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Cyber Yankee prepares DoD, government, and business for potential cyber threats

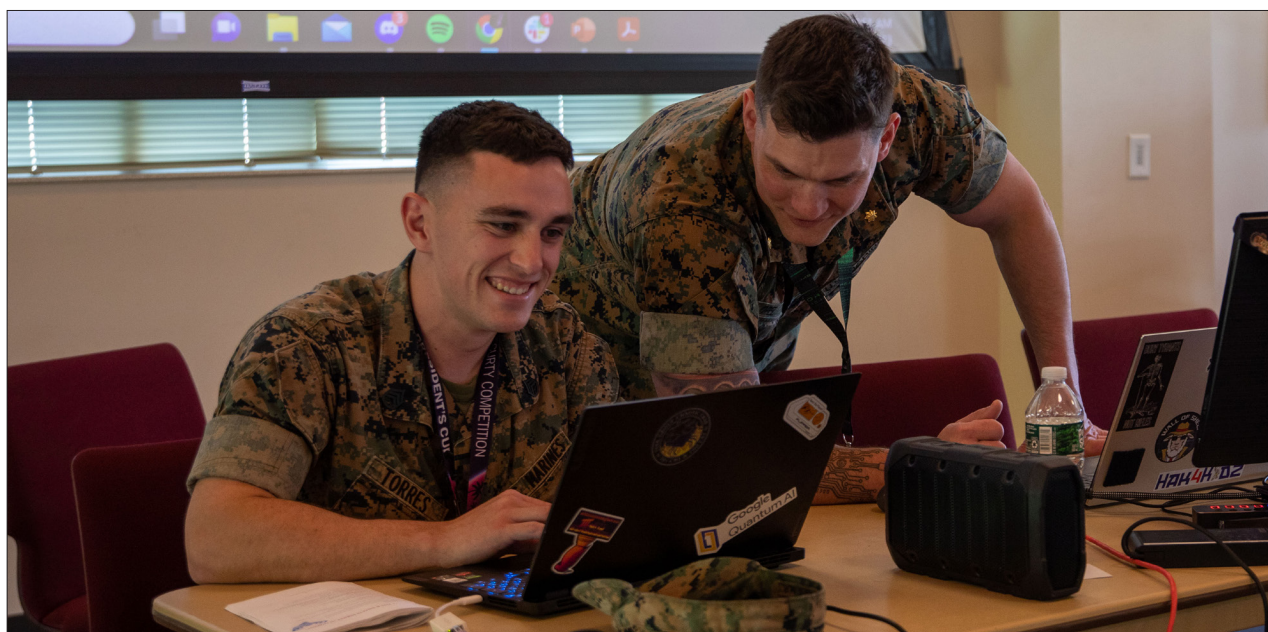
Timothy Koster
Joint Force Headquarters

In Ernest Cline's 2012 novel, Ready Player One, people have migrated much of their lives into a virtual reality world known as the Oasis. In this digital universe, people play games, make money, and interact with strangers and friends from around the globe. Although we've yet to reach this level of integration with VR in the non-literary world, a staggering amount of the world around us relies of a connection to the world wide web to provide the ease of access we take for granted every day.

This instant connection certainly makes aspects of our lives easier – think online banking, shopping, or teleworking – but it also opens our sensitive information such as Personal Identifiable Information (PII) and banking information to outsider threats from malicious actors like hackers.

This vulnerability isn't just at the personal level, however. Power plants, public transportation, and oil pipelines – almost all of our nation's critical infrastructure has some level of connection to the internet. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, at the time this article was written, there have been forty-seven significant cyber incidents this year around the world that have targeted people and/or governments. Not listed on the site are the countless minor attacks that happen every single day.

These attacks include phishing attempts to conduct espionage, malware designed to obtain confidential infor-



Staff Sgt. Michael Torres, left, a data systems administrator for Defensive Cyberspace Operations-Internal Defensive Measures (DCO-IDM) Company A, 6th Communication Battalion, discusses his network hacking plans during Cyber Yankee 23 at Camp Nett, Connecticut, May 25, 2023. (U.S. Marine Photo by Lance Cpl. Ashley Corbo)

mation against governments, militaries, and civilians, and ransomware against educational institutions, just to name a few.

This is why the Department of Defense has doubled down on its efforts to recruit and build its cyber capabil-

ities. According to the released, unclassified 2023 DoD Cyber Strategy, the military has four main lines of effort when it comes to the cyberspace: defend the nation, pre-

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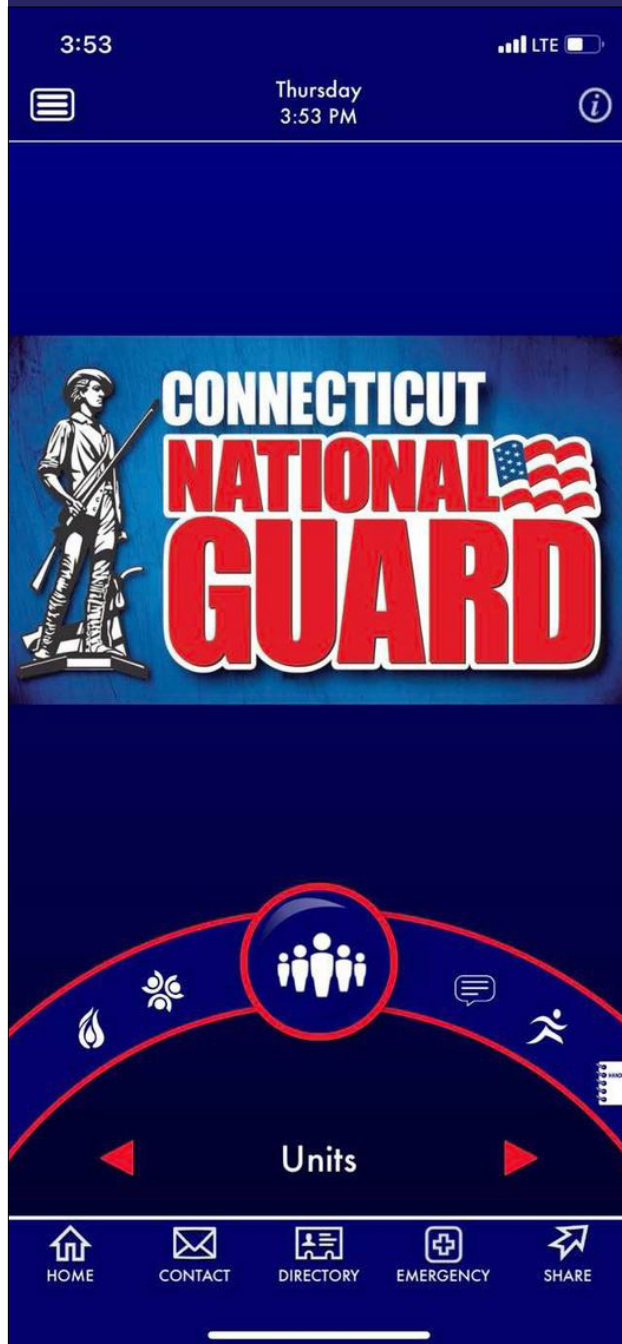


