

THE

# Maryland

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# MILITARY



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## On the cover:



*Sgt. 1st Class Louisa White, C Co. Recruiting and Retention noncommissioned officer, "knife hands" future warriors as they get ready to move off the bus on Oct. 17 at the Recruit Sustainment Program at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. (Photo by Spc. Brianna Kearney, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)*

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# The Maryland Guard wants to know:

## How are you preparing for winter?

By Spc. Allen Griffith,  
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**W**inter is coming! Being prepared for cold weather means more than just pulling your heaviest coat out of the closet. Can your car handle freezing temperatures? Can your house stand up to wind chill and ice? Are you ready for a sudden inch of snow? A sudden foot?

To set you and your loved ones up for success this winter, some of our teammates around the Maryland National Guard have offered up a few words of advice.

**Spc. Nwamaka F. Okoronkwo,**  
29th Military Police Battalion

"Before winter, I take my car to the shop and I make sure they check my tires and ensure all of the fluids are at safe levels for the winter temperatures."



**Spc. Jamal R. Patterson,** HHC 1-224  
Aviation Security and Support Battalion

"I like to make sure I have proper clothing for the winter. I wear long johns and socks that keep my feet warm."



**Sgt. 1st Class Willie D. Brown,** Joint  
Force Headquarters

"I'm concerned with having a leaky roof during winter. I have the roof inspected to make sure there is no leakage."



**Senior Master Sgt. Hope Edwards,**  
Joint Force Headquarters

"My concern is my heat bill. I caulk all windows and doors to prevent cold air from entering my house."

*"When bad weather hits, service members in Maryland are often called up to help our fellow Marylanders who are stuck or stranded. It's what we do in the Guard. Stock up on emergency supplies for communication, food, safety, heating, and vehicles in case a storm hits."*

### Communication Checklist

- Make sure you have at least one of the following in case there is a power failure: cell phone, portable charger, and extra batteries.
- Find out how your community warns the public about severe weather: siren, radio, television.

### Heating Checklist

- Turning on the stove for heat is not safe; have at least one of the following heat sources in case the power goes out: extra blankets, sleeping bags, warm winter coats, fireplace with plenty of dry firewood or a gas log fireplace, portable space heaters.

### Food and Safety Checklist

- Have a week's worth of food and safety supplies such as: drinking water, canned/no-cook food (bread, crackers, dried fruits), non-electric can opener, baby food and formula (if baby in the household), prescription drugs and other medicine, first-aid kit.

### Car and Emergency Checklist

- cell phone, portable charger, shovel, windshield scraper, water, snack food, extra hats, coats, and mittens, blankets, chains or rope, emergency flares, tool kit, and road maps.



# Always Ready, Always There:

## MDNG implements positive changes for future soldiers

By Spc. Brianna Kearney,  
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**T**he changing times have caused a major increase in the amount of National Guard soldiers.

The Army National Guard is the largest reserve component of the Army. States are working harder than ever to ensure that their recruits are ready for their commitments to the Guard. The Maryland Army National Guard's Recruit Sustainment Program has evolved throughout the years and is ranked one of the top programs in the nation due to its adaption and evolution of its programs.

Master Sgt. Buddy Houston, senior operations noncommissioned officer of the Recruit Sustainment Program at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving

Ground, Md., has been with the RSP since last October. His mission is to help evolve the RSP into a more streamlined program to improve the future warriors for their initial active duty training as well as provide their units with well-disciplined soldiers.

Within the RSP groups, these new enlistees are separated depending on their phase. Red Phase includes recruits who have not yet been to a drill weekend before. White Phase recruits have been to drill prior, and are more than 45 days away from their initial entry training starting date. Blue Phase recruits are 45 or fewer days away from shipping to Initial Entry Training. Gold Phase soldiers have already successfully completed IET and they are returning to prepare for the transition into their units as official Maryland National Guard soldiers. Each phase follows a



different schedule, and one of the biggest challenges has been helping the recruits understand what to expect so they can thrive at basic combat training.

“We have integrated our Military Entrance Processing Station guidance counselors and our Gold Phase soldiers to paint a clear picture of what to expect, dispel Basic Combat Training myths and overcome concerns,” Houston said. “As a result of this collaborative effort, we successfully shipped 90 percent of [recruits].”

The MDNG's RSP has changed a great deal pertaining to their Gold Phase soldiers in order to better prepare them for an easier transition into their units. Their equipment is ordered and issued through the RSP, they are all briefed on their education benefits and the medical detachment brings in a team of doctors to update their records. The Gold Phase soldiers have a set standard before going out into their units, and the RSP ensures they are prepped and ready for whatever unit they are moving into.

An obstacle for some recruits was physical readiness. Some were not meeting the Army's mandatory height, weight and physical fitness standards. The RSP created



specific programs tailored to the needs of each warrior and were able to increase their individual level of fitness.

“We conduct an Army Physical Fitness Test every month for all our recruits to measure their physical readiness,” Houston said. “Those at-risk recruits participate in a Warrior Fit Program, led by Maj. John Fincatto, and his team of cross-fit certified NCOs, to teach these recruits how to improve their fitness.”

The biggest difference between the MDARNG’s RSP and other states’ RSP is the Grey Phase. This is an orientation that helps prior service enlisted, National Guard inter-state transfers or branch transfers, to become more familiar with serving in the MDARNG.

