

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Spring 2021

# GUARDSMAN

MAGAZINE



# MARKSMANSHIP TRAINING

## OPEN RANGE DAY

### 2021 Dates Available

Every Wednesday & Thursday,  
dependent on unit usage.

### Weekend Dates

July: 16, 17 & 18

August: 6, 7, 8, 27, 28, 29

September: 10, 11, 12, 24, 25, 26

**What:** Live-Fire Range Use

**When:** Every Wednesday & Thursday.  
Some Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays are  
also available.

**Who:** Currently serving NH National Guard  
service members (in a non-duty status).

**Where:** NHNG Training Site, 19 Austin Cate  
Drive, Strafford, NH. Report to the Cooper  
House, Building 7.

**How:** Reserve days at least three days in  
advance by phone or email at 603-715-3769  
and [ng.nh.nharnng.mbx.nhngts@mail.mil](mailto:ng.nh.nharnng.mbx.nhngts@mail.mil).

**Additional Information:** Users must bring  
their own weapons, ammo and approved  
targets.

All pistol calibers up to .45 ACP, all rifle  
calibers up to .30-06/7.62mm x 54R, and  
shotgun slugs are authorized.

Paper targets and approved biathlon target  
sets are the only authorized targets.

Prior to live-fire range use, all users must  
complete a range safety course. Please  
request training via email.



**There must be a minimum of two trained & safety certified users on the range  
at all times, so bring a battle buddy.**

**A liability waiver must be signed before each use.**

**There is a standard live-fire range usage fee of \$3.00/hr. This is a shared cost  
between all shooters (e.g. 2 shooters/\$1.50 each per hour)**

# NEW HAMPSHIRE NATIONAL GUARD LEADERSHIP



**The Honorable Chris Sununu**  
Governor of New Hampshire



**Maj. Gen. David Mikolaities**  
Adjutant General of the N.H. National Guard

**Brig. Gen. John LeBlanc**  
Commander of the N.H. Army National Guard

**Brig. Gen. Jed French**  
Commander of the N.H. Air National Guard

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- 114th Public Affairs Detachment, N.H. Army National Guard
- 603d Public Affairs Detachment, N.H. Army National Guard
- 197th Field Artillery Brigade Public Affairs, N.H. Army National Guard
- 157th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs, N.H. Air National Guard
- Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs, N.H. National Guard

*The New Hampshire Guardsman Magazine is a joint publication for soldiers and airmen serving in the N.H. National Guard, as well as their families and retirees.*

*The New Hampshire Guardsman Magazine is produced by the State Public Affairs Office.*

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**Cover Photo:** Airmen from the 157th Security Forces Squadron, NHANG, conduct civil disturbance training in the FedExField parking lot Jan. 18 in Landover, Md. The stadium, home to the NFL's Washington Football Team, provided the backdrop for hundreds of National Guardsmen from around the country training for the presidential inauguration.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.



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DEPARTMENT OF  
**Military Affairs and  
Veterans Services**

## **TOGETHER WE'RE STRONGER: A MESSAGE TO THE EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS AND VETERANS SERVICES**

I would like to acknowledge the tremendous impact each of you has had as state employees, working in support of Governor Sununu and the New Hampshire National Guard to quell the worst pandemic in modern history.

Over the past year, you've worked tirelessly, going above and beyond to take care of our customers and partners. You've adapted to an unprecedented set of circumstances and adjusted your lives to continue to shoulder your share of the burden and workload. Whether it was working remotely or covering for coworkers who were quarantining, you produced.

