

THE

Maryland

Fiscal year 2019

HIGHLIGHTS



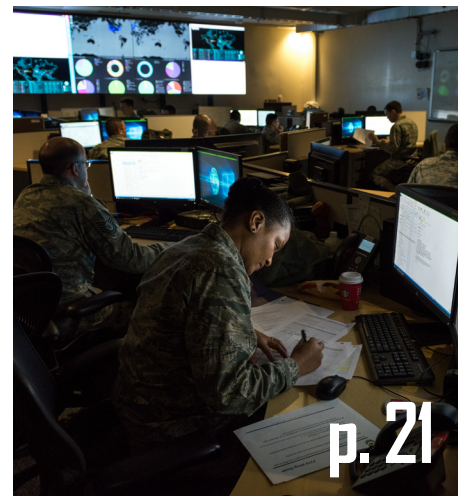
**MAJ. GEN.
LINDA L. SINGH**



“Relentless 6, Out”



HIGHLIGHTS:



03 Maryland National Guard welcomes new adjutant general

Members of the Maryland National Guard, friends, and family gathered at the 5th Regiment Armory in Baltimore to attend the change of command ceremony between Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh and Maj. Gen. Timothy E. Gowen.

05 Maryland soldier named Army Guard's best

Fourteen Soldiers from throughout the Army National Guard battled for three sweltering days at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, July 15-18 to compete for the title of Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year during the 2019 Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition. Maryland's very own Spc. Hunter Olson finished first and earned the title of Soldier of the Year.

21 Guard cyber units evolve at warp speed

Just as the cyber threat has continued to evolve and grow, so too have the National Guard's cyber defense teams and capabilities, said Guard officials during a cyber-roundtable discussion at the Pentagon.



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CONTENTS:

03 Articles

- 03 Maryland National Guard welcomes new adjutant general
- 05 Message from the adjutant general
- 06 Maryland Guard provides inauguration support
- 07 175th Wing provides precise, professional performance on deployments
- 09 Maryland soldier named Army Guard's best
- 11 Multinational service members participate in Spring Storm
- 13 Training reinforces Bosnia-Herzegovina partnership
- 17 Maryland soldiers take on the world
- 18 Maryland Guard, Bosnia-Herzegovina armed forces celebrate 15-year partnership
- 19 Leaders need resilient soldiers
- 20 STEM Partnership helps grow students success
- 21 Engineers sweep up during Ocean City mine clearing exercise
- 23 Cyber units evolve as online threats continue
- 25 Innovation Fitness: Soldiers push their limits

27 Year in Review



Maryland National Guard welcomes new adjutant general

Article and photos by **Staff Sgt. Enojli Saunders**, 175th Wing



(Office of Governor Larry Hogan photo by Anthony DePanise)



Members of the Maryland National Guard, friends, and family gathered at the 5th Regiment Armory in Baltimore, to attend a change of command ceremony that formalized the transition of command within the Maryland Military Department September 14, 2019.

The ceremony represented the orderly transition of one commander to another through the passing of colors representing the organization. The outgoing commander, Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh received the colors from

the MDNG's Senior Enlisted Leader, Command Sgt. Maj. Perlisa D. Wilson. Singh then passed the organization's colors to Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan who then passed the colors to the new commander, Maj. Gen. Timothy E. Gowen.

"Over the past four and a half years under the skilled and visionary leadership of General Singh, this Maryland Guard has risen to even greater heights," said Hogan. "I have every confidence that General Gowen will lead you with great

distinction and integrity and that he will work tirelessly to ensure that Maryland's National Guard remains one of America's very best military organizations."

Following the relinquishment of command, Singh retires from the MDNG after 38 years of service. In the history of the MDNG, Singh was the first African American and woman to be appointed as the adjutant general of Maryland.

"It doesn't matter the number of snow storms, number of hurricanes ... you do it all,"

said Singh, addressing members of the MDNG. "You are doing extremely important things; don't stop. Give continued support to General Gowen."

Singh served approximately four years as the adjutant general of Maryland. Her successor, Gowen, previously served as the assistant adjutant general for the Maryland Army National Guard from April 2015 to September 2018 and most recently in the U.S. Army's Futures Command.

Gowen is now the 30th adjutant general for the state of

Maryland and will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the MMD, which includes the MDARNG, Maryland Air National Guard, Maryland Emergency Management Agency, and Maryland Defense Force.

"My style is to observe, become familiar with the challenges, assign the best people to the task, provide them with the encouragement and resources to get the job done, and to let them do it," explained Gowen.

The adjutant general is a senior advisor to the governor

and is responsible for the readiness, administration, and training of more than 6,700 members of the MMD with an annual budget of more than \$314 million. The adjutant general serves as the official channel of communication between the governor and the National Guard Bureau, and serves as a member of the governor's cabinet.



Soldiers, Airmen, Civilians and Volunteers of the Maryland Military Department:

I am honored to serve as the 30th Adjutant General of Maryland. It is an incredible privilege to lead the nation's premier Military Department, comprised of Maryland's best and brightest.

The Maryland Air and Army National Guard service members are the best-trained and most-capable forces in the nation. The Maryland Emergency Management Agency, stands ready to reduce disaster risks and effectively manage relief efforts. The Maryland Defense Force is the most competent and professional volunteer force of its kind.

Our State Partnership Program is the standard-bearer as we make a difference in our partner countries. Through this collaboration and innovation, we advance our own ability to fight and win. The Freestate Challenge Academy is changing lives for Maryland's at-risk youth every day.

Together, the Maryland Military Department stands ready to protect our national interests, support our communities, and uphold our values.

