

THE

# Maryland

2015 Issue #3



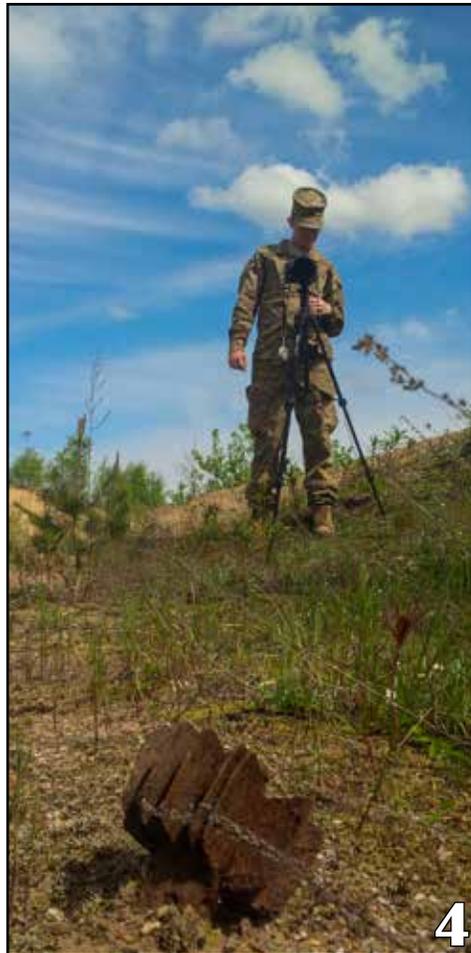
# LINE

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE MARYLAND MILITARY DEPARTMENT



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# THE Maryland LINE



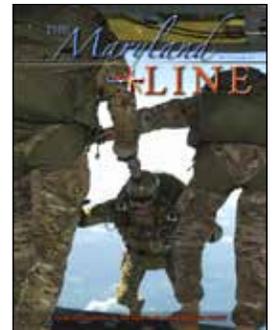
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*Maryland Army National Guard soldiers free fall from 13,000 feet during a jump with C Co., 1st Squadron, 158th Cavalry Regiment (Long Range Surveillance), on July 18, 2015, over Little Orleans, Maryland. This was the unit's last jump. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Margaret Taylor, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)*

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Larry Hogan

**Adjutant General:**  
Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh

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The 175th Wing, Maryland Air National Guard, participated in a pleural confusion exercise at Warfield Air National Guard Base, Middle River, Md., Aug. 28, 2015. The exercise tested the base emergency response to a HAZMAT incident. (Air National Guard photos by Tech. Sgt. Christopher Schepers)

# REEL TIME: MARYLAND GUARD, ESTONIAN BOMB SQUAD PARTNER TO SAVE LIVES



Article by Staff Sgt. Margaret Taylor and  
Video by Staff Sgt. Michael E. Davis, Jr.,  
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**T**he smoke billowed around a young man, who lay bleeding and barely breathing on the sandy ground. His injuries had come from a treasure hunt gone bad: he'd struck a half-buried bomb with the blade of his shovel. His right hand and foot were severed in the explosion.

All was eerily quiet as the smoke thinned and cleared. "Cut!"

The crew members shifted their camera gear, and the young man – an actor – relaxed for a few minutes before filming another take in the scene. The scene with the smoke was the last shots captured in a joint Maryland National Guard-Estonian Rescue Board film project shot in Tallinn, Estonia, on May 26-27.

The purpose of the project was to raise awareness of and educate the public about the unexploded ordnance (UXO) issue in Estonia, said Arno Pugonen, chief, EOD Center.

"If you are playing with explosives, there are only two real possibilities," Pugonen said, describing a key message from the film project. "You will go to prison, or you are injured or dead."

On account of World Wars I and II and the 1944-1991 Soviet occupation, Estonia has hundreds of thousands of bombs, mortars, missiles, and landmines – or UXOs – riddling the country, and the danger they pose is very real. Demining efforts continue on a daily basis.

In addition to locating and destroying bombs, educating the public about UXOs is one of the primary objectives of the Humanitarian Mining Action (HMA) program, which in Estonia falls under the U.S. Army's European Command. The HMA program provides resources for operations and training to agencies like Estonia's Rescue Board.

In the case of the film project, the HMA program brought the Rescue Board and Maryland National Guard soldiers together to create four public service announcements.





[youtu.be/tvIfANuD6qE](https://youtu.be/tvIfANuD6qE)



The Maryland Guard and Estonia are partners under the National Guard's State Partnership Program. The partnership began in 1993 to assist with the Baltic state's transition to an independent nation after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

"The HMA program is one of the best connections between the U.S. and Estonia," Pugonen said. "It's very constructive."

Plans for the video project began more than three years ago under the guidance of Army Maj. Tracy J. Sullins, who was the bilateral affairs officer between the Maryland

Guard and Estonia. Sullins recently turned over his duties to Air Force Capt. Daniel Griffin. Sullins said he wanted to connect Maryland Guard medical and public affairs teams with the Estonian Rescue Board to boost the Rescue Board's emergency services and public relations capabilities.

Since 2012, Maryland medical teams have visited their Estonian counterparts twice to share training aids and knowledge.

The artificial limbs that were included in the medical training aids were used in the commercial. Maryland public affairs crews have made the journey four times to coach first responders on public relations, to train them on camera equipment, and – most recently – to create commercials to educate the public about UXOs.

"It's not often that a bilateral relations officer gets to see a program go all the way through. This is it: this is the culminating event," Sullins said after watching the completed commercials. "It's kind of a bittersweet moment."

Explosive-related fatalities such as the young treasure hunter's used to be common occurrences in Estonia. Since 2012, however, no one has died from a UXO explosion.

While the HMA program is one of several public safety efforts, Pugonen said, it is clear that its contributions to education have helped reduce fatalities to zero for four years in a row. This is largely on account of the Maryland-Estonia partnership.

Said Pugonen: "I hope our partnership continues."



# MARYLAND

GOV. HOGAN'S

TEAMWORK AMONGST

STATE



*By Staff Sgt. Michael Davis Jr.,  
Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office*

**M**embers of the Maryland Military Department volunteered their time to help cadets, from the Maryland National Guard's Freestate Challenge Academy, beautify their academy surroundings on the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland on Aug. 26, 2015.

