

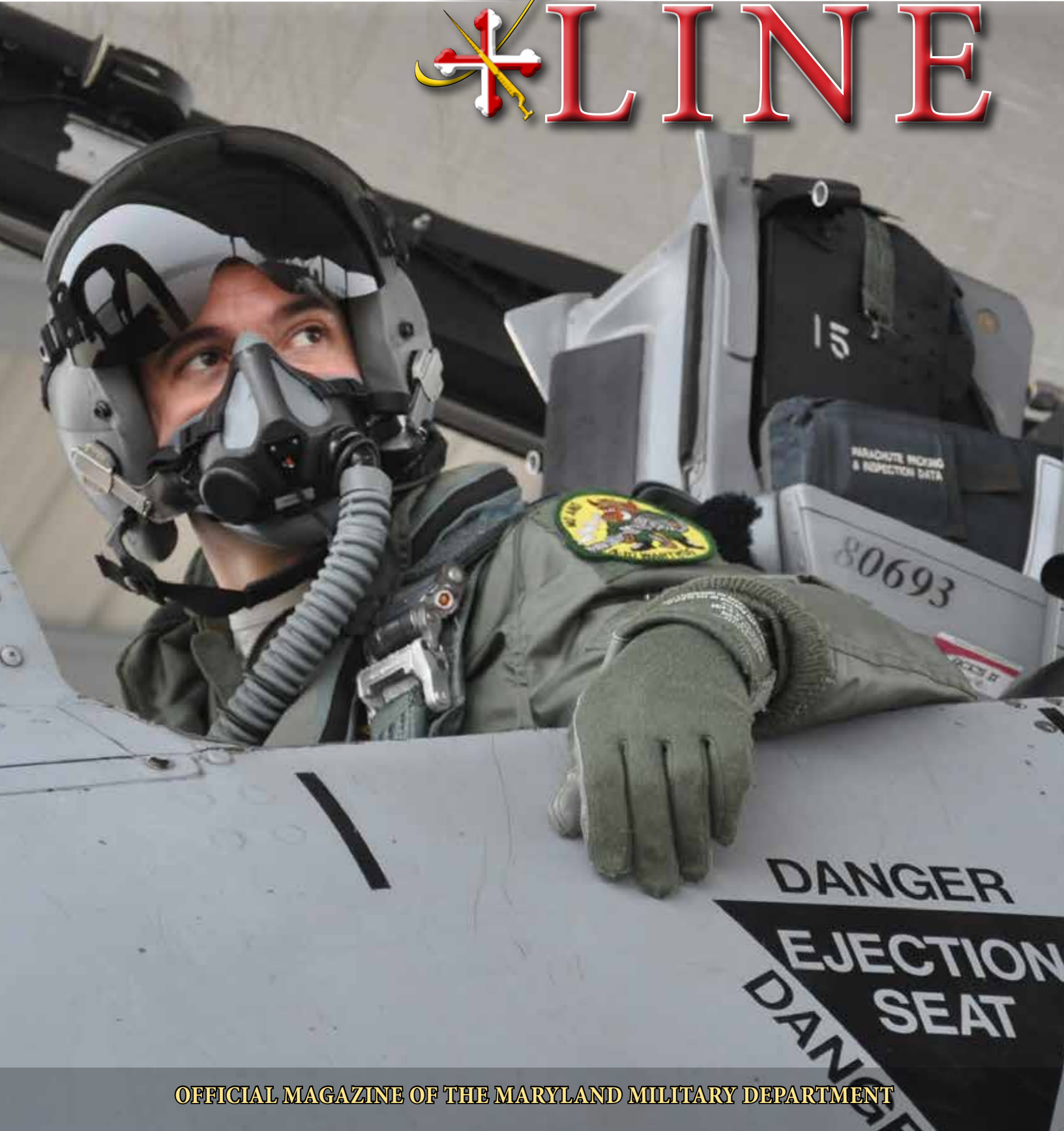
THE

Maryland

Fall/Winter
2014



LINE



OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE MARYLAND MILITARY DEPARTMENT



Inside this issue:

THE Maryland LINE



Feature Stories

- 6 Female Soldiers unite through new sorority
- 12 231st Chem. Co. joins with Air Guard for HAZMAT training
- 14 Maryland Army Guard gets first female, African-American commander
- 23 A look at black history in the Maryland Guard

- 4 Centennial Legion Pass and Review
- 8 Caroline County Veterans Memorial
- 9 58th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade's Best Warriors
- 10 290th Military Police Return
- 11 115th Military Freedom Salute
- 26 Star Spangled 200
- 28 Operation Harbor Assault
- 30 Distinguished Flying Cross

On The LINE 16-22

On the cover:



In January drill members of the 175th Wing evaluated the unit's ability to operate and launch missions in a chemical combat environment with their A-10 aircraft at Warfield Air National Guard Base in Middle River, Md.

Governor:
Martin O'Malley

Adjutant General:
Maj. Gen. James A. Adkins

Design & Layout:
Staff Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington



Military Department
Maryland National Guard
Public Affairs Office
Fifth Regiment Armory
29th Division St.
Baltimore, Md. 21201
ng.md.mdarng.list.pao@mail.mil
410-576-6179

Contributors:
Lt. Col. Charles Kohler
Staff Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington
Tech. Sgt. David Speicher
Sgt. Crystal Hudson
Sgt. Regina Glott
Sgt. Edwin Gray
Sgt. Breeanna Pierce
UPAR 58th BFSB
Lt. Col. Armen Martirosyan, Armenian Peacekeeping Brigade





Maryland Guard answers state's call for help

By Sgt. Edwin Gray,
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Approximately 500 Service members of the Maryland National Guard and Defense Force, were activated for to help with severe winter weather operations throughout the state on Feb. 13, 2014.