The health of our people serving is my top priority. Every great organization becomes great by ensuring the people who serve it are well cared for. Our Soldiers, Airmen, civilians, and family members deserve that type of care. Each one of our people will be treated with dignity and respect at all times and in all situations. We will continue to ensure that our team is in good mental, physical, medical, and spiritual conditions.

Retention of our current force is key. We need to keep our teammates on the team by allowing them to succeed and thrive. I want everyone to remember this acronym: AMP.

Autonomy: We need to give our teammates a job to do, provide guidance, and let them figure out how to do it.

Mastery: We need to give them opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Purpose: We need to give them important, meaningful missions.

At its heart AMP creates the approach where senior leaders have centralized development of strategy, and decentralized planning and execution. This enables our subordinates to take the initiative to succeed at our mission. I expect leaders to back their subordinates' risk as they continue to grow. We need to create trust up and down the chain of command.

Readiness of our entire force is necessary for us to continue toward accomplishing our mission. Our leaders have a sacred obligation to build cohesive teams that are trained, disciplined, and able to accomplish their missions. We must be ready to defeat any threats. From deployments to foreign shores to defeat any adversary, to the defense of the cyber domain, to the immediate response to natural disasters: our Guard is always ready and always there.

Recruiting is everyone's job. We must continue to grow the force in order to meet our readiness objectives. Recruiting is a team effort. We are all recruiters and growing the force is our duty.

In closing, I want to make sure that the Maryland Military Department continues to be a premier organization, and by prioritizing the health of our people, retention, readiness, and recruiting I believe that we will continue to be the innovative force needed to effectively serve our nation.

It is our duty to maintain our force so we are prepared for our important role in homeland response operations for the State of Maryland, while also being ready to provide our nation with professional, lethal, and decisive forces. I want to thank you and to thank you to your families for your service and sacrifice.

OLD LINE!

Sincerely,

Major General Timothy E. Gowen
The adjutant general of Maryland

Maryland Guard provides inauguration support

Article by **Staff Sgt. Enojli Saunders**, 175th Wing



(Maryland Defense photo by Maj. (MDDF) Isadore Beattie)

More than 100 members of the Maryland National Guard provided support for Gov. Larry Hogan's inauguration, Jan. 16, 2019, in Annapolis, Maryland. Members escorted key attendees during the outside ceremony as well as assisted with logistics and security.

"Participating in the governor's inauguration allows us the unique opportunity to play a small part in this important day for our commander-in-chief," said Air Force Maj. Paul Mercier, 175th Wing executive officer.

The governor's office works closely with the Maryland National Guard to ensure preparedness,

functionality, and support to the people and communities of Maryland.

"As I stand here today, I'm hopeful, and I have every confidence in our collective ability to continue giving Marylanders a state government that is just as decent, hard-working and pragmatic as they are," said Hogan.

The ceremony concluded with a flyover by a four-plane formation of A-10 Thunderbolt II's from the 175th Wing as well as a 19-gun salute by 1-175 Infantry Regiment, Maryland Army National Guard.

175th Wing provides precise, professional performance on deployments

Article by **Master Sgt. Christopher Schepers**, 175th Wing



(US Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Enjoli Saunders)

(U.S. Air Force photo by Capt. Anna-Marie Whyant)

Nearly 500 airmen from the 175th Wing, Maryland Air National Guard, supported two major deployments and other taskings around the world in late 2018 and early 2019. The airmen deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, and Syria.

During the first major deployment, more than 150 Airmen served in the U.S. Air Forces Central area of responsibility. A large part of that group came from wing headquarters, mission support, force support, and logistics readiness to support of Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve at various locations in the AOR.

As the airmen from the first deployment were redeploying home, the second major deployment of approximately 250 maintainers and 25 A-10 pilots in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Afghanistan was just beginning.

"Our airmen consistently execute at the highest level of excellence across all of the wing's mission sets," said U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Paul Johnson, 175th Wing commander. "With a portfolio spanning deployed combat operations, mobilized cyber operations, state partnership engagements and our support functions to enable all of



(US Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Enjoli Saunders)

“The preparation and professionalism of our Maryland Air National Guardsmen make our unit the premier A-10C group in the Air Force.”

-U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Paul Kanning, 104th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron commander

it, the Maryland Air National Guard is recognized worldwide for getting the job done right.”

The second major deployment began in January 2019. The 175th Operations Group and 175th Maintenance Group arrived to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, with 12 A-10C Thunderbolt II aircraft. The pilots from the 104th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron flew close-air support and combat search and rescue missions supporting U.S. and coalition forces in the fight against Taliban insurgents and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Khorasan. They flew 934 combat sorties.

“The preparation and professionalism of our Maryland Air National Guardsmen make our unit the premier A-10C group in the Air Force,” said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Paul Kanning, 104th EFS commander.

While executing their missions, the pilots expended over 135 Joint Direct Attack Munitions, nearly 100 rockets, more than 17,000 rounds of 30mm, and logged nearly 4500 hours in the air. The A-10C maintainers assigned to the 451st Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Kandahar Airfield mirrored the high operations tempo to ensure the mission was completed.

“We train hard in the “off-season” so we can execute the mission with precision and professionalism,” said

U.S. Air Force Maj. Brian Hoare, 175th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Commander. “The stellar performance our troops gave during the deployment to Kandahar is a direct result of that training and the personal and professional commitment our folks have toward the A-10 mission.”

U.S. Air Force Capt. Brenda Stewart, installation deployment officer, 175th Logistics Readiness Squadron, and her team played an integral role in ensuring wing members were prepared and met all required training items prior to their departure date.

“Not all unit deployment managers deploy their members on a regular basis and every deployment is different,” said Stewart. “We’d much rather have UDMs asking questions so that we focus on their needs and provide as much support as we can to them, their members, and the mission.”