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Facebook - @CTArmyGuard
Instagram - @CTArmyGuard

CTANG Recruiting Team
Facebook - @CTAirGuard

103rd Airlift Wing
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102nd Army Band
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Instagram - 102darmybandct

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1109th TASMG
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CTARNG Recruit Sustainment Program
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Facebook - CTNGFamilies

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Facebook - @CTESGR
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1st Co. Governor's Foot Guard
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To change your home of record, please do one of the following:

Retirees: Contact

Sgt. 1st Class Rachael Murphy at
ng.ct.ctarng.mbx.G1-RSO@army.mil or
860-524-4813.

Guardsmen and Militia Members: Contact
your chain of command or unit admin.

*Any further questions or concerns about the
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Airmen from various squadrons around the 103rd Airlift Wing work on constructing the framing of a single-family house meant for disabled veterans of Cherokee Nation in Talequah, Oklahoma, June 29, 2023. The Cherokee Veterans Housing initiative is a collaboration between the Defense Department's Innovative Readiness Training program and the Cherokee Nation that constructs new single-family homes and supporting infrastructure for eligible Cherokee Nation veterans and their families.

103rd Engineers help build houses for disabled native veterans

Timothy Koster
Joint Force Headquarters

TAHLEQUAH, Okla. – Engineers from various squadrons of the 103rd Airlift Wing worked on building homes for disabled Cherokee veterans, here, June 26 – July 7, 2023.

The work was done as part of the multi-year rotational project known as the Cherokee Veterans Housing Initiative which provided real-world training for the airmen and will see a total of 21 houses built by the project's completion.

Air Force Master Sgt. Jon Delaney, the 103rd Civil Engineer Squadron's Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force manager, said most of the Airmen on the mission have non-engineering civilian careers and those who do don't typically work on new construction so the project was an excellent opportunity for the airmen to put their trade skills to use, especially those they don't get to use on a regular basis during normal drill days and annual training.

But even for the Airmen who serve in an Active Guard and Reserve status, this mission was an opportunity to refresh their skills they'd learned in their Tech School.

"It feels pretty good [going back to the basics]," said Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Cooper, a full-time HVAC/R specialist with the ACS out of Orange, Connecticut. "The 103rd Air Control Squadron is a tactical military unit, so all our equipment is rapid deployable, I'm deployable, and this is outside of the scope of what I normally do."

Cooper also said most of his day-to-day work at the ACS revolves around maintenance of the building's HVAC systems to make sure the server rooms, which as mission critical for the unit, receive proper airflow and temperatures don't get too high.

During the unit's two weeks on the worksite, the airmen oversaw just about every aspect of the construction project, from framing walls and hanging sheetrock to running electrical lines and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning ductwork. They were also working on multiple houses at once; while one team was erecting the framework of one home, others were running wire, plumbing, and ductwork in the shell of another built by the previous rotation.

While there was a clear consensus that the Airmen appreciated the quality of training they received, it was also evident that the mission's purpose was of an even greater value.

Cooper said the National Guard has a unique responsibility to serve the community, state, and country and, while most of those missions come in the form of storm response or other domestic emergency such as the COVID-19 pandemic, being a part of something like this – which brings together agencies from the state and nation – to honor the service and sacrifice by of these veterans was very rewarding.

The Cherokee Veterans Housing initiative is a collaboration between the Defense Department's Innovative Readiness Training program and the Cherokee Nation that constructs new single-family homes and supporting infrastructure for eligible Cherokee Nation veterans and their families.

Innovative Readiness Training is a collaborative program that leverages military contributions and community resources to multiply value and cost savings for participants. Communities typically provide materials and basic services (e.g. facilities), while military units contribute personnel and training resources. IRT missions produce mission ready forces, civil-military partnerships, and stronger communities.

Cyber

Cont. from page 1

pare to fight and win the nation's wars, protect the cyber domain with allies and partners, and build enduring advantages in cyberspace.

To do this, a series of cyber-centric training exercises have been developed to build the military's cyber capabilities. Cyber Yankee is the second-largest exercise of its kind in the world and brings together National Guard and Reserve cyber warriors from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard from around the country.

Started in 2015, Cyber Yankee is the premier regional cyber training event for defense, state and federal agencies, and key utility companies to rehearse prevention and response best practices. And, unlike other cyber-focused training events which focus entirely on threats against the DoD's information Network (DODIN), Cyber Yankee is the only military exercise which focuses on critical infrastructure and key resources that directly affect the American people.

"The fact we exercise [with cyber professionals from the private sector and utility companies], we practice like we fight," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Tim Hunt, deputy director of Cyber Yankee and fulltime Guardsman from the Massachusetts National Guard. "So, if there were something where we need to get activated already knowing those people, already having relationships, it goes a long way getting Soldiers and Airmen into action and helping provide and support a response to take care of something that's effecting the citizens of the region."

One aspect of the National Guard that makes its Soldiers and Airmen uniquely qualified for this type of mission is their diversity in knowledge, skills, and experience. Most cyber guardsmen are part-time warriors and, outside of their monthly training days, live and work – often within the cyber or information technology domain – in the communities they're working to defend.

