

# THE CONNECTICUT GUARDIAN



Connecticut and Uruguay Celebrate

*25 Years of  
Partnership*



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## **The Connecticut Guardian**

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*Brig. Gen. Ralph Hedenberg*

### ***Assistant Adjutant General - Air***

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## Connecticut honors its World War II veterans with ceremony in Hartford

Story by Tim Koster

The Connecticut National Guard, in partnership with the office of Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz, hosted a ceremony at the Gov. William A. O'Neill Armory in Hartford, Connecticut to celebrate the service and sacrifice of the state's living World War II veterans on May 19, 2025.

About 70 Connecticut veterans and their families participated in the ceremony, in which they were presented the World War II victory medal.

"It is important to thank these members of the Greatest Generation as it is because of their service and sacrifice that we live in a free and democratic state and nation today," said Bysiewicz.

"The words 'Thank You' are not enough to truly express the gratitude I have for the men and women who served in World War II to protect our nation's safety, prosperity, and freedom," said Evon. "Regardless of whether they served in Europe, Asia, or stateside, their strength, courage, and resiliency are the bedrock of American ideals. As a Soldier in our Nation's military, I understand and appreciate that we stand upon the shoulders of these warriors' service, sacrifice, and legacy. Thank you, Lt. Gov. Bysiewicz and Commissioner Welch, for ensuring we continue to remember and honor our veterans, their families, and the fallen."

The ceremony was held on the 80th anniversary of the signing of the armistice, ending the second world war, and possibly one of the last times this many World War II veterans will come together to celebrate their service. The age of the

veterans in attendance ranged from 97 to 105 and, according to state officials, only about 600 Connecticut World War II veterans are still alive—down from nearly 1,266 last year.

"Our team at Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs could never thank enough this "Greatest Generation" of WWII Veterans and their families for all they endured. Your incredible strength, courage, tenacity, and sacrifices on the ground, at sea, undersea and in the air set a shining example for all future military service members to follow," said Brig. Gen. (ret.) Ron Welch, commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs. "We thank LT Governor Bysiewicz for her steadfast charge to never forget these extraordinary Veterans. Likewise, we thank MG Evon and the Connecticut National Guard for serving as the host of this commemorative recognition of our living CT WWII Veterans."

In addition to state leadership, representatives from the United Kingdom and France were also in attendance to express thanks to these veterans on behalf of their home countries.

"On the 80th anniversary of the armistice of World War II, France extends its deepest gratitude to the American soldiers from Connecticut who fought alongside France and its allies, to their families and the families of those who fell in the name of freedom," said an official statement presented to each veteran by Myriam Gil, French deputy consul general in New York.





# JEEP<sub>500</sub>



**JOINT ENLISTMENT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM**

**UPDATE TO CT JEEP 500**

**UP TO \$1,500**

**FOR EVERY QUALIFIED LEAD THAT ENLISTS INTO THE CTNG**

**QUALIFIED LEAD ENLISTS INTO CTNG= \$1,000**

**LEAD ENLISTS INTO A PRIORITY VACANCY=  
ADDITIONAL \$500**

## **AIR PRIORITY VACANCY**

**1A1X2N - Mobility Force Aviator  
1C5X1 - Battle Management Operations  
1D7X1 - Cyber Defense Operations  
2A5X1 - Airlift/Special Mission Aircraft Maintenance  
2A6X2 - Aerospace Ground Equipment  
2A6X5 - Aircraft Hydraulic Systems  
3E1X1 - Heating, Ventilation,  
Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration  
3FOX1 - Personnel  
3NOX6 - Public Affairs  
3POX1 - Security Forces**



CT JEEP 500



## **ARMY PRIORITY VACANCY**

**11B - Infantryman  
11C - Indirect Fire Infantryman  
12C - Bridge Crewmember  
12N - Horizontal Construction Engineer  
25U - Signal Operations Support Specialist  
31E - Corrections / Detention Specialist  
68W- Combat Medic Specialist  
88M - Motor Transport Operator  
91B - Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic  
92F - Petroleum Supply Specialist**



# NOT FEELING LIKE **YOURSELF?**

## REACH OUT. STAY MISSION READY.

### Military Life is Hard On Your Mind And Body

Even pain or trouble sleeping can hurt mission readiness. Talk to your health care provider if you feel unusually:

- Tired
- Angry
- Forgetful
- Pained
- Stressed
- Sad
- Worried
- Hopeless



### Psychological Health Resource Center

Call/Chat with a health resource consultant 24/7 at 866-966-1020 or visit [health.mil/PHRC](https://health.mil/PHRC) and click "Live Chat."

### Military Crisis Line

Call 988 and press 1 or text 838255. To chat or find overseas help visit [militarycrisisline.net/](https://militarycrisisline.net/).

**REAL WARRIORS ★ REAL BATTLES**  
**REAL STRENGTH**

[health.mil/RealWarriors](https://health.mil/RealWarriors)

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*A woman in the crowd greeted her friend and retired veteran with a warm hug as he entered Bradley International Airport on May 3, 2025.*

## Veterans Honored with Emotional Send-Off for Honor Flight to D.C.

Story by Capt. Jennifer Kaprielian

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn. — In the early morning on the first Saturday in May, family members, friends, and service members from the Connecticut National Guard gathered at Bradley International Airport to cheer and applaud for over 65 veterans from across Connecticut. These veterans were preparing to embark on an Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. as a thank you for their service in decades past.

The send-off, organized by Honor Flight Connecticut, was a poignant tribute to those who served in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War. Among the group was a 102-year-old World War II veteran, exemplifying the enduring spirit of service. Several members were recognized during the ceremony for having received the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, or Silver Star decorations. One veteran in the room, Ron Lemay of the 143 Military Police Battalion, was recognized for having earned all three decorations

throughout his military career.

Family and service members lined the terminal, holding signs and cheering as the veterans entered the airport. The atmosphere was filled with emotion, as many veterans smiled through tears, acknowledging the heartfelt appreciation from the crowd. Major General Francis J. Evon, Jr., the Adjutant General of the Connecticut National Guard, addressed the assembly, expressing deep gratitude for the veterans' sacrifices and service. His remarks underscored the significance of honoring those who have defended the nation's freedoms.

Also present were WSFB News Channel 3's and military advocate Renee Denino, state meteorologist and U.S. Marine Corps veteran Gil Simmons. Simmons, who has been actively involved in veteran affairs, accompanied the group to Washington, D.C., further highlighting the community's commitment to honoring its heroes.

As the veterans proceeded toward their flight, they passed through a corridor formed by applauding service members and civilians, a true gesture of respect and admiration. This moment served as a powerful reminder of the nation's enduring gratitude for its veterans.

The Honor Flight program, established in 2005, has transported over 300,000 veterans to the nation's capital, providing them with the opportunity to visit the memorials dedicated to their service. For many of the veterans on this flight, particularly those from the Vietnam and Korean War eras, the experience offered a long-overdue welcome home.

In the words of Mr. Simmons: "When you were returning from Europe in the '40s, Korea in the '50s, Vietnam in the '60s and early '70s, we weren't there to stand on the curb and clap as you arrived home... not only weren't we there, we don't think what many of you

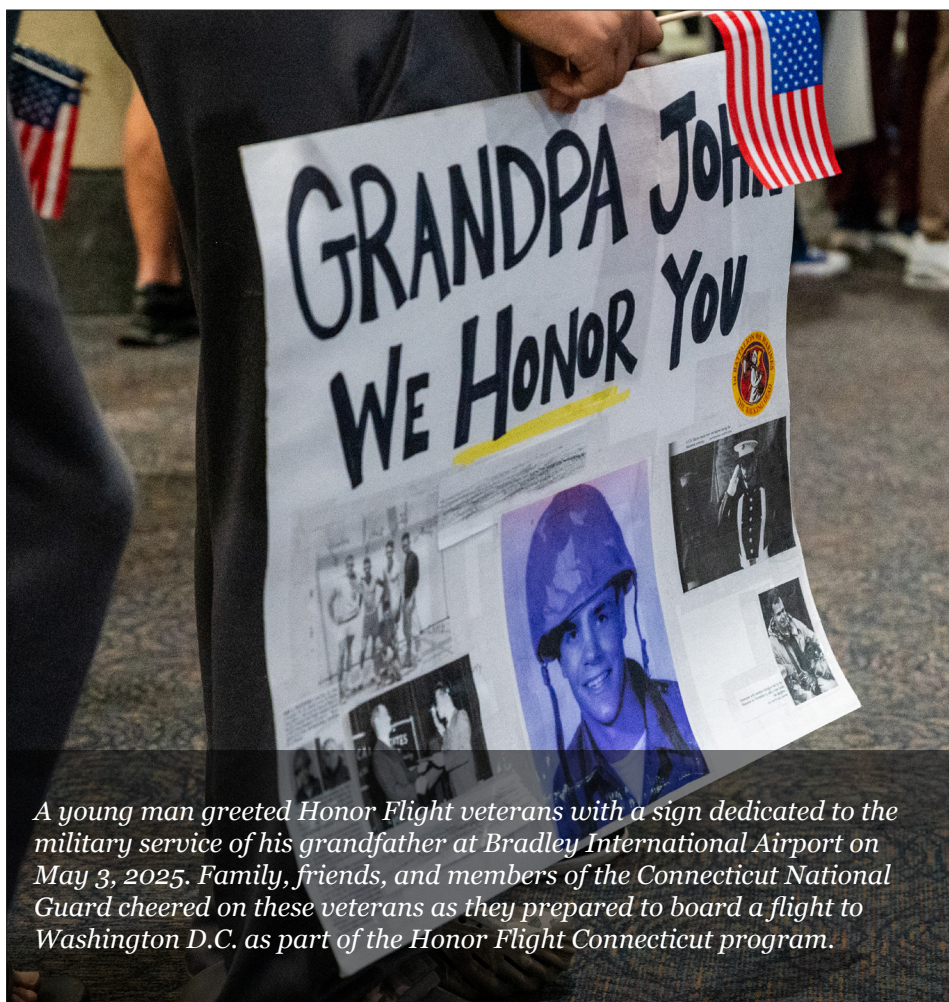


endured upon your homecoming was indicative of this great country." This reflects the painful reality that many veterans, when they returned home, did not receive the honor or recognition they deserved. As Mr. Simmons continued, "We don't believe you got what you deserve. So today, we will do our best."

This event was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the Connecticut Airport Authority, Breeze Airways, and numerous volunteers who ensured a seamless and memorable journey for the veterans.

As the plane departed, carrying these esteemed individuals to a day of reflection and honor, the collective sentiment was clear: a profound appreciation for the sacrifices made by those who have served, and a commitment to ensuring their legacies are remembered and celebrated. Today's event was a small token of our appreciation, but it was filled with deep meaning. And for those of us who were able to join this special day, it is an unforgettable experience.

For more information on upcoming Honor Flights or to learn how to support the program, please visit [honor-flightct.org](http://honor-flightct.org).

