whole soldier concept and treating our attendees as the citizen soldiers they are. These are not just skills they can use in uniform, but in civilian life as well”

Sypher, also the senior enlisted leader for the 192nd Engineer Battalion, coordinated for a Mobile Training Team from Fort McCoy, Wisconsin to lead a 10-day Master Resilience Training Class at Camp Niantic, May

16-26, in order to continue to build the state’s cadre of Resilience-trained personnel. It was the first time Connecticut hosted an MRT course, according to Sypher.

“The big advantage to holding it (in Connecticut) is convenience for the local Soldier,” said Sypher. “A lot of

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(Front Page American Flag photo by Buddy Altobello)

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Connecticut Students Explore National Guard Careers

MASTER SGT. ERIN McNAMARA
103RD AIRLIFT WING, PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The colorful crowd exploring the military aircraft on the flight line at Bradley Air National Guard Base is a reminder of the first days of basic military training. The young faces are quietly curious and the wardrobe includes every color in the rainbow. In those first days of basic training prior to uniform issue and still clothed in “civvies,” or civilian clothing, the group of recruits that trains together is known as a “Rainbow Flight.”

Unlike those early days of basic training, this crowd was encouraged to ask questions and get hands on with specialized equipment during a visit with Connecticut Guardsmen Thursday at the 103rd Airlift Wing. For most in attendance, the Career Day event hosted by Connecticut Air National Guard recruiters was a first encounter with military operations.

Master Sgt. Sylvia Kirchner, Connecticut Air National Guard Recruiting and Retention Manager, explained the significance of hosting an interactive tour of the installation for high school students.

“Through Career Day, we show our high school kids what the Air National Guard does in Connecticut,” Kirchner said. “It’s a great opportunity for them to ask specific questions not of the recruiting team but of the members who are actually doing those jobs here.”

Students, educators and guidance counselors from six local schools spent four hours visiting the installation, meeting with Airmen to discuss their specialties and explore their questions during a catered lunch. Interactive displays helped the Airmen to demonstrate their skills for the attentive audience. Kirchner said that the event helps potential candidates witness what can’t be offered during an office visit with a recruiter.

“We’re trying to give them the opportunity to see what we do behind the scenes. Sometimes a textbook answer is not good enough for us, so we try to put them in front of the members who actually do that job and also they’ll have the opportunity to get hands-on experience.”

A wide cross section of the state’s military specialties was represented at the event that spanned one side of the flight line and the headquarters parking lot on base. Maintenance, support and aircraft operations specialists provided expert demonstrations and descriptions of the jobs that they perform and the experience they’ve gained during their service.

According to Kirchner, the students were an enthusiastic audience. “The students are great,” she said. “They’re not afraid to ask the questions that they’re coming up with. They’re listening and actually absorbing what they hear and touching the equipment. They’ve been very responsive and we’re hoping that when they leave today they’ll think about what they have seen and reach out to us for more information.”

The educators and guidance counselors who accompanied the students during the visit play an



Master Sgt. Dennis Coughlin, aircraft ground equipment technician, explains the function and purpose of equipment to support flight mobility, May 12, during a Career Day hosted at Bradley Air National Guard Base, East Granby, Connecticut. Students discussed military careers with Air National Guardsmen during their visit to the 103rd Airlift Wing. (Photo by Master Sgt. Erin McNamara, 103rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs, CTANG)

integral role in the event’s success.

“To me, the educators are the greatest point of contact that we can establish with the students,” Kirchner said. “They’re going to take a lot of information away from today and share that not only with the students who are here but also the students and educators that couldn’t come today.”



Staff Sgt. Andrew Faust, security forces specialist, explains safe use and handling of military-issued weapons to visiting Jr. R.O.T.C. students May 12, during a Career Day event hosted at Bradley Air National Guard Base, East Granby, Connecticut. The interaction with troops from the 103rd Security Forces Squadron was a highlight for students participating in Career Day events. (Photo by Master Sgt. Erin McNamara, 103rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs, CTANG)



Tech Sgt. Steve Sevigny explains C-130 engines to a group of local JROTC students in the 103rd Airlift Wing Engine shop during a Career Day event hosted at Bradley Air National Guard Base, May 12. (Photo by Capt. Dawn Suprenant, CTANG PAO)

Best in the Region:

It Takes More than Meeting the Standard

SGT. ALICIA M. BROCUGLIO
130TH PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT, CTARNG

Competition between comrades can be tough. To achieve the title of Soldier or Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year, Soldiers must prove themselves to be not only above the standard, but highly competitive and motivated. They bring their own experience to the table, but are trained to support their fellow Soldiers and to finish together, which makes competing against each other an added challenge.

On May 5, Command Sgt. Maj. John Carragher, Connecticut National Guard State Sergeant Major, announced that Sgt. 1st Class David Earle of Connecticut, and Spc. Joseph Garback of New Jersey, had won the titles of Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year and Soldier of the Year, respectively, for the Army National Guard's Region I Best Warrior Competition.

Earle and Garback competed against 14 other soldiers from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont, that had all been named Soldier or Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year for their home states. The competition was tight; there was a tie going into the final event.



Sgt. 1st Class David Earle of the CTARNG competes in the APFT two-mile run at the Region I Best Warrior Competition at Camp Niantic, Connecticut, May 2. Earle took the title of Region I NCO of the Year after the three-day competition that consisted of several events including an 12-mile road march, stress shoot and land navigation. A total of 16 Best Warriors from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont competed for the titles of Region I Soldier and NCO of the Year. Soldier of the Year went to Spc. Joseph Garback of the New Jersey Army National Guard. The two winners will go on to compete at the national competition at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts in June. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Boffen, 130th PAD, CTARNG)

Spc. Joseph Garback (right) of the New Jersey Army National Guard exits Camp Niantic with his mentor to begin the 12-mile road march as part of the Region I Best Warrior Competition, May 4. Garback took the title of Region I Soldier of the Year after the three-day competition that consisted of several events including an APFT, stress shoot and land navigation. A total of 16 Best Warriors from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont competed for the titles of Region I Soldier and NCO of the Year. NCO of the Year went to CTARNG Sgt. 1st Class David Earle. The two winners will go on to compete at the national competition at Camp Edwards in Massachusetts in June. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Boffen, 130th PAD, CTARNG)

All competitors demonstrated their mental and physical toughness during the challenging tasks that included the Army Physical Fitness Test, individual weapons qualifications, a stress shoot, Army Warrior Task testing, a written test, a 12-mile ruck march from Camp Niantic to Stones Ranch Military Reservation, day and night land navigation through heavy wooded terrain, and an appearance board that tested military bearing and knowledge.

Earle, of Southbury, Connecticut, has been a member of the Connecticut National Guard for 16

years. During his career he has received multiple awards and merits through two deployments and numerous military education courses.

He received a Bachelor's of Science in History and American Studies from Eastern Connecticut State University. He is currently employed at Petron Automation in Watertown, Connecticut.

He commended his employers at Petron, where he makes machined parts for medical equipment and firearms, for allowing him the flexibility with his time to train for competitions like this.

"The parts I'm currently making at work are for medical equipment and once I set my machine up they take about five minutes to run," Earle said, "so while my machine is running my boss is pretty good about letting me knock out some push-ups or whatever so I can train even when I'm at work."

Earle recognized that though individuals receive recognition as, "The Best," the competition was not only about individual achievement. He won a title, but to him the title represented more than just winning the competition.

“It is not me against them,” Earle said about the other competitors. “The competition is there but the animosity is not.”

Earle competed in cross-country and track in high school and college and considered how this competition is different than those meets.

“If I was in a road race with a team, we would just run past the other guy on either side and leave him behind to demoralize him,” Earle said. “At Best Warrior the other competitors are Soldiers; we’re comrades who encouraged each other to make it across that finish line.”

Earle began his career as an infantryman, but made a switch to the RTI’s Officer Candidate School Instructor because he wanted to gain more knowledge and experience. He looks forward to what is next in his military endeavors.

Though Earle plans to continue with his military and civilian careers, being NCO of the Year is just a stepping-stone to drive him to be better each day. Within minutes of winning, he began planning what he needs to improve with his mentor.

“I definitely got some great experiences with great competition,” said Earle. “I already talked to my mentor and commander about what to work on for the next competition.”

Garback, of Sewell, New Jersey, Region I Soldier of the



Spc. Joseph Garback of the New Jersey Army National Guard completes the timed push-up portion of the APFT during the 2016 Region I Best Warrior Competition at Camp Niantic, Connecticut, May 2. Garback took the title of Region I Soldier of the Year after completing the three-day competition. A total of 16 Best Warriors from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont competed for the titles of Region I Soldier and NCO of the Year. NCO of the Year went to Connecticut’s Sgt. 1st Class David Earle. The two winners will go on to compete at the national competition at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts in June. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Boffen, 130th PAD, CTARNG)

Year, follows a similar mentality as Earle.

“I like to compete, but I compete to be better than I was the day before, never become complacent with yourself,” Garback said.

This is the first year that New Jersey held a state competition, and Garback was proud to come in more prepared representing his state because he had

accomplished the first phase.

“I had some great non-commissioned officers that trained me, but I am surprised by the win,” he said

He smiled big as his commander came to shake hands and get photographs, showing how proud he was of his Soldier and what he was representing.

Garback has been with the New Jersey National Guard as an artilleryman for three years. Like Earle, Garback plans to continue to gain new experience within his military career as well.

“Hopefully this will open some doors for some other units,” he said. “Down the line I would like to go out for a special forces group.”

Garback is currently studying criminal justice at Rutgers University and looks forward to a civilian career in law enforcement and to continue his pursuits in competitive Muay Thai boxing.

Both of these Soldiers earned the opportunity to represent the region at the national level. By exceeding the standard and continuing to drive themselves to be better every day they hope to lead others to do the same.

“I always tell new [Soldiers] to wake up every day and train harder and be better than you were yesterday,” said Garback.

The national competition will be held at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts in June.



Sgt. 1st Class David Earle (left) of the CTARNG and Spc. Joseph Garback of the NJARNG took the titles of Soldier and NCO of the Year at the 2016 Region I Best Warrior Competition at Camp Niantic, Connecticut, May 1-5. Earle and Garback competed against 14 other Best Warriors from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The Competition consisted of several events designed to test the Soldiers’ Army knowledge and skill. Soldiers endured a 12-mile road march, day and night land navigation, a stress shoot, army warrior tasks and an APFT. Earle and Garback will go on to represent the region at the National Best Warrior competition at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts in June. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Boffen, 130th PAD, CTARNG)

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the students enrolled in this course are from all over New England. We have a great facility (here in Niantic), and there are a lot of things to do outside of the duty day.”

First Sgt. Chad Johnson, Primary Instructor for the MRT Course, agreed with Sypher’s sentiment about the facilities. He thinks Connecticut has the potential to host another course in the future.

Of the 55 students in the class, eight were members of the Connecticut National Guard, and three were employees of the Connecticut National Guard’s Family Programs. The remaining students will return to their state with the critical skillset.

“We’ve been working on this course for almost a year,” said Eva Grier, Mobile Training Team Coordinator for MRT. “The state leadership support is what makes these programs effective and sustainable through the years. Seeing the support here (in Connecticut) is a very welcome dynamic for everyone on our team.”

Sypher also coordinates and leads the Resilience Training Assistant course, also taught in state. The RTA course is “designed to teach Soldiers to support MRTs,” according to the course’s training circular.

While the MRT course was on break for the weekend, the Connecticut National Guard Behavioral Health Team continued its commitment to educating the force on all mental health resources available during the second annual Fresh Check Day at Camp Niantic, May 22.

Over 100 members assigned to the Recruit Sustainment Program were on hand, moving booth-to-booth on the parade field to hear different civilian and military subject matter experts discuss suicide prevention and a host of other topics that included sexual assault prevention and the effects of alcohol on the mind and body.

According to its website, Fresh Check Day, “aims to create an approachable atmosphere where students are encouraged to engage in dialogue about mental health.”

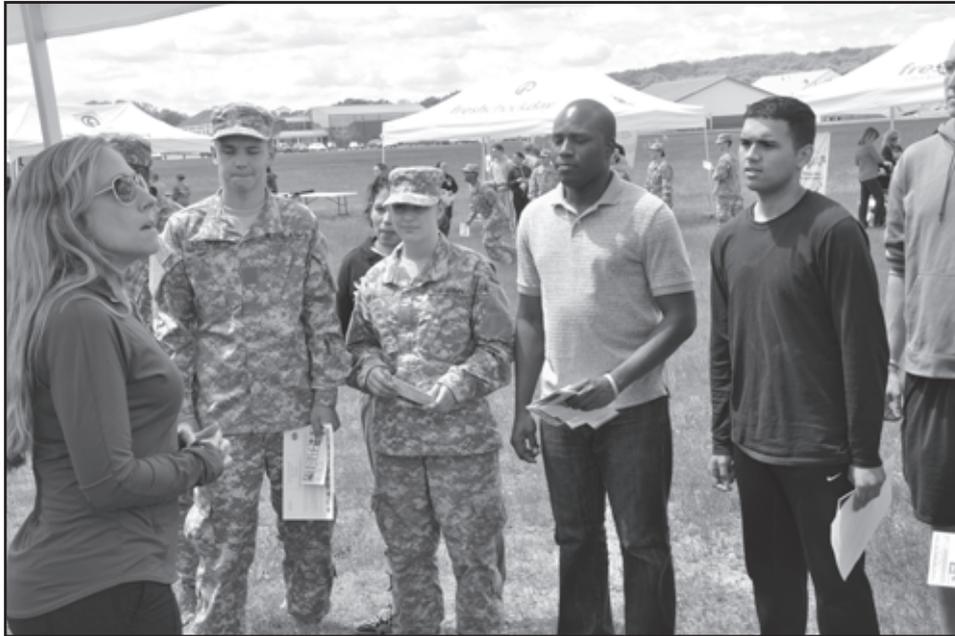
The event is typically held on college campuses throughout New England, but organizers were enthusiastic about working with military personnel, so they tailored the event to focus on the Citizen Soldiers of Connecticut.

“We are honored to work with the military again to share the message of suicide prevention,” said Marisa Porco, founder of the Jordan Porco Foundation which runs the Fresh Check Day program.