The exercises split participants into two teams, red and blue. The red team serves as the OPFOR, or opposing force, in a traditional military training exercise. Their role is to behave as a malicious state actor trying to infiltrate the United States' critical infrastructure through a series of cyberattacks. The blue team on the other hand, which comprises both military and industry partners, work to thwart the red team's attempts to disrupt their assigned sector.

In addition to building the relationships and standard operating procedures with their industry counterparts, exercises like Cyber Yankee work toward training National Guardsmen to serve as the first responders for the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) during a large-scale cyberattack.

"We have fifty-four National Guards across the greater United States and each governor has Army Soldiers and Air National Guardsmen at their disposal," said Hunt. "A lot of times we associate a National Guard state response under the governor's direction for a wildfire, hurricane or natural disaster ... but now we're in this new reality where cyberspace touches all of us every day."

"If you read the news, in many cases, when there's a big cyberattack in a state, the National Guard is the first and primary response to that simply because they're there, the governor can call on them, and put them immediately on



Department of Defense cyber analysts work together as a team during Cyber Yankee, a cyber training exercise hosted by the National Guard, inside the Regional Training Institute at Camp Nett, Niantic, Connecticut, May 17, 2023. For the exercise, cyber analysts from multiple services of the DoD joined forces to hone their skills safeguarding critical infrastructure from simulated cyber attacks. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matthew Lucibello)

status," said Air Force Lt. Col. Cameron Sprague, director of Cyber Yankee.

Speaking of the news, the organizers of this year's event turned to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, a war which has highlighted cyber capabilities on the modern battlefield, to create a more realistic training scenario.

"We have a very tight partnership with the FBI and used real-world intelligence that they gather to simulate the threats against our critical infrastructure in this exercise, similar to what we saw in Ukraine," said Sprague.

For many Americans the war in Ukraine may seem like little more than a news headline somewhere far away, but the implications of cyberattacks can have far-reaching impact. Take, for example, the ransomware attack on the Colonial Pipeline, the largest American pipeline for refined oil products and victim of one of the largest cyberattacks against critical infrastructure, ever.

The attack forced Colonial Pipeline to cease operations for six days which resulted in immediate fuel shortages and led to public panic and the highest gas prices of the year. As a result, President Joe Biden issued Executive Order 14028 on May 12, 2021, which increased software security standards for sales to the government, tightened detection and security on existing systems, improved information sharing and training, and established a Cyber Safety Review Board, among others.

It also highlighted the importance of training exercises like Cyber Yankee to defend against cyberattacks, deter potential adversaries from initiating an attack, and improving response times and results should someone attempt to attack our critical infrastructure.



A cyber duty identifier patch is worn by U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Gordon Smith, a cyberspace operations officer assigned to the 101st Air Refueling Wing, Maine Air National Guard, inside the Regional Training Institute at Camp Nett, Niantic, Connecticut, May 17, 2023. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matthew Lucibello)

"This is the ninth year of Cyber Yankee so the military, the National Guard in particular ... has been taking this threat seriously and has been exercising, talking about it, developing relationships across state, local, federal government and private sector to prepare for that day and hopefully it won't happen," said Hunt.

At 0730 on Saturday, August 19th the inaugural TACTLETE Appalachian Trail Hike will commence to raise awareness for Suicide Prevention and Resilience amongst our community. The hike will be split into two segments. Saturday will cover 11.3 miles on the trail starting at Hoyt Rd in Sherman, CT. On Saturday we will hike the trail to the Mt. Algo campsite where we will set up camp for any overnighers. Individuals do not have to camp; they can simply join us for the hike and then depart. Sunday will begin at 0800 at the Mt. Algo site and continue 10.8 miles to Silver Hill where the hike will end for a total of 22.1 miles over two days.

Each day's hike will commence with a cookout for dinner to build camaraderie and build upon our human network connections.

Each hiker who is staying overnight at the campsite will need to carry all gear with them on the hike. A trail vehicle will be traveling along the local roads to provide water refills and first aid if needed. This hike will be done in civilian clothes, not in military uniform.

Please email Silas Holden for questions or to have your name put on the committed roster for attendance to the hike.

Once having a committed roster, I will send out a packing list that is furnished by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy Organization.

- **Who:** Civilian event open to all CTNG Soldiers and Family & Friends
- **What:** Two Day Appalachian Trail Hike for Suicide Prevention and Resiliency Promotion
- **Where:** CT Section of Appalachian Trail
- **When:** Saturday, August 19th, 0730 to Sunday, August 20th, 1700
- **Event POC:** SFC Silas Holden sikholden@gmail.com or silas.k.holden.mil@army.mil



Tactfully Adept

A Community of Tactical Athletes

Take Advantage of Military Benefits for Travel

Sgt. 1st Class (ret.) Stephanie Cyr
Contributor

Using your military benefits as a retiree can help you plan a great vacation and save money too. People are starting to travel again post pandemic. Often retirees don't think in terms of the military benefits they can use for travel.

Cost saving travel available to retired soldiers is using Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) services. For example, MWR runs four full services hotels: Hale Koa Hotel on Waikiki beach, Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in the German Alps, Shades of Green on Walt Disney Resort in Florida, and Dragon Hill Lodge in Korea. All are family-oriented resorts. Rooms are priced based on retired rank and are sold on a first come basis.

Do you camp or have an RV? The Army and other DOD Service Departments operate RV sites and campground on military and recreations areas on military installations all over the United States. Go to the website www.armymwr.com/programs-and-services, and select Recreation on the task bar. Here you can find locations, information and amenities for RV sites and campgrounds by state.

Department of Defense DOD Lodging (www.DODLODGING.Net) is the perfect place to look for lodging from all military branches. In addition to lodging offered by the Army, one can stay at Air Force Inns, Navy Gateway Inns and Suites, and Navy Getaways RV parks, campgrounds, and vacation rentals. Some limit retirees to making reservations within thirty days in advance of travel.

