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CTARNG, Uruguay conducts counter-IED training

Maj. David Pytlík
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

HARTFORD, Conn. - Smiles, laughter, and jokes permeated throughout a room in the Hartford Armory as seven members of the 192nd Engineer Battalion met with state partnership program director, Maj. Nick Raphael, to complete an after-action report for their recent trip to Uruguay.

The team conducted Counter-IED (improvised explosive device) training with the Uruguayan Army in Montevideo, Uruguay, July 15-25, 2022, as part of a bilateral exchange between the two partners.

“It was awesome to see this side of the Guard,” said Staff Sgt. Nathan Carrasquillo, a communication specialist assigned to the 192nd. “We’re not just the Connecticut National Guard. When we were over there, we were representing the U.S., we were representing the U.S. Army, we were filling a bigger role. We were doing something a lot bigger than ourselves. We were literally fostering a friendship with another nation, a partner nation, to show them that we care about them, they care about us. We are the same, we have a lot of similarities.”

The group worked with Uruguayan Army instructors and a diverse rank structure of more than 30 Uruguayan Soldiers preparing to deploy to Africa and Syria in support of U.N. peacekeeping missions. The Soldiers were mostly non-commissioned officers and junior officers, representing artillery, infantry, scuba divers, K-9 handlers, engineers, and armor specialties, with the goal of training the

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Uruguayan Soldiers and members of the 192nd Engineer Battalion celebrate the successful completion of a counter-IED exercise in Montevideo, Uruguay on July 22, 2022. The Connecticut Army National Guardsmen assigned to the 192nd Engineer Battalion participated in a bilateral exchange as part of the State Partnership Program.

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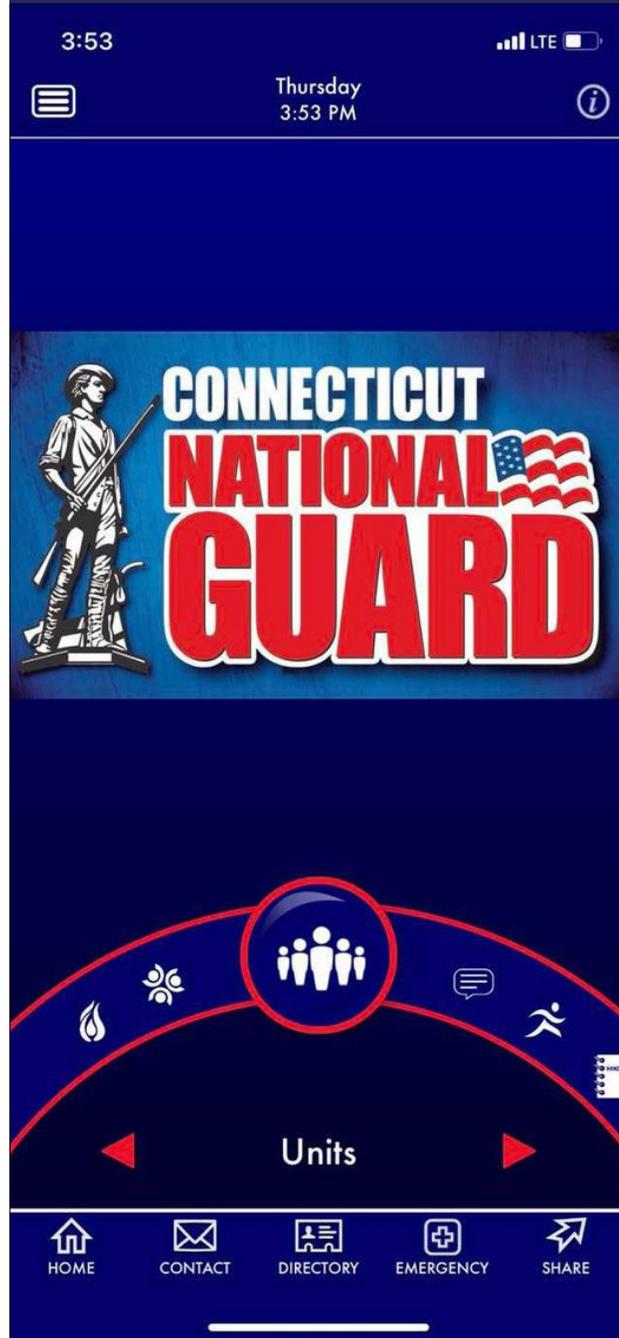


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The Soldiers of the Connecticut National Guard's Officer Candidate School, class 67, pose for a photo with Maj. Gen. Francis Evon, adjutant general of the Connecticut Guard, and Brig. gen. Ralph Hedenberg, assistant adjutant general - Army, following a commissioning ceremony at Camp Nett, Niantic, Connecticut, Aug. 20, 2022.

Nine Army Guardsmen Commissioned as Lieutenants

Timothy Koster
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

NIANTIC, Conn. – The Connecticut National Guard commissioned nine new lieutenants into its ranks during a ceremony for Officer Candidate School Class 67 at Camp Nett, Niantic, Connecticut, August 20, 2022.

Administered by 1st Battalion, 169th Regiment, the Officer Candidate School is a 14-month program designed to test the candidate's ability to lead as well as their proficiency in basic warrior tasks and military knowledge to prepare them to be the next generation of Army leader.

The Connecticut Guardsmen who received their commissions are:

Hannah Tyler. Second Lt. Tyler studied psychological sciences at the University of Connecticut, branched into cyber, and will be assigned to Detachment 1, 146th Cyber Warfare Company in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. She was also the recipient of the Erickson Trophy and Regimental Commander's Award for being the distinguished honor graduate.

Peter Negrea. Second Lt. Negrea studied applied accounting and finance at Fordham University, branched into the infantry, and will be assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-102nd Infantry Battalion in New Haven, Connecticut. He was also the recipient of the Academic Award for the one of the highest grade point averages over the duration of the class and the Leadership Award.

Christopher Valente. Second Lt. Valente majored in criminology and minored in psychological science at Central Connecticut State University, branched into the infantry, and will be assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-102nd Infantry Battalion

in New Haven, Connecticut. He was also the recipient of the Physical Fitness Award.

Rhecia Llewellyn. Second Lt. Llewellyn studied accounting at Bay Path University, branched into transportation, and will be assigned to H Company, 186th Brigade Support Battalion in Southington, Connecticut.

Andrew Cardillo. Second Lt. Cardillo majored in marine operations and minored in intermodal and maritime security at the Maritime College, branched into the infantry, and will be assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-102nd Infantry Battalion in New Haven, Connecticut.

Felipe Villalon. Second Lt. Villalon received his Master of Arts in English from Rutgers University, branched into the infantry, and will be assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-102nd Infantry Battalion in New Haven, Connecticut.

Wade Allen. Second Lt. Allen studied sociology at the University of Connecticut, branched into engineering, and will be assigned to the 250th Engineer Company in New London, Connecticut.

Alexander Prague. Second Lt. Prague majored in history and minored in sociology at Central Connecticut State University, branched into the quartermasters, and will be assigned to the 143rd Regional Support Group in Middletown, Connecticut.

Cameron Raymes. Second Lt. Raymes received his Master of Sciences in biological sciences with a concentration in health sciences, branched into engineering, and will be assigned to the 248th Engineer Company in Norwich, Connecticut.

During the ceremony, each candidate received their new rank and first salute from friends and family.

IED

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trainers.

Setting learning conditions right up front was critical for Master Sgt. Ernesto Rios-Soto, team non-commissioned officer in charge, who said during the introduction that they were there to collectively exchange information and learn from everyone's experiences, saying, "we are here to show you a way to do things, not the way to do things, and this is going to be collectively led, not us telling you. We are going to learn from you as much you learn from us. It's a group effort and we're going to learn together."

The first two days of the exchange involved classroom education and the last three days were training lanes (practical exercises) in the field. The class was divided into two teams that maneuvered along a two-mile lane, reacting to IEDs and ambushes along the path, following an iterative series of progressively more difficult challenges that fit into the overall notional mission.

"We shared our experiences and knowledge of IED placement, what to look out for, indicators, the five C's (check, confirm, clear, cordon and control,)" said Sgt. Ismael Gutierrez, a combat engineer and heavy equipment operator assigned to the 250th Engineer Company. "You find it, then what? You've got to clear it and go through the whole process of what to do about the IED once it is found. The first day we snailed it, the second day we did a crawl, a mini-walk, then the last day – full send."

The group from the 192nd Engineers brought plenty of real-life experience to the exchange.

"I joined in 2009 and was active duty going on two combat deployments with my Fort Drum-based unit," said

Gutierrez. "We were training up for Sapper school, so they made sure I knew a lot about explosives, demo (calculations) and all that. On my second deployment we did route clearance, so I became very familiar and hands-on with high explosives."

Uruguay is the largest per capita contributor to U.N. peacekeeping operations, so the exchange had tangible benefits that could save lives.

"It was a mix of experience levels. Most of them knew zero about counter-IED, that was like a totally new topic to them," said Rios-Soto. "They do peacekeeping operations all the time and they have never really been exposed to this type of threat in the places they're used to going, such as the Congo. Now being in Syria, the threat (of IEDs) is more real when they're doing their patrols. So, I went back a little bit and explained about our [tactics, techniques, and procedures], about how we came up with this in 2003 and how we learned this way, sadly through experience, and we want to share this with you guys. I told our team that you're going to learn when you teach and I know that we're saving lives. I put a lot of this together from experience from last year's exchange and I really put my heart into this thing and a lot of work."