Community support is always a key element of spreading mental health initiatives. In 2013, the CTNG established the Community Health Promotion Council. The council’s primary mission is to provide enduring solutions that will promote healthy behaviors amongst Connecticut’s service members and their family members while facilitating the risk of long-term reduction in at-risk

behaviors, according to Maj. J. Alvarado, CTNG Behavioral Health Officer.

The CHPC works to expand access to community, CTNG and other military resources, while increasing communication between providers. The goal is to avoid



Crissy Lussier discusses her role as a Master Resilience Trainer for the Connecticut National Guard with members of the Recruit Sustainment Program during Fresh Check Day at Camp Niantic, May 22. “Resilience is what I love to teach the most,” Lussier said. (U.S. Army Photo by Capt. Mike Petersen, State Public Affairs Officer)

redundancy and enhance service utilization.

According to Alvarado, the CHPC encourages community providers to become involved and partner with the CTNG in order to care for its service members and their families. Those interested in joining the CHPC can contact Maj. Alvarado directly at 860-883-2035.

The Behavioral Health team, stationed throughout the state and capable of travelling wherever help is needed, is no stranger to working hard to ensure the entirety of the Connecticut National Guard knows about the resources available, to include the Connecticut National Guard Helpline – a 24-hour, 365-days a year phone line that immediately connects callers to a live Behavioral Health specialist capable of providing support right away.

“If you, or someone you know, is in need of immediate mental health services, the Helpline is one of the most important tools you can use,” said Alvarado. “We promote that phone number in nearly every conversation we have with Guardsmen, family members and employees of the organization.”

That phone number, which has a monthly advertisement in the *Connecticut Guardian*, is 1-855-800-0120.

The diligent work and creative methods used to spread the word about mental health by the CTNG Behavioral Health Team has led to nationwide recognition. During an Army National Guard Medical Team Training Event in Arkansas, the BH Team received the award from the Office of the Chief Surgeon for, “Exceptional Innovation and Implementation of Programs Improving Behavioral Health for Soldiers and Families of the Army National Guard,” May 17.

The Military Support Program, a state program run by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services,

have been a cornerstone of mental health support in the Connecticut National Guard. From embedded clinicians that Guardsmen see on drill weekends to a call center made available to every Connecticut veteran of every branch of service, the program provides yet another outlet for Guardsmen and their family members to turn to when seeking help.

Local news outlets reported May 18 that the MSP was going to be entirely cut, but quickly corrected the record after DMHAS issued a press release announcing the program has been saved.

Facing budget cuts in the wake of a difficult financial future for the state government, “the re-engineering of the Military Support Program in the wake of legislative approval of the 2017 budget adjustment.”

That re-engineering was due to the commitment shown by Governor Malloy and Lt. Governor Wyman to keep the core program services open during this period of financial uncertainty.

“The program will continue to embed military support mental health clinicians in drill weekend activities to allow for immediate assessment and linkage to appropriate services,” according to the press release.

“As I’ve watched this program evolve into a model for the nation, we are most grateful for the partnership we share with DMHAS,” said Adjutant General of the Connecticut National Guard, Maj. Gen. Thad Martin, in that same press release. “Those who served or are currently serving should know the Military Support Program will be there for them when it’s needed.”

Being there for those who are in need is the key to any successful mental health initiative. It is the duty of leadership at all levels to promote an environment where reaching out for help is a sign of strength, and educating all Guardsmen on all resources available.

Life Lines

Emergency - 911

CTNG Behavioral Health Help Line

1-855-800-0120

Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline

1-800-984-8523

Sexual Assault Hotline

1-877-995-5247

Military One Source

1-800-342-9647

National Suicide Hotline

1-800-SUICIDE

Suicide Prevention Hotline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

103rd Maintenance Group Embraces Process Improvement

MAJ. (RET) BRYON TURNER
103RD AIRLIFT WING, INSPECTOR GENERAL OFFICE

Months of analysis and problem solving efforts culminated in a special event where 17 members of the 103rd Maintenance Group presented the results of their combined process improvement efforts on April 24.

The Airmen conducted four separate team projects as part of a Six Sigma Green-Belt course taught at the Bradley Air National Guard Base over the last few months. The projects focused on streamlining various maintenance processes to reduce aircraft downtime and increase mission capable rates. The teams worked to shorten time requirements for shop dispatching, and for parts ordering, transit, and turn-ins to free up maintenance manpower for mission priorities.

Six Sigma is a set of techniques and tools for process improvement introduced to the corporate world in 1986. Today, these techniques are used in many industrial sectors and within the U.S. Air Force. Green Belts are Airmen who take up Six Sigma implementation as an additional duty operating under the guidance of Black Belts. Black Belts are seasoned Six Sigma professionals who can apply Six Sigma methodology to specific projects.

While this improvement methodology is not new, it is just getting started within the Connecticut Air National Guard, and the men and women of the 103rd Maintenance Group are leading the way.

“The completion of the first maintenance group green belt class and four projects is a significant step forward in our continuous-improvement efforts. The 17 green belt recipients demonstrated their commitment to this organization and the importance of continually reviewing our processes and programs to find ways to enhance our mission effectiveness,” said Col. Gerald McDonald, commander of the 103rd Maintenance Group.

“If you’re not moving forward, you’re standing still, and if you stand still in today’s environment you get run over. These Airmen get that and are investing their time and energy to ensure it doesn’t happen,” McDonald said. “Their project presentations and results were impressive and are a testament to their commitment and the outstanding leadership and instruction Master Sgt. Rob Walsh, from the force support squadron, provided during this program. The maintenance group will continue to grow this program and use these new tools to improve our operations.”

The course was taught by Walsh, a Black Belt assigned as a personnelist with the 103rd Force Support Squadron. Walsh was on loan to the 103rd MXG to facilitate the adoption of these proven process-improvement methods through academic instruction and hands-on practical



Members of the 103rd Maintenance Group proudly display their newly-earned Green Belts after graduating from a Six Sigma course taught by Master Sgt. Robert Walsh (lower right). Walsh is a Black Belt assigned as a personnelist with the 103rd Force Support Squadron. Six Sigma is a set of techniques and tools for process improvement used in many industrial sectors, and within the U.S. Air Force. Green Belts are Airmen who take up Six Sigma implementation as an additional duty operating under the guidance of Black Belts. Black Belts are seasoned Six Sigma professionals who can apply Six Sigma methodology to specific projects. (Photo Courtesy of Capt. Cheryl Mead, 103rd Maintenance Group)

applications.

“I’m really impressed with the management support here; thank you to all the students—it’s going to pay dividends,” said Walsh. “I’m excited about process improvement breaking through here at Bradley.

Continuous improvement is a key aspect of the wing’s recent implementation of the Air Force Inspection System. With Green-Belt training, the focus is on improving the unit, one of the four major graded areas that serve as the focus of AFIS. In theory, a focused Green-Belt effort can improve all four of the major graded areas, which also include resource management, leading people and mission execution.

“In the IG, we identify problems, and then track responsible parties as they work to develop solutions and document their efforts,” said Lt. Col. James Guerrero, Inspector General, 103rd Airlift Wing. “We are specifically told not to solve problems to maintain our impartiality, that’s where these green-belts come in. They perform root cause analysis and develop corrective actions through a thorough and deliberate process that has been very successful in the private sector and beyond.”

Six Sigma seeks to improve the quality of the output of a process by identifying and removing the causes of defects and minimizing variability in production and management processes. It uses a set of quality management methods, mainly empirical, statistical methods, and creates a special infrastructure of people within the organization, who are experts in these methods.

Each Six Sigma project carried out within an organization follows a defined sequence of steps and has specific

value targets, for example: reducing process cycle time, reducing pollution, reducing costs, increasing customer satisfaction, and increasing mission readiness. To put it in Air Force terms, Six Sigma can help us do more with less.

Col. McDonald stressed the value in these efforts, urging his fellow group commanders to embrace this effort and follow his lead.

“Some complain that they don’t have time for this sort of effort, they can’t afford it”, said McDonald. “I say we can’t afford not to. This is a small investment that will bring big gains at the end.”

Green Project Details

1. Parts Ordering Process—Reduce the time spent to order aircraft parts while performing maintenance on the flight line. If a technician needs a part while on the flight line, they need to store their tools and equipment, go to their shop to use the computer, walk back to the aircraft, set-up their tools and equipment again, then begin work again.

2. Aircraft Parts Turn-In Process—Reduce the amount of time it takes to return parts to supply. The process currently requires completing turn-in tags and dropping off the parts to LRS.

3. People and Equipment Movement on the Flight line—Improve the movement of people and equipment on and off the flight line to reduce travel time.

4. Morning Job Dispatch Procedures—Reduce the amount of time for technicians to respond to job dispatch assignments in the morning.

Connecticut Hosts Region's Best

STAFF SGT. JERRY BOFFEN
130TH PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT, CTARNG

Competitors, mentors, support staff and Soldiers from the other six New England states, plus New Jersey and New York, came together and faced wet and unseasonably cold Connecticut weather at Camp Niantic to participate in and support the three-day Army National Guard Region I Best Warrior Competition, May 2-5.

Those vying for the title in the regional competition had all been crowned victors during their state-level events held earlier this year.

Much like their state competitions, the regional competition kicked off with a casual social dinner on the first night that gave the competitors a chance to meet their counterparts from throughout the region. The next day consisted of the Army Physical Fitness Test in the early morning, followed by rifle qualification, a stress shoot and Army Warrior Tasks throughout the day, with a written exam capping off the evening.

The following day was perhaps the most arduous. The remaining competitors began with a 12-mile road march (while carrying a minimum 35-pound ruck sack), followed by day and night land navigation events. All of the competitors walked close to 20 miles in the rain and cold by the end of a day that tested not just physical strength, but mental resolve, too.

On the final day of the competition, competitors saw a reprieve from the physical rigors of the contest as they moved indoors, donned the Army Service Uniform and reported for the appearance board portion of the

competition.

This format is the same basic flow that each of the state-level competitions followed. While challenging, competitors knew what to expect and could prepare for most events (minus the "mystery task" on day two). What was new, however, was the location and support staff for the regional contest.

For many years the competition was held at Camp Smith, New York. For the last several years, though, the hosting duties and venues for the regional competition have rotated between the Region I states; this was the first year that Connecticut was ever tasked with hosting a regional-level best warrior competition. The Constitution State-based support staff was more than up to the task.

"The key to successful execution is good planning and the key to good planning is rehearsals," said Command Sgt. Maj. John Carragher, Connecticut State Command Sergeant Major. "We were able to use our state-level competition as a rehearsal for the regional-level competition, which just made it more precisely executed."

In addition to April's state competition, the staff here also drew upon years of experience in previous competitions to try to put on a top-notch regional competition.



Soldiers of the Year from Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey participated in the Region I Best Warrior Competition at Camp Niantic, Connecticut, May 2-5. Sixteen Soldiers and NCOs competed in events that tested their Army knowledge and skill. After three days of grueling competition, the Region I Soldier of the Year went to Spc. Joseph Garback (far left) of the New Jersey National Guard. Garback will join the Region I NCO of the Year at the national competition at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts in June. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Boffen, 130th PAD, CTARNG)



NCOs of the Year from Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey participated in the Region I Best Warrior Competition at Camp Niantic, Connecticut, May 2-5. Sixteen Soldiers and NCOs competed in events that tested their Army knowledge and skill. After the three days of grueling competition, the Region I NCO of the Year went to Sgt. 1st Class David Earle (center right) of the Connecticut National Guard. Garback will join the Region I Soldier of the Year at the national competition at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts in June. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Boffen, 130th PAD, CTARNG)

"Months of preparation went into this and we used the state competition that we ran last month as a rehearsal," said Sgt. Maj. Ronald Giroux, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the tactical operations center for the event. "We took feedback from that event and from competitions from previous years and made it more polished. We also used a lot of the same personnel from previous years to run this because they've done it before and they really are the subject matter experts. We wanted to make sure everything was dress right dress."

Giroux said that many of these changes were small, but important. They didn't make grand sweeping changes to the format but instead focused on little things that improved the overall professionalism of the event.

"We added patches with numbers on them that the competitors wore so that we could more easily identify them while they went through the competition," said Giroux. "We also utilized some of our unit's assets and had signs made for each event. We wrote and refined scripts for the staff that was running each event so that there was consistency and professionalism throughout."

"Another thing we looked at," Giroux added, "was adjusting the meals to meet the rigors of the events. For instance, on day two, by the time the competitors do the ruck march and the day and night land navigation events, they'll all have walked 18 miles or more. That's a lot of calories burnt so we added a lot to meet their nutritional needs."

Giroux went on to discuss the advantages that he sees in holding the competition at Camp Niantic.

"It's compact," he said. "We do everything here. We

have a beautiful new facility. The competitors are housed right on the water here and they all had their own rooms. So at the end of a long day they could come back and take a nice hot shower and decompress and get ready for the next day. This may all sound like small things but these small things are big to the competitors.”

Carragher echoed much of Giroux’s remarks.

“It’s great for us to bring in all of the other states in the region and be able to show off our facilities and our people so that they can see what we’re doing here in Connecticut,” said Carragher, “and, quite frankly, to show off a little bit and try to sell what we’ve got here.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Carlos Ramos Rivera, State Command Sergeant Major of the Massachusetts Army National Guard, was among the visitors to Camp Niantic that took notice of this.

“I am truly impressed and jealous of the facilities here in Connecticut,” he said. “This is what most of the states wish they had.

“This was a very well-run and well-organized competition,” he added. “I took notes for when we run the national competition in Massachusetts next month.”

Sgt. 1st Class David Earle, from Connecticut’s 169th Regional Training Institute and winner of this year’s regional competition, also took notice of the improvements and hard work of the support staff.

“The support staff was amazing,” said Earle. “They



Spc. Qian Han, New York Army National Guard Soldier of the Year completes push-ups during the AFPT at Region I Best Warrior Competition at Camp Niantic, Connecticut, May 2. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Boffen, 130th PAD, CTARNG)

took our comments from [the state competition] last month and made the events even better. Something as simple as the ruck march was improved by adding mile markers, having more [support] people on the course and more support during it like a road race with water tables and people cheering us on. So the events were definitely improved upon and run very professionally.”

“There were several competitors out here from other RTIs,” he continued, “and it shows the caliber of the

professionalism and just how good our soldiers really are. This validates it for me and I walk away just super charged knowing that the future of our Army is in very, very good hands based upon the quality of the Soldiers I’ve seen over the last few days.”

The next step for the winners is the national competition in June, which is being held this year at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts.