Governor Larry Hogan initiated the Maryland

Unites: Day of Service campaign that allows state employees to receive four hours of administrative leave so they can offer their time and talents to benefit Maryland citizens through community service.

"I was informed that the folks from the Fifth Regiment Armory wanted to do something to support our Maryland National Guard Youth Challenge Foundation and as a result,



# UNITES: INITIATIVE FOSTERS TEENS & MARYLAND EMPLOYEES



here we are," said Charles Rose, Freestate ChalleNGe director.

Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh, the adjutant general of Maryland, also came to show support for the cadets, ChalleNGe Academy cadre, and state employees.

"Teamwork is really the foundation of almost everything," Singh said. "So when you're working with one another the best thing you can do is figure out how to work out your differences and keep the whole team moving forward."

One of the cadets, Bilan Montgomery, seemed to be moving her team forward with the landscaping by carrying a four by eight wood with her fellow cadet.

"When I say drop, we

drop," Montgomery said, with a stern voice.

Montgomery said she is used to landscaping, as she constantly worked on the exterior of her home. However, she said she is not used working with other people her age.

"I think our cadets can learn a lot when it comes to teamwork," Rose said. "It's a learning experience that they can take with them for a lifetime."

The Military Department volunteers and cadets not only moved bulky blocks of wood together, but they also shoveled gravel, removed large branches, and swept together, all to enhance the exterior décor of the academy.

"This is just the beginning,

- Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh,  
The Adjutant General of Maryland

**“Teamwork is really the foundation of almost everything.”**



this is the first step," Rose said. "It's not all going to be done in one day, but it's going to be done in a period of time. It's going to give the kids something to work on and we can also carry this on for future classes and teach them the same thing this class is going to learn."

Maryland Unites: Day of Service allowed for people to get involved and to make a difference.

Two other initiatives a part of Maryland Unites are Maryland Departments

of Natural Resources and Labor, Licensing and Regulation Hold Day and the Maryland Business Workshop.

Maryland Unites campaign was specifically created as a one-stop shop to provide Marylanders with the resources they need to react and respond to the recent disturbances in Baltimore.

"We're very happy to see the cadets working together and doing things together," Rose said. "Just seeing them get involved just brings a fine tune to my heart."



**SENIOR AIRMAN  
DANIEL C. GENERETTE**

**HONOR  
GUARDSMAN  
OF THE YEAR**

*By Staff Sgt. Michael Davis Jr.,  
Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office*

Senior Airman Daniel C. Generette, a member of the Maryland National Guard Honor Guard, received the Honor Guardsman of the Year Award during a ceremony at the 5th Regiment Armory in Baltimore, Maryland, June 23, 2015.

During the ceremony, other soldiers and airmen were also recognized and received the 2014 Honor Guardsmen of the Quarter Awards.

Generette received the highest overall total points in the Honor Guardsman of the Year competition, after competing against his fellow Honor Guardsmen of the Quarter competitors. The contest was conducted in three phases: Phase I – an annual assessment of physical training and an evaluation of Honor Guard duties, Phase II – a written test comprised of Honor Guard procedures and its history, Phase III – an inspection of the Honor Guard’s Ceremonial Uniform and an Honor Guardsman of the Year Board.

In addition to Generette scoring well in the competition, Shervell Stevenson, master trainer for the Maryland National Guard Honor Guard, sees him as being an Honor Guard member who is meticulous, high-spirited, and takes his overall job wholehearted.

“To me, he’s always in high spirits, always willing to take that extra step, always willing to do what he can do to better himself as far as his performance,” Stevenson said.

Stevenson also said despite Generette’s good characteristics, he is still a humble person and just wants to perform better than how he performed in a previous ceremony.

“I didn’t expect to win,” Generette said. “I just come here to do my job, I support the mission as best as possible, and stay as precise as possible.”

Even though Generette has been an Honor Guard for three years, he said he still gets nervous right before performing his duties during a burial service.

“We practice before our services – do a walk through, but I actually feel for the families of the veteran that passed,” Generette said. “Once we do the ceremony, I just lock it in and make sure I keep my ceremonial composure, but I definitely feel emotional after every service.”

Generette said while performing their duties, he and his fellow Honor Guard members try their best to display honor and give the deceased service member’s family a last impression of the service member’s dedicated service to state and Nation.

“Whether it’s [a ceremonial] firing party, casket guard, casket bearing, he is always willing to learn that extra bit of information to make himself look better while he’s actually doing his job,” said Stevenson about Generette’s work ethic.

Generette said it was at a ceremony where a fellow airmen and friend, Staff Sgt. Kevin Grant, former Honor Guardsman of the Year, who inspired him to join the Honor Guard.

“He just looked so sharp, and I like to be sharp, as best as possible, and I like to lead by example,” Generette said. “I talked to him for a little bit and he gave me a little bit of the ropes of how to get into the program and I followed the steps and now I am here.”

Covering around 250 burials a month, Stevenson noted that he thinks the Maryland National Guard Honor Guard is a great organization because it not only helps give a final ceremony for the veteran and their family, but it also improves the soldier or airmen, who are the Honor Guardsman.

Generette also said he feels he has improved while being an Honor Guard, and said he takes the meaning of the word, honor, seriously.

“Personally I feel that honor is about how much you value a certain object or a thing,” Generette said. “I really value this program, I tried my best to get in and with a little diligence and consistency I made it, and look what I have to show for it – I’m Honor Guard of the Year.”



# REALISTIC SCENARIOS PROVIDE MEDICS THE RIGHT MEDICINE

By Staff Sgt. Mitchell Miller,  
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



**A**n ambulance arrives with screams from inside that drown out the sirens. A woman fills the air with sounds of terror. Inside the tent, the energy is high and people begin to run and shout commands in an effort to quickly treat the injured soldier. The back doors fly open and medics pull out the stretcher. Four personnel rush the woman to the triage section of the make-shift hospital. The diagnosis...a "gun shot wound" to the abdomen with "lacerations" to her arms and legs. This is how the Mass Casualty training exercise begins.

The MASCAL exercise took place at Warfield Air National Guard Base in Middle River, Md. It runs from July 25 to August 7, 2015, as part of the Maryland National Guard's 104th Area Support Medical Company's annual training.

