

# GEORGIA GUARDSMAN



★★ SERVING THE NATIONAL GUARD AND STATE DEFENSE FORCE OF GEORGIA ★★

Q3 / 2020

## Changing of the Guard

Georgia Army National Guard Receives New Leadership



## Noble Partner 2020

Ga. Army Guardsmen train in Country of Georgia

PLUS: WELCOMING NEW LEADERS | ANDREW SULLENS COMPETITION | AND SO MUCH MORE



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## GEORGIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD RECEIVES NEW LEADERSHIP



## GEORGIA NATIONAL GUARD

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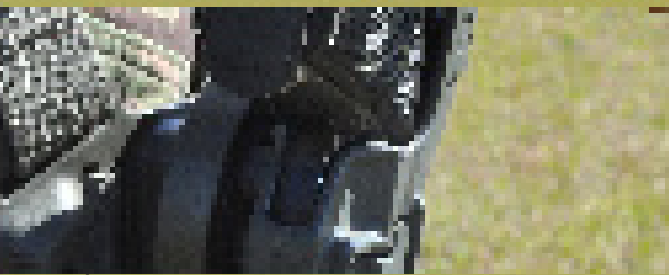
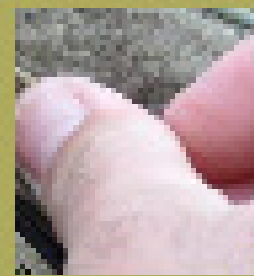
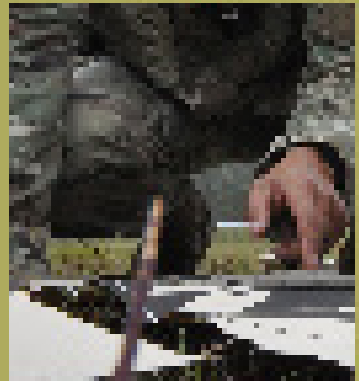
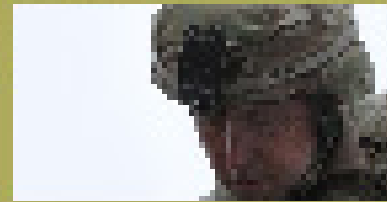
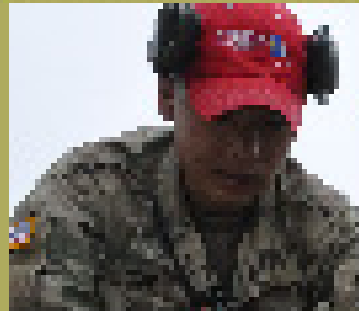
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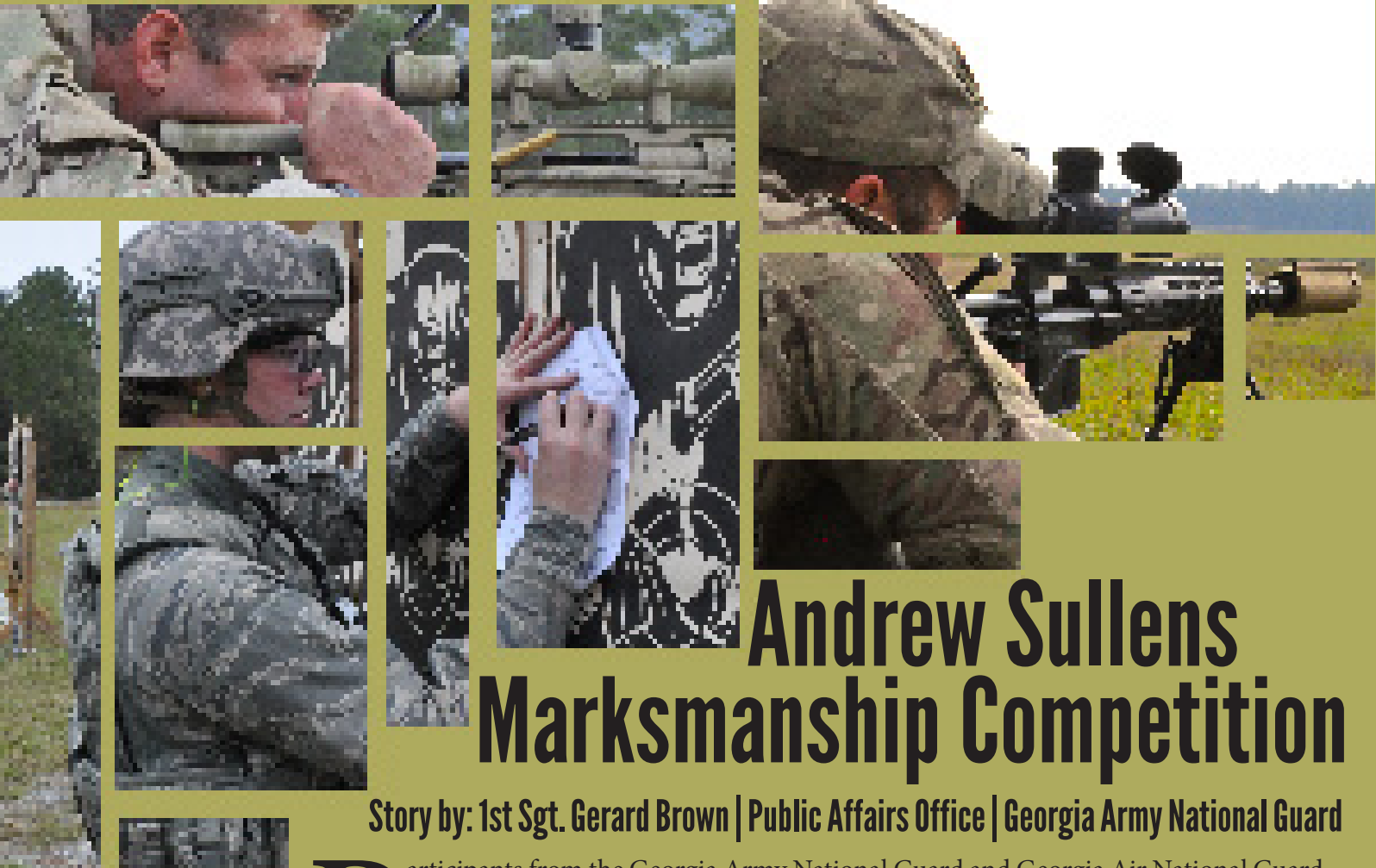
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# Andrew Sullens Marksmanship Competition

Story by: 1st Sgt. Gerard Brown | Public Affairs Office | Georgia Army National Guard

Participants from the Georgia Army National Guard and Georgia Air National Guard competed in the annual Andrew Sullens Marksmanship Competition at Fort Stewart, Ga. between August 31-September 4, 2020.

“It’s about soldiers’ readiness,” said Sullens. “It’s about war-fighting readiness.”

The event is named after Georgia National Guard veteran, Andrew Sullens, who sustained a visible wound in Afghanistan in 2009. Sullens is an advocate for many things that include joint readiness, building strong leadership and rehabilitation of soldiers, to name a few.

“The marksmanship community is small,” said Sgt. 1st Class Raven. “The marksmanship unit started about eight years ago. Once we saw the value of the training that we got from competing, what we did was ask to train.”

The participants were tested during the week on diverse combat and marksmanship scenarios that tested their skills with weapons such as the M4 rifle and the M9 pistol. The diverse training scenarios offered participants the opportunity to train on weapons systems that they might not typically get to train on. This competition tested Soldiers and Airmen on lethality and their resilience on the battlefield.

“Resilience comes from not having a lot of options,” said Sullens. “Take something from this competition.”