Grey-Phase soldiers are issued their equipment prior to going to their assigned units and learn basic information to help smooth their transition into their units. The changes implemented to the MDARNG’s RSP are proving to produce better, more qualified soldiers.

According to Maj. Latisha Lewis, RSP executive officer, the calculations stand at 89.7 percent in-training seat management, which is the ability of the RSP to manage

and properly ship recruits to training. Negative end strength is at 0.8 percent, which are recruits who have been to drill and consistently have not gotten paid. The program has a 97.3 percent shipper quality, the ability of the RSP to ship the recruits with minimal packet errors or deficiencies. Their ratings for these specific RSP metrics excel the average standards and earned them the rank of 36th out of 54 within the National Guard Bureau standings.

The matrix has improved from the following year, specifically, with improved advanced individual training graduation rates for the Maryland National Guard soldiers. The Maryland RSP ship rate is 90 percent compared to the national standard of 85 percent. The Maryland RSP believes they still have work to do to improve. The great efforts of the staff have impacted the RSP, and their evolution of positive change has just begun.







# Focus on NCOs

By Maryland National Guard  
Public Affairs Office

Senior noncommissioned officers are groomed and not made. There are years of service, professional military education, and lessons learned through life's experiences in molding a soldier or airman into top-level NCOs.

Many NCOs at the highest levels in the services understand the importance for NCOs to be adaptable and to thrive in joint environments.

With more than a decade at war, it is clear that the services must work together to successfully accomplish the nation's war-time mission.

There are many stakeholders in the success of senior NCOs. The more obvious ones are the junior enlisted members and officers. Professional development is a critical component as the NCO corps is the backbone of the services.

The week of Oct. 12 – 17, 2015, brought focus to the NCO corps in the Maryland National Guard. That week, Sgt. Maj.

Siim Saliste, sergeant major of the Estonian Defence Forces, visited soldiers and airmen, participated in roundtable discussions with senior NCOs and attended the capstone event a joint E-9 professional development dinner. Under the State Partnership Program, this was Saliste's first visit to Maryland to see how we develop our NCOs.

"I see a lot of similarities yet we are a bit different. It doesn't really matter," said Saliste. "We have the same goals, we're partners, we're friends, and we're allies."

These types of events are helpful to developing the enlisted force to be totally interoperable with NATO and to create long-term and sustaining relationships.

"Everywhere I went I noticed the NCOs were always prepared, they always had an answer, they knew how to describe their challenges and most importantly they had suggestions on how to confront these challenge, said Saliste."

The theme of the capstone event was developing adaptable NCOs for a joint and ever-changing environment. The special guest speaker was retired Command Sgt.

Maj. Cynthia Pritchett. Pritchett was the first and only female to serve as the senior enlisted leader of a sub-unified combatant command in time of war. She addressed the importance of joint operations and for senior NCOs to have a full and complete understanding of the capabilities of the force.

"The last 15 years of combat has shown us that none of the services go into these deployments as a separate entity," said Pritchett. "It's truly a team thing. Separately we all bring our own strengths to the fight but collectively we bring much more bang for our buck. Embrace the importance of understanding our sister services."

Maj. Gen. Linda Singh, the adjutant general of Maryland, noted that she would like the NCOs to walk away from the dinner thinking that they need to reach out and do a little more, in terms of their own development.

She would also like them to see that the opportunities that exist can be challenging to get if NCOs are not building the right skill sets.

# Maryland warrant officer school pins Army's newest experts



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



**N**ine newly minted warrant officers graduated from Warrant Officer Candidate School, class 15-001, during a ceremony on the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Md., on Oct. 3, 2015.

Before applying to WOCS, candidates must be at least a staff sergeant and have completed appropriate noncommissioned officer education system leadership courses. Warrant officers make up the technical foundation of the U.S. Army by specializing in a technical area like intelligence, aviation or military police.

Class 15-001 was the largest WOCS class to go through Maryland's 70th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Kaylan G. Harrington, the class's primary training, advising and counseling officer. The class started with fifteen candidates in March and finished with nine.

"We had a really diverse class," said Harrington. "The candidates were from Maryland, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Delaware, as well as both Army Reserve and National Guard."

In order to graduate, warrant officer candidates must first complete Phase One online distance learning courses. Phase Two is a resident portion at Edgewood that consists of training on the weekends for six months followed by two weeks at

Camp Atterbury, Indiana. The candidates must successfully complete numerous tasks during the second phase including written exams, the Army Physical Fitness Test and a 6-mile march.

One of the graduates, Warrant Officer Frank J. Muto, of Arlington, Virginia, was awarded the Physical Fitness Award at the graduation ceremony for achieving the score of 336 out of 300 on the APFT.

"My biggest motivator for completing this was to follow in the footsteps of my mentors," said Muto. He will be joining the Maryland National Guard's 110th Information Operation Battalion as the information operation chief.

Muto and his WOCS classmates will return to their units as technically and tactically proficient warrant officers.

"These warrant officers have a lot of experience," said Harrington. "I look forward to working with them as my peers in the future."



- Warrant Officer Frank J. Muto,  
Physical Fitness Awardee

**“My biggest motivator for completing this was to follow in the footsteps of my mentors.”**



# Trains to SUSTAIN



By Capt. Cody Starken,  
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**T**he National Training Center (NTC) plays host to multiple units, each looking to test their abilities to accomplish their war-time mission. One Maryland Army National Guard battalion aims to use this training to measure its staff's command and control capabilities.