Staff Sgt. Nicholas Wida of the Vermont National Guard locates points during day land navigation at the Region I Best Warrior Competition at Stones Ranch Military Facility, East Lyme, Connecticut, May 4. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Boffen, 130th PAD, CTARNG)



Sgt. Jeremy Armstrong (center), Massachusetts Army National Guard NCO of the year, completes the 12-mile road march at the Region I Best Warrior Competition at Stones Ranch Military Reservation, East Lyme, Connecticut, May 4. In a show of support at the finish of the march were Armstrong’s mentor and Command Sgt. Maj. Gary Comeau, MAARNG. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Boffen, 130th PAD, CTARNG)

View and download all of the photos from this event on the

Connecticut National Guard Flickr Page

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Connecticut Celebrates 67th Armed Forces Day Luncheon

Ms. ALLISON L. JOANIS
CTNG PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

A record number of military members, Veterans and supporters came out to celebrate the men and women of America's Military at the 2016 Connecticut Armed Forces Day luncheon at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington, Connecticut, May 20.

The event, hosted by the Connecticut National Guard, is a way to recognize those who have served the state of Connecticut and the United States. The 2016 luncheon proved to be the biggest in the 67 years of the luncheon's existence, with a crowd of about 900 in attendance.

On hand to celebrate Connecticut's service members were several local officials to include, Governor Dannel P. Malloy, U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal and State Comptroller, Kevin Lembo.

Special guest speaker at the event was Sean Connolly, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs.

Connolly addressed the crowd filled with Veterans of all ages, specifically calling out and thanking Veterans from each American war and conflict since WWII.

"I thank all our women and men of the United States Armed Forces here today and all of our Veterans for your sacrifice, courage and selfless service to our nation," said Connolly. "It is all of you that keep us safe and free."

Connolly, who recently marked his one-year anniversary as commissioner, is a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army Reserve, and an East Hartford native. He worked most recently as Pratt & Whitney's

Global Ethics and Compliance Officer prior to his confirmation. He is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, serving as a Prosecutor and Brigade Legal Advisor with the 101st Airborne Division in both Kuwait and Iraq.

"Commissioner Connolly has brought a great deal of knowledge and experience to the Department of Veterans Affairs, and we are honored to have him as part of our official party to acknowledge the Reserve Component service members here in Connecticut," said Maj. Gen. Thaddeus J. Martin, Adjutant General of the Connecticut National Guard.

Each year, the luncheon recognizes one enlisted service member from each reserve component of the Armed Forces for their outstanding achievements over the past year.

This year the Connecticut National Guard honors went to Sgt. Michael Boscarino, a UH-60 Blackhawk crew chief with C Co., 3-126th Aviation Battalion, CTARNG, and Staff Sgt. Kristel M. Solerti, a personnelist with the 103rd Force Support Squadron, CTANG.

Also recognized were Connecticut members from the Army Reserve, the Naval Reserve, the Marine Corps Reserve and the Coast Guard Reserve.

For the past 67 years, the Connecticut Armed Forces Day Luncheon remains as the only function to bring together representation from all of the state's military components to honor their enlisted personnel.

Armed Forces Day has been recognized since August 31, 1949, when Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson announced its creation to replace separate Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force Days. The single-day celebration stemmed from the unification of the armed forces under one Department, the Department of Defense.



Sean Connolly, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs, addressed the crowd of about 900 guests at the 67th Connecticut Armed Forces Day Luncheon at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington, Connecticut, May 20. Connolly thanked the Veterans in attendance and also highlighted the CT VA mission to enhance the lives of Connecticut's Veterans. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Simon, JFHQ Public Affairs, CTARNG)



Sgt. Michael Boscarino (far right), a UH-60 Blackhawk crew chief with C Co., 3-126th Aviation Battalion, is presented the award as the 2016 Armed Forces Luncheon honoree for the Connecticut Army National Guard by (left to right) 1st Sgt. James Duggan, 3-142nd Avn. Bn., Sean Connolly, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs and Maj. Gen. Thad Martin, Adjutant General of the Connecticut National Guard. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Simon, JFHQ Public Affairs, CTARNG)



Staff Sgt. Kristel M. Solerti (far right), a personnelist with the 103rd Force Support Squadron is presented the award as the 2016 Armed Forces Luncheon honoree for the Connecticut Air National Guard by (left to right) Lt. Col. Kristine Graham, 103rd FSS, Sean Connolly, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs and Maj. Gen. Thad Martin, Adjutant General of the Connecticut National Guard. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Simon, JFHQ Public Affairs, CTARNG)

Visit the Connecticut National Guard Flickr page to view and download all of the photos from this event.
www.flickr.com/photos/ctnationalguard/albums

103rd Civil Engineers Train to Perfect Skills

SENIOR AIRMAN EMMANUEL SANTIAGO
103RD AIRLIFT WING, PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Members of the 103rd Civil Engineer Squadron took advantage of a unique opportunity to hone their welding skills during the April drill at Bradley Air National Guard Base, East Granby, Connecticut. The Flying Yankee structural craftsmen spent the majority of time cutting, cleaning and welding metal. Guardsmen were able to get hands on with the equipment used in the process as well as following the proper safety methods.

They began day one of their training at Bradley using an acetylene oxygen cutter to slice through thick pieces of metal. Before beginning, they trained on how to properly set up the cutter, and to use it safely. The torch is a long metal rod that is bent forward at its end and produces a high-pressured flame that sounds like a mini jet engine. The chemical acetylene is what essentially lights the flame and the oxygen is what increases its temperature and feeds the flame, allowing it to cut through metal almost effortlessly. As the engineers trained on the cutter, they cut metal pieces that would be later used in training over drill weekend.

Once the metal is cut, it needs to be cleaned. Guardsmen used different types of grinders and wire brushes to ensure the metal is rid of any rust, paint or air pockets. Removing these imperfections ensures that the metal edges receive a strong weld.

On the second day of training, the Flying Yankee civil

engineers traveled to Barnes Air National Guard Base, Westfield, Massachusetts along with the 12-inch long pieces of metal they cut and cleaned on day one of training. At Barnes, the guardsmen freshened their skills on different welding techniques.

“Training like this allows us to use what we learned in tech school and apply it to the operational Air Force—keeping up with these skills and getting our hands dirty is extremely beneficial to Airmen like me who just recently came back from tech school,” said Airman 1st Class Katie Puza, a structural engineer assigned to the 103rd Airlift Wing.

One of the welding techniques the Airmen used is called shielded metal arch welding, or better known as stick



Airman 1st Class Katie Puza, a structural craftsman assigned to the 103rd Airlift Wing, cleans a piece of metal with a grinder on Barnes Air National Guard Base, Westfield Massachusetts., April 3. The Flying Yankees had the opportunity to use the facilities at Barnes to undergo a refresher course in welding. (Photo by Senior Airman Emmanuel Santiago. 103rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs, CTANG)



Senior Airman Eric Burton, a structural craftsman assigned to the 103rd Civil Engineer Squadron, slices through a piece of metal using an acetylene oxygen cutter on Bradley Air National Guard Base, East Granby, Connecticut., April 2. The metal being cut will be used to practice welding when the Flying Yankee craftsmen travel to Barnes Air National Guard base, Westfield, Mass., to sharpen their skills. (Photo by Senior Airman Emmanuel Santiago. 103rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs, CTANG)

welding. The welder begins by readying his or her work area and assessing it for any safety issues. While doing so the welder looks over his or her safety gear. Since the light from the weld is incredibly bright, the welder needs to wear extreme eye protection. They also have to wear a thick leather jacket and gloves that shield them from small fragments of metal shooting from the weld called “slag”.

To weld, the member clamps the metal they use to a metal table that is electrically grounded. Then they use what’s called a stinger that is clamped to an electrode. The stinger runs a current of electricity to the electrode that creates an arc. The electrode is what’s used to melt in between two pieces of metal and creates the weld. The electrode is coated with a material that, when burned off, creates a gas that smothers the weld and protects it. The Airmen practiced various types of welds such as the butt joint, lap joint and t-joint.

According to Tech. Sgt. Jim Diederich, situations on the battlefield arise requiring that their skills remain sharp. One of the more important scenarios he outlined was when he himself was deployed and a security fence needed repairing.

“Any kind of welding experience is extremely beneficial down range. Any time you get deployed, you never know what can happen,” said Diederich. “So as much training as you can get before you go is always better.”

Training opportunities such as these help Guardsmen maintain their skills and inch closer to becoming an all-around combat-ready platform. The members of the 103rd Civil Engineer Squadron continue to do their part and contribute to the overall mission.

Second Company Governor's Horse Guard to Host 26th Annual Open House

OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE OF 2GHG

For 26 years, The Second Company Governor's Horse Guard has held an Open House during the summer months. Originally for the family and friends of Troopers, the Open House demonstrates the commitment it takes to be a member. Over the years, the Open House has grown more into a family focused community event, still showcasing the unit and its members, but mostly thanking the citizens of the State of Connecticut and the Town of Newtown for their support.

The Second Company Governor's Horse Guard (2GHG) cordially invites all military personnel and the general public to the 26th annual Open House on Saturday, June 25.

This year, in addition to 2GHG's Troopers performing a mounted military drill and musical ride, there will be line dancing, a Police Canine demonstration, critters from the Beardsley Zoo, pony rides for the kids and many other family focused displays

The Open House — sponsored by The Friends of 2GHG, — is free, however donations will be gratefully accepted and will benefit 2GHG's horses. The Open House will be held at 2GHG headquarters: 4 Wildlife Drive, Newtown, formation will start at 11:00 a.m. with a cannon salute and the program will end at 3:00 p.m.

Chartered in 1808, The Second Company Governor's

Horse Guard is one of the oldest active cavalry units in the United States. An all-volunteer state militia unit, 2GHG serves the Governor and the State of Connecticut at the direction of the Connecticut Army National Guard. 2GHG Troopers continue to serve Connecticut as willingly today as they did during colonial times, and remain, "Ready to Serve." For further information, visit, thehorseguard.org, or contact 2GHG at 203-426-9046 or by email

at, thehorseguard@gmail.com. Exterior of the Second Company Governor's Horse Guard facility in Newtown, Connecticut. The 2GHG will host an open house on Saturday, June 25. (Photo courtesy of The Second Company Governor's Horse Guard)



Aviation Completes Yearly Training Requirement

Members of the 1-169th General Support Aviation Battalion, 2-104th Aviation Regiment and C Co., 3-142nd Aviation Battalion flew UH-60 Blackhawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters to conduct their annual water bucket training at Colebrook Reservoir in Colebrook, Connecticut, May 17. Pilots and flight crews hooked up Bambi buckets to the aircraft and unloaded the buckets onto the target locations. This training helps to prepare the Guardsmen for real world state and federal missions. (Photo by Sgt. Jordan Tharp, F Co., 186th BSB (FSC) UPAR)



Health & Fitness

Five Ways to Stay Active at Work

MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM

Even with regular exercise, sitting for most of the day can increase your risk for chronic illnesses and early death. Find out what you can do about it.

Little things you do during your workday can reduce the amount of time you sit, decreasing your chance of developing certain sicknesses. Many jobs involve hours of sitting. Commuting, sitting down for dinner and TV after work, and then sleeping only add to the time most people sit or lie down in their daily lives. The more time you spend sitting, the higher your risk of chronic illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, and even some cancers. We offer some ways to move more throughout your workday.

Tip #1: Take small standing breaks.

When your phone rings, you could stand up to answer it and remain standing during the call. When someone visits your workspace, stand during your conversation. Consider switching to a standing desk in your office.

Tip #2: Take walking breaks.

Walk to a coworker's office instead of calling or emailing. Suggest a walking meeting next time you and coworkers schedule a get-together. You could walk to a cafeteria, park, or nearby bench before eating lunch. Experts suggest that even 2 minutes of walking per hour can be beneficial—so set your timer and go.

Tip #3: Bike or walk to work.

If you don't live close enough to bike or walk the entire commute, try walking for at least part of your travel time. Park further from your building or choose a higher level in the parking garage.

Tip #4: Take the stairs.

The more you climb, the easier it will get. Walk up and down escalators too instead of riding. Avoid elevators as much as possible.

Tip #5: Practice yoga.

Try to squeeze in a few yoga poses or stretches throughout your workday. Yoga can improve posture, increase much-needed energy, and stretch overused or tense muscles.



Biking to work is one thing people can do to help keep them moving. (www.health.mil)

Playing in a sporting league? Participating in a race? Involved in a fitness challenge? See yourself in print! Submit your health & fitness photos and stories to allison.l.joanis.civ@mail.mil.

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KEY LEADER EXCHANGE from page 1

country's top key Army, Navy and Air Force officials, but to also learn more about Uruguay's emergency management systems to help assist its residents in need was something that will certainly go a long way in developing and planning future engagements both here in state and in Uruguay."

The Joint Staff's trip was concurrent with an engagement that saw six members of the 1-102nd Infantry Regiment travel to Minas, Uruguay – about a 90-minute drive from Montevideo – to take part in an exchange of tactics, techniques and procedures with members of the Uruguayan Army.

"To hear the praises about the professionalism of our soldiers while down in Uruguay is a great sign that the State Partnership Program is making the impact it was designed to make," said Welch. "Our soldiers have the once-in-a-lifetime chance to travel to a part of the world they may have never thought possible, and learning to become better NCOs and officers

while at the same time exchanging experience and knowledge."

The tour began with a Sunday morning arrival into the capital city, followed by stops at numerous cultural sites, highlighted by a visit to Independence Plaza, where Welch and Lukowski were schooled in the genesis of Uruguay as a nation. With Uruguayan Air Force 1st



Connecticut National Guardsmen participating in the Key Leader Exchange travelled from Montevideo to Minas, Uruguay via a Uruguayan Air Force UH-1H Huey helicopter (background). In the center is Maj. Gen. Juan José Saavedra, commander of the Army's 4th Division (U.S. Army Photo by Capt. Mike Petersen, State Public Affairs Officer)

Lt. Daniel González volunteering his off-duty time to provide an informal history lesson, the Connecticut duo learned about the struggles General José Gervasio Artigas had in founding his country, which included his expulsion from the nation in 1825. Beaming with pride, González led the group through a tour of the plaza itself, centered by a statue of Artigas on horseback, stores

his remains underneath – available for public viewing and guarded 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by members of the Uruguayan Army.