American Forces Travel is an MWR joint service transformation initiative has resulted in the first official online vacation travel site, American Forces TravelSM, with Priceline[®] as the service provider. Armed Forces Travel offers

special deals to Active military, Guard or Reserve, U.S. Coast Guard, Retired Military, and all eligible MWR patrons. Once eligibility is approved, hotels, cars, flights, cruises, and travel packages may be booked at a discount. Average discounts for hotels are around 20% but go as high as 30% off the published price.

If visiting America's National Parks is on your bucket list, it is advised you purchase the National Parks Senior Pass. Though not a military benefit, it is a lifetime pass that will allow you to visit National park Fee areas free. The pass is for US Citizens or permanent residents aged 62 or over. The cost is a one-time price of \$80.00 and must be obtained in person at a federal recreation site. It allows entrance or access to the pass owner and accompanying passengers in one private, non-commercial vehicle. The pass is non-refundable, non-transferable, and will not be replaced if lost or stolen.

Retirees who have Medicare as their primary health insurance need to consider other options when needing medical outside of the United States. Medicare provides coverage in the U.S. and U.S. Territories. Medicare doesn't provide coverage in any other overseas locations. When traveling overseas and using TRICARE For Life in all



Master-at-Arms Seaman Brook Gellar, assigned to Naval Support Facility (NSF) Deveselu, tours the Kalemegdan Fortress in Belgrade, Serbia as part of a Morale, Welfare and Recreation trip. NSF Deveselu and Aegis Ashore Missile Defense System Romania are co-located in Deveselu, Romania with the Romanian 99th Military Base and play a key role in ballistic missile defense in Eastern Europe. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Bill Dodge)

other overseas locations, TRICARE is the primary payer and you're responsible for paying TRICARE's annual deductible and cost shares.

Having the flexibility to travel at leisure is a perk of being retired. Your military benefits allow travel often at a lower cost. When traveling, remember the other discounts such as shopping or getting gas at military installations will also save money.

CT National Guard Chaplain Corps Contributor

Have you -- or someone you know -- ever considered extending your spiritual call to those men and women who have answered a call of their own -- to selflessly serve our nation in uniform?

We hope that you and your colleagues can spend part of your day on August 22nd with your hometown National Guard to learn about the spiritual needs of our service members and their families and the related ministry opportunities.

We need your help to reach members of the clergy or those preparing for ordination/spiritual leader service who may be interested in extending their ministry as a chaplain with the CTNG. Never before have chaplains played such a vital role in spiritually supporting and generally assisting those who serve. During this event you will receive a broad overview of what it means to serve in the CTNG and what are the basic requirements to become a chaplain in the U.S. military. Most significantly, our State Chaplains, Colonel Brian Converse, Lt. Colonel Eric Wismar, and Major Stephen Eichelberg will share their vast experience on what it is like to minister to Soldiers and Airmen and what it has meant to them personally. Clergy from all faith traditions are invited to take part in this special event. Please come and learn how you could extend your call to community members who serve in the National Guard, while having fun getting up close to some of the latest military equipment.

This event will be held at the Connecticut Army National Guard Aviation Support Facility (AASF) where you will receive a tour, informational briefings, lunch/networking opportunity and then be given a civic leader orientation flight on a UH-60 Blackhawk or CH-47 Chinook helicopter along the Connecticut River!

Please RSVP using the enclosed QR code, or email address, or return address. Please note that this event is limited to the first 40 clergy members who respond.

- When: Tuesday, August 22, 2023, starting at 10:00 a.m. and concluding at 2:30 p.m.
- Where: Army Aviation Support Facility (AASF), 85-152 Light Lane (off of Rt. 75), Windsor Locks
- Please kindly RSVP by July 31, 2023.
- To learn more or to register, please contact:
- Chaplain: Lt. Col. Eric Wismar, Office: (860) 548-3240
- Email: eric.a.wismar.mil@army.mil
- Officer Strength Manager: CPT Mark Soltau, Cell: (860) 982-2852
- Email: hewan.m.soltau.mil@army.mil

Once we receive your response, you will be contacted and informed that you are part of the first 40 people who RSVP'd.

Clergy Day 2023 Tentative Agenda

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1000 | Clergy Leaders arrive |
| 1015-1045 | Coffee and networking; AASF Walk-through |
| 1045-1100 | Greeting by CTNG Senior Leader(s) |
| 1100-1120 | The Chaplain Ministry Brief/Testimonials (Chaplains) |
| 1120-1135 | Service in the Guard Brief (Recruiting) |
| 1135-1150 | Value of the Chaplain Corps: Major Commander Perspective (COL Nowakowski) |
| 1200-1245 | Lunch |
| 1245-1300 | Safety Briefing |
| 1300-1430 | Movement to Aircraft and Flights. Group Photo |
| 1415-1430 | Conclusion/O&A/Resource Information. |

Live the Call ... What is Your Calling?
Connecticut National Guard
Clergy Day 2023



REGISTER



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 a Blackhawk orientation flight!

The day will include a FREE lunch.

When: Tuesday, August 22, 2023
Time: 10:00 AM - 2:30 PM

Where: Army Aviation Support Facility, 85-152 Light Ln, Windsor Locks, CT

Please RSVP by July 31, 2023

To learn more or to register:

Chaplain: Lt. Col. Eric Wismar
Office: (860) 548-3240
Email: eric.a.wismar.mil@army.mil

Officer Strength Mgr.: CPT Mark Soltau
Cell: (860) 982-2852
Email: 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/>