The 1297th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion is in the midst of their annual training in the heart of the Mojave Desert at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Ca. The surrounding Tiefert Mountains provide a picturesque view for those deployed to NTC to conduct desert training. The unit engaged in a hypothetical 15-day scenario in the fictitious land of Atropia. Atropia is currently under the threat of imminent attack from Donovanian enemy forces. The 1297th CSSB has been deployed to support the 1st Armored Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team and the Atropian people.

This is the first time a Maryland Army National Guard combat sustainment support battalion has been deployed on a NTC rotation. The unit worked for more than a year and a half planning for all possible outcomes during this rotation. The staff brainstormed, and planned for all possible outcomes to include logistical and administration support operations to other units.

During the training, NTC provided active duty observe, control, and train teams who evaluated and suggested improvements to the 1297th CSSB based on their performance. The NTC teams also observe simulated attacks on the soldiers by opposing forces during sustainment operations and how the soldiers responded to those attacks.

"The National Training Center gave us an opportunity to assess where the staff sections are, and where they need to be," said Lt. Col. Charles Blomquist, commander of the 1297th CSSB. "These past three weeks have given us an opportunity for a lot of self evaluations."

The battalion worked with active duty logistics units from Texas, an Army Reserve unit from Michigan, and a Kentucky Army National Guard unit, giving them a unique training experience. Although the units come from different locations across the U.S., they are deployed here under Task Force Cadillac, led by the 1297th CSSB.

This opportunity creates a shared understanding of what it is to be a soldier. I think both active duty and reserve organizations have learned and strengthened from these experiences, Blomquist added.

"This is my first time working with the CSSB, and my first rotation to the NTC," said Spc. Megan Thomas, a utility repairer for the 307th Maintenance Company, Kentucky National Guard. "It's been great."

To achieve success at NTC, the battalion depended on all the staff sections working together as a cohesive team. It is one section that has the true responsibility to ensure all missions for the battalion are staffed and have equipment ready to meet mission. The support operation group has that responsibility and is tasked to coordinate all logistical supplies to and from locations requested by other units.

On any given day, the section must track current and future convoys, the manifests, and arrival and departures. A lot goes into every movement in the logistical support area.

Capt. Kimami Smith, chief logistician for the 1297th CSSB, is the soldier charged with the responsibility to coordinate movements through the support operations section.

"I primarily examine logistical trends, support customers in the most proficient way, and to provide specific services e.g. transportation, maintenance, quartermaster," Smith said. "If you ask for logistical support, we will get it to you."

The support operations section acts as the nerve center for all logistic operations. When you walk into the support operations section, you see charts, maps tracking locations, manifests, and supplies currently within the battalion. It takes all this planning to send the trucks out of the gates.

"85 to 90 percent of a typical day mission is consumed with transportation and distribution based issues," Smith said. "The [other] 10 to 15 percent is consumed with movement related issues."

The NTC provides an in-depth training experience and gives commanders an idea where their soldiers and staff stand when it comes to real-time operations. The NTC observe, control, and training teams sit with the different sections, such as the support operations, staff sections, and the commander to prepare and develop their skills before deploying overseas.

"This has been an outstanding experience as a commander," Blomquist said. "The full integration of the staff providing mission guidance has helped me develop as a leader, and identified processes that has not been previously tested."



# Soldiers **BRAVE** the **HEAT** to treat others

By Capt. Cody Starken,  
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



One of the challenges Maryland National Guard soldiers face is pausing their civilian lives to attend their two-week annual training. This training can span many different places, such as locations across the United States or it can take place overseas.

Sometimes, you get a little of both.

Members of the 104th and 224th Area Support Medical Companies are spending their annual training together at Ft. Irwin's National Training Center from Oct. 4 to Oct. 24. While there, they are operating as if in a deployed combat environment where the sun drenched sands and windy plains create a land that resembles the Middle East, a land that can be unforgiving if proper care isn't provided or taken.

The medical companies primary mission is to support the 1297th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, providing real-world medical care for soldiers and to participate in the notional battle.

This training is unique for these units. The 104th and 224th ASMCs combined their personnel for this mission to maximize their care to the soldiers, and to maximize the training benefit offered by the NTC. Together, they are working alongside with logistic companies from the 1st Cavalry Division, a Michigan Reserve unit, and a Kentucky National Guard unit.

"Usually we are in a training environment or a real world environment, and the two don't generally mix," said Sgt. Aaron Genter, a health care specialist from the 224th ASMC. "In the beginning, it was like oil and water, but we are now getting the hang of it."

These units have to make the best of a challenging situation inside the training location, known as "the box". With temperatures well into the 90s, medics provide medical care in the notional training environment and are ready for any real-world incidents, if required.

The medical units will receive both simulated casualties and real-world patients to care for, during their time at the NTC, which will require the use of all the medical supplies.

"A challenge the medical staff faces is one of a real and authentic need of medical services versus one that is notional on the battlefield," said Maj. William Fox, field surgeon for the 1297th CSSB. "Yesterday for example, we had a "mass casualty" consisting of five patients with "sucking chest wounds", "shrapnel",

"amputees", and "head injuries"; while simultaneously having people in gurneys being treating for dehydration, stress and various injuries."

The real injuries that occur are given priority; the biggest one being heat casualties, and service members can immediately get treated at the medical facility.