After the competition, the top overall team was recognized as the 116th Security Forces Squadron. The team will compete at the National Marksmanship Competition at the National Guard Marksmanship Training Center at a date to be later determined due to COVID-19.

Other awards included the top marksman, which was awarded to Capt. Paul Johnston, representing the Marietta-based 78th Aviation Troop Command, the top individual pistol, which was awarded to Staff Sgt. Len Chanthalangsy, representing the Macon-based 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, and the top individual rifle, which was awarded to David Dividu, representing the Macon-based 48th IBCT. Nine Soldiers and Airmen received their Governors Twenty tabs during the competition as well.

“Learn something from your experiences and take it back to your units,” said Sullens to the competitors. “This is free training and could save your life one day.”

# Georgia National Guard OCS Class 59 Graduation

Story and Photo by: Maj. William Carraway | Public Affairs Office | Georgia Army National Guard

Twelve officer candidates of the Georgia Army National Guard's Georgia Military Institute received their commissions as 2nd lieutenants during a ceremony at the Clay National Guard Center in Marietta, Ga. The ceremony marks the culmination of 18 months of training by the officer candidates of OCS Class 59.

The newly commissioned lieutenants will attend follow-on training in their branch assignments before returning to their units of assignment. For some, this will be their first unit outside of basic combat training and OCS. Others, like 2nd Lts. Christopher Brown, Rudolph Delpe and Stephen Morris have years of prior enlisted experience from which to draw in their new assignments.

During the commissioning ceremony, the new second lieutenants were administered the oath of office and pinned with their new rank. Following tradition, the new officers received their first salute from an individual of their choosing.

Second Lieutenant Brenton Widener captured the Erickson Trophy which is awarded to the distinguished honor graduate of each OCS class. Widener, who will receive Infantry-branch training and serve in the Lawrenceville-based Company A, 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment of the historic 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Second Lieutenant Sergei Prokopov received the George J. Hearn Trophy which recognizes the outstanding graduate in each OCS class as determined by instructors and fellow candidates. Prokopov will next receive Adjutant General branch training and a follow-on assignment with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 48th IBCT in Macon.

The first award of the Roswell Hathaway III Academic Award was presented to 2nd Lt. Christopher Brown who attained the highest academic average in OCS Class 59. The award is named after Captain. Roswell Hathaway, a former GMI instructor. Brown will serve in the Statesboro-based 177th Brigade Engineer Battalion upon completing Engineer-branch training.

The remaining graduates of OCS 59 are:

Second Lieutenant Marcus Alford, Ordnance, Company G, 148th Brigade Support Battalion.

Second Lieutenant Alena Artis, Quartermaster, Company G, 148th Brigade Support Battalion.

Second Lieutenant Gerson Blaise, Adjutant General, HHC, 148th Brigade Support Battalion.

Second Lieutenant Rudolph Delpe, Medical, HHC, 2nd Battalion 121st Infantry Regiment.

Second Lieutenant Allison McCullough, Chemical, HHC, 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery Regiment.

Second Lieutenant Joseph Medina, Quartermaster, HHC, 148th Brigade Support Battalion.

Second Lieutenant Stephen Morris, Infantry, Company B, 1-121st Infantry Regiment.

Second Lieutenant Abdoul Ndiaye, Engineer, 878th Engineer Battalion.

Second Lieutenant Stephanie Soto, Engineer, 878th Engineer Battalion.

The Georgia Military Institute, part of the Georgia National Guard's 122nd Regional Training Institute, serves as the officer candidate school for the Georgia Army National Guard. The traditional state National Guard OCS class commits to 18 months of training during drill weekends and two summer annual training events

Once accepted into the Georgia National Guard OCS program, candidates are subjected to a series of academic challenges and arduous tasks to test them both physically and mentally. They train in the academics of leadership in a classroom setting and take to the field to learn small unit tactics and unit leadership. The rigorous program is designed to push officer candidates to their limit.





# NOBLE PARTNER 20 BEGINS

STORY BY: SGT. JORDAN TRENT | 124TH  
MPAD | GEORGIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Allied and partner nations from around the world gathered at Vaziani Training Area, Georgia, for the opening ceremony of Noble Partner 20 September 7, 2020.

Noble Partner 20 is a Georgian Defense Force and U.S. Army Europe cooperatively-led exercise hosted at Vaziani and Camp Norio training areas designed to enhance Georgian, regional partner, and U.S. force readiness and interoperability in a realistic, multinational training environment. Noble Partner is a recurring, biannual exercise in its fifth iteration. This year also marks the 26th year of the partnership agreement between the Georgia National Guard and country of Georgia under the National Guard's State Partnership Program.

"This exercise is an incredible display of commitment of cooperation between the United States and Georgia and between Georgia and NATO," said U.S. Army Col. Stephanie Bagley, Defense Attaché to Georgia. "It is an opportunity to hone our skills to work together as a coalition, to enhance interoperability, as well as to show our future cooperation."

Countries participating in this year's exercise include France, Georgia, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Active duty U.S. Army units training in the exercise include the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, 12th and 101st Combat Aviation Brigades, and 18th Military Police Brigade during Noble Partner. Components from the Georgia National Guard in the exercise include the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 78th Troop Command, 78th Aviation Troop Command, and 165th Airlift Wing. This year's training will include mechanized infantry maneuvers, helicopter attack and medical evacuation operations with rotor-wing aircraft, and a culminating combined arms live-fire exercise that integrates all participating forces.

Senior leaders and exercise coordinators spoke about the importance of partnership and training with allied and partnered countries.

"I'm very excited to be back here in the country of Georgia. I was fortunate enough to be here a couple of years ago at the last Noble



movement and required COVID-19 testing before entering Georgia, and COVID-19 screening will occur during the exercise to enable continued training in a safe environment.

"This exercise emphasizes interoperability and coordination with our partnered nations and our defense forces, strengthens our military readiness and defense capabilities to build trust, cooperation and friendship," said Brig. Gen. Irakli Chichinadze, Georgian Deputy Chief of defense forces. "I'd like to express my appreciation to our many partners."

Partner exercise," said Col. Jason Fryman, Georgia Army National Guardsman and U.S. Exercise Director. "I'm a walking testament that exercises like Noble Partner 20 allow us to bring partners and allies together to connect personally, professionally as well as technically and tactically. Interoperability though is not just about technology. It's about people and processes. Those relationships here allow us to work with our partners and allies, hone those skills necessary for us to act as a coalition."

Fryman went on to say exercises like Noble Partner promote stability and security in the region and around the globe.