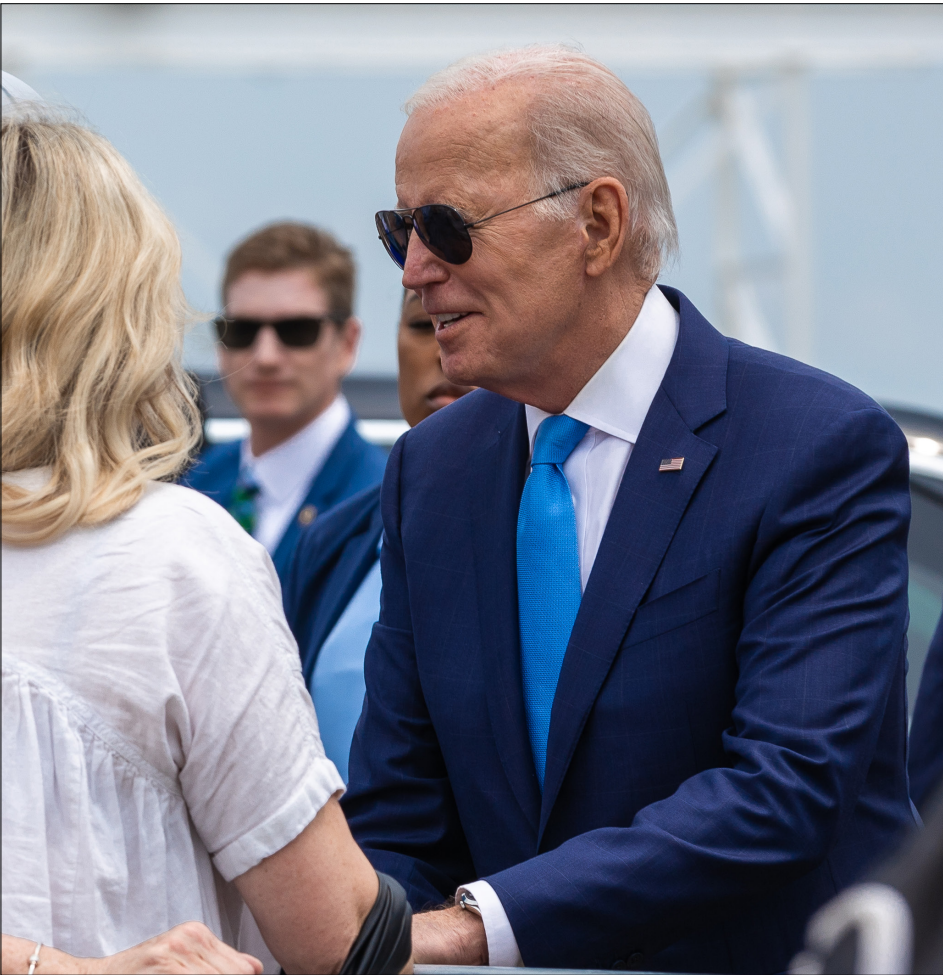
SCAN QR CODE TO RSVP



REGISTER



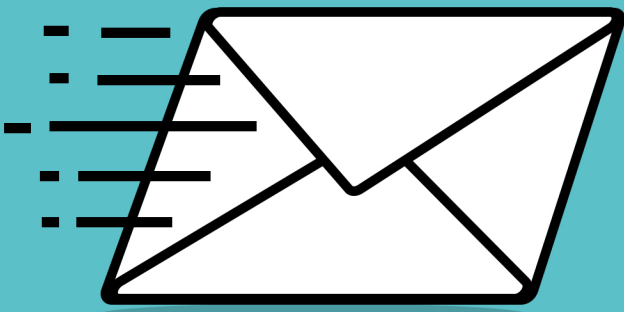
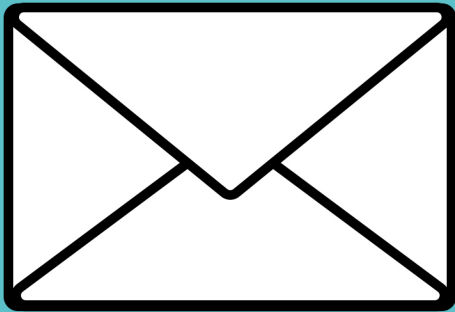
On June 14th, we celebrated Wamogo Regional High School seniors and their accomplishments, especially Megan Rousseau, who recently enlisted in the Army National Guard! She will be attending the University of New Haven in the fall and has enrolled in ROTC. She was selected to receive the Minuteman Scholarship, which will cover her tuition for all 4 years, totaling over 160k. She will also receive cadet drill pay, \$1,200 a year book stipend and \$4,200 a year cadet stipend. All of those benefits together equate to over 200k for four years. We couldn't be prouder of her and look forward to seeing her progress



President Joe Biden speaks to a crowd at Bradley Air National Guard Base, East Granby, Connecticut, June 16, 2023. Immediately after speaking to members of the Connecticut National Guard and other distinguished guests, President Biden rushed over to the crowd to speak with members of the public. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matthew Lucibello)

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Wednesday, July 12, 2023
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WANTED

OLD UNIFORMS & EQUIPMENT

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



There is a project in the works at the William A. O'Neill Armory in Hartford to display more recent historical uniforms of Connecticut military service. The intent of these new displays is to incorporate them with the other significant historical displays, pictures, and items as a walking tour for visitors to the capital, especially school children field trips for generations.

If you have any of the following uniforms that you would be willing to donate to the CT Military Department for this purpose, please contact us at (860) 524-4968 or email military.history@ct.gov. We would like as much of the uniform as possible, to include foot gear, head gear, and pins/patches/accoutrements. The list of uniforms (with accoutrements) we are looking for are as follows:

- Vietnam – OG 107 – olive drab combat uniform - tropical/ light weight**
- 1970's – OG 107 – olive drab uniform temperate (preferably with a Fritzy Badge on pocket)**
- Army Flight Suit (Green, ACU, or OCP)**
- Army Mess Dress**
- Army Blue ASU (female either pants or skirt)**
- Army Khaki uniform**
- Era equipment that can be added to period dioramas.**



SEOUL, South Korea - Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief, National Guard Bureau, right, visits the Republic of South Korea to assess potential National Guard contributions at a time of deepening U.S. and ROK defense and security ties May 16, 2023.

In South Korea, Hokanson Assesses Potential National Guard Support

Master Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

SEOUL, South Korea – Assessing how the National Guard might support U.S. and Republic of Korea forces at a time of deepening defense and security ties between the two nations was top of mind for Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson during his recent visit here.

“As a globally proven combat operational reserve with strategic depth, the National Guard is prepared to provide additional support to U.S. Forces Korea, and we can contribute to improving the training and capabilities of Republic of Korea Reserves, if desired,” Hokanson said.