Fox elaborated that a major concern the medical personnel have is dehydration. Active duty, National Guard, and reserve soldiers simulating an actual deployment, it's realistic, hard, and stressful in the intense heat.

"The fact we are training with notional mass casualties in a training atmosphere and at the exact same time we have real world patients walking in the door. We are burning our candle on both sides," said Sgt. Aaron Genter, a health care specialist from the 224th ASMC.

The soldiers also engage in other activities if there is a need in other locations on the forward operating base. They still have a primary responsibility to provide medical care, but they may be tasked to do other duties within the battalion. In a deployed environment, the first thing you have to establish is base security. Some soldiers will be assigned to gate security to protect individuals inside the logistical supply area.

The medical companies also help in another way. When deployed, they travel with a Mobile Kitchen Trailer that allows cooks to provide meals to service members.

The MKT arrived with the first convoy to the logistical support area to provide hot meals and a big morale booster.

"We have a 21-day menu that the cooks work from and select meals from that list," said Spc. Renee Siereveld, a food service specialist from the Army Reserve's 401st Transportation Company based in Battlecreek, Mich. "They come in the morning all groggy, barely awake. Then soldiers see hot meals and you can see the smiles on their faces."

Soldiers are provided high-caloric ready-to-eat meals that are packaged for the soldier to consume at any given moment while performing their mission. Despite that, the soldiers welcomed hot meals.

"It's probably one of the closest environments to the real thing where they cover every single aspect of warfare with the MILES use on personnel and the vehicles, so it is the closest to real life without losing equipment or supply," said Genter.

- Sgt. Chae McFadden,  
Health Care Specialist

**“This was the first time I’ve  
done a competition like this  
and I’m highly impressed by it.”**



# Medical Warrior Challenge

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





**T**he Maryland Army National Guard's 104th Area Support Medical Company conducted its first Medical Warrior Challenge competition at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation near Reisterstown, Md., on Sept. 12, 2015.

The challenge was held to build teamwork and strengthen esprit de corps within the unit. The competition included a 500-group push-up event, 9-line medevacs, medical scenarios, sked litter obstacle course, land navigation, and road march.

Soldiers participated in the sked-litter obstacle course to move full MRE boxes, ammo cans, and water containers up a hill and back down, all while not dropping anything and doing it as a team.

"Towards the end, when we had the downpour, we saw that their times were 6 or 7 minutes faster than the teams who had the dryer conditions," said 1st Lt. Kristen Santos, sked litter obstacle course grader. "They fought through it and continued to push through."

Teamwork is a major component of the challenge, each team had to complete 500 push ups in the shortest time possible. Team lead positions were assigned to junior noncommissioned officers so they could gain experience.

"Not only do you have to respect people at a higher rank but you respect the junior enlisted as well," said Sgt. Anthony Eccio, emergency care NCO in the treatment platoon.

"If a private comes up to you with a better idea that you didn't think of, you have to respect that, and you can use it."

Not all of the unit members are medics, health care specialists to be exact, but they all participated as a team in the medical lanes event.

Here, the team had to apply tourniquets, having all members engaged in the task.

"We had people who were medics and people who weren't medics and they had to jump in and remember their CLS (Combat Lifesaver) skills," said Sgt. Anthony Eccio. "The fact that they could recall that information is pivotal in our success in the task."

The teams had to plot land navigation points to the different stations spread out over Camp Fretterd and had to move on foot to each location.

"This was the first time I've done a competition like this and I'm highly impressed by it," said Sgt. Chae McFadden, a health care specialist.

"It's a good time for it and a good place for it. If we could do more of them I'd be up for it."

"It makes me proud to be a member of this company just to see how much the soldiers put forth," said 1st Lt. Kristen Santos.

"I know a lot of them weren't pleased with this kind of challenge, especially given the weather, but they made the most of it."

In addition to moving from each point on foot, the challenge concluded with a ruck march from the rappel tower to their readiness center where showers and lunch awaited.

"It motivates us as officers and senior noncommissioned officers to be better leadership for our soldiers and give these opportunities to them," said 1st Lt. Kristen Santos.



# TROOPER

of the

# QUARTER

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

## Q&A



**T**he Maryland National Guard takes great pleasure in recognizing its citizen-soldiers and airmen who stand out in their military and civilian careers. This quarter, the MDNG would like to highlight Air Force Staff Sgt. Kevin A. Grant for his professionalism as an honor guard member with the Maryland National Guard and as a self-promoted hip-hop artist.



photo by Rick Carrier





photo by James Miles

# Air Force Staff Sgt. KEVIN<sup>A.</sup> GRANT

## Guard Status:

Affiliation: Maryland Air National Guard

Unit: 175th Full Support Squadron

Air Force Specialty Code: 3MO51 - Services - Readiness and Mortuary

Years of service: 6

## Citizen Status:

Careers: Hip-Hop artist and Honor Guardsman

Affiliation: Maryland National Guard Honor Guard and Self Employment

Education: some college



**Q:** What inspired you to join the Honor Guard?

**A:** I just got home from tech school [military occupational specialty school]. I was at drill [military duty], and a good friend of mine who was also my supervisor at the time, Senior Master Sgt. Nilson, was like 'Hey, what do you think about joining the Honor Guard?' At the time I didn't have a job, so I took it. I was like 'Yeah, I would love to do that!' Besides me joining the Air National Guard, that was probably the best decision I made right there because my life totally flipped

**Q:** How do you think becoming an honor guard member changed your life?

**A:** I used to catch three buses to drill. I would have to wake up around 3 a.m. to

get to drill by 6 a.m. Now that I'm in the Honor Guard, I have a car; I got my own place. It actually gave me the cash that I need it to get the hip-hop thing going. So if I weren't in the Honor Guard, I most likely would not be doing what I am doing.

