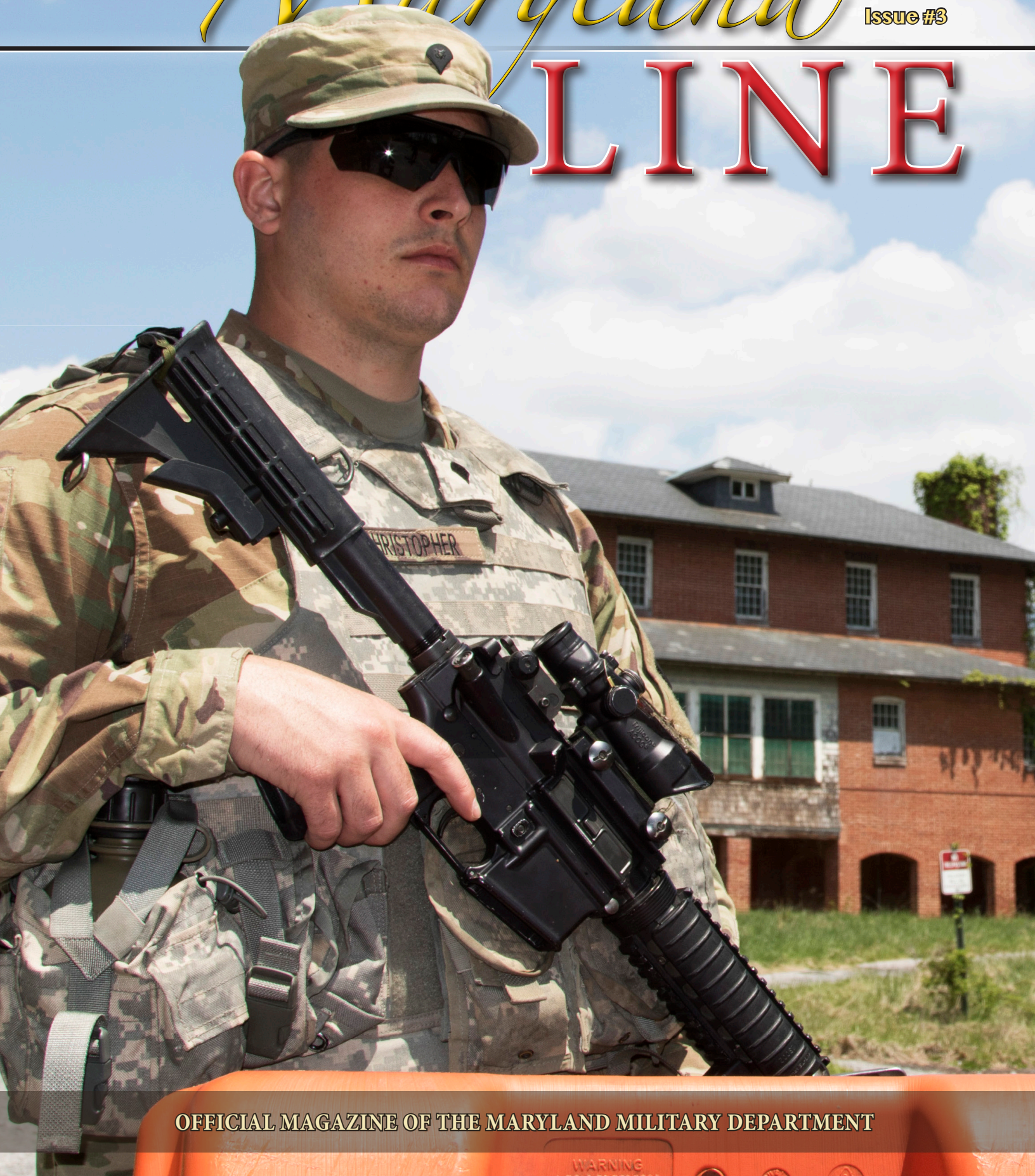


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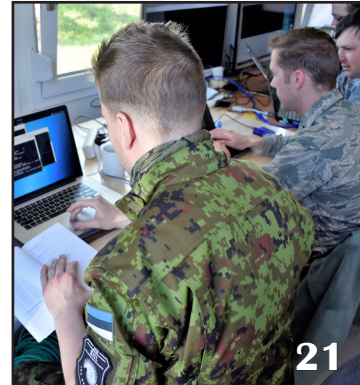
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On the cover:



Spc. Ryan Christopher, D Company, 175th Infantry Regiment, Maryland National Guard, stands guard at a tactical control point as part of Vigilant Guard 18 on May 8, 2018 in Sykesville, Maryland. The defensive perimeter was designed to secure a notionally downed cell tower.

(U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Sean Williams)



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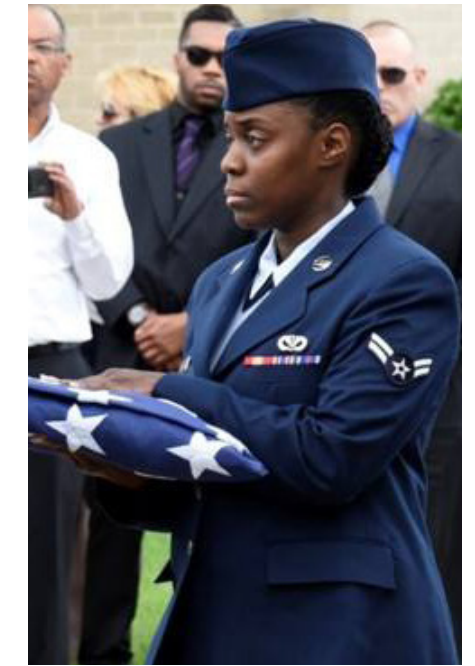
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Hermond awarded Soldier's Medal

Staff Sgt. Eddison Hermond's family was presented the Soldier's Medal, the U.S. Army's highest honor a soldier can receive for an act of valor in a non-combat situation, on June 7, 2018.