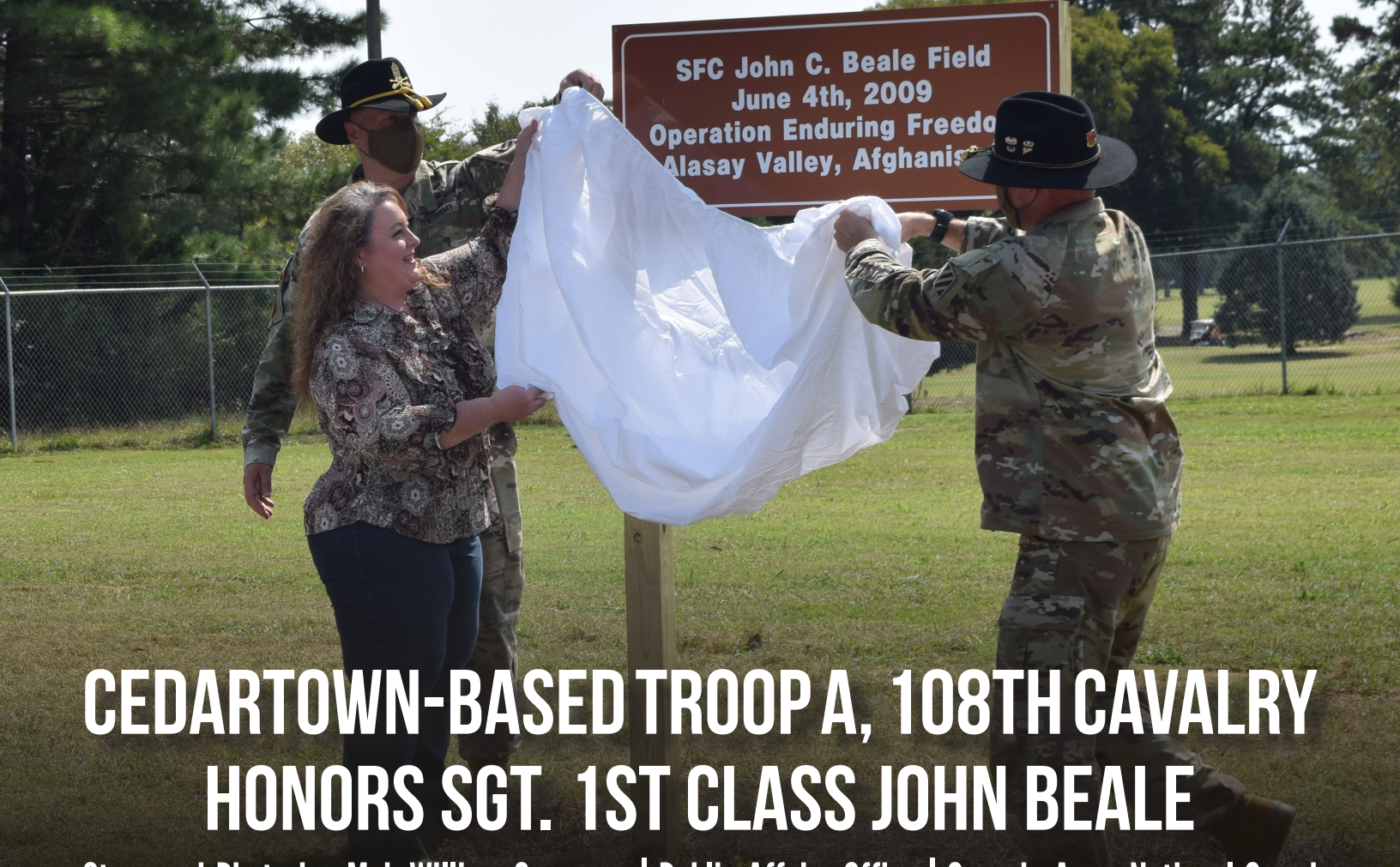
The Georgia National Guard and country of Georgia became partners under the State Partnership Program in October 1994. The program's first partnerships began in 1993, and the agreement between both Georgias is the 17th agreement in the program's history.

Safety precautions are in place to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 exposure during and after the exercise. The Georgian Ministry of Defense implemented a 14-day restriction of









# CEDARTOWN-BASED TROOP A, 108TH CAVALRY HONORS SGT. 1ST CLASS JOHN BEALE

Story and Photo by: Maj. William Carraway | Public Affairs Office | Georgia Army National Guard

Georgia Army National Guard Soldiers of the Cedartown-based Troop A, 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry stood at attention for the dedication of a training field in honor of Sergeant 1st Class John C. Beale who was killed in Afghanistan June 4, 2009. The dedication was attended by family, friends, fellow Soldiers and Veterans who served with Sgt. 1st Class Beale.

"Sgt. 1st Class Beale embodied the attributes of the United States Army Noncommissioned Officer's Creed," said Lt. Col. Christopher Powell, commander of the 1-108th Cavalry. "His professionalism, leadership, selflessness, courage, technical and tactical competence as a 19D Cavalry Scout and love for Soldiers was unmatched. No commander could ask for a better NCO than him."

Powell observed that Beale balanced his service as a Soldier with his role as a husband to wife Crystal and father to children Christopher and Callie who attended the ceremony.

"As we honor Sgt. 1st Class Beale's service and sacrifice, we also honor yours," said Powell to Beale's family.

Major General Randall Simmons, commander of the Georgia Army National Guard spoke of Beale's service and legacy. Simmons commanded the 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry in Afghanistan from 2009 to 2010.

"Those of us who knew Sgt 1st Class Beale hold him in a special place in our hearts," said Simmons. "But this day is not about sad reflection, it is about a celebration of the courage and sacrifice and service of this hero."

Simmons called Beale a consummate professional noting how approachable and welcoming he was to all Soldiers and how he was absolutely dedicated to the Soldier's craft.

"John was a warrior. He served with distinction. He was a

team builder who was widely respected and loved." Said Simmons. "For those Soldiers going forward who will train on this field, when you feel tired, when you feel like you can give no more, if you need to draw on a source of motivation, think of the sacrifice of Sgt. 1st Class John Beale and the other fallen Rough Riders who paid the ultimate price so we could be here to move forward."

Sergeant 1st Class Robert Freeman, who deployed with Beale in 2009 recalled leadership lessons Beale imparted as a mentor and teacher to the Soldiers of Troop A.

"Beale was in charge of all our supplies," recalled Freeman. Every single morning, He would literally go over every single thing we loaded," said Freeman. "But I learned so much from that. It made me a better NCO. He always wanted me to know my mission, and my routes. He was a constant professional and teacher."

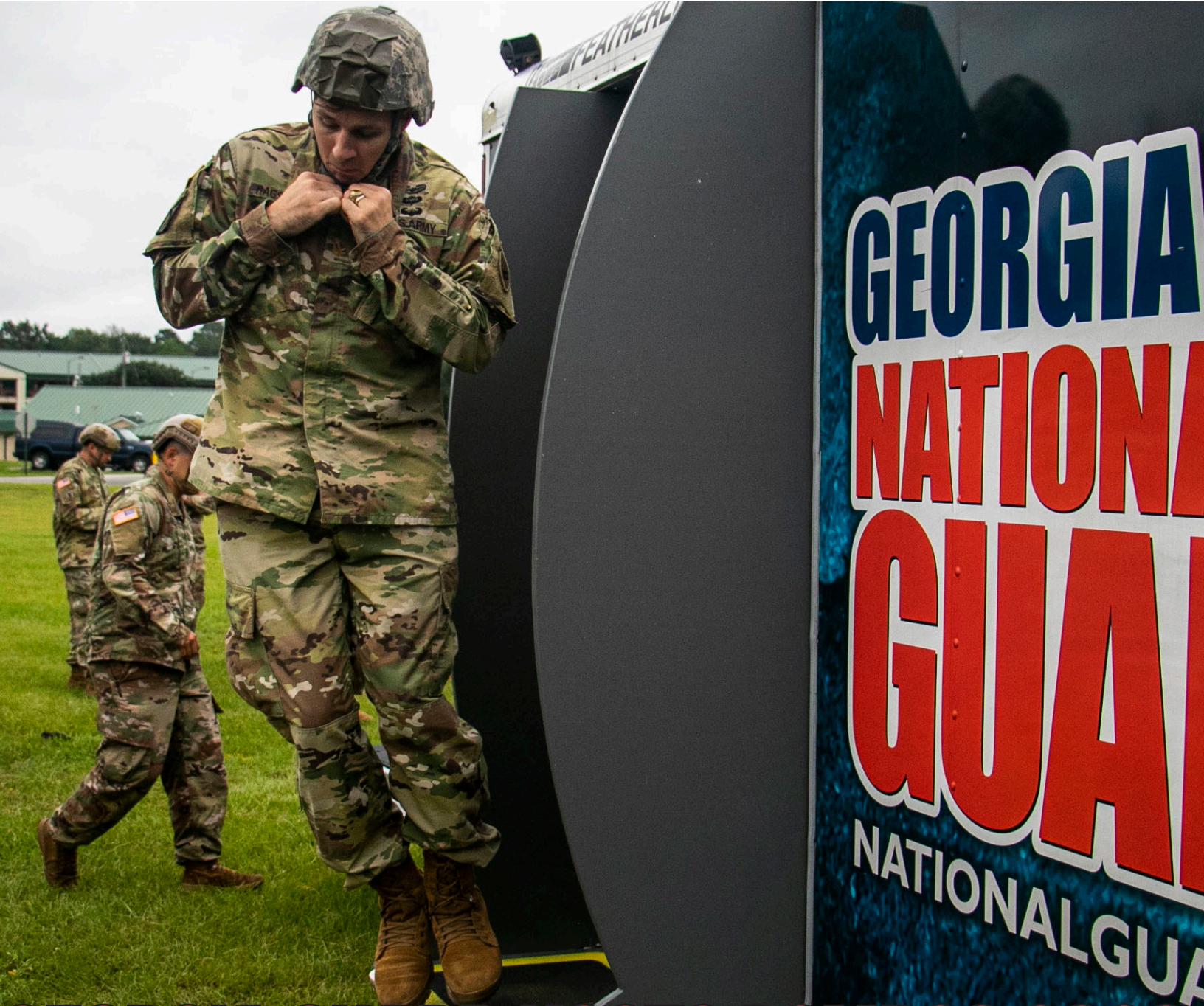
Crystal Beale, wife of John and long-time supporter of the 108th Cavalry thanked the Soldiers for the dedication and thanked them for their service.