**Q:** Besides becoming financially stable, what are some other things you've taken away from being in the Honor Guard?

**A:** I have learned a lot from the people I work with. They have inspired me so much. The biggest thing that I can honestly take away from being in the Honor Guard is that we're doing honors almost every day for a veteran that just passed. It makes you realize how short life is, and you want to take advantage of the time you have because you don't know how much time you do have. It's a good honor because people do appreciate it, and I love doing it.

STAFF SGT. KEVIN A. GRANT

**Q:** I understand that you won the Honor Guardsman of the Year award in 2010. What was that like for you?

**A:** When I won the Honor Guardsman of the Year award, that was the first time I was like, 'You know what? I'm doing something that's good.' My parents were proud of me, everybody in my unit was proud. I was like, 'I have to keep going. I have to find something else that makes everybody proud.' Them being proud made me feel proud, and I also like the effect that it had with other people in the Air National Guard; it gave them inspiration to do something with themselves. That was a big turning point in my life as far as how much more success I wanted to have, and I was so honored.

**Q:** Was that around the time when you decided to become a rapper?

**A:** Yes. I'm not the typical rapper though. I play the piano, saxophone, I dance, and I'm more of an entertainer than a rapper. I just love to entertain people and make people feel good.

**Q:** When did you realize that you wanted to become an entertainer?

**A:** It all ties back to the Air Force. If I didn't join the Air Force, if I didn't get put in one place to meet people from all around the country and put into one place, I would not have known that I can reach that many people just off of me rapping.

**Q:** What is your latest single?

**A:** The Juice. It just dropped last week [Aug. 9, 2015]. The music video is something crazy because a lot people didn't know that I could play the saxophone. The meaning behind The Juice really that everyone has their thing – that one thing they have that not so many other people can do – and that's what The Juice is. That one talent, that one gift that you have that makes you say, 'I got the juice. That's what I got, don't nobody else got it but me.'

**Q:** What advice would you give to a young person who is thinking about joining the military or even becoming a professional artist?

**A:** You can do anything and still be in the Armed Forces. The only thing that can stop



photo by Rick Currier



# Q&A

you from doing what you want to do is yourself. When you want to do something bad enough, you'll find time for it. That's what happened to me. I really want my story to help the younger people to realize that 'I can still do this and still have my dream that I really want because it's possible.'



photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Ed Bard



PROOPER OF THE QUARTER

# MARYLAND

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

# AVIATORS

## PROTECT SOUTHWEST BORDER FROM ABOVE

**M**aryland National Guard aviators participated in a stateside deployment in support of Operation Phalanx/River Watch II in Harlingen, Texas. The National Guard's mission was to conduct aerial detection and monitoring to disrupt Transnational Criminal Organizations and Drug Trafficking Organizations in support of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The mission here is different than one that is overseas. Each aviator volunteered for this mission, and for some it's the second time.

"We joined the Maryland National Guard to serve our state and protect our homeland. That's exactly what this mission does," said Capt. S., a Maryland National Guard UH-72A pilot. "This is a stateside mission defending the homeland and we are very excited about it."

That same excitement for the mission helped to foster a close-knit community between the soldiers in the operation.

"We are a passionate group who believes in what we are doing," said Capt. S. "The results of the mission leads to taking illegal narcotics and weapons off the street."

The Rio Grande's twisting and turning waterway creates a natural border that extends 1,896 miles. It can provide anyone crossing the opportunities to avoid detection



and evade U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agents. It covers a 135,439 square-mile terrain that includes ravines, foliage, and dense agricultural crops that reach beyond overhead.

Maj. Gen. Linda Singh, the adjutant general of Maryland, toured the operation and visited soldiers. The pilots provide daytime and nighttime visual capability, which is essential in detecting activity not seen by border patrol agents on foot.

"I was able to see how easy it is for someone to come across the border. It's such a difficult place for border patrol agents to protect," Singh said. "I think it's critical that we continue to provide this support. That gives them [CBP] the ability to protect the border and allows them to be even safer. Not just safe for them [CBP] but those who come across."

People, including families with children, risk their lives trying to cross the river.

"I am very sympathetic for the foreigners apprehend[ed]. They're people, just like you and me, who are

seeking a better life for themselves and their children," said Capt. S. "While there may be innocent civilians trying to cross the border, there are also drug smugglers, as well as other criminals, that are trying to come across too."

Providing support for Operation Phalanx is beneficial for Maryland Guardsmen.

"Our primary customer is [CBP] and the relationship we've built with them is fantastic," said Capt. S. "There is an excellent mutual respect, and we are all one team. We are one team fighting for one cause, to secure the borders. It's a great experience."

The soldiers gained valuable real-world experience, improved their proficiency, and the working relationship between the Guard and the Department of Homeland Security agencies has strengthened.

