

THE

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LINE



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THE Maryland LINE

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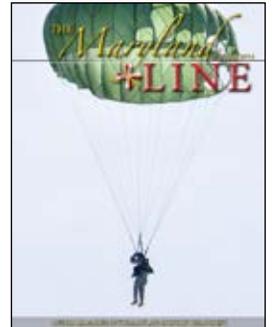
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Maryland Army National Guard Soldiers from C Troop, 1st Squadron, 158th Cavalry Regiment conducted parachute drops on March 7, 2014, at Pappy Tidwell Drop Zone in Mechanicsburg, Pa. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Donald Claxton)

Governor: Martin O'Malley

Adjutant General: Maj. Gen. James A. Adkins

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Maryland National Guard facility will be named in honor of a fallen Soldier

ANNAPOLIS, MD (May 14, 2014) -The Maryland Board of Public Works approved the naming of a Maryland National Guard facility after a local Maryland Army National Guard member who lost his life while serving in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The physical fitness center at Camp Frettered Military Reservation in Reisterstown, Maryland, will be named in honor of Maj. Robert J. Marchanti II, who was killed in action in Kabul, Afghanistan on Feb. 25, 2012.

“Naming this facility in honor of Maj. Marchanti is fitting tribute for a man who dedicated his entire life to serving his students, neighbors, and fellow citizens,” said Governor Martin O’Malley. “His sacrifice is yet another example of the bravery of men and women who willingly risk their lives every day to protect the country they so valiantly serve.”

Marchanti, who was 48 at the time, died of wounds received during an attack on the Afghan Interior Ministry. He was

married and had four children and one grandson. He was a Baltimore native and worked full-time in the Construction and Facilities Management Office at the 5th Regiment Army in Baltimore.

He joined the active duty Army in 1984 before joining the Maryland National Guard in 1986. He has also served as a physical education teacher in the Baltimore County School System.

“We will always remember Bob’s dedication and service as we honor his selfless sacrifice,” said Maj. Gen. James Adkins, the adjutant general of Maryland. “I am pleased that we can help to ensure that his memory will live on for his family and generations of service members to come.”

The dedication ceremony will be held on a future date to be determined.



Enlistees learn about Service members' sacrifices in past wars

By Sgt. Margaret Taylor, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

When some of the Maryland Army National Guard's newest Soldiers visited the war memorials in Washington, D.C., on April 12, they found more than they expected.

Sgt. 1st Class Kevin McCluskey, a MDARNG recruiter and the tour's organizer, brought a group of approximately 30 Soldiers down from Camp Fretterd Military Reservation near Reisterstown, Md., in order to give them a change of scenery.

These Soldiers are in the Recruit Sustainment Program, which introduces new National Guard recruits to the fundamentals of soldiering and the traditions of the Army. When enlistees graduate from RSP after completing their basic and military occupational specialty training, they join their units as fully qualified Soldiers.

"I don't think they get enough military history early in their careers," said McCluskey, a resident of Baltimore. "I figured we'd let them learn about the people [who] came before them."

McCluskey and other RSP cadre gave short lectures on the facts and figures of the conflict memorialized by each monument. The Soldiers started at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall, stopped at the Vietnam Women's Memorial, took a walk through the World War II and Korean War memorials, and then crossed

the bridge over the Potomac River to see the U.S. Marine Corps Memorial statue at Arlington Cemetery.

One of the Soldiers, Pvt. Philip Litz, whose family lives in Blauvelt, N.Y., though he currently attends the University of Maryland at College Park, said he found the experience to be more than he'd expected.

"I was walking down the Vietnam memorial and reading all of the names," said Litz, an infantryman in training. "I saw my own reflection in that wall, and I kind of realized that all those people are basically the same person that I am – we're all Soldiers."

Those names on the wall stood out. The RSP Soldiers were taken aback to find that they stood out as well.

Because the visit occurred on a duty day, all the Soldiers came in their duty uniform, the Army combat uniform or ACUs. Other visitors took notice of the RSP group as ACUs hardly blend well in a crowd. They frequently stopped to thank the new Soldiers for their service, to applaud, or even to have a photo taken with one of them.

On occasion, an older gentleman or two, in a wheelchair or leaning on a cane, would call out in passing 'I was in the 82nd,' or 'I served in Korea,' simply upon seeing the younger faces in uniform. In an instant, a camaraderie spanning half a century and several generations came into being.

Several of the Soldiers found the praise unnerving, however, especially since their time in service is just beginning.

- Pvt. Philip Litz

“I saw my own reflection in that wall, and I kind of realized that all those people are basically the same person that I am – we're all Soldiers.”