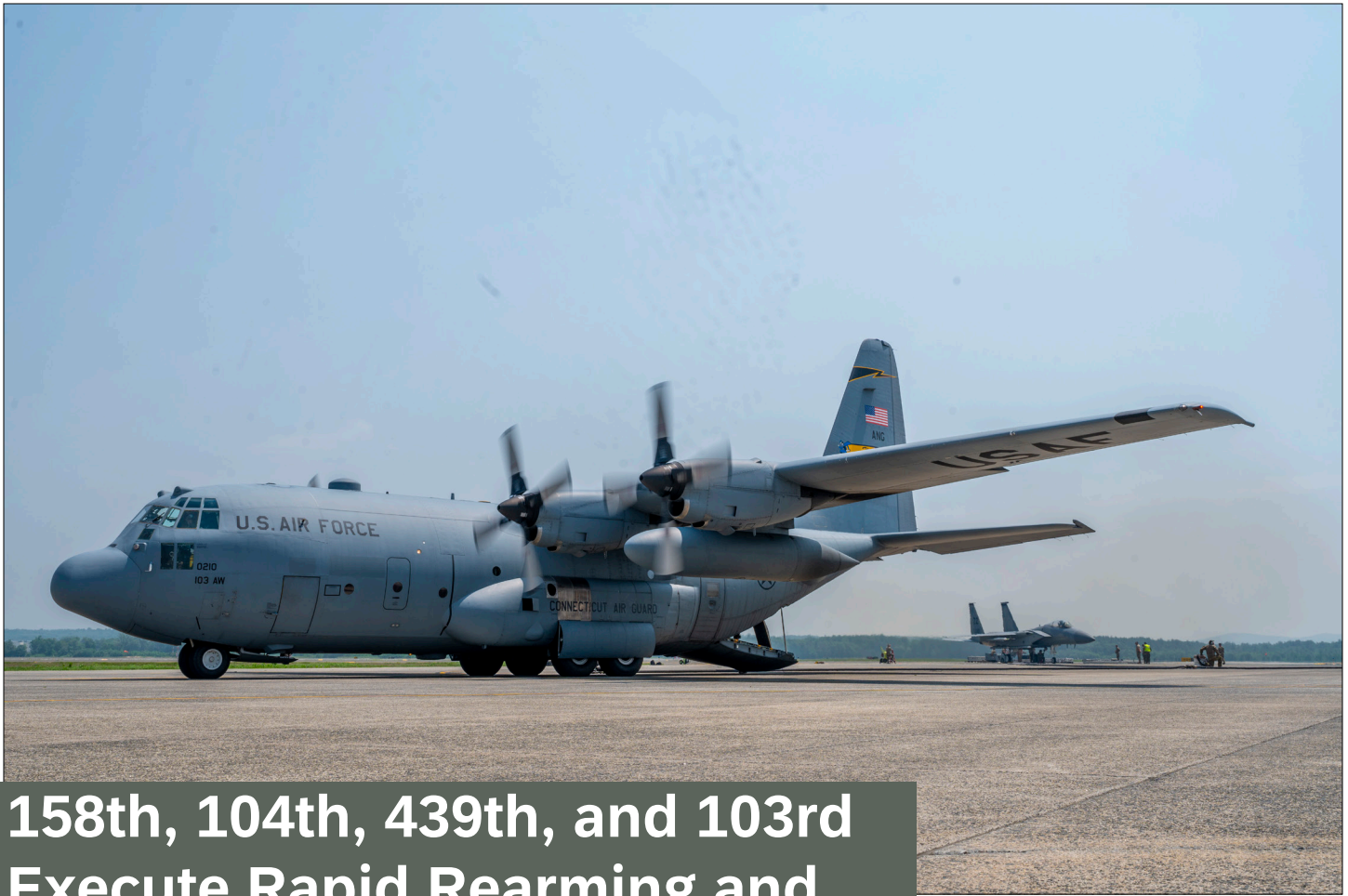


*A young man greeted Honor Flight veterans with a sign dedicated to the military service of his grandfather at Bradley International Airport on May 3, 2025. Family, friends, and members of the Connecticut National Guard cheered on these veterans as they prepared to board a flight to Washington D.C. as part of the Honor Flight Connecticut program.*



*Family members holding signs and banners of thanks awaited the arrival of over 65 Honor Flight veterans at Bradley International Airport on May 3, 2025.*





## 158th, 104th, 439th, and 103rd Execute Rapid Rearming and Refueling Exercises

Story by Jerry Hewitt

Westover AIR RESERVE BASE, Chicopee, Mass. – Members from the 104th Fighter Wing, 103rd Airlift Wing, and 158th Fighter Wing recently participated in a series of integrated combat turn (ICT) exercises, June 11-12, 2025, at Westover Air Reserve Base, Chicopee, Mass. The Distributable-ICT exercises consisted of F-15C Eagle's from the 104th Fighter Wing and F-35A Lightning II's from the 158th Fighter Wing getting refueled by a C-130H Hercules from the 103rd Airlift Wing that also delivered a full missile loadout for each jet. This exercise proved the capability to refuel and rearm multiple fighters in austere conditions with no external support. Maintenance crews from the 104th and 158th Fighter Wing's loaded the C-130-delivered ordnance, all with engines-running (fighter and transports) for expedited refueling, rearming, and launch back into the operational environment.

The ability to perform integrated

combat turns allows rapid refueling and rearming of fighter aircraft while minimizing the amount of time aircraft spend on the ground and the distance they have to travel to and from combat operations. Colonel Neal 'Rug' Byrne, 103rd Airlift Wing Commander, spoke on the significance of the exercise and highlighted its overwhelming success.

"The distributable integrated combat turn and our ability to execute it the way we just did shows our pacing competitors that their potential ability to target us is much, much more complex, and these ICT exercises show our ability to distribute and operate from anywhere."

During the first day of the exercise, two F-35's from Burlington Air National Guard base touched down and taxied into the Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP) site, and just moments later the joint efforts of the 104th Fighter Wing, 158th Fighter Wing, and 103rd Airlift Wing maintenance teams

enabled the F-35's to refuel without shutting down their engine. It took less than 15 minutes to fuel the fighters utilizing only the hoses and equipment the C-130s brought to the site.

On the second day of the exercise, two additional F-35's conducted D-ICTs, with this exercise also consisting of rearming a full air-to-air missile loadout on the F-35s in addition to getting refueled by a C-130 Hercules at the same time. Shortly after the F-35s successful refueling, rearming, and takeoffs, two F-15C Eagle's from the 104th Fighter Wing landed to also perform D-ICTs with members of the 104FW maintenance group. In under forty minutes, the maintainers from the 104th Fighter Wing and 103rd Airlift Wing worked together to effectively rearm and refuel the F-15s through the 103d AW's C-130 Hercules, allowing the Eagle's to take back off and return to their mission.

The overall success of these D-ICTs demonstrates both the Air Force's abil-



ity to conduct joint exercises and our ability to execute the mission anytime, anywhere. The ability to conduct hot integrated combat turns illustrates the Air Force's capabilities of being able to land aircraft, refuel, rearm, and take back off in the most minimal amount of time possible, at any location, without any external support.

When asked about what the greatest impact of conducting D-ICTs are, Maj. Alex 'Birdman' Ostrom, 104th Fighter Wing pilot, answered by reinforcing the advantage of being able to land and return to the mission as quickly as possible.

"I think the benefit of the D-ICT is that it is vital to the peer adversary fight or any high tempo combat operation," said Ostrom. "You land, you get fuel and reload weapons and then get right back into the fight."

The overall effectiveness of the exercise also demonstrates the amount of practice, skill, and knowledge required by all involved maintenance groups and D-ICT teams to conduct the refueling and rearming operations. In the weeks leading up to the D-ICT exercises at Westover Air Reserve Base, the 104th Fighter Wing's ICT team conducted multiple practice ICT exercises at Barnes Air National Guard Base, with multiple F-15s touching down, getting refueled, rearmed, and back in the air.

MSgt Michael Poudrier, 104th Fighter Wing Crew Chief/Tactical Aircraft Maintenance Craftsman, acted as the Barnes ICT team lead throughout the ICT exercises, and emphasized the amount of skill and hard work that is required to accomplish these ICTs in such a short amount of time.

"The team successfully overcame significant challenges in establishing a safe and efficient sequence for concurrent missile loading and engines-running hot refueling," said Poudrier. "We mitigated hazards associated with minimal communication protocols through the implementation of a comprehensive and well-defined mission plan. The team's performance exceeded ICT weapons load standards, demonstrating exceptional professionalism and dedication to mission success."

As the ICT team lead, MSgt Poudrier is responsible for building, training, and maintaining a highly mobile ICT



*U.S. Air Force Technical Sgt. Jose Hernandez, a fuels specialist with the 103rd Airlift Wing, mans a refueling hose during Distributed Integrated Combat Turn (D-ICT) exercises, June 12, 2025, at Westover Air Reserve Base, Chicopee, Mass.*

team capable of rapid deployment and specialized aircraft servicing, as well as ensuring all team members are thoroughly knowledgeable of their roles and responsibilities. Following the success of the ICT exercises at Westover, Poudrier also spoke on the impact performing these exercises has on the mission as a whole.

"The implementation of the new process greatly improved efficiency during the hot refueling and weapons loading process, which supplements our existing airborne lethality with a faster turnaround in a hostile environment," Poudrier said.

Following the exercise, members

of the Barnes ICT team were seen high-fiving each other in celebration as the refueled and rearmed F-15's took back off into the skies. Barnes ICT team member TSgt Damian Bouchard, 104th crew chief, was responsible for communications with the pilot and ensuring the weapons loading and refueling operations were conducted in a safe manner. He expressed that the excitement of the team was a direct result of the overall precision and teamwork that was displayed during the ICTs.

"It was definitely a great team effort, all around," said Bouchard. "Our team did a lot of work in the weeks leading up to this exercise. The newly imple-





*Airmen refuel an F-35 Lightning at Hanscom Air Reserve Base June 12, 2025 as part of a joint training exercise*

mented Distributed – Integrated Combat Turn procedures, all done with engines running while loading training missiles has never been done at Barnes before, so it took a collaborative effort from everyone involved to make this exercise as successful as it was.”

The capability to perform these Distributed-ICTs bolsters the U.S. Air Force’s combat and air superiority capabilities by being able to quickly rearm and refuel aircraft from anywhere in the world with little to no external support. The D-ICT exercises at Westover demonstrate the Air Force’s ability to conduct joint operations to accomplish the mission and project airpower deep into our pacing theaters.