Rios-Soto continued, "There was a guy at the daily (after-action review) and he said 'I want to be honest with you, when they told me to go do counter-IED training, I didn't want to go, I didn't know what it was or why I needed it, but now I don't want to stop. I'm so glad I'm here.' We never stopped working, even when we were off, we were planning for the next day. In the field, we were up by 6 a.m. then we were doing day and night operations so by

the time we got back it was 10 or 11 p.m."

When asked about what Guard Soldiers and Airmen should know about Uruguay's and Connecticut's State Partnership Program, Rios-Soto emphatically said, "it is a work trip. I want to break the stigma about going to Uruguay for State Partnership Program missions being a vacation. You do have a good time, but it's more work than we normally do during annual training. The participants were eager for knowledge, and they always wanted more, more, more so we constantly made ourselves available to them during every phase of training and during the little down time we did get. We did have a good time and we did enjoy the culture, they treated us really, really well, but it is work."

Bilateral exchanges take on many different forms and the virtual engagements during the COVID-19 pandemic were important, but face-to-face interaction is more effective. The State Partnership Program has welcomed returning to in-person events that can take on more substantive topics such as counter-IED.

"For me, it really matters," said Rios-Soto. "It's bigger than me, or our battalion, or Connecticut. It's an international mission, I'm very proud to do this mission and I will do it anytime, as many times as I can, because I feel like it makes a difference."

The reason for the smiles, jokes, and laughter is clear now - the throughline among each of the team members that visited Uruguay was a sense of pride and purpose in something they believe makes a difference.



A Uruguayan Soldier issues orders during a counter-IED lane in Montevideo, Uruguay, July 19-22, 2022. Connecticut Army National Guardsmen assigned to the 192nd Engineer Battalion participated in a bilateral exchange on the topic of counter-IED training in Uruguay as part of the State Partnership Program.



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ARNG Captain Shaneka Ashman presents ideas to class during the Advanced Instructors Course at Camp Nymindgab July 2, 2022. MREP is a program that houses almost 130 participants from 6 different nations, to increase interoperability, strengthen partnerships, and to enhance professional development between allies.

Connecticut National Guardswoman Trains in Denmark

Maj. Emily Hein
Contributor

MIDDLETOWN, Conn. - Training opportunities in the Connecticut National Guard are ever present and sometimes, it just comes down to having a conversation and asking the right questions.

For Capt. Shaneka Ashman, a soldier in the operations sections of the 143rd Regional Support Group (RSG), a casual conversation about her love of traveling the world with her like-minded training NCO brought about an opportunity in her wheelhouse: the Military Reserve Exchange Program (MREP).

The MREP is offered annually to National Guard and Reserve members in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force to travel to Denmark, Estonia, Germany, or the United Kingdom to participate in that country's annual training. The all-inclusive program is open to officers, warrant officers and enlisted who are paired with the country that allows them to train in their primary military occupational specialty. Nominations for the MREP are accepted in the fall prior to the exchange year occurring.

"The application was simple and smooth, thanks to my unit [representatives] Maj. Matt Marks and Staff Sgt. Jared Barile who helped," said Ashman. "I filled out the application to include explaining why I should be selected for the program."

While each branch has different requirements for applying, the National Guard requires soldiers to complete an initial application and then once selected for the exchange, additional items are completed as necessary and dependent on the location of the cooperative they have been chosen for. Soldiers are notified of their acceptance into the exchange in January or February of the MREP year.

Ashman was selected for the Denmark exchange hosted by the Danish Home Guard (DHG) at Camp Nymindgab, July 1-8, 2022. Ashman joined a group of more than 50 National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers who worked alongside nearly 90 service-

members from the host nation, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Participants were placed into one of three courses depending on their rank and leadership skill levels. For this year's MREP in Denmark, the course offerings were for Leadership, Basic Instructor and Advanced Instructor. Ashman found herself in the Advanced Instructor module which covered how to prepare lessons, self-evaluation, learning theory, joint experiences, didactics, methods of evaluation, presentations, and a certification for instructing.

"I gained a greater understanding of the Denmark, Lithuania and Estonia military operations through my daily interaction and collaboration with colleagues and instructors," said Ashman. "I think this experience allowed us to challenge ourselves by thinking outside the box, outside of our typical military mindset, while breaking language and cultural barriers among ourselves. I was very fascinated to learn about each country and its military capabilities and operations. Although I learned a lot about developing a course utilizing multiple teaching theories or how to be an effective instructor or facilitator, I developed new ways that will enhance my skills and knowledge working jointly with our international partners."

Once instruction is done for the week, Ashman and her classmates toured Copenhagen and immersed themselves in the culture outside the classroom before returning stateside.

"The experience was amazing! I have so many memorable moments," said Ashman. "Some of my favorite memories include running with my instructor who showed us the entire base that has several historical bunkers from WWII, collaborating and connecting with colleagues from different countries, and experiencing Denmark's culture and food. These are memories I'll forever hold on to. My last day was emotional and bittersweet."

Want to take the next step and see what the MREP is like yourself? Work with your training NCO for more information and be on the lookout for the training circular early this fall so you can experience this once-in-a-lifetime joint, multinational program for yourself.

22 Years of Continued Partnership - Connecticut Guard Command Team Builds Bonds in Uruguay

Sgt. Matthew Lucibello
130th Public Affairs Detachment

HARTFORD, Conn. — Between August 6-10, 2022, U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Francis Evon, the Connecticut adjutant general, and other officers of the Connecticut Army National Guard, visited Montevideo, Uruguay, to strengthen bonds with our partners in the Uruguayan Armed Forces.

Uruguay, renowned for upholding the values of democracy and peace in South America, on top of being one of the most prosperous countries in the region, has been partnered with Connecticut through the State Partnership Program since August of 2000. Additionally, Uruguay heavily supports United Nations peacekeeping operations, having participated in 23 peacekeeping missions since 1952, even being named the top peacekeeping contributor in Western Hemisphere in 2021. Currently, Uruguay's largest singular contribution to the United Nations is its support of over 900 peacekeepers to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, also known as MONUSCO.

“One out of every 3,000 Uruguayans is on a U.N. peacekeeping mission at any given time,” said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Juan Villarreal, the Global Peacekeeping Operations Initiative Program Manager at the U.S. Embassy in Uruguay. “20 percent of the armed forces, and nearly all Army officers, have participated in at least one mission.”

The State Partnership Program, or SPP, administered by the National Guard Bureau and guided by the U.S. State Department, builds interoperability and cooperation between host nation countries and the United States through military-to-military engagements, such as joint training exercises, bilateral exchanges and key leader engagements. Each state's National Guard is aligned with at least one partner nation. Currently, there are 85 partnerships between 93 partner nations.

Over the course of the past 22 years, Uruguay and Connecticut have trained together, most recently when members of the 192nd Engineer Battalion conducted counter improvised explosive device training in Montevideo alongside soldiers of the Uruguayan Army between July 17-20, 2022. Leaders of both the Connecticut National Guard and Armed Forces of Uruguay frequently visit each other to share experience and lessons learned through training and operations conducted by each force.

This trip marked the first time Evon has visited Uruguay since becoming the Adjutant General in July of 2018.

As part of the trip, Evon visited the Chief of Mission's Residence and met with Chargé d'Affaires Karl Rios, Deputy Chief of Mission Eric Geelan and Senior Defense Official of the Office of Defense Cooperation U.S. Air Force Col. Gary Symon. Following that visit, Evon visited the Estado Mayor De la Defensa, part of the Uruguayan Ministry of Defense, and numerous Uruguayan military installations including the Capt. Juan Manuel Boiso Lanza Air Base, Comando General de la Armada Nacional, Comando General del Ejército and the National Peace Operations Training School of Uruguay, also known as ENOPU, where Uruguayan service members go for pre-deployment



U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Francis Evon, the Connecticut Adjutant General, renders a hand salute alongside commanders of the Uruguayan Armed Forces during a ceremony at Cementerio del Norte, Montevideo, Uruguay, August 10, 2022. The ceremony, which is conducted annually, was held to honor Uruguay's fallen airmen. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matthew Lucibello)

training in participation of U.N. peacekeeping missions.

While visiting these sites, Evon met with senior officials of the Uruguayan Army, Air Force and Navy, to include Army commander Gen. Gerardo Fregossi, Air Force commander Gen. Luis De León, and Navy commander Adm. Jorge Wilson. Additionally, Evon also met with members of the Uruguayan Joint Staff to include Chief of the Joint Staff Gen. Rodolfo Pereyra and Army Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Luis Mangini.

Evon and his staff were briefed by their Uruguayan counterparts on the capabilities, equipment and missions of each respective organization and discussed ways to incorporate the Connecticut National Guard in future joint engagements. Evon also presented Defense Meritorious Service Medals to officers, from each Uruguayan service, that previously served as an attaché to the United States for providing expert insight and advancing issues of major importance to the United States and Uruguay, in addition to facilitating training and operations between the two na-

tions.

Evon himself was presented with the medal of 18 May 1811, the second highest military award of the Uruguayan Army, by Army commander Gen. Gerardo Fregossi at the Comando General del Ejército on Aug. 9, 2022, in recognition of the dedicated support the Connecticut National Guard had provided Uruguay throughout the history of the partnership.