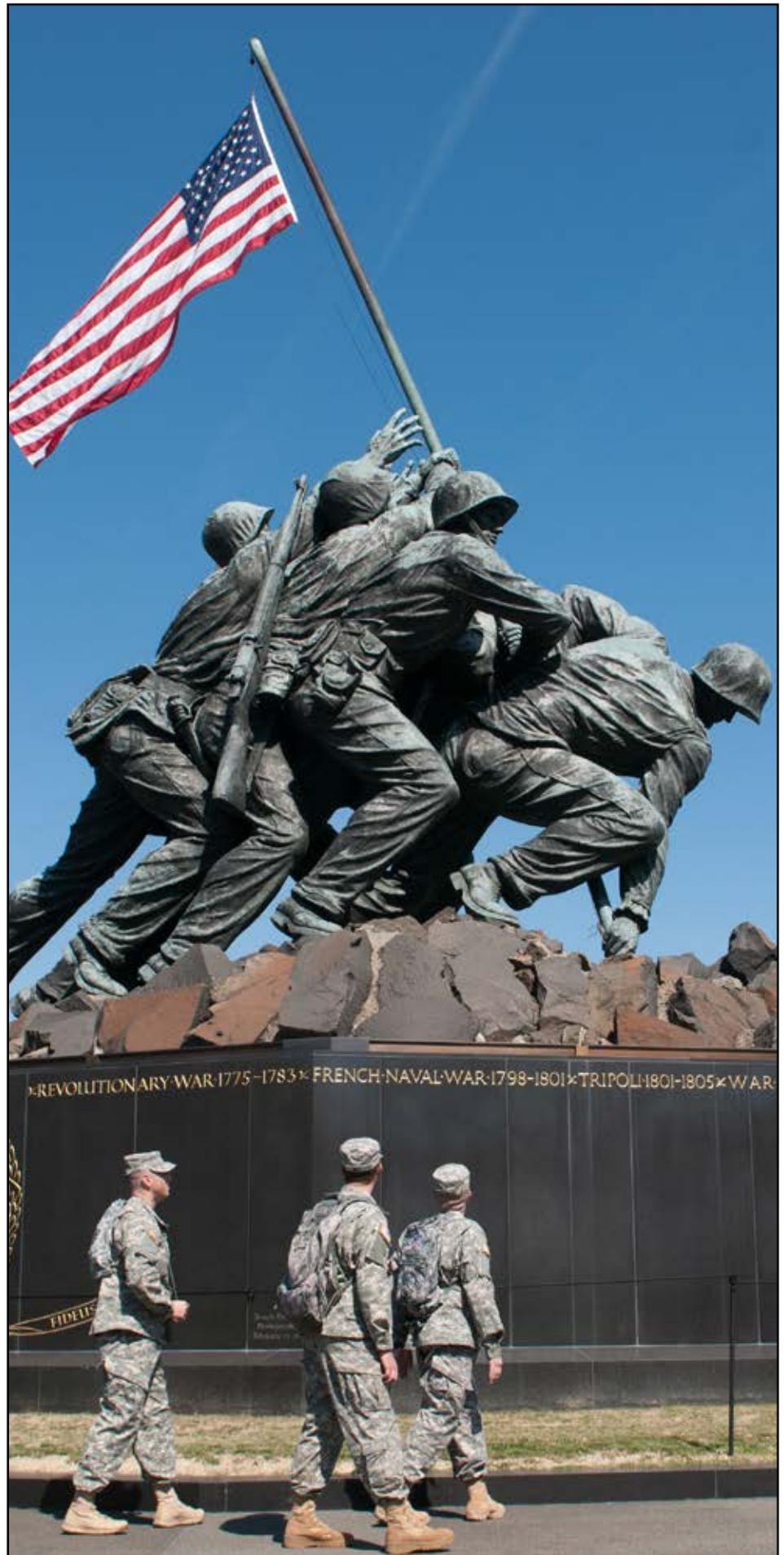


“[This praise] is new, so you don’t really know how to react,” said Pvt. Evan Andrew, an infantryman and Baltimore native. “I didn’t join to get attention.”

He said he joined to serve, to help people, to do his part and gain purpose for his life – reasons many, many others have shared. That he and the other RSP Soldiers were praised for their service was something he said he found surprising, but welcome nonetheless.

“It makes you feel connected,” Andrews said.

This sense of connection will hopefully encourage the newest generation of Maryland Guard Soldiers to continue the proud tradition of all those who’ve gone before them, and to lead those who come after.



Will you be mine?

Maryland Guard members build stronger bonds

By Sgt. Regina S. Glott, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

They gazed into one another's eyes with sincerity, holding hands. She looked up at her husband with a nervous grin. He met his wife's gaze, smiling slightly, but staying mostly solemn. The roundness of her belly on her small frame filled the space between them.

The chaplain recited the renewal of wedding vows for the couple as they stood in front of the pulpit. The pregnant wife and husband seemed unaware of anything but each other in this moment, and their anticipation grew as the pastor drew closer to reciting the familiar words.

"Do you take this woman to be your wife again?" asked the chaplain.

With conviction, the husband answered, "I do."

The emotional atmosphere in the room was intense. The woman's eyes started to well with tears as she listened for her cue, grasping her husband's hands tighter.

Then, it was her turn. "Do you take this man to be your husband, again?" asked the chaplain.

She paused for a second and stared into her husband's eyes before responding, "I do."

The couple, Maryland Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Christopher Baldwin and wife, Shayna, had a romantic Valentine's Day weekend to remember. Instead of the typical dinner date, they chose to attend a "Strong Bonds" event in Annapolis, Md., to renew their vows and learn how to be better partners.



- Shayna Baldwin

“I learned a lot about communicating in my marriage, and I feel a lot better now. It was great.”

The Strong Bonds relationship-building workshop is featured as part of a free weekend retreat and teaches Soldiers and Family members how to develop better relationships. Strong Bonds retreats are held year-round and the tracks are aligned to the needs of singles, couples or families.

"Our goal is to help marriages survive the cost of serving in the Army National Guard and to teach couples resiliency skills to help them build happy, healthy [and] lasting marriages," said Col. William Lee, the state chaplain for the Maryland Guard. "We teach a Prevention Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) curriculum chosen from the University of Denver, based on 20 years of marriage study on how to have successful marriages that are satisfying and last."

The educational retreat includes a free two-night hotel stay at a destination getaway with meals and licensed childcare provided. Soldiers can even be paid to attend this training under a split-train status in lieu of drill.

"We are very thankful," said Christopher, who is the Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear non-commissioned officer for the



Maryland Guard's 110th Information Operations Battalion. "It's a free hotel for two days, [including] meals and childcare. You can't beat it."

The couple was initially apprehensive at talking about their marriage in a group environment. Baldwin and his wife have four children and expect another child in June 2014. Shayna said it's often hard for the two of them to find childcare and to spend time alone.

This was the first Valentine's Day they had spent together since 2005 because of her husband's job, said Shayna. "It was really special to me that we got to have time alone, away from the outside distractions of everyday life," she said.

According to Shayna, her husband has always been there through the years to support their family during tough times. She said he went out of his way to be there when they had a death in the family and when their son was fighting cancer.