*Right: Airmen from the 104th Fighter Wing perform rearming operations during Distributed Integrated Combat Turn (D-ICT) exercise, June 12, 2025, at Westover Air Reserve Base, Chicopee, Mass. The D-ICT allows for rapid refueling and rearming of fighter aircraft to increase sortie generation and mission readiness.*

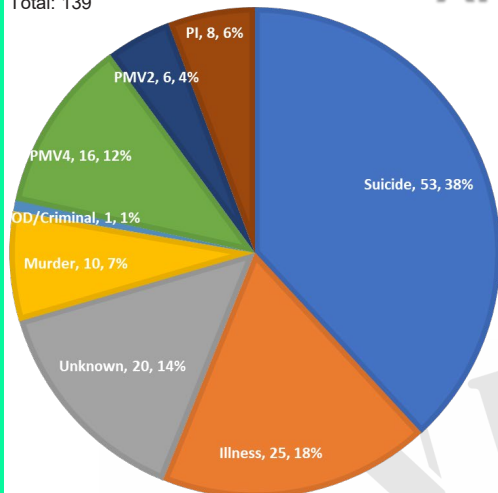




All Known ARNG  
Fatalities in FY25  
Total: 139

FY25

# ARNG Safety Newsletter May 2025



PMV4=POV  
PMV2=Motorcycle  
AV=Aviation  
PI=Off-Duty Sports & Recreation (Other)

## From the Branch Chief of ARNG Safety and Aviation Standardization:

I'm honored to step into the role of Branch Chief for the Army National Guard Safety Division. As a MEDEVAC pilot with eighteen years of service, I've seen firsthand how critical a strong safety culture is to mission success and Soldier well being. My goal is to promote a proactive mindset where safety is integrated into everything we do not just as a checklist, but as a shared responsibility. I'm passionate about empowering leaders at all levels, improving risk management practices, and fostering an environment where every Soldier feels accountable for their own safety and that of their teammates. I look forward to working alongside you to strengthen our safety posture and build a force that is not only ready but resilient. Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this capacity, it's a privilege I take seriously.  
LTC Stephanie VandenBrink



As summer arrives and more Soldiers take to the roads for training and travel, the risks associated with distracted driving, speeding, and pedestrian awareness increase significantly. It is critical to eliminate distractions such as texting, eating, or adjusting GPS. Your full attention should always be on the road. Speeding remains one of the leading causes of fatal crashes; obey posted limits and adjust your speed for weather, traffic, and road conditions. Always remain alert for pedestrians, especially in residential areas, training sites, and motor pools. Practicing disciplined, defensive driving habits protects not only your life, but the lives of fellow Soldiers, families, and communities.

Warm weather also brings opportunities for swimming, boating, and other outdoor recreation but with that comes increased risk of drowning incidents. Always swim in designated areas with a buddy and ensure children are always supervised. When boating, wear approved life jackets and check weather conditions in advance. Alcohol and water-based activities don't mix, save celebratory drinks for after you're safely back on shore. Leaders and Soldiers must remain vigilant and promote a culture of safety off duty, just as we do on duty.

As we enter annual training season, heat-related injuries become a serious concern. Commanders and leaders must prioritize proactive risk management by assessing heat risks daily, enforcing work/rest cycles, and ensuring Soldiers stay hydrated and are acclimatized to the environment. Use of the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) index should guide activity levels. All personnel should be trained to recognize the early signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Vigilance and accountability are key to preventing avoidable tragedies and keeping our force strong and mission ready.

### The Army System of Record ASMIS Host Training in Your State

The ASMIS training team from the CRC can travel to your state and conduct the resident training. If you would like to host an ASMIS training reach out to CW3 Ryan Rohner at [ryan.r.rohner.mil@army.mil](mailto:ryan.r.rohner.mil@army.mil). We are booking classes for FY26. We are looking for 30 Soldiers minimum. If you can not fill the class, we will work with the surrounding states. We welcome all offers to host.

### Safety Assistance Visit (SAV)

The ARNG Safety Office has conducted 10 SAVs in the last 12 months. A typical SAV is 2 members from the ARNG Safety Office for 3 days with Monday and Friday as the travel days. To schedule your state for a SAV scan the QR code and fill out the required information.



### Speaker Request

If you are interested in having a speaker from the ARNG Safety Office speak during IDT or a unit safety standdown or standup contact MAJ Ben Gonzalez at [benjamin.gonzalez85.mil@army.mil](mailto:benjamin.gonzalez85.mil@army.mil).

### Improved Risk Assessment Value (iRAV)

The iRAV is a Web-based resource that provides battalion-level commanders and directors with data on their organization's readiness posture through analysis of respondent perceptions of the organizational safety program.

**ARNG-AVN-S - Safety and Aviation  
Standardization**





The 192nd Engineer Battalion Presents

# The 2<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Gala

July 19th, 2025 - Mystic Marriot

\$85 - per ticket

Ticket purchase includes a choice of 4 entrees,  
a Charcuterie Board, a professional photographer,  
a live band, and a DJ.

We are happy to invite you back!

All current and former Soldiers, retirees,  
and their guests are welcome.

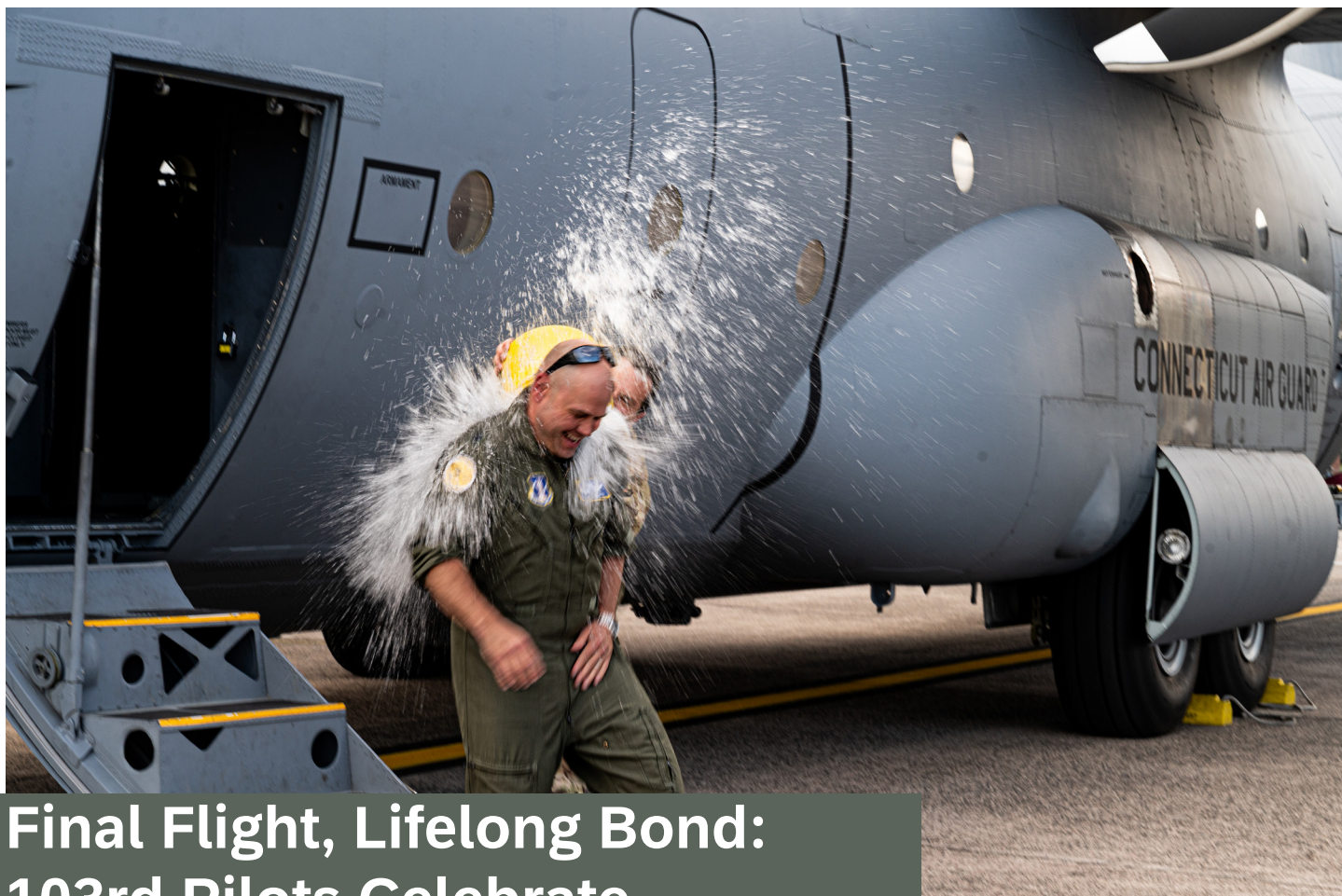
More Information, Tickets and Rooms are available  
at <https://engineergala192nd.squarespace.com>  
or simply scan QR code below



SCAN ME FOR TICKETS, HOTEL  
RESERVATIONS AND MORE INFO







## Final Flight, Lifelong Bond: 103rd Pilots Celebrate Retirement Together

Story by Capt. Jennifer Kaprielian

On Saturday, May 3, the Connecticut Air National Guard's 103rd Operations Group marked a historic milestone as Lieutenant Colonel Gary Caponetti and Lieutenant Colonel Josh Panis took to the skies one final time. The longtime colleagues and close friends completed their Air Force careers with a joint “fini flight” in two C-130 Hercules aircraft, circling the skies above New England in a farewell steeped in tradition, emotion, and camaraderie.

The final (“fini”) flight—a time-honored tradition among Air Force aviators—saw both pilots soar above the Atlantic Ocean, the Hudson Valley, and coastal parts of Rhode Island and Maine, before returning to Bradley Air National Guard Base, where family, friends, and fellow Airmen gathered to celebrate their incredible careers.

As the aircraft touched down, the festivities began with a jubilant welcome: champagne sprays and squirt guns at the ready, friends and family creating a reception line, smiles and applause greeting the retiring officers as they stepped off their aircraft for the last time in uniformed flight. The pilots then transitioned to their formal service dress for a retirement ceremony that reflected the honor, legacy, and gratitude of decades of selfless service.

Lt. Col. Caponetti and Lt. Col. Panis joined the 103rd at different points—Caponetti transitioning from a civilian mortgage broker career to a pilot in 2005, and Panis enter-

ing through ROTC in 2001 before making the leap from active duty to the Connecticut Guard. Both ultimately became C-130 pilots after earlier experience in other platforms, including the A-10 Thunderbolt II and the C-21 Learjet.

When reflecting upon their first flights after years of rigorous training, both pilots expressed a sense of deep accomplishment. “I think my most memorable first flight was with the A-10,” Panis reflected. “There’s no two seater A-10 to go up with an instructor. But climbing into the air, I felt so fortunate.” Caponetti added that he also would never forget his first “dollar ride” with the T-37.

Their career paths, closely aligned through years of deployments and training, helped forge a deep professional bond. “We were the last guys hired when we still had A-10s,” Panis recalled. “We came up together through transitions, missions, and memories. Our friendship grew in the grind and never faded.”

Among their most memorable experiences was their 2017 deployment flying the C-130, navigating harsh conditions including near-zero visibility sandstorms and landing on remote airstrips under the cover of night. “That deployment was humbling,” said Caponetti. “It tested us. I had about 50 hours in the aircraft and was leading a crew. You felt the stakes and the adrenaline—but also the pride.”

Their friendship was born in the small tasks—stocking





*Lt. Col. Josh Panis, a pilot with the 103rd Airlift Wing, grins as he recovers from the champagne bottle-filled reception party to his pre-retirement "fini" flight on May 3, 2025. The event is a tradition for retiring pilots and occurs before the formal ceremony. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Captain Jennifer Kaprielian)*

snacks, making coffee, and holding each other accountable during early years as lieutenants—and matured in combat, coordination, and shared leadership. Both have continued their careers in commercial aviation, while remaining tied to the “Flying Yankees” heritage of the 103rd. Said Panis, “I feel like I was just a small part of this this big thing, but the bond here is so unique, so strong. Not just the aircrew, but the whole Wing.”

As they reflected on retirement, both expressed deep admiration for their fellow Airmen and the enduring spirit of the unit. “There is definitely a unique bond here,” said Caponetti. “You serve beside people who put mission and integrity above all else. I’m proud just to have shared in that. I think about it a lot—why you have old Flying Yankees who still come back. I don’t think in a civilian job that you have people come back like that, to watch the ceremonies.”