Army Maj. William Fox, 104th ASMC commander and Maryland deputy state surgeon, said he saw the need for the unit to work in a joint service environment, so he started planning this training with the 175th Wing over a year ago, well before the Baltimore protests. At the time of the protests in April 2015, the 104th ASMC was already at an 80% fully ready status.

"We have a common goal to support the state of Maryland in a disaster response. In coming here, we're establishing a collaborative work environment," said Fox.

Warfield ANG Base is set as a Joint Reception, Staging, Onward movement and Integration site, which would handle

all movement into and out of during a national emergency operation. With the help of the 10th Regiment from the Maryland Defense Force, C Co. 1-169th General Support Aviation Battalion, and the 175th Wing, this exercise will help soldiers and airmen understand their roles and improve their readiness if the need arises.

Army Maj. Matthew Miskimon, 104th ASMC lead field surgeon, said, "The mission here is to operate a Medical Treatment Facility and this is the first time we're able to get the entire unit to participate. We're learning together how to accomplish that goal."

Fox said he wanted the MASCAL exercise to be completely isolated from the rest of the base. In an effort to be self-sustained and create no impact on the Air Force base, all meals were created on-site, they brought their own showers and bathroom facilities, slept in tents and brought in water with their own trucks. This ensures that the unit would be able to maintain operations anywhere, in any situation.

Through simulated medical scenarios, 1st Army, 4th Cavalry soldiers evaluated the 104th ASMC's Mission Essential Task List, which will show their higher headquarters they are ready for real-world missions. By training in emergency medical treatment, ground ambulance evacuations and casualty evacuations with Black Hawk helicopters, the medical company is prepared to support up to 5,000 service members in self-sustainable emergency medical urgent care.





In addition to scenario-based training, the unit is also providing real-world medical support during the exercise. The Maryland Army National Guard's 70th Regional Training Institute conducted phase three of Officer Candidate School with the support of the 104th's ambulances and medical care. The ambulance personnel provided 24-hour support for two locations with times available to treat candidates in the morning and evening.

There's more than just needles and stretchers available here. Other resources include dental, behavioral health, social work, x-rays and a laboratory. They all work together to assist each patient with the best care possible.

Maj. Stafford Conley, Army dentist on loan from the Maryland Medical Detachment, says that half the people he sees are anxious when they come to him for treatment and that allows him to hear more than he expects.

"Everyone's nervous and just starts talking about personal stuff," said Conley.

One soldier came in to get his cavity filled, but as Conley listened to his problems, he realized this soldier needed to talk to the behavioral health provider as well.

This year the 104th ASMC was in the field, but next summer they are planning to spend their annual training in a hospital on Fort Bragg, N.C. Their unit status report is only good for a year, so next year 1st Army will be there again to evaluate and rate their readiness.



# TROOPER of the QUARTER

By Staff Sgt. Michael E. Davis Jr.,  
Maryland National Guard  
Public Affairs Office

## Q&A



The Maryland National Guard takes great pleasure in recognizing its citizen-soldiers and airmen who have interesting qualities and stand out in their military and civilian careers. This quarter, the MDNG would like to acknowledge Army Staff Sgt. Kenneth T. Smith for his outstanding work as a full-time program analyst with the Maryland National Guard and as a successful entrepreneur.



# Army Staff Sgt. KENNETH T.J. SMITH

## Guard Status:

Affiliation: Maryland Army National Guard  
Unit: 29th Military Police Company  
Military Occupational Specialty: 31A - Military Police Officer  
Years of service: 10

## Citizen Status:

Careers: Program Analyst and entrepreneur  
Affiliation: Maryland National Guard and Self  
Education: Early Childhood Education,  
minor in Business Management



**PAO:** So what do you do for the Maryland National Guard?

**Staff Sgt. Smith:** I'm a full-time program analyst for the Maryland National Guard, in the human resource office and I'm also a military police officer with the 29th Military Police Company.

**PAO:** What does your full-time job as a program analyst entail?

**Staff Sgt. Smith:** As a program analyst, my primary function in the Human Resource Office is to maintain the Maryland National Guard's tech-pay budget, which is roughly a 33-million-dollar budget to cover down on the technician's pay in the whole state of Maryland. I also assist the chief of staff, general officers, and manage the budget for the AGR (Active Guard Reserve) and tech travel for the whole state of Maryland.

**PAO:** How long have you been a program analyst?

**Staff Sgt. Smith:** About five years.

**PAO:** Ok. What do you do on the civilian side?

**Staff Sgt. Smith:** On the civilian side, I own my own business; I am an entrepreneur. It's been five years and my company is called Xtreme Snow. We're a mobile-shaved-ice service that serves over 50-plus flavors in the Maryland, Virginia, and D.C. area. We do this every summer. Everything is event based. We have customers that will call us up and say 'hey, I'm having a birthday party or a wedding and I think snow cones would be a great treat to offer to my guest or employees.'

**PAO:** Has your business supported the Maryland National Guard in any way?

**Staff Sgt. Smith:** Yes, I actually do a lot of family-day events for the Maryland Army National Guard - Joint Force Headquarters being one of them.

**PAO:** How long have you been offering shaved ice, with over 50 plus flavors, to all of the friends, family and fellow citizen-soldiers of the Maryland National Guard?

**Staff Sgt. Smith:** Probably for about three years now. I've also been doing Unity Day as well every year for the past five years.

**PAO:** So what made you want to become an entrepreneur and own your own shaved ice service?



**Staff Sgt. Smith:** Well (chuckle), it's funny because when my wife and I were in high school, we actually worked at a snowball stand together. I wanted to start out as a stationary stand, but that didn't happen. But it came to me to do mobile, so I can move around. But on July 1st, I just opened up my first stationary stand in Glen Burnie.



## Q&A

**PAO:** Wow! So how's that working for you?

**Staff Sgt. Smith:** So far, so good; foot traffic has been picking up everyday. We're open from twelve to eight and it's just about building the trust of the community and just continually providing that quality service that we do when we do these individual events.

**PAO:** Do you run the whole business yourself?

**Staff Sgt. Smith:** No, my whole family is involved. My sister is involved, my in laws, my four sons and my wife. Not so much my wife now, because she has her own bakery. My wife has been doing designer cakes for well over 10 years now.