"I'm shy and was hesitant at first, but it was fun and I'm glad I came," said Shayna. "I learned a lot about communicating in my marriage, and I feel a lot better now. It was great."

175th Civil Engineer Squadron participate in Silver Flag Exercise

U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Gareth Buckland

Members of the Maryland Air National Guard's 175th Civil Engineer Squadron (CES) set up a Mobile Aircraft Arresting System (MAAS) during the practical application portion of the Silver Flag exercise, on March 27, 2014. The Silver Flag exercise at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, simulates training relevant to building a bare base in a deployed environment.



Firefighters conduct structural fire training on March 24, 2014.



Air Force Staff Sgt. Steven Unglesbee, 175th CES, uses a bull float, a cement-finishing tool, to even out the surface of a concrete pad during the construction project portion of the Silver Flag exercise, March 24, 2014.



I-158th CAV dominates at Best Warrior Competition

By Staff Sgt. Michael E. Davis, Jr., 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The Maryland Army National Guard conducted its 2014 Best Warrior Competition at Camp Fretterd and Gunpowder Military Reservations – near Reisterstown and in Glen Arm, Md. – to determine this year’s best noncommissioned officer and Soldier, March 13-16.

Sgt. Michael L. Firth from C Co., 1st Squadron, 158th Cavalry Regiment, was named

NCO of the Year, and Spc. Michael Robinson, from the same unit, was named Soldier of the Year.

Staff Sgt. Michael Casterline from 1100th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group and Spc. Jesse Spencer from C Co., 1st Battalion, 169th General Support Aviation Battalion, were the runners-up.

The contest is held each spring to determine Maryland’s finest NCO and Soldier. Qualified ranks, private through specialist, compete for Soldier of the Year, while corporals through sergeants first class compete for NCO of the Year.

Soldiers tested their skills, strength and knowledge in a variety of events – from a written exam, the Army

Physical Fitness Test, land navigation and individual weapons qualification, to a road march and an appearance board. Each event contributed points to a Soldier’s combined score, with the winners, Firth and Robinson, having the highest overall scores.

This year, 10 competitors were chosen from various units to compete in the three-day event. The winners will now





advance to the Region II Best Warrior Competition to represent the MDARNG.

“I wanted to represent my squadron; I wanted to represent my unit, Charlie 1-158 Cavalry,” said Robinson, when asked what drew him to the competition. “I wanted to represent them well, and that’s why I’m here.”

Robinson said he also feels extremely confident that he will continue to represent his unit well when he goes to regionals.

Firth, Robinson’s partner in the competition and a fellow infantryman, said he is also ready and that he has no time for breaks.

“Winning is a mixed blessing,” Firth said.

“Obviously it’s really cool to be on top, it’s great to win, but the hard work starts again tomorrow. Tomorrow I’ve got to go out to run with my rucksack,

study more, and get ready for the next level.”

Firth said this is his first time participating in a BWC and that it felt good to go head-to-head with some of the best in Maryland.

Another competitor, Sgt. April-Mae Ridenour with 32nd Civil Support Team, agreed.

“It’s a lot of fun,” Ridenour said. “You meet a lot of good people, so it’s a good camaraderie – it’s like a morale booster.”

While Ridenour is no stranger to the BWC, having previously competed in 2012, other Soldiers, such as Sgt. Christopher Butler and Spc. Ryan Stotler were the new kids on the block.

Butler and Stotler, of Detachment 1, Headquarters Support Company, 29th Infantry Division, were both first-time competitors and first-

time representatives for their units. Normally, 29th Division Soldiers compete in Virginia’s BWC.

Butler and Stotler both said they were excited to compete, but participating in the BWC meant they had to balance life events along with their normal National Guard duties while getting physically and mentally ready for the event.

“A lot of it was studying the Army Study Guide,” said Butler. “As M-Day Soldiers [who drill] one weekend out of the month and two weeks out of the year, trying to find time during drill weekends, on our own time after work, [or by] meeting up and talking with one another to study – you spend a lot of time trying to prepare for it.”

The other contestants were Sgt. 1st Class Harold Murdock, an Honor Guard member representing the Maryland

Military Department; Sgt. Charles Tucker, 224th Area Support Medical Company; and Spc. Ariel Grissinger, 29th Military Police Company.

After the competition concluded, Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Beyard, the Maryland Army National Guard command sergeant major, commended all participants on a job well done and encouraged other MDARNG Soldiers to aim for next year’s BWC.

“The most important thing leaders can do is try to look in their formations and find our future competitors,” Beyard said. “Some Soldiers you have to actually go to speak with and encourage them to participate, but I would say that for a Soldier coming up through the ranks, participating here and doing well is really good for their career.”



Defense Force supports Towson Univ. students in an

By: Staff Sgt. Michael E. Davis Jr., 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



- Zach Smith

“If there was an [actual] disaster, the people who [participated here] would definitely be prepared for it.”

Selected personnel from the Maryland Defense Force provided support to Towson University's 6th annual Operation STAT, an emergency preparedness exercise. The exercise took place on the campus April 11, 2014.

Operation STAT is an exercise that is designed to give students real-time hands on training for real-life emergencies. This year's scenario centered on a plane, loaded with explosives, crashing into the university's stadium packed with thousands of spectators. The plane explosion causes mass casualties.

“The goal of the exercise is to educate the nursing students here at Towson on how to take care of mass casualties,” said Lt. Col. (MD) Kathy Ogle, a member of the MDDF and a faculty member of Towson University.

The scenario did not involve big-budget Hollywood stunt

devils or loud explosions, but the acting and make-up were believable. The students playing the casualties were from Joppatowne High School and Friends School of Baltimore Middle School.

“It's so much fun,” exclaimed Omeed J. Sharifi, explaining his experience playing a casualty with burns on his leg and face. Sharifi is a student at Friends.

“If there was an [actual] disaster, the people who [participated here] would definitely be prepared for it,” said Zach Smith, one of Sharifi's friends and also a student at Friends.