Most of these troops were prepositioned at readiness centers throughout Maryland and then dispatched to support local first responders.

Many first response vehicles are not capable of traveling through deep snow. In response to this dilemma, the Maryland Guard has provided approximately 50 High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles with troops to help get the first responders through the snow safely.

Gov. Martin O'Malley asked Marylanders to refrain from using

- Staff Sgt. Amanda Youngblood

“The way the Joint Task Force runs the system is very smooth. It allows us to keep accountability.”

the roads so emergency workers could do their jobs efficiently and more people stay safe.

“Our Maryland Guard has deployed roughly 500 people,” said O'Malley. “They are helping in response to local calls for service.”

The Maryland National Guard receives its missions through the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) when there is a need to assist state and local emergency response organizations.

MEMA is part of the Maryland Military Department and under the

authority of the adjutant general. The agency is responsible for coordinating the state's response in any major emergency or disaster.

“The way the Joint Task Force runs the system is very smooth. It allows us to keep accountability,” said Staff Sgt. Amanda Youngblood, supply sergeant with F Co., 128th Brigade Support Battalion. “The emergency response missions are being tracked with an online portal that allows state and local agencies to make requests for assistance.”

Each request is updated when it has been assigned to a unit. The requester will know how many personnel will arrive and what equipment is being provided.

Youngblood also added that her unit sent out multiple vehicles to various locations around the state to support local fire departments.



Centennial Legion Pass and Review

By Lt. Col. Charles Kohler, Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Officer





Maj. Gen. James A. Adkins, the adjutant general of Maryland was the reviewing officer for the Centennial Legion pass and review and the flag changing ceremony Nov. 2, 2013, at the historic Fort McHenry in Baltimore. The Centennial Legion is comprised of the historic military commands from the 13 original states. It was officially organized on July 4, 1876, in Philadelphia during the 100th anniversary celebration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The Legion perpetuates the legacy of units who served and protected our nation during the Revolutionary War and continue today. Past members of the Maryland National Guard's 175th Infantry Regiment and members of the Veteran Corps were well represented in the ceremony.



Female Soldiers unite through new sorority



*By Sgt. Edwin Gray,
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Several female troops united to create the Kappa Epsilon Psi Æas KEΨ. The sorority is open to all female Service members, regardless of branch, who are serving or have served honorably in the military.

The mission of KEΨ is to honor past female Service members, unite current female Service members, and mentor the future leadership of our armed forces. Many of the members say the organization is a unique asset to the military.

“There are so many challenges that come along with being a woman in uniform,” said Sharise Payne, an Army staff sergeant with Maryland’s 231st Chemical Company, also a member of KEΨ. “This is a great opportunity for military women to get out and help, as well as mentor other women.”

The sorority was founded April 4, 2011, by YaShica Hill, who served as the first national president of the sorority, and by Moneka Smith-

Dailey, who served as its first national vice president.

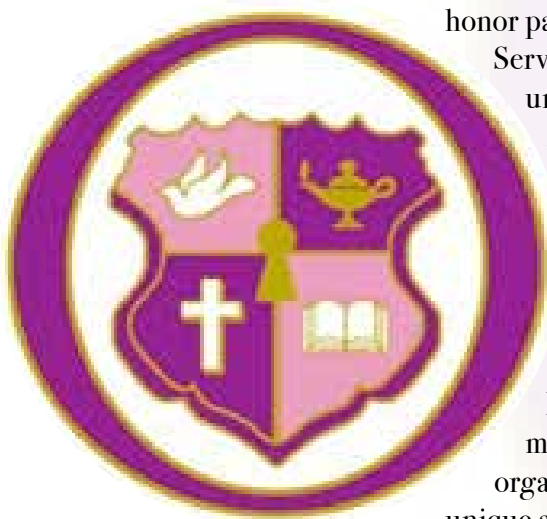
Many sorority members mention that they enjoy the opportunity to connect with others who have served in the military.

“It’s a new organization, but I’m excited to be a part of something that’s meaningful to fellow military women,” said Latasha Bell, who is a Navy petty officer third class electrician’s mate and a veteran. “I think it’s a great way to connect with other women who may have had similar experiences.”

KEΨ’s local chapters meet twice a month. Nationally, all chapters meet annually at the Reveille Retreat. This retreat is a reunion for all KEΨ sisters. It is also an opportunity for newer troops to get advice from a diverse group of more experienced Service members.

“I wanted to be a part of a sisterhood,” said Belinda Mann, an Army staff sergeant with the headquarters element of Maryland’s 70th Regional Training Institute and among the first to join from the Maryland Guard. “It gives me the opportunity to go out into the community and mentor fellow female Service members.”

Candidates with less than two years of military service are teamed up a mentor who has more military or civilian experience. Several veteran Service members have joined





-Staff Sgt. Belinda Mann

“I wanted to be a part of a sisterhood. It gives me the opportunity to go out into the community and mentor fellow female Service members.”

the sorority to advise and help new female troops while also helping the community.

Twenty women chartered the first chapter of KEΨ on May 25, 2013. The sorority is already working toward expanding the organization to have a chapter on every military installation. Since the first KEΨ chapter started, several other women have begun the process of bringing local chapters to their own communities.