Your efforts have made it possible for the NHNG to support the state's COVID-19 relief mission since March of 2020, the longest noncombat activation of our forces in history. The Guard's accomplishments are a direct result of your dedication:

- Administration of more than 570,000 vaccinations
- COVID testing of more than 144,000 NH citizens
- Receipt, storage and distribution of more than 7,100 pallets of PPE
- Preparation and distribution of more than 281,000 meals to those affected by the pandemic
- Support of the NH Food Bank, including the receipt and storage of more than 200 tons of food

Additionally, our DMAVS employees stepped up to participate in the following activities:

- Supporting call centers, which fielded 493,000 calls to address the impact of unemployment
- Supporting mass vaccinations at NH Motor Speedway that served more than 25,000 citizens
- Onboarding more than 400 soldiers & airmen to state active duty
- Processing more than 500 state active travel vouchers
- Processing and disbursing \$3 million in Veterans Services Support Program funding
- Ensuring our facilities were clean and well maintained
- Processing more than 2,500 VA claims for eligible veterans
- Providing a dignified resting place for more than 970 veterans

During this year of uncertainty, your commitment to the organization has been one thing we could always count on. Thank you for your hard work, dedication and living the Guard motto of "Always Ready, Always There."

Remain vigilant and look out for each other. Together we are stronger.

Sincerely,

**David J. Mikolaities**

*Major General, NH National Guard*

*The Adjutant General*

## HEAVY METTLE

By Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO

It's been over a year since Gov. Chris Sununu chose the New Hampshire National Guard as his state champion.

COVID-19 has been a formidable foe. But the battle is turning.

"The size and duration of this activation has been unprecedented," said NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities. "It truly reflects on the next greatest generation and their ability to help their community, state and nation."

About 1,260 guardsmen have served on Task Force Granite, the state's makeshift pandemic response force.

But as more Granite Staters become vaccinated, support missions are drawing to an end. Many guardsmen have returned to their civilian jobs. About 660 NH Guard soldiers and airmen remain on orders supporting four lines of effort.

"When you're taking soldiers and airmen from their employers for an extended period of time, it has a rippling effect on the individual, their family and their employer," Mikolaities said.

The NH Guard was first thrust onto the front lines in March of 2020. Activations rose steadily. At its peak, nearly 30 percent of the NHNG was called up. Across the 54 states and territories, that's an estimated five times the average, Mikolaities said.

With each passing month, missions expanded and multiplied.

Guardsmen built alternate care facilities to augment hospitals, staffed food pantries, call centers, test sites and led vaccination efforts. Massive shipments of personal protective equipment were warehoused and distributed. They even tilled soil and planted crops for NH Food Bank.

*continues on next page*



**Spc. Brett Lima**, a HIMARS operator with 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Brigade, NHARNG, waits patiently for the next line of cars at a mobile pantry in Laconia on July 10.

Photo By Staff Sgt. Courtney Rovick  
114th PAD NCOIC.

As resources were taxed, non-COVID crises emerged. Contingents of NH guardsmen were sent to quell local civil unrest and fight West Coast wildfires. Other units deployed to the Southwest Border, Middle East and mobilized to D.C. for the presidential inauguration.

“When you put this mosaic together, you just realize we truly are America’s utility knife and 911 force, where you can be called and can answer for any endeavor,” Mikolaities said.

Though all available guardsmen contributed, some have been on orders since the beginning—true elder statesmen of the Guard’s pandemic response.

Spc. Brendan Johnson, a HIMARS gunner with 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Brigade, has been at it for 13 months. After hauling PPE shipments and mapping COVID-19 contacts for much of his activation, he currently works in an administrative role for task force leadership.

“I never thought I’d stay this long,” Johnson said. “This is kind of the length of an actual deployment.”

Though Johnson had civilian careers at FedEx and Fratello’s restaurant, he’s volunteered to stay on full time.

His efforts have translated to big numbers. Johnson estimates he’s helped sort and salvage 410,000 pounds of food and delivered about 273,000 meals for the food bank. He also helped deliver nearly 15,000 orders of PPE, while logging almost 3,800 driving miles.



**Gov. Chris Sununu** and state agency representatives, including NH Adjutant Gen. **David Mikolaities**, address the media following a tour of the state’s first alternate care site at Southern New Hampshire University in Hooksett, Mar. 24, 2020.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston,  
NHNG Deputy State PAO.

“I love it,” Johnson said. “Being on orders is great for me. I just reenlisted for another six years.”

Though he’s met many challenges over the past year, one sticks out: a summer’s day shipment of PPE.