"We are constantly flying here so the timing is a lot quicker, giving you the chance to do the same task repeatedly," said one Maryland National Guard aircraft mechanic who recently returned from a



- Capt. S., UH-72A Pilot,  
Maryland National Guard

**“We joined the Maryland National Guard to serve our state and protect our homeland.”**



deployment to Afghanistan and Kuwait. “It’s leaps and bounds what you might learn in a 6-month period.”

Operation Phalanx is an on-going mission. In each rotation, National Guard units from across the country will participate in the mission and provide many hours per month of flight support and criminal analyst support.

“The National Guard’s presence has greatly improved the Border Patrol’s, and other law enforcement agencies, ability to stem the illicit smuggling and flows of people, drugs, weapons, and bulk cash across the U.S./Mexico border,” a Texas Military Department spokesperson said. “We will continue to support U.S. Customs and Border Protection as long as the Department of Homeland Security requests our support.”

Since March 2012, the National Guard has assisted with approximately 87,000 observations, 61,000 apprehensions, 17,000 turn-backs, and seized 75,000 pounds of narcotics.

\*\*\*The full names of those interviewed are withheld by request of the Texas Military Forces to protect the service members currently serving in the operation.



# On the LINE



## Col. Cooper, commander of the MDDF, gets promoted to the rank of brigadier general

Col. Lorenza Cooper, commander of the Maryland Defense Force, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general at the historic Fifth Regiment Armory, located in downtown Baltimore, Md., Nov. 20, 2015.



## Col. Sean Casey gets promoted to the rank of brigadier general

Col. Sean M. Casey, director of the Joint Staff for the Maryland National Guard, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general at the Harry C. Ruhl Readiness Center in Towson, Md., on Dec. 4, 2015.

## “Dandy Fifth” Pass In Review

The Maryland Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 175th Infantry Regiment “The Dandy Fifth” conducted their annual Pass in Review at the Fifth Regiment Armory in Baltimore on Dec. 5, 2015. Current and former members of the 175th, also known as Baltimore’s “Dandy Fifth” Regiment, attended the event, paying their respects to the unit’s historic legacy. The Fifth traces its roots back to the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812.





## MDNG change in unit-command infrastructure

The Maryland National Guard held various events such as, a promotion ceremony for Col. Mark Beckler and change of commands and responsibilities for the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade and the 1100th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group at the Edgewood Conference Center located in the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., on Oct. 24, 2015.



## Partners in Care donates thanksgiving meals to service members

The Maryland National Guard's Partners in Care initiative donated 50 Thanksgiving meals to soldiers and airmen at the 5th Regiment Armory, on Nov. 24, 2015. (Video by Staff Sgt. Michael Davis Jr., Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office)



## Baltimore Veterans Day parade and ceremony

Today marked the tenth-year anniversary of the celebration that honors current veterans and those who made the ultimate sacrifice. The citizens marched through the streets of Baltimore with cheers and gratitude. During the ceremony Maj. Gen. Singh awarded members of the 231st Transportation Battalion her adjutant general coin as a way of showing appreciation and honoring them for their service. (Photo by James Miles.)



## Maj. Gen. Singh signs Memorandum of Understanding between Maryland Military Department and Estonia War Museum

Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh, the adjutant general of Maryland, hosted a ceremony for the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Maryland Military Department and the Estonian War Museum. The signing of this historical document demonstrates the Maryland Military Department's commitment to their state partner and furthering the mutual goal of promoting their military history. The Maryland National Guard has been partnering with Estonia for more than 20 years now.





## MDARNG Conter Drug excels at Substance Abuse Program

In the Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon today, Maryland Army National Guard's Counter Drug team was recognized for having one of the best Substance Abuse Programs in the Department of Defense.

(From left to right) Teresa Northrup, prevention coordinator, Nabulungi Akinshegun, alcohol and drug control officer, Sgt. First Class Jason Tolbert, drug testing coordinator and Lt. Col. Arland Moon, counter drug coordinator.



## Chaplain Stinchcomb receives Chaplain Eugene O'Grady Award

Chaplain (Col.) William S. Lee, Joint Force Headquarters chaplain for the Maryland National Guard, presented Chaplain (Capt.) Wayne A. Stinchcomb, 29th Combat Aviation Brigade chaplain, with The Order Of Chaplain Eugene O'Grady Award at a facility in the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., on Dec. 5, 2015. Stinchcomb said he thanks God for this award and is honored to have been selected, especially when he loves what he does for the service members.

The 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.



## Family Fall Festival

BOO! More than 200 goblins and ghouls from Joint Force Headquarters and their children had a creepy family fall festival at the Fifth Regiment Armory in Baltimore on Halloween, Saturday, Oct. 31. The event featured a best costume contest, games, food and candy for the little spirits. Special thanks to JFHQ Family Readiness Group and Staff Sgt. Nixon for setting up the fun event. Next year promises to be even bigger and better.



## 1-158 Casing of the Colors

**1**st Squadron, 158th Cavalry Regiment cased the unit's colors on Nov. 7th, 2015. This video briefly highlights the unit's proud lineage. (Video by Sgt. Elizabeth McCoy, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



### JFHQ Holiday Party 2015

**M**embers of Joint Force Headquarters Detachment held its holiday party on Dec. 6, 2015 at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation, near Reisterstown, Md. There were food and festivities for the family, raffle, and ugly hat contest.