Panis added, “This place has given us everything. Saying farewell is overwhelming—but we leave full of gratitude and love for the people who make the 103rd what it is.”

When asked about their advice to the next generation of

pilots, Panis said, “You can’t buy these experiences. Be excited, take the opportunities, buckle down, and try your hardest.” Caponetti added, “Take care of your family. Trust that the unit will take care of you.” In regards to flying the C-130 Hercules, he emphasized, “Respect this aircraft and don’t get complacent.”

Their joint retirement symbolizes not just the end of two storied careers, but the closing chapter of a generation of aviators shaped by legacy, brotherhood, and service. After more than 13 years of working two jobs, both Caponetti and Panis are looking forward to slowing down and focusing on their civilian airline jobs with United and American Airlines. They also emphasized the time available to attend more family moments. “If I can get back a baseball game or a dance competition here and there, then I’m absolutely going to do it,” Panis said.

These two remarkable officers leave behind a lasting legacy in the Connecticut Air National Guard and the Flying Yankees community. Thank you for your service, gentlemen. You will always be part of this family.



# Live the Call ... What is Your Calling?

## Connecticut National Guard

### Clergy Day 2025



**Who:** Clergy from *all* faith traditions are invited to take part in this rewarding informational and networking event.

Learn how you can extend your ministry to those who voluntarily serve in your local National Guard. Get hands-on with military equipment and receive an orientation flight!

The day will include a FREE lunch.

**When:** Wednesday, August 6, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM - 2:30 PM

**Where:** CP Nett at Niantic "The Point" 38 Smith ST Niantic, CT

**Please RSVP by July 30, 2025**

To learn more or to register:

Chaplain: Lt. Col. Eric Wismar

Office: (860) 548-3240

Email: [eric.a.wismar.mil@army.mil](mailto:eric.a.wismar.mil@army.mil)

Officer Strength Mgr.: CPT Mark Soltau

Cell: (860) 982-2852

Email: [hewan.m.soltau.mil@army.mil](mailto:hewan.m.soltau.mil@army.mil)

<https://www.nationalguard.com/chaplain>

<https://ct.ng.mil/Resources/Chaplain/>

<https://www.facebook.com/CT-National-Guard-Chaplain-Corps-107176457587282/>





## Connecticut Education Network Hosts 25th Anniversary Conference

Story by Sgt. Damien Vega

The Connecticut Education Network (CEN), Connecticut's premier high-speed internet service provider for education, public safety, and government institutions, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Since its founding, CEN has been instrumental in delivering reliable, high-capacity broadband to schools, libraries, municipalities, and other public organizations, helping to advance digital equity and innovation across the state.

As technology becomes increasingly vital to public services, the intersection between cybersecurity and CEN's mission has become a focal point. CEN not only provides connectivity but also plays a critical role in safeguarding the digital infrastructure of Connecticut's public sector. This year's milestone conference places a spotlight on that evolving role, especially through partnerships that enhance the state's cyber resilience.

One of the key highlights of the event is a joint presentation by Sergeant Ian

Heath of the Connecticut Army National Guard and Ian Alexander from the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS). The duo will present an interim report on the 2025 Cyber Assessment Mission, an ongoing effort to evaluate and strengthen the cybersecurity posture of public entities across Connecticut.

Ian Alexander will also share updates on the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP), including how eligible organizations can apply and what resources are available through this federal initiative. DEMHS was awarded funding through SLCGP to help fortify the cybersecurity defenses of critical infrastructure sectors statewide.

In partnership with the Connecticut Military Department, including the Connecticut National Guard, DEMHS has been leading a coordinated cybersecurity assessment campaign. The mission targets a broad spectrum of public organizations—K-12 school

districts, health districts, municipalities, water and wastewater systems, and Councils of Governments (COGs). These assessments identify vulnerabilities, recommend mitigation strategies, and help build long-term cyber resilience.

According to interim findings from the 2025 mission, organizations assessed since the last major cyber mission in 2023 have shown marked improvement in several key areas. These include enhanced end-user cybersecurity training, broader adoption of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA), and deployment of Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR) technologies.

As CEN celebrates 25 years of connecting Connecticut, the conference serves as a powerful reminder that cybersecurity is a shared responsibility. With strategic partnerships like those between CEN, DEMHS, and the Connecticut National Guard, the state is building a safer, more secure digital future for all.



## CTARNG FY 25 SAFETY MESSAGE

## Heat Injuries Know the Difference

Outdoor activities are one way to enjoy the warm weather of spring and summer, but Soldiers and Family members should be mindful that high temperatures pose a significant risk for heat injury.

According to the U.S. Army Public Health Command, first prevention, then early recognition and treatment of heat injuries, are critical to curbing weather-related deaths. Soldiers have been trained to prevent and identify heat injuries on duty, and they can apply that same knowledge to protect themselves and their Family members 24/7. One helpful source is Technical Bulletin Medical 507/Air Force Pamphlet 48-152 (I), which describes the symptoms of and treatment protocols for the three most common heat injuries.



- **Heat cramps.** Symptoms: spasms in the arms, legs or stomach. Treatment: sip water, massage cramping areas and replace lost salt through food. Never take salt tablets unless directed by a physician.
- **Heat exhaustion.** Symptoms: headaches, paleness, clammy skin, excessive sweating, difficulty breathing, loss of appetite, nausea and exhaustion. Treatment: sip water, lie in a shaded area and rest, and loosen or remove clothing.
- **Heat stroke.** Symptoms: headache, dizziness, delirium, nausea, vomiting and body temperature of 106 F or higher. Treatment: Heat stroke is a medical emergency and can be fatal. Immediately call 911 and follow the dispatcher's instructions for treatment you can perform before help arrives. Reducing body temperature is paramount in rescue efforts, and the most effective cooling strategy entails removing the victim's clothing and immersing him or her in cool or iced water while massaging the skin (ice sheets or ice packs are acceptable if immersion isn't possible). Anyone suspected to be suffering from heat stroke should be transported to a hospital immediately, preferably by trained medical professionals such as paramedics

Heat Exhaustion		Heat Stroke	
<b>ACT FAST</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move to a cooler area</li> <li>• Loosen clothing</li> <li>• Sip cool water</li> <li>• Seek medical help if symptoms don't improve</li> </ul>	Dizziness Thirst Heavy Sweating Nausea Weakness	Confusion Dizziness Becomes Unconscious	<b>ACT FAST</b> <b>CALL 911</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move person to a cooler area</li> <li>• Loosen clothing and remove extra layers</li> <li>• Cool with water or ice</li> </ul>
<i>Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.</i>		<i>Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given.</i>	



State Safety Office  
 Windsor Locks Readiness Center  
 85-300 Light Lane  
 Windsor Locks, CT 06096







## 728th BMCS Integrates with 103rd ACS in F-22 Live-Fly Control Training

Story by Capt. Jennifer Kaprielian

In a demonstration of seamless Total Force Integration, the 103rd Air Control Squadron (ACS) hosted active-duty personnel from Robins Air Force Base's 728th Battle Management Control Squadron (BMCS) for a week of advanced live-fly control training. The exercise served to sharpen combat readiness and enhance multi-unit cooperation across the Air Force's control mission enterprise.

Twelve airmen from the 728th BMCS traveled from Georgia to Connecticut to participate in the exercise, which involved remote control of live aircraft—namely F-22 Raptors from the 1st Fighter Wing out of Joint Base Langley-Eustis. The training focused on providing tactical-level control of airborne assets, and it gave Robins' personnel the opportunity to earn critical live control experience required for Combat Mission Ready (CMR) status. Said ACS Commander, Major Jonathan Bopp, "In the control world, you can do simulated missions or actually control real aircraft in the sky. We're tying into the Eastern Air Defense Sector (EADS) to utilize their remote radios so that this group can control live aircraft."

Unlike traditional radar sites, the 728th BMCS is a fixed-site Battle Control Center (BCC) and is preparing to assume the "Kingpin" mission currently managed out of Shaw AFB. Without organic sensors, they rely on integrated feeds and remote radio networks, like those provided by the Eastern Air Defense Sector (EADS), to control aircraft during exercises.

"TDYs like this one are essential for us," said Capt. Richards from the 728th BMCS. "We're a relatively new squadron—stood up in February 2023—and we're still working towards full operational capability. Until then, we rely on partners like the 103rd ACS to help us maintain our training and readiness standards."

Weapons Director Conor Westling of the 103rd ACS emphasized the significance of the collaboration. "This kind of Total Force Integration doesn't just benefit us—it strengthens the entire Air Force. We're providing real-world, live control opportunities while acting as a conduit between active duty, guard, and other operational units."

Throughout the week, the units worked hand-in-hand, sharing expertise, systems access, and operational coordination. In addition to working with EADS, the exercise included support from the 1st Fighter Wing and demonstrated how geographically separated units can operate as a cohesive force.

"The 103rd ACS is built to support diverse mission sets—tankers, bombers, ISR platforms, and more," Westling said. "This training shows how we can extend that capability to help our active-duty teammates sharpen their edge."

As both squadrons continue to prepare for future deployments and mission transitions, exercises like this reinforce the Air Force's ability to operate as one integrated team—no matter the patch on the shoulder.



# ASIST Course

open to all  
CTNG Full-Time Staff and  
Service Members

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*Interested in learning more about how to help others at risk of suicide?*

## **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)**

Attending this two-day course will train you to intervene with an individual who is thinking about suicide. ASIST is a two-day civilian, interactive workshop in suicide first aid. ASIST teaches participants to recognize when someone may have thoughts of suicide and how to work with them to create a plan that will support their immediate safety. Taught around the world and learnable by anyone, this course is highly recommended for Leaders, employees and Service Members at all levels.