The trip concluded with a visit to the Legislative Palace of Uruguay, where Evon met and spoke with Uruguayan senators as well as Uruguayan Vice President Beatriz Argimón, discussing items of mutual defense interest and ways to collaborate in the future. Lastly, Evon attended a wreath laying ceremony at the Cementerio del Norte, to commemorate Uruguay's fallen airmen. In attendance were all of the Uruguayan service chiefs as well as the Minister of Defense Javier García and the President of the Republic Luis Lacalle Pou.

Connecticut's New Selective Service State Director Swears In, But What Is Selective Service?

Maj. David Pytlík
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

HARTFORD, Conn. – Michael Smith swore in as the Connecticut State Director for the Selective Service System on Friday, August 12, 2022, in Hartford, taking over for outgoing Director Mark Fullerton.

Smith is a finance and insurance professional, a West Point graduate, and youth sports coach who was appointed by the Governor to fill this important volunteer role.

“Michael is the exact type of person that we want in this role, a person who has dedicated his life to service, a West Point grad, years of professionalism and giving back to the community through coaching and the West Point Society, we are very happy the Governor felt the same and we are happy to have him onboard,” said Selective Service System Associate Director for Operations Thomas “T.J.” Kenney.

The example set in modeling service to others and local communities was top of mind for the new Director throughout the event.

“In the movies, they talk about the sacrifice, but it’s always taking up arms, but there’s so many different ways we serve,” said Smith. “We talk about during COVID, you had soldiers who were serving their communities across this country and getting (young people) passionate about serving, wherever it is – in their communities, in service, that’s the part that helps resonate, but they need examples, and they are looking to us. If we are giving and reaching out and we are leading and showing service in community, then they are going to do the same thing, they will be instilled with the same values and purpose.”

A large part of a State Director’s responsibility is education and mobilizing people to fulfill their responsibilities.

“(We must) be mindful of how to serve and I think that leadership matters, it always matters, in tough times or challenges it always matters, and the way you do that is by getting involved,” said Smith. “You look to educate, you look to train, but more importantly to inspire.”

The United States did away with having an active draft in 1973 during the Nixon administration in response to anti-Vietnam War sentiment. So why then does the Selective Service System still exist and why must all males between the ages of 18 and 25 register with it?

“It’s a very critical piece of our National Defense Strategy,” said Acting Selective Service System Region 1 Director Anthony Rayome. “Luckily, since 1972 the all-volunteer force has done a superb job and continues to. It is really nice to know that there is a backstop with the Selective Service System, that in a time of national emergency we can actually call upon our citizens to help support the cause.”

In other words, in the event of an immediate and significant need to increase the size of the U.S. military, a draft could be reinstated, and it would be built upon the Selective Service System backbone. The State Director is a key part of that system.

“(State Directors) do two primary things, one is to build those relationships within the state,” said Rayome. “Obviously, the National Guard is one of our key relationships



(From left to right) Selective Service System Associate Director for Operations Thomas “T.J.” Kenney, new Connecticut State Director for the Selective Service System Michael Smith, and outgoing State Director Mark Fullerton pose for a photo at the Governor William A. O’Neill Armory in Hartford, CT on August 12, 2022 during Smith’s swearing in ceremony. Smith is a finance and insurance professional, a West Point graduate, and youth sports coach who was appointed by the Governor to fill this important volunteer role.

across the country and then the Governor’s office to let them know what we do. They have an appointments office that manages our local board members that we try to get nominated and placed on a local board. What local board members are, are volunteers throughout the state that say, ‘hey if we ever have a draft, I’ll sit on my local board and hear those cases of individuals who are conscientious objectors or may ask for a deferment for a particular reason.’”

Not that a draft is likely, but the system has evolved and is now a national-level system.

“The national system now is a lottery, so we actually have big lottery machines with ping pong balls in them with the month and day, and then we do a double random (drawing,) so we also have the call of days 1 through 365 of the year that’ll match up,” Rayome said. “So even if your birthday is called first, you may not get number 1, you may get number 365, so it’s double-random and called nationally by the birthday.

“18-25-year-olds are registered, but we call 20-year-olds first. So, it goes 20, 21, 22, all the way up to 25, 18- to 19-year-olds would actually be the last ones called, if needed. A lot of folks don’t know that.”

Major Gen. Francis Evon, adjutant general for the Connecticut National Guard said there’s no immediate need for a draft but noted the “18-24-year-olds with a propensity to raise their right hand and serve in any branch is down significantly, the lowest since 1972.”

The military has suffered recruiting droughts in the past, such as during the surge years in Iraq, and is subject to many of the same macroeconomic conditions that affect civilian employers. For those concerned about a return of

the draft, consider that the services have a variety of tools at hand such as increasing bonuses and incentives to entice volunteers. Even the hottest job markets must cool eventually.

One result of the difficult recruiting market may be cutting end-strength. A downsized standing force is easier to maintain but makes growing back force structure (units) and people a bigger and more time-consuming challenge.

For acting Selective Service System Associate Director for Operations Thomas “T.J.” Kenney, registering is an act of civic service and patriotism, but it is not necessarily about military service.

“A lot of people think that you are putting a rifle and a uniform in someone’s hands, but that’s not what registration is all about,” said Kenney. “We always look at registration as a young person’s time to say, ‘hey the country could need me someday and I’m registering and understanding that if there ever is a draft I could be called,’ so it is almost a rite of passage.”

Smith recalled his mother as a source of his belief in serving the community, “She had to be hard but she also had to show me where to learn compassion, so she would take me to church, she would get me involved in the community and give back and those were the ways that I built relationships so that she would never be worried about us if she were away at work. We were always surrounded by community.”

In Connecticut, men 18-25 can register online at <https://www.sss.gov/register/> or through the mail, but they are now automatically registered with Selective Service when applying for a driver’s license.

LEADS TO ENLISTMENTS

FY-22 ARMY NATIONAL GUARD AWARDS PROGRAM

1ST LEAD TO ENLISTMENT

Choice of: National Guard Sweatshirt
OCP Backpack or Personalized Tumbler



2ND LEAD TO ENLISTMENT

Choice of: National Guard Sweatshirt
OCP Backpack or Personalized Tumbler



3RD LEAD TO ENLISTMENT

Choice of: National Guard Sweatshirt
OCP Backpack or Personalized Tumbler

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Soldiers will submit leads through the "Connecticut National Guard" app which can be downloaded from the google play store or the app store. You will earn the above items when the lead enlists.

**Contact MSG Craig Townsend for questions and more information.
craig.r.townsend.mil@army.mil**



“Every time we have asked, the National Guard has been ‘Always Ready, Always There,’” Army Gen. James McConville, chief of staff of the Army, told National Guard leaders meeting in Columbus, Ohio, Aug. 27, 2022.

McConville: ‘We Can’t do What we do as an Army Without the National Guard’

Master Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The Army is transforming, modernizing, boosting readiness, improving fitness across the force, and investing in potential recruits, the chief of staff of the Army said in wide-ranging remarks here Saturday.

But, first, Army Gen. James McConville heaped praise on a National Guard he said is essential to the Army, overseas and in the homeland.

“We don’t go anywhere or do anything without the National Guard,” McConville told an annual meeting of Guard leaders. “We can’t do what we do as an Army without the National Guard.

“Every time we have asked,” he added, “the National Guard has been ‘Always Ready, Always There.’”

McConville cited the more than 20,000 Guardsmen currently deployed in support of multiple combat commanders worldwide. He listed ongoing homeland defense missions, the Guard’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and its support just in the last 12 months to civil authorities responding to natural disasters – including wildfires, hurricanes, tornadoes and floods.

“Your immediate responses have saved hundreds, maybe thousands, of lives,” McConville said. “You have brought hope to America when it needed it the most.”

The CSA included three adjutants general in his transition team coming into his current assignment because of the importance he attaches to the component.

“What makes you special is not just what you do, but it’s really how you do it, and the great people who have answered the call to serve,” he said.

Take the July 28th Kentucky floods – and the example of Army Staff Sgt. Matthew Dyal.

One of the hundreds of Kentucky National Guardsmen who responded, Dyal lived in the affected area, knew his neighbors, knew who to work with, and knew the roads.

“Because of his relationships and knowledge of the area, he was able to get supplies and support where it was needed in record time,” McConville said.

“These were his people, and this was his home – and you just can’t get a response like that anywhere else but from the National Guard.”

Highlighting the 30-year role of multiple National Guard states, led by California helping Ukraine’s armed forces transform, McConville dwelt on the impact of the 93-nation Department of Defense National Guard State Partnership Program.

“Your State Partnership Program is really making a difference,” he said. “Your security assistance, security cooperation missions around the world are really making a difference.”

The SPP was one of three factors McConville said contributed to the Army’s readiness to respond following Russia’s unprovoked Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine.

“It’s a good thing we started transforming ... when we did, because when the crisis hit our allies ... we were ready,” he said.

The Army was ready because of its strong permanent presence in Europe.

“We’re able to rapidly deploy highly trained and ready units into theater very, very quickly, and there they remain to reassure our allies and partners, and to deter any further threats,” McConville said.

And the Army was ready because of the SPP.

“We’ve had many years invested with the National Guard state partnerships with many European countries, and especially with Ukraine,” he said. “[state National Guards] have helped them train and reach the level of proficiency that they’re demonstrating on the battlefield every single day.”

America’s National Defense Strategy calls Russia an acute threat and China a pacing

challenge, the CSA said. “While we focus on China and Russia, we can’t take our eyes off our other persistent threats – North Korea, Iran, and violent extremists.”

Simultaneously, the COVID-19 pandemic remains a challenge. “And we will deal with more unprecedented natural disasters,” McConville said.