### 110th IOB Freedom Salute

**S**oldiers from the 110th Information Operations Battalion hosted a Freedom Salute ceremony in Annapolis on Sunday, Dec., 6th, to welcome home four of their members who deployed to the Horn of Africa. This is the 11th team that deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom since the Battalion was stood up in 2011. Their mission is to conduct information operations planning and integration in support of Special Operations Command and U.S. Africa Command.





## The story of service

Many Americans have decided to serve this nation. From all different backgrounds and beliefs, these service members put their lives on the line. Their story is our story.

Take a moment to appreciate those who have served and those who currently serve our state and nation.

(Video by Staff Sgt. Ron Lee, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

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## Chaplain Wortham helps Service members build healthy relationships

Chaplain (Maj) Lonny S. M. Wortham, 1100th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group, hosted a Strong Bonds event, in order to conduct Relationship Enhancement Soldier Training (REST), in the Schaffer Dining Hall, located at the 5th Regiment Armory, Baltimore, Md., on Sept. 15, 2015.

"Whether it is a personal relationship, work relationship or simply getting along with our neighbors; building, developing, and maintaining relationship health can be challenging" - Chaplain (Maj) Lonny S. M. Wortham, HHD 1100th TASMG.



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## November

November is prostate cancer awareness month. You can show your support with a mustache and stay within regulations at the same time.

Your health is important, get a check up. <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dcpc/resources/features/prostatecancer/>

(Produced by Pfc. Patrick Rooney, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

U.S. Army Capt. Kristen Griest (left) and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver (right) congratulate Maj. Lisa Jaster (center) for completing Army Ranger School. They are the first women to earn the Ranger tab.

Photo by Paul Abell / AP Images for U.S. Army Reserve



# Gender matters

## *But not*





**atters**  
*why you might think*

Commentary by  
**Staff Sgt. Margaret Taylor**





Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Davis / MDARNG



*“They must have lowered the standards.”*

**W**e were talking about the two women who had just completed Army Ranger School, and my brother Tim was playing devil’s advocate.

Even knowing that he was only parroting a common negative opinion and it wasn’t his own, I got huffy.

I sputtered something about Ranger pride and the probability that some girl out there had to be capable enough to beat the challenge.

Our conversation became a bit more civil after that, but something about it has stuck with me in the months since.

I read a lot of the news reports that covered the story of Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver – and later Maj. Lisa Jaster – earning their Ranger tabs, all the while looking for something that was missing.

Was it all about checking the equal opportunity block? To public perception, maybe Griest, Shaye, and Jaster’s achievement wasn’t much more than that.

But I believe public perception completely missed what’s at stake.

Gender, in and of itself, does not matter.

“Blasphemy!” some might say. “Sexism! Misogyny!”

And I’d say, “What’s the point of gender integration? To fill a quota? To add a dash of pink into a sea of blue? I don’t want to be reduced to my chromosomes any more than any other person does.”

“Of course you shouldn’t!” they’d say. “A person’s value in an organization exceeds her genetic makeup: her experiences, her education, her upbringing – which are unavoidably linked to her gender and race – all contribute. That’s why equal opportunity is not only just, but practical too. Barring a person from a position on account of gender means we lose the potential benefits of all the rest.”

“So, from that viewpoint, going with the ‘same-old, same-old’ all the time would be a bad thing,” I’d say.

“Sure. Bringing in people with different points of reference means we can tackle problems that arise with fresh perspectives. Diversity in the ranks means a more robust fighting force or workforce.”

Huh. Diversity.

I’ve heard the word thrown about a lot, most particularly in regard to the Army Equal Opportunity Program. Looking around, though, I discovered that Army





Photo by Staff Sgt. Margaret Taylor / MDARNG



Photo by Sgt. Thomas Duvall / U.S. Army

EO doesn't have a monopoly on the term.

For instance, in finance diversified portfolios cut the happiest medium between profit growth and security. In architecture, bricks run in alternating patterns, which adds strength as well as curb appeal. In biology, inbreeding results in freaky future generations. In military tactics, engaging the enemy with plans that are the 'same-old, same-old' is a recipe for disaster.

Even if the word has been overused and abused, I think diversity's value shouldn't be ignored.

Looking back to February, the Maryland National Guard got its first African American woman as adjutant general. Maj. Gen. (MD) Linda L. Singh wasn't given command on account of her race or gender or to score EO kudos, but those were the focus of nearly every story.

Then the civil unrest in Baltimore happened in late April, and the Maryland Guard was activated to assist.

When Singh stepped in front of the cameras, maybe her gender and skin color first caught people's attention. But she held their attention when she shared the wisdom gained from her background, her experiences and the decisions she'd made to get to the top. All of that – every little bit – allowed her to speak words that resonated, that connected with people in Baltimore.

Singh was the right person for the job, no question about it.

That's why I think gender matters, especially in today's military. It can't be just a quota or ratio. Rather, it's an element that when – and only when – taken with all the other things that make up an individual, can strengthen and add depth to a group. This is the pur-

est, most valuable form of diversity.

While the 'same-old, same-old' can stunt development, I think cultivating such valuable diversity can ultimately enrich the military environment.

*From left:*

+ Maj. Gen. (MD) Linda L. Singh addresses the media during the civil unrest in Baltimore in April 2015.

+ U.S. Army Soldiers, both men and women, patrol the customs checkpoint at Torkham, Afghanistan, in April 2013.