Independence Plaza, home to the office of Uruguay's president, **T a b a r e V a z q u e z**, also houses the last-standing piece of the wall that used to contain the

entirety of Montevideo, before the city expanded. Of the country's more than three million residents, more than half reside in the nation's capital.

"That first day you arrive in Montevideo can be overwhelming," said Capt. Nick Raphael, Connecticut State Partnership Program Coordinator. "You've spent nearly 24 hours travelling, and the last thing we want to do is send the leadership from our joint staff into high-level meetings without getting to see some of the history this beautiful city has to offer. Spending those few hours acclimating to the environment while learning about Uruguay's rich history in an informal setting is a great balance."

The "we" referred to by Raphael includes the hard-working members of the Office of Defense Cooperation who help make the State Partnership Program possible, to include Maj. Gabriel Caminero, the Connecticut National Guard's Bilateral Affairs Officer, who is currently serving on a three-year tour at the United States Embassy in Montevideo.

Monday, May 9, began at the United States Embassy, where Welch and Lukowski met with U.S. Air Force Col. Kirk Karver, Chief of the ODC and Defense Attaché, for a briefing on what could be expected throughout the week. The group then spent a half hour in an office call with Chargé D'Affaires Brad Freden, followed by a Modified Country Team briefing. Welch and Lukowski heard important details on the political, economic, military and security environment in Uruguay.

"These types of briefings are eye-opening," said Lukowski. "It was well-prepared, informative and a great way for both Brig. Gen. Welch and I to mentally prepare for the week ahead."



Col. Gerald Lukowski and Brig. Gen. Ron Welch were briefed on the different individual weapon systems of the Uruguayan Army during a visit to the 1st Infantry Brigade Headquarters in Montevideo, Uruguay (U.S. Army Photo by Capt. Mike Petersen, State Public Affairs Officer)

Welch and Lukowski travelled across town for an office call with Gen. Nelson Pintos, Uruguayan Chief of Defense. The group discussed future engagements already planned by the State Partnership Program, and Gen. Pintos was quick to praise the Connecticut National Guardsmen that have worked full-time in Uruguay, to include Caminero and Raphael.

“One of the themes I noticed throughout the entire week was how grateful our Uruguayan counterparts are to have such an engaged SPP program, and I’m glad that thankfulness goes both ways” said Welch. “Tactics and military instruction aside, it pays dividends to share the differences in culture throughout all ranks of the force.”

The commanders of the Uruguayan Armed Forces welcomed their guests from Connecticut that evening, treating them to a traditional Uruguayan barbeque at the home of the Uruguayan Army 1st Cavalry Regiment, *Blandengues*. The *Blandengues* are an operational unit, with a ceremonial element that is charged with guarding Gen. Artigas’ tomb. The unit is steeped in history that dates back to the country’s founding in the early 19th century.

Tuesday, May 10, the Connecticut group travelled north via a UH-1H Huey to the city of Minas to visit the Army 4th Brigade, as well as the members of the 1-102nd that made the trip down as part of a subject matter expert exchange. Welch and Lukowski received a capabilities briefing before briefly speaking with soldiers engaged in operations at the 11th Infantry Battalion Headquarters.

Connecticut aviation personnel assigned to the 1109th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group and 1-169 General Support Aviation Battalion had worked with the aircraft during previous engagements in Uruguay, but it was the first time Connecticut personnel had the opportunity to ride as passengers in the aircraft.

The group continued their tour of Minas, meeting with Maj. Gen. Juan José Saavedra, Commander of the Army’s 4th Division. Saavedra and his staff hosted an informal pasta lunch on-site at their dining quarters.

Wednesday started with a history and capabilities briefing at the Uruguayan Air Force Headquarters, hosted by Maj. Gen. Jose Marengo, Air Force Chief of Staff. One similarity between the CTNG and Uruguayan Air Force is the use of the C-130 airframe.

Marengo then led the group to the Air Operations Center, where Welch and Lukowski met personnel that has previously worked alongside members of the Connecticut Air National Guard’s 103rd Air Control Squadron.

Gen. Alberto Zanelli, Commander of the Uruguayan Air Force, had previously been unavailable due to a prior engagement, but made the time to say hello and have coffee with Welch and Lukowski, while expressing his appreciation for the professionalism and knowledge of the Connecticut Guardsmen that had worked with the Uruguayan Air Force. He, too, was excited for what future engagements would hold.

The group then travelled to Air Force 1st Brigade, where the commanders and staff members of the 3rd and 5th Squadron gave presentations detailing their fixed and rotary-wing capabilities. These capabilities



Brig. Gen. Ron Welch speaks with Adm. Leonardo Alonso during an office call at the Uruguayan Naval Headquarters, in Montevideo, Uruguay, May 12. Brig. Gen. Welch met with the commanders of the Uruguayan Army, Navy and Air Force throughout the week, as well as the Chief of Defense. (U.S. Army Photo by Capt. Mike Petersen, State Public Affairs Officer)

were brought to life with a static display tour at the hangar on base. Displays included search and rescue equipment and a walkthrough of a C-212 Aviocar.

After leaving brigade headquarters, Welch and Lukowski were guests of Dr. Jorge Menéndez, Vice Minister of Defense, and Mr. Claudio Alonso, Director of International Programs. Discussions opened comparing the demographics of Connecticut to that of Uruguay, and Dr. Menéndez expressed high levels of interest in expanding engagements involving the SPP, specifically mentioning initiatives involving C-130 capabilities and disaster response.

Welch mentioned the continued praise Uruguay had received from United States Southern Command and Army South for their ongoing peacekeeping operations around the globe and regional humanitarian efforts, specifically mentioning the support provided to the victims of the recent earthquake in Ecuador.

The western city of Dolores, Uruguay was ravaged by a tornado in April 2016, killing four and injuring over 200 according to government officials in a CNN report. The military had boots on ground within in hour, assisting with evacuation due to the damage and subsequent flooding.

The topic of disaster response was highlighted throughout the week, but none more so than the group’s Thursday meeting with Magistrate Fernando Traversa, Director of Sistema Nacional de Emergencias (better known as SINAE), the Uruguayan equivalent of the Federal Emergency Management Administration.

The group discussed recent SPP engagements involving disaster response, and talked about the similarities and differences between the two organizations standard operating procedures as it pertains to the involvement of the military.

Earlier in the spring, five members of the Uruguayan Armed Forces traveled to Connecticut and participated in a Liaison Officer Training Course taught at the Windsor

Locks Readiness Center, Mar. 9-10, learning about some of the different ways Connecticut does business in response to the state mission. According to the course training circular, the focus of the two-day seminar was to teach, “the basic operational functions that every [liaison officer] needs to learn in order to accomplish effective interagency coordination at the local, state, and/or federal level for Defense Support of Civil Authorities operations.”

“To have a group of Uruguayan officers partake in our Liaison Officer Training Course was a testament to the high emphasis their government places on defense support to civil authorities,” said Lt. Col. Mark Tallo, lead instructor for the course.

The trip wrapped up with a visit to Admiral Leonardo Alonso’s office at the Headquarters of the Uruguayan Navy. Alonso, Commander of the Uruguayan Navy, echoed the sentiments of his compatriots, grateful recent engagements involving aviation and military working dog assets.

As the Connecticut group prepared to travel back home, they reflected on the Key Leader Engagement and what lessons learned they would bring back to Connecticut.

“As our complex operational environment continues to change here in the United States, the importance of interacting with allied nations pays huge dividends for everyone involved,” said Welch. “These engagements are broadening opportunities that reinforced the value of the State Partnership Program. We will bring our experience back to Connecticut, and continue with robust, well-planned exchanges in both locations.”

Welch said the week-long visit exceeded all expectations, and he was impressed with the professionalism and willingness of Uruguay’s top leaders.

For more information on opportunities with the State Partnership Program, contact your chain of command. See more photos on the CTNG Flickr page, www.flickr.com/photos/ctnationalguard/albums.

Recruiting & Retention

Griswold High School Wolverine Warrior Fitness Challenge

CAPT. ULRICK BRICE
CTARNG RRB

The fourth annual Wolverine Warrior Fitness Challenge took place at Griswold High School May, 12th.

The event was sponsored by the Connecticut Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion and coordinated by Staff Sgt. Justin McGale. Attended by students from several grade levels - either individually or as members of a team - the challenge focused on physical fitness activities and exposed the students to what it takes to be a member of the Army National Guard.

Each year since its inception, the event has grown in participation. About forty percent of the student body took part in the challenge and also included a team from Plainfield High School.

The challenge itself consisted of four events; one minute of push-ups, one minute of sit-ups, a one-mile run, and the Recruiting Battalion obstacle course. Faculty and community members were very supportive of the event and some faculty participated in the challenge while others cheered alongside other students watching the competition.

In addition to the fitness challenge, students got the opportunity to see a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter land on a nearby soccer field. Participants and faculty alike toured the helicopter and interacted with the pilot and

crew from the CTARNG's Army Aviation Support Facility, asking questions and taking pictures.

Excited and incredibly motivated, all of the participants and cheerleaders did a great job. The majority of students entered the challenge for fun and to

gain a new experience. Once they finished the challenge, entrants received a t-shirt and water bottle to acknowledge their success in completing all four events. Some students did extremely well at the challenge performing over 60 pushups and sit-ups. The top finisher of the mile, in at five minutes, 35 seconds.

McGale, the driving force behind the challenge, announced a follow-up event to present awards to the participants that exceeded expectations. Additionally, the principal asked RRB to administer the enlistment oath to five students who have enlisted into the CTARNG this school year during the annual awards assembly.

The Wolverine Warrior Fitness Challenge provided the Connecticut Army



Griswold and Plainfield High School students perform one minute of push-ups as part of the fourth annual Wolverine Warrior Fitness Challenge at Griswold High School, Griswold, Connecticut, May 12. The challenge was hosted by the Connecticut Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion and it consisted of four events; one minute of push-ups, one minute of sit-ups, a one-mile run, and the Recruiting Battalion obstacle course. At the event, students also had the opportunity to see a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter land on a nearby soccer field. (Photo by Sgt. Stephanie Gilbertie, CTARNG RRB)



Griswold and Plainfield High School students run through the Recruiting Battalion obstacle course at the fourth annual Wolverine Warrior Fitness Challenge at Griswold High School, Griswold, Connecticut, May 12. The challenge was hosted by the Connecticut Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion and it consisted of four timed events; push-ups, sit-ups, a one-mile run, and the obstacle course. (Photo by Sgt. Stephanie Gilbertie, CTARNG RRB)

National Guard an opportunity to cultivate great relationships with the school and community. Lt. Col. Mathew Wilkinson, Recruiting and Retention Battalion Commander, had high praise of the event and of McGale's initiative and intends to continue and grow the event for years to come.

The RRB looks forward to expanding unit support and displays at next year's Warrior Challenge.



Following the fourth annual CTARNG RRB Wolverine Warrior Fitness Challenge at Griswold High School, Griswold, Connecticut, May 12, students from Griswold and Plainfield High Schools also toured one of Connecticut's UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters and had the opportunity to interact with the pilot and crew. (Photo by Sgt. Stephanie Gilbertie, CTARNG RRB)

Enlisted Update

It's Prime Time for Training - Be Prepared



COMMAND SGT. MAJ.
JOHN S. CARRAGHER

Welcome to June! Hopefully we have moved over the hump and are ready for some good weather. This is an exciting time of the year as we all move into prime training time. As you make final preparations for annual training, I would ask that you keep a few things in mind:

First, make use of every moment you have with your Soldiers and Airmen during annual training to not only train, but to talk and build your team. We go through the training year at a million miles an hour and often sacrifice team building in order to get all of the required tasks completed. During annual training we have a little more time to get to know our people.

Second, please be acutely aware of safety. The most critical part of the deliberate risk management process is supervision and assessment. Risk management must be a continuous process that is evaluated by leaders to ensure that the controls we have implemented mitigate the risk to an acceptable level. If controls are not being implemented or are not adequate, they must be adjusted. If we are not continuously reviewing the process as operations continue, we will never identify the shortcomings. In addition to the specific tasks we are conducting, we must also review our decision making process. If a course of action exposes us to unnecessary risk, make sure that the decision is made at the appropriate level.

Finally, please take time to specifically thank your family members and employers for their support. We

cannot accomplish our mission without our families doing the heavy lifting or our employers making do in our absence.

The last couple of months were very busy for the Connecticut Army National Guard. In April, we conducted the State Best Warrior Competition. Thirty-two of the best Soldiers and NCOs from across our Guard came together to compete for the title of "Best Warrior" for the Connecticut Army National Guard and the privilege to represent all of us in the Region 1 competition. Over the course of four days, these Soldiers executed a year's worth of major training events. Starting with an Army Physical Fitness Test and continuing through weapons qualification, Army Warrior task testing, a 12-mile road march, and an appearance board, the level of competence was extraordinary. In the end, however, there can only be one winner. I am proud to announce that Spc. Nathan P. Havens of Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry is your 2016 Best Warrior (Soldier) and Sgt. 1st Class David C. Earle of the 1st Battalion, 169th Regiment (RTI) is your 2016 Best Warrior (NCO). We should all be very proud of these two great Soldiers for winning the competition over some very difficult competition.

The Best Warrior process continues. The Connecticut National Guard was privileged to host the Region 1 competition at Camp Niantic during the first week in May. The very best Soldiers and NCOs from New England, New York, and New Jersey came together to determine who would represent Region 1 in the Army Guard competition. Once again, the level of competition was extremely high. Each of the eight States sent their very best. In a very tight competition, Spc. Joseph Garback from the great State of New Jersey earned the title of Region 1 Best Warrior. On the NCO side, your own Sgt. 1st Class Earle was named the Best Warrior. Each of these outstanding Soldiers will move forward to represent Region 1 in the National competition in June. Good Luck!

I would be remiss if I did not thank all of our units for the hard work that went in to executing both the State and Regional competitions. It may seem relatively simple

from the outside, but there is a huge amount of work that goes into planning and executing events of this magnitude. Every single unit of the Connecticut National Guard (to include the Air National Guard) had a part in these events and performed superbly. It is truly a pleasure to work on an event and think of something that needs to be done, turn to ask about it, and find that the staff and or units already thought of it and are executing. That is the mark of a professional organization that understands the collective intent and is empowered to make it happen. Your hard work and relentless pursuit of excellence does not go unnoticed and is very much appreciated.