Eddison sacrificed his life when he went to rescue Kate Bowman from the rising waters during a flash flood at Ellicott City, Maryland, on May 27, 2018. Hermond spotted Bowman as she struggled against the rising current. Without regard to his own personal safety, Hermond immediately ran towards Bowman and shouted to her to stay and to remain calm. However, as he took a step over the edge in an attempt to render assistance, he was swept away by the rushing current.



MDNG, Estonian Defences celebrates 25 years of partnership

Article by Maj. Kurt M. Rauschenberg, 58th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade



Estonian Defence Force personnel from 2nd brigade conduct recon and react to contact missions May 6th during Exercise Hedgehog in southern Estonia. Soldiers from the 629th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Battalion work as observers and controllers for the EDF. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Kurt M. Rauschenberg)

Maryland National Guard service members supported the Estonian Defence Forces during Exercise Hedgehog 2018, the largest training exercise conducted in Estonia, May 2-12, 2018.

Focused on territorial defense, as well as special operations capabilities, the exercise brought together elements of the Estonian Defence League, Women's Home Defence League, and Defence Force. Estonian police and border forces, and emergency management personnel also participated.

Additionally, more than 15,000 personnel from 15 NATO countries participated in the exercise.

Hedgehog 2018 occurred as the Maryland National Guard celebrates the 25th anniversary of partnering with Estonia as part of the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program. The program links different National Guard states with partner nations worldwide.

The Maryland Guard was one of the first three partnerships in the program that began in 1993 as the Cold War came to a close.

"During the SPP's 25th anniversary, the Maryland Guard was honored to once again participate in this

Estonian national exercise," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Jason W. Burns, bilateral affairs officer with the Maryland Guard.

Maryland Guard personnel had the opportunity to integrate a wide variety of capabilities, enabling soldiers and airmen to fulfill specific training requirements, exchange critical tactics, techniques, and procedures. The exercise is a chance to continue to reinforcing security cooperation in the region.

"Annually, the Maryland National Guard typically schedules and accomplishes about 40 military-to-military training and exercise events," Burns said. "The Maryland Guard is fortunate to have such a close ally and partner nation."

Personnel from the Maryland Army National Guard's 629th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Battalion, based in Laurel, Maryland, provided expertise to two Estonian brigade intelligence sections. They supported the brigade commanders with operational planning, advised on fighting techniques, and engaged with the community throughout the exercise.

Meanwhile, soldiers with the Maryland Army Guard's



B Co., 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, based in Glen Arm, Maryland, took part by disrupting enemy actions against the Estonian Defence Force's 1st Brigade.

Airmen with the Maryland Air National Guard's 175th Wing Cyber Operations Group, based at Warfield Air National Guard Base, Middle River, Maryland, supported the Estonian Defence League's cyber defense unit. They

advised and assisted with building greater operational awareness of cyber defense capabilities among the Estonian participants.

The Maryland Air Guard's 175th Security Forces Squadron also participated in the exercise at Amari Air Base, Estonia, and provided air base security support and observations within the Base Defense Operations Control center through the duration of the exercise. The unit's participation provided greater insight on processes and procedures used to protect mission-critical resources.

Those training exchanges are all part of the goals of the SPP.

"The SPP assures our allies, deters our enemies, provides access to critical regions, and forges long-lasting relationships around the globe," said U.S. Air Force Gen. Joseph L. Lengyel, chief of the National Guard Bureau, in a May 10 letter to the force.

Through the partnership with Estonia, the Maryland Guard has played a key role in promoting regional cooperation and stability.

"Through SPP, the Maryland Guard and Estonian Defence [Forces] strengthen our alliance and supports all other NATO allies and partners as well," said Army Maj. Gen. John L. Gronski, U.S. Army Europe's deputy commanding general for Army National Guard, during a visit to the exercise training area on May 11.

Gronski met with Maryland Guard intelligence and special operations soldiers to address the importance of the exercise and how their participation fits within overall National Guard training opportunities throughout Europe.

"When the Maryland Guard comes here they also strengthen their own readiness, which helps them seamlessly deploy alongside Estonian [partners], contributing to the overall SPP," Gronski said.

▲ Airmen from the Maryland Air National Guard and members of the Estonian Air Force move a spare A-10C Thunderbolt II aircraft engine at Amari Air Base, Estonia, for Saber Strike 15, June 5, 2015. (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Master Sgt. Christopher Schepers)



▲ Sgt. Kristjan Mägi, an Infantryman from the Kuperjanov Bn., 2nd Bde., of the Estonian Defence Forces, competes in the Maryland National Guard Best Warrior Competition March 15, 2018, at Lauderick Creek Military Reservation on the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Senior Airman Enjoli Saunders)

Practice makes perfect during nation-wide CBRN scenario

Article and Photography by Spc. Victoria Piccoli, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Throughout the past year, members of the 231st Chemical Company based at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation, near Reisterstown, Maryland, participated in multiple disaster scenarios. They clocked countless hours of classroom instruction and field training, in preparation for the three week Army disaster response exercise Guardian Response 18, in April, which is the field training exercise run in conjunction with Vibrant Response 18.