U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Christopher Otten, chaplain for the 175th Wing, who deployed to Afghanistan, recognized the importance everyone brings to the overall mission and how deployed service member are responsible for being subject matter experts in their roles.

“Every airman is vital, from the senior airman who hasn't even finished their first enlistment to the chaplain, like me, who simply wants to provide morale and welfare care,” said Otten. “Everyone does their part and, on deployment, you see it all come together.”

Maryland soldier named Army Guard's best

Article by *Tech. Sgt. Erich B. Smith*, National Guard Bureau

Fourteen soldiers from throughout the Army National Guard battled it out over three sweltering days at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, July 18-20 to be named the Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year during the 2019 Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition.

In the end, Spc. Hunter Olson, an infantryman with the Maryland Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 175th Infantry Regiment, and



(U.S. Army National Guard photo by Bo Wriston)

“When the heat started to ramp up, it was easy to let your mind take over and tell you how tired you are. But when you have somebody to kind of bounce off of, it's good to have company.”

-Spc. Hunter Olson

Army Staff Sgt. Erich Friedlein, an advanced infantry instructor with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's 1st Bn., 166th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), emerged as the Soldier and NCO of the Year, respectively.

“It feels good to see that my training has made me into a better soldier,” said Friedlein.

“Right from the beginning, it was obvious they were the best of their regions,” he said, of the other competitors.

Olson had similar thoughts.

“I feel really good,” he said. “All the soldiers were incredible. I've never had competition this stiff.”

According to Army Sgt. Maj. Christopher Miller, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the competition, the events were designed to be physically and

mentally challenging and measure the abilities, skills and knowledge of all competing soldiers.

“It's all the tasks on top of each and the constant stress of moving, communicating, and that cause the most difficulty in this competition,” he said. “We wanted to find out who the best of the best was and prepare them to move on to the next level.”

That next level is the 2019 Department of the Army Best Warrior Competition, scheduled to be held in October at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. There, Friedlein and Olson will compete against soldiers from throughout the Army to be named the Army's NCO and Soldier of the Year.

The unwavering heat even lasted to the final event: a 15-

mile ruck march the competitors had to complete on a day with a heat index of 110 degrees.

But the camaraderie attached to the competition, said Olson, made the unforgiving sun all the more bearable.

“When the heat started to ramp up, it was easy to let your mind take over and tell you how tired you are,” said Olson, who charged to the ruck march finish line with Friedlein by his side. “But when you have somebody to kind of bounce off of, it's good to have company.”

Friedlein agreed.

“All of us have joked around with each other,” he said. “We had the same gripes about things, we helped each other prepare for certain events.”

For Friedlein and Olson, the focus now is preparing for the all-Army Competition.

“Training is a continuous process, and some days you can feel great and the very next day feel [terrible],” he said. “But as long as you stick to the process, trust that your training is going right and keep a positive attitude, you can stay on top.”

Olson agreed and said that while he plans to spend quality time with his wife and enjoy a hot meal, he's already focused on the next competition.

“I am going to be competing against the best in the entire Army,” he said. “What's on my mind right now is the competition.”



(U.S. Army National Guard photo by Bo Wriston)



(U.S. Army National Guard photo by Bo Wriston)



Multinational service members participate in Estonian exercise

Article and photo by **Staff Sgt. Enojli Saunders**, 175th Wing

Approximately 50 airmen and soldiers from the Maryland National Guard deployed to Estonia to participate in Spring Storm (Kevadtorm), an Estonian Defense Force annual exercise. Members from the 290th Military Police Company, Maryland Army National Guard, the 175th Wing Security Forces Squadron and the 175th Cyberspace Operations Group, Maryland Air National Guard, embedded with Estonian military forces to conduct training that mirrored real-life warfight situations.

“One of the biggest highlights is being able to work with our international counterparts,” said U.S. Army Capt. Timothy Reynolds, 290th Military Police Company commander, MDARNG. “Being able to interoperate and build those international alliances and relationships has been a highly valuable experience for this joint force unit and myself as well.”

The training fostered collaboration for over 9,000 military personnel from more than a dozen NATO partner countries. The brigade versus brigade scenarios were implemented to test preparedness and response for war time situations.

“This is not a typical training environment for the military police detachment,” said U.S. Army Spc. Angelique Helkowski, 290th Military Police Company, MDARNG. “When we train stateside, we do the same things repetitively. This gets us out into nature and relates more to a deployed environment.”

MDNG service members participated in scenarios to include convoy security, detainee operations, entry control points and tactical patrols. The integrated groups were required to build camps and live in field conditions where they had to sleep in single person tents with only meals-ready-to-eat.

“In an austere environment, especially on cold mornings, you see the troops’ morale actually goes higher when they are dealing with harder situations,” said U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Chad Crockett, 290th Military Police Company, MDARNG. “I think it’s because they realize they are a team and they are working through it together.”

Before the exercise began, MDNG members trained with their international counterparts at the Estonian Defense Force army base in Tapa, Estonia. The exercise commenced for the Maryland military police/security forces personnel in Ida-Viru County in eastern Estonia.

“My squad included nine team members that performed very well together, especially in the detainee operations portion, which was one of the larger training sections that was evaluated,” said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Kevin Miner, 175th Wing Security Forces Specialist.

This was the first year that MDNG members jointly participated in this capacity within the Spring Storm exercise. Another first was that the Estonian Cyber Command authorized Maryland cyber personnel to access Estonian networks.

“It’s a big deal because we have different laws and regulations that normally prevent us from being on different partner nation networks,” said U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Martin Bartkowski, 275th Operations Support Squadron cyber intelligence analyst, MDANG. “This is huge that they trust us enough to let us on and look at their real data that’s across the network.”