On June 8th, Command Sgt. Maj. Brunk Conley will relinquish his responsibilities as the Army National Guard Command Sergeant Major to Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Kepner. I wanted to take a moment to publically thank Command Sgt. Maj. Conley for his lifetime of hard work to Soldiers, State, and Nation. During his time as the Command Sergeant Major of the Army National Guard, he has been a tireless advocate for Soldiers across our Guard. Command Sgt. Maj. Kepner comes to the position from the great State of Pennsylvania. His most recent assignment was as the Command Sgt. Maj. of the 28th Infantry Division. I have no doubt that Command Sgt. Maj. Kepner will bring the same level of dedication to the Soldiers and Families of the 54 States and Territories that Command Sgt. Maj. Conley has demonstrated over the last several years.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as I can as we visit your annual training locations. As always, take full advantage of every second you have with your Soldiers. We cannot afford to waste a moment of valuable training time.

Quote of the Month:

"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear - not absence of fear." -Mark Twain

CSM Carragher

"Any Soldier, Any Issue, Any Time"

CONNECTICUT AIR NATIONAL GUARD COMMISSIONING OPPORTUNITIES

Qualified candidates may email resumes/CVs to:

Master Sgt. Aaron Hann
aaron.f.hann.mil@mail.mil
(860) 292-2331

Master Sgt. Christopher Grizzle
christopher.h.grizzle.mil@mail.mil
(860) 292-2758

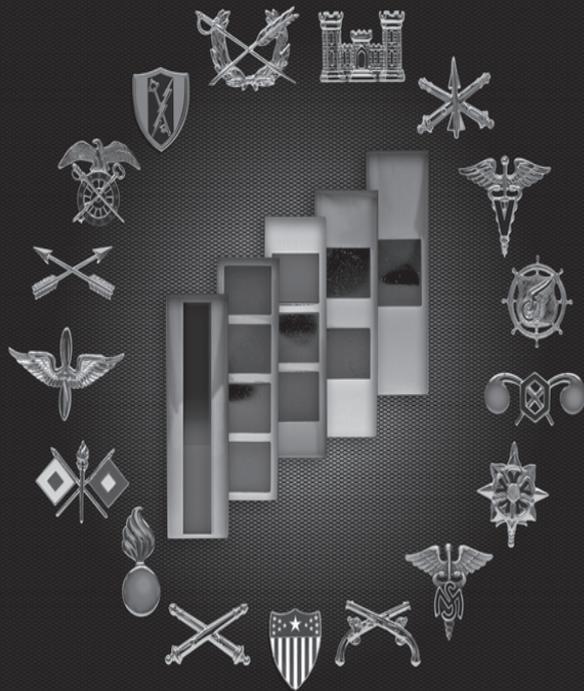
- 44K - Pediatrician
- 47G - Dentist
- 48A - Aerospace Medicine Specialist
- 48R - Flight Surgeon
- 46Y3A - APRN Nurse
- 45G3 - OB/GYN Nurse
- 42G3 - Physician Assistant
- 31PX3 - Security Forces Officer
- 14N3 - Intelligence Officer





WARRANT OFFICER

Use Your Military Experience in a Leadership Role as a Warrant Officer in the National Guard.



TAKE THE CHALLENGE TODAY, CONTACT:

CW3 JOHN NERKOWSKI

WARRANT OFFICER STRENGTH MANAGER

203.410.0828

john.v.nerkowski.mil@mail.mil



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



Officer Candidate School OCS & WOCS Open House

INFORMATION BRIEF

June 25, 2016

Report Time: 9:00 a.m.
9-12:00 p.m. Rm. 1113,
RTI, Camp Niantic

Uniform: ACUs with Patrol Cap or
Business Casual (Civilians Only)

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



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

INSIDE OCS

Taking on Challenges, Finding Balance

OC EDWIN ESCOBAR
OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL CLASS 61

Five.

That's the number of Officer Candidates left in class 61. We have seen many faces come and go throughout the year. This year has been full of ups, downs, hard times, and good times but more importantly it has been full of learning experiences and personal growth. We are going into month 8 of phase two of OCS and I feel as if it has been a life time since we first started this program about a year ago. What a roller coaster ride it has been. Complete strangers have become family. We have adapted and overcome at every turn and I have a strong feeling that together we can accomplish any task set before us.

Every month has its own unique challenges in OCS. Whether it be the on-the-spot changes in leadership amongst the OCs, the grueling ruck marches and PT sessions, the demanding written tests and homework assignments, the list seems endless.

I think the hardest challenge of them all is striking a balance between your civilian life with your military responsibilities. This is a big part of being an officer. You have to be willing to put in the time and effort not only at drill but during the rest of the month when it may conflict with your personal life as well, all so you can set up your soldiers for success.

We all know that as an officer the quote, "first one up, last one to sleep," thoroughly applies, but it only encompasses what officers do at drill.

Outside of drill they spend countless hours making sure every single little detail is planned, coordinated, ready to be executed, and then backed up with a contingency plan all while making sure the men and women under our command are ready and trained. It is an art that takes plenty of failures to get right, and even then, it is not perfect.

My fellow Officer Candidates and myself have found a balance that works for each of us individually 8 months into the program and even now it still needs adjusting but progress is never ending and at least we are all on the right path.

This program requires you to be very well rounded and able to perform various different tasks, whether physical or administrative. You also have to be able to perform them with a level of stress that you may just not be used to. At home some of my friends jokingly call me a chameleon, but at times, it doesn't feel too far from the truth. In this program you have to be willing to follow as much as you are willing to lead, deal with people of different walks of life, adapt and overcome.

I haven't come this far because I am smarter, stronger, or a natural born leader. I have come this far because I am willing to take on any challenge, whether intellectual or physical, and adapt so that I can do the absolute best

job possible on it. We all have something that will drive us to do this, but the hard part it figuring out what it is. OCS has shown me what mine is. It has been something that has driven me my entire life and I was never able to identify it or accept it, probably because I was too proud to admit it to myself.

That gut feeling that has pushed me to succeed in my most difficult moments in my life is fear. I never realized this about myself before and I don't think I would have ever admitted to it before this year but I am terrified by a couple of things and it is a good thing I am because it has been one of the biggest driving factors throughout my life.

I am scared to fail. Fail my family, my battles, my cadre, and my friends. This fear keeps me hungry and keeps me going and it is a big reason that I am still in this program. The fear of not being successful kills me inside and it's a good thing because it drives me to do what I have to do just that much better.

People always say, "it is all mental," and it truly is. I am 220 pounds, but ran my 3-mile last drill in 21:25. Why? Not because I run everyday, because I don't, but because I have learned through this program that the mind quits way before the body does and in times of distress one must take a deep breath, adapt and overcome, make a decision, and drive on.

This program is really a journey for people to find out about themselves and I think that self-discovery factor is what separates those who remain in the program from those who have come and gone. Every candidate left has found out more about themselves than they knew before and they have been able to use their strengths and weaknesses and those of their battle buddies in order to balance out and accomplish all our tasks as a team.

This process could only have been paved by our mentors, the cadre of OCS. The cadre in this program are the best at what they do. These soldiers are subject matter experts and even better teachers and mentors. Now that we are starting to get closer to the end of the program I have realized that all the "pointless" correctional physical activities and extra assignments weren't pointless at all. Everything that we do can be applied in battle and in life. It took a while to understand but now that we are delving deeper into more advanced topics and tasks, I can see where all these things come together to set us up for success.

I am glad I decided to take on the challenge of OCS and will be looking forward to the next couple of months when we will be out in the field putting all we have learned into action. Although low in numbers, I am proud and excited of the team that the five of us have become and there is no doubt in my mind that together we will accomplish the tasks set before us in the next couple of months.

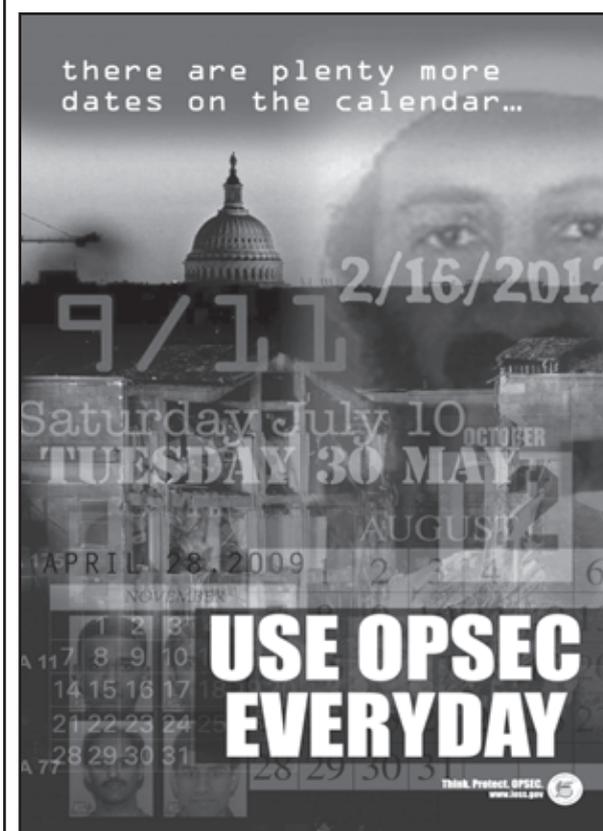
Connecticut Army National Guard Critical Information List

The Critical Information List describes a list of critical information that must be protected from adversaries. Release of any information considered critical information must first receive an OPSEC review and will be released by the proper authority.

The following information is considered critical and will be protected accordingly.

1. Personally Identifiable Information
2. Protected Information/Privacy Act
3. Mobilization/Deployment/Re-deployment Information
4. Details of Operations and/or Missions
5. Information Assurance: passwords, phone numbers, unit rosters
6. Training Schedules, training Calendars or details of major training events
7. Capabilities of organizational weapons, equipment and personnel; LOGSTAT/PERSTAT
8. Identification of unit/facility, Mission Essential Vulnerable Areas

For more information reference Army Regulation 530-1, Operations Security or contact the State Operations Security Officer, Maj. Andrew P. Ossolinski at (860) 548-3221 or Andrew.p.ossolinski.mil@mail.mil.



Off the Bookshelf

Going Back To Civilian Life: Pamphlet No. 21-4, November 1944

STAFF SGT. BENJAMIN SIMON
JFHQ PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

U.S. service members who deployed during the Global War on Terrorism are not the first group of Americans to return home from foreign combat zones. President Thomas Jefferson deployed American forces to North Africa in 1801 (to the shores of Tripoli) to fight Barbary pirates. Undoubtedly, future Americans will also fight wars on foreign soil.

Modern day service members receive access to helpful resources and are supported in countless regards when they return home to the United States. This, also, is not new.

War Department (it was not yet the Department of Defense) Pamphlet No. 21-4, dated November 1944, is titled, "Information for Soldiers: Going Back to Civilian Life." This pamphlet was issued to all soldiers who separated from military service. It contains sections on obtaining insurance coverage, veterans' benefits, Veterans Administration issues (it was not yet the Department of Veterans Affairs), legal assistance, education benefits, and employment.

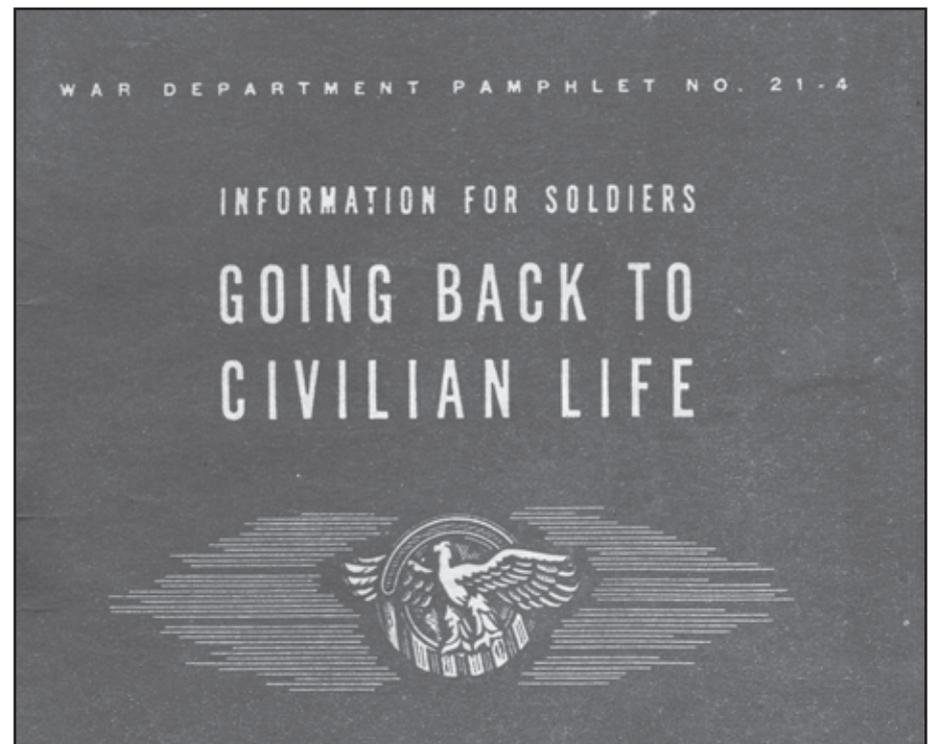
The literature returning soldiers receive today is not

totally far removed from this small 50-page pamphlet. The language in the old booklet is a little more direct than what modern service members are used to, and yet its illustrations are simple and almost humorous. Its seriousness, and light-hearted spirit, may have been exactly what soldiers returning home in 1944 needed.