Their 7th grade social studies teacher, Ms. Erika Smith, was also impressed by the realness of the scenario.

“This year, everything looks more real,” said Ms. Smith, gazing at the training as it was happening.

The nursing students treated victims suffering from small

EXERCISE



injuries like mild cuts and bruises to more serious injuries like head trauma, compound fractures, and third-degree burns.

“She was stable but she inhaled something and she had burns in her throat, so sending her to the ambulance was probably the best call,” said Rebecca Pedron, explaining the injuries of one of her patients. Pedron is a nursing student at Towson University.

1st Lt. (MD) Steven Dustin, an emergency medical technician with the MDDF, provided mentorship to Pedron throughout the training event.

MDDF personnel that helped conduct this training were from the 10th Medical Regiment, the Financial Corps, the Signal Corps, and Troop Command. Local registered nurses and counselors also participated.

Daniel P. Linskey, Chief of the Boston Police Department, served as an observer for

Operation STAT 2014. Linskey was the incident commander during the April 15, 2013, Boston Marathon Bombing.

“There are people alive today, in the city of Boston because of training just like this,” said Linskey. “I would say the most important things we should be investing in across the country is real-time real-life training and exercises. Put first responders and the medical community in situations where they’re actually stressed, under pressure, and dealing with the adrenaline that comes with an event like this.”

“Unfortunately for us there are evil people in the world who do evil things and we need to be able to respond to them to minimize the damages they try to inflict on us,” Linskey added.

- Daniel P. Linskey

“There are people alive today, in the city of Boston because of training just like this.”

Medics awarded Expert Field Medical Badges

By Staff Sgt. Michael E. Davis, Jr., 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



- Maj. Gen. Joseph Carvalho

“The Expert Field Medical Badge is one of the toughest competitions in the military.”



Twelve Soldiers from the Maryland Army National Guard participated in the U.S. Army’s Expert Field Medical Badge competition at Fort Dix, N.J., March 23-April 2.

The EFMB is a military skill identifier, similar in prestige to the Air Assault or Expert Infantryman badges, that any Soldier in the Army’s medical branch may earn after successfully completing a strenuous set of tasks. Many medics entered the competition, but only few made it to the end. Of the 12 MDARNG Soldiers who took part, only four were awarded the prestigious badge of excellence.

U.S. Army Capt. Monique Medina, 1st Lt. Jonathan Woodworth, 2nd Lt. Ellen Broz, members of the 104th Area Support Medical Company, and Spc. David Monk, a member of the 1st Battalion, 175th Infantry Regiment, successfully completed the EFMB’s rigorous series of qualification tests.

The U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command sponsored the EFMB. The competition consisted of a 60-question written test, a day-and-night land navigation course, three combat training lanes involving medical and casualty evacuation, tactical combat casualty care and warrior skills, and a 12-mile road march.

“I’ve been wanting this badge for about ten years now – ever since I joined the Army,” said Medina, a physician assistant with the 104th ASMC.

Medina said she never had the opportunity to compete for the EFMB before. When she learned about the competition, she didn’t hesitate to seize her chance.

In addition to the participants from Maryland, 165 Soldiers from other states and Army components also took

the opportunity to compete in the event. Forty-five of these candidates were victorious including the four from the Maryland Guard.

Earning the EFMB is no walk in the park. Whether participants applied a tourniquet to a simulated casualty, carried a heavy rucksack for 12 miles, or searched for points in the woods in the pitch dark of night, they had to perform such skills and more under stress and in various extreme weather conditions.

Broz, a health service administrator with the 104th ASMC, found all of her points for the day and night land navigation course, but did so while being drenched in pouring rain.

“Night land navigation was pretty hard,” said Broz. “It was raining; it was like doing your pace-count in quick sand.”

The road march concluded the competition’s events. When some of the candidates crossed the finish line with just minutes left on the clock, tears of joy started flowing.

“This is the biggest accomplishment I think I’ve ever had in my whole life up to this point,” said Monk, a combat medic with the 1-175 Inf. Regt.

Many celebrated with their families afterward. Woodworth, despite feeling under the weather, was able to spend his day of victory with his infant daughter, who turned eight weeks old that same day. Woodworth is a nurse with the 104th ASMC.

“The Expert Field Medical Badge is one of the toughest competitions in the military,” said Maj. Gen. Joseph Carvalho, commanding general of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, and of Fort Detrick. “Your body and mind are pushed to the limit: only the strongest and the best [will] qualify for the EFMB.”

PT with the community

By the Unit Public Affairs Representative

Maryland Army National Guard's C Co. 1204th Network Support Company of the 1204th Aviation Support Battalion conducted a community physical training event May 3, 2014, at the Patuxent River Readiness Center in Lexington Park, Md. The PT event was led by Health Revolutions and allowed members of the community interested in fitness to visit the armory.





SOD-J Airborne Operations

Maryland National Guard's Special Operations Detachment - Joint Forces, conducted airborne operations at Phillips Army Airfield at Aberdeen Proving Ground during their drill weekend on April 13, to maintain jump proficiency.

The 1,250-foot static-line jump is a training requirement performed to maintain jump status and it was done with the support of a CH-47 aircraft from the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade. The SOD-J Soldiers were also joined by some troopers from the 1st Squadron, 158th Cavalry Regiment. *(Photos by Lt. Col. Charles Kohler, Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Officer)*





Maryland Defense Force Chaplain awarded O'Grady Award

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



Maryland Military Department chaplains, candidates, and assistants concluded their annual training conference and presented the Order of Chaplain (Capt.) Eugene P. O'Grady Award at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation near Reisterstown, Md., Feb. 26, 2014.



- Mark Kirby

“Accepting the award allows me to see into his life a little more.”

Maryland Defense Force Chaplain (Maj.) Christian Kirby was awarded the O’Grady Award for 2014. Kirby passed away on Jan. 21, 2014. His family accepted the award.