“This has been a great opportunity, I hope we can continue participating in these types of exercises and operations,” said Reynolds, who served as the exercise commander for MDNG personnel. “We look forward to working with our Estonian and NATO partners in the future.”

Training reinforces Bosnia-Herzegovina partnership

Article by **Senior Airman Sarah McClanahan**, Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office

On a rainy afternoon, a speck appears on the horizon over the not-so-distant mountains surrounding the city of Tuzla. Before long, lights appear as the tiny dot takes the shape of an aircraft. What touches down on the calm flight line of Tuzla International Airport is a military aircraft that has rarely been seen by the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina since the turn of the century.

The aircraft, a C-130H Hercules aircraft from the 179th Airlift Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, is just one way the United States has been working alongside their partners in this European country. Most importantly, this cargo aircraft represents a partnership between the United States and BiH that has been forged and strengthened since 2003.

“This U.S. Air Force aircraft is a symbol,” explains U.S. Army Lt. Col. Corey Shea, chief of the Office of Defense Cooperation at the U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo. “It is a symbol of continued U.S. commitment to stability and security of BiH, continued U.S. commitment to the people of BiH, and, a symbol of a strong and enduring partnership with the Armed Forces of BiH, which we expect to continue.”

From Sept. 9-12, members of the U.S. Air Force and Army as well as the Maryland and Ohio National Guard, shared tactics, techniques and procedures with members of the Armed Forces of BiH on public affairs and strategic communication, cargo loading and unloading procedures, and joint terminal attack controller operations.

“This is the NATO partnership in action,” said U.S. Ambassador Eric Nelson, U.S. Embassy in BiH. “This event is helping to enable the Armed Forces of BiH to interoperate with NATO allies like the United States armed forces. It’s very important for future deployments of the Armed Forces of BiH as trusted peace keepers, as trusted partners in the fight against counterterrorism.”



(Photo by Armed Forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina Pfc. Armin Hadzic)

When the C-130 aircraft touched down on the flight line on Monday, Sept. 9, it marked the start of the Silver Arrow in BiH training event. The two days that followed the initial arrival of the aircraft consisted of Armed Forces of BiH members learning C-130 cargo loading and unloading procedures as well as instructions on joint terminal attack controller operations - an entirely new capability for the Armed Forces of BiH. The training

event established an environment where participants engaged in realistic training scenarios, received hands-on experience, and the opportunity to develop skills in cooperation and teamwork.

Once the dust settled after the C-130 aircraft landed, members of the 179th Airlift Wing and the 435th Contingency Response Support Squadron, U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa, gave

demonstrations on how to palletize cargo before moving the cargo onto or off of an aircraft. Using Humvees and pallets of supplies as real-life examples, the instructors walked the Armed Forces of BiH members through the processes of loading and unloading cargo from a C-130 aircraft.

“We are really excited to learn from Armed Forces of BiH, as well as teach tactics and some of the

“ For me, the real important piece of this mission is it provided an opportunity for the Armed Forces of BiH to demonstrate its capabilities to its own population.”

-Lt. Col. Corey Shea,
Chief of the Office of Defense Cooperation at the U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo



(U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Thaddeus Harrington)



(U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airmän Sarah McClanahan)



(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Natalee Ebanks)

things we do,” explains U.S. Air Force Capt. Frank Zaunserb, a C-130 pilot assigned to the 179th Airlift Wing, Ohio National Guard.

In addition to the cargo loading and unloading training, Armed Forces of BiH members received training in joint terminal attack controller operations. Beginning with presentations on specific tactics and procedures, the members then moved to the flight line to put some of the methods learned into practice. Armed Forces of BiH members directed the flight path of one of the two UH-1H Iroquois helicopters from the 2nd Helicopter Squadron, Air Force Brigade, Armed Forces of BiH. Using maps and radios, they guided the helicopter through several flights around the surrounding military base.

“This event is of great importance for the Armed

Forces of BiH because, through the implementation of this exercise, BiH have in essence created new capabilities that are prescribed by joint terminal attack controllers,” says Armed Forces of BiH Lt. Gen. Senad Mašović, Chief of Joint Staff Armed Forces of BiH. “Armed Forces of BiH gained a new ability that ensures more competent and secure performance of these missions while, through practical exercise, improving our capacity and cooperation with U.S. armed forces as our strategic partner.”

Other capabilities were tested during the training event, the Armed Forces of BiH public affairs team established a Media Information Center and tested their strategic communication program, which was drafted back in June 2019 with the assistance of The Maryland National Guard’s Public Affairs Office. The combined

joint public affairs team was able to create photos and videos, as well as written products and social media that were released to the public.

“This [construct] was formed as a temporary media information center to support the Silver Arrow in BiH training event and to do the best job to present this event to the public,” says Armed Forces of BiH Maj. Aleksandar Krunić, the deputy media information center officer. “Making this media information center a permanent structure would be a good idea and would allow for more effective public affairs in the Armed Forces of BiH.”

On the final day of Silver Arrow in BiH the Armed Forces of BiH public affairs hosted an open house event at the airport where an overview of Armed Forces of BiH operational capabilities, vehicles, weapons, and

equipment were displayed for distinguished visitors and local civilians. The attendants of the open house included members of the BiH Presidency, the US Embassy in BiH, representatives the Ministry of Defense of BiH, the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of BiH, and many others. Students of primary and secondary schools from the Tuzla region were also present.