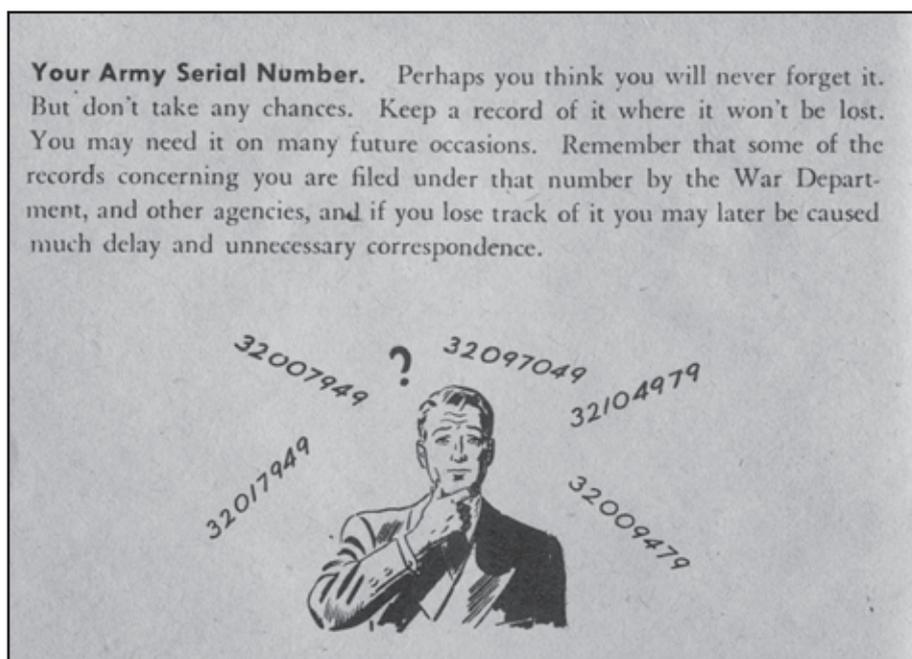
The pamphlet's forward will seem familiar. Although the world has changed significantly since 1944, many things are the same:

By your service in this war you have done your share to safeguard liberty for yourself, for your family, and for the Nation. You have helped to preserve it for those generations to come ...When you return to the duties

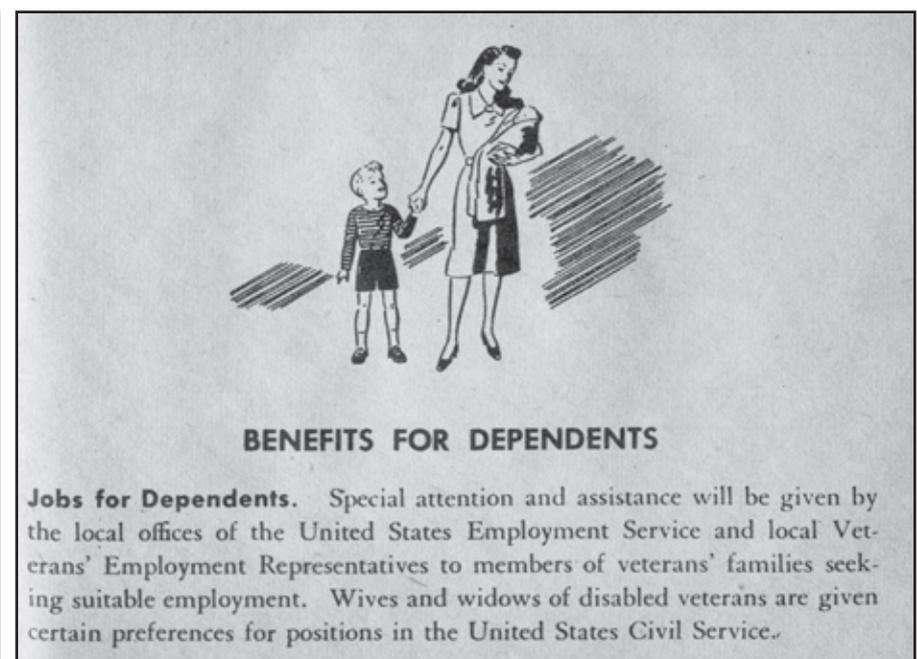
and responsibilities of civilian life, you take with you the good wishes of those who were in the Army with you. You can always be proud that you were once a member of America's armed forces and that you served with honor.



Cover of "Information for Soldiers: Going Back to Civilian Life," War Department Pamphlet No. 21-4, November 1944. The 50-page pamphlet was issued to all soldiers who separated from service in 1944.



An illustration and helpful tip from "Information for Soldiers: Going Back to Civilian Life," War Department Pamphlet No. 21-4, November 1944. The 50-page pamphlet was issued to all soldiers who separated from service in 1944. Inside the pamphlet, soldiers obtained helpful information to ease their transition as they exited military service.



An illustration from "Information for Soldiers: Going Back to Civilian Life," War Department Pamphlet No. 21-4, November 1944. The 50-page pamphlet was issued to all soldiers who separated from service in 1944. The pamphlet contains sections on obtaining insurance coverage, veterans' benefits, Veterans Administration issues, legal assistance, education benefits, and employment.

Military History: The Father of Uruguayan Independence

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

Outside the U.S. Embassy in Montevideo, Uruguay is a statue of George Washington. Washington, who has often been referred to as the, "Father of our Country," keeps watch over the dedicated men and women of the various agencies who work tirelessly there. During my career with the Connecticut National Guard, I was very fortunate to make four visits to our partner country and learn about their national hero, the Father of Uruguayan Independence, General José Gervasio Artigas.

José Artigas was born on June 19, 1764 on the outskirts of Montevideo. His birthday is a national holiday in Uruguay. At the age of 12, he left school and began to work on one of his father's farms. He then became a cattle smuggler, which made him a wanted man. In 1797, Artigas began a military career because he was promised a pardon in exchange for joining the army.

In 1814, Artigas organized the League of Free Peoples that proclaimed independence from the Spanish Crown the following year and began fighting for it. Influenced by the principles of American leaders such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, Artigas established a provisional government in 1815. Unfortunately, this government was short lived and Artigas was forced to live in exile in Paraguay from 1820 until he died on September 23, 1850. The movement which Artigas inspired was eventually victorious and the First Republic of Uruguay was established on August 25, 1825.

After being exiled to Paraguay, Artigas reportedly said, "Taking the United States as a model, I desired the

autonomy of the Plateau provinces, granting to each state its own government, its constitution and its flag, with the right to elect its representatives, its judges, and its governors from its own national-born citizens." Artigas also reportedly had copies of the US Constitution and Articles of Confederation in his possession at all times.

A statue honoring General Artigas is in the Plaza de Independencia in Montevideo. Below it is a mausoleum with his ashes, guarded around the clock by soldiers of the Ejército Nacional called the "Blandegues de Artigas." These soldiers wear uniforms from the period that General Artigas served.

Just as Montevideo, Uruguay is home to a statue of George Washington, Gen. Artigas is honored with monuments in Washington, D.C., New York City and Montevideo, Minnesota (a sister city of Montevideo, Uruguay). The statue of the Uruguayan independence leader and national hero in Manhattan is one of six sculptures to Latin American leaders which overlook the Avenue of the Americas. The larger-than-life statue of Artigas in Soho Square is a second cast of an original



A statue depicting Gen. José Artigas on horseback at Independence Plaza in Montevideo, Uruguay. His remains are guarded 24 hours a day underneath the statue, and are available for public viewing (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Mike Petersen, State Public Affairs Officer).

which has stood in Montevideo, in front of the Uruguayan National Bank, since 1949. Sixth Avenue was renamed Avenue of the Americas in 1945 at the suggestion of Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia, to honor Pan-American ideals and principles.

Brig. Gen. Cody retired from the CTARNG in 2014 and currently teaches 7th grade Humanities in Stamford. He may be reached at rmcody@snet.net.



State Substance Abuse Program

Limited Use Policy

If you think you may have a problem with alcohol or drugs, it is best to admit the concern to your chain of command so they can help before you get caught.



If you admit your abuse and request help, the Limited Use Policy could limit the negative consequences of your drug or alcohol abuse.

Under the Limited Use Policy:

- The characterization of discharge is limited to "Honorable"
- Your commander is not required to initiate separation proceedings
- For more information, see AR 600-85 or talk to your ADCO and PC



Strong Choices is the Commander's tool for Universal prevention education for all ARNG Soldiers. Talk to your ADCO or PC to set up your required annual training

CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. Steve Langehough
Alcohol and Drug Control Officer
steven.o.langehough@accenturefederal.com
Cell: 475-238-2138

Jennifer Gonzalez-Smith
Prevention Coordinator
j.m.gonzalez-smith@accenturefederal.com
Cell: 860-549-2838

CT ARNG Armory
360 Broad Street, Rm 103
Hartford, CT 06105

DID YOU KNOW...

Of Soldiers age 18-24,

19%

meet criteria for alcohol dependence.

Self-referral may be an option for you.

State ARNG Substance Abuse Program

Phone: 860-549-2838 or 475-238-2138

Five Dimensions of Strength and MRT Competencies

COMMAND SGT. MAJ. JAMES SYPHER
CTARNG RESILIENCE COORDINATOR

The five dimensions of strength consist of Family, Physical, Social, Spiritual, and Emotional.

The **Family** dimension is about maintaining trusted relationships that foster good communication including a comfortable exchange of ideas, views, and experiences.

The **Physical** dimension of strength relates to performing and excelling in physical activities that require fitness, endurance, strength, and flexibility derived through exercise, nutrition and training.

The **Social** dimension involves developing valued friendships that are personally fulfilling.

The **Spiritual** dimension is about having a set of beliefs, principles and values that sustain a person beyond family, institutional, and societal sources of strength.

The **Emotional** dimension of strength has to do with approaching life's challenges in a positive, optimistic manner by demonstrating self-control, stamina and good character with your choices and actions.

Master Resilience Trainers utilize six competencies, which fall within the five dimensions, to cope with adversity and remain resilient under difficult circumstances. The six competencies on which Master Resilience Trainers rely are:

Self Awareness: Identify thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Identify patterns in thinking and behaviors; particularly counterproductive patterns in order to combat negativity.

Self Regulation: Regulate impulses, emotions, and behaviors in order to achieve goals. Express emotions appropriately and stop counterproductive thinking.

Optimism: Hunt for what is good and remain realistic. Identify what is controllable, maintain hope and have confidence in yourself and your team.

Mental Agility: Flexible and accurate thinking. Identify and understand problems; be willing to try new strategies and take other perspectives.

Strengths of Character: Be aware of your top strengths and how to use them to overcome challenges and meet goals. Have faith and confidence in your strengths, talents, and abilities; have an, "I am strong," attitude.

Connection: Maintain strong relationships through positive and effective communication. Have the willingness to ask for help when help is needed. Demonstrate empathy and support others.

Resilience Tip of the Month:

Make it a priority to visualize yourself achieving your goals. Not only will you build confidence by seeing yourself attain your goals, but you will also feel and experience the act of achieving, which can create positive emotional balance.

All units of company size or larger are required to have at least one Master Resilience Trainer. Seats for FY 16 have been sub allocated to the Major Subordinate Commands and Separate Units. Ask your Readiness NCO for more information.



Resilience Resources:

Outward Bound

www.outwardbound.org/veterans

Strong Bonds

Contact Chaplain Nutt at 800-858-2677

Connecticut Veteran Affairs

Newington: 860-666-6951

West Haven: 203-932-5711

Military One Source

www.militaryonesource.mil

NGACT RETIREES' PICNIC & BENEFITS UPDATE BRIEF
THURSDAY, AUGUST 4th, 2016
CAMP NIANTIC, NIANTIC CT

Retiree Benefit Update at 10:30 a.m.



Mark your calendar
\$25.00 by July 29th, 2016 & \$30.00 at the Door
Register & Pay Online at WWW.NGACT.ORG

Cookout starts at Noon
Join us for fun!!!



Reconnect with friends!!!
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/NGACT

2016 NGACT Calendar of Events

June 15
Board Meeting

August 4
Retiree Picnic
(flyer on page 13)

August 20-25
EANGUS
Conference

September 9-12
NGAUS Conference

July 20
Board Meeting

August 10
Scholarship Banquet

August 31
Work Night

October 19
Board Meeting

July 27
Work Night

August 17
Board Meeting

September 2
NGACT Golf Tourn.

November 16
Board Meeting

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Website at
www.ngact.org

Equal Opportunity

June - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Pride Month

MAJ. KRISTINA L. GARUTI
CTNG SEEM/SARC

The United States and its military are made up of thousands of people that do not look alike.

They speak and sound different from one another, and have grown up and lived in a variety of different cultures, under different circumstances, and even in different countries. As military members, we wear a uniform and honor our respective branch's Core Values. But as humans, we have a right and an expectation to be different from one another. When we take off our uniforms and, "let our hair down," we might not even recognize each other!

Many of us are proud of what makes us who we are. Whether it is our belief systems, the colors of our skin and textures of our hair, or our family histories and values, we are honored to share our uniqueness with each other.

But just like other countries, the history of the United States is wrought with examples of intolerance, discrimination and prejudice, of which the effects are still felt today. So there is still a need to encourage acceptance amongst ourselves. One way we do this is through special emphasis awareness.

This awareness fosters recognition of the continuous achievements that all Americans contribute to American culture and increases mutual respect and understanding. Information and activities regarding special emphasis are designed to enhance cross-cultural and cross-gender awareness and promote unity among all military members, their families and the civilian work force. These activities are extensions of the equal opportunity education and training objectives.

Each special emphasis month or event occurs on an annual basis in support of a Joint Congressional Resolution, Presidential Proclamation, and achievements of all groups that comprise the society of the United States.

Dr. Carter G. Woodson is credited with instituting the first ever special emphasis awareness event in 1926, with his week-long celebration to raise awareness of African Americans' contributions to history (<http://www.archives.gov/eo/special-observances/>). In 1976, the week became a month of observance, and today February is celebrated as Black and African American History Month. Between 1968 and 2000, the following days and months have been assigned special emphasis: January 20 is observed as Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, February is Black and African American Heritage Month, March is Women's History Month, one week between April and May (depending on when Yom Hashoah occurs) are "Days of Remembrance" of Victims of the Holocaust, May is Asian and Pacific American Heritage Month, June is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and



Transgender Pride Month, August 26 is Women's Equality Day, September 15 to October 15 is celebrated as Hispanic Heritage Month, October is Disability Employment Awareness Month, and November is American Indian and Alaskan Native Heritage Month. For each of these special emphasis days and months, the Equal Opportunity office and Wing Human Resource Advisor are sent the Presidential Proclamations. Although LGBT Pride Month has been celebrated for the last 15 years, it is not one of the widely known special emphasis months.

LGBT Pride Month is the newest special emphasis awareness, having first been issued by President Clinton in June 2000, via Proclamation No. 7316. According to www.archives.gov, June became LGBT Month to commemorate the June 1969 Stonewall Inn riots in New York. Patrons and supports of the establishment staged the uprising to resist police harassment and persecution to which LGBT Americans were commonly subjected.