Male Service members have followed their female counterparts by creating a similar organization Kappa Lambda Chi Military Fraternity, Inc., also known as KΛΧ, founded on July 4, 2013.

“Oftentimes, joining the military means not going to college full time like many other young adults,” said Kerry Campbell, a former Army Reserve and National Guard Soldier. Taking college courses is encouraged in today’s military, said

Campbell, but joining a sorority is not always an option for military members, since many cannot attend college full time. “Now it is.”

Some members view KEΨ as a college experience that they never had the chance to experience. The women of KEΨ have created bonds that could exist far beyond their military careers. Most say that joining feels equivalent to extending their family.

“Being a part of this organization is no different than it is with my family,” said Payne. “I love my sorority sisters as if we were relatives, and to be honest, you couldn’t tell me that we aren’t.”

KEΨ members actively participate in community service. The Virginia-District of Columbia chapter has provided many hours of community service local charities such as the D.C. Central Kitchen and the Interfaith Clothing Center.

Caroline County Veterans Memorial

Senior leaders both past and present from the Maryland National Guard were in Denton, Md., today for the dedication of the memorial walk at the Caroline Veterans Monument on the grounds of the General James F. Fretterd Community Center. A plaque honoring Caroline natives who died in WWII and a plaque honoring Maryland Guardsmen who mobilized from the former armory for service in WWII were also unveiled.

Maj. Gen. James A. Adkins, the adjutant general of Maryland, Brig. Gen. Linda L. Singh, the assistant adjutant general of Maryland, Lt. Gen (ret) H Steven Blum, former chief of the National Guard Bureau, Brig. Gen. Carole A. Briscoe, previous deputy assistant adjutant general of Maryland and Lt. Gen. (MD) (ret) James F. Fretterd, former adjutant general of Maryland made remarks and honored all veterans.

The Maryland National Guard's Honor Guard presented the colors and the 229th Army Band performed for the more than 200 residents and veterans from Caroline County for the ceremony.





Courtesy of 58th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade

The Maryland Army National Guard's 58th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade held its Best Warrior and Noncommissioned Officer Competition on Jan. 25, 2014, beginning at Gunpowder Military Reservation in Glen Arm, Md., and ending at the MG (MD) Harry C. Ruhl Readiness Center in Towson, Md. The winners will compete in the state's Best Warrior Competition in March.

Several Soldiers stepped up to the plate, vying for title as the brigade's Best Warrior. These Soldiers endured a January which brought along some of the coldest days this winter that our region has experienced. Twenty-one degrees and snowfall could not stop the Soldiers of the 58th BfSB as they started on their 7-mile ruck march.

They started the competition off at Gunpowder, testing their land navigation and map reading skills, demonstrating Combat Lifesaver techniques, making 9-line MEDEVAC requests, and disassembling and reassembling a M-240B machine gun and an M4 carbine.

They ended the competition at Ruhl Readiness Center for the final test – the boards. The competitors appeared before senior noncommissioned officers, testing their individual knowledge. When it was over and the scores tabulated, Sgt. Michael Firth and Spc. Michael Robinson, both from C Company (LRS), 1st Squadron, 158th Cavalry Regiment, emerged as the champions. They will advance to face other brigade-level winners at the state competition.

58th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade's Best Warriors





290th Military Police Return

Approximately 90 members of the Maryland Army National Guard's 290th Military Police Company from Parkville returned today, Feb., 1, after nearly a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. The unit was deployed to Bagram Airfield working with the NATO lead International Security Assistance Force to help grow the capacity and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces in order to provide a secure environment for the people of Afghanistan. This was the unit's fourth federal deployment since 9/11 along with several state emergency activations.

On 9/11 the 290th Military Police Company was alerted in response to the terrorist attacks on our nation and on Sep. 12, 2001, the unit reported to the Pentagon in support of rescue and recovery operations.

The 290th was ordered into active Federal service to support Operation Noble Eagle through September 2002, by temporarily providing law enforcement on Fort Stewart, and then returning to the Pentagon to provide force protection. The 290th was next ordered into active Federal service July 10, 2003, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Soldiers from the 290th provided force protection for several locations throughout Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Pakistan, and also provided convoy security and presence patrols for activities in, and around, Kabul. The 290th was again ordered into active Federal service October 23, 2007, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Soldiers from the 290th operated a refugee camp in Ashraf, Iraq and conducted detention operations at Camp Cropper, Iraq.





115th Military Police Freedom Salute

The Maryland Army National Guard hosted a Freedom Salute ceremony for more than 70 members of the Headquarters Detachment of the 115th Military Police Battalion from Salisbury, Md., on Sunday, Nov., 24. The ceremony gave senior leaders and local elected officials the opportunity to publicly recognize the sacrifice of our Soldiers as well as those who have supported them during their year-long deployment to Afghanistan.

The unit deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in November 2012. They served as advisors and mentors to the Afghan National Police and helped to build Afghanistan's domestic security forces. They put their lives on the line in order to serve their country and proudly carried on the legacy service to the nation's fighting forces.



MIDDLE RIVER, Md. (Feb. 10, 2014) –

On a cold, overcast weekend, the Maryland National Guard's 231st Chemical Company and 175th Civil Engineering Fire and Emergency Services Flight conducted joint HAZMAT training at Warfield Air National Guard Base in Middle River, Md., on Feb. 8-9, 2014.