“For me, the real important piece of this mission is it provided an opportunity for the Armed Forces of BiH to demonstrate its capabilities to its own population,” explains Shea. “We live in a day and age where few militaries do everything on their own. The Armed Forces of BiH with their limited resources provide a lot of services to their population. But, your average Bosnian citizen doesn’t know that.”

Maryland soldiers take on the world

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

Four days through the dense-soggy forests of Valga County, Estonia, the Maryland National Guard team and Trilateral team evade enemy forces, trek through arduous terrain, and forgo sleep to complete the Admiral Pitka Recon Challenge from Aug. 5-9, 2019. The 70-plus mile journey includes negotiating obstacles, fighting on non-US equipment/weapons systems, performing reconnaissance tasks, and maintaining accountability of teammates and equipment.

There were 29 teams from 14 different nations competing in the challenge. Three teams sported the American flag: the active Army's 92nd Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; the Maryland National Guard Team; and the Trilateral team with members representing the state partnerships the MDNG has with Estonia, since 1993, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, since 2003. The MDNG members hail from the 1st Battalion, 175th Infantry Regiment. The unit holds the Pocomoke competition to determine which team has what it takes to represent the MDNG in Estonia.

"This is my eighth competition and my eleventh time to Estonia. I think everyone does something like this for a different reason," says Army Sgt. Daniel Stasny.

The terrain would be challenging, there are bodies of water to cross, roads with opposing forces to avoid, marshy and dense wooded forest to move through, tripwires to simulated mines, and poisonous weeds.

After engaging the target, the teams dart into the forest in search of their first grid point. Their immediate future would be filled with miles-upon-miles of movement, limited sleep, dog attacks, eye injuries, severe foot blistering, tattered trousers, strict time hacks, obstacle courses, and possible bear dodging.

Dubbed as one of the toughest competitions in the world, the stressors extended beyond the woods of Estonia and forgoing comforts like plumbing, these service members took time away from family, careers, and daily routines to test themselves and to represent the MDNG. Despite

the toll, the MDNG team appeared in great spirits from obstacle to obstacle, showing great morale and camaraderie.



Maryland Guard, Armed Forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina celebrate 15-year partnership

Article and photo by **Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy**, National Guard Bureau



chief of the joint staff of the Armed Forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

For others, the most rewarding part has simply been seeing the growth itself.

"It's been a rewarding experience for me," said Army Brig. Gen. Janeen Birkhead, the Maryland Guard's assistant adjutant general for Army, "to see where the country was and where we are now. It's really exciting to see that change."

Singh, Birkhead, and other Maryland Guard senior leaders recently spent time in Bosnia-Herzegovina, both as part of celebrations marking the 15-year anniversary, but also to map out future plans for the partnership. Those plans include expanding noncommissioned

officer leadership training, disaster response training as well as boosting cyber capabilities.

Future plans also include possibly expanding aviation capabilities and training.

"There hasn't been a ton of Air [National Guard] involvement," said Air Force Brig. Gen. April Vogel, the Maryland Guard's the assistant adjutant general – Air for the Maryland National Guard.

Vogel added that one thing she's looking into while in Bosnia-Herzegovina is how that imbalance could change.

"We're coming here so I can understand all the places we have been [throughout the partnership] and where our [the Maryland Air National Guard's] specific air capabilities may be able to fit in."

The larger goal, said Vogel, is simply learning from each other.

"The fact that we've made it 15 years and we're continuing to see progress and talking about 20 and 30 years, that shows a significant commitment to each other and to doing the right thing for our services," said Vogel. "This trip in particular was really special, but in general it makes me feel like I'm part of something really cool."

Upbeat jazz and ragtime-influenced music filled the cavernous main room of the Bosnia-Herzegovina armed forces' Army Hall in downtown Sarajevo as Maryland National Guard and Bosnian armed forces members came together to celebrate 15 years of partnership in the U.S. Department of Defense's State Partnership Program.

"When I really think about how to summarize this partnership of 15 years," said U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Linda Singh, the adjutant general of the Maryland, "all I can say is that for me it has been life changing."

For many, the effects of the partnership with Bosnia-Herzegovina can be seen in the way it's grown over the past decade and a half, beginning with small training events and expanding to see Bosnian armed forces members deploy alongside Maryland Guard units to Afghanistan.

"In my opinion, the crown of this 15 years of cooperation was the joint deployment of the military police unit from the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Maryland National Guard to the mission in Afghanistan," said Bosnia-Herzegovina army Lt. Gen. Senad Mašović, the

Leaders need resilient soldiers

Article by **Lt. Col. Rick Brietenfeldt**, Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office

Maryland Army National Guard leaders from across the state spent February 9 at a kick-off meeting for an upcoming statewide Resiliency Stand Down.

More than 175 unit commanders, first sergeants, and master resilience trainers from Maryland Army Guard units participated in the one-day training event.

Brig. Gen. Janeen Birckhead, the commander of the Maryland Army National Guard, said the statistics that she was seeing about soldiers in distress was one of the main reasons for ordering the statewide stand down.

“It’s not like training on a weapon or training on



(U.S. Army National Guard photo by Bo Wriston)

“I want a more resilient soldier who is better prepared and who can perform their job and do what we need them to do for state and nation.”

-Brig. Gen. Janeen Birckhead, commander of the MDARNG

your vehicle,” said Birckhead. “These are people, people are more complex than any other piece of equipment that we have. If we care about those other pieces of equipment we really need to focus on the person.”

Birckhead said resiliency starts and stops with unit-level leaders who take the time to get to know their soldier’s strengths, weaknesses, motivators, and personal challenges.

This specific training program addresses struggles soldiers are experiencing both professionally and

personally such as discrimination, physical threats, harassment, drug and alcohol abuse, low morale, and even relationship issues.