Today, LGBT Month celebrations include pride parades, picnics, parties, workshops, symposia and concerts. Memorials are held during this month for those members of the community who have been lost to hate crimes or HIV/AIDS. LGBT Month recognizes the impact that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals have had on history locally, nationally, and internationally (<http://www.loc.gov/lgbt/about.html>).

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, humans are diverse. The one constant about humanity is that whether through want, circumstance, or genetics, humans will always be different from one another. Every one of us is entitled to our personal beliefs regarding tax reform, the President, gun control, abortion, free speech, immigration, welfare, global warming, GMO, marriage equality, the Flying Spaghetti Monster, and any other hot topic in this day and age. But as members of the Connecticut National Guard, we must never forget that we must continue to follow policy and procedure, and first and foremost treat each other with dignity and respect.

Remember, our diversity is our strength if we choose to embrace it, but can also be our weakness if we do not continually foster and develop inclusion and understanding within our workforce.

**THE CONNECTICUT NATIONAL GUARD
OFFICIAL WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

www.ct.ng.mil/
Official CT National Guard Website

f facebook.com/connecticutnationalguard
The Official CT National Guard Fan Page

t twitter.com/ctnationalguard
The Official CT National Guard Twitter

o flickr.com/ctnationalguard
The Official CT National Guard Flickr

i instagram.com/ctnationalguard
The Official CT National Guard

CONNECTICUT NATIONAL GUARD
Connecticut National Guard Public Affairs Office
Social Media Submissions and Information
(860) 524-4857
ctngpublicaffairs@gmail.com

**The Connecticut Guardian
ONLINE**
<http://ct.ng.mil/Guardian>

Retiree Voice End the Military "Widow's Tax"

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4 (RET.) JOHN GODBURN
RETIREE AFFAIRS COLUMNIST

Under current federal law, if the surviving spouse of a military retiree or service member who dies while on active duty, is eligible to receive the monthly Survivor Benefit Program annuity payment, and is also awarded a monthly Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefit by the Veterans Administration, the SBP annuity is offset, dollar-for-dollar, by the amount of the DIC received. This offset is commonly referred to as the "military widow's tax."

When service members retire, they have the option to purchase SBP coverage to provide their surviving spouse up to 55 percent of their retired pay in the event of their death. This payment is designed to help make up for the loss of the military retirement income. When the servicemember dies while on active duty, SBP coverage, in most cases, is automatically provided to the eligible survivor.

In cases where the VA determines that the death is service-connected, the VA then pays the survivor the additional payment called DIC. This earned benefit is a

tax-free benefit for the surviving spouse and children (if any). If the servicemembers death occurred before January 1, 1993, DIC rates varied based on rank and other family factors. Currently the base DIC rate is \$1,254.19 monthly. If the surviving spouse has dependent children under the age of 18, an additional \$310.71 for each child is added to the monthly payment.

SBP and DIC are two distinct and independent programs, each with its own unique eligibility requirements. An SBP annuity is service member purchased, requiring financial contributions. DIC is an indemnity payment awarded to survivors of servicemembers whose death was a result of military service.

Realizing that when military service causes the servicemembers death, the VA DIC should be paid in addition to the SBP, and not subtracted from it, Congress in 2008 authorized a Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance to partially compensate for the SBP/DIC offset. Currently the monthly SSIA rate is \$275 in FY 2016 and will rise to \$310 a month in FY 2017. This SSIA payment, while helpful, only covers about 25 percent of the SBP/DIC offset.

At the time of its passage, SSIA was intended to continue to increase, ultimately phasing out the widows tax. However the legal authority to pay SSIA expires October 1, 2017, unless Congress repeals the SBP/DIC offset or extends the SSIA authority. If you feel, that the VA DIC should be added to the SBP payment, and not subject to the dollar-for-dollar offset, then you need to act. Contact your United States Congressmen and Senators to let them know how you feel. Urge them to repeal the widow tax, or at the very least, extend the authority of SSIA to continue making payments beyond the current cutoff of October 1, 2017. To my knowledge, no other federal surviving spouses are required to forfeit their federal annuity because military service caused their servicemembers death. It's time to end this injustice.

Further information concerning the Survivor Benefit Program, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation and Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance can be found at these sites, www.dfas.mil; www.va.gov; www.ausa.com and www.military.com, to name just a few.

Legal Issues 27D - Paralegal Duties

SUBMITTED BY THE
CTARNG OFFICE OF THE STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE

It is an unfortunate truth that in time, there are soldiers who will inevitably encounter circumstances that result in some sort of legal action.

There are some well-known resources that a soldier can use to help through this often confusing and aggravating time. These resources can included, but are not limited to: his or her chain of command; the Chaplain; and the consultation of a Judge Advocate.

However, there is one resource that tends to get passed over during this process, the paralegal specialist. A paralegal specialist (27D) is trained extensively on a variety of legal and administrative support matters and processes, and can be an effective resource to both commanders and soldiers navigating through difficult legal issues.

The Army defines the paralegal specialist military Occupation Specialty as the soldier trained and delegated the authority to provide support to commanders and staff with the Army's core legal disciplines: military justice, international and operational law, administrative and civil law, contract and fiscal law, claims, and legal assistance. A paralegal can prepare wills, administrative separation documents, and powers of attorney, among other documents important to unit readiness and soldier welfare.

The paralegal is not a Judge Advocate. They cannot provide legal counsel or advice, but they can act as a resource for input regarding available legal recourses and processes. Unfortunately, the paralegal is a resource that is often overlooked by commanders and not used to

their full potential. In an M-Day status, a battalion-level command can utilize their paralegals effectively in a variety of ways. Through the development and maintenance of wills, review of adverse action documentation or unit training on matters such as the ramification on soldiers of the Lautenburg Amendment, or the requirements to self-report arrests by civilian authorities, the 27D can be used more in conjunction with their MOS, and more importantly, to the added benefit of their unit.

To the individual soldier in the CTARNG, a paralegal can be an extremely important resource as well. The paralegal can act as a liaison between the soldier and a Judge Advocate. Not only can the paralegal coordinate appointments with the Judge Advocate, but gather and process the information provided by the soldier, eliciting important details that the soldier may not think significant, so that the soldier's time spent with the Judge Advocate is better utilized and not spent re-telling his or her story. The 27D can also provide an overview of information on legal processes or administrative actions pertaining to the potential outcomes of certain actions by regulation such as the loss of a military driver's license, inability to carry a weapon, or potential separation from service.

During deployment, or any Title 10 status, a paralegal can provide additional information regarding non-judicial punishment (Article 15) or any issues related to the Uniform Code of Military Justice. During AIT, paralegals are trained extensively on the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the use of the Manual for Courts-Martial, as well as the outcomes that can result from either Court-Martial proceedings, or non-judicial punishment. Paralegals have

advanced training on these subjects, and can provide a useful knowledge to an NCO writing a counseling statement, or a commander initiating Article 15 proceedings against a soldier.

Regardless of the status or situation, a paralegal specialist can be a very effective asset to a unit and their overall readiness. The training and development that these soldiers go through gives them a considerable knowledge on a variety of military legal matters. In the current state of the operational reserve, it only serves to benefit a command to take steps to ensure that the paralegal in your unit is being utilized and developed, so when the call comes the 27D is an asset ready to go.



Photo courtesy of Army Credentialing Opportunities Online

CTNG Safety Message

Zika Virus Disease

Protect Yourself and Your Family this Summer

SUBMITTED BY THE CTARNG SAFETY OFFICE
READY ARMY

Zika virus disease (Zika) is a disease caused by Zika virus that is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week after being bitten by an infected mosquito. People usually don't get sick enough to go to the hospital, and they very rarely die of Zika. For this reason, many people might not realize they have been infected. Once a person has been infected, he or she is likely to be protected from future infections.

Symptoms

- Most people infected with Zika virus won't even know they have the disease because they won't have symptoms. The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis (pink eye).
- Other common symptoms include muscle pain and headache. The incubation period (the time from exposure to symptoms) for Zika virus disease is not known, but is likely to be a few days to a week.
- If you are pregnant, you should see your doctor if you or your male sexual partner lives in or has traveled to areas with Zika transmission during the pregnancy, whether or not you have symptoms.
- The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week after being bitten by an infected mosquito.
- Zika virus usually remains in the blood of an infected person for about a week but it can be found longer in some people.
- Once a person has been infected, he or she is likely to be protected from future infections.

Diagnosis

- The symptoms of Zika are similar to those of dengue and chikungunya, diseases spread through the same mosquitoes that transmit Zika.
- See your healthcare provider if you develop the symptoms described above and have visited an area where Zika is found.
- If you have recently traveled, tell your healthcare provider when and where you traveled.
- Your healthcare provider may order blood tests to look for Zika or other similar viruses like dengue or chikungunya.

Transmission and Risks

Through mosquito bites

- Zika virus is transmitted to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito, *Aedes aegypti* (the yellow fever mosquito), *Aedes Albopictus* (the Asian tiger mosquito), and *Aedes polynesiensis*.
- These mosquitoes typically lay eggs in and near

standing water in containers such as buckets, bowls, animal dishes, flower pots and vases. They prefer to bite people, and live indoors and outdoors near people.

- Mosquitoes that spread Zika, chikungunya, and dengue are aggressive daytime biters. They can also bite at night.
- Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a person already infected with the virus.

- Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through bites.

From mother to child

- A mother already infected with Zika virus near the time of delivery can pass on the virus to her newborn around the time of birth.
- A pregnant woman can pass Zika virus to her fetus during pregnancy. The CDC is studying the adverse pregnancy and infant outcomes associated with Zika virus infection during pregnancy.
- There are no reports of infants getting Zika virus through breastfeeding.

Through sexual contact

- Zika virus can be spread by a man to his sex partners.
- In known cases of sexual transmission, the men developed Zika virus symptoms. From these cases, we know the virus can be spread when the man has symptoms, before symptoms start and after symptoms resolve.
- The virus can be present in semen longer than in blood.

Through blood transfusion

- As of February 1, 2016, there were no confirmed blood transfusion transmission cases in the United States. The FDA has issued guidance to ensure the safety of the US blood supply.
- Reports of multiple blood transfusion transmission cases in Brazil are being investigated.

Treatment

- There is no vaccine to prevent or medicine to treat Zika virus.
- **Treat the symptoms:**
 - Get plenty of rest.
 - Drink fluids to prevent dehydration.
 - Take medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or paracetamol to reduce fever and pain.



The Zika virus disease (Zika) is a disease caused by Zika virus that is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito (shown above). Photo courtesy of Ready Army - www.ready.army.mil

- Do not take aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) until dengue can be ruled out to reduce the risk of bleeding.
- If you are taking medicine for another medical condition, talk to your healthcare provider before taking additional medication.
- If you have Zika, prevent mosquito bites for the first week of your illness.
- During the first week of infection, Zika virus can be found in the blood and passed from an infected person to a mosquito through mosquito bites.
- An infected mosquito can then spread the virus to other people.

Prevention Tips

- Apply insect repellents with the active ingredients DEET or picaridin to exposed skin when outdoors.
- Wear permethrin-treated clothing whenever possible. Minimize exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and socks.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water around the home to prevent mosquito breeding.
- Maintain screens on windows and doors to prevent mosquitoes from entering buildings.
- Talk to your sexual partners about their potential exposure to Zika, travel to Zika-affected areas, and any history of Zika-like symptoms. Consider abstaining from sex or using condoms correctly every time to prevent sexual transmission of Zika virus.

Where to Find Additional Information

- Army Public Health Center—<https://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/discond/diseases/pages/zika.aspx>
- Zika Hotline – 800-984-8523
- Health.Mil—<http://www.health.mil/zika>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>
- World Health Organization—<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/zika/en/>
- Ready Army—www.ready.army.mil

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tomasz.d.durnik.mil@mail.mil or (860)375-1801.

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The Connecticut National Guard
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The 130th Public Affairs Detachment is looking for qualified, motivated Soldiers interested in writing, photography, video production, or media relations.

For information on vacancies and requirements, please contact Sgt. 1st Class Jordan Werme
jordan.e.werme.mil@mail.mil or (203) 568-1730



Veterans Services and Where to Find Them

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

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

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

Health Care

VA's health care offers a variety of services,

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

Benefits & Services

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

Burial and Memorials

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

Veterans Benefits Fact Sheets

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

CONNECTICUT NATIONAL GUARD PROMOTIONS

ARMY

To Private 2

Mccollum, Justin M.
 Bandeira, Joseph M.
 Niles, Kaitlyn M.
 Mitchell, Johnoy G.
 Mack, Chris R.
 Evans, Keith S.
 Oliver, Jacob R. III
 Mccloud, Riley K.
 Jackson, Brandon L.
 Angileri, Connor D.
 Perry, Jacob R.
 Cutler, Cody J.
 Rivera, Michael
 Levesque, Ian J.
 Castillo, John Jr.
 Kopacsi, Adam J. Jr.
 Villalvamarillo, Christopher
 Ash, Derrick II
 Rodriguez, Isaac D.

To Private First Class

Blanc, Patrice D.
 Hebert, Brandon M.
 Leonard, Joseph B.
 Ballou, Hailey E.
 Delmas, Sterley S.
 Rojas, Adaliz E.
 Bowen, Thomas P.
 Ruiz, Angel J.
 Ciscato, Robert W.
 Hourigan, Connor P.
 Waters, Robert D. Jr.
 Aguilar, Brandon A.
 Velez, Johnny
 Oneill, Alex J.
 Rocheleau, Mariah E.
 Combs, Jacob D.
 Barragan, Christian
 Acevedo, Jeremiah M.

To Specialist

Hill, Robert B. III
 Mitchell, George M.
 Coger, Anton L.
 Phipps, Rhamar D.
 Perkins, David N.
 Chrzanowski, Eric M.
 Doherty, Ryan M.
 Baldracchi, Louis J.
 Smutnick, Noah A.
 Gerhard, Justin
 Barnash, Bryan R. Jr.

To Sergeant

Wichrowski, Christopher J.
 Prague, Alexander T.
 Watson, Angelo A.

To Staff Sergeant

Jackson, Jeffrey J.
 Loveless, Stephen A.
 Johnson, Christina B.
 Gruner, Colin M.
 Moore, Christopher T.
 Colonies, Eldon J.
 Mcarthur, Damar R.

To First Sergeant

Dempsey, James R.

To Command Sergeant Major

Dentzau, Mark E.

To 2nd Lieutenant

Devries, Stephen G.