"I just want to thank you all for this day," said Beale. "I pray over every one of you and thank you that you serve."

After sharing some of Sgt. 1st Class Beale's favorite quotes from military history Crystal was joined by Powell and Command Sgt. Major John Ballenger, senior enlisted advisor for the 1st Squadron 108th Cavalry in revealing the sign dedicating the field in honor of Sgt 1st Class Beale. Captain Samuel Jerome, commander of Troop A, closed out the ceremony and invited Soldiers, veterans and family members to share stories and fellowship.

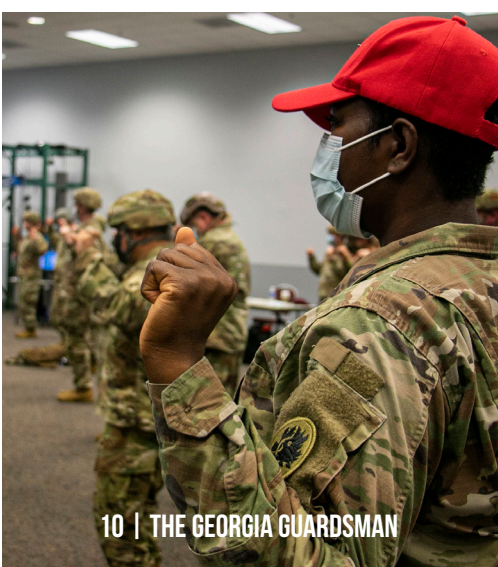
Following the ceremony, the armory grounds resounded with laughter as family and friends recalled the life and times of John Beale, consummate Soldier, gregarious personality, and friend to everyone he met.





# GEORGIA GUARD HOSTS POMPOC 2020

STORY AND PHOTOS BY: SPC. TORI MILLER | PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE | GEORGIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD







The Georgia National Guard hosted the annual Parachute Operation Mishap Preventative Orientation Course (POMPOC) in Savannah, Ga. on Sept. 14 – 18, 2020. This year, the weeklong event brought together over 110 jumpmasters, parachute riggers and airborne Soldiers from Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard components from around the country into one forum where they conducted classes and seminars to discuss new trends, procedures, and equipment in the airborne community.

“On an annual basis, there are a lot of thing that change in the jumpmaster and rigger world for standardization and safety,” Said Col. John Till, Georgia Department of Defense Safety Occupational Health Director, and the coordinator of POMPOC in Georgia. “This event is the best time to get all the jumpmasters and riggers from around the country and around the world, we have had folks from other countries participate in the past, and let them know what has changed over the last year.”

POMPOC brings in vendors from around the country to test out equipment, assist jumpers in finding and filling their equipment needs and jumpers also provide aid in research. During the week, Soldiers had the opportunity to sign up and test different equipment such as the virtual reality parachute jump simulator, Parasim.

“Our vendors come in a variety, but all are meeting the needs of the airborne community,” said Till. “Some jumpers may have trouble finding a product that may assist them in accomplishing their mission. An example of this is the U.S. Army Research Lab is currently working on a project for head trauma and impact.”

Programs and events like POMPOC provide feedback to engineers to further studies for Soldier safety on future jumps in training environments and in combat.

Due to inclement weather during most of the training week, vendors and training were hosted inside at the Georgia National Guard Air Dominance Center, Savannah, Ga. The Georgia National Guard ensured that Soldiers were following guidelines set due to COVID-19 restrictions. Soldiers were required prior to the event to ensure that they were not showing signs of illness and had their temperatures checked daily.

“When Soldier’s arrived, we understood that they were coming from all over so when they reported for check in, they had their initial screening completed and that includes temperature checks and the questionnaire,” said Till. “Then, throughout the week we reminded Soldiers to maintain the social distancing of 6-feet or more and that included when we were in classes, we had the chairs social distanced. If they could not maintain social distancing of 6-feet or more, they would be asked to wear a mask.”

By Friday, late afternoon, the moment that POMPOC participants had waited all week for, arrived. There was a break in the weather, and they were able to complete 83 jumps on a CH-47 Chinook before wrapping up a successful week of training.

“Overall, this year was excellent, although the standard interaction that we see during our Q & A was diminished when presenting multiple topics through Microsoft Teams,” Said Till. “We had many subject matter experts attending this year that provided feedback and fielded questions based on their interactions with the Aerial Delivery Malfunction Review Board, the 507th PIR Airborne School, U.S. Army Advanced Airborne School and the Program Manager-Soldiers Clothing and Individual Clothing directorate. Also, the cooperation of our own Georgia Air National Guard 169th Aviation and MEDCOMs support helped us conduct the airborne operations after adverse weather made us postpone the jump and extend the event an extra day.”





# New Leadership for the Georgia Army Guard

Story by: Maj. William Carraway | Public Affairs Office | Georgia Army National Guard

Brigadier General Dwayne Wilson assumed command of the Georgia Army National Guard from Maj. Gen. Randall Simmons Jr. during a ceremony at the Clay National Guard Center Oct. 9, 2020. Wilson is Georgia's 16th Assistant Adjutant General-Army to serve since the position was created by the passage of the Georgia Military Forces Reorganization Act of 1955.

"As I leave today, sad to say goodbye, I am even more excited for the future as Brig. Gen. Dwayne Wilson assumes command," said Simmons during the change of command ceremony. "(General Wilson), best of luck in the future. Thanks for your many years as a colleague, friend and mentor. I truly wish you and Samantha the best as you take the Ga. ARNG to new heights."

Simmons commanded the Ga. ARNG from September 2017 until his selection to serve as commanding general of Joint Task Force North headquartered in Fort Bliss, Texas. During the ceremony, Simmons

reflected on his career in the Georgia Army National Guard and his upcoming assignment.

"Today is bittersweet," said Simmons. "It is hard to believe after almost 32 years serving in the Georgia Guard, that I am leaving. I am certainly grateful and excited for the opportunities ahead of me at Joint task Force North, but at the same time, I have feelings of trepidation and sadness, primarily because I won't have the same daily interaction with you."

To symbolize the change of command, Maj. Gen. Tom Carden, Adjutant General of the Georgia Department of Defense, transferred the organizational colors from Simmons to Wilson. Wilson then placed the colors in the guardianship of Command Sgt. Maj. Jeff Logan, Command Sergeant Major of the Ga. ARNG.