The specialized 130-person chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear unit is among nearly 5,200 military and government civilian personnel spread throughout Indiana training, testing, and being validated on their CBRN disaster response tactics.

“Once we are notified of a large scale CBRN incident we are responsible for confirming or denying the presence of chemical contaminants and our ability to set up and conduct detailed personnel and equipment decontamination,” said Capt. Aaron Stutts, commander of the 231st Chem. Co.

For the second year, the 231st has assumed command and control of the CBRN response element, also called C2CRE. This means the unit stands ready to deploy with little notice in response to CBRN activities that could range from a derailed train car to a nuclear threat.

The unit is trained to respond within the first 72 hours of an incident while working with local first responders and alongside units from multiple states, said

Lt. Col. Michael Taluskie, commander of the 581st Troop Command.

During Vibrant Response 18 and Guardian Response 18, the training buildup to become C2CRE paid dividends when the unit entered the simulated blast zone ready to perform their job. CBRN specialists were able to quickly set up equipment, execute proper decontamination, and triage under the watchful eyes of U.S. Army North evaluators.

“The nature of our mission [here] is to respond to any event domestically that requires decontamination of large quantities of people,” said Sgt. Aaron Thompson, safety officer in the 231st Chem. Co. “This training has by far been the most realistic the company has seen.”

The training environment resembles a scene from an episode of the “The Walking Dead.” The landscape is littered with metal, personal effects, and actors playing displaced civilians to provide a little real-world pressure and scenario immersion for the unit.

“It [the environment] certainly brings an element of realism to what they have been doing,” said Taluskie. “If they [231st Chem. Co.] were to walk into either a chemical attack or some other attack, where their response is needed, it could look something very similar to this, where stuff is thrown all over the place or maybe the roads aren’t as passable.”

Thompson commented that the reality of this scenario pushed members of 231st to put all of their

practice and training for C2CRE over the past year to the test.

“The line that started this mission was ‘we’re here on America’s worst day’ and on a personal level I initially dismissed that,” said Thompson. “But as the mission progressed and we kept doing what we’re doing, it really sank in that what we do, or could potentially do.”

Last year the unit practiced with a purpose to maintain their C2CRE status, allowing the 231st to achieve a perfect score by U.S. Army North. This is helpful when we recertify, added Stutts.

“This year the unit has performed up to standard and exceeded it,” said Stutts. “We have come a long way.”



A soldier from the Maryland National Guard's 231st Chem. Co., conducts CBRN operations during exercise Guardian Response 18 at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center in Indiana on April 12, 2018.



▲ U.S. soldiers from the 251st Area Support Medical Company, South Carolina Army National Guard, and the 231st Chemical Company, Maryland Army National Guard, are evaluated by U.S. Army North on their equipment setup time, proper decontamination, and triaging patients during Guardian Response 18 on April 12, 2018, at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, Indiana.

VIGILANT GUARD 18

The background image shows two individuals in full-body protective suits. The person on the left is wearing a dark blue suit with a respirator mask and is using a long-handled tool to reach into a pile of rubble. The person on the right is wearing a white suit with a respirator mask and a white hard hat. In the background, a red car is crushed and partially buried under a large, broken concrete structure. The scene is set outdoors under a clear blue sky.

Vigilant Guard is an exercise that allows the Maryland Military Department, along with 42 federal, state, and local agencies a chance to collaborate and test interoperability as part of a national level exercise. The agencies are evaluated on preparing for and recovering from a catastrophic hurricane making landfall. Nearly 2,000 service members, from within the FEMA Region III area, are participating in the Vigilant Guard exercises in Maryland and Virginia. International partners were present to observe the exercise to take home lessons learned. The national level exercise is sponsored by the United States Northern Command in conjunction with National Guard Bureau.

MDNG soldiers, airmen conduct joint search and rescue training

Article by Sgt. Devon Bistarkey, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Photography by Sgt. Devon Bistarkey, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

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

Breaking, drilling and hammering away at a resilient pile of concrete in an effort to save lives, a team of Maryland National Guard soldiers and airmen work together to conduct simulated urban search and rescue operations at the Montgomery County Public Safety Training Academy in Montgomery Village on May 8.

The joint training, a part of the statewide disaster relief exercise Vigilant Guard 2018, validates the Maryland Guard's search and rescue capabilities.

"We're here to bring victims out safely," said Air Force Tech. Sgt. Kyle Trengo, a crew chief with the 175th Civil Engineer Squadron.

Piles of engineered concrete simulate a collapsed building where service members worked to clear and extract dummies using a variety of techniques. Army engineers from companies around the state gained experience from airmen from the 175th CEF.

"Army engineers have their own capabilities, but here they are getting to integrate and get some tool time as we show them the ropes," said Air Force Tech Sgt. Sean Murphy, a team leader from the 175th CEF.

Tactics of breaching and breaking away concrete structures came as new skills for the Army engineers, who took turns chiseling and drilling away at the pile.

"This is tedious, dirty, hard work — but what we are doing is a lot of calculated efforts to ensure safe stable passes for extraction, called shoring," said Murphy.