“I fully endorse chaplain Kirby as our nominee for the O’Grady award. He is passionate about inspiring others through selfless service,” written in the nomination letter by Lt. Col. Amy Bennett, commander of the Maryland Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion. “It is important to note, that while he volunteers his personal time to serve in the MDDE, in an unpaid position, his contributions to Soldier care and morale of our unit is invaluable.”

Kirby served as the Maryland Army National Guard Recruit Sustainment Program’s chaplain. Every month he provided ministry, resiliency instruction, and counsel to more than 150 Soldiers. He contributed a spiritual support article to the RSP newsletter

and provided the opening prayer and benediction for RSP graduation ceremonies.

The award was established three years ago to recognize anyone who showed particular efforts to provide for the religious and spiritual support for Maryland Military Department members.

“Accepting the award allows me to see into his life a little more,” said Mark Kirby, Christian’s older brother. “It kind of puts some closure on his passing.”

The three-day conference’s theme was “Support for Mind and Spirit.” This was the 13th annual meeting and brought together chaplains of many different faiths from the Maryland Army and Air National Guard as well as the Maryland Defense Force.

The conference took place at the Weinberg Center while the award presentation took place at the Chaplain O’Grady Chapel.

The chapel and award is named in honor of Chaplain (Capt.) Eugene Patrick

O’Grady, a Baltimore native, who served with the 29th Infantry Division and was the only National Guard chaplain killed while serving in World War II.

O’Grady, born July 5, 1909, became ordained as a Catholic priest in 1935 and entered federal service at Fort Meade, Md., in 1941. He was with the 115th Infantry Regiment as they stormed Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944. While returning to a battalion aid station near Kirchberg, Germany, he was killed in a mortar attack on Nov. 29, 1944.

The chapel was created by an Episcopalian, although requested, it was not recognized as a Protestant Episcopal church for fear that it may be used as a Romish Mass House or as a Baptist Meeting House.

The chapel is an all-inclusive place. There are no specific fixtures for any religion. The conference concluded with an ecumenical service.



On the +LINE



Leaders get creative

Soldiers from the Maryland Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment and 1st Battalion, 169th General Support Aviation Battalion conducted a joint training exercise focused on leadership development May 2, 2014, at Gunpowder Military Reservation, in Glenn Arm, Md. Squad leader's received missions, issued verbal operation orders, and lead squads. This training allowed junior enlisted Soldiers to develop creative solutions to complete missions and negotiate the obstacles encountered.



Command Battlefield Forum

Brig. Gen. Linda Singh, the Maryland Army National Guard commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Beyard, the Maryland Army National Guard command sergeant major, held the first Command Battlefield Forum for a select group of junior enlisted Soldiers at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation near Reisterstown, Md., on May 17, 2014. The Soldiers came from every company in the Maryland Army National Guard. The forum provided Soldiers an opportunity to communicate their concerns and propose solutions to the Maryland Army National Guard leadership. (Photo by Sgt. Breeanna Pierce, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



Maryland team helps Estonian bomb techs fuse camera techniques

Soldiers with the Maryland Army National Guard's 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment demonstrate new equipment provided by the European Command's Humanitarian Mine Action program to the Estonian Rescue Board's Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams at their regional offices from May 19-22, 2014. The EOD technicians are now better equipped to document their missions and to inform the Estonian citizens of the dangers associated with unexploded ordnance.



1297th HHD commander participated in alumni career day

Capt. Chantal Fogarty, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1297th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Maryland Army National Guard, participated in the alumni career day at Mercy High School in Baltimore, Md., March 27, 2014. Career day, held every two years, is an opportunity for alumni to give back to school and its students. Alumni inform students about the different career options available to them. Fogarty has participated in 10 career day events. She initially participated as a racehorse groom and has only missed one event due to an Afghanistan deployment.

(Photos by Staff Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington, Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office)



Combat Hammer 2014

Maj. Gen. James A. Adkins, the adjutant general of Maryland, visited members of the Maryland Air National Guard during Combat Hammer at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida on March 24, 2014. Combat Hammer is a program that evaluates the total air-to-ground weapons system from storage to impact. The program looks at the effectiveness of the munitions and the tactics, techniques, and procedures of the air crew. For many units, this is their first opportunity to train with and employ live ordnance. Maryland sent 12 A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft to Combat Hammer.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



Maryland National Guard Youth Symposium

The annual state youth symposium was held April 4-6 at the Hunt Valley Inn in Hunt Valley, Md. More than 20 members of the Maryland National Guard teen council spent the weekend learning about dating safety, resiliency, and team building. The council is made up of teenagers who have a parent in the Maryland Army or Air National Guard.



Leadership visits Airmen at Joint Base Andrews

Maj. Gen. James Adkins, the adjutant general of Maryland, Brig. Gen. Allyson Solomon, assistant adjutant general – Air, and Chief Master Sgt. Glenn D. Hart, senior enlisted leader, visited Maryland Air National Guard members on active duty tours at Joint Base Andrews, Md., on April 16, 2014. The meeting was a chance to talk with the Airmen about their concerns and let them know that leadership supports them.

Recruiting and Retention Battalion change of command

Maj. George Downey assumed command of the Maryland Army National Guard's Recruiting and Retention Battalion from Lt. Col. Amy Bennett on April 2, 2014, during a change of command ceremony at the 29th Division Hall on Camp Fretterd Military Reservation, near Reisterstown, Md. Downey served in the battalion as the commander of Task Force Two until selected to command the Recruiting and Retention Battalion.