“[This is] the first time that we’ve done any joint training with another branch,” said Air Force Master Sgt. Joel McCroy, assistant chief of training for the 175th Civil Engineering Fire and Emergency Services Flight and a former Army infantryman. “Most of our members have deployed to joint bases and worked in a joint environment, so it just made sense to include joint training into what we do.”

The 231st contacted the 175th fire department this past fall about training that could benefit both units. From the beginning, both organizations had to learn a little about each other—different acronyms,

ranks and particular ways of doing things.

Firefighters got firsthand experience working with the operations order supplied by 231st Chemical Company.

Each day of the weekend’s training consisted of four stations: fixed-wing aircraft decontamination; Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System training; troop decontamination using Mission Oriented Protective Posture level 4; and familiarity with the Air Guard’s equipment used to detect chemical, biological and radiological materials.

“The Air National Guard’s fire department here has absolutely been fantastic in accommodating us and making sure that both the Army and the Air Guard get excellent training out of this,” said Army 1st Lt. Kristofer Baumgartner, 231st commander. “This is something that the Soldiers are absolutely looking forward to. They hadn’t had this kind of unique training before, and they’re using this as an opportunity to learn new skills.”

- 1st Lt. Kristofer Baumgartner

“So, it’s an invaluable asset for us to be able to come out here and join our friends at the Air National Guard and understand how other units do things.”

A retired A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft with a brand new paint job, slotted to be used as a static display, gave

the Soldiers a full-sized aircraft to work with. This allowed them to conduct realistic training without taking an aircraft out of operation, freeing it up to do flights and minimizing potential damage.

Although it was a display model, Soldiers still received a safety brief on approaching the aircraft and avoiding its danger zones. Army Staff Sgt. Aaron Edwards, platoon sergeant for DECON Platoon, explained to his group of Soldiers the extreme importance of decontaminating the aircraft’s wheels and areas that the pilots may touch, to allow the aircraft to return to and stay in the fight.

This period of training was also drill weekend for the Maryland Air National Guard. The mechanics were repairing, pilots were flying, the support staff was hard at work, and Airmen, Soldiers, and even the Civil Air Patrol filled the dining facility.

“I hope we can do some more [training] in the future,” said McCroy. “Maybe we can expand it to some other

By Staff Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



things; we already discussed the possibility of a field exercise in the future.”

Air Force Tech Sgt. Michael Cruz conducts a familiarity course on HAZMAT symbols.

After the joint training proposal received the green light through the respective chains of command, the two organizations moved forward to obtain training areas, schedule events, coordinate training with the 175th Emergency Management, and secure an aircraft from the 175th Maintenance Squadron.

Training in a joint environment allows Service members to build relationships, learn best practices, work with different equipment, and increase specific skills in an unfamiliar environment.

Senior Airmen Joe Galloway, a firefighter, uses the Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System to perform a radio communication check.

When asked what he considered the best part of the training, Sgt. Jonny Kincaid, a 4th Platoon section leader in the 231st and member of the chemical strike team for the International Monetary Fund, said, “Seeing some of my colleagues and some of the [junior] enlisted Soldiers get into the suits (JSLIST) and go

through everything.”

Team members don MOPP Level 4 or the Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology (JSLIST) to carry out their mission. The proper wear of this equipment is vital for completing the mission safely, so team members constantly monitor each other and correct malfunctions.

“I’m pretty knowledgeable in what I do, and [I’m] always into learning other techniques. I’m willing to learn each and every technique I can,” Kincaid added.

Air Force Staff Sgt. Mike Dowling and Airmen Andrea Chaves, both in emergency management, demonstrate the proper wear of some of the equipment that fire fighters wear.

The 175th Civil Engineering Fire and Emergency Services Flight is considered a Prime BEEF civil engineer unit by the Air Force. Nothing to do with steaks, it means Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force, an organization that could be tasked with setting up a bare base.

“Whenever we deploy to a combat zone, it’s never what you think it will be. We may be working with the Air

Guard, Marine Corps, other units, [or] other countries even,” said Baumgartner. “So, it’s an invaluable asset for us to be able to come out here and join our friends at the Air National Guard and understand how other units do things.”





- Brig. Gen. Linda Singh

“The nation today needs men and women that think in terms of service to their country and not in terms of their country’s debt to them.”

Maryland Army Guard gets first female, African-American commander

*Article by Sgt. Crystal Hudson
Photos by Sgt. Regina Glott,
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

In a ceremony with more than 250 Soldiers attending, Brig. Gen. Linda L. Singh assumed command of the Maryland Army National Guard from Brig. Gen. Peter C. Hinz, at the Fifth Regiment Armory, Nov. 3.

Hinz is retiring after more than 40 years of military service, and after three years as assistant adjutant general of Maryland-Army, the position that holds the responsibility of commanding all Maryland Army National Guard units.

“I am so humbled and so honored, especially [in] the past three years as commander of the Maryland Army National Guard, by the quality of the force and the great work that everyone has done,” said Hinz. “But I would like to challenge the

members of the [Maryland] Army Guard to keep it up.”

Singh, the former director of the Maryland Army National Guard joint staff, becomes both the first woman and first African-American to command the Maryland Army National Guard.

She recognizes the significance of her achievement and the motivation she provides to women and people with diverse backgrounds.

“People are looking to see that they have role models that look like them at the top,” Singh said.

She began her military career in 1981, and spent 11 years as an enlisted Soldier. In 1991, she earned distinguished graduate of the Maryland Army National Guard Officer Candidate School.





Throughout her military career, she has served at levels of command ranging from company through regimental, as well as in various staff assignments.