Carden praised Simmons in his remarks, noting particularly his steadfast leadership of the Ga. DoD's Coronavirus Joint Task Force.

"Major General Simmons has led with distinction," said Carden. "Whether in combat or here at home, Simmons has set the standard."

Carden recounted Simmons inspired leadership of the Ga. DoD's joint task force for the Coronavirus response and civil support to law enforcement which is the longest domestic response operation in the history of the Ga. DoD. Carden credited the organization's success to Simmons' vision and determination to create and maintain readiness throughout the force.

"The Department of Defense

divides the globe into six geographic combatant commands," said Carden. "The Georgia Army National Guard is providing support to all six at the moment. We are globally engaged like never before. In addition, Simmons led out joint task force in response to both the global pandemic and civil unrest. The outstanding results speak

*"I don't think there's ever been a time in my career that I've been more proud of the hard work of our formations."*





for themselves.”

Enlisting in 1989 as a private in the Statesboro-based 2nd Battalion, 214th Field Artillery, Simmons subsequently earned his commission from the Georgia Military Institute's Officer Candidate School. From 1992 to 2006, Simmons served in a variety of assignments with the Savannah-based 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery Regiment, a unit whose history predates the American Revolution. Simmons deployed to Iraq in 2005 as the executive officer of the 1-118th. He commanded the Calhoun-based 1st Squadron 108th Cavalry Regiment in Afghanistan from 2009 to 2010 and commanded the Macon-based 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team from 2013 to 2015, during which time he served as commander of Task Force Volunteer in Kabul, Afghanistan. Simmons served as the chief of staff for the Ga. ARNG from 2015 until his appointment as commanding general. During his command tenure, the Georgia Army National Guard has grown in strength and capability adding nearly 300 personnel and activating new units such as the 1st Battalion, 54th Security Forces Assistance Brigade, and 265th Chemical Battalion while mobilizing nearly 3,000 of Georgia's Citizen Soldiers overseas.

“It is because of your combined



efforts we were able to accomplish so much over the past three years,” said Simmons who proceeded to recount some of the many achievements of the Ga. ARNG since 2017. These included 13 deployments, 18 overseas deployment missions and response missions following Hurricanes Irma and Michael.

Assuming command of the Ga. ARNG is Brig. Gen. Dwayne Wilson, former director of the joint staff and state aviation officer for Georgia. Wilson's military career began in 1987. He commissioned as an aviation-branched officer in 1993, and served eight years in Army aviation before transferring to the Ga. ARNG in 2001. He commanded Company E, 1-171st Aviation Regiment and led the 148th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) from 2003 to 2004. Wilson commanded the 1-171st Aviation Regiment from 2008 to 2012, including a tour of duty in Iraq from 2011 to 2012. Upon return, he served as deputy chief of staff for logistics for the Ga. ARNG and completed Army War College. From 2014 to 2018 Wilson commanded the 78th Aviation Troop Command and later served as chief of staff for the Ga. ARNG and, ultimately, Director of the

Joint Staff for the Ga. DOD.

During his remarks, Wilson thanked Maj. Gen. Simmons for his leadership.

“I've had the privilege of working with (Simmons) both as his chief of staff and, more recently as the DJS,” said Wilson. “I can't think of a more qualified officer to lead Army North's JTF-N. Thank you for your leadership, mentorship and friendship.”

Wilson also recognized the considerable contributions made by the members of the Ga. DoD in 2020.

“I don't think there's ever been a time in my career that I've been more proud of the hard work of our formations,” said Wilson. “Daily, I witness Soldiers and leaders of all ranks demonstrating an unprecedented amount of agility, discipline and professionalism.”

In his farewell remarks, Simmons expressed appreciation to his family, Maj. Gen. Carden, and the Soldiers of the Ga. ARNG with whom he had served for more than three decades.

“If my service in this position has done nothing else, I hope it inspires others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more,” said Simmons. “In this organization anything is possible.”





# GA. ARNG COMPLETES SOLDIER READINESS PROCESSING

Story by: Maj. William Carraway | Public Affairs Office | Georgia Army National Guard

More than 6,100 Soldiers of the Georgia Army National Guard completed medical screenings in August as part of its Soldier Readiness Processing. This unprecedented effort was the culmination of planning by the Ga. ARNG personnel office designed to improve efficiency, reduce cost, and increase readiness while maintaining strict COVID-19 safety protocols.

“Over the course of 31 days, 6,170 Soldiers from all of Georgia’s brigades completed SRP,” said Lt. Col. (Ret.) Thomas Meeks, deputy director of personnel for the Georgia Army National Guard. “We were able to accomplish this without any incidence of COVID-19 during or following the SRP.”

The Soldier Readiness Processing, or SRP, is an Army program to qualify Soldiers for deployment. The SRP features a comprehensive medical examination and the completion of financial and administrative requirements that all Soldiers are required to complete annually.

In 2018, the Ga. ARNG personnel office, or G-1, began looking for ways to improve the way it delivered the SRP to the more than 11,000 Citizen Soldiers in the state.

“What we had (before 2018) was a 92-man medical detachment that was running four readiness events a month, and it just wasn’t sustainable,” said Meeks. “But more importantly, we weren’t able to predict our medical readiness. It might be 85 percent one day and 92 percent the next. With

this concept, we can get our medical readiness to a given level and maintain it through the year.”

With the approval of the commanding general of the Ga. ARNG, the G-1 launched a five-year pilot program aimed at having a consistently high readiness level throughout the year. The plan was to have all Soldiers seen in a one-month window during annual training in the summer and host a three-day quarterly SRP for the Soldiers who missed the summer months. Newly enlisted Soldiers in the Recruit Sustainment Program also participate in SRP before they are handed off to their units, so leaders are given a fully “green” Soldier.

Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Powell, commander of the Calhoun-based 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment, praised the new approach.

“The G-1 has perfected their craft of executing Soldier Readiness Processing,” said Powell. “When I deployed to Iraq in 2004, (SRP) took two to three days. Now, the average Soldier is complete in three hours.”

Powell also noted that the annual approach has reduced the time commanders and staff must devote to medical readiness.

“Before, the SRP was conducted year-round and any given month, Soldiers would be absent for important training,” said Powell. “Now we can knock out the SRP and focus the rest of the year on training. This approach to an



annual SRP process increases the squadron's readiness and lethality."

To facilitate the approach, the Ga. ARNG constructed and renovated ten buildings at the Georgia Garrison Training Center on Fort Stewart, Georgia, to provide dedicated facilities for the SRP.

"The proof of concept came with the mobilization of the 48th (Infantry Brigade Combat Team) in 2018," observed Meeks. "During that iteration, we completed SRP for 2,500 Soldiers which was the most that had been completed in one event until that time." In just two weeks, the G-1 has already surpassed that milestone.

The sprawling SRP site and process for navigating through 23 readiness stations were easily adapted to mitigate COVID-19 through social distancing and work-flow management. Soldiers enter and exit stations through different doors and non-commissioned officers strictly enforce mask wearing at all times. All stations feature hand sanitizer and plexiglass protection barriers between Soldiers and workers. Units attending SRP must conduct temperature and symptom checks prior to mobilizing to the SRP site and temperatures are checked before entry to all buildings.

The two-fold approach to efficiency and risk mitigation is in accordance with the guidance provided by Maj. Gen. Tom Carden, Georgia's Adjutant General, whose response priorities throughout the Georgia National Guard's response to COVID-19, includes protecting the force, protecting readiness, building response capacity and alleviating suffering.