“We’re going to continue to transform our Army, he added. “So they’re ready for the next 40 years, as we move from counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, irregular warfare to large-scale combat operations.”

That transformation will incorporate lessons learned from Ukraine, including the imperative to switch from large, stationary command posts to small, mobile ones. A new Army Field Manual outlining the multi-domain operations doctrine is imminent.

McConville discussed upgraded and new munitions and weapons systems coming into the inventory, a renewed focus on long-range precision fires, and other modernization.

He equated the future challenge of lethal enemy unmanned aerial systems with the challenge that improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, presented in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“We’re aggressively investing in weapons systems and concepts that are going to help us counter unmanned aerial systems,” he said.

“The foundation of our Army will always be our small units – our squads, platoons, and companies,” McConville said.

The CSA calls small units the Army’s foundational readiness.

“You all do that extremely well,” he said.

Example: The National Guard’s 34th “Red Bull” Infantry Division.

In rapid succession, the Red Bulls responded to domestic civil unrest, helped with the pandemic, completed a rotation at the National Training Center, and deployed first to the Middle East, then to Afghanistan.

“They did an incredible job,” McConville said. “That’s... what I see in the National Guard all the time. And that’s why foundational readiness is absolutely key.”

It takes people to make all this happen, and McConville outlined his vision for tackling a challenging recruiting environment in which only 23 percent of Americans can meet the qualifications to join the force.

“We are putting out a call to service,” he said. “We’re putting out a call to inspire young men and women to sign up to serve their country – in all institutions: military, teaching, going to the police forces, going to fire forces, going to all these institutions that make us the greatest country in the world.”

The disruption caused by the pandemic exacerbated a reduction in potential recruits’ ability to meet academic and physical qualifications necessary to serve.

But the CSA isn’t interested in lowering the Army’s entry standards.

“We’re going to raise the young men and women’s standards that want to serve,” he said, one day after he visited a pilot 90-day Future Soldier Preparatory Course at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

The course is designed to help would-be recruits raise academic and physical standards to meet Army requirements.

“We’re seeing tremendous progress in these young men and women, and it was very emotional for me to talk to these young men and women who truly want to serve,” McConville said. “For the first time, they said someone was investing in them and giving them an opportunity for the future.”

Other initiatives he outlined include reviewing the standard test – known as the ASV-AB, or Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery – that all potential recruits are required to take. For example, candidates still are not allowed to use a calculator when testing.

“One of the things we’re trying to do is move from what I would argue is an industrial-age recruiting system to, quite frankly, a 21st century system,” he said.

The CSA also is focused on force-wide fitness. The new Army Combat Fitness Test, or ACFT, is a better test than its predecessor, he said – and it’s only one piece of comprehensive change.

“We’re going to have dietitians. We’re going to have strength coaches,” McConville said. “We’re going to have a much more physically fit Army.”

“We want to be an Army of possibilities,” he added. “We want to be an Army where, quite frankly, you can do anything you want – where you can ‘be all you can be.’”

TRICARE For Life Review

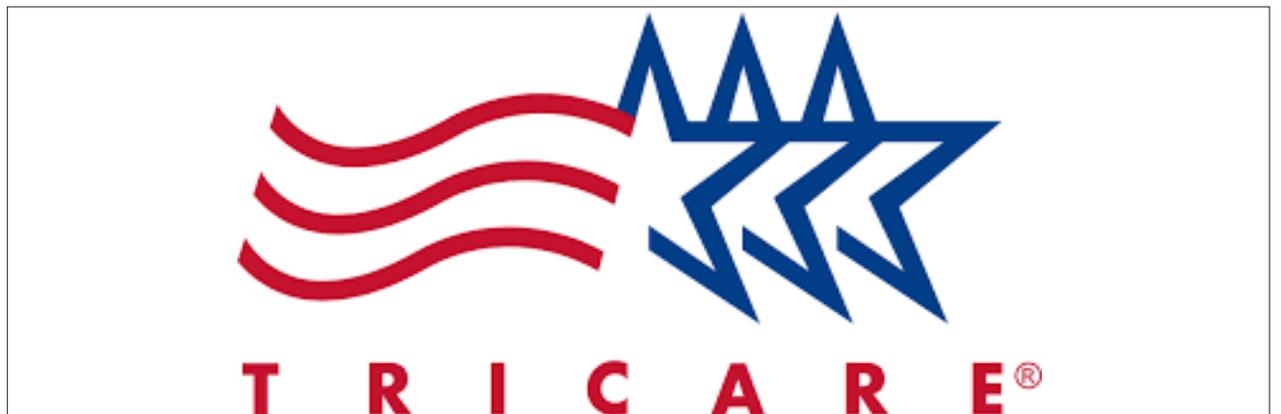
Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie Cyr (ret.)
Contributor

TRICARE For Life is the military retirees. It is the Medicare wrap-around coverage for eligible retirees who have Medicare Part A and B. Enrollment is not required, but if you have Medicare Part A and B, enrollment is automatic. This month’s article is a review of TRICARE For life.

To have coverage you are required to pay Medicare Part B premiums. The premium cost is based on income. In 2022 the stand Part B premium amount is \$170.10. If your modified adjusted gross income from two years ago is above certain income, the premium will be higher. If you collect Social Security the premium will be deducted from your Social Security benefit.

TRICARE For Life works in conjunction with Medicare to cover medical expenses. The medical provider submits the claim to Medicare. Medicare pays its portion which is usually eighty percent of standard procedures. Medicare’s website details what and how much of medical expenses it covers. Once Medicare has paid its portion, it forwards the claim to TRICARE For Life. TRICARE For Life then pays the provider directly for the services it covers. You will never pay anything when services are covered by both Medicare and TRICARE For Life.

There is no membership or enrollment fee to enroll in TRICARE For Life. You will not receive a membership card. When getting medical care, you use your Medicare card and military ID. On the back of the military ID is a benefits number.



TRICARE For Life is available worldwide and one can see any provider of their choice. It is important to know that one will pay more when getting care from Veterans Administration providers, and providers who opt out of Medicare, because they are not allowed to bill Medicare.

Medicare does not cover all services. Go to Medicare.gov for a list what is covered by Medicare. The TRICARE For Life also provides information on what it covers. In some cases, a service or procedure is not covered by either Medicare or TRICARE For Life.

Prescription costs can be concerning for retirees. Both TRICARE For Life and Medicare have their own formularies. TRICARE For Life only covers prescriptions written by doctors or other healthcare providers at VA hospital or other approved facilities. TRICARE For Life requires that you use military pharmacies, its mail order pharmacy or retail pharmacies in its network. Co-pays and prescription costs vary depending on the drug and where the

prescription is filled. TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery called Express Scripts costs \$12 for generic drugs, \$34 for brand-name drugs, and \$68 for non-formulary drugs for a ninety-day supply. TRICARE retail network pharmacies charge slightly more and for only up to a thirty-day supply. When using a non-network pharmacy, the co-pay is \$38 for generic and brand-name, \$68 for non-formulary drugs or 20% of the cost, whichever is higher for a thirty-day supply. Using a military pharmacy is the best option as there is still no cost for covered generics and brand-name drugs if obtained there.

For more detailed information on how TRICARE For Life and Medicare work together visit their respective websites: TRICARE For Life at tricare.mil/tfl and Medicare at medicare.gov. To keep up with the latest TRICARE For Life information, order a hard copy of the TRICARE For Life Handbook by calling Wisconsin Physicians Service (WPS) at 1-866-773-0404.

Hokanson: Individual Readiness Makes National Guard Always Ready, Always There

Master Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The physical and mental readiness of each Guard member enables the National Guard to keep its promise to America to stand Always Ready, Always There, the component’s most senior general officer said Sunday.

“Your health and resilience – both physical and mental – is vital to readiness,” the chief of the National Guard Bureau told Guard leaders in remarks that also provided a road map for the way ahead. “It’s not just about the miles you run or the ways you manage stress, although both are very important.

“It’s about being ready to step into your formation and do your job whenever the call comes.”

Peak individual readiness is why members of the Kentucky National Guard’s 123rd Special Tactics Squadron could show up and prepare their gear within an hour of news of a July 28 deadly flash flood – assembling before even tasked.

Orders in hand, the team was out the door in two hours. By truck, boat and helicopter, they rescued 19 people, contributed to the rescue of 40 others, and recovered four flood victims, helping give families closure.

“You can make a difference by committing to your individual readiness – from maintaining physical and medical fitness, to your military occupation and education, to making sure your family is prepared when you have to respond on little to no warning,” Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson told Army and Air National Guardsmen gathered for the 144th General Conference of the National Guard Association of the United States.

Individual readiness is also why Montana National Guardsmen could save 87 people after this summer’s 500-year-flood devastated areas around Yellowstone National Park.

“You can make a difference by investing in your relationships every day – with your family, your employer, your fellow Soldiers and Airmen, and by developing your relationships with your partners at every level, from local first responders to your state partner counterparts,” Hokanson said.

“And you can make a difference by looking out for each other,” he said. “None of us serve alone – and together we have shown we can accomplish almost anything.”

The readiness of the entire force is also part of why those Kentucky and Montana Guardsmen could spring into action minutes after the no-notice call came.

“The skills we have honed to fight our nation’s wars also provide an invaluable service to our communities,” Hokanson said.

Glancing in the rearview mirror of the National Guard’s contributions around the world and right here at home over the last couple of years, Hokanson mostly focused his remarks on the road ahead.

A member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the general took the Guard’s senior role in the summer of 2020, during the National Guard’s largest mobilization since World War II.