+ A female U.S. Army Soldier greets local children during a patrol in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, in Feb. 2012. Though direct combat units are not yet integrated, men and women have served alongside each other in combat throughout the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

# 2015

*Layout by*  
Staff Sgt. Margaret Taylor

*Photos by*  
Spc. Allen Griffith  
Sgt. 1st Class Mitch Miller  
Staff Sgt. Nancy Spicer  
Staff Sgt. Margaret Taylor  
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Maj. Rick Breitenfeldt  
Staff Sgt. Michael Davis  
Sgt. 1st Class Thaddeus Harrington  
Col. Charles Kohler  
MDNG Public Affairs Office



## March 13 - 16

Soldiers from all across the state give their all in the Maryland Best Warrior Competition held in Glen Arm and the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. Spc. Christopher Hoffman won Soldier of the Year; Staff Sgt. Brandon Kennedy won NCO of the Year; 1st Lt. John Villanueva won Officer of the Year. Hoffman took 2nd place at the Region II competition at Fort Pickett, Virginia, in May.



## Feb. 6 ▲

C Company, 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment soldiers hone combat medic skills in the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. with their counterparts from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

## Feb. 28 ▼

Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh becomes the 29th adjutant general of the Maryland National Guard in a ceremony at the Fifth Regiment Armory in Baltimore.



Hoffman

Kennedy

Villanueva



## Jan. 20

Maj. Gen. James A. Adkins meets one final time before his retirement with state partners from Bosnia-Herzegovina at the Fifth Regiment Armory in Baltimore.



January

February

March



# IN REVIEW

OUR TEAM did a lot this last year. Hails and farewells. Changes at the top. Working with our partners from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Estonia. Helping to keep the peace in Baltimore. Honing skills throughout the U.S. and overseas. Competing for Soldier of the Year and other best-of-the-best titles. Celebrating diversity and workplace camaraderie.

And we did so much more! Here's a look at a few highlights from 2015.



## Apr. 27 - May 3

More than 3,200 soldiers and airmen from units throughout the Maryland Guard help local law enforcement keep the peace in Baltimore during Operation Baltimore Rally. This marks the first time in nearly 50 years that the Maryland Guard mobilized for peacekeeping operations in state.

## May 24 - 30

Public affairs personnel, in conjunction with Estonian bomb squad, film public service announcements about unexploded ordnances in Tallinn, Estonia, as part of the state partnership program.



Gowen



Generette

## June 7 ▲

Brig. Gen. Timothy E. Gowen takes command of the Maryland Army National Guard in a ceremony at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation in Reisterstown.

## June 12 - 14 ▲

C Company, 2nd Battalion, 175th Infantry Regiment soldiers conduct their first company-wide live-fire exercise at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey.

## June 23 ▲

Senior Airman Daniel Generette is named Honor Guardsman of the Year at a ceremony at the Fifth Regiment Armory in Baltimore.

April

May

June

# 2015 review



**July 4 ▲**  
The Maryland National Guard Ceremonial Salute Battery provides percussion at the 'Salute to Independence' concert at the Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg.

**July 18 ▼**  
Soldiers with C Company, 1st Squadron, 158th Cavalry Regiment (long-range surveillance) parachute together one last time over Little Orleans, Md. before the unit is disbanded.



**Aug. 1 ▲**  
104th Area Support Medical Company soldiers tackle a mass casualty exercise at Middle River to sharpen their disaster response prowess.

**Aug. 8 ▼**  
The Maryland National Guard pins seven new second lieutenants during an Officer Candidate School graduation ceremony held at Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Edgewood.



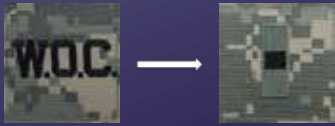
**Sept. 12**  
Soldiers with the 104th Area Support Medical Company participate in their first Medical Warrior Challenge at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation in Reisterstown. Participants performed team- and skill-building exercises, as well as a whole lot of pushups.

July

August

September





WOCS graduation



HART training

**Oct. 3 ▲**

Nine newly minted warrant officers graduated from Warrant Officer Candidate School, class 15-001 during a ceremony on the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Grounds, on Oct. 3, 2015.

**Oct. 7 ▲**

Maryland Army National Guard aviation soldiers team up with MD Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team and Baltimore County Fire Department to practice water rescue techniques in Kingsville.

**Oct. 31 ▼**

Guard members and their families dress up for Halloween fun at the Fifth Regiment Armory in Baltimore.



**Nov. 7**

The 1st Squadron, 158th Cavalry Regiment cases its colors during the unit's deactivation ceremony at LTC (MD) E. Leslie Medford Armory in Annapolis. The unit has had a storied place in Maryland Guard history: it was activated for both World Wars as part of the 29th Infantry Division, went to Bosnia and Herzegovina to provide aid, and was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

*Ashura  
Hanukkah  
Bodhi day  
Yalda  
Yule  
Christmas  
Kwanzaa*

May your New Year be a safe and happy one, and here's to a wonderful 2016!



# Final Frame

*By Tech. Sgt. David Speicher,  
175th Wing Public Affairs*

**M**aj. Gen. Linda L. Singh, the adjutant general of Maryland, congratulates Brig. Gen. Scott Kelly, 175th Wing Commander, after his final flight in an A-10C Thunderbolt II at Warfield Air National Guard Base in Baltimore, Maryland. Kelly's final flight marked the end of his service as wing commander because he is transitioning to be the assistant adjutant general Air for the Maryland National Guard.