“It was a 90 to 95-degree day, and we were in these super-hot trailers in the beating sun in the middle of the day,” Johnson recalled. “I was going through two gallons of water a day, just soaked with sweat. We’d be in there just so sweaty and exhausted, ‘One more box. Let’s keep going.’ We made it fun.”

Spc. Brett Lima, another HIMARS gunner, has also been on orders from the start. Though apprehensive at first, he has come to treasure the experience.

“At the start, it was a hassle to be on these orders,” Lima said. “But we come in here every day for the past year, and it’s like you can’t find this anywhere else no matter where you go. The camaraderie, the morale here, we love it.”

He admits, however, that balancing work with family life has proven difficult.

“There’s been times where I’ve been working seven days a week, 12 hours a day,” Lima said. “The schedule changes a lot. The flexibility aspect of that has been really tough.”

Another task force veteran has been Maj. Luke Webster, a staff judge advocate. He’s helped with planning, operations and logistics for all COVID missions.

“There were times, because of the length of the mission, it’s a slog,” Webster said. “It becomes challenging. You know, you’re showing up every day, and there are times where it doesn’t feel like you’re moving the needle.”

“But what’s amazing about the people on this mission is that they were able to rise to the challenge,” he added.

Webster was invigorated by how his efforts impacted his own community and family. He recalled a moment shared with his daughter, a kindergartener.

“Every night at dinner, we talk about our day,” Webster said. “You know, ‘What did you do today? What was the best part of your day?’ Those sorts of things. I was able to tell her, ‘We helped drop off masks and gloves to your school today to make sure everyone was safe; to make sure your teachers were safe; to make sure the kids were safe at your school.’ And I was pretty proud of that.”

Though Mikolaities projects a smaller task force presence in the months ahead, there’s work still to be done by Johnson, Lima, Webster and their comrades. The fight isn’t over yet. But meanwhile, the adjutant general has been amazed by their ability to adapt, react and overcome.

“When I look back and reflect on the year, my first thought is pure pride with being affiliated with the soldiers and airmen for what they’ve done,” Mikolaities said. “Everyone has had a positive demeanor and outlook in helping their state, and I think that speaks highly of the next greatest generation.”

## GUARDSMEN BACKFILL SHORTAGE AT STATE PRISON

*Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO*

A team of NH guardsmen activated for pandemic relief operations has become a fixture at the state prison in Concord.

The mission, which started in mid-December, stopgaps a critical shortage of corrections officers caused by COVID-19.

Twenty soldiers and airmen from the 237th Military Police Company and 157th Security Forces Squadron have been used for two, primary roles: perimeter security outside the prison and control room operations.

“So far, the mission has been going smoothly with no major issues,” said Capt. Patrick Randall, 237th MP commander. Prior to reporting for duty, the guardsmen received additional corrections-specific training through New Hampshire Police Standards and Training.

One of the team’s senior leaders is 1st Lt. James Lawrence of the 237th, who backfills openings on exterior patrol. He circles the grounds in a marked patrol car along stone walls, chain link fences and razor wire with his issued sidearm, baton and handcuffs.

“It can be very slow with moments of intensity,” Lawrence said. “If there’s a fight in the prison or somebody tries to commit suicide; if we find unauthorized vehicles pulling into the backside of prison grounds for some obscure reason. Who knows why they’re there or what they’re willing to do? You kind of have to be prepared.”

Other soldiers and airmen supervise residents, unlock doors remotely and manage electronic security cameras from within a secure enclosure. There is no physical contact with the residents.

“The [corrections] officers treat us well, and the inmates have been respectful to us for helping out,” said Airman 1st Class Nolan Guillemette of the 157th SFS.

Guillemette admitted he at first “dreaded” the assignment. Now he’s considering a future in corrections. “I am thoroughly enjoying it,” he said.

The mission extended through February.

“Active duty doesn’t get to do this,” Lawrence said. “They don’t get to support the community. This is my community.”