Birckhead said she wanted all soldiers to know that it is okay to reach up for help and reach down to assist others. She also hopes to empower leaders with time and resources to better care for their soldiers both on and off duty.

“I want a more resilient soldier who is better prepared and who can perform their job and do what we need them to do for state and nation,” said Birckhead.

STEM Partnership helps grow students success

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

Expressions of amazement and intrigue showed across the faces of the YouthWorks STEM program participants as they experienced some of the STEM-related career fields in the Maryland National Guard.

The MDNG recently supported the curriculum of Baltimore City’s Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics program under YouthWorks.

Each Wednesday throughout the month, the group of about 40 YouthWorks participants visited National Guard installations throughout Maryland and met with MDNG professionals with expertise in STEM-related career fields.

The YouthWorks program connects thousands of young people between the ages of 14 and 21 to summer jobs with private, nonprofit, and city and state government employers throughout Baltimore. This is the first time the MDNG partnered with the Baltimore City’s Mayor’s office to offer this type of STEM program.

“Our partnership with Baltimore City is at the core of our mission, we are a community-based organization,” said Army Brig. Gen. Adam R. Flasch, director of the Joint Staff. “The focus

on STEM, the ability to reach young people in a meaningful way, and share our story, goes to the heart of where we want to be as an organization.”

The group visited Warfield Air National Guard Base in Middle River for A-10C Thunderbolt II simulator flight time, toured the hangars, and interacted with pilots and mechanics. The



(U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Enojli Saunders)



participants then spent time at Weide Army Airfield in Edgewood, in the UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter and door gunnery simulators.

“The MDNG has really stepped up to provide great programming for these kids, and maybe influenced a lot of these kids to go into STEM programs,” said U.S. Army Maj. Jessie Green, a joint network operations planner, facilitated the support from the Maryland Air and Army National

Guard for the STEM program. “And, hopefully, [come] into the Maryland National Guard when they become of age.”

“We, the MDNG, remain committed to Baltimore, and to all the communities that make up our great state and we intend to continue this partnership and others like it,” said Flasch.

Engineers sweep up during Ocean City mine clearing exercise

Article and photo by *Cpl. Elizabeth Scott*, Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office



On a brisk fall day, all seemed routine on the Ocean City Boardwalk and beach.

But this was no ordinary day. Steps away from the Boardwalk, Maryland National Guard soldiers, side-by-side with Ocean City emergency responders, were dealing with a series of pre-planned emergency scenarios.

In one scenario, the Ocean City Police called on the Maryland National Guard to help locate suspicious objects placed on the beach.

Soldiers from the 253rd Engineer Co. had to locate simulated mines buried in the sand. The training was one of the many dynamic, high-intensity training scenarios that occurred that day

like chemical decontamination, active shooter response, and civil disturbance.

Sgt. Steven Vermont, a communications chief with the 253rd Engineer Co., said that this training is important because they need to be able to go in there and sweep out areas so that others can come in and be safe.

“When you have good units going through here, like the 253rd, a lot of the times they’ll do their internal checks,” said Capt. Adam Dulling, who was in-charge of the demining exercise. “I might see someone doing something incorrectly, but before I can correct them, their immediate supervisor is already there doing it.”

The thorough search had soldiers walking in a straight line, scanning five-feet side to side listening for the signal of a possible ordnance with a metal detector hooked up to a headset worn by each soldier.

Sometimes the soldiers found nothing, and sometimes they found the simulated ordnance. Then the soldier would identify and mark it. Either way, they would have to get back up and continue the search until the area was clear.

“It’s great doing this on the beach for demining,” said Vermont. “It looks like they did a good job smoothing over the beach so it’s not really obvious where they have it hidden.”

These types of exercises allow soldiers to use their skills not only in a live training area, as well as a more urban environment than they usually do, said Dulling.

Exercises, like this one, remind soldiers that the techniques and information they learn in their advanced individual training isn’t something that they can forget, even if they don’t use it on a daily basis.

“Coming out here and getting the hands-on experience, there’s nothing better than that,” said Dulling.

A soldier from the 253rd Engineer Company, probes an area looking for a simulated mine hidden during a domestic emergency response exercise at Ocean City, Md.



Guard cyber units evolve at warp speed

Article by *Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy*, National Guard Bureau

(U.S. Air Force photo by J.M. Eddins Jr.)

Just as the cyber threat has continued to evolve and grow, so too have the National Guard's cyber teams and cyber capabilities, said Guard officials during a cyber roundtable discussion at the Pentagon.

"The cyber domain is constantly changing and it's very dynamic," said Air Force Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Burkett, the vice director of domestic operations with the National Guard Bureau.

That changing cyber domain also means looking differently at where cyber operators come from within the ranks.

"We tend to be very linear in our thinking sometimes," said Air Force Col. Jori Robinson, vice commander of the Maryland Air National Guard's

175th Wing and former commander of a cyber operations squadron and group. "You have to have a computer science degree, you have to come from a computer background and that is what makes a good cyber operator."

Turns out, some of the best cyber operations specialists may come from the aircraft maintenance field, said Robinson,

An Air Force study, she said, looked into elements that make an individual have the capacity to understand cyber networks, even if the specific computer network abilities aren't there.

Having another potential avenue to pull from is important, said Robinson, as the Maryland National Guard has a large concentration of cyber capability.

"In the National Guard our core missions are one, fight America's wars, two, secure the homeland and, three, build partnerships," Burkett said. "We support the warfight by building fully integrated National Guard cyber units into operational federal missions. [We] protect the homeland by providing highly-trained cyber forces available to support mission-partner requirements."

Those mission-partner requirements often focus on working with state and local agencies to assess and identify potential security risks in their networks.