In addition to shoring, squads create crib stacks to secure failing elements of the structure. Working with the heavy compound, which weighs 150 pounds per square foot, makes load calculations a critical part of ensuring safety.

As a Federal Emergency Management Agency qualified rescue specialist squadron, the Air Guard team here is able to integrate with other federal agencies. Working together with the Army during this training further strengthens the state's ability to respond in an emergency.

"We're here to help in any domestic operation, and by integrating Army skills, we are that much more capable," said Murphy.





— VIGILANT GUARD 18 COVERAGE —

Soldiers protect lines of communication

Article by Airman 1st Class Sarah McClanahan, 175th Wing

Photography by Sgt. Sean Williams, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers from the Maryland Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 175th Infantry Regiment, responded to an emergency scenario May 8, at Springfield Hospital in Sykesville, Maryland, as part of Exercise Vigilant Guard 18.

Maryland's Exercise VG 18 is one of the multiple exercises taking place over the first two weeks in May as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Level Exercise 2018 using a common scenario simulating a catastrophic regional hurricane making landfall.

This location's scenario involved a cell tower that sustained damages from the high winds of Hurricane Cora. Civil unrest also took place in the exercise, in which civilians tampered with the tower.

"Our job is to secure the area and wait for the mechanic to move in," said Staff Sgt. James Slayman, a section leader assigned to D Co., 1-175th Inf. Regt.

Upon arrival to the exercise location, three traffic control points were established and maintained by D Co., 1-175th Inf. Regt.

Sgt. Raul Martinez, an infantryman assigned to D Co., 1-175th Inf. Regt., noted that a quick reaction force was on standby in the event a TCP was overrun.

"TCPs are designed to slow the flow of traffic, so that we can gain control of the vehicle," said Slayman. "We have teams out there to check IDs and turn vehicles around or escort them through the area – mission

dependent. It's for people's safety and to keep essential personnel in."

During the scenario, infantry teams were dispatched to each TCP and responded to civilian role players participating who attempted to gain access to the area.

"Currently, there is no cell service in the area," said Slayman. "Once the tower gets repaired, communication will be restored immediately."

The success of a mission like this is extremely important due to the extensive reliance on cell towers for communication. Most people, including first responders, rely heavily on phones to perform their duties.

However, the importance of a training exercise like this goes deeper than restoring communication, it also maintains the readiness of service members.

"Training like this occurs multiple times throughout the year and troops are continuously demonstrating their understanding of what's necessary to complete the mission," said Slayman.

The consistent readiness of guard members also provide reassurance to the communities they serve.

"The training we have, [when] put to use, will help the community ease their minds and know that we have control of the situation," said Spc. Jonathan Bridges, an infantryman assigned to the D Co., 1-175th Inf. Regt. "We are always mission ready."

Testing the Joint Medical System during natural disaster exercise

Article by Article By Master. Sgt. Christopher Schepers, 175th Wing
Photography by Sgt. Elise Moore, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



Members of the Public Health Service, PHS-2 Rapid Deployment Force, and 10th Medical Regiment, Maryland Defense Force, monitor patients condition during Vigilant Guard 18 at Aberdeen Proving Ground Edgewood Area in Edgewood, Maryland, on May 8, 2018.

When a natural disaster strikes, one of the most vital aspects of recovery is treating people that have a medical need in the area. Whether an individual needs immediate medical attention or generic medication, a Joint Medical System provides triage, medical care, and patient holding in response to a natural disaster.

During Vigilant Guard 18 the JMS will be staffed with members of the Maryland Military Department, U.S. Public

an insight into whether they can treat the patient and if so the course of treatment an individual may need.

“Patients will be greeted at a triage desk at which point we will determine whether someone has an acute life threatening presentation or are they safe to be signed in to see a provider,” said Miskimon. “The provider that sees the patient will determine whether the patient can be treated for their acute medical problem and then discharged or

“It’s extremely important to work jointly with other components in order to better understand our strengths and weaknesses.”

- U.S. Army Maj. Matthew Miskimon

Field surgeon, 104th Area Support Medical Company

Health Service’s PHS-2 Rapid Deployment Force, and the Maryland Defense Force.

The exercise will give the groups the opportunity to work together in a training environment so they are better prepared when and if they respond together to a natural disaster.

“It’s extremely important to work jointly with other components in order to better understand our strengths and weaknesses,” said U.S. Army Maj. Matthew Miskimon, a field surgeon in the 104th Area Support Medical Company. “We can also familiarize ourselves with the policies of other forces and to prepare and practice together and get to know each other in order to more thoroughly and efficiently manage the patient flow and patient treatment.”

Upon entry into the JMS, patients are triaged to determine the extent of their injuries. This gives providers

should they be treated for an illness or medical condition that requires a prolonged observation course.”

After treatment, a patient can be sent home or may be admitted to a patient holding area where they can receive additional medical care or stay for an extended period of time.

“We have an acute care area where people get initial treatment,” said Commander Mike Krumlauf, U.S. Public Health Service, PHS-2 Rapid Deployment Force operations director. “If people are going to be here beyond 24 or 48 hours we move them to a less acute area, a more chronic care area.”

People can be moved to the chronic area to help alleviate the crowds at local hospitals or if they are not able to return to their home,” said Krumlauf.