Singh has graduated from both the U.S. Army War College and the Army Command and General Staff College.

Her military awards include the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with two bronze oak leaf clusters, the Maryland Distinguished Service Cross, and the Maryland Meritorious Service Medal, among others.

As a civilian, Singh is the managing director in the public safety portfolio for a large consulting firm based in Arlington, Va. She holds master's degrees in Strategic Studies and

Business Administration, a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, and a Master Certificate in Six Sigma.

During the ceremony, Singh addressed the many Soldiers that are now under her command with words of encouragement.

"The nation today needs men and women that think in terms of service to their country and not in terms of their country's debt to them," Singh said.

She stressed the importance of each Soldier that makes up the Maryland Army National Guard.

"I would be remiss if I didn't thank you," said Singh, "the Soldiers that continue to give me the inspiration and the drive to do more and be better than I am today."

On the +LINE



Simulated missions realistic conditions

The Nonrated Crewmember Manned Module (NCM₃) simulator enables aviation personnel to operate together as flight crews to complete simulated missions under realistic conditions.



EXERCISE Active Shooter EXERCISE

Baltimore County Police SWAT team members and Maryland Air National Guard Security Forces participated in an active shooter exercise at Martin State Airport on Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2014. The active shooter exercise allowed first responders from the Warfield Air National Guard Base and the local police a chance to work together in a simulated situation.



Live feed from Afghanistan

Family and friends gathered at Ravens Stadium on Nov. 8, 2013, to test a live feed from Afghanistan with members of the Maryland Army National Guard in preparation for the Nov. 10 Veterans Day game celebration. This marked the seventh consecutive year the Baltimore Ravens will kick-off the Veterans Day pregame



activities with a live message on Ravens Vision from deployed members of the Guard.



Care packages for Soldiers

Integral Components in Westminster, Md., held their annual Christmas luncheon Nov. 22, 2013, where they packed more than 70 care packages for deployed Soldiers of the MD National Guard. For the 5th year in a row owners Russ and Bill Keiser invited members of the Guard for lunch and to join their "packing party" as they stuffed boxes with holiday treats, books and even iPods fully loaded with movies and music.



Bravo Co. 642nd ASB in Kuwait

Lt. Gen. William E. Ingram, Jr., director, Army National Guard, and Command Sgt. Maj. Brunk W. Conley visited the Soldiers of the Maryland Army National Guard's Bravo Company, 642nd Aviation Support Battalion in Kuwait on Dec. 26, 2013.



Military Officers Association of America Award

The Maryland Council of the Military Officers Association of America presented its 2013 outstanding unit award to Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment of the Maryland Army National Guard during a ceremony Jan., 11, 2014, at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Edgewood Area. Charlie Company, a medical evacuation helicopter company, conducted 713 medical evacuation missions for 975 troops during their recent deployment to Afghanistan.

"When I looked at this, I just thought wow," said Brig. Gen. Linda Singh, commander of the Maryland Army National Guard. "Because at any given time I could have been one of those patients you evacuated out. I hope you realize the magnitude to the contribution of the overall effort."



Officer Candidate School Graduation 2013

Nine Citizen-Soldiers from the Maryland Army National Guard graduated from Officer Candidate School Nov. 2, 2013, at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation. Immediately following the commissioning ceremony, the newly commissioned second lieutenants were pinned with their badge of rank and received their first salute.

FORSCOM FEMA Region III Conference

U.S. Army Forces Command held a Federal Emergency Management Agency Region III adjutants general conference at Fort McHenry National Monument, in Baltimore, Md., Nov. 14, 2013. FEMA Region III consists of Maryland, District of Columbia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.



Combat Lifesaver Training

Soldiers with the 110th Information Operations Battalion conduct combat lifesaver training at Gunpowder Military Reservation in Glen Arm, Md., Nov. 9, 2013.

BiH's Armed Forces Day

Members of the Maryland National Guard attended the Armed Forces Day reception hosted by the Ambassador and the Defense Attaché of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Embassy in Washington, D.C., on Dec. 11. This is the 8th anniversary of the unification of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Maryland Guard was well represented during Ambassador Jadranka Negodic and Colonel Vučić, the Defense Attaché's formal remarks.





1229th TC's Cup of Joe

Soldiers from the 1229th Transportation Company headquartered in Baltimore, enjoyed a well earned coffee break during their deployment to Afghanistan. WAWA sent them a big box of coffee and cups so the unit sent them this picture and say thank you.

Kosovo Force 17

Maryland Army National Guard Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment, assembled for a group photo. The unit deployed to Kosovo March 20, 2013, to support Nato-led Kosovo Force 17. (Photo by Lt. Col. Armen Martirosyan, Armenian Peacekeeping Brigade)



Freedom Salute Ceremony SOD-J

Maryland National Guard Soldiers from the Special Operations Detachment – Joint participated in a Freedom Salute Ceremony Nov. 17, 2013. Citizen Soldiers from SOD-J deployed to Afghanistan 2012-2013 to support the development of Afghan Special Operations Forces.



Christmas trees for troops

Dan Simons, the managing partner of Hubbard Funeral Home, generously donated more than 200 Christmas trees to the members of the Maryland National Guard on Dec. 7. Some Soldiers from the 115th Military Police Battalion came all the way from Salisbury, Md., to get free trees.