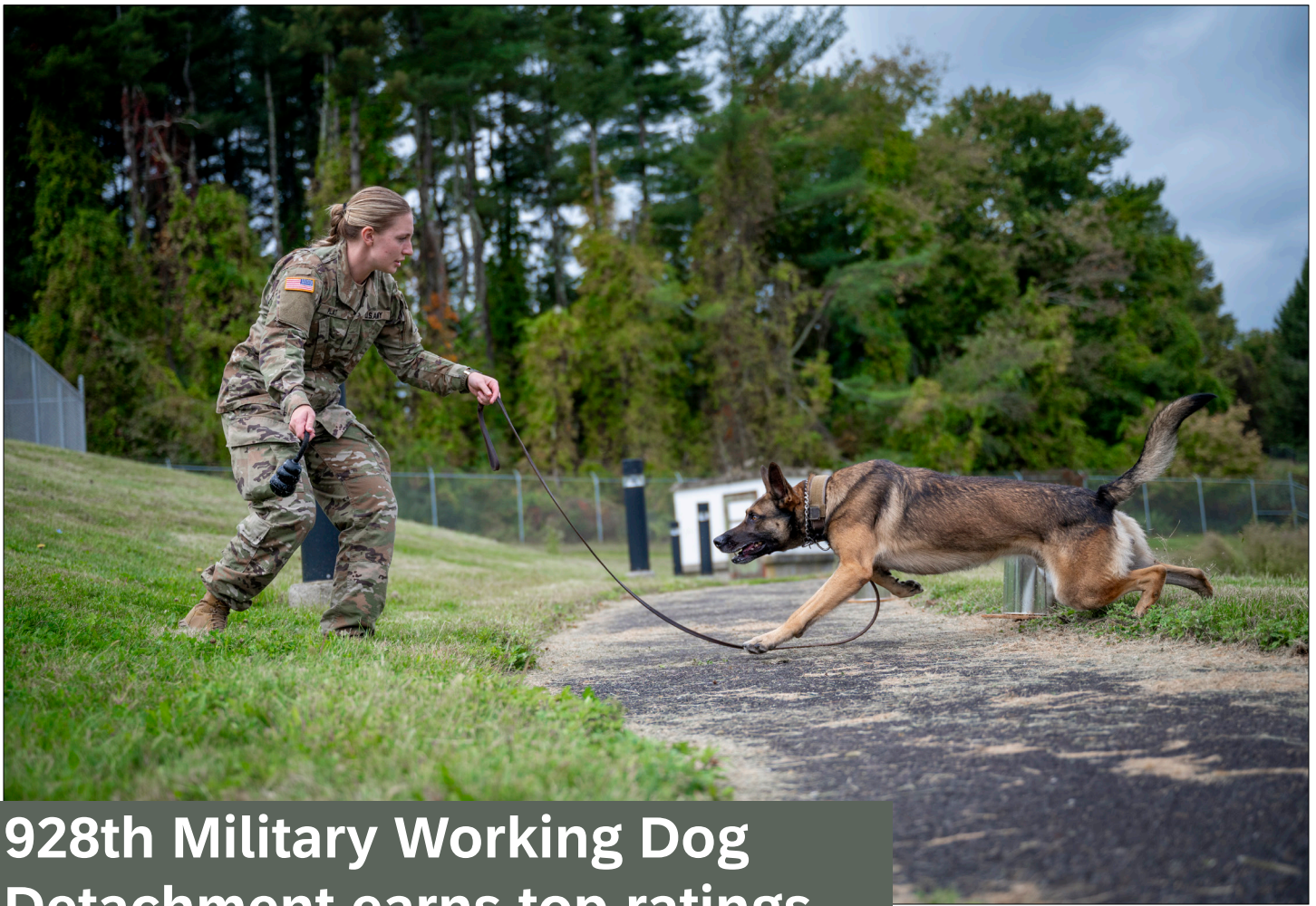
**24-25 July: 0830 Hrs., Hartford Armory, VTC Rm. 150**

Please contact Jennifer Visone at (860) 548-3291 or  
[Jennifer.a.visone.ctr@army.mil](mailto:Jennifer.a.visone.ctr@army.mil) to register NLT 21 July 2025

- All Full-Time employees may attend in their full-time status, with the approval of their first-line supervisor.
- Although no funding is available for M-Day/DSG orders, Service Members may attend in a SUTA drill status with the approval of their Commander.







## 928th Military Working Dog Detachment earns top ratings in annual inspection

Story by Sgt. Matthew Lucibello

The Connecticut Army National Guard's 928th Military Working Dog Detachment earned a rating of excellence during its recent annual kennel inspection and military working dog team certification toward the end of April.

The inspection, which is mandatory for every military working dog kennel across the U.S. Army, was conducted by the Program Manager for Military Working Dogs and reviewed 80 unique categories related to kennel management, animal health, and operational procedures.

"The first thing they are doing is inspecting administrative stuff; physical security, key control, monthly evaluations on the team's monthly proficiency," explained Staff Sgt. Tre Shifflett, a military working dog handler assigned to the Detachment. "Another category they inspect is the veterinary category, ensuring kennel inspections are happening by the vet quarterly, that the vet training is being conducted. The next section is the explosive section, everything having to do with our bomb training. We're also going to be evaluated on drugs for our narcotics dogs. Are inventories being conducted? Is our DEA license and state drug license up to date? There are 80 different items that we are evaluated on."

The 928th received "Go" ratings in 79 categories, earning the unit a rating of "Excellence" for the next year. This also marks the fifth year-in-a-row the 928th has earned this rat-

ing.

"You can't get rated higher than excellence," said Shifflett. "You can miss three. You can have 77 out of 80 and still be rated for excellence. We stack up pretty highly [against Active Duty Military Working Dog Teams]. The way we do our inventories, the program manager (for military working dogs) is starting to have Active Duty do it our way."

The 928th Military Working Dog Detachment is currently the only military working dog unit within the Army National Guard and Army Reserve.

At the same time as this inspection was happening, dog handler teams from the 928th underwent their own evaluations to be certified as working dog teams. This certification lasts multiple days and reviews the core competencies and mission essential tasks expected of a military working dog handler and their K-9. Additionally, passing certification is necessary in order for a working dog handler to be able to conduct missions as part of the unit.

"A big part of what we do is US Secret Service missions and support units downrange. If you aren't a certified team, you can't go on mission," explained Shifflett. "Once you are originally assigned to a dog, you go through a certification, but you have to recertify. It is the exact same certification you went through originally. It ensures team proficiency is



staying where it needs to be. We want to make sure you are still capable of going out on mission, finding drugs, finding explosives, doing the task we are having you out there to do.”

On the first day of their evaluation, the teams will tackle Obedience Drill One. Here the dog will be tested on their ability to sit, stay and lay down on command. Additionally, the dog will be exposed to the sound of gunfire through the use of blank weapons to showcase that they will not have any adverse reactions if they encounter such a situation on an actual mission. Following this drill, the teams will be evaluated on their patrol tasks. One such task in this category is subject apprehension. Here, the handlers will identify a threat, command their dog to apprehend and subdue the threat, and release the subject when commanded. Additionally, the teams must conduct searches for suspects in both buildings and in the woods. The last task conducted on day one is odor recognition. Here, cans filled with real examples of substances teams will find out on missions are hidden and must be detected by the working dog. Once a substance is detected, the dog must give a response, such as sitting or lying down.

“The next three to four days are all detection bases, drug

dogs finding drugs, bomb dogs finding bombs,” said Shifflett. “All teams are expected to search five areas, one of which has to be blank; no drugs or bombs are going to be in it. An example could be a vehicle lot, a roadway, like route clearance for explosive teams. The rest of them will generally be buildings, like a warehouse, barracks, or office building. The teams do not know which one of the areas is going to be blank. Drug teams are expected to find 10 drug [training] aids throughout five areas, and are only allowed to miss one. They are allowed two false responses, which is when the dog sits and there is actually nothing there. For bomb teams, they are required to find 20 [training aids] through the five training areas. They are only allowed to miss one and [are allowed] two false responses.”

Three teams from the 928th were evaluated, as well as a separate contractor team. All teams passed.

“We make cert as hard as we can,” explained Shifflett. “If we make it too easy, then it isn’t good for real-world application. We want to know at the highest level our guys can perform.”

*U.S. Army Sgt. Kevin O'Connell and his working dog Misha search a C-130H aircraft for simulated explosives during a training event at Bradley Air National Guard Base, East Granby, Conn. Aug. 29, 2023. This joint training was designed to help handlers and their K-9 step outside their comfort zone, train in an unfamiliar environment, and build rapport with their sister service.*







## From Training to Tradition, Conn. and Uruguay celebrate 25th SPP Anniversary

Story and photos by  
Amn. 1st Class Emme Drummond

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP) between the Connecticut National Guard and the Uruguayan Armed Forces. This milestone reflects a quarter-century of partnership, shared training, and ongoing support between Connecticut and Uruguayan counterparts.

Established in 2000, the partnership is part of The Department of Defense initiative that pairs state National Guard branches with partner nations around the world to collaborate on military readiness. The Connecticut-Uruguay partnership has become a model of sustained engagement, particularly in peacekeeping operations, humanitarian response, and joint training.

“After 25 years of successful exchanges with the Connecticut National Guard and Uruguay, both enterprises have obtained broad knowledge and understanding of their partner nation’s capacities, and standard operating procedures,” said Maj. Juan Torres Santiago, Connecticut National Guard Bilateral Affairs Officer in Uruguay. “However most importantly, these efforts reflect the pride and will of all military members that are aligned with ensuring the safety of their nations.”

In May 2025, Connecticut National Guard leadership traveled to Uruguay to meet with leadership from the Uruguayan Armed Forces and diplomatic leaders. The visit included

various strategic planning meetings, base tours, and further discussion about future collaboration under the State Partnership Program. The program’s success lies not only in its operational outcomes but also in the strong personal and professional relationships it fosters.

The SPP is important because it provides unique training and learning opportunities for both Connecticut and Uruguay armed forces.

“Today, this collaboration symbolizes the Connecticut National Guard’s global commitment to stability, resilience, and partnership,” said Connecticut National Guard Command Senior Enlisted Leader, Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur Fredericks. “It reflects the Guard’s ability to influence and support allied capacity-building, not just through training and military exchanges, but through enduring people-to-people ties, professional military education, and shared solutions to real-world challenges.”

The visit by Connecticut National Guard leadership reaffirmed the enduring collaboration and shared commitment of both nations to security, stability, and peace.

“What began as a traditional state partnership has grown into a comprehensive strategic relationship,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Fredericks. “The partnership now extends well beyond bilateral military exchanges as it will encompass collaborative work in peacekeeping, mental health, resilience,



women's leadership, disaster response, space and cyber initiatives, and even civic engagement models like urban planning and homelessness programs.”

The recent visit concluded with a traditional Uruguayan asado hosted by the Fuerza Aérea Uruguaya, which offered an informal setting to strengthen bonds between leadership and celebrate the program's 25th anniversary over a shared meal.

“The SPP success in Uruguay without a doubt, lies in the

human touch— which is the professional friendships cultivated over the last 25 years,” said Maj. Torres Santiago. “By building this relationship, the Connecticut National Guard has ensured that the U.S. is and will be the partner of choice for Uruguay in the future.”

Together, the Connecticut National Guard and Uruguay are looking forward to another 25 years of continued training and military collaboration.



*Top: Uruguayan Air Force Gen. Fernando Rubén Colina Alsinet, Commander in Chief of the Uruguayan Air Force, U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Francis J. Evon, Jr., the Connecticut National Guard Adjutant General, and U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Thomas Olander, the Connecticut National Guard Chief of Staff Air, sits at a round table discussion at Juan Manuel Boiso Lanza Air Base, Montevideo, Uruguay, May 20, 2025.*

*Right: U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Francis J. Evon, Jr., the Adjutant General of the Connecticut National Guard, and Uruguayan Navy Rear Admiral José Elizondo, the Prefecto Nacional Naval, speak together in a meeting at the Armada Nacional in Montevideo, Uruguay, May 22, 2025. The meeting highlighted capabilities that both the National Guard and the Uruguayan Navy can bring together under the State Partnership Program.*







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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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## GOVERNOR NED LAMONT

# GOVERNOR LAMONT SIGNS LEGISLATION DESIGNATING NATIONAL WOMEN VETERANS RECOGNITION DAY

Governor Ned Lamont today announced that he has signed into law legislation (Public Act 25-20) designating June 12 of each year in Connecticut as National Women Veterans Recognition Day to recognize the significant contributions of women who bravely and honorably served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

June 12 was the date selected for this designation because it commemorates the anniversary of the signing by President Harry S. Truman of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948, which authorized the enlistment of women as permanent members of all branches of the military. Several other states across the U.S. have also recently adopted similar designations to recognize the importance of the anniversary.

"Women veterans have honorably served the United States for decades, and designating this day will serve as a strong reminder about the contributions of women in our Armed Forces and honor those who have so bravely served this country," Governor Lamont said. "Any time that we can bring attention to veterans who have served our country and the issues they face is worth doing. It is an honor for me to sign this bill into law."