AIR

To Senior Airman

Rivera, Alex J. Jr.
 Rakich, Elizabeth A.
 Benton, James D.
 Shopey, William T.
 Wood, Richard J.

To Staff Sergeant

Rothman, Melissa G.
 Michels, Jennifer A.
 Forgue, Jeremy M.
 Fasser, Joshua A.
 Leist, Kevin M.
 Lester, Ryan M.

To Technical Sergeant

Reyes, Cesar J.
 Brunetti, Kevin M.
 Lorenzini, Sarah

To Master Sergeant

Ewings, Robert
 Mead, Joshua
 Weller, Brian

To Chief Master Sergeant

Saresky, John

Congratulations to All!



Promotions as of May 1, 2016

Coming Events & Holidays

June

June 6

D-Day

June 6

Ramadan begins

June 7

July Guardian Deadline

June 14

Flag Day/Army birthday

June 19

Father's Day

June 27

National PTSD Awareness Day

July

July 4

Independence Day

July 12

August Guardian Deadline

August

August 4

NGACT Army & Air Retiree Picnic

August 7

Purple Heart Day

August 9

September Guardian Deadline

Deadline for July Issue of the Guardian is June 7, 2016.
 Deadline for the August Issue of the Guardian is July 12, 2016.

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Connecticut FAMILY Guardian



VOL. 17 NO. 6

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

JUNE 2016

Military Kids Spend Spring Break at CTNG Day Camp

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

The Connecticut National Guard Child and Youth Program hosted the annual Operation Military Child Intelligence Training Day Camp at the New London Armory, April 19-22.

With more than 30 participating campers and four junior counselors from the Connecticut National Guard, the camp was at full capacity, making it the most-attended MCIT in CYP history.

The four-day camp consisted of science and cooking programs offered by Mr. Jim Anglos from Inspire Works Enrichment Camp and several 4-H activities provided by the 4-H Military Partnership Program that included healthy eating, stop-motion photography and nature walks. Campers were also treated to a street hockey demonstration by Mr. Frank Berrian from the Hartford Wolf Pack.

The camp wrapped up with a field trip to Mystic Aquarium where campers learned about sea life and celebrated Earth Day with a focus on keeping the oceans clean and healthy for all sea creatures.

The goal of MCIT camp is to bring Connecticut military kids together to meet and build friendships with other local military kids who relate to similar issues as military children.

The CTNG CYP will host a summer MCIT Day Camp at the Windsor Locks Readiness Center, July 25-29. If you would like more information about MCIT camps or other CYP events please contact Ms. Michelle McCarty, Lead Child & Youth Program Coordinator at michelle.m.mccarty4.ctr@mail.mil.



More than 30 military kids visited the Mystic Aquarium in Mystic, Connecticut during the annual Spring Operation Military Child Intelligence Training Day Camp, April 22. The camp is hosted by the Connecticut National Guard Child and Youth Program was held April 19-22 at the New London Armory. Campers enjoyed educational activities with the 4-H Military Partnership Program and were treated to a demonstration by the Hartford Wolf Pack. (Photo by Michelle McCarty, Lead Child and Youth Coordinator, CTNG Service Member and Family Support Center)



SAVE THE DATE!

July 25-29, 2016

Windsor Locks Readiness Center

For more information or to be added to the email distribution list please contact Lead Child & Youth Program Coordinator,

Michelle McCarty at michelle.m.mccarty4.ctr@mail.mil



CATHERINE
GALASSO-VIGORITO

God Has Decided to Use You 'For a Time as This'

There are times in life when our faith can start to wither. Maybe you're going through tough times or you've hit a low you never thought you could hit. Your obstacles might seem to be too big to be overcome. Perhaps, you've been on hold. Doors may have been shut in your face. Or, left reeling

from another unfair situation, broken, wounded, you may have lost your passion. Now, with tears in your eyes, you could think, "Nothing good is left for me."

But do not look at your present condition. Look up to God. Be still. Be quiet. Put your worries in God's Hands. Look beyond any limits and consider what God can do. Your past challenges have not been wasted. After years of rejections, betrayals, or mishaps, something wonderful is about to happen in your life. You may not see a way right now, but don't get diverted. Trust that God can make a way, for He can do the impossible. God is going to do something extraordinary for you in the near future. For God has decided to use you, "for such a time as this." (Esther 4:14).

You have amazing talents and gifts that are to be utilized to serve God and serve others. Hence, release any negative self-doubt from your mind. Cease listening to unconstructive voices. Make room for new, creative thoughts, bold ideas, and for new people and opportunities that are soon going to come into your life.

Are you going through something today? A great blessing is right behind that stumbling block taking you onto new and better things. Wait on the miracle. For it's on its way to you. Very soon, you will see God's Hand of blessing move mightily in your behalf. And those new blessings will make up for the past pain taking you further, beyond what you ever thought was possible.

In the Bible, there is a story about the life of a woman named Esther. It tells how God's hand called her to fulfill a significant role. Esther was a woman of deep faith and

was placed in the position to be queen. When she heard that a law could be passed to make it legal to kill all Israelites, Esther trusted that God would bring His people through the difficulties they faced. Esther did not draw back in fear and think she was not worthy, qualified or good enough to take on such a great undertaking. She didn't let any negative, 'I can't do it...', 'I'm incapable...', or 'I am lacking,' inner thoughts talk her out of persisting. Instead, boldly, she recognized what she 'could do' and carried on with boldness. Esther went forward by faith and asked the favor of the King to spare her life and the lives of her people. Esther was at the right place at the right time. God used her like she had never been used before. The King granted her request. And as a result of Esther's faithfulness, courage and influence, she saved an entire nation.

Similar to Esther, you are at the right place at the right time. Be prepared. God is getting ready to make use of your life like never before. This is your year, your time to rise above the norm, as God is about to set into motion your heart's aspirations.

In my daughter's class at school, she read a book about the bamboo. Bamboos are known to be some of the fastest-growing plants on Earth. However, at first, they can appear quite slothful, because the bamboo is part of the grass family and doesn't have any branches. Depending on the soil and climate, the bamboo plant can emerge very slowly. This plant has a unique, multi-tiered root system, with many deep and wide roots that are hidden under the ground. Nonetheless, once the bamboo's roots take hold, some species are capable of surging upward quickly, as fast as 39 inches in 24 hours.

As the bamboo shows us, in an instant, situations can change. Your goals may not have happened in the past. But circumstances are about to turn around. The odds might be against success. You could be the underdog. Yet, the breakthrough that you've been waiting for will soon come to pass.

So watch for God's goodness to crop up for you at every turn. Don't stop now:

- You're moving closer to achieving your heart's dream. So, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do and

your plans will succeed." (Proverbs 16:3).

- God will restore what you thought was over and done. For, "God will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten" (Joel 2:25).

- It's almost time for you to reap your due reward. As, "Behold, now is the accepted time..." (2 Corinthians 6: 2).

Scripture says in Matthew 7:7: "Knock and the door will be opened unto you." So keep trying and advancing onward. If you will persist in asking, seeking, and knocking, God will open the right door and make your beautiful dreams come true.

Recently, a friend of mine overcame a challenging medical issue. After he was given a clean bill of health from the doctor, he decided to invite all of his friends and family to his home and have a, "Victory Party." And they celebrated a life that he didn't think he'd ever have again.

Today is the first day of your, "Victory Party." Regardless of your present ordeal or mistakes made in the past, don't ever underestimate what God has in store for you in the future.

Continue your pursuit of creating the life of your dreams. Miracles will come forth like never before. Quickly, you will step into your purpose. In a split second, you'll receive a breakthrough in your health, your relationships, or career path. You'll be given the attention, the respect and appreciation that you deserve. God's plans for you are for good.

For God has decided to use you, "for such a time as this." (Esther 4:14).

A new, full, joyous, life awaits.

Catherine Galasso-Vigorito is a nationally-syndicated columnist and author from Connecticut who donates a monthly inspirational column to demonstrate her appreciation of U.S. service members and their families. The content is her own and does not express the official views of the U.S. Government or the Department of Defense. You may write to Ms. Galasso-Vigorito in care of Connecticut Guardian, 360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06106-3795 or e-mail her at cgv@anewyouworldwide.com. Visit her website at www.anewyouworldwide.com. © Catherine Galasso, 2016

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

<p>William A. O'Neill Armory 360 Broad St. RM 112 Hartford, CT 06105</p> <p>Service Member and Family Support Center (800) 858-2677 Fax: (860) 493-2795</p> <p>Child and Youth Program (860) 548-3254</p> <p>Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (860) 493-2796</p> <p>Military OneSource (800) 342-9647 (860) 502-5416</p> <p>Survivor Outreach Services (860) 548-3258</p> <p>Open Mon.-Fri.</p> <p>Windsor Locks Readiness Center 85-300 Light Ln. Windsor Locks, CT 06096 (860)292-4602 Open Mon.-Fri.</p> <p>Veterans' Memorial Armed Forces Reserve Center 90 Wooster Heights Rd. Danbury, CT 06810 (203) 205-5050 Open Mon.-Fri.</p>	<p>CONNECTICUT NATIONAL GUARD <i>Family Assistance Center Locations</i></p>	<p>New London Armory 249 Bayonet St. New London, CT 06320 (860) 772-1422 Open Mon.-Fri.</p> <p>103rd Airlift Wing 100 Nicholson Rd. East Granby, CT 06026 (800) 858-2677 *By Appointment*</p> <p>103rd Air Control Squadron 206 Boston Post Rd. Orange, CT 06447 (800) 858-2677 *By Appointment*</p> <p>Niantic Readiness Center 38 Smith St. Niantic, CT 06357 (800) 858-2677 *By Appointment*</p> <p>Norwich Armory 38 Stott Ave. Norwich, CT 06360 (800) 858-2677 *Wednesday or By Appointment*</p> <p>Waterbury Armory 64 Field St. Waterbury, CT 06702 (800) 858-2677 *By Appointment*</p>												
<p>Family Assistance Centers are an information and referral hub for all Branches of Service</p> <p>Our Programs Include:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Budget Counseling</td> <td>Community Support Options</td> <td>Financial Assistance and Relief</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Family Communication</td> <td>Counseling Referrals</td> <td>Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Legal and Pay Information</td> <td>Outreach</td> <td>Family Readiness Groups (FRG)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TRICARE Assistance</td> <td>Volunteer Opportunities</td> <td>DEERS & ID Card Assistance</td> </tr> </table> <p>Support is available 24/7 by calling (800) 858-2677</p> <p>*Centers are open part-time on a regular, weekly schedule. Please call ahead to confirm times or to make an appointment.</p>			Budget Counseling	Community Support Options	Financial Assistance and Relief	Family Communication	Counseling Referrals	Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR)	Legal and Pay Information	Outreach	Family Readiness Groups (FRG)	TRICARE Assistance	Volunteer Opportunities	DEERS & ID Card Assistance
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TRICARE Assistance	Volunteer Opportunities	DEERS & ID Card Assistance												

Save for College with a 529 Plan

SUBMITTED BY CHRISTOPHER ROULEAU
MILITARY ONE SOURCE



As the cost of college continues to rise, you may want to start saving early for your children's education. One way to do this is to invest in a 529 plan. These plans are flexible, they offer tax savings and they are available in every state. Here are some facts to help you decide if a 529 plan is right for your family.

Five things you need to know about 529 plans:

- **You can choose your plan type.**
Two types of 529 plans can help you save for college: prepaid tuition plans and college savings plans. Prepaid tuition plans have state residency restrictions, but they allow you to lock in current tuition rates at participating colleges and universities. College savings plans aren't tied to specific universities, but they do not allow you to lock in tuition rates.

- **You won't be taxed on your plan's earnings.**
As long as you use the money for eligible college expenses, you can make tax-free withdrawals from your 529 plan. However, you will owe federal income tax on any withdrawals that exceed your eligible college expenses. You'll also have to pay a 10 percent penalty on your plan's earnings for ineligible withdrawals.

- **You can sign up for any state's plan.**
If you choose a 529 college savings plan, you aren't limited to your home's state plan; you can choose a plan from any participating state. This helps military families who have to consider residency requirements if they relocate to several states before their children head off to college.

- **Anyone can contribute.**
Your friends and family can contribute to your child's 529 plan in lieu of birthday, holiday or graduation gifts. Be sure to check your individual plan for regulations regarding gift tax liabilities.

- **Plans are easy to compare.**
Visit the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission to get detailed plan information that includes a side-by-side comparison of the different 529 plan types.

When you start early with a 529 plan, you'll be better prepared to manage future college expenses. If you need help navigating the ins and outs of saving for college, you can get financial education services through your installation's personal financial management program. For contact information, visit Military installations. If you don't live near an installation, you can still access free personal financial counseling and resources through Military OneSource.

Additional Resources:
www.militaryonesource.mil
www.sec.gov/investor/pubs/intro529.htm

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/>

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

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)

FLAG DAY: MISSING LETTERS

Each word is missing one or more letters. Finish each word by writing the letter on the line.



1. B ___SY RO ___
2. RE___, ___ITE, AND BLU___
3. S___ARS ___ND STR___ES
4. C___NTIN___NTAL CO___GR___SS
5. ___LD ___LORY
6. NA___ION___L ANT___EM
7. SALUT___
8. PLE___GE OF ___LLEG___ANCE
9. JU___E
10. P___TRIOTI___M
11. S___AR-SPANG___ED BANN___R

- Answers**
1. Betsy Ross
 2. Red, White, And Blue
 3. Stars And Stripes
 4. Continental Congress
 5. Old Glory
 6. National Anthem
 7. Salute
 8. Pledge of Allegiance
 9. June
 10. Patriotism
 11. Star-Spangled Banner

FATHER'S DAY WORD SEARCH

See how many words related to Father's Day you can find in this word search from the list at the bottom. Words can be backward, forward, up, down, or diagonal. Circle each word you find, then cross it off the list.



- AFFECTION
- HUSBAND
- PROTECTOR
- CAREGIVER
- JUNE
- PROVIDER
- DEPENDABLE
- LAUGHTER
- ROLE MODEL
- DEVOTED
- LOVE
- UNCLE
- FAMILY
- MEMORIES
- WISDOM
- FATHER
- NURTURE
- PARENT
- GRANDFATHER



Service Member & Family Support Center Staff Directory

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Veterans' Memorial Armed Forces Reserve Center - 90 Wooster Heights Road, Danbury, CT 06810 - Open Mon.-Fri.			
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