State Energy Database Participation Award

The Maryland Military Department received the Maryland Energy Cup's Best State Energy Database Participation Award for exceeding the standard in its efforts to maintain the completion and accuracy of utility data in the state energy database. Olatunde Babalola, energy manager, and Maj. Gen. James A. Adkins, the adjutant general of Maryland, accepted the award during a ceremony hosted by Governor Martin O'Malley in Annapolis Md., on Feb. 6, 2014.





Freestate ChalleNGe Academy

The Maryland National Guard Freestate ChalleNGe Academy graduated 126 cadets during a ceremony at the Aberdeen Proving Ground Post Theater on Dec. 14, 2013. The 22-week residential portion of the program is followed-up with a 12-month mentoring phase designed to aid graduates' adjustment to the world of employment and follow-on education. The Freestate ChalleNGe Academy was established in 1993 and has graduated more than 4,000 cadets since its inception.

(Photos by Sgt. Breeanna Pierce, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Service members serving their communities

Members of the Maryland National Guard volunteered to help serve their community by working with the Catholic Charities Our Daily Bread soup kitchen in Baltimore on Saturday, Nov. 30. Eleven Soldiers from Headquarters Company of the 1-175th Infantry Regiment from Dundalk, Md. worked in the soup kitchen this Thanksgiving holiday season to help those less fortunate and homeless. "Each day Our Daily Bread in Baltimore serves more than 400 meals a day to the hungry and homeless," said 1st Lt. Brandon

Williams. "This is a great way for us to give back to the citizens of Baltimore." Williams the event organizer, works full-time for the Catholic Charities homeless shelter just across the street from the soup kitchen and sees the need for volunteers.



A look at black history in the Maryland Guard: Brig. Gen. Allyson Solomon

By Staff Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington,
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The United States Army Air Forces, which became the U.S. Air Force in 1947, was home to the 332nd Fighter Group “Redtails” piloted by the Tuskegee Airmen. Until 1948 women were not allowed to serve in the U.S. military.

On May 15, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the bill into law that established the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps, “for the purpose of making available to the national defense the knowledge, skill, and special training of women of the nation.”

- Brig. Gen. Allyson Solomon

“It was an interesting time in 1979. Women were still new to the Maryland Air National Guard.”

Fort Des Moines, Iowa, operated the first WAAC training center, and the first group of women arrived July 20, 1942; there were 565 in the group – 125 enlisted and 440 officer candidates. Only 40 of the black women who wanted to join to become officers were selected to attend the WAAC Officer Candidate School.

On July 1, 1943, the WAAC became the Women’s Army Corps and a part of the Army of the United States, a conscripted force allowed by Congress during times of war and last used during Vietnam.

As with American society at the time, the newly created WAC was racially segregated and did not extend the same benefits to women as those to which the men were entitled.

In 1948, President Harry Truman signed Executive Order 9981, stating,

“There shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale.”

Brig. Gen. Allyson Solomon, the assistant adjutant general – Air, Maryland National Guard, is a woman who has broken many barriers and achieved many historic firsts.

Born in Trinidad and Tobago, she immigrated to the U.S. at a young age. Solomon enlisted in the Air National Guard following high school, a choice she did not think would last more than three years. Although she met with trying times, she did not let the difficulties stop her from continuing to serve.

“The squadron I enlisted to when I joined in 1979, there were three women. I was one of three and a handful of blacks in the whole squadron,” said Solomon. “It was an interesting time in 1979. Women were still new to the Maryland Air National Guard.”

In 2003, Solomon became the first black female colonel in the Maryland Air National Guard; in 2008, she was promoted to brigadier general, the highest position in the Air National Guard; and she also became the first black and first female selected to lead the Maryland Air National Guard as assistant adjutant general. Later, in 2009, she was inducted into the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame.



“Being one of a few women in an organization certainly does have its share of challenges,” said Solomon. “There is certainly much more connection across the spectrum of race today than [there] was since when I first moved here or joined the military.”

The Women’s Armed Services Integration Act, in 1948, set the stage to allow women to serve in the military without institutionalized discrimination. However, the battle against segregation was not so easily won, especially in the Maryland Guard, despite the signing of E.O. 9981. It took many years of struggle before Service members began to change and embrace equality.

“Having been enlisted for seven years prior and going through basic training, officer training was nothing compared to that,” said Solomon. “It is the foundation of every decision I make today, because I think about Airman Basic Allyson Solomon, when I make decisions. At the end of the day, that [decision-making] impacts Airman Basic whoever.”





A look at black history in the Maryland Guard: retired Command Sgt. Maj. Wilson J. Thornton Jr.

By Staff Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

In 1776, Congress passed legislation allowing black men to enlist in the armed services. Following that decision, approximately 7,000 black men enlisted in the Army to defend America during the Revolutionary War. Throughout the nation's history, they continued to play significant roles in the U.S. military.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation declared freedom for slaves in states not under Union control, allowing blacks to fight for the

Union. That same year, the 19th Regiment Infantry, U.S. Colored Troops, Maryland Volunteers was formed in Benedict, Md. The 19th was comprised of a mixture of free blacks and of slaves purchased by the U.S. government for their freedom and service as Soldiers.

In 1866, Congress authorized six segregated regiments of Soldiers who later became known as the "Buffalo Soldiers." There were several all-black units in the Army, which included the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion "Triple Nickels," the 758th Tank Battalion (Light) "Tuskers," and the 2nd Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) "Buffalo Rangers," among others.

"We didn't realize that the Army was really segregated, because we thought it was the norm," said retired Command Sgt. Maj. Wilson J. Thornton Jr., the first black state command sergeant major of the Maryland National Guard. "At Fort Benning, Ga., we actually went through separate serving lines at the dining hall."