"The service of women veterans has been overlooked, underrecognized, and too often forgotten," Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz said. "Public Act 25-20 takes one more step in helping change that, by telling women veterans across Connecticut that we see them, and we care. It's a long overdue acknowledgement for women who have always answered the call to serve, sometimes without the same supports offered to their male counterparts. I look forward to future celebrations of National Women Veterans Recognition Day."

"Thank you to our chief elected officials for passing Public Act 25-20 during this legislative session," Connecticut Veterans Affairs Commissioner Ronald P. Welch said. "Sadly, our Connecticut women served in the shadows until the June 12, 1948, when the Women's Armed Service Integration Act was signed enabling you to become permanent members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. This all after 350,000 women had joined and served in World War II, including service by Coast Guard members. The twelfth of June now recognizes our Connecticut women veterans who have made tremendous contributions and sacrifices in both peace and war in securing and defending our great State of Connecticut and country."

"On National Women Veterans Recognition Day, we honor the generations of women who have worn our nation's uniform with courage, distinction, and unwavering dedication," Major General Fran Evon, adjutant general and commander of the Connecticut National Guard, said. "Their service has strengthened our military, inspired our communities, and paved the way for future leaders. The Connecticut National Guard is proud to stand on the shoulders of these trailblazers and remains committed to fostering a force that reflects their resilience, strength, and legacy."

The legislation was approved by a vote of 146 to 2 in the House of Representatives and a vote of 35 to 0 in the Senate. It went into effect immediately upon receiving the governor's signature.

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**14-17  
JULY**

**0900 - 1500**



**CTNG  
DEPENDENTS**

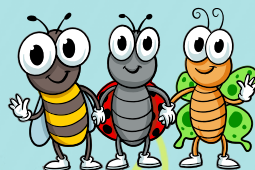
**AGES  
6 - 12  
YEARS**

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**BEEES, BUGS  
AND BIRDS**

**STEM, ACTIVITIES, GAMES,  
ARTS AND MORE!**

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July STEM Day Camp







## 146th Cyberwarfare Companies conduct joint training

2nd Lt. Dominika Dojnikowski

During this drill weekend, the Connecticut and Massachusetts 146th Cyber Warfare Companies conducted a joint training exercise at Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) in Massachusetts.

The training focused on developing and enhancing cyber awareness, with an emphasis on Operational Technology (OT) and Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT).

Training sessions covered the fundamentals of OT, including how critical infrastructure and industrial systems are targeted and defended in cyber operations. Soldiers worked in teams to locate hidden flags of varying difficulty in a capture-the-flag (CTF) exercise. This hands-on activity allowed soldiers to analyze and respond to simulated cyber incidents in mock OT environments.

The OSINT portion of the training centered on passive reconnaissance—leveraging publicly available information for intelligence gathering. Soldiers learned how to assess social media, public records, and open databases to identify patterns, trace digital footprints, and extract actionable intelligence. The instruction emphasized legal and ethical considerations, critical thinking, and effective information collection.

Both exercises challenged soldiers to build technical proficiency and operational confidence. This joint training served as another valuable opportunity for collaboration in a multi-state cyber operations environment, helping to prepare participants for larger-scale events such as Cyber Shield and Cyber Yankee later this year.






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 STATE OF CONNECTICUT
 

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## GOVERNOR NED LAMONT

# GOVERNOR LAMONT CONGRATULATES MAJOR GENERAL EVON ON ELECTION AS PRESIDENT OF AGAUS

Governor Ned Lamont is congratulating Major General Francis J. Evon Jr., adjutant general and commander of the Connecticut National Guard, on his election to serve as president of the Adjutants General Association of the United States (AGAUS). The election took place during the organization's summer conference in St. Augustine, Florida.

AGAUS is the nationwide organization representing senior National Guard leadership of all U.S. states, territories, and the District of Columbia. As president, Major General Evon will help shape national-level strategies and advocate for key priorities that strengthen the National Guard's ability to support both federal and state missions. He will play a leading role in addressing readiness, modernization, and resourcing needs, as well as preserving the Guard's constitutional structure and state-based authority.

"Over the last several years, I have witnessed Major General Evon's leadership capabilities as the head of the Connecticut National Guard, displaying the utmost level of professionalism and dependability," Governor Lamont said. "It does not surprise me at all that other adjutant generals from states across the nation have chosen him to represent them as the head of this group. This is a proud moment for Connecticut, and I am glad to congratulate General Evon on being selected for this important responsibility."

"Serving as president of AGAUS is an incredible honor and responsibility," Major General Evon said. "I look forward to collaborating with my fellow adjutants general, as well as our partners in the National Guard Bureau, the National Governors Association, and key organizations such as NGAUS and EANGUS, to help shape the future of our force and ensure we remain an integral and trusted part of the Joint Force."

As outlined in the 2025 Posture Statement of the 54, the National Guard's dual-mission role continues to expand from overseas deployments and homeland defense to state emergency response and cyber defense. The Guard's effectiveness depends on modern equipment, healthcare access, benefits parity, and maintaining its community-based structure rooted in the Constitution.

In his role as president, Major General Evon will:

- Chair and coordinate AGAUS meetings and guide the work of the executive director;
- Serve on the boards of directors for the National Guard Education Foundation and National Guard Insurance Trust;
- Participate in strategic planning sessions and governance forums with the chief of the National Guard Bureau, the director of the Army National Guard, and the director of the Air National Guard;
- Represent AGAUS on the National Guard Associations' Friday association call and serve as vice chair of the General Officer Advisory Council;
- Collaborate with the Strategic Engagement Committee and senior communications leaders to support the development of the National Guard's annual Posture Statement; and
- Maintain open communication with the leadership of NGAUS, EANGUS, and intergovernmental affairs officials.

Major General Evon brings more than 30 years of military service to the role, with extensive experience in both state and national leadership positions. His appointment underscores a career dedicated to preserving the Guard's operational effectiveness, supporting its members, and ensuring the National Guard continues to serve as an essential component of the Joint Force.

The National Guard is a dual-mission force that serves both state and federal roles, supporting overseas combat operations and responding to emergencies at home. The Connecticut National Guard, known as Connecticut's Home Team, provides trained and ready soldiers and airmen who stand "Always Ready, Always There" to defend the U.S. and support its communities.



# Service Member and Family Support Center

## Staff Directory

(800) 858-2677

<i>William A. O'Neill Armory: 360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105 Room 112 Open Monday-Friday</i>			
Director, Service Member and Family Support Center	<b>Melody Baber</b>	<a href="mailto:melodychevenne.c.baber.civ@army.mil">melodychevenne.c.baber.civ@army.mil</a>	(860) 548-3276 (desk) (860) 883-2515 (cell)
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Military and Family Readiness Specialist	<b>Carolyn Kyle</b>	<a href="mailto:carolyn.r.kyle.civ@army.mil">carolyn.r.kyle.civ@army.mil</a>	(860) 524-4920 (desk) (860) 394-8748 (cell)
Military and Family Readiness Specialist	<b>Scott McLaughlin</b>	<a href="mailto:scott.p.mclaughlin.civ@army.mil">scott.p.mclaughlin.civ@army.mil</a>	(860) 524-4892 (desk) (860) 883-0155 (cell)
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Lead Child & Youth Program Coordinator	<b>Carrie Joseph</b>	<a href="mailto:carrie.l.joseph.ctr@army.mil">carrie.l.joseph.ctr@army.mil</a>	(860) 524-4908 (desk) (860) 883-6934 (cell)
Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve	<b>Brian Erkson</b>	<a href="mailto:brian.r.erkson.ctr@army.mil">brian.r.erkson.ctr@army.mil</a>	(860) 524-4970 (desk)
Yellow Ribbon Coordinator	<b>SSG Jeovanny Ulloa</b>	<a href="mailto:jeovanny.j.ulloa.mil@army.mil">jeovanny.j.ulloa.mil@army.mil</a>	(860) 493-2796 (desk)
Personal Financial Consultant	<b>Jafor Iqbal</b>	<a href="mailto:pfc.hartford@magellanfederal.com">pfc.hartford@magellanfederal.com</a>	(203) 233-8790 (cell)
Transition Assistance Advisor	<b>Fausto Parra</b>	<a href="mailto:fparra-c@gapsi.com">fparra-c@gapsi.com</a>	(203) 219-8573 (cell) (202) 987-3942 (desk)
State Support Chaplain	<b>Lt Col Eric Wismar</b>	<a href="mailto:eric.a.wismar.mil@army.mil">eric.a.wismar.mil@army.mil</a>	(860) 548-3240 (desk) (860) 883-5278 (cell)
Connecticut Military Relief Fund	<b>Julian Muller</b>	<a href="mailto:julian.muller@ct.gov">julian.muller@ct.gov</a>	(860) 524-4968 (desk)
Military OneSource	<b>Sean Carey</b>	<a href="mailto:sean.carey@militaryonesource.mil">sean.carey@militaryonesource.mil</a>	(860) 502-5416
<i>103rd Airlift Wing: 161 Rainbow Road, East Granby, CT 06026</i>			
Airman and Family Readiness Program Manager	<b>Selva Cabrera</b>	<a href="mailto:selva.cabrera.1@us.af.mil">selva.cabrera.1@us.af.mil</a>	(860) 292-2730 (desk) (860) 734-7482 (cell)
<i>Middletown Armed Forces Reserve Center: 375 Smith Street, Middletown, CT 06457 Room 309 Open Mondays &amp; Tuesdays</i>			
Military and Family Readiness Specialist	<b>Linda Rolstone</b>	<a href="mailto:linda.b.rolstone.civ@army.mil">linda.b.rolstone.civ@army.mil</a>	(860) 680-2209 (cell)
<i>Niantic Readiness Center, Camp Nett: 38 Smith Street, Niantic, CT 06357 Room 105 Open Thursdays &amp; Fridays</i>			
Military and Family Readiness Specialist	<b>Joseph Palys</b>	<a href="mailto:joseph.j.palys.civ@army.mil">joseph.j.palys.civ@army.mil</a>	(860) 739-1637 (desk) (860) 883-6953 (cell)
<i>Windsor Locks Readiness Center: 85-300 Light Lane, Windsor Locks, CT 06096 Open Mondays &amp; Tuesdays</i>			
Military and Family Readiness Specialist	<b>Carolyn Kyle</b>	<a href="mailto:carolyn.r.kyle.civ@army.mil">carolyn.r.kyle.civ@army.mil</a>	(860) 292-4601 (desk) (860) 394-8748 (cell)
<i>Waterbury Armory: 64 Field Street, Waterbury, CT 06702 Open Tuesdays &amp; Thursdays</i>			
Military and Family Readiness Specialist	<b>Scott McLaughlin</b>	<a href="mailto:scott.p.mclaughlin.civ@army.mil">scott.p.mclaughlin.civ@army.mil</a>	(860) 883-0155 (cell)
<i>Waterbury Armory: 64 Field Street, Waterbury, CT 06702</i>			
Survivor Outreach Services Coordinator	<b>Reisha Moffat</b>	<a href="mailto:reisha.a.moffat.ctr@army.mil">reisha.a.moffat.ctr@army.mil</a>	(860) 883-6949 (cell)