**PAO:** So, it's a family affair?

**Staff Sgt. Smith:** Yes, it's always some one moving in the house. We don't even bother to have cable because we're always doing something (chuckle).

**PAO:** So, what makes you want to continue with Xtreme Snow? What's your motivational drive?

**Staff Sgt. Smith:** Honestly, it's the



smiling faces I see and meeting new people from all over the MD/DC/VA area.

**PAO:** Do you feel being a program analyst for the Maryland National Guard helps you with maintaining your business?

**Staff Sgt. Smith:** Absolutely. It teaches me how to stay disciplined financially. It teaches me how to make key decisions. Knowing how to be proactively instead of being reactive definitely helps me in the entrepreneurship world.

**PAO:** What are your future plans with the Maryland National Guard and your business?

**Staff Sgt. Smith:** To retire from the Maryland National Guard and expand my business across the East Coast.

- Staff Sgt. Brandon J. Kennedy,  
Best Warrior Competitor

**“I’m super appreciative of everything my supporters have done for me. It really means a lot to me on a personal and professional level”**



the 253rd Engineer Company, was awarded Noncommissioned Officer of the Year at the Maryland Best Warrior Competition in March, which meant they both advanced to the regional competition.

The regional competition included two soldiers from each of the five states in the region – West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Delaware – as well as from Washington, D.C.

The Best Warrior Competition events included the Army Physical Fitness Test, rifle marksmanship, land navigation, evaluating a casualty, hand and arm signals, weapon maintenance, a 6-mile foot march while wearing a 30-pound rucksack, and an interview panel, said Command Sgt. Maj. Carl A. Holcomb, the Virginia Army National Guard command sergeant major.

**T**wo soldiers from the Maryland Army National Guard competed for Region II Best Warrior at Fort Pickett, Virginia, on May 29-31.

Spc. Christopher M. Hoffman, a Blackhawk mechanic crew chief from the 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, was awarded Soldier of the Year, and Staff Sgt. Brandon J. Kennedy, a combat engineer from

# 2015 REGION II

By Staff Sgt. Nancy Spicer,  
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

# BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION



This was Kennedy's second time representing Maryland in the Region II competition; unfortunately, this was also the second time he did not win.

"It seems like a common theme for people to do repeat competitions," said Kennedy. "The level of competition this time was much higher than the previous time I was here."

This was the first time Hoffman competed at the regional level. He finished in second place, only missing the top prize by one point. Should the winner not be able to attend the national competition, Hoffman would compete in his place as the runner up. Though Hoffman did not win overall, he said he learned a lot from the competition.

"There are great leaders out there," said Hoffman. "I've had the greatest

support from leaders – from my sponsor all the way up to my state command sergeant major."

Sponsors and senior enlisted members from Maryland accompanied Hoffman and Kennedy to the competition. Staff Sgt. Delvon Anderson, a former Best Warrior competitor who works at the National Guard Bureau, mentored Hoffman; Sgt. 1st Class James Lentscher, the 253rd Engineer Company's first sergeant, mentored Kennedy.

"I am super appreciative of everything that my supporters have done for me," said Kennedy. "It really means a lot to me on a personal and professional level."



# Medics inject youth with career ideas

By Staff Sgt. Aimee Fujikawa,  
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Baltimore City teens spent a hot summer day getting acquainted with military emergency medical training during Maryland's Youth Works Summer Internship Program at Warfield Air National Guard Base in Middle River, Md., July 29, 2015. The interns visited with soldiers from the 104th Area Support Medical Company during Operation Raven Care, a two-week training event, from July 25 to Aug. 7, simulating emergency scenarios.

They toured the 104th ASMC Tactical Operations Center, which included medical treatment areas, on-site laboratory, ambulance squads, and a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter.

"We try to impress upon them how much career opportunity comes from being a member of the Maryland National Guard," said Michael Deckard Jr., Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems ombudsman. "In addition to the added benefits of becoming a Guardsman, they also get to serve the state of Maryland."

A male intern said the visit opened his mind to see what he really wants to do. The soldiers explained how they got to their medical careers with the Guard and showed them what they really do.

"Being able to work with MIEMSS gives the interns an opportunity to see what the military is like," said Maj. Barbara Meadows, Maryland Medical Detachment deputy commander for administration. "It's a huge opportunity for them to get out, earn an income and get to see what opportunities are available out there."

The program also mentors the interns on trying new things and life skills such as being on time, learning respect, and active listening.

During their internship with MIEMSS, interns traveled to various Baltimore City firehouses and police stations. They learn about everything from fire rescue and extracting patients from vehicles to 911 calls.

The interns discovered that many firemen and policemen they met had a military background.

"It was an awesome opportunity to give these kids a five-week in-depth look into emergency services," Deckard said. "Hopefully we can recruit them into the volunteer realm, where there is always a shortage in the state."

High school age students interested in various career fields submitted applications for the summer internship. Upon selection, they were able to participate in the Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development five-week summer program young adults between the ages of 14 - 21.

During the program, interns have the chance to explore various trades for both volunteer and career paths. They gain work experiences with private sector, nonprofit, and city and state government employers. This is the first year for the Maryland National Guard and the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems to participate in the program.





- Michael Deckard Jr.,  
MIEMSS Ombudsman

**“We try to impress upon them how much career opportunity comes from being a member of the Maryland National Guard.”**



# On the +LINE



## MDNG's new Assistant Adjutant General - Army

**B**rig. Gen. Timothy E. Gowen takes command of the Maryland Army National Guard during a ceremony on June 7, 2015. The assistant adjutant general-Army is responsible for the daily operations of the Maryland Army National Guard to include the readiness, administration, and training of more than 4,700 soldiers and with an annual budget of more than \$156 million.

## Estonian cyber delegation visits Maj. Gen. Linda Singh

**E**stonian cyber delegation visits Maj. Gen. Linda Singh, the adjutant general of Maryland, the museum at the 5th Regiment Armory, and the great state of Maryland on July 30, 2015. The Maryland National Guard has partnered with the Republic of Estonia since 1993 through the State Partnership Program, which was originally designed as outreach by the U.S. to new democracies in Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union.