In 1948, President Harry Truman signed Executive Order 9981, stating, "There shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale."

"There were some advantages to being in a segregated unit," added Thornton, "because you didn't have to compete for rank Army-wide. All you had to do was be better than the guys in your unit."

Thornton was a member of the 231st Transportation Truck Battalion, now the 229th Main Support Battalion. The 231st can trace its lineage to an 1879 all-black independent city militia company in Baltimore, "The Monumental City Guards." The unit was accepted into the Maryland National Guard as an infantry company in 1882 and redesignated the 1st Separate Company.

In 1946, the unit was reorganized and federally recognized as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 231st Transportation Corps Truck Battalion, with responsibility for three truck companies. On Aug. 19, 1950, the 231st mobilized to serve in Korea and became the only Maryland National Guard unit ordered to active duty to support the Korean War.

During wartime, the 231st served as an integrated unit. Upon its demobilization and return to Maryland, many 231st officers refused to serve in a segregated unit. In November 1955, Gov. Theodore McKeldin issued an order to end racial segregation in the Maryland National Guard, making Maryland the first state below the Mason-Dixon Line to integrate its National Guard.

During the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Maryland Guard members were called on to help contain disturbances throughout the state. In September 1963, then Sgt. 1st Class Thornton and his unit were sent to Cambridge, Md., during the rioting.

Thornton recalled a moment when an activist met with Maj. Gen. George Gelston, who was the equivalent of a task force commander during the 1963



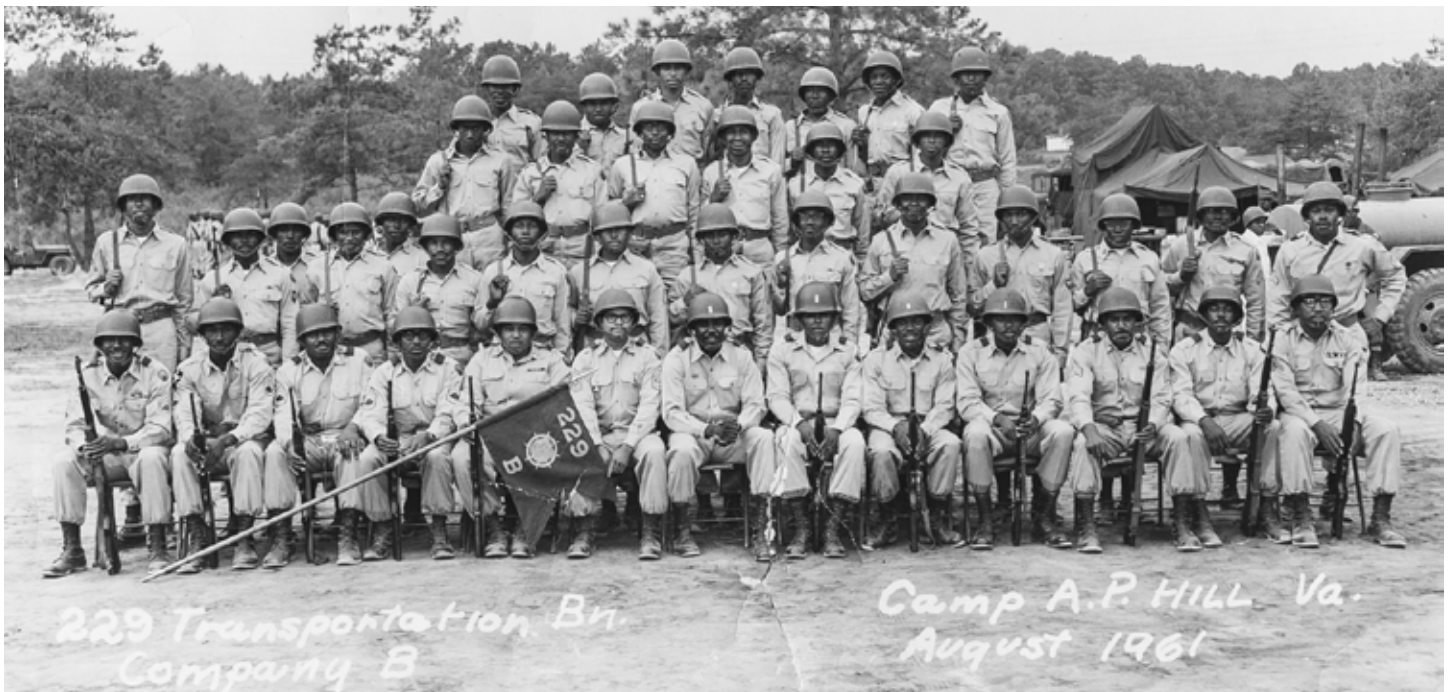
riots, and told him that his troops were segregated and they had nothing more to discuss.

“He [Gelston] turned around and told the battalion commander to ‘get this thing straightened out right now!’” recalled Thornton.

“At that point, that battalion integrated. All the assignments from that point on were integrated assignments with mixed troops at all the duty stations and duty points,” said Thornton. “That was the first integration that I experienced in the Maryland Guard.”

- Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Wilson J. Thornton Jr.,

“ We didn’t realize that the Army was really segregated, because we thought it was the norm.”