Maryland Guard showcases benefits of partnerships

Article by Sgt. Sean Williams, 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
Photography by Airman 1st Class Sarah McClanahan, 175th Wing



Distinguished visitors listen to a brief about the Maryland's Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team's search and rescue capabilities May 9, 2018, at Lauderick Creek, Edgewood, Maryland, during Maryland's Exercise Vigilant Guard 18. International partners are present observing the exercise to take home lessons learned.

For members of the Army and Air National Guard, partnerships continue to be a critical and enduring focus. While each relationship has its own unique and sometimes complex intricacies, they serve to ensure America's safety and strengthen global peace and security.

The Maryland National Guard showcased the benefits of its partnerships during Vigilant Guard 2018. Designed as a response to a hypothetical catastrophic hurricane landfall in the mid-Atlantic region, Vigilant Guard was an exercise that allowed the Maryland Military Department, along with 42 federal, state, and local agencies, a chance to collaborate and test interoperability as part of a national level exercise.

Members of the Adriatic Charter and Estonia were there to witness and also participate in the training. The Adriatic Charter, also known as A-5, is an association of Western Balkan countries including Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the United States. Originally designed to help usher the Balkan states into NATO membership, the association's intent has also evolved to include strengthening coordination and capabilities between the states at the regional level.

While sharing an official partnership with Estonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina through the National Guard's State Partnership Program, the Maryland National Guard invited the rest of A-5 to Vigilant Guard 18 in hopes that the association might learn from and replicate the type of exercise in their own home region.

"It is our hope that they will learn about the process of planning a disaster management exercise, and the coordination and challenges incurred while doing an exercise

with civilians," said U.S. Army Capt. Harrison Bittenbender, a Maryland National Guard bilateral affairs officer working with the Joint Staff of the Ministry of Defense of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. "Vigilant Guard is an opportunity where they get to see that within disaster management. The civilians are in charge and therefore change the coordination and expectation of the military."

Bittenbender is optimistic that the A-5 might organize a Vigilant Guard-type exercise of their own within the Balkans by 2020.

"At the end of the day these countries' armed forces are very similar to the National Guard in that one of their primary missions is to support the civil authority during natural disasters," said Bittenbender.

Attending A-5 member representatives agree and share in the sentiment surrounding the benefits of partnerships and the opportunity to see how they play out in multifaceted exercises like Vigilant Guard.

"It is necessary to build this type of activity, this type of coordination between the different countries," said Damir Pilcik, Head of the National Protection and Rescue Directorate in Zagreb, Croatia. "It is a very good thing for all of these countries to build and grow and increase our capacities for the different catastrophes and emergency situations."

As the exercise closes and representatives return to their home region, the Maryland National Guard remains committed to maintaining its state partner relationships. It is through these partnerships the Maryland National Guard ensures its capability, and its partners' capability, to respond to the many challenges across the full spectrum between war and peace.



Maj. (MDDF) Stephen Rice, a public affairs officer, Maryland Defense Force, goes over a schedule of events with distinguished visitors May 9, 2018, at Perry Point Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Perry Point, Maryland.



◀ Maryland National Guard soldiers work to hone their urban search and rescue techniques at the Montgomery County Public Safety Training Academy in Montgomery Village, Maryland, on May 8, 2018.



▲ Maryland Lt. Gov. Boyd K. Rutherford speaks during a press conference at the Harford County Emergency Operations Center, in Forest Hill, Maryland, on May 7, 2018.



◀ Staff Sgt. Wendell Myler, a cyber warfare operator assigned to the 175th Cyber Operations Squadron, provides support protecting a 911 call center from cyber threats May 9, 2018, at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation, Reisterstown, Maryland.



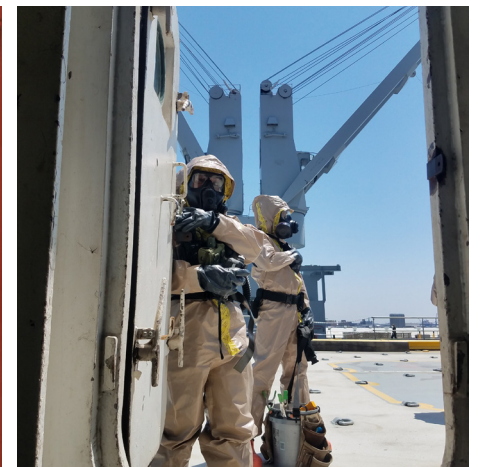
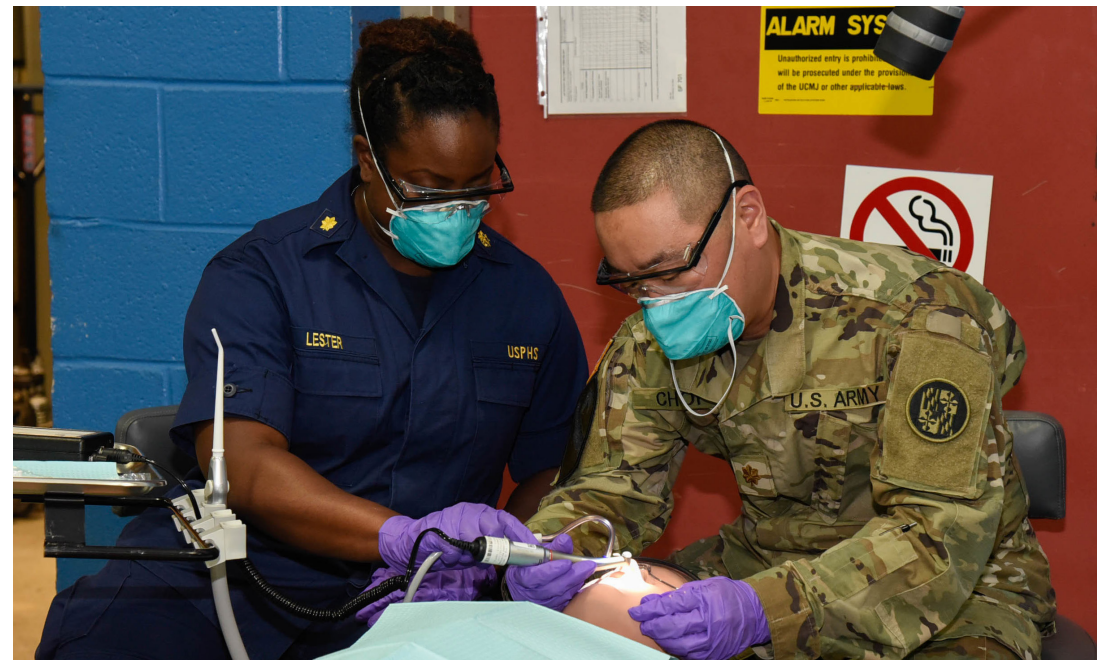
◀ Service members from the 21st Civil Support Team, from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, enter buildings to locate simulated casualties and determine the contamination source on Aberdeen Proving Grounds-Edgewood Area, Maryland on May 8, 2018.