## 58th EMIB Change of Command

The Maryland Army National Guard's 58th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade cases its colors and is replaced by the 58th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade. The casing colors and the 58th EMIB change of command ceremony took place at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation near Reisterstown, Md., on Aug. 1, 2015. The 58th BfSB stands down as part of the Total Army Force Structure adjustments and is replaced by the 58th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Aimee Fujikawa, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



## MDGuard citizen-soldiers work together to test emergency response

The Maryland National Guard conducts an exercise at Lauderick Creek Training Site in Edgewood, Md., on Aug. 12, 2015, to assess its ability to quickly respond to and support civil authorities. The service members are helping to maintain public safety, provide emergency management services, and restore law and order. The exercise scenario includes assisting civil authorities respond to the simulated detonation of an Improvised Nuclear Device. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Thaddeus Harrington, Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office)



## LRS conduct joint training

The Maryland National Guard's, B Co., 3rd Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment soldiers joined soldiers from 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve, in a joint paratroop exercise held in New Jersey on June 12, 2015. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Matt Hecht)



## Maj. Gen. Singh gives keynote speech to Baltimore Police officers

Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh, the Adjutant general of Maryland, spoke words of encouragement to officers of the Baltimore City Police Department's Western District at the Hyatt Hotel in Baltimore, Md., June 11, 2015. Baltimore City Police Col. Darryl D. De Sousa invited Singh to be the keynote speaker for a retreat given to the police officers who were recovering from the recent events in Baltimore. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael E. Davis Jr., Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office)



## MDNG's leadership visits 253rd SAPPER

Maryland Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Linda Singh and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Beyard, the Senior Enlisted Leader of the Maryland National Guard, visited the 253d Engineer Company (Sapper) July 10, 2015. The 253rd is hosting several soldiers from the country of Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the National Guard State Partnership Program. The Maryland National Guard began their partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2003 to help stabilize that country following the break-up of Yugoslavia and the ethnic conflict that followed.



## Maj. Gen. Singh checks out the new Chinook helicopters at the aviation facility

The Adjutant General of Maryland, Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh, checks out B. Co., 3rd Battalion, 126th General Support Aviation Battalion's brand new modernized aircraft – CH-47F – at the Weide Army Air Field on the Edgewood area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., on Aug. 26, 2015. The aviation battalion received five new Chinooks with upgrades that include, a Common Avionics Architecture System (CAAS) with five multi function displays and two cockpit display units. The new aircraft also includes improved air transportability and a Digital Automatic Flight Control System (DAFS) for a more efficient hover hold. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Davis Jr., Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office.)



## Annual 'Salute to Independence' concert

The Maryland U.S. Army National Guard Ceremonial Salute Battery teamed up with the Maryland Symphony Orchestra to participate in the annual 'Salute to Independence' concert and fireworks show at Antietam National Battlefield, July 4, 2015.



### 3-126th Aviation Regiment conducts annual CH-47 door gunnery qualification

Staff Sgt. Darren Eggerman, a CH-47 flight engineer with the Maryland National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, conducts an annual door gunnery qualification at Fort Dix, Nj., June 19, 2015.



[youtu.be/k-ZKeSgaHIM](https://youtu.be/k-ZKeSgaHIM)

### CSM Beyard extends in the MDNG

Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas B. Beyard, senior enlisted leader for the Maryland National Guard, takes the oath of extension on July 2, 2015. Beyard, and many other Maryland Guard service members, affirm to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.



### Lt. Col. Real assumes command of the 291st Digital Liaison Detachment

Lt. Col. Joseph Real assumed command of the 291st Digital Liaison Detachment during a ceremony on July 11, 2015, at the MG Henry C. Evans Armory in Westminster, Md. He assumes command from Col. Samuel Riley, who is retiring after 30 years of military service.

### Chief Chaplain for the Estonian Defense League visits MD Guard chaplains

The Chief Chaplain for the Estonian Defense League traveled to Maryland this week as part of the Maryland National Guard State Partnership Program. Chaplain (MAJ) Aivar Sarapik participated in a Strong Bonds retreat held June 27-28 in Annapolis. Sarapik's participation marks the first time in the 22-year program that a chaplain from Estonia has participated in Strong Bonds. Maryland National Guard state chaplain, Col. Sean Lee, said the exchange was vitally important for both the state of Maryland and the country of Estonia and described the experience as "spiritual diplomacy."



## Citizen-soldiers eat lunch with Acting Under Secretary of the Army Eric Fanning during his Maryland Guard visit

Acting Under Secretary of the Army Eric Fanning eats lunch with soldiers from the Maryland Army National Guard and visits the Army Aviation Support Facility at Weide Army Airfield in Edgewood, Md., on Aug. 18, 2015. Fanning became the Acting Under Secretary of the Army on June 30, 2015. "My highest priority will be working to ensure soldiers receive the necessary resources and training to remain the greatest land power in the world." (Photo by Staff Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington, Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office)



## Col. Samuel Riley after 30 years

Help us congratulate COL Samuel Riley who is retiring after 30 years of military service. Riley has been the commander of the 291st Digital Liaison Detachment since February, 2012, and has served in numerous positions during his 30-year career including a deployment to Iraq with the 58th Brigade Combat Team. Riley maintains his own law practice and lives in the Westminster area with his family, including two daughters, Marion and Anna.



## MDNG's Counterdrug Civil Operations Team supports community outreach at Mondawmin Mall

Maryland National Guard takes part in the Mondawmin Festival at Mondawmin Mall in Baltimore on July 11th, 2015. Soldiers from the Maryland Guard's Counterdrug Task Force set up an obstacle course and take part in community activities.

[youtu.be/TcakKhI4QSA](https://youtu.be/TcakKhI4QSA)



### MDNG members participate in school's hero day

Maj. Matthew Deener and Staff Sgt. Walter Hirschman recently visited Clemens Crossing Elementary during the school's Hero Day. Students had the opportunity to learn about the role of the National Guard for overseas missions and domestic operations. They also learned how service dogs are being used to help veterans.



### Soldiers from the OSA prepare for deployment

Maryland National Guard soldiers from Operational Support Airlift (OSA) Detachment 13 said goodbye to family and friends today at the BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI) before deploying to Kuwait. The unit is scheduled to be deployed for approximately nine months.