(Photo by Pfc. Julia Lull, Social Media & Marketing Specialist for the Recruiting and Retention Battalion)





Guard members receive MD 400 Distinguished Service Medal

The Maryland Society, Sons of the American Revolution awarded five service members of the National Guard the Maryland 400 Distinguished Service Medal during a luncheon on Feb. 22, 2014, at the Towson Country Club, Towson Md. Lt. Col. John Stevens, Chief Warrant Officer 5 (ret) Richard Jordan, Chief Warrant Officer 5 (ret) Ivan Dooley, Jr., Command Sgt. Maj. James M. Nugent, and Spc. Gregory Hobbs were recognized for their contributions in keeping with the spirit of the medal, awarded for general excellence as a Soldier based on dependability, cooperation, leadership, patriotism and intelligence. The annual luncheon coincided with former President George Washington's birthday which was Feb. 22, 1732, some 282 years ago. The society is an organization that promotes patriotic, historical and educational objectives, including the perpetuation of the memory of the men and women, who by their sacrifices during the American Revolution achieved the independence of the American people.



Col. Casey awarded Legion of Merit

Congratulations to Col. Sean M. Casey, this morning during the monthly Joint Force Headquarters meeting, Maj. Gen. James A. Adkins, the adjutant general of Maryland presented him with the Legion of Merit. Col Casey has distinguished himself by exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service while assigned as the Chief of the Joint Staff and as the Chief of Staff of the Maryland Army National Guard from Oct. 1, 2009 to Jan. 25, 2014.



NASCAR Recruiting Event

Official Maryland Army National Guard Recruiting recruiter, SFC Michael Phillips, along with a team of Maryland Citizen Soldiers spent the day in Bel Air, Md., with the Junkyard Dog, a vehicle built by Maryland National Guard Soldiers. Also making an appearance was the National Guard sponsored #88 NASCAR driven by Dale Earnhardt, Jr. Earnhardt has been voted by fans as NASCAR's most popular driver for 10 consecutive years.



2014 Unity Day

The Maryland Military Department celebrated Unity Day, an event designed to enhance cross-cultural awareness and promote harmony, May 22, 2014, at the Fifth Regiment Armory in Baltimore. Unity Day included displays, artifacts, games/activities, food samples from the different groups as well as live music and dancing. This year's theme was celebrating women. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Stephen Scott, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



First oath of enlistment

Brig. Gen. Linda L. Singh, assistant adjutant general for the Maryland Army National Guard, administered her first oath of enlistment to Louis Langluttig on April 30, 2014, at the Fort Meade Military Entrance Processing Station.





224th ASMC's April Drill

Members of the 224th Area Support Medical Company conducted combat lifesaver training and other basic medical skills, during their battle assembly April 3-6, 2014, at Camp Pendleton, Va. The training prepared the Soldiers for the medical testing lanes that culminated into a mass casualty scenario. *(Photo by the Unit Public Affairs Representative)*



3-126th GSAB's May Drill

Spc. Ajitsingh and Muniz are promoted to the rank of sergeant during their May battle assembly with B Co., 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, on May 2-4, 2014. The unit also held Corrosion Prevention Control training, fire extinguisher training among other training activities. *(Photo by the Unit Public Affairs Representative)*



HHC, 29th CAB's May Drill

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 29th Combat Aviation Brigade's May 3-4 battle assembly included inventories, annual training preparation, Soldier readiness, reenlistments, promotions and awards. *(Photos by the Unit Public Affairs Representative)*



Sgt. James Wright is promoted to the rank of staff sergeant.



Sgt. Andrew Shropshire, Spc. Zedleur Addison, Sgt. Marcus Imhoff, and Staff Sgt. Tarteasha Williams extend their enlistment contracts to continue serving in the Maryland Army National Guard.



1st Lt. Larry Halvorson is promoted to the rank of captain.



CW2 Michael Johnson is awarded the Army Achievement Medal.



Master Sgt. Scott Trimble is awarded the Army Achievement Medal.



Capt. Michelle Johnson is awarded the Army Achievement Medal.



Motorcycle Safety Event Nearly 60 Maryland National Guard

Soldiers spent their Saturday at the Motorcycle Mentorship Safety Event at Fort George G. Meade, Md. While at the event, riders reviewed motorcycle safety policy, learned about riding in the heat and rain, and talked about group riding etiquette. Soldiers got a chance to practice their skills with certified trainers and mentors.



Delegate, TAG visit Elkton Armory

Maj. Gen. James Adkins, the adjutant general of Maryland, and Delegate David Rudolph, Maryland delegate for district 34B, Cecil County, inspected the LTC James Victor McCool Readiness Center, in Elkton, Md., on April 18, 2014. The 100-year old facility is also known as the Elkton Armory and is home to D Co., 1st Battalion, 175th Infantry Regiment. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington, Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office)



Maryland Army National Guard CSM Visits 32nd CST

Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Beyard, the Maryland Army National Guard command sergeant major, visits the Service members of the 32nd Civil Support Team at Fort Meade, Md., on April 30, 2014. Beyard tours the facility and receives a briefing on the unit's capabilities by the Soldiers, explaining their roles and missions. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Davis Jr., 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



Adkins awarded Jeffries Carey National Achievement Award

Maj. Gen. James Adkins, the adjutant general of Maryland, receives the Jeffries Carey National Achievement Award at the 5th Regiment Armory in Baltimore, Md., on May 6, 2014. The National Association for Black Veterans presented the award. The award is named after a Vietnam veteran who led a veterans group which spanned the cultural and ethnic divides of America. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington, Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office)

Senator Mikulski visits Maryland Guard

Senator Barbara Mikulski met with Maryland National Guard leadership at the 5th Regiment Armory, Baltimore, Md., on April 23, 2014. Mikulski backs the formation of a national commission on future Army Force Structure. The senator toured the Maryland National Guard headquarters, and met with Maj. Gen. James Adkins, the adjutant general of Maryland; Brig. Gen. Allyson Solomon, assistant adjutant general – Air; and Brig. Gen. Linda Singh, commander Maryland Army National Guard. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington, Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office)





March Drill for the 224th S&S BN

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment (Security & Support), held their March battle assembly at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa. They conducted MK 19, 40-mm grenade machine gun gunnery, combat lifesaving training, culminating with an 8 hour convoy and mounted casualty evacuations.