VIGILANT GUARD 18 COVERAGE

Lt. Cmdr. Monique Lester, an environmental health officer assigned to the PHS-2 Rapid Deployment Force and U.S. Army Maj. Brian Choi, a general dentist assigned to the 104th Area Support Medical Company, demonstrate giving dental treatment to a medical dummy May 9, 2018, at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.



▲ Members of the 175th Fire Department carry role players out of a notional collapse building May 9, 2018, at Perry Point Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Perry Point, Maryland.



▲ National Guard service members from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware respond to a simulated radiological threat at the Port of Baltimore on May 9, 2018.

Guard exercises cyber awareness with Estonian comrades

Article and Photography by Maj. Kurt M. Rauschenberg, 58th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade

The 175th Wing's Cyber Operations Group from Warfield Air National Guard Base, Middle River, Maryland, supported the Estonian Defence League's cyber defense unit May 2-12 during Exercise HEDGEHOG, also known as Siil 2018.

The Maryland and Estonian cyber warfare operators used the exercise

see people blowing the whistle in these scenarios, which is very creative."

Scenarios involving rogue wireless access points, phishing attacks with links to a website, and leaving quick response codes with Siil 18 branding to capture basic information from those connecting were used as means for testing the

"This is not the first time the 175th COG has trained with the Estonian Defence Forces," the Maryland Guard cyber warfare operator said. "Our relationship goes back at least 9-years, if not longer."

Normally, the exercise would focus primarily on air and land operations with little to no cyber-related situations. However, incorporating the cyberspace domain allows Estonia and the Maryland Guard to widen the scope of participation through the National Guard's State Partnership Program.

"This training is so valuable to exercise our shared goals and values," said the EDL cyber member. "The everyday tactical and technical efforts put substance to all the cooperation that goes into our established relationship."

The interviewees in this story requested that their names not be used in the article due to security concerns.

HEDGEHOG 2018 is the largest exercise ever conducted in Estonia with a nation-wide training

area and major activities conducted in South-East Estonia and Northern Latvia. The purpose of the exercise is to train on territorial defense, both in conventional and asymmetrical warfare.

Internally, the exercise brings together members of the Estonian Defence League, Women's Home Defence League, and regular Defence Force.

Additionally, Estonian police and border forces and emergency management personnel also participated. With cooperation from 15 NATO allied forces, over 15,000 personnel participated in Exercise HEDGEHOG 2018. The Michigan And Oklahoma National Guard also participated in the exercise.



MD Guard cyber warfare operators from the 175th Wing's Cyber Operations Group support Exercise Hedgehog May 7th in Southern Estonia.

as an opportunity to leverage their joint knowledge and skills from both civilian and military backgrounds. They incorporated cyber scenarios within the training areas that could cause potential threats to the overall exercise if it were a real situation.

One of the EDL's goals was to build cyber awareness into the exercise with physical objects meant to potentially test policy and procedures of Estonian participants.

"We used a technique known as cyber exploitation to test their own internal cyber awareness," said a Maryland Guard cyber warfare operator. "Normally we play a defensive role, but the EDL wants to

internal cyber awareness levels of the Estonian Defence personnel.

There was also removable media loaded with malware, ransomware attacks, and planting cell phones within units to track locations.

"Essentially, they are breaking into your house, but not stealing anything," the Maryland Guard cyber warfare operator said. "They are leaving a nice little note behind, however, letting them know we were here."

These scenarios mirror real world ways attackers attempt to collect information. Obtaining such information in reality could allow an adversary to gain intelligence of the on-going military activities and potentially compromise planned missions.

Guard supports U.S. Army Europe in major exercise

Article and Photography by Maj. Kurt M. Rauschenberg, 58th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade



Thirty Maryland National Guard soldiers from the 629th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Battalion recently supported U.S. Army Europe's intel operations during Joint Warfighting Assessment 18.1, an exercise that tested readiness, interoperability, and future force development at Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels Training Areas, Germany.