Star Spangled 200



The U.S. Navy Blue Angels are welcomed to Martins State Airport on Monday, Dec. 9 to announce the Star-Spangled Air Show, scheduled for Sept. 13-14, 2014. The air show will take place during Star-Spangled Spectacular, a free 10-day festival celebrating the 200th birthday of our national anthem.

The pilots are in Baltimore to conduct familiarization flights of the local area in advance of their performance.

The Maryland Air National Guard is providing logistical support to the Blue Angels for the two-day festival featuring multiple acts flying above the waters of the Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine.



Operation Harbor Assault

By Staff Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington, Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office





Maj. Gen. James A. Adkins, the adjutant general of Maryland, visited the 32nd Civil Support Team (Weapons of Mass Destruction) during Operation Harbor Assault at North Locust Point Marine Terminal in Baltimore, Md., Oct. 31, 2013. The joint exercise included the harbor police as well as a Baltimore SWAT team, hazardous material unit and explosive ordnance disposal unit. The Biological Agent Identification and Counter-Terrorism training focused on the local, state and federal response to potential terrorist activity. The agencies involved responded in real time, and worked on increasing communication and cooperation between the respective agencies.





Distinguished Flying Cross

by Tech. Sgt. David Speicher
175th Wing Public Affairs

Ninety Soldiers lived to fight another day due to the efforts of several A-10C Thunderbolt II pilots of the Maryland Air National Guard.

“I saw tracer fire and I knew I was getting shot at,” said Lt. Col. Paul C. Zurkowski, the 104th Fighter Squadron commander. “I turned away from the ground fire and got right back into providing fire support.”

It all started with enemy contact in a desert valley in Afghanistan with unpleasant weather. When the A-10s were called into the fight, fuel became an issue for them. One A-10 would stay on station, while the other went to refuel in an effort to provide combat air support.

“At that point I provided four passes with 30mm cannon, concentrating fires on that northern ridgeline,” said Zurkowski.

Throughout those passes Zurkowski communicated mission updates with Maj. Christopher D. Cisneros, his wingman, who was in-flight refueling by an orbiting KC-135 Stratotanker.

“Starting on the fourth pass, Cisneros was eight minutes away from the target area. At this point I am out of ammunition and I am below bingo fuel (a level of fuel where the pilot must return to base). I am not going to make it to the tanker,” said Zurkowski. “I inform the JTAC (Joint Terminal Attack Controller) on the ground that it will be about seven minutes until there is another A-10 on station (target area). So there is a break in coverage for about seven minutes.”

Full Tank Plenty of Ammo

“I get a brief hand-off,” said Cisneros, an instructor pilot for the 104th Fighter Squadron. “It

sounded like they needed ordnance right away.”

Cisneros still needed to navigate around weather and terrain to get to the target area.

‘Ordnance right away’ has to be balanced with the safety of the coalition troops in contact with the enemy.

“We want to find the friendlies. I had a difficult time seeing the friendlies because of the weather. There were lightning strikes and these guys really needed my assistance,” recalled Cisneros. “Anytime you employ ordnance you are concerned where friendly v.s. enemy positions.”

“As I checked in with the JTAC, I got the vibe that they wanted to make sure I employ [weapons] ASAP on the enemy,” added Cisneros.

Communication with the ground troops was difficult because the coalition forces were engaged in the intense firefight.

“They were under too much fire to make corrections (to the attacks he executed),” said Cisneros. “

Two other A-10s joined the fight. All of the engaged pilots neutralized the enemy and provided cover to HH-60 Pave Hawk casualty evacuation helicopters.

Danger Close

Cisneros remembered a conversation with one of the JTACs who took direct fire from the enemy.

“I’m shot, I’m handing the radio over to someone else,” said the JTAC to Cisneros. “[It was] danger close. You could tell by his voice, we hit the right target.”

Danger close means that to hit the enemy, the attack pilot is risking collateral damage to friendly forces. In the end, coalition forces emerged without a loss of life.

“They got all 90 of the coalition (members out) and the wounded

were airlifted to nearby medical treatment facilities,” said Cisneros. “It was definitely the most challenging mission I’ve flown.”

“You saved a lot of lives!”

“I landed at Bagram and had maintenance look the plane over for battle damage,” said Zurkowski. “That is when they found the two bullet holes in the airplane...I knew I had been shot at, but I didn’t know I had been hit until then.”

The next day the two pilots visited the wounded JTACs in the Bagram hospital. Cisneros recalled a JTAC asking “Are you the A-10 that stayed when the weather got really bad?”

When the two Thunderbolt pilots responded ‘yes’, the JTAC said, “Brilliant! You saved a lot of lives!”

“For an A-10 pilot there is no greater satisfaction then to meet the

guys you helped that day and hear them say - ‘You are the reason I am alive today,’” said Cisneros.

Distinguished Flying Cross

Lt. Col. Paul C. Zurkowski and Major Christopher D. Cisneros were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor for their efforts during an engagement in Afghanistan. The two pilots were deployed from the Maryland Air National Guard in the 104th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron.

“We in the Maryland Air National Guard are well trained and will rise to any occasion. These two pilots achieved what we all strive for,” said Brig. Gen. Allyson R. Solomon, assistant adjutant general-Air. “It’s a testament to the fabulous people we have in this organization. They excelled when given the opportunity and we are proud of their accomplishments.”





Final Frame

Photo by Sgt. Crystal Hudson

Maryland National Guard Counterdrug Task Force, Aviation Support pilots fly a training mission over the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, Jan. 8, 2014. The pilots flew one of the four UH-72A Lakota helicopters added to the Maryland National Guard's flying assets.