Dwayne Morgan receives High School Inspiration Award

Dwayne Morgan, a high school senior basketball star, receives the High School Inspiration Award during a ceremony at St. Frances Academy in Baltimore, Md., on May 16, 2014. Morgan has lived the Army values of duty, selfless service, honor, and integrity on and off the court. Encouraged to play basketball at a young age, Morgan developed and used his skills to stay out of trouble. He's currently ranked 15 for the class of 2014.

The National Guard Inspiration Campaign brings to light powerful stories of struggle and triumph of high school athletes who inspire their communities on and off the field.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael E. Davis Jr., 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



Aviators SWET in fitness center

Maryland Army National Guard aviators and members of the Maryland Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team conduct water training in the Shallow Water Egress Trainer (SWET) at the Community College of Baltimore County fitness center in Dundalk, Md., Feb. 19, 2014. This training helps aviators develop the skills needed to survive a downed helicopter over water.

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



175th Wing Headquarters Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Mrs. Barbara Costello, Costello Construction representative, Ms. Barbara Nemcheck, Project Manager for Burns & McDonnell, U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Scott Kelly, 175th Wing Commander, U.S. Sen. Benjamin Cardin, Maryland, U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Allyson Solomon, Assistant Adjutant General-Air and U.S. Army Maj. Gen. James Adkins, Adjutant General Maryland National Guard, cut the ribbon during a ceremony inside the new 175th Wing headquarters building, March 8, 2014, at Warfield Air National Guard Base, Baltimore, Md. The new facility is the home of the 175th Wing Leadership, Mission Support Group, Medical Group and other wing support functions.

(U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Chris Schepers)



Task Force Razorback in Laredo

Maj. Gen. James A. Adkins, the adjutant general of Maryland visits with his Soldiers assigned to Task Force Razorback in Laredo, Texas on April 1, as they work with U.S. Customs & Border Protection Agents. Their mission is to conduct aerial detection and monitoring to disrupt transnational organizations in support of the Department of Homeland Security. Task Force Razorback supports the Rio Grande Valley and Laredo Border Patrol Sectors, encompassing an 118,000 square-mile area. The National Guard LUH-72 Lakota helicopters are uniquely equipped to communicate with and assist DHS with eyes in the air, both day and night, in a way that no other aviation asset can.

1st Battalion, 175th Infantry Annual Training 2014

More than 400 Citizen Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 175th Infantry, and 9 Soldiers from Bosnia and Herzegovina conduct annual training at Fort Indiantown Gap May 30 to 14 June 2014.

The National Guard State Partnership Program, or SPP, is in its 21st year successfully building long-lasting relationships that today include 68 unique security partnerships involving one-third of the world's nations. The Maryland National Guard established its partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2003 to help stabilize that country following the break-up of Yugoslavia and the ethnic conflict that followed.

(Photos by Maj. Rick Breitenfeldt, Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office.)





*Story by Staff Sgt. Michael Davis and
photos by Sgt. Margaret Taylor, 29th
Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Soldiers of the 231st Chemical Company linked up with the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade to conduct rotary-wing chemical reconnaissance and decontamination operations at Weide Army Heliport, Aberdeen Proving Ground-Edgewood Area, and Lauderick Creek Training Site from April 4-6.



- 1st Lt. Jeffrey Braden

“We’re not just sitting around at home station simulating the training, but we’re out here actually doing it.”

The purpose of the event was to provide realistic training to the 231st and the 29th CAB, developing a positive relationship between the two units and building Soldier morale. The training was also aimed at familiarizing Soldiers with the non-standard decontamination procedures, which included demonstrating the capabilities, as well as cross-training.

“Today our focus was to be carried out in a helicopter to where the enemy chemical attack happened,” said Staff Sgt. Shayla Honablew, a RECON squad leader in the 231st Chem. Co.

“We had troops go out with their chemical equipment and locate any hazardous chemicals, or biological (hazards), or anything that can harm the civilians in the area; while there is a team in the rear that waits to DECON the troops when they come back to make sure that the troops didn’t run into any contaminants along with the aircraft.”

Honablew said the Soldiers used basic Army skills like giving a situation report, performing a 360-degree perimeter check for security, and communicating effectively using a single channel ground and airborne radio system (SINCCARS).

“It’s good to know tactically how to get in and out of an aircraft and do different movement techniques during a tactical





operation,” said 1st Lt. Jeffrey Braden, operations officer with the 231st Chem. Co.

Some of the 231st Soldiers said they enjoyed the training and thought it went well.

“It went pretty smoothly, a lot smoother than what I expected,” said Spc. Christopher Wise, a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) specialist with the 231st Chem. Co.

“This unit is a lot more versatile than what it once was,” Wise added. “We’ve managed to hit the ground running this year, especially with our new chain of command.”

1st Lt. Kristofer Baumgartner, 231st Chem. Co. commander, expressed great enthusiasm toward providing training for his Soldiers.

“The unit is in the available year of the Army force generation cycle,” Baumgartner said.

Generally, when Army National Guard units come back from a deployment, they are given a certain amount of time to recuperate. After that time is over, those

specific units fall back into a window or a year of being deployable, otherwise known as the Army force generation cycle.

“While we’re in this available year, our training focus is on our collective tasks, which utilizes the entire company in a way that they would perform during a deployment,” Baumgartner said. “This training accomplishes that requirement and allows my Soldiers to get motivating training with aviation units that they would not normally receive.”

This is the first time the 231st Chem. Co. has worked with rotary-wing aircraft.

“We’re very grateful to the 29th CAB for their support and their willingness to help us train in this environment,” Baumgartner said.

The 231st Chem. Co. Soldiers said they appreciate the training they conducted.