"We will never drive risk to zero, but we need to do all we can to mitigate risk while maximizing our readiness," said Carden. "We cannot respond to help the citizens of Georgia during a pandemic if we are not medically ready, and we



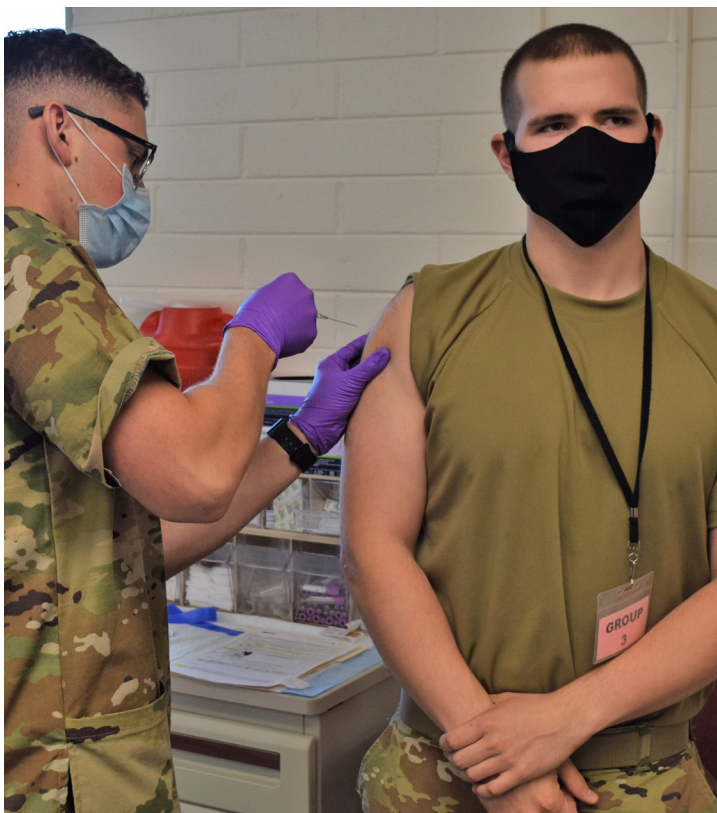
cannot do so if we let our guard down and do not adhere to appropriate risk reduction measures."

Brigadier General Randall Simmons, Commanding General of the Georgia Army National Guard visited the SRP site, met with Soldiers and received feedback on the improved SRP.

"The feedback I am getting from Soldiers and commanders is very positive," said Simmons. "We are just two years into the five-year implementation plan, and we are already seeing improvements in readiness, efficiency and cost savings. These efforts make us a more ready and lethal force."

Medical readiness is not the only function of the SRP. Soldiers also receive updates on their benefit packages. In addition to a briefing on education benefits, Soldiers are introduced to the G-1 smart phone app which provides real-time updates on programs such as the Georgia National Guard Service Cancellable Loan, which enables Soldiers to attend college with no tuition cost. Soldiers meet with retention and financial counselors who explain the value of a military retirement and visit with representatives of the Family Services Branch who provide employment opportunities with civilian employers. It is all part of what Meeks described as a "global approach to readiness."

"The idea is that we would add a readiness station every year," said Meeks. "Next year, we plan to incorporate a station to review record briefs for accuracy to improve promotions. I realize that no one enjoys coming to SRP. Therefore, we are constantly looking for ways to improving the experience for the Soldier, while producing the maximum amount of readiness for our leaders."





# GEORGIA AIR GUARDSMAN EARNS PURPLE HEART FOR ACTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

Story by: Master Sgt. Nancy Goldberger | 116th Air Control Wing | Georgia Air National Guard

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Franklin Wetmore, a radio frequency transmission systems craftsman with the 202d Engineering Installation Squadron, 116th Air Control Wing, Georgia Air National Guard, was awarded the Purple Heart medal on Sep. 13, 2020, during a ceremony at the Museum of Aviation outside Robins Air Force Base.

On Dec. 11, 2019, while Wetmore and his team were awaiting airlift to conduct a quality assurance inspection for the Defense Information Systems Agency, a nearby explosion shook a terminal at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, where they were deployed during Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

Although Wetmore sustained an injury during the explosion, he jumped into action and provided security as the base came under attack. He guided unarmed comrades between bunkers and another terminal, some of whom were civilian contractors and some who were just leaving the shower area. Prior to Army personnel arriving to take charge of security, Wetmore guarded more than 500 personnel who were hunkered down in the terminal. During the course of the attack, he held his position for approximately two hours with shots firing in the distance before medical personnel could be notified and attend to his injuries.

With Christmas around the corner, Wetmore shared how he was thinking about the holidays coming up during the days leading up to the explosion.

"I was thinking about family, food, and looking forward to the helicopter ride to a forward operating base in Afghanistan," Wetmore said. "I am proud to serve and always wanted to be deployed to the tip of the spear. But this time, the enemy's spear got me."

For his actions and ensuing injury, Wetmore earned the Purple Heart, our nation's oldest military medal. It is a combat decoration awarded to members of the armed forces of the U.S. who are wounded or killed by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy.

"I'm very honored to receive the medal, and I'm proud, but I wish I was never hurt," Wetmore said. "I love America, and I go to deployed locations knowing I may never see my family again. America and freedom are that important. I am always ready and will always say 'yes.'"

Wetmore's actions downrange reflect his consistent service and dedication. Since November 2012, he has served in numerous capacities in the Georgia Air National Guard -- primarily in the 202d EIS -- inspecting, installing, and trouble-shooting radio and antenna installations for fixed and mobile radio communications. His work is key to establishing and maintaining communication systems and network connectivity in austere environments for U.S. and friendly forces.

"It's an incredible honor to serve with Sgt. Wetmore," said Col. Amy Holbeck, commander of the 116th Air Control Wing. "I'm proud of his selfless service and sacrifice on this specific occasion, but also of his continued commitment to serve this great nation."





# Georgia Guard Aviators Welcome New Leader

Story By: Capt. William Carraway | Public Affairs Office | Georgia Army National Guard

Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Buck relinquished command of the Marietta, Ga.-based 1st Battalion, 171st Aviation Regiment to Lt. Col. Matthew Kukla during a ceremony at the Clay National Guard Center Oct. 3, 2020. Buck has commanded the Dragon Masters of the 171st since February 2019 and mobilized Soldiers and aircraft of the 171st to Kosovo as part of Operation Joint Guardian later that year.

“Thank you for being here today to celebrate the superb leadership team of Christopher and Wendy Buck and welcome the new command team of Matt and Shannon Kukla,” said Col. Jason Fryman, commander of the 78th Aviation Troop Command.

Fryman recognized the efforts of the 171st Aviation Regiment over Buck’s command tenure in overseas operations and domestic emergency response missions.

“Buck has expertly led this battalion, said Fryman. “Training, preparing and deploying this battalion to Kosovo as part of longest standing NATO-led peacekeeping mission while maintaining the highest standards of safety and discipline and then safely redeploying and transitioning the battalion to a domestic mission.”

A native of Georgia, Buck entered the Georgia Army National Guard as an infantryman in 1992 while attending the University of North Georgia. Upon graduation in 1996, Buck entered the Army as an aviation lieutenant. His active service took him from Fort Carson to Korea before he rejoined the Georgia Army National Guard in 2005. He is a past commander of Headquarters Company and Company E, 171st Aviation GSA and has previously deployed to Bosnia Herzegovina and Iraq.

Buck recognized the support of his family and Soldiers of the 171st Aviation Regiment in his farewell remarks to the battalion.

“I could not be more proud of this battalion and the way it has performed over the past two years,” said Buck. “From the process of mobilization at Fort Stewart and Fort Hood to mission execution in Kosovo for KFOR 26, I got to see these Soldiers in action. What I saw was hard work, dedication, sacrifice, ingenuity and character.”