As of 6 MAR 25



# Water Safety Tips



Tell someone you're going surfing



Surf with a buddy, especially in a big swell

Always wear a leash and the right wetsuit

Check weather and tides, be aware of rip currents

Know your skill level and stay within it, and take a class to build your skills

Always surf between the black and white chequered flags

Stay hydrated, drink plenty of water

Stay away from pool drains

Swim in designated areas supervised by lifeguards

Have young children or inexperienced swimmers wear U.S. Coast-Guard-approved life jackets



Never swim alone, buddy up

Enter water feet first

Supervise children when they are in or near the water

Know your limits or take a refresher course

NEVER drink Alcohol while operating the boat or skiing

Review and know all hand signals before skiing

Wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket in the boat and while skiing

Give a wide berth to fisherman, slow moving crafts like canoes, kayaks and sailboats



Use a tow rope at least 75 feet long

Never use engine or propeller as a step

Don't leave boat running while skier is re-boarding

<https://www.safety.af.mil/Divisions/Occupational-Safety-Division/Summer-Safety/Water-Safety/>

## JULY 4<sup>TH</sup> FIREWORKS SAFETY



**Know your fireworks; read the labels before igniting**



**A responsible adult, 18 or older, should oversee the use of fireworks**



**Light one firework at a time and then move away**



**Have a bucket of water, charged water hose or extinguisher nearby**



**Don't relight a "dud" firework**



**Ensure fireworks are used outdoors in a clear area**



**Wear proper safety gear, such as safety glasses and gloves, when shooting fireworks**



**Fireworks should not be carried in your pocket or shot into metal or glass containers**

AFSEC recommends attending a public fireworks display managed by experts



# CTNG hosts East Lyme Emergency Management-RDSI Cybersecurity training

**Sgt. Damien Vega**

**O**n April 11, 2025, East Lyme Emergency Management, in partnership with Research & Development Solutions Inc. (RDSI), gathered at Camp Nett for their annual cybersecurity training. The event aimed to enhance the region's preparedness for increasing cybersecurity threats targeting operational technology (OT).

This was an invaluable opportunity for professionals from the DEHMS Region 4 emergency operations and cybersecurity sectors to come together and refine their response protocols. With cybersecurity becoming an increasingly critical component of emergency operations, the tabletop exercise offered participants a unique chance to simulate a cyber incident affecting a mock town's infrastructure.

The scenario presented to participants involved a sophisticated cy-

ber-attack on operational technology within the town's critical infrastructure. This included systems essential to maintaining public safety, utilities, and emergency services. The exercise was designed to provide participants with a realistic understanding of how cybercrimes of this nature unfold and, more importantly, how to respond effectively.

The training objective was clear: to develop and solidify a procedural framework that ensures all stakeholders, from cybersecurity experts to local emergency management teams, know exactly what steps to take when facing a cyber threat. This included identifying key contacts, determining necessary actions, and understanding how to mitigate the impact of such incidents on the community.

This year's training marked RDSI's third consecutive year of hosting this critical event. Over the years, it has become a cornerstone of cybersecurity

readiness for Region 4, continuously refining and adapting to the evolving threat landscape.

The tabletop exercise helped reinforce the importance of collaboration between cybersecurity professionals, emergency management personnel, and local authorities in the face of emerging technological threats. It also served as a reminder that the line between cyber threats and physical infrastructure vulnerabilities is becoming increasingly blurred in today's interconnected world.

As the cybersecurity landscape continues to grow in complexity, training events like these are essential in ensuring that emergency response teams remain ready and capable of responding to cyber incidents swiftly and effectively. Region 4's commitment to this type of training underscores the growing importance of cybersecurity within public safety and emergency management.



**SHARP<sup>SM</sup>**  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT/ASSAULT RESPONSE & PREVENTION



## CTNG SAPR TEAM

Mrs. Katherine Maines

Principle SARC

(860) 883-4798

Mr. Denis St. Jean Wing SARC

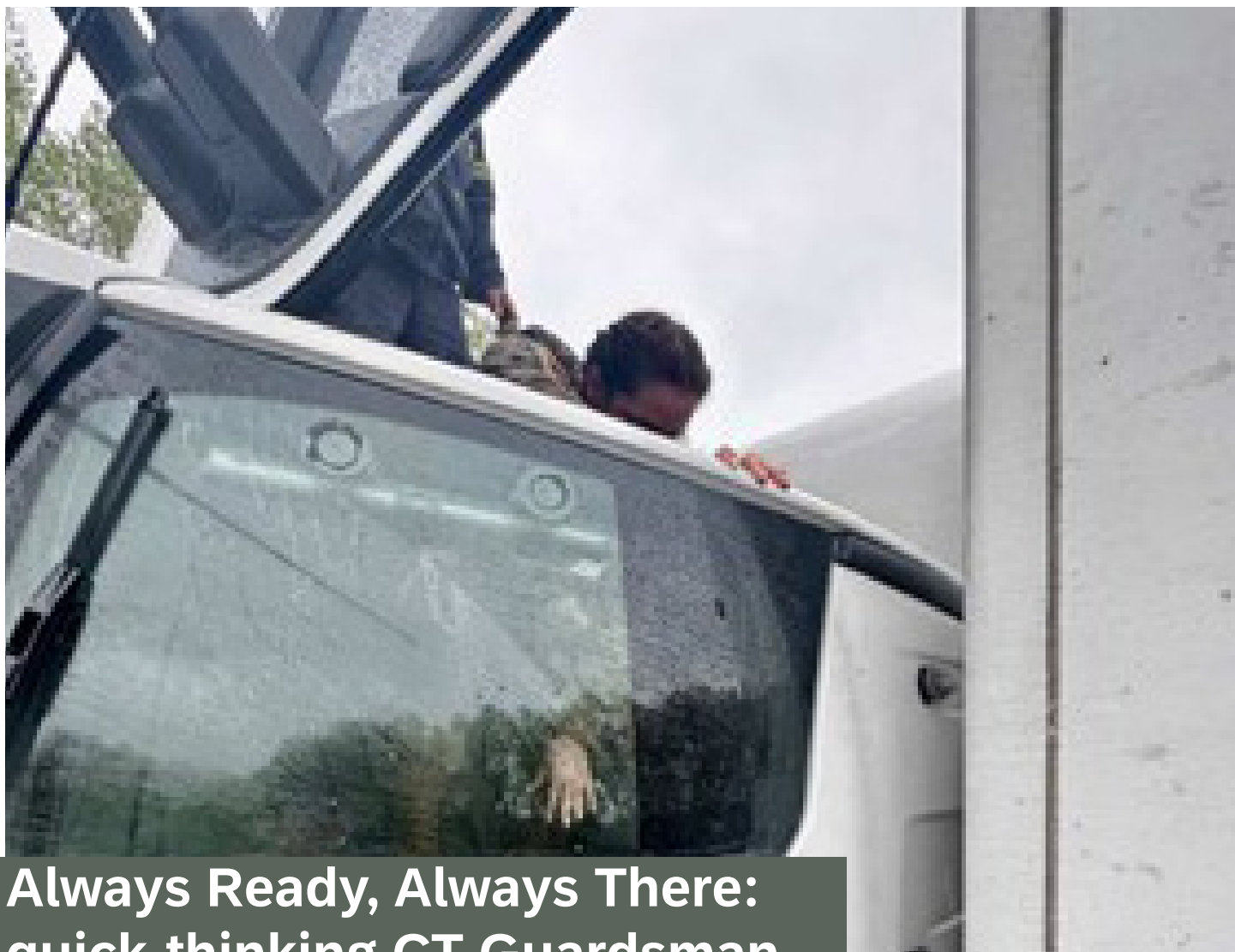
(860) 895-3526

Ms. Altia Lawrence-Bynum SAPR-S

(860) 500-3057







## Always Ready, Always There: quick-thinking CT Guardsman aids rollover crash victim

**Maj. Mike Wilcoxson**

On the morning of Monday, May 4, 2025, a Connecticut National Guard Soldier sprang into action after witnessing a dramatic vehicle rollover on Route 9 northbound in Cromwell. Sgt. Shaunna Mango of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1109th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group (1109th TASM), was en route to an appointment in Newington when she observed a passenger vehicle abruptly cut off a box truck. The larger vehicle veered off the roadway, re-entered traffic, and overturned, coming to a halt in the middle of the highway's travel lanes.

Demonstrating the highest standards of military readiness and selfless service, Sgt. Mango immediately pulled over, exited her vehicle, and approached the overturned truck to assess the situation. The driver, a male who appeared dazed and disoriented, was conscious but unable to exit the vehicle on his own. Recognizing the urgency of the moment, Mango began speaking with him to maintain alertness and evaluate his condition.

As traffic slowed and other motorists arrived to assist, Mango coordinated efforts with a bystander to extricate the driver. Together, they climbed the undercarriage of the over-

turned vehicle. While the driver's foot was initially trapped, Sgt. Mango was able to help free him. When the vehicle's height made direct egress impossible, Mango entered the cab and offered her knee as a step so the driver could be lifted through the front passenger window by the other bystander. She then retrieved the man's phone from the cab per his request and remained with him until emergency personnel arrived.

Her decisive action, physical courage, and calm under pressure reflect the values instilled in every member of the Connecticut National Guard. Mango's quick thinking and compassion directly contributed to the safe rescue of the driver without further injury. Although the driver later reported a possible shoulder injury and remained disoriented, no visible bleeding or broken bones were noted at the scene.

The Connecticut National Guard proudly recognizes Sgt. Mango's outstanding leadership, bravery, and selfless service. Her actions are a testament to the Guard's unwavering commitment to being "Always Ready, Always There"—whether on the battlefield, in natural disasters, or along the roads of our communities.





## 14th CST conducts training with Army North

Story and photos by  
Timothy Koster

The Connecticut National Guard's 14th Civil Support Team conducted collective lanes training in conjunction with Army North observer controllers at the Lebanon Fair Grounds, May 13 – 15, 2025, to prepare for their annual certification later this year.

These training lanes are designed to test the service members' ability to conduct their Mission Essential Task List (METL) capabilities. These are skills that each member of the unit must have proficiency in to be considered mission ready.

"This is kind of like a test for the test," said U.S. Army Sgt. Emmett Lytle, a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) specialist. "They evaluate us the things we're deficient in and give us feedback and pointers and then, come around September, we do it again for the real test and hopefully we've improved on every point they've given us."

The 14th CST is comprised entirely of Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) Sol-

diers and Airmen who provide their services to local, state, and federal agencies on a daily basis. The group has become very proficient in their jobs, but training like this is meant to push the limits of their capabilities by putting them into a simulated "worst of the worst" situation to put their skills to the test.

"This [training] is based more on the fundamentals," said U.S. Air Force Tech Sgt. Devin Kelly, an Emergency Management Specialist. "This is based on your absolute worst case scenario, so it's all exaggerated based of a real-world scenario."

Kelly also said that in a typical real-world scenario, only a small team from the CST would respond, as opposed to the entire unit, like in this training. Additionally, he said when the CST is called to respond to an incident, there's typically only a single point of concern they concentrate on, be that a suspicious powder or substance; in this training, they had multiple substances

they needed to find and identify.

In the past several years, the CST has provided a critical resource to local law enforcement and the community at large, such as identifying narcotics found at a local school and running a mobile COVID-19 testing lab during the pandemic. This real-world hands-on experience has allowed this team to function together seamlessly, even in this more extreme training environment.