Guardsmen were still in Afghanistan and responding to hurricanes, wildfires and civil unrest at home, and there was no COVID vaccine.

“On any given day, over 60,000 Guardsmen were serving our communities and nation, around the globe,” Hokanson said.

Today, Guardsmen are training members of Ukraine’s armed forces in Germany and providing materiel support. They continue to respond to persistent, record-breaking natural disasters. They helped evacuate and resettle Afghan refugees, saved lives in fires and floods, and vaccinated millions of Americans.

“We still meet every mission,” he said. “We still meet every deployment. We still uphold our promise to America. I’m inspired by the difference we’re making all around the world.”

The National Guard Bureau, which Hokanson heads, exists to maximize performance and accountability through its support to “the 54” – the states, territories and District of Columbia – which ensures Guard formations remain integral to America’s defense and the Joint Force.

Among initiatives Hokanson outlined:

Healthcare

About 60,000 members of the 453,000-strong Army and Air National Guards do not have health insurance.

“This means many do not get the health care they need when they’re not in a duty



“The 2022 National Defense Strategy is clear,” Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson told National Guard leaders meeting in Columbus, Ohio, Aug. 29, 2022. “Mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships are an enduring strength. They are critical for achieving our objectives – and we have been doing it for almost 30 years.”

status,” Hokanson said. “The National Guard is 20% of the Joint Force, and our nation cannot deter or fight and win our wars without the National Guard. And lost readiness costs more than the price of health care.”

Calling health care a strategic and moral imperative essential to readiness and vital to recruiting and retention, Hokanson said: “Our National Guardsmen need health care, regardless of duty status. We fight the same wars as our active-duty counterparts. We spend weeks, months, even years away from our families, like our active-duty counterparts.

“We must provide health care for every single person who serves in uniform,” he added, “so they are always ready to fulfill our promise to America.”

Childcare

The Army National Guard is piloting a drill weekend childcare program across six states starting in October.

“No one in uniform serves alone,” Hokanson said, “and when we prioritize people, that includes prioritizing our strongest supporters and our greatest advocates: our families.”

Annual Training

Guardsmen are required to complete the same mandatory training and briefings as active-duty troops, such as cyber, sexual harassment and assault prevention and suicide awareness. For the traditional status members who comprise most of the force – troops who balance civilian careers with their military duties – increasing requirements compete for the critical time needed to sustain Soldier and Airmen skills.

The NGB has worked with the 54 and the parent services – the Army and Air Force – to prioritize and consolidate mandatory training requirements into a single drill weekend, freeing up the rest of the year to maintain and sharpen military professional skills, boosting component readiness.

Army: Eliminated 16 requirements. Reduced 38 administrative tasks. Army Guard now can complete all mandatory training in two days.

Air Force: Gone are 15 requirements. Consolidated 16 courses. Evaluating mandatory tasks. Exploring initiatives to allow Airmen to “test out” of some.

“We’re making real progress,” Hokanson said, “and that ... translates to readiness.

“Readiness begins with the individual,” he said, “but modernization begins as an enterprise.”

Modernization

“We work in a system of systems,” the CNGB said. “Our states, our parent services, the Joint Force, and our partnerships at every level. All of these elements affect modernization – personnel, equipment, training, processes, and more.”

The Army and Air National Guard and the Air Guard's space missions are now included in their services' modernization programs. A road map is created to modernize all major weapons systems. Congressional funding – in the form of National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriations, or NGREA – is now linked to America's National Defense Strategy, service and combatant command priorities, and domestic operations requirements.

"We must remain relentless in pursuing our goal of deployable, sustainable and interoperable equipment and force structure," Hokanson said. "That will always be a vital priority."

"We've proven the National Guard is an operational force – but that's not enough," he continued. "We must be an operational force that is modernized so we are fully interoperable with the Joint Force and our partners and allies."

Telework

Where it makes sense, Hokanson has spearheaded a 10% telework initiative, allowing some of the NGB workforce to remain in home states and work remotely.

The general cited improved state/NGB communication; retention of high-skill, high-talent team members; improved staff competitiveness for higher positions; an increase in the inclination of the 54 to share their best talent; family stability; and readiness gains as benefits.

"Most of all, it brings us closer to being the agile, adaptable, integrated force we need

to be," he said.

State Partnership Program

The Department of Defense National Guard State Partnership Program, or SPP, began in the Baltics in 1993. This security cooperation program aligned with combatant command priorities celebrates its 30th anniversary next year and now includes 45 percent of the world's nations.

"The 2022 National Defense Strategy is clear," Hokanson said. "Mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships are an enduring strength. They are critical for achieving our objectives – and we have been doing it for almost 30 years."

The SPP is, he said, "one of the best, most valuable security cooperation programs in the world."

The NGB will issue country recommendations this summer to add 30 more countries to the 93-nation SPP over the next 10 to 15 years.

"People, readiness, modernization and reform – they aren't top-down priorities: they belong to all of us," Hokanson said.

You can find Guardsmen in the heart of almost every American community, he observed. And in the heart of the Joint Force, world events, and the human experience.

"I am proud to share our stories and represent our Guardsmen," Hokanson said. "Together, we have shown we can accomplish almost anything."

People, Readiness Focal Points at National Guard Senior Enlisted Leader Forum

Sgt. 1st Class Zach Sheely
National Guard Bureau

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. – Senior enlisted National Guard leaders gathered here Aug. 7-10 to synchronize on Guard initiatives that impact people and readiness.

Senior Enlisted Advisor Tony Whitehead, the SEA to the chief, National Guard Bureau, hosted the Senior Enlisted Leader Training Forum alongside Command Sgt. Maj. John Raines and Command Chief Master Sgt. Maurice Williams – the top enlisted leaders for the Army and Air Guard, respectively. Senior enlisted leaders from every state, territory and the District of Columbia were present.

There were multiple points for discussion, training, and implementation. These senior noncommissioned officers collectively strategized ways to prevent sexual assault and harassment, stop suicide, improve health and wellness, and increase COVID-19 vaccination rates in the Guard at a time when the military at large is struggling to attract recruits.

Whitehead, the senior-most enlisted Guardsman of a 450,000 member-strong force, said keeping current Guardsmen in uniform is just as important as recruiting new Soldiers and Airmen.

"Our people are our foundation," Whitehead said. "We can't allow any of these issues to degrade our readiness."

He cited the Novavax vaccine – approved under emergency use authorization by the FDA on July 13 – as another option for Guardsmen who have declined previous COVID vaccines. The National Guard's total force vaccination rate is about 90%.

Whitehead is hopeful that number will continue to increase.

"We will not give up and just discard our Guardsmen," he said. "We have not done that, and we will not do that. At the same time, we're implementing guidance from our service secretaries and the secretary of defense.

"The health of our Guardsmen is paramount. We need every single Soldier and Airmen in our formations."



Senior Enlisted Advisor Tony Whitehead, the SEA to the chief, National Guard Bureau, and senior enlisted Guard leaders from across the country stand for a photo at the National Guard Professional Education Center in North Little Rock, Arkansas, Aug. 10, 2022. Whitehead hosted the National Guard's Senior Enlisted Leader Training Forum in Little Rock, Aug. 7-10, 2022.

Whitehead said sexual assault and harassment are other corrosive factors in readiness. New National Guard initiatives are aimed at preventing sexual assault and harassment entirely – also a key Defense Department initiative.

"I realize that it may not be realistic to say we will get down to zero sexual assaults and harassments in the National Guard," Whitehead said, "but that's our target and we will continue to work toward that goal and work until we get there."

The SEL forum was briefed on emerging National Guard sexual assault and harassment prevention measures that will add resources and staffing to target these issues in every state, territory, and D.C.

"I look at the reports that are coming through," Whitehead said. "I look at the fact that people are trusting the process. Part of creating a strong organizational culture is to make sure your people understand that they can trust us and trust you."

As most Guardsmen balance careers, family and military service, Whitehead encouraged the SELs to engage with their troops early and often to continue building that trust.

"As National Guard senior noncommissioned officers,

you have civilian careers, you have the work that you do while you're in uniform – caring for our Guardsmen and their families – you work in your communities," he said. "You do this repeatedly, and you take it seriously."

"Our junior enlisted Guardsmen have to see us taking it seriously."

Whitehead said individual readiness is the building block to collective readiness. The National Guard must be prepared to deliver on its promise to America to be "Always Ready, Always There," at home and abroad. He added that he does not expect the Guard's operational tempo to slow.

Bringing the senior enlisted leaders together from across the country provided valuable dialogue to ensure that promise is kept, said Command Sgt. Maj. Dena Ballowe, the command senior enlisted leader for the Illinois National Guard.

"We were able to come together, listen to one another, exchange ideas and grow," she said. "With such amazing, diverse and strategic-thinking senior enlisted leaders coming together with positive attitudes and outlooks, we can't help but succeed."



**CT National Guard
Suicide Prevention 5k Fun Run
Sunday, September 11, 2022**

Check-in @ 8:00 am
Race begins @ 9:11 am

Camp Nett at Niantic
38 Smith Street, Niantic, CT

Bradley Air National Guard Base
161 Rainbow Road East Granby, CT

Please register by September 5, 2022
<https://CTNGbreakthestigma.eventbrite.com>

Password: breakthestigma

Stay for post-race refreshments and community resource fair

T-Shirts will be given to the first 250 registrants



103rd Medical Group partners with Hartford Hospital

Master Sgt. Tamara Dabney
103rd Airlift Wing

The 103rd Medical Group, Connecticut Air National Guard has partnered with Hartford Hospital in Hartford, Connecticut for annual medical training.