"We provide vulnerability assessments, we'll do some mission assurance, predominantly with

government agencies," said Robinson, adding that Maryland Guard cyber units assisted the Maryland Board of Elections during recent elections in the state.

"We were called in pretty early with the Maryland Board of Elections just to have a conversation," she said. "We provided a lot of lead up information, a lot of policy review and should they have needed it we were available going into the elections to do more over-the-shoulder monitoring [for potential cyber threats] for them."

The Maryland Guard cyber units were able to easily integrate because of partnerships built

“We support the warfight by building fully integrated National Guard cyber units into operational federal missions. [We] protect the homeland by providing highly-trained cyber forces available to support mission-partner requirements.”

-Air Force Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Burkett, vice director of domestic operations with the National Guard Bureau

between the Guard and those local agencies, stated Robinson.

"We learn a lot from our partners," said Burkett. "We don't necessarily have all the answers."

The Maryland Guard has been partnering with Estonia as part of the Department of Defense's State Partnership Program. Since 2007, that partnership has included a strong cyber component, said Robinson.

"Learning and building those relationship and partnerships is what the National Guard does naturally," he said, adding that's critical as the cyber threat continues to evolve.

Innovation Fitness: Soldiers push their limits

Article by **Senior Airman Sarah McClanahan**, Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office

Some soldiers physically push themselves, compete against who they were yesterday, and train above and beyond. Some Maryland Army National Guard soldiers conduct their regular exercise routines in innovative ways.

Soldiers are required to maintain a certain standard of physical fitness. The annual Army Physical Fitness Test requirement gives commanders an indication of the overall fitness of the soldier. The Army is now transitioning to the Army Combat Fitness Test, a six-event, age and gender neutral test, designed to assess a soldier's physical fitness and readiness for physically demanding combat situations.

RUNNER FOR LIFE

Capt. Meghan Landymore, a Joint Force Headquarters Medical Detachment physician assistant, is an accomplished ultra-marathon runner and member of the All Guard Marathon team. Each year, Army and Air guard members compete for a position on the All Guard Marathon Team during the National Guard Marathon Trials. The trials take place during the Lincoln Marathon, a traditional 26.2 mile marathon race, in Lincoln, Nebraska. Landymore placed third in her age group, sixth overall, and qualified for the national team with a time of 3:23:09.

Landymore first moved off the starting block as a competitive runner in high school. As a kid who grew up performing gymnastics, running wasn't her initial choice. However, after some encouragement from her father, she found her path — cross country.

Once she started, no one could stop her stride. Landymore ran all throughout her years in college and ran her first marathon, the 2010 New York City Marathon, while in graduate school.

For ultra-marathon athletes like Landymore, training for a race becomes more than just a form of physical fitness, it becomes a lifestyle.

"It affects everything," said Landymore. "It becomes your personality and becomes what you talk about, and who you hang out with."

NOTHING BUT NET

Sgt. Donita Adams, a MDNG chaplain's assistant and All-Army Women's Basketball team member, connects her faith and the love she has for the game of basketball. She is the only National Guard member selected for an all-star team to compete at the 2016 Conseil-International-Du-Sport-Militaire World Military Women's Basketball Championship.

"Basketball is a way that I can cope with a lot of things," says Adams. "If I'm stressed out, I know I can go play basketball and clear my mind from anything. It's my peace. God has given me a way to escape and go into an element where him and I can connect. It ties us together because it's something that I'm passionate about."

Both basketball and faith have been pivotal elements in Adams' life. At 5-years old she picked up a basketball for the first time and by 8-years old started playing on a team. It wasn't until high school that Adams found her love for coaching.

Prior to enlisting in the Army, Adams took on a head coaching job at Watkins Mill High School. For four years, she taught and developed nearly 100 female student athletes on and off the basketball court. She taught the importance of mentorship and being a role model as an athlete.

"Sometimes you don't sign up for this stuff," said Adams. "But when you put on that jersey, or when you sign up for a sport, it comes along with it."

LEAPING OVER OBSTACLES

Capt. Ben Smith, 32nd Civil Support Team survey team leader, an avid obstacle course runner. He is a participant in the 2019 Baltimore Maryland City Qualifiers for American Ninja Warrior, a show where contestants demonstrate their agility and strength through challenging obstacle courses.

Through his training for the Toughest Mudder races, an overnight eight-hour version of the Tough Mudder races, Smith realized while he was adequately conditioned to run the course, his technique work in tackling obstacles needed to be strengthened. This is where Smith was introduced to the world of American Ninja Warrior.



(U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Sarah McClanahan)



(U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Emiline Senn)



"I began Ninja Warrior training to increase obstacle course proficiency," said Smith. "From there, I fell in love with the sport."

Smith explains simply being physically fit will not carry an athlete far in ANW and a more well-rounded approach to training is required. To prepare for his competition, Smith's physical training and conditioning focused on improving endurance, speed work, functional strength, balance, and active recovery. This often resulted in late nights at his obstacle course gym multiple times a week. Smith would also incorporate ninja training into his regular physical training for the Army by including exercises focused on grip strength, balance, or running on curbsides for portions of his regular runs.

Unfortunately, Smith did not successfully complete his run of the Baltimore Maryland City Qualifiers and was stopped short at the second obstacle of the race, the double twister.

THE MDNG ATHLETE

For every Maryland National Guard soldier, "game day" may not come in the form of an ultra-marathon, basketball game, or obstacle course race. Instead, the training, conditioning, and physical readiness of each and every soldier is tested by the APFT or fast-approaching ACFT.

It's important to note that the ACFT will not be an easy test and must be approached with a well-rounded training program personalized for each individual soldier to build them up from where they are starting to where they need to be, explained Landymore.