On his first stop on a three-nation Indo-Pacific trip, the National Guard’s most senior general met with U.S. and South Korean leaders and visited the Demilitarized Zone, or DMZ, where he saw firsthand the improved collaboration between U.S. and South Korean forces to maintain the integrity of this key friction point on the Korean Peninsula.

“This alliance is a linchpin of regional stability and has prevented a resumption of hostilities that shredded the post-World War II peace on the Korean Peninsula almost 72 years ago,” Army Gen. Paul LaCamera, commander, U.S. Forces Korea, told a congressional subcommittee earlier this year.

One of the world’s most heavily guarded borders, the 155-mile DMZ was established in 1953 as a buffer zone between South Korea and North Korea following the Korean War. A “frozen conflict,” the war ended with an armistice and ceasefire but no final peace treaty.

The National Guard has played a role in every conflict in U.S. history, and one-third of the Army National

Guard’s total strength — or six Divisions — mobilized to fight the Korean War. Fully 80% of the Air National Guard mobilized.

Hokanson’s May 14-16 visit followed South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol’s state visit to the United States in April, during which Yoon and President Joe Biden commemorated the 70th anniversary of — and strongly affirmed — the U.S.-South Korea alliance. The two presidents agreed on new initiatives to strengthen defense cooperation, increase joint exercises and deepen extended deterrence.

“[O]ur two nations are deepening and broadening all aspects of our relationship at a breakneck speed,” the two leaders said in a joint statement. “The next 70 years of the U.S.-ROK alliance will be the brightest yet.”

With a population of more than 51 million, South Korea has 500,000 active-duty troops and 3.1 million reservists. About 28,500 troops comprise U.S. Forces Korea.

“When desired, the National Guard learns from and shares knowledge with our allies and partners,” said Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau. “Uniquely, our combat training and resources mean rapid, unified responses to domestic missions such as natural or manmade disasters or public health emergencies.”

Security cooperation is one of the Guard’s most important missions, Hokanson said, with 100 countries in the 30-year-old Department of Defense National Guard State Partnership Program, including 13 in the Indo-Pacific region.

The National Guard expects to expand the SPP by about 30 more countries, including additional nations in the critically important U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility.

“We look forward to helping advance the defense cooperation essential to achieving peace, stability and prosperity in the region,” Hokanson said.

Hokanson and Republic of Korea Army Chief of Staff Gen. Park Jeong-Hwan discussed expanding exchanges of reserve forces. The two met at Gyeryongdae, headquarters of the Republic of Korea Army, the first time a CNGB had visited the base.

“We will continue to actively communicate with the National Guard, strengthen the military alliance between the two countries, and seek ways to develop future-oriented forces,” a Republic of Korea Army statement said.

Established in 1968, the ROK Reserve Forces respond to national emergencies, such as armed conflict, crises and disasters. Troops serve 18 months on active duty before joining the reserves.

“Our National Defense Strategy is a call to action to incorporate our allies and partners in all our planning,” Hokanson said. “The National Guard has a proven track record building long-lasting relationships with our allies and partners by consulting and coordinating the modernization of reserve forces and reinforcing existing deterrence capabilities.”

Hokanson is the 29th chief of the National Guard Bureau and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In this capacity, he serves as a military adviser to the president, secretary of defense, and National Security Council and is the Defense Department’s official channel of communication to the governors and adjutants general on all Guard matters. He is responsible for ensuring the more than 453,000 Army and Air National Guard personnel are accessible, capable and ready to protect the homeland and provide combat-ready resources to the Army and Air Force.



OVERVIEW

CT JEEP 500 IS A CONNECTICUT MILITARY DEPARTMENT (CTMD) PROGRAM DESIGNED TO INCREASE ENLISTMENTS INTO THE CONNECTICUT NATIONAL GUARD (CTNG).

THE CTMD WILL ISSUE A SPECIAL RECRUITING ALLOWANCE TO A RECRUITING ASSISTANT (RA) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$500 FOR EVERY QUALIFIED LEAD THAT ENLISTS INTO THE CTNG WITHIN 180 DAYS OF BEING ENTERED INTO CT JEEP 500. UPON SUBMITTING A LEAD, AN RA MUST ASSIST THE ASSIGNED CTNG RECRUITER BY PROVIDING THE LEAD GUIDANCE, MENTORSHIP, AND SUPPORT FROM THE DATE OF ENTERING THE LEAD INTO CT JEEP 500 UNTIL THE DATE THE LEAD ENLISTS INTO THE CTNG.

RECRUITING ASSISTANT ELIGIBILITY

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NON-ELIGIBLE

- ANY AIRMEN, SOLDIER, RETIREE OR CIVILIAN ASSIGNED OR ATTACHED TO A RECRUITING/ROTC COMMAND.
- ANY CURRENTLY SERVING CTNG IN THE GRADE OF O7 OR ABOVE.
- IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS OF ANY NON-ELIGIBLE PERSONS.



- STEP 01
- ENTER A LEAD INTO THE CT JEEP 500 WEBSITE
- STEP 02
- ASSIST THE ASSIGNED RECRUITER WITH THE PROCESS TO ENLIST THE LEAD INTO THE CTNG WITHIN 180 DAYS OF ENTERING THE LEAD INTO CT JEEP 500
- STEP 03
- RECIEVE A SPECIAL RECRUITING ALLOWANCE OF \$500, APPROXIMATELY 90 DAYS AFTER THE LEAD ENLISTS IN THE CTNG.

SERVICE MEMBER AND FAMILY NEEDS ASSESSMENT



The Connecticut National Guard Service Member and Family Support Center is looking for your input on how to best meet the needs of our Service Members and your Families. Your input is valued. Please take a moment to fill out this needs assessment through the link below.



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Recruiters Optimistic Amid Private Sector Competition

Air Force Master Sgt. Amber Monio
National Guard Bureau Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Defense Department faces one of the most challenging recruiting environments in history, Col. Anthony Pasquale, chief of the Air National Guard recruiting and retention division, told reporters June 21.

Pasquale expressed optimism but expects the Air National Guard to fall 3,000 to 4,000 recruits short of this year's goal. He noted the Air National Guard is at 97% of its target strength of 108,000 Airmen, including new and existing members.

Pasquale and eight other Guard recruiting and retention professionals discussed recruiting issues with reporters connected remotely.