Air National Guard medics and nurses are required to receive at least 40 hours of training a year at a level I or II trauma center. However, Bradley Air National Guard Base, where 103rd MDG members are stationed, does not have a trauma center. To meet the training requirement, Lt. Col. Charles Johndro, an Emergency Medical Control Physician with the 103rd, arranged an agreement with Hartford Hospital for 103rd medics to conduct trauma care training at the hospital's Level I Trauma Center. Johndro, who is also the Emergency Medical Services Director for Hartford Healthcare and an attending physician at Hartford Hospital, oversees the training.

"[Johndro] is one of our own," said Capt. Jennifer Monahan, Officer in Charge of Education and Training and Chief Nurse at the 103rd Medical Group. "He has served over 20 years in the military and he was a medic before he went to medical school and became a doctor, so he truly understands what the medics need and what's required of them. To have this physician who is a military member, as well as an emergency certified physician, teach our medics is really big."

Before the partnership was established, trauma care training at Bradley was limited to simulations that utilized mannequins. The training at Hartford Hospital provides 103rd MDG members with hands-on experience in real-life trauma care.

"We're seeing patients, we're seeing the equipment, we're getting hands-on experience with a physician who is a trauma certified doctor," said Monahan. So, if we have questions, he's able to answer them."

While approximately 86 percent of 103rd MDG members work in healthcare outside of the military, less than 50 percent provide trauma care to patients on a regular basis. The training increases the readiness of the 103rd MDG by preparing medics for scenarios they may face during deployments.

"In a deployed setting, it is a requirement that we all have trauma training," said Monahan, who also works as a critical care nurse at Backus Hospital outside of the military. "Some of our medics are firefighters and paramedics, but our nurses work in different capacities, so a lot of our members don't see these things. [103rd medics] are not getting what they need without this training."

Staff Sgt. Anitress Delgado, a former emergency services worker who currently serves as Non-commissioned Officer in Charge of education and training for the 103rd MDG, agreed.

"I used to work in the [emergency medical services] capacity years ago, but I don't now, so all that I really have is my training," said Delgado. "Seeing a live patient and see-



Air Force Lt. Col. Charles Johndro (left), an ER Medical Control Physician assigned to the 103rd Medical Group, Connecticut Air National Guard, instructs Tech. Sgt. Anitress Delgado, NCOIC of education and training for the 103rd MDG, during an airway/resuscitation training session, September 2021, at Hartford Hospital in Hartford, Conn. The 103rd Medical Group partnered with Hartford Hospital for annual medical training at the Hartford Hospital Level I Trauma Center. (Photo courtesy of Tech. Sgt. Anitress Delgado)

ing those live injuries was definitely a learning refresher. When you see someone who's probably having one of the worst days of their life and they're looking at you, it makes it extremely realistic."

The partnership also highlights the Connecticut Guard's readiness to respond to crises domestically.

"There's a lot of excitement around shadowing our own doctor and being comfortable in our own capacity, but also with the public that we interact with," said Delgado. "This is helping to prepare us for emergency situations that could happen on the domestic side, like after a natural disaster. This agreement is definitely very beneficial for the Connecticut Guard and for civilians, seeing us, and knowing that they can trust the Guard and that we do actually have real skills."

Joint and multinational forces demonstrate interoperability during Swift Response 22

Master Sgt. Tamara Dabney
103rd Airlift Wing

EAST GRANBY, Conn. – U.S. Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard Airmen were among approximately 9,000 troops from 17 allied and partner nations to participate in Exercise Swift Response 22. The annual exercise focuses on enhancing airborne interoperability between allied and partner nations, as well as integrated, total force training with Reserve and Guard units.

Swift Response 22 underlines the U.S. Defense Department's focus on building readiness to face near-peer adversaries in future conflicts. This year, the geographic scale of the exercise was expanded to include the Arctic High North, Baltic States, Balkans, and Caucasus regions.

Air Force Capt. Bryan Reed, a pilot assigned to the 700th Airlift Squadron, 94th Airlift Wing at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia, and an aircraft commander for Swift Response 22, expressed the importance of integrating Air Guardsmen and Reservists with multinational forces during the exercise.

"We have to build these partnerships," said Reed. "There's nothing like being able to practice with those [allied and partner nations] during Swift Response. We enhance our readiness for our wartime capabilities, get training in locations that we haven't trained in before and strengthen our relationship with our coalition partners."

This year's exercise, held from May 2 to 24, 2022, evaluated the readiness of the U.S. Army's Global Response Force core ground component - the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division - alongside multinational high-readiness forces from Albania, Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

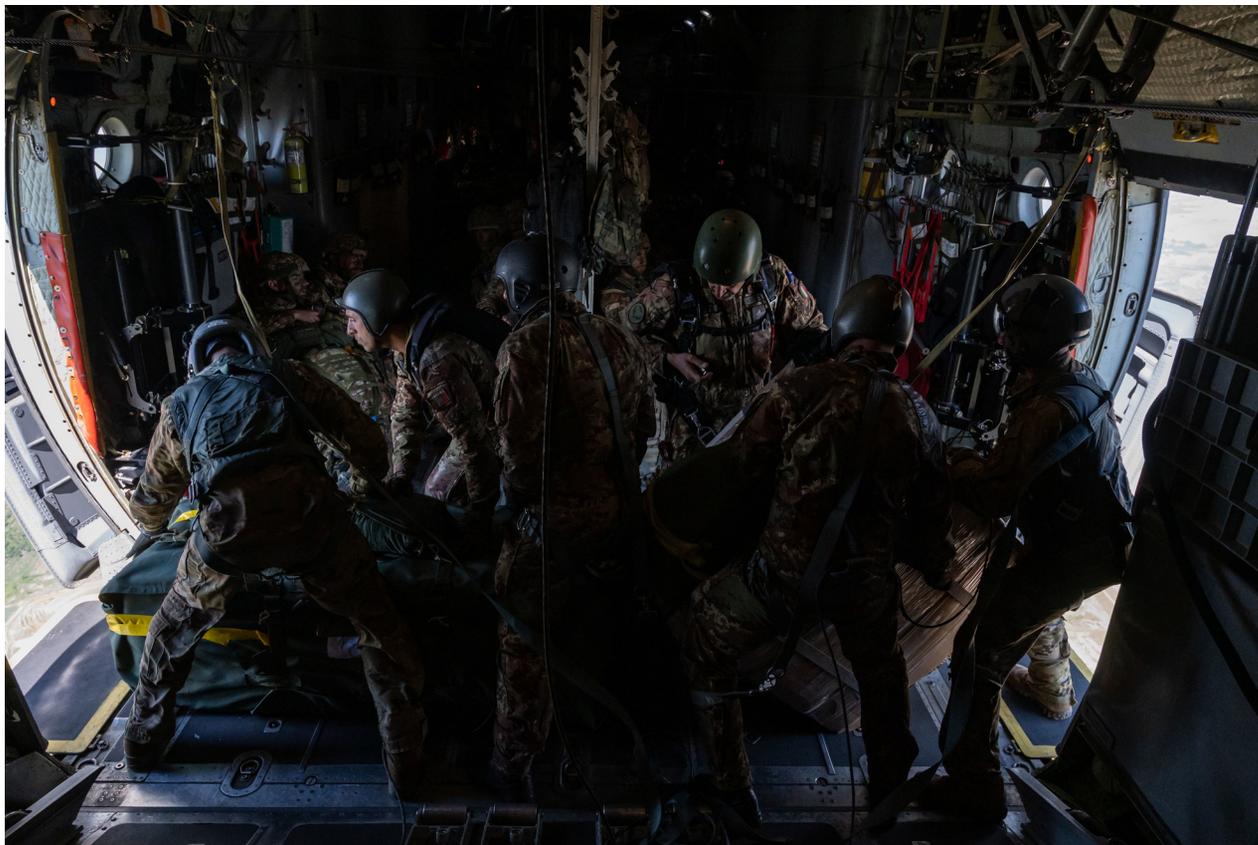
Such large-scale exercises are key to overcoming the challenges of operating in a joint environment, said Senior Master Sgt. Eric Hady, an evaluator loadmaster from the 118th AS, 103rd AW, Connecticut Air National Guard.

"Working with different types of agencies is always a challenge," said Hady. "Whether it's multinational, speaking different languages, or even if it's different branches of service, because sometimes our lingo is different. So working together with our allied partners, we learn a lot from each other about how we operate."

On May 11th, as part of Swift Response 22, three C-130H crews from the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard flew with one C-130J crew from the Italian Air Force to conduct a joint forcible entry exercise (JFE) in North Macedonia. The JFE simulated forcible entry and control of airfields in a contested environment.

The formation of two Connecticut ANG C-130Hs from Bradley ANG Base, Connecticut, one C-130H from Dobbins ARB, Georgia, and one C-130J from Pisa International Airport, Italy, airdropped approximately 368 Italian and Spanish paratroopers into North Macedonia during the JFE.