Focused primarily on the military intel mission of the exercise, the Maryland Guard soldiers served in various high-level command structures throughout the scenarios and provided a wide-range of backgrounds and experience to the USAREUR intel capabilities.

"Our 629th intel personnel were able to assess critical information within various official platforms throughout the exercise and then turn them into decision-making products for senior leaders," said U.S. Army Maj. Ryan N. Gerner, 629th MI Bn. executive officer. "It was amazing to see them come out of their comfort zones and show our active-duty counterparts what we could do."

The intel functions the 629th MI Bn. provided included counter, human, signal, and all source intelligence capabilities.

"During the exercise, the teams were able to synchronize with one another during three different shifts and involve themselves in the full-range of military intel skill sets," Gerner said.

USAREUR G2 hosted the 629th MI Bn. soldiers within the Mission Command Center in Wiesbaden. U.S. Army Lt. Col. Christopher J. Heatherly, deputy chief of USAREUR G2 operations, plans, and training division, oversaw the day-to-day operations and witnessed first-hand the expertise the National Guard counterparts brought to the table.

"The support from our U.S. National Guard and Army Reserve units is absolutely vital to our operations

this level, and the great perspective that comes with it was all achieved during this exercise," said Sgt. Cody J. Lewis, an intel analyst with A Company, 629th MI Bn. "People have to branch out from their comfort zones and participate in the opportunities that exist."

U.S. soldiers tested 27 concepts and capabilities alongside U.S. allies and partners during the JWA 18 from April 20 to May 7.

“It was amazing to see them come out of their comfort zones and show our active-duty counterparts what we could do.”

- U.S. Army Maj. Ryan N. Gerner
Expeditionary Military Intelligence Battalion executive officer

and their work was exceptional," said Heatherly. "It's a win for us given how well the exercise went and it's a win for them by applying the various intel functions from this level to their own training objectives."

As an integrated team, the Maryland Guard intel soldiers were able to cross-train with the other companies within the battalion, adding value to their overall experience and overall knowledge.

"Expanding the skill sets, teaching what a staff looks like from

JWA consisted of six 3-star headquarters, and more than 4,800 participants from 10 partner nations. The assessment included a brigade headquarters from United Kingdom, Canada, France, and Germany, one battalion headquarters from Denmark, and participants from Italy, Australia, New Zealand, and Spain. United States Air Force Europe, 3rd Fleet, and U. S. Army Special Operations Command also provided mission command elements for the exercise.

On the



LINE

'Get ready for the ride'

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

Photography by Spc. Jiapanda Lebbie, 29th Infantry Division

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



Freedom Salute for 29th CAB

April 15, 2018

Governor Larry Hogan welcomed home nearly 200 soldiers at Aberdeen Proving Ground during a Freedom Salute ceremony. The Maryland National Guard soldiers were from the headquarters element of the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade and members of B Company, 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion (Lift) and F Co., 1st Battalion, 111th General Support Aviation Battalion (Air Traffic Services). The soldiers deployed to the Middle East for nine months and provided full-spectrum aviation support in ongoing combat operations.

The headquarters element of the 29th CAB supported more than 2,200 soldiers from multiple aviation units spanning more than a dozen states to 17 locations across in Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Turkey, and Kuwait. B Co., 3-126th GSAB (Lift) was deployed to various locations in Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel.



The Maryland Army National Guard hosted the change of command and change of responsibility ceremony at the historic 5th Regiment Armory in Baltimore, Maryland, on June 2, 2018.

Col. Janeen L. Birkhead assumed command of the Maryland Army National Guard from Brig. Gen. Timothy E. Gowen.

Command Sgt. Maj. James M. Nugent assumed responsibility as the senior enlisted leader of the Maryland Army National Guard from Command Sgt. Maj. Kimberly A. Mendez.

Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh, the adjutant general of Maryland, presided over the ceremony. Singh stated that she feels like a proud parent when she see leaders that she has served with and mentored take command.

"Change is something you have to embrace," said Singh.

The outgoing commander Gowen, who initially took command shortly before the civil unrest in Baltimore, stated that he always likes to leave things better than he found them.

"I am most proud of my talent management system," said Gowen of his time in command. "I consider it a feather in my cap."

In attendance were units from Joint Force Headquarters Detachment, 70th Regiment, 58th Troop Command, Maryland Army National Guard Staff Element, 29th Combat Aviation Brigade, and 58th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade as Birkhead assumed command.

"It's an honor to take the guidon," said Birkhead.

The passing of the unit colors represents the transfer of authority and responsibility for the unit from one commander to another.

Birkhead explained how the organization success depends on developing disciplined soldiers from diverse backgrounds who are committed to serve. Her focus will be on, readiness, recruiting, retention, and resiliency.

"I'm ready to lead," said Birkhead. "Get ready for the ride."

Spc. Villamar wins Region II Best Warrior Competition

May 17 20, 2018

Reporting and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Terra C. Gatti

Spc. Gerald Villamar was named the top soldier in the Region II Best Warrior Competition at Fort Pickett, Virginia. The winners from the regional competition will go on to compete at the national level this summer.

"I feel excited and proud," Villamar said at the announcement ceremony. "All the hard work, studying and preparing myself for the competition, it all paid off."