### Shoot, communicate & move: 1-175th conduct live fire training

The Maryland Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 175th Infantry Regiment conducts live fire training at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in N.J., during their June 6-20, 2015, annual training. (Video by Sgt. 1st Class Thaddeus Harrington, Maryland Public Affairs Office)



[youtu.be/DWTA4GJsp6Q](https://youtu.be/DWTA4GJsp6Q)



### Members of the MDNG conduct Facilities Manager training

The Maryland National Guard conducted a Facilities Manager Training Course July 22, 2015, at Camp Frettered Military Reservation, near Reisterstown, Md. The course includes training on new systems and a forum to address many of the challenges managers face in maintaining Maryland Guard readiness centers.

### Sgt. First Class Arretta P. Johnson receives Meritorious Service Medal

Congratulations to Sgt. 1st Class Arretta P. Johnson as she receives a Meritorious Service Medal for her outstanding support to the front office of the Maryland Army National Guard in a ceremony at the Fifth Regiment Armory on July 1. She stands with her son Sgt. James E. Johnson and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas B. Beyard, Maryland National Guard Senior Enlisted Leader.



### Governor recognizes Maryland's best warriors

Maryland Army National Guard's Soldier of the Year, Spc. Christopher M. Hoffman, Co. C, 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment; NCO of the Year, Staff Sgt. Brandon J. Kennedy, 253rd Engineer Company (Sapper); and Officer of the Year, 1st Lt. John D. Villanueva, Co. B, 1st Battalion, 175th Infantry Regiment were recognized May 7, 2015, by the Governor for being Maryland's best warriors. Lt. Col. Brian Borakove, 1-175th commander, accepted the award on 1st Lt. Villanueva's behalf.



### Westminster Readiness Center ribbon cutting

The Maryland Army National Guard hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony officially opening the MG Henry C. Evans Readiness Center in Westminster, Md. on Aug. 1, 2015. The readiness center opened at its current 10-acre Hahn Road location in 1980, replacing the older World War I era armory on Longwell Avenue. The renovated and expanded 33-year-old facility includes 16,019 square feet of new space. The readiness center is home to the 29th Military Police Company, 115th Military Police Battalion, and serves as a recruiting station for Carroll County. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Thaddeus Harrington, Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office)





“It’s all Good.”

# Maryland Guard SOLDIER builds strength after adversity

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*Story by Staff Sgt. Aimee Fujikawa,  
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

*Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Thaddeus Harrington,  
Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office*

“I’m doing this with you, and we’ll get through it together.”



- Staff Sgt. Verillian Githara,  
Food Service Specialist, MDARNG

**“It’s inconceivable how so many people came into my life to pick me up, I never fell. There are so many random people out there, angels, who don’t know how awesome they were.”**

In recent events, police officers here in Baltimore, have been under more scrutiny and subject to bias. Staff Sgt. Verillian Githara, a food service specialist with the Maryland Army National Guard’s 104th Area Support Medical Company, is no different because she has also been a Baltimore City Police Officer for the past 10 years. Both jobs couldn’t be more different.

“You’re going to jail,” yelled a five-foot, two-inch-tall Githara while in pursuit of perpetrators.

The relationship between a cop and suspect is an unusual one. Judgments are formed in an instant and then action takes place. It’s easy to stereotype someone without knowing who the person underneath really is or where they came from.

Githara may be doing well now, but life hasn’t always been easy. Her life could have turned out differently had she taken a different path. Only few people know her turbulent life story.

"Things happen and then you move on," Githara said. "If you don't move on, you end up like the people I see living on the street. And I refuse to be that way."

Githara, born in Texas, wasn't raised in a stable household with great role models. At the age of nine she was molested by a relative. Her mother was not able to care for her she was sent to live with her godparents in Texas.

It was then, when she officially became a foster child. She stayed there until relocating from Texas to spend the summer with a cousin in Maryland. The stay lasted four years and during this time she was molestation again.

"How does that even happen?" Githara asks.

No matter what happened or where she was, it seemed like there was always someone there to help. If there was something she needed, like a place to stay, it was provided.

"Even in the foster home, molestation and drug issues, I never felt like I was without," she said.

Through tough times, she said her faith is what kept her going.

"It's inconceivable how so many people came into my life to pick me up," she said. "I never fell. There are so many random people out there, angels, who don't know how awesome they were."

Help came from the least expected places. Even the people who were abusing their own kids were the ones who came to her rescue and provided safety.

Just before her foster mom was preparing to adopt her, Githara's mother wanted her daughter back. Somehow Githara managed to get out of the foster care system and move back with her mother.

## **Githara joins the Maryland National Guard:**

Githara's original plan was to join the active duty Army right out of high school, but her mother, Jean wanted her to focus on an education. Githara weighed her options and ended up joining the Guard so she could do both. She attended Coppin State University. Joining the Guard was a way to allow her to do both. That was 14 years and two deployments ago.

In her Guard family, there are few people in her trusted circle whom she considers very close confidants.

"Although she's a very quiet and concealed person, she's very caring," said Capt. Elise Dent, 104th ASMC executive officer. "We have a very close, personal

officer-noncommissioned officer relationship. I know the conversations we have will stay confidential."

According to Dent, Githara is the type of person that will help someone out, but you'd have to be the first to approach her.

With her team, Githara has a straightforward, hands-on leadership style. She pushes them to do their best and be able to shine.

"This is my kitchen and we need to get the job done," she said. "I'm doing this with you, and we'll get through it together."



Githara tells her soldiers to be open. "In order for you learn and grow, you have to be receiving of me giving you instruction," she said, "and I'm here to learn from you as well."

She admits to being "somewhat closed off personally," but it's something she's working on. It's a self-preservation mechanism.

Presentation is important to her.

"Let's pretty it up. Garnish it and put it in a different container," Githara said about how she prepares her food. "I want it to look good, as best as it can, and I want it to taste good."

It's essential for her to provide some type of happiness to soldiers when they're out in the field and away from home.

"She pays attention to detail and she makes sure we have enough food," said Pfc. Kristina Benedict, a healthcare specialist and combat medic with the 104th ASMC. "If something doesn't taste right or look right, she's not serving it."