Buck called attention to the historic significance of the Battalion’s effort in Kosovo.

“I am proud to say we were part of the peace and stability of the Balkans Region that led to the recent economic treaty between Kosovo and Serbia,” said Buck. “Our presence, along with the other KFOR Soldiers over the years set the condition for this diplomatic breakthrough to be possible.”

Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Kukla assumes command following a career in aviation that has taken him from Fort Hood, Texas, to the Clay National Guard Center. Enlisting in the Virginia National Guard in 1996, Kukla graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 2000 and began his aviation career as an AH-64 Longbow Apache pilot at Fort Hood. He served in company command in Korea and was deployed to Iraq in 2005 and 2007. Kukla joined the Georgia Army National Guard in 2009 and served as operations officer of the 48th Brigade Special Troops Battalion

and as the brigade aviation officer for the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Following assignment to the Ga. ARNG joint staff, Kukla served as ARNG liaison to the Future Vertical Lift Cross Functional Team at Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

Kukla thanked the command team of the 78th Aviation Troop Command for the opportunity to take the 171st Aviation forward and challenged the Soldiers of his new command to always give five percent.

“Five percent is not the low watermark for success,” explained Kukla. “The challenge is to be five percent better tomorrow than you are today. Whether that is physical fitness, education or relationships, pick something within your life and become five percent better at it.”







# VETERAN GA. ARNG AVIATORS COMPLETE FINAL FLIGHT

Story by: Staff Sgt. Rob Lannom Jr. | Public Affairs Office | Georgia Army National Guard

**T**wo Veteran Ga. ARNG pilots completed their final flight with the Marietta-based 78th Aviation Troop Command Sept. 23, 2020 at the Clay National Guard Center. Chief Warrant Officer 5 Pete Demkow and CW4 Ken Dyson have more than 70 years combined military service. Friends, family members and fellow Soldiers of the 78th ATC lined the taxiway at Hangar 1 on a clear sunny day for a ceremony honoring the careers of Demkow and Dyson. Children scanned the horizon and listened for the rotor chop that would herald the arrival of the aircraft.

At precisely 1:00, right on schedule, Demkow and Dyson's Black Hawk approached from the east and made a pass over the runway before circling back to Hangar 1. A fire truck from Dobbins Air Reserve Base showered the Black Hawk with a ceremonial water salute as it ground taxied to a stop. Demkow and Dyson were then showered with champagne sprayed by jubilant Soldiers and family members.

Lieutenant Colonel Will Cox, deputy commander of the 78th ATC addressed the ceremony praising the aviators for their long and distinguished service.

"Not only have they spent many years in the organization they have invested in us," said Cox. "We love you; we appreciate you."

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Pete Demkow enlisted in the Army November 24, 1980 as an infantryman. He rose through the enlisted ranks to staff sergeant and served as a drill instructor before completing warrant officer candidate school June 16, 1986 and graduating from Initial Entry Rotary Wing Flight School in 1987. Joining the Georgia National Guard in 1996, Demkow currently flies the UH-60A/L and HH-60M Black Hawk. Demkow mobilized to Iraq and been activated for countless domestic response missions at home from Hurricane Katrina to the present COVID-19 response. He has more than 4,600 flight hours in the TH-55 Osage, UH-1 Iroquois and UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopter.

Demkow recognized many of the aviators and Soldiers





aviation career.

"It means the world to me that you would all be here," said Demkow.

Demkow and Dyson's combined 72 years of service exceeds the number of years the Georgia Army National Guard has flown rotary-wing aircraft. The Ga. ARNG received its first helicopter, an H-13 Sioux, in 1954. Since that time, Georgia's aviators have assisted the state and southeast region during domestic emergencies ranging from winter storms to hurricanes.

with whom he had served over four decades and thanked his wife Debbie and family for their support

"Thank you for coming out," said Demkow. Thank you for giving me the opportunity. We do this for our country, and we are just going out and doing our jobs, and you support us in everything we do."

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Ken Dyson joined the Georgia Army National Guard in 2006 after more than 20-years' military service. A 1984 graduate of the United States Military Academy, Dyson completed U.S. Army Rotary Wing Flight Training in 1985. Over the course of his military career, he has flown more than 4,100 hours in the TH-55 Osage, UH-1 Iroquois and H-60 Black Hawks during domestic response and overseas contingency operations in Iraq.

Dyson thanked his family and recognized the mechanics, refuelers and maintainers that have sustained him over his







# THE HISTORY OF MILITARY POLICE IN THE GEORGIA ARMY

Story by: Maj. William Carraway | Public Affairs Office | Georgia Army National Guard

## EARLY MP HISTORY

The Military Police Corps was established as a permanent branch in the U.S. Army September 26, 1941, but the military police mission began during the American Revolution with the establishment of the first provost unit. During the American Civil War, the office of the Provost Marshal General was established. By the time of the First World War, the mobility and mass of armies were taxing the existing provost structure. In May 1917, the War Department approved a restructuring of Army divisions that included a headquarters company with two MP companies. That July, the 1st Division fielded two MP companies marking the first officially organized MP units.

## FIRST MP UNITS IN GEORGIA

With the entry of the United States in World War I, units of the Georgia National Guard were assigned to the 31st Division. In the reorganization that followed, elements of Georgia National Guard's 1st Squadron of Cavalry were assigned the military police role for the division and reorganized as the 106th Headquarters and Military Police. The cavalry units had previously conducted policing functions at Camp Gordon until relieved October 5, 1917 and dispatched to Camp Wheeler in Macon.

Georgia National Guard Capt. Henry D. Russell served as the Provost Marshall of Macon from 1917 to 1918. After the war, he returned to the Georgia National Guard to serve as commander of the 121st Infantry Regiment. He would go on to command the 30th Division at the start of World War II and was the first commander of the Ga. ARNG's 48th Infantry Division.

## INTERWAR AND WORLD WAR II

The National Defense Act of 1920 authorized the creation of military police units in the Army. There were no military police units authorized for Georgia when the state began reorganizing its National Guard in 1920. On June 18, 1921, the 164th Combat Engineers was organized in Springfield. The unit was redesignated as Company E, 133rd Engineers June 2, 1924 and on June 1, 1928, was again redesignated as the 30th Military Police Company. The 30th MP Company owned its own armory, a rarity among Georgia Guard units in the 1920s and 1930s. This unit served with the 30th Division throughout World War II. Its lineage is perpetuated today by Battery A, 1-118th Field Artillery Regiment.

Military Police units guided the Georgia Army National Guard's 121st Infantry Regiment and the 118th, 179th and 230th Field Artillery Battalions from their landing areas on Utah and Omaha beaches to their assembly areas and ensured orderly flow of personnel and equipment. When the 121st Infantry was heavily engaged with German forces in the Hurtgen Force, MPs kept armor, artillery and supplies moving freely into the engagement area to support them. The 30th MP Company similarly supported the 118th and 230th Field Artillery battalions during the fighting at Mortain where the 30th Division earned the Presidential Unit Citation.

Post World War II Reorganizations: 48th Infantry and 48th Armor Division

The initial allotment of National Guard ground force units for the state of Georgia on July 11, 1946 included the authorization for the 48th Military Police Company to serve as the MP element for the 48th Infantry Division. In 1955, the 48th Infantry Division was reorganized as an armor division



with the 48th MP Company continuing its role.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the 48th MP Company provided provost duties for the 48th Division, served as the honor guard for the governor during Governor's Day activities and frequently provided the color guard for the National Guard Association of Georgia conventions and other gatherings.

### 1968 REORGANIZATION

An Army-wide reorganization in 1968 eliminated the 48th Armor Division. Former 48th units were reorganized under the 3rd Brigade, 30th Division. Because the 30th Division was split among multiple states, Georgia received an allotment for a platoon of MPs designated the 3rd Platoon, 30th MP Company based in Macon.