"I think it was one of the smoothest entries we've had in a really long time," said Kelly. "Sergeant Lytle hit all the points he was supposed to hit, we didn't miss any of the steps, I feel like, as a team, we communicated well and moved methodically ... I honestly don't know, at this point, what we would've done differently."

As for the collaboration with Army North, Kelly said it's been an evolving program that's been brings training opportunities that better reflects the real-world scenarios the unit encounters



on a regular basis.

“They’re really good at focusing on the methodology and the characteristics of what we’re supposed to be doing,” said Kelly. “It is their job to nitpick us and, I think, as a team we appreciate that.”

The Lebanon fairgrounds is a quaint area of rolling hills and small outbuildings that regularly hosts a wide array of events from magic shows, monster truck rides, and renaissance fairs. Despite its rustic and welcoming aesthetic, the fairgrounds footprint provided an entirely separate set of hurdles the unit needed to overcome as part of their training.

For example, the distance between their command station and the target building was greater than on a typical real-world event and the path between the two was a twisted, up-hill road in the woods. These obstacles forced the unit to evaluate their contingencies with communication, movement, and emergency evacuation before ever putting on a hazmat suit.

Between now and their final evaluation, the CST will continue to provide support to local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, but also sprinkle in some more traditional skills training that will help them achieve a passing

score in September.

“We’re constantly doing something,” said Lytle.

The CST’s mission is to support civil authorities at a domestic Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear high-yield Explosives (CBRNE) incident site by identifying CBRNE agents and substances assessing current of projected consequences, advising on response measures, and assisting with appropriate requests for additional follow-on state and federal military forces.



*U.S. Army Sgt. Emmett Lytle takes a sample of a simulated mysterious substance while conducting collective lanes training at the Lebanon Fairgrounds, Lebanon Conn. May 13, 2015.*



*U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Devin Kelly speaks with a member of his team before conducting collective lanes training at the Lebanon Fairgrounds, Lebanon, Conn. May 13, 2025.*



# Congratulations!

## Connecticut National Guard Promotions and Retirements

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### Army

Sgt. Josiah Mendez  
Sgt. Patrick Foley  
Sgt. Kyle Busse  
Sgt. Andre Resto  
Sgt. Jailyn Nieves  
Sgt. Victor Cruzmantilla  
Sgt. Irvin Johnson  
Sgt. Bryam Calderon Galarza  
Sgt. Ethan Kanlong  
Sgt. Landon Nevillesmith  
Sgt. Matthew Hallgren  
Sgt. Peter Coniglio  
Sgt. Griffin Dimichele  
Sgt. Cameron Graham  
Sgt. Ethan Hampton  
Sgt. Joshua Hurlburt  
Sgt. Yoel Morelquevedo  
Sgt. Ross Morrone  
Sgt. Luis Tello Serna  
Sgt. Jasmine Young  
Sgt. Bryam Paltinmocha  
Sgt. Anthony Walker  
Sgt. Richard Sanchez  
Sgt. Ian Rodriguez-lorenzo  
Sgt. Joshua Guerrero  
Sgt. Cody Fox  
Sgt. Newton Maldonado  
Staff Sgt. Hannah Rivera  
Staff Sgt. Michael Justo  
Staff Sgt. Matthew Crudo  
Staff Sgt. Jonathan Ducki  
Staff Sgt. Paula Farrar  
Staff Sgt. Cody Ferreira  
Staff Sgt. Brina Yanez  
Staff Sgt. Luke Sciortino  
Staff Sgt. Kristy Gallant  
Staff Sgt. John Durham  
Staff Sgt. Tomas Messonlopez  
Staff Sgt. Jorge Medina  
Staff Sgt. Jesus Morales  
Staff Sgt. Ian Heath  
Staff Sgt. Jimmy Inahuazo  
Staff Sgt. Emiley Watts  
Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Douthit  
Sgt. 1st Class Victor Martinez  
Sgt. 1st Class Donato Williams

Sgt. 1st Class Richard Wooten  
Sgt. 1st Class Deesier Garcia  
Sgt. 1st Class Jordan Coons  
Sgt. 1st Class Amos Muiga  
Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Tan  
Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Rogers  
Sgt. 1st Class Nicole Cammett  
Master Sgt. Daniel Park  
Master Sgt. Christopher Prokup  
1st Sgt. Jose Quinones  
Sgt. Maj. Zane Barber  
Command Sgt. Maj. Ryan Maynard  
CW2 Michael Nizzardo Jr.  
CW2 Jose Rodriguez  
Capt. Isaac King  
Capt. Austin Gibilsco  
Capt. Nathan Moody  
Capt. Colin Ng  
Capt. Zachary Sholes  
Maj. Joel Fulsang

### Air Force

Airman Dimitrios Bowen  
Airman Daijhon Jarrett  
Airman Olivia Krahel  
Airman Edgard Ogando Jose  
Airman Theodore Orzol  
Airman Saravout Sirichantho  
Airman Santasha Smith  
Airman Amy Dunklee  
Airman Stanislav Pruhlo  
Airman Benjamin Quito Poma  
Airman Rodiana Rodriguez  
A1C Jesus Acevedo  
A1C Nicholas Cadena  
A1C Andrew Cattaneo  
A1C Kemhi Clarke  
A1C Danielle Coleman  
A1C Georgina Correa  
A1C Sherifdeen Dhikrullah  
A1C Long Do  
A1C John Flanagan  
A1C Oliver Garceau  
A1C Noah Hunt  
A1C Brock Isenburg  
A1C David Kamladze

A1C Kevin Kelleher  
A1C Elizabeth Knapp  
A1C Gelmir Lantigua  
A1C Ashley Lopez  
A1C Alexander Malone  
A1C Jelani Martinez  
A1C Jazmin Morales  
A1C Thomas Mulvehill  
A1C Christopher Munroe  
A1C Michael Orellana Navas  
A1C Anthony Paragone  
A1C Zaydiel Quinones  
A1C Jose Pena  
A1C Alan Pereira  
A1C Donovan Ravenberg  
A1C Jason Rivard  
A1C Wanderley Silva Reis  
A1C Margaret Taylor  
Senior Airman Joseph Bairos  
Senior Airman David Bamgboye  
Senior Airman Eoin Chekas  
Senior Airman Max Chiarillo  
Senior Airman Gabriel Feher  
Senior Airman Giulianna Gionfriddo  
Senior Airman Ashley Greene  
Senior Airman Jeremy Malecki  
Senior Airman Shane McMahon  
Senior Airman Christopher Mejia  
Senior Airman Janae Rainey  
Senior Airman Jaasiel Tejada Lopez  
Staff Sgt. Michael Belardinelli  
Staff Sgt. Christian Bolivar  
Staff Sgt. Ian Brathwaite  
Staff Sgt. Shawn Campbell  
Staff Sgt. Hannah Carignan  
Staff Sgt. Brett Cowhey  
Staff Sgt. Olivia Giuffria  
Staff Sgt. Chase Kempke  
Staff Sgt. Sydell Lecher  
Staff Sgt. Demetrius Mariani  
Staff Sgt. Gavin McCabe  
Staff Sgt. Peter Omeara  
Tech. Sgt. Gener Ancelet  
Tech. Sgt. Michael Bladek  
Tech Sgt. Michael Castellow  
Tech Sgt. Amanda Colbert  
Tech Sgt. Stephanie Dennis  
Tech Sgt. Andrew Major  
Tech Sgt. Dante Piccione



Tech Sgt. Christopher Serate  
 Master Sgt. Shanoy Dixon  
 Master Sgt. Lucas McEntire  
 Master Sgt. Delmar Munoz  
 Master Sgt. Michael Stearns  
 Chief Master Sgt. Kevin Durand  
 Chief Master Sgt. George Ehrlichman  
 Chief Master Sgt. Christina Glasper  
 2nd Lt. Scotty Andreozzi  
 1st Lt. Thomas Norton  
 Capt. David Pohl  
 Capt. Alexandra Sanowskibell  
 Lt. Col. Jessica Persad

# Retirements

*Thank you for your service!*

Sgt. David Olson  
 Master Sgt. Ricardo Valle  
 Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmie Smith  
 CW3 Michael Horrigan  
 Col. Anthony Pizzo  
 Brig. Gen. Ralph Hedenberg  
 Staff Sgt. Carlos Hernandez Garcia

Master Sgt. Carleen Oehmsen  
 Master Sgt. Joaquin Rojas  
 Master Sgt. Leopoldo Otero  
 Senior Master Sgt. Lisa Todaro  
 Senior Master Sgt. Jonathan Burr  
 Lt. Col. Joshua Panis  
 Lt. Col. Garrett Caponetti  
 Col. Amanda Evans  
 Col. Henry Chmielinski  
 Col. Patrick Kelly



**DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY AND AIR FORCE**  
 JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS - CONNECTICUT NATIONAL GUARD  
 GOVERNOR WILLIAM A. O'NEILL ARMORY  
 360 BROAD STREET  
 HARTFORD CT 06105-3706

July 1, 2025

## New Senior Leader Announcement

I am pleased to announce that Colonel Michael Sipples will be promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and will assume the duty of Assistant to the Adjutant General (Army), effective July 1, 2025. Brigadier General Sipples will also serve as the Deputy Commissioner of the Connecticut Military Department.

Brigadier General Sipples has served with distinction as the Chief of Staff for the Connecticut National Guard, playing a vital role in advancing the organization's strategic objectives, streamlining staff operations, and supporting the mission readiness of our force. His broad leadership experience, institutional insight, and commitment to excellence make him exceptionally qualified for this new role, where he will serve as a principal advisor to the Adjutant General and a senior representative for the Army component.

I am also proud to announce that Colonel Alan Gilman will be appointed as the Chief of Staff for the Connecticut National Guard, effective July 1, 2025.

Colonel Gilman most recently served as the G-3, where he was instrumental in planning and executing state and federal missions, managing force readiness, and coordinating joint operations across the organization. His achievements during his tenure in prior leadership roles have strengthened the Guard's ties to the community and enhanced our operational capacity. As Chief of Staff, he will oversee the day-to-day operations of the Joint Force Headquarters and ensure continued alignment with the Adjutant General's vision and strategic goals.

Please join me in congratulating Brigadier General Sipples and Colonel Gilman on their well-earned appointments. Their professionalism, leadership, and dedication to the mission will continue to drive excellence within the Connecticut National Guard.

Francis J. Evon  
 Major General  
 The Adjutant General



Please Join Us

# CT MILITARY DEPARTMENT & RETIREE PICNIC 2025



Reconnect with friends!!!

Camp Nett, Niantic CT

Retiree Benefit update: 10:30 AM

Cookout starts: 12:00 PM

Early Registration Deadline: Monday, August 11, 2025

\$35 if registered by August 11 \$40 at the door

Payment accepted at the door or

<https://www.zeffy.com/ticketing/2025-annual-ct-military-department-and-retiree-picnic>

Friday  
August  
15



## CTNG Picnic Attendance Guidelines

Full-time CTNG personnel are welcome to attend with supervisor or commander approval.

Federal technicians and civilian employees may be granted excused absence for the time spent at the picnic, including travel.

Timecards should be marked as "LN" – Administrative Leave.

AGR and ADOS personnel are considered on duty during the event—no leave will be charged.

Attendance will be recorded to confirm time away from duty location.

## Open to all:

- CTMD State Employees
- CTNG Members and Retirees
- Organized Militia Members
- Governor's Military Staff
- CT Military Community