Aircrews later flew a second airdrop mission to deliver supplies and equipment to the paratroopers who were on the ground. The JFE also covered parts of Lithuania, Lat-



Aircraft loadmasters assigned to the 103rd Operations Group, 103rd Airlift Wing, Connecticut Air National Guard and Italian paratrooper jump masters prepare to off-load cargo during an airdrop mission, as part of Exercise Swift Response 22, May 11, 2022, in Pisa, Italy. Swift Response is a U.S. EUCOM scheduled, U.S. Army Europe and Africa conducted, and SETAF-AF led global exercise, focused on Allied Airborne forces' ability to quickly and effectively respond to crisis situations as an interoperable, multi-national team. Swift Response demonstrates U.S. and Allied force projection and high readiness interoperability in support of NATO Connected Force Initiative (CFI). Swift Response consists of Joint Forcible Entries (JFEs) into the Nordic, Baltics, and Balkans, followed by multinational training, and live-fire exercises. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Tamara R. Dabney)

via, The Republic of Georgia and Norway.

Lt. Col. John Saunders, a Combat Systems Officer assigned to the 118th AS, 103rd AW, Connecticut ANG, and mission commander for Swift Response 22, expressed the significance of the JFE in showcasing the joint force's capability to rapidly and simultaneously deploy multinational airborne forces, anywhere in the world.

"One of the great things about Swift Response is the sheer magnitude of the exercise," said Saunders. "One of the highlights from this year's exercise is the near simultaneous airdrop in five different countries for the joint forcible entry exercise."

Saunders also noted that, while language barriers and differences in weapons systems presented challenges during Swift Response 22, participants were able to overcome those challenges.

"Although it's sometimes difficult to get our ideas across, it turns out that what we do share, if not a common language, is the common culture of wearing the uniform," said Saunders. "[The language barrier] is not something that has been insurmountable and it's something that we've been able to successfully work through."

Lt. Col. Roberto Panico, Italian C-130J pilot and Air Liaison Officer at Folgore Airborne Brigade, agreed that Swift Response 22 enhanced the interoperability of U.S. and Italian forces because the exercise established coordi-

nation to better work together in the future.

"Not only did we make this possible, but everything worked great, thanks to the talent and professionalism of the [U.S. Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard] crews, which have been planning, shoulder-to-shoulder, with the Italians," said Panico. "With the Italian parachutists, an Italian C-130 and C-130s from the U.S., we have worked together to make this a success."



Air Force Tech. Sgt. Radek Kret (foreground), an aircraft loadmaster assigned to the 103rd Operations Group, 103rd Airlift Wing, Connecticut Air National Guard informs Italian and Spanish paratroopers that they are 10 minutes away from jump time during an airdrop mission, as part of Exercise Swift Response 22, May 11, 2022, in Pisa, Italy.

New Seals a 'Singular Representation' of Army, Air Guard

National Guard Bureau Public Affairs
Contributor

ARLINGTON, Va. – Seals are the oldest form of heraldic insignia and have evolved over time to represent monarchies, families, and organizations. As a military design, seals represent the common identity of members of military organizations.

As the nation's oldest armed force, the National Guard, is no exception. In April 2022, the National Guard Bureau and the Army National Guard updated the appearance of their seals, and the Air National Guard established its first.

“The seals symbolize a shared organizational identity and should serve as reminders to our Soldiers and Airmen that they belong to a world-class military organization – one that fights and wins our nation's wars, responds to emergencies on the home front and builds global partnerships,” said Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, Chief of the NGB.

To honor the bureau's history, the NGB seal reverted its background color from flag blue to its original 1921 dark blue.

“Gen. Hokanson launched a parallel effort to update and redefine the Army Guard's seal and establish the first Air National Guard seal to create a singular representation of the National Guards of the States, Territories, and District of Columbia,” said Dr. Richard Clark, Director of the NGB History Office.

“Something was needed,” he said, “that spoke to both the shared relationship of the Army and Air National Guards and recognized their separate service. Thus, both designs include the minuteman, but both designs are also distinct.”

The Army National Guard Seal features the Concord Minuteman statue in white and dark blue and reflects the colors of George Washington's Continental Army during the American Revolution. As with the previous seal, the new one features a dark blue designation band with a scarlet trim and the words “Army National Guard” and five stars in white inscribed on the trim.

The Air National Guard Seal also features the minuteman statue in white and dark blue and two white fighter jets with the colors of the Air Force: ultramarine blue, alluding to the sky as the main theater of operations, and yellow, representing the sun and the excel-



lence required of all Airmen. The seal has a white designation band featuring dark blue letters with the words “Air National Guard,” along with five stars.

While the seals will be found in official military spaces as they always have, an original function of heraldry was to help identify Soldiers and their units on the battlefield, said Clark. “The updated and new seals do not affect uniforms, and Airmen will continue to wear the shield patch of the Air National Guard of the United States.”

NGB is working on a directive and a plan to replace the old versions of Army National Guard Seal and the Air National Guard of the United States Emblem with the updated seals in public spaces, letterhead, and briefing templates.

Today, as battlefields become more complex, heraldry generally serves to encourage Guardsmen to recognize their shared membership and to help non-Guard members easily recognize the service with which they are engaged.

“Military heraldry can speak volumes to communities about the National Guard,” Clark observed. “It allows non-military members to readily identify ones' service affiliation, while giving Soldiers and Airmen something of which to be proud.”

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Brown: 'The National Guard ... Truly at the Heart of it all'

Master Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

COLUMBUS, Ohio – As the Air Force's 75th birthday nears, the service is transforming – bringing change that requires Airmen to get comfortable being uncomfortable, Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. told National Guard leaders gathered here Saturday.

"I reflect on the fact that our service was created on a foundation of innovation and forward thinking, and how we must harness that mindset and exploit change to transform from the force we have today to the one needed to meet our pacing challenge," the chief of staff of the Air Force said. "We've done this before, and I'm confident we can do it again.

The greatest security threat America faces, Brown said, is military modernization and the dangers posed by China and Russia. He said the National Guard will be part of the solution.

"The Guard plays a key role in addressing these complex challenges, and Air Power is vital and in high demand," Brown said. "I know it. Our Air Guard knows it. And combatant commanders have proven this with their continued ask for more Air Power."

Airmen can't assume the service's current capabilities and posture will be relevant forever, Brown said.

"This transformation requires us to look at our posture," he said. "To look globally at how our Air Force should be postured over the next 10- to 20-years based on threat-driven requirements ... [it] requires change and difficult choices."

Throughout his career, the Air Force's most senior officer has seen the National Guard's contributions, and he cited numerous examples, from his time commanding a fighter squadron that included Guardsmen to the present.

Brown was U.S. Central Command's air component commander during the Defeat ISIS campaign.

"The Guard was continuously deployed and fully integrated into the campaign, seamlessly working side-by-side with the active duty," he said. "Matter of fact, you couldn't tell where one component ended and the next began."

Among other examples of Air National Guard contributions to the Total Force, Brown praised the Missouri National Guard's 131st Bomb Wing, who fly the B-2 Spirit out of Whiteman Air Force Base.

"They recently returned from a deployment to Australia, where they partnered and trained with the Royal Australian Air Force, providing full-spectrum expeditionary B-2 Global Strike combat capabilities, sending the message to both our adversaries and our allies and partners that ... our Air Force can provide Air Power, anytime, anywhere."

New York National Guard crews with the 109th Airlift Wing flew Brown to Antarctica on a ski-equipped LC-130 Skibird.

"We will be challenged in the most austere conditions, to include both the Southern and Northern Arctic regions," he said. "Our day-to-day operations demonstrate we are always working, always building, always preparing, and always deterring. Thanks to the New York Guard for the unique capability you provide."

The CSAF also noted the California National Guard, which has conducted more than 1,000 exchanges with Ukrainian armed forces over almost 30 years through the



"The National Guard is critical to our nation's defense," Air Force Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., chief of staff of the Air Force, told National Guard leaders gathered in Columbus, Ohio, Aug. 27, 2022. "You have unmatched experience, expertise, and unique mission sets ... gained from your dual civilian-military identities, and share them with our active component counterparts, and with our allies and partners."

Department of Defense National Guard State Partnership Program or SPP.

"Some people may be caught off guard by Ukraine's skill in battle," Brown said, "but I can assure you the California National Guard wasn't, because they've been training together for the past few decades."

California is partnered with Ukraine in the 93-nation SPP that aligns state and territory National Guards with foreign nations in support of combatant command security cooperation objectives.

"That's the payoff when you invest in partnerships, and what campaigning during peacetime can lead to in conflict or crisis," Brown said.

He called forward presence, conducting exercises and training, strengthening alliances and partnerships and maximizing interoperability – the ability of military units and their equipment to operate together – all areas where the Guard is exceptional.

The Alaska Air Guard's close integration with their active duty C-17 Globemaster military transport aircraft counterparts; the Kentucky Air Guard's rescue of people and dogs after July's flooding; the Wyoming Air Guard's support to U.S. Forest Service wildfire fighting; the more than 600 Air National Guard members who provided safe passage to Americans and Afghan allies during Operations

Allies Welcome and Allies Refuge last year – all examples Brown cited that speak to the Guard's ongoing contribution to the Total Force.

In discussion after his remarks, Brown highlighted the need to switch from the long-established facilities familiar to many service members to a concept of building austere quarters from scratch, operating for short periods, then tearing down and moving in potential future conflicts.

He also emphasized the doctrine of taking initiative in the absence of orders, a crucial American advantage against adversaries.

"In an environment where a lot of things are going to be uncertain?" he said. "You can't sit waiting for instructions. You've got to go out and execute."

Brown's bottom line? Transform. Modernize. Embrace change. Be comfortable being uncomfortable.

"We certainly can't drive change without the collaboration and support of the National Guard," he said. "The National Guard is critical to our nation's defense. You have unmatched experience, expertise, and unique mission sets ... gained from your dual civilian-military identities, and share them with our active component counterparts and with our allies and partners.