## **Decision to join the police department:**

In addition to having a strong sense of right and wrong, her decision to be a police officer was influenced by her godfather, who appropriately went by the name, Judge.

"He was sheriff of the town and I wanted to be like him," she said.

At age 21, her career with the Baltimore City Police Department began. It was a fast track to becoming a police officer; applying on Monday, testing done by Friday and hired that Saturday. She started out working in patrol for the first two years.

"I was 'officer friendly,'" she said. "I would visit with the elderly and try to solve their problems." Things changed when the drug unit took her. "It was fun and I loved the adrenaline rush."

It was there where Officer Verillian Allgood, her name at the time, met her husband, Officer George Githara. They had been assigned partners for two years before dating. She became pregnant and then transitioned inside to work in the drug deployment unit.

They've been married three years now and have a blended family with three children - each entered the relationship with a child of their own, plus one together. Her mother Jean, who is in poor health, is also member of the Githara household.

## **World Beauty Fitness and Fashion competition:**

In addition to responsibilities as a full-time police officer, a Guardsman, a caregiver, mother, and student, she is training for a bodybuilding competition. She will compete in the figure category for the World Beauty Fitness and Fashion competition this October. She is working hard to earn her personal training degree at Bryan University and to attain a pro card, which will lead to her dream of become a sponsored competitor.

"I want to bring my best to the stage," she said.

Githara started training in 2013, during her deployment to Afghanistan to keep her sanity. Her schedule is demanding, yet she manages to train with Team Elite, based out of Alabama.

"What's really big to me is, I like the way she involves her family in everything she does," said Greg Hasberry, Githara's trainer and owner of Alabama Elite Fitness and Figure. "She has a supportive husband and well-rounded kids. It's pretty neat that they get a chance to watch their mom attain a personal goal."

Her husband George drives the whole family to Alabama for her to train with Hasberry and takes care of the kids while she's training. She will have traveled there for a total of five extremely rigorous three-day training sessions leading up to the competition.

"My family is very supportive," Githara said. "They are all on board."

The family goes to the gym together, and she and her children do homework together. Githara didn't have an ideal childhood and could have been a victim of adversity. Instead, she chose to live life on her terms. She is an example of someone living a resilient life, and in her own words, "It's all good."

- Pfc. Kristina Benedict,  
Healthcare Specialist/Combat Medic,  
104th ASMC

**“She pays attention to detail and she makes sure we have enough food.”**



“Things happen and then you move on.”



- Daryl Hubbard,  
Cadet - Freestate Challenge Academy

“The program restores your health and turns you into a better person in 22 weeks.”

# Cadets Accept the Challenge Strive for

Article by Staff Sgt. Nancy Spicer,  
Video by Staff Sgt. Michael Davis Jr.,  
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



**E**ighty-five cadets from Class No. 44 from the Maryland National Guard Freestate Challenge Academy at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland, participated in a completion ceremony June 13 at the post theater.

The FCA’s mission is to help at-risk teens graduate from the program with the values, skills and education needed to better their lives and succeed as adults.

“The program restores your health and turns you into a better person in 22 weeks,” said Daryl Hubbard, a cadet from Washington, D.C.

The FCA takes young people ages 16 to 18 through a 22-week residency program at APG, said Joshua Barlow, the acting lead instructor, and a social studies and citizenship teacher. The cadets wake up every morning at 5 a.m. and conduct physical training. Afterward, they attend classes in areas such as mathematics, social studies, science, literature and writing in preparation to take the GED certification exam.

The FCA focuses on eight core

components, Barlow said. These components – life-coping skills, academic excellence, responsible citizenship, health and hygiene, job skills, leadership and followership, physical fitness and service to community – give the cadets hope for the future.

Adeigh Bynum, a cadet from Montgomery County, said she appreciated learning responsibility and accountability while at the FCA.

“Without responsibility and accountability, people don’t trust you,” Bynum said. “Without it, you don’t get opportunities.”

Since 1993, more than 4,000 cadets have completed the FCA program. Of these, about 15 to 20 percent have enlisted in the military.

Barlow, who has been teaching at the FCA for the last seven years said he enjoys working with teens like Bynum and Hubbard.

“When I see a change in behaviors and that dawning moment where someone is maturing and becoming more educated, that’s very fulfilling,” Barlow said.



# e **NG** e,

## Better Future



[youtu.be/2ZwmKm2hUXM](https://youtu.be/2ZwmKm2hUXM)

# Mean, Green,



# Fighting Machine

Commentary by Spc. Brianna Kearney, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Over a year ago, at age 17, I was shipped off from my little hometown in Connecticut to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Many Americans don't go through the sweat and tears that it takes to become a soldier and even fewer choose to take the misunderstood path that I followed through Basic Training. I enlisted into the Army National Guard as a vegan, and was committed to staying as close as possible to my diet during training.

I had already been vegan for a little over a year prior to enlisting. This was due to my views on animal rights as well as upholding my idea of a healthy body. I did, however, want to prove that I could maintain my vegan diet throughout the majority of my Basic Combat Training experience.

After my 7-month experience in the Recruit Sustainment Program, I knew I was a very special case. On the very first day of BCT, I immediately became somebody to watch. This made me stand out, which many people explicitly advised me against doing. However, I was taken aback when my platoon peered at me with confusion when my drill sergeant asked, "Is anyone a vegetarian?"

During the Red-Phase week, we were pushed mentally and physically to

our limits. Each time that I dropped for push ups my palms were scraped and imprinted by the rock-studded sidewalk in front of our barracks. These "smoke sessions" were so long that I became appreciative when we happened to be on a smoothly-paved street or a forgiving-dirt area instead of in front of the barracks.

Each time that happened, I could feel people looking at me as if they were expecting me to fail. At 5-foot-2, I was not only the shortest person in my platoon, but also slimmer than most of the females. They expected me to be weak. I constantly caught them watching in anticipation for the moment I would drop to my knees. Showing any weakness would prove that I couldn't keep up with the demands of my drill sergeant.

But their prejudice fueled my desire to be better than any stereotype imposed on me. I refused to be weak. I was going to set the example.



Our first ruck march was 2 miles, leading us up to the notorious gas chamber. They asked for volunteers to go in first before they filed us in by squad sequence. My hand shot up before my mind processed what I had agreed to do.