The 48th MP Company was reorganized as the 190th MP Company in 1968 with the inactivation of the 48th AD. The 190th was organized with the 178th MP Company and 1148th Transportation Company to form the 170th MP Battalion with headquarters in Atlanta. The 170th perpetuated the lineage and honors of the 179th Artillery Battalion that fought in the European Theater of World War II.

The 1968 reorganization also established the 176th MP Battalion with headquarters and the 179th MP Company in Forsyth and the 182nd MP Company in Macon. These two battalions. Were assigned to the Emergency Operations Headquarters based in Decatur. The EOH is the forerunner of today's 78th Troop Command.

### 1973 REORGANIZATION AND THE BIRTH OF THE 48TH BRIGADE

In 1973, the Georgia Army National Guard underwent another major reorganization. In October, The National Guard Bureau approved Governor Jimmy Carter's request for a separate brigade in the Georgia National Guard. Accordingly, on December 1, 1973, the 3rd Brigade, 30th Division was reorganized as the 48th Brigade. The reorganization brought an additional 278 personnel slots to the state but eliminated the 176th MP Battalion. Headquarters of the 176th became the headquarters detachment of the new 148th Support Detachment while the 179th MP Company was reorganized as Company C, 148th. The 182nd MP Company was inactivated.

### THE 170TH MP BATTALION LOST AND REGAINED

On September 30, 1990, a change to the troop allotment to the State of Georgia consolidated the 170th MP Battalion into the 190th MP Company. For the next 17 years, the 190th and 178th MP Companies were the only MP units in the state.

The Georgia National Guard organized Headquarters Detachment, 170th MP Battalion and the 278th MP Company on September 1, 2007 with the 170th based in Decatur and the 278th in Augusta. Because the previous 170th MP Battalion's lineage had passed on to the 190th MP Company, the new 170th MP Battalion did not perpetuation the old battalion's lineage and was granted a 2008 federal recognition date.

One year later, the 179th MP was organized in Savannah.

This unit had no connection to the lineage of the previous 179th MP and was federally recognized May 12, 2011.

### Further Force Structure Changes

The 278th MP Company was inactivated during a ceremony at Fort Gordon January 10, 2016.

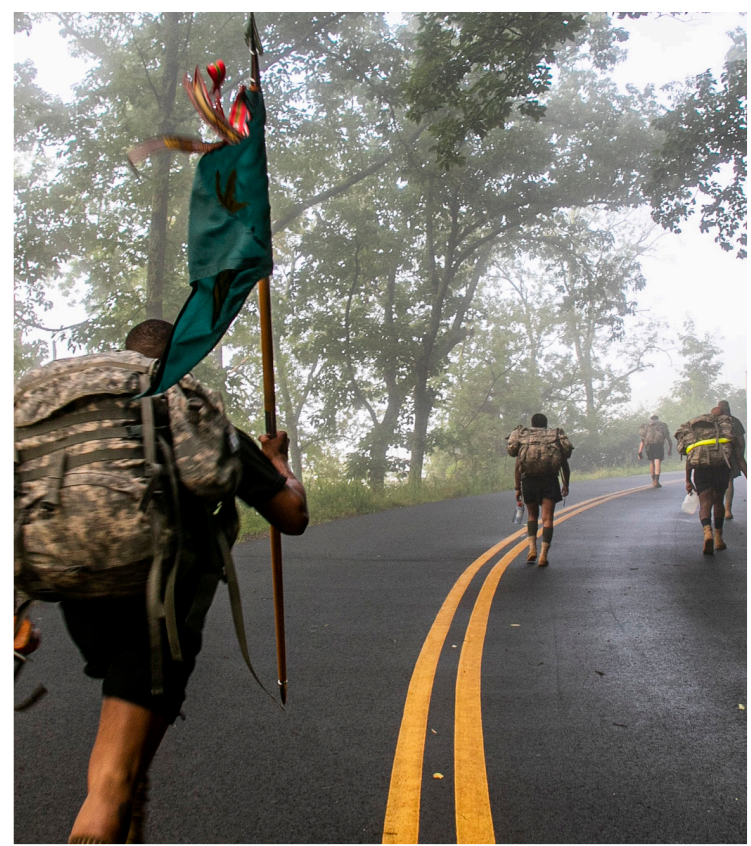
The Kennesaw-based 190th Military Police Company was inactivated during a ceremony at the Kennesaw Armory on Sept. 17, 2019. With the consolidation of the 190th personnel into the 170th MP Battalion, the lineage of the original 170th MP Battalion, which passed into the 190th MP Company in 1990 was passed along to the current 170th MP Battalion.

As of September 26, 2020, the 170th MP Battalion with the 178th and 179th MP Companies were assigned to the Marietta-based 201st Regional Support Group.





# AROUND THE GEORGIA GUARD



## RUCK MARCH

Georgia Army National Guardsmen of the Marietta-based 124th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment participated in a ruck march at Kennesaw Mountain, Marietta, Ga. Soldiers supported one another and worked as a team to make it up to the top as a unit.



## 1230TH TRANS. CO. DEPLOYMENT CEREMONY

Brigadier John Gentry, commander of the 78th Troop Command, speaks to the Soldiers of the 1230th Transportation Company during their deployment ceremony.



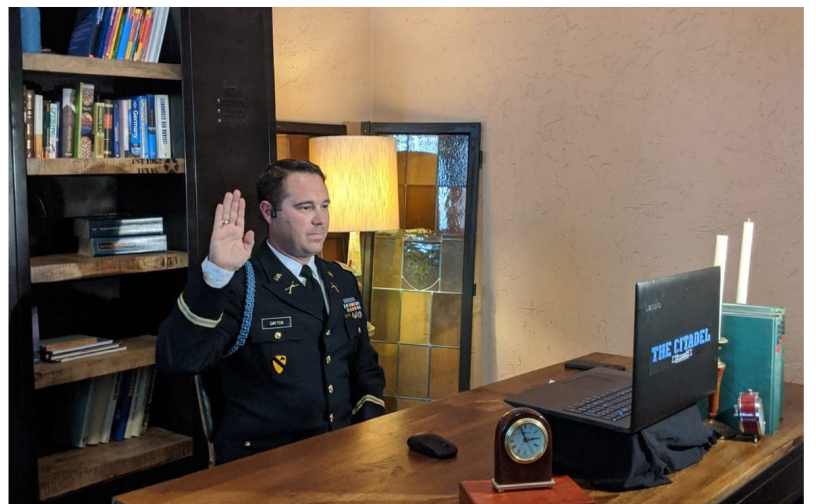


## RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY

Senior leaders of the Georgia Army national Guard cut the ribbon to symbolically open the new Tactical Unmanned Aerial Unmanned Systems facility at Fort Stewart, Ga.

## SWEARING IN

In a virtual ceremony, held August 13, 2020, Chief Justice Harold D. Melton swore in Captain Bryan Dayton of the Georgia Army National Guard to the bar of the Supreme Court of Georgia. Dayton, who is currently stationed in Europe on active duty with the U.S. Army, is transferring from the Infantry to the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps to serve as a lawyer in the Georgia National Guard.



## HONORING WWII POW

Georgia Army National Guard Commander, Major General Randall Simmons and other senior leaders presented Sergeant Leo Lanier, a WWII veteran and former Prisoner of War, with certificates and coins from the Adjutant General of Georgia and the Georgia Air National Guard during POW/MIA Day in Summerville, Ga.





# Stay tuned for the Year in Review Edition of the Georgia Guardsman Magazine!



**GEORGIA GUARDSMAN**

★★ SERVING THE NATIONAL GUARD AND STATE DEFENSE FORCE OF GEORGIA ★★

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