Pasquale acknowledged that all branches and components except the Marine Corps are experiencing shortfalls. Guard leaders point to stiff competition from the private sector as a key driver of current struggles.

"Competition is any civilian market, any career field, especially when it comes to IT (information technology)," said Air Force Tech. Sgt. Stephen Graves, a recruiter for the Illinois Air National Guard's 182nd Airlift Wing.

Graves noted that retail and service industry jobs can also be attractive alternatives for people who prefer to avoid basic training or meet strict physical and medical requirements. He said incentivizing potential recruits, especially in the Air Guard, involves offering localized opportunities that allow individuals to remain close to home and pursue education benefits in their states.

"However, we still have faced challenges in the IT world," said Graves. "Individuals are coming in and able to make six figures just by getting the training we would give them in each branch of service. Then they can go get a job making thousands of dollars."

Senior Master Sgt. Chris Perez, senior enlisted adviser of recruiting and retention for the Washington Air National Guard, said people are also actively seeking remote positions, which poses a challenge for the National Guard since it cannot always offer the same level of workplace flexibility as the private sector.

Staff Sgt. Yoon Kim, a recruiter with the Illinois National Guard, is instead emphasizing the need to raise awareness and education about the Guard's unique function and how it can complement civilian careers.

"A lot of applicants in the job market want to settle immediately when they hear something good. I think everyone needs to do a little bit more research and see that there's a lot of these great part-time opportunities, [and we] can work together to build something holistic and fulfilling for you," said Kim.

Residual impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic also continue to present unique logistical challenges. The closure of schools and the limited face-to-face contact between recruiters and potential recruits has made it challenging to build relationships. However, the National Guard's visibility and relevance throughout the pandemic have raised its profile nationwide.

"We have seen, as of the last five or six years, the relevancy of the National Guard mission is the highest it's been in recent memory," said Col. Steve Rowe, chief of staff for the New York Army National Guard.

"We're grassroots," said Sgt. Maj. Anthony Abbate,



U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Michael A. Loh, director of the Air National Guard, administers the oath of enlistment to Isaiah Rosario, a Hawaii ANG recruit, Nov. 5, 2022, at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. Rosario is the first member of his immediate family to serve in the military and will begin his career as a cryptologic language analyst. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Andrew Jackson)

command sergeant major for the New York Army Guard's Recruiting and Retention Command. "We're from the same communities we're recruiting out of. We live here and serve here."

Asked how the Guard planned to bridge the gap of Americans who don't have a service connection, Abbate said, "Through the COVID pandemic, which was very rough on the nation, New York did not have to reintroduce ourselves to the community because we were in it every day, running food pantries and drive-thru test sites."

Abbate said he couldn't say enough about the National Guard members who stepped up to assist their communities through the pandemic.

"So, in terms of reintroducing ourselves, we've always been there," he said.

With only a few months before the fiscal year ends Sept. 30, Pasquale said July, August and September are crucial recruiting months for the Air National Guard.

While recruiting remains a struggle, he noted that the number of troops opting to stay in the military is exceptionally high, with a retention rate of 95.8%, about 2 per-

centage points higher than usual for this time of year.

The Guard panelists agreed they are acutely aware of the need to adapt to the evolving needs and expectations of potential recruits, particularly in light of the changing dynamics of the job market. They said they are exploring additional incentives, such as increased bonuses, educational loan repayments and flexible service options to attract and retain talent.

Pasquale said Congress approved an additional \$50 million for National Guard marketing efforts this fiscal year in addition to the usual \$36 million. The National Guard is also easing rules on everything from tattoos to body mass index requirements to broaden the field of potential recruits.

"Obviously, in a post-COVID environment, a lot of things have changed, so there's a lot of training that we work alongside our active component to advance our recruiting skills in marketing and advertising, along with processing new candidates and better ways to do business to lead the digital space," he said.

What's Your Story?

Do you have an interesting hobby, skill, civilian occupation, or recent life event?

We want to help you
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Contact the Connecticut National Guard
Public Affairs Office:

Maj. David Pytlik
david.c.pytlik.mil@army.mil
860.524.4857

Mr. Tim Koster
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For more information contact CPT Robert Ragos, 1943rd Commander, at Robert.j.ragos.mil@army.mil