As we made our way to the entrance, I noticed that I was the only female volunteer in the group. I squeezed my fists until my knuckles turned white, trying to deny myself the realization that I would be stepping into a chamber filled with tear gas.

Before stepping in, the drill sergeants came over and tried to intimidate us yelling, "I hope y'all drank your milk this morning, privates! You're gonna have to stomach it in there, privates." I smirked in sarcasm under the confinement of my gas mask knowing that milk was not in my diet.

Side by side, my battle buddies and I were now choking on the same gas. In that chaotic moment was

when I had established to myself and others that I was strong. Keeping our eyes shut tight, we were told to grip the shoulder of the soldier in front of us and run out of the dark and foggy chamber together.

The fresh air and sunlight were a blessing to the chemical mayhem we had faced. As we were walking around trying to regain our senses, I felt the watchful eyes of my platoon members on me again. But it wasn't with the look of hopelessness like before.

As the weeks went on, the training got easier. I began to wake up each morning with hope that I would outlast my strength from the day before, and I waited for the voice in my head that would push me to be better than the day before. My platoon found me incredibly determined, not backing down from a challenge while strategically eating only the foods I thought was good enough for my body. I was officially deemed "the vegan" when we had field food, which was brought from the chow hall in trucks.

Under the hot Missouri sun, the drill sergeants would start filing us by platoon into line so that we could get chow. The field food was prepared and prepackaged at the chow hall in aluminum trays. This was advantageous for people who ate meat



because it meant they could get larger portions. For me, it meant that I didn't have an alternative source of protein like the chow halls that served peanut butter and beans at the salad bar.

I always said, "No meat, thank you" as I moved down the serving line. I received a look of confusion from those who looked at my sad tray: 2 scoops of vegetables, salad, an apple, a fig newton and a carton of milk. I didn't drink the milk, but the other soldiers would trade their fruit or vegetables for it.

I sat quietly with the



platoon while my drill sergeant came up to me saying, "Kearney, ain't you gonna eat more?" I replied, "I don't eat meat, drill sergeant. I can't eat anything more than this."

The sun beat down on my head as I scarfed the food down quickly, but it did little to quiet my hunger since I had eaten so few calories. I began to tell my mind, "This is just another obstacle and I will get through it." Then I felt a tap on the shoulder. To my surprise, my squad had collected their apples and given them all to me in



the hopes that I would have more to eat.

I had seven extra apples! My eyes widened in shock over the generosity of my battle buddies who felt the need to help me when I could not help myself. After thanking each of them, they laughed as I wolfed down all seven red apples within the last five minutes of allotted chow time.

My legacy as 'Vegan Girl' was born and I was proud of the title.

During my basic training experience, the sum of my entirety was tested. I



overcame the voice in my head that told me I couldn't, and I surprised myself with how much I changed over the course of 11 weeks. My battle buddies from all over the world now saw me as somebody that beat the stereotypical odds. Because of my outstanding performance, my drill sergeant sent me to the soldier of the Cycle board. Even though I didn't win, I had proven that I am strong, to not only those around me, but most importantly to myself.

# SUICIDE PREVENTION IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

By Staff Sgt. Ron Lee,  
Maryland Guard Resiliency Coordinator

September is Suicide Prevention Month. Each day service members, veterans and retirees take their own lives due to a myriad of different stressors in their life. The military isn't the only organization facing this problem; suicide is a national issue. Military members are often referred to as heroes, but the fact is, service members are only human and are subject to the same life pressures as anyone else.

"We as a Guard community are still struggling with suicides. It doesn't matter whether you've deployed or not, suicides remain an issue," said Army Colonel Nathan Crum, G-1 Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Maryland National Guard Joint Force Headquarters.

The military consistently relies on training to ensure personnel remain current on tactics, equipment and procedures. This is true for everything from the M-16 rifle range to changing a field dressing on a fellow troop. So it should come as no surprise that this is how the military is confronting suicide awareness and prevention. Training is the number one way soldiers are learning strategies to deal with deployment, finance, family and personal issues.

"Awareness, understanding and concern for those around us is key to tackling this daunting challenge," Crum said. "Luckily, the Maryland Army National Guard, with its established training programs, is a forerunner in prevention."

Training is delivered in several forms

and is designed to bring soldiers together in group settings where they can share comfortably among peers. But make no mistake about it, vulnerable individuals identified in time will always be directed to trained professionals

"Although we have had our own experiences and exposures, we have to understand that these situations cannot compare to what the person at risk is experiencing," said Army Staff Sgt. John Dethdy, Maryland National Guard State Trauma Crisis Noncommissioned Officer.

Many times the outward signs of a problem in a suicidal individual might appear insignificant, but trained personnel are taught to realize that these signs may be indications of more troubling issues. One of the foundations of military leadership is the Be, Know, Do philosophy.

"Suicide prevention starts with exercising basic leadership skills: knowing your soldiers and caring for them," Crum said. "Suicide prevention training is not a training distractor. It is simply another way of reinforcing the leadership and soldier lessons we all have been taught over the course of our military experiences."

According to the Army Times Magazine, there has been a 17 percent drop in suicides over this same time last year among Army Reserve and National Guard members. One suicide is too many, but shrinking numbers provide proof that increasing awareness is a winning strategy.

Suicide prevention is everyone's business. Moreover, this month's campaign is about resiliency in all phases of a service member's life. In addition to raising awareness and

educating the military, we can help by taking action and getting involved to create a better future for troubled service members thinking about suicide.

For the month of September, the Maryland National Guard is promoting a series of events to raise awareness during Suicide Prevention Month. Activities include a Poster Contest, Essay Contest and an Awareness Walk.

Maryland National Guard members who wish to participate in the events should contact Staff Sgt. Ron Lee, Maryland National Guard Resiliency Coordinator at 410-576-1448.

- Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh,  
Adjutant general of Maryland

**“We're all here, we all have a purpose, and we all serve a purpose.”**





# Final Frame

*By Sgt. 1st Class Thaddeus Harrington,  
Maryland National Guard  
Public Affairs Office*

**T**he Maryland Army National Guard conducted water bucket training with a CH-47 Chinook helicopter on the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground on May 20, 2015. The soldiers are practicing in order to assist firefighters if deployed to help stop a forest fire.