Maryland Military Department celebrates Unity Day

April 19, 2018

Service members gathered for the 13th Unity Day at the Fifth Regiment Armory, Baltimore, where they were able to learn about different cultures, try food from various countries, and view cultural performances. Unity Day was established to enhance cross-cultural awareness and promote harmony among all members and retirees of the Maryland National Guard and Maryland Military Department.



Be Healthy & Stay Substance Free Family Fun Night

April 27, 2018

In celebration of the Month of the Military Child and in recognition of National Alcohol Awareness Month, the Maryland National Guard Substance Abuse Program and the Maryland National Guard Child & Youth Program hosted a Be Healthy & Stay Substance Free Family Fun Night at Ruhl Armory in Towson, Maryland.



MD and PA soldiers conduct sling-load operations during annual training

April 21, 2018

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment (Security and Support) and Pennsylvania's H Company, 128th Brigade Support Battalion, conduct sling-load operations at the Lauderick Creek Training Site, Edgewood, Maryland, during their April annual training.

Over 45 soldiers were trained in operating around helicopters, rigging vehicles, and the fundamentals of air assault operations. This training event combined the mission essential tasks of both units.

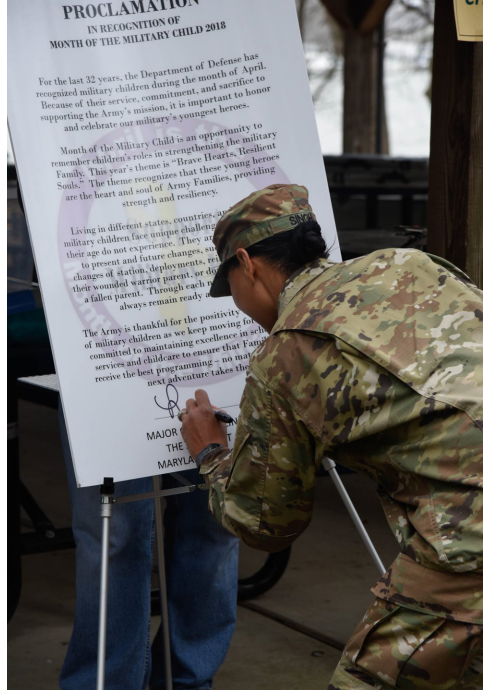




SHARP/SARC awareness 5K Run/Walk

April 15, 2018

Members of the Maryland National Guard along with friends and family complete a 5K Run/Walk at Warfield Air National Guard Base, Middle River, Md.



29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment supports Vibrant Response/Guardian Response 18

April 22, 2018



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Paul Porter (right), 29th MPAD, interviews U.S. Army Capt. Charles Robitaille, commander of the 22nd Engineer Clearance Company, during Guardian Response 18 at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, Indiana.

The 29th MPAD supported U.S. Army North with public affairs support with real-world coverage, role-playing media, and evaluating the the public affairs response of service members in the scenario.

58th EMIB conducts combat lifesavers training



May 4, 2018

U.S. Army Sgt. Wilson Lucas instructs soldiers within the HHC, 58th EMIB during a combat lifesavers training practical exercise. CLS training will certify soldiers in the basic functions to provide medical assistance to wounded personnel until additional medical support arrives. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Scharton.)

Maryland Defense Force holds annual muster

April 21, 2018



The Maryland Defense Force held its annual muster, at the Fifth Regiment Armory in Baltimore, Maryland. The guest speaker for the muster was Maj. Gen. Meelis Kiili, commander of the Estonian Defence League. Remarks were also given by Maj. Gen. Linda Singh, the adjutant general of Maryland, and Brig. Gen. (MDDF) Lorenza Cooper, commanding general of the MDDF.

729th Quartermaster Composite Supply Company honored for relief support effort

April 8, 2018

Members of the 729th Quartermaster Composite Supply Company were honored for their exemplary performance in support of the Hurricane Maria relief efforts. Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh presented the 15 team members with the Adjutant General's Special Recognition Ribbon and her coin for their service in Puerto Rico. The 729th QM Composite Supply Co.'s primary mission was to convert seawater into drinking water. They were responsible for supervising or performing the installation and operation of water purification equipment, as well as dealing with water storage and distribution operations and activities. They also inspected facilities and food supplies for the presence of disease, germs, or other conditions hazardous to health and the environment.



Soldiers train on unstabalized gunnery trainers

May 7, 2018

29th Military Police Company and HHC, 115th Military Police Battalion soldiers train on high tech unstabalized gunnery trainers that simulate turret mounted weapon systems. These simulations utilize interactive virtual reality interface with the user.



200th Military Police Company named 2017 outstanding unit of the year



May 26, 2018

The Maryland Council of Chapters of the Military Officers Association of America presented its 2017 outstanding unit of the year award to the 200th Military Police Company, in Catonsville, Maryland. It was in recognition of their performance and success in providing defense support to civil authorities in the U.S. Virgin Islands following Hurricane Irma and during military training and exercise at the National Training Center.

2018 State Awards and Recognition Ceremony

May 24, 2018

State employees receive awards and recognition during a ceremony at the Dundalk Readiness Center.



Final Frame



PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. MARGARET TAYLOR

Maryland National Guard soldiers and airmen work together to hone their urban search and rescue techniques at the Montgomery County Public Safety Training Academy in Montgomery Village, Maryland, on May 8, 2018.