"The best advice I can give is to use the resources around you," says Adams. "There are people in your circle or even in your unit who are experts, like trainers or athletes, so use those resources. Take time during your drill weekend to do the exercises and workouts because it's going to help you."

YEAR in REVIEW

Fiscal Year October 2018 to September 2019



Oct. 7, 2018

Family and friends gathered to congratulate Brig. Gen. Timothy E. Gowen during his promotion ceremony to major general at Webster Field in Saint Inigoes, Maryland. Gowen was assigned to the National Guard Bureau where he served as the Special Assistant to the Director of the Army National Guard and as the Deputy Commanding General of the newly established Army Futures Command.

Nov. 3, 2018

Approximately 600 Maryland National Guard soldiers, along with 200 Ocean City police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and civilian role players participated in a domestic response exercise in Ocean City, Maryland.

Nov. 19, 2018

As part of the Partners in Care program, Christ Our King Presbyterian Church in Bel Air, Maryland, donated 50 Thanksgiving meals for Maryland National Guard service members at the Fifth Regiment Army in Baltimore, Maryland.

March 2, 2019

About 20 Soldiers from the Maryland Army National Guard's 224th Medical Company Area Support were honored Saturday, March 2, 2019, with a Freedom Salute Ceremony to officially welcome them home from their deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom Sentinel.

April 24-26, 2019

United States European Command and the Maryland National Guard hosted the Adriatic 5+ Cyber Forum at the Army Research Laboratory in Adelphi, Maryland.

Oct. 13, 2018

The Maryland National Guard hosted the Joint E-9 Professional Development Dinner at Warfield Air National Guard Base in Middle River, Maryland.

Oct. 12, 2018

The Maryland National Guard hosted a groundbreaking ceremony to officially begin construction on the new Freedom Readiness Center in Sykesville, Maryland.

Dec. 12, 2018

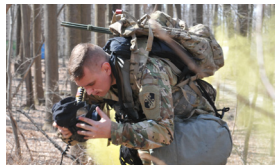
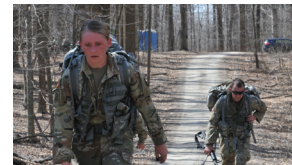
The Maryland National Guard held a change of responsibility ceremony welcoming the organization's first female senior enlisted leader at the Fifth Regiment Army in Baltimore, Maryland.

March 14-17, 2019

Soldiers battled for the Best Warrior title during the 2019 Maryland National Guard Best Warrior Competition.



Army Staff Sgt. Cassandra Black, 2nd Battalion, 70th Regiment, became the first female to win Maryland National Guard's Best Warrior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.





May 16-19, 2019

MDNG's Staff Sgt. Cassandra Black and Spc. Hunter Olson competed in the 2019 Region II Best Warrior Competition. They competed against a noncommissioned officer and soldier from Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, District of Columbia, and West Virginia National Guard.



June 28, 2019

Air Force Gen. Joseph L. Lengyel, Chief, National Guard Bureau, made a visit to the 175th Wing on June 26, 2019, where he spoke to airmen, listened to perspectives from service members, and handed out coins for exceptional service.



Aug. 10, 2019

The Maryland National Guard officially opened the Easton Readiness Center in Easton, Maryland, with a ribbon cutting ceremony. This new 47,000 square-foot facility replaced a legacy building constructed in 1976 that was originally built for an all-male unit. The original building provided a facility that was functionally inadequate to support the current units' mission.



Aug. 14, 2019

Brig. Gen. Janeen Birkhead, commander of the Maryland Army National Guard, spoke at the 12th Women in Leadership Session hosted by the U.S. Army Aberdeen Testing Center at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

May 17, 2019

Maj. Gen. Linda Singh, the adjutant general for Maryland, and Dr. Marylou Yam, president of Notre Dame of Maryland University, signed a memorandum of understanding between NDMU and the Maryland National Guard, which formally made the two organizations Partners in Education.



May 17, 2019

The Maryland Army National Guard's Citizen Soldier for Life Program and the Recruiting and Retention Battalion hosted their annual Career Fair at the ARNG Dundalk Armory.



July 12, 2019

Brig. Gen. Edward S. Jones assumed command of the Maryland Air National Guard from Brig. Gen. April D. Vogel. As the assistant adjutant general - Air, Jones serves as the governor's and adjutant general's principal advisor on matters pertaining to the MDANG.



Sept. 5, 2019

Within five hours of notification, the Maryland Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team deployed to North Carolina in support of Hurricane Dorian rescue efforts. The team consists of members of the Army National Guard and first responders from Baltimore, Howard, Harford, and Montgomery County along with two MDNG UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters.



Sept. 8, 2019

Maj. Gen. Timothy E. Gowen, the adjutant general of Maryland, and other members of the Maryland National Guard, honored its fallen Warriors, who paid the ultimate price defending freedom, during a wreath-laying ceremony at the Fallen Warrior Memorial on Camp Fretterd Military Reservation.



Brig. Gen. Birkhead speaks to Eastern Shore students

April 5, 2019

Brig. Gen. Janeen L. Birkhead, the Maryland Army National Guard commander, spoke to Eastern Shore middle and high school MC JROTC students with the recruiting team to talk about leadership at Snow Hill High School.



Gunpowder renamed H Steven Blum Military Reservation

Aug. 7, 2019

Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh, the adjutant general of Maryland, and officials of the Maryland National Guard hosted a ceremony renaming Gunpowder Military Reservation as H Steven Blum Military Reservation in Glen Arm, Maryland. The reservation was named after U.S. Army Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, former chief of the National Guard Bureau and longtime Maryland resident.