“I give a lot of credit to our new commander, because he’s stepping out and taking us outside the box of what we normally do to push us and make us utilize all that we have to complete our mission,” Honablew said. “It’s really been awesome,

[and] morale has gone up. I mean how many people get to say that they got the chance to fly around in the helicopter to perform their mission? Usually you walk or you’re bused to your [training].”

Another aspect of the training that was beneficial to the Soldiers was that they were able to cross-train on proficiencies in their military occupational specialties.

“As a 74 delta (74D) you’re taught RECON and DECON, but when you get to your unit you’re broken up into solely DECON or RECON,” Honablew said.

“This is cross-training for everyone, so that some days if we’re short DECON personnel we’re going to need RECON to help out.”

Honablew said it is important for the CBRN Soldiers to know their jobs as a whole and not just some of it.

“These are great learning points; this is real life,” said Braden. “We’re not just sitting around at home station simulating the training, but we’re out here actually doing it.”



By Tech. Sgt. Chris Schepers, 175th Wing Public Affairs

More than 75 Airmen from the 175th Wing, Maryland Air National Guard, helped clean up Warfield Air National Guard base in Middle River, Md., during the annual Base Beautification Day, April 25, 2014.

Base Beautification Day is an annual event that was envisioned by Brig. Gen. Scott Kelly, 175th Wing commander, when he was the Mission Support Group commander to help keep the base as clean as possible to help minimize the wing's negative effect on the environment.

"Our wing is committed to the environment, we consider this base a part of the Middle River community and is as much our community as it is the local residents, and we will take care of it. It pleases me to know that this event continues to this day since its inception when I was the Mission Support Group commander," said Kelly.

The event, organized and led by the 175th Mission Support Group with assistance from the Chief's Council, drew many Airmen out of their work areas to take part in the post-Earth Day event. Participants were given the opportunity to assist in numerous activities aimed at improving the cleanliness and

appearance of the base. These activities included mulching gardens, planting flowers and picking up trash.

"I feel that it is our responsibility to give back to the base and the environment in any way we can. To be out here cleaning the base is something that I look forward to doing every year," explained Air Force Staff Sgt. Jennifer Wyrick, a member of the 175th Comptroller Flight.

This year's Base Beautification Day was a huge success as the participating members were able to mulch numerous flower beds and plant a variety of flowers in a number of gardens located around the base. They were also able to collect trash to fill many bags that otherwise would have polluted the base and surrounding community.

Base Beautification Day came shortly after a ceremony for the opening of a brand new 175th Wing Headquarters building which was constructed to meet LEED Silver Certified standards that include multiple energy saving materials and systems to include sustainable green roofs.

Earth Day





- Spc. Michael A. Robinson

“The challenging part of it was that the events were one after the other.”



I-158th Soldiers win runner-up in Region II Best Warrior Competition

*By Staff Sgt. Michael E. Davis, Jr.,
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Two Maryland Army National Guard Soldiers competed in the Army National Guard Region II Best Warrior Competition at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, May 20-23, 2014.

After winning the state's Best Warrior Competition in March, Sgt. Michael L. Firth, from C Company, 1st Squadron, 158th Cavalry Regiment, and Spc. Michael A. Robinson, from the same unit, both advanced to the regionals to represent Maryland.

Firth competed in the noncommissioned officer category and Robinson in the Soldier category; both were named runners-up.

"The runner-up is almost as important as being the winner of this competition," said Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Gundrum, Pennsylvania National Guard senior enlisted leader. "With the ability to go on to the National Guard competition, if for some reason

the competitors that won this competition couldn't make it, the runner-up would be selected to take their place."

Soldiers from all over the Mid-Atlantic region, which includes West Virginia, Virginia, Washington D.C., Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, tested their mettle at the competition.

The ARNG Best Warrior Competition consists of a written test, an Army Physical Fitness Test, qualifications with various weapons, day and night land navigation, a 6-mile ruck march, and demonstrating various warrior tasks. After all this, the Soldiers were graded on their overall Army knowledge and the appearance of their Army Service Uniform while standing before a review board.

"It was different from the previous competition," said Firth. "It was more dynamic, and I thought it was better done in that way because you weren't



- Command Sgt. Maj.
Michael Gundrum

“We kept them very busy, a lot of physical activities and not so much sleep.”

thinking of a technical task, you were just reacting the way you were trained.”

Gundrum said he wanted to put a lot of stressors on the competitors to prepare them for the next level.

“We kept them very busy, a lot of physical activities and not so much sleep,” Gundrum said. “They had days starting as early as 0300 in the morning, and then they would go until 1800 (6 p.m.), 1900, [or] 2000 at night without a lot of breaks in between.”

Robinson agreed that the tempo was the source of a lot of stress during the competition.

“The challenging part of it was that the events were one after the other,” Robinson

said. “Rather than having a ruck march one day and a PT test another day, they were all consecutive in one day. They definitely built up stress, but you had to push through.”

In the midst of all of the stressors, Firth and Robinson had their mentor, Staff Sgt. Eric Zubkus, training noncommissioned officer from their unit, Command Sgt. Major Thomas B. Beyard, the Maryland National Guard Command Sergeant Major, and other sergeants major encouraging and supporting them.

Firth and Robinson said their support system boosted their morale even when they felt they didn’t do well in

certain categories.

“They’re always there reminding us to focus on the next event, telling us to keep motivated and making sure we didn’t beat ourselves up but [kept] moving on,” Firth said.

Firth and Robinson didn’t win the competition but still performed very well while representing Maryland.

“When I’m representing my state I really think of all eyes on me from the entire state - all of the Soldiers, all of the senior enlisted, all of the junior enlisted, all of the officers - and I need to do the best I can to make the state look good,” Robinson said. “Win or lose, I got to make [it] look good in some type of way.”







Final Frame

By Master Sgt. Gareth Buckland

Tech. Sgt. Rodney Riley, an Airmen in 175th Civil Engineer Squadron, Maryland Air National Guard, assists his team members in constructing a tent during the practical application portion of the Silver Flag Exercise on March 24, 2014, at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.