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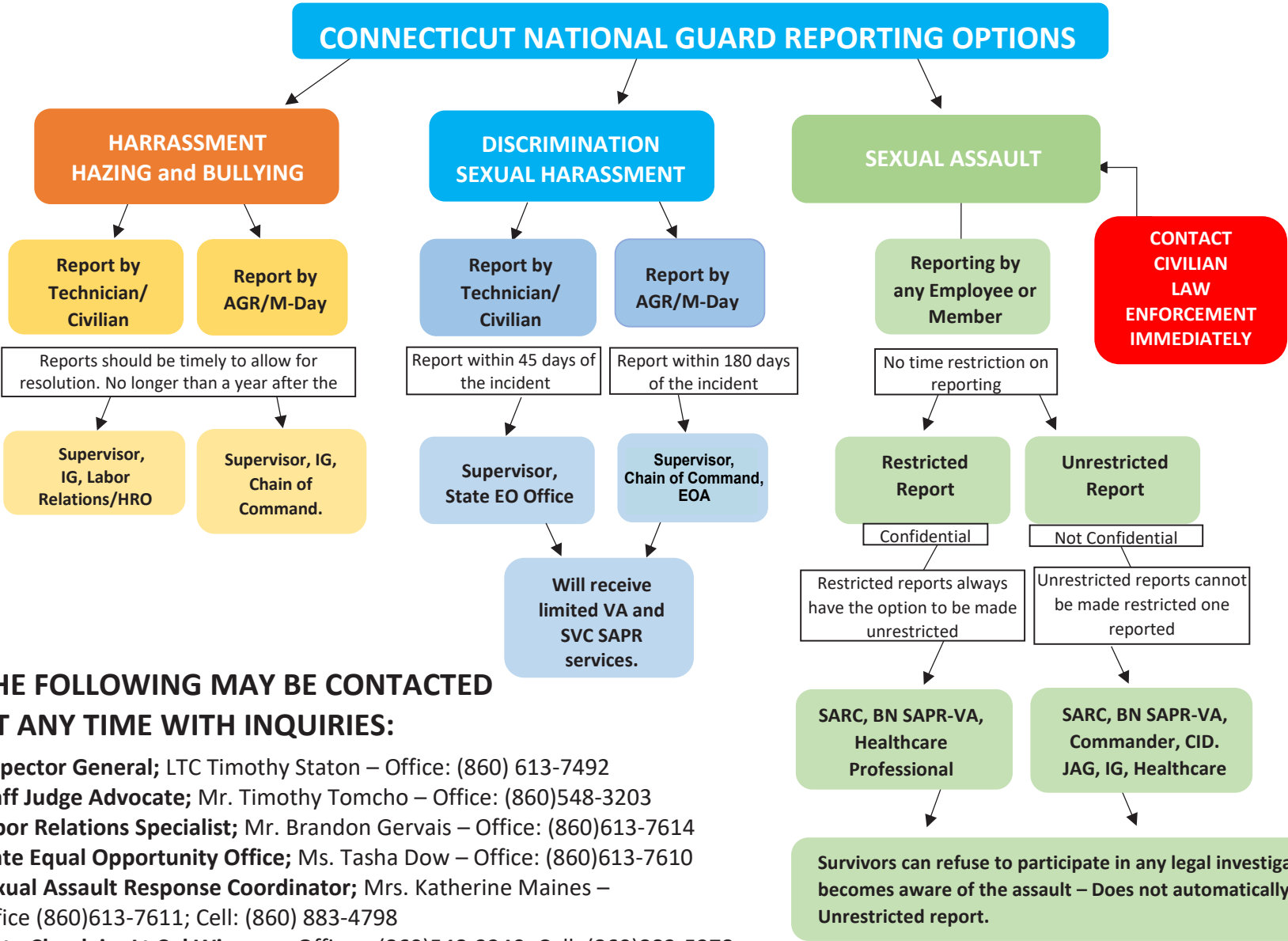
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Maj. Gen. Giselle Wilz, director of staff, National Guard Bureau (NGB), speaks with Bonnie Carroll, president and founder of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), along with other members of the program and NGB staff, about the importance of the TAPS organization and its mission during an event held May 24, 2023, at the Herbert R Temple Jr. Army National Guard Readiness Center (TARC) in Arlington, Virginia. (Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Amber Monio)

Guard Leaders Welcome Ukraine Family Support Organizers

Air Force Master Sgt. Amber Monio
National Guard Bureau Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Virginia – Caring for those affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine took a personal turn for National Guardsmen at the Temple Army Readiness Center recently.

Members of TAPS Ukraine, a non-governmental organization, and the parent organization's founder, Bonnie Carroll, president of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, were greeted by Army Maj. Gen. Giselle Wilz, director of staff, National Guard Bureau, May 24, 2023, to discuss the importance of TAPS initiatives in the National Guard.

TAPS' enduring mission is to provide comfort, care and resources to individuals grieving the loss of a military loved one, with a special focus right now on Ukraine.

Wilz expressed her gratitude. "Your stories are our stories; our stories are your stories," she said. "We are so grateful to TAPS and the special care it provides to our Guard members and our families."

"The National Guard-TAPS partnership is founded in the common value of taking care of families," said Carroll, a retired U.S. Air Force Reserve officer.

TAPS is one of the partnering programs of the NGB's Warrior Resilience and Fitness Division, supporting National Guardsmen and families with support for suicide prevention, risk reduction, substance abuse treatment, and resilience.

"When we have an organization like TAPS that is so experienced on what it means to take care of the entire family, that means a lot to them and it means a lot to us," said Senior Enlisted Advisor Tony Whitehead, SEA to the chief of the NGB.

Carroll started the organization in 1994 following the death of her husband, Army Brig. Gen. Tom Carroll, the assistant adjutant general of the Alaska Army National Guard, in an Army C-12 crash two years prior. And today, TAPS' involvement ranges to a substantial program of aid and support in Ukraine.

"This was a mission we had to do," said Liliia Kravets, co-founder of the TAPS Charitable Foundation. "TAPS Ukraine has filled-in gaps supporting over 150 Ukraine military

units and families with the work of our volunteers."

TAPS offers a range of services, including psychological help and humanitarian aid, and plays a role in supporting families of fallen Ukrainian military members, military families, volunteers, displaced children, and children who have experienced the horrors of war.

With one hundred volunteer psychologists across all primary regions of Ukraine, the program provides assistance to individuals coping with wartime trauma and emotional challenges, she said.

In 2018, the organization established TAPS Ukraine in the U.S. to help meet the emotional and humanitarian needs of Ukrainians who have suffered from Russian aggression. The director of TAPS Ukraine, Yuliya Dmytrova, also attended the meeting.

"Every day, our civilians suffer the results of war," she said.

Carroll said TAPS Ukraine actively seeks resources for medicines, equipment, food products, and supplies for displaced persons and hospitals. The program also supplies military uniforms, protective gear, and technical equipment to Ukrainian fighters.

TAPS operates one of the largest volunteer headquarters in Ukraine, with nearly 1,400 members, said Carroll. The organization's reach extends globally, currently partnered with 29 countries, supporting more than 350,000 people who have experienced the loss of a military loved one.

During the event, delegates from Romania and Burkina Faso also shared stories of how TAPS is working in their regions.

Carroll said TAPS maintains close ties with foreign partners—a concept shared by the National Guard through its State Partnership Program, a key U.S. security cooperation tool that facilitates civil-military affairs and encourages people-to-people ties.

"It's important to remember that our state partnerships are not rooted just in the military but human connection," said Wilz. "It is bigger than the uniform; it connects society."

For more information on the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, visit taps.org or contact NGB-J1-W through the CAC-enforced Guard Knowledge Online portal.



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Airman and Family Readiness Program Manager	Selva Cabrera	selva.cabrera.1@us.af.mil	(860) 292-2730 (desk) (860) 734-7482 (cell)
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Waterbury Armory: 64 Field Street, Waterbury, CT 06702			
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