"The National Guard," the CSAF added, "is there for the nation and is truly at the heart of it all."

PHOTOS FROM THE FORCE



U.S. Army paratroopers assigned to the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 11th Airborne Division (Arctic Angels) conduct airborne operations at Malemute Drop Zone after exiting a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III, assigned to the 62nd Airlift Wing, at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, August 24, 2022. The Arctic Angels stay proficient at their primary function of being a Joint Forcible Entry unit, able to respond and project power across the Pacific within 18 hours. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Patrick Sullivan)



A turtle is shown at the Fort McCoy Pine View Campground and Pine View Recreation Area 50th birthday celebration Aug. 20, 2022, at Whitetail Ridge Ski Area at Fort McCoy, Wis. (U.S. Army Photo by Scott T. Sturkol, Public Affairs Office, Fort McCoy, Wis.)



A U.S. Marine Corps AV-8B Harrier, attached to the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), flies past U.S. Navy Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handler) First Class Tu N. Chau during flight operations on the flight deck of the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge (LHD 3) Aug. 24, 2022. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Taylor Parker)

PHOTOS FROM THE FORCE



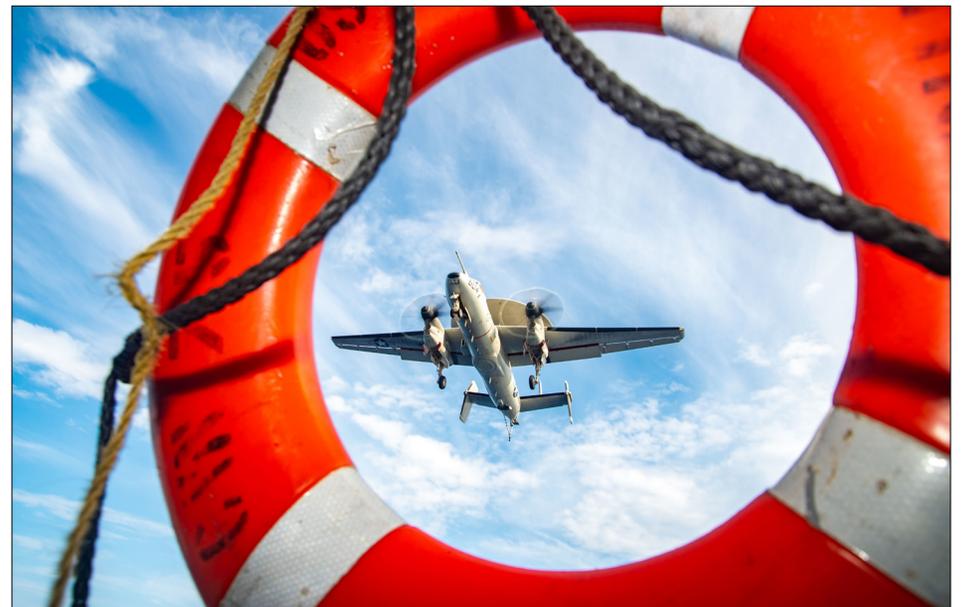
Sailors combat a simulated fire during a damage control drill aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), Aug. 29, 2022. The Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group is on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. Naval Forces Europe area of operations, employed by U.S. Sixth Fleet to defend U.S., allied and partner interests. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Christopher Suarez)



A U.S. Air Force pararescueman assigned to the 58th Rescue Squadron breaches a room during Rigid Pulse 22-1 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, August 19, 2022. Rigid Pulse 22-1 is a readiness culmination exercise used to validate mission essential task lists to support personnel recovery operations in a deployed environment and to refine and exercise agile combat employment capabilities. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Zachary Rufus)



Two Swedish Air Force Saab JAS 39 Gripens escort a U.S. Air Force 23rd Expeditionary Bomb Squadron B-52H Stratofortress over Sweden during a Bomber Task Force mission Aug. 27, 2022. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Michael A. Richmond)



An E-2D Hawkeye, attached to the "Seahawks" of Airborne Command and Control Squadron (VAW) 126, flies over the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), Aug. 24, 2022. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Charles Blaine)

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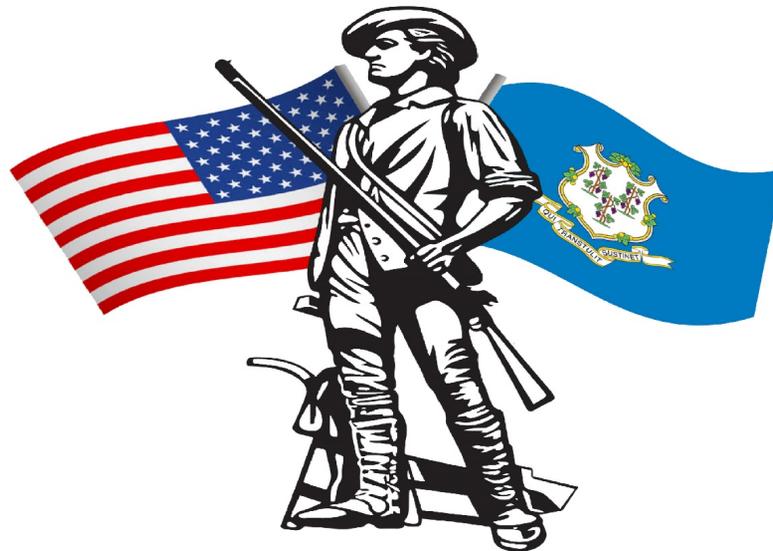
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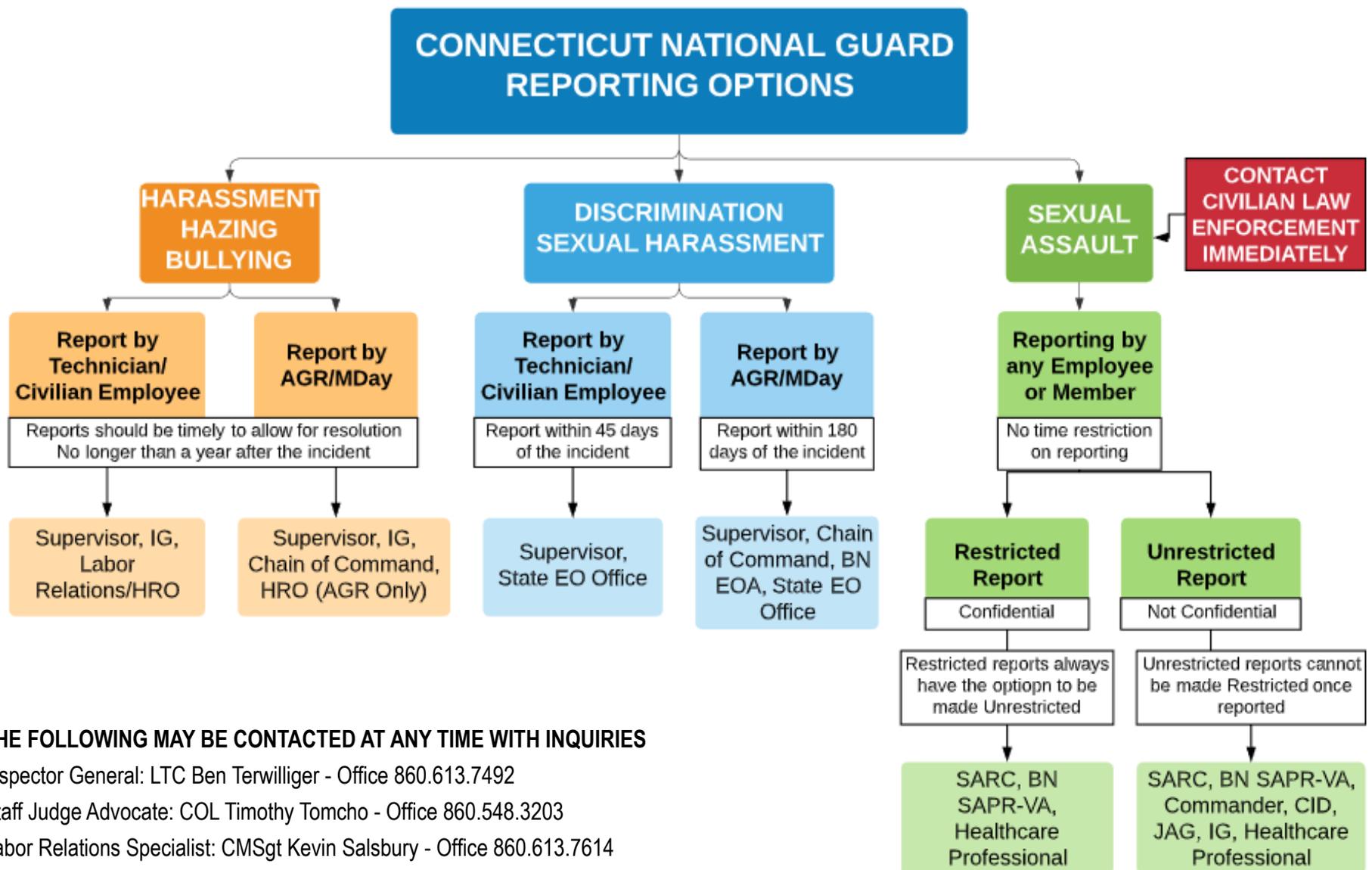
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Sexual Assault Response Coordinator: Mrs. Katherine Maines - Office 860.613.7611; Cell 860.883.4798

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