*1st Lt. James Lawrence, a military police officer with the 237th Military Police Company, NHARNG, poses with his issued corrections patrol car on the perimeter of the state prison Jan. 10 in Concord. Lawrence is one of 20 guardsmen who backfilled corrections officer shortages caused by COVID-19.*



## DOING THE RIGHT THING

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW Public Affairs

After a day of working ski patrol at McIntyre Ski Area in Manchester, Staff Sgt. Dante Davis merged onto the Everett Turnpike northbound. In an instant, an otherwise routine commute home on a Sunday afternoon in February called upon Davis's military training to prevent a tragic consequence.

Soon after entering the Interstate, Davis was abruptly cut off by a box truck.

"It didn't seem like much," recalled Davis, a team leader with the New Hampshire Army Guard's 237th Military Police Company. "I thought, 'Whoa, maybe he didn't see me.'"

But the truck's erratic operation continued.

"He was swerving aggressively left and right, almost like he was trying to run cars off the road," Davis said. "I initially thought this might be like a diabetic emergency, seizure, or stroke behind the wheel."

When the truck forced a Jeep off the road, Davis called 911. As he was giving the dispatcher a description of the vehicle, the

truck suddenly veered into a Hooksett rest area, crashing into a gas pump.

What Davis didn't know at the time was that the driver of the truck had fled the scene of an incident in Manchester after refusing to stop for police. An unmarked, Manchester police cruiser had been pursuing the suspect.

"It escalated so fast," said Davis, who had followed the pursuit into the rest area. "It went from the officer saying, 'Get out of the car,' to the guy trying to run away."

When the suspect began to fight with the officer, Davis exited his vehicle and ran to the officer's aid. Together, they subdued the man just as backup arrived.

For his actions that day, Davis was awarded the Army Achievement Medal. At an April 11 ceremony, Manchester Police

*Staff Sgt. Dante Davis, a team leader with the 237th Military Police Company, NHARNG, stands in formation after receiving a certificate of recognition during an April 11 ceremony at the Pembroke training complex.*



Chief Allen Aldenberg also presented Davis with a certificate of recognition on behalf of the Manchester Police Department.

“Sgt. Davis wasn’t armed so it’s just his two hands, his brain and his military experience,” Aldenberg said. “He put himself at risk. To do that speaks to him as a soldier and as a person. He was doing the right thing when no one was watching.”

Davis’s command agreed. It wasn’t out of character for a soldier with such a distinguished career, which includes a combat deployment to Afghanistan, they said.

“If it was going to be anyone in my platoon, who wasn’t a [civilian] police officer anyway, it would be Staff Sgt. Davis,” said 1st Lt. James Lawrence, Davis’s platoon leader in the 237th. “He makes me very proud to be in this company, and he does a great job passing that knowledge to other members.”

For his part, Davis said he was just happy to help.

“I’m appreciative,” Davis said. “That’s what it’s all about for me. I like people. I like serving people, and I just thank God for the opportunity to help somebody.”

**Staff Sgt. Dante Davis,**  
*a team leader with the 237th  
Military Police Company,  
NHARNG, receives a  
certificate of recognition  
during an April 11 ceremony  
at the Pembroke  
training complex.*



## TORCH PASSED

By By Senior Master Sgt. Timm Huffman, 157th ARW Public Affairs Superintendent



NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities passes the organizational flag to incoming commander of the NH Air National Guard, Brig. Gen. Jed French, at a change of command ceremony May 15 at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington. French assumed command from outgoing commander, Brig. Gen. Laurie Farris, who was then promoted to major general as assistant to the commander of Air Mobility Command at Scott Air Force Base, Ill. Looking on is State Command Chief Master Sgt. John Symington.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.



Newly promoted Maj. Gen. Laurie Farris' children, Drew and Taylor, pin stars to her uniform at a promotion ceremony held May 15 at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.

Command of the New Hampshire Air National Guard changed hands during a ceremony held beneath the wings of a KC-46A refueler at Pease Air National Guard Base on May 15.

In a symbol of the transfer, outgoing commander Brig. Gen. Laurie Farris passed the organizational guidon to incoming commander Brig. Gen. Jed French.

NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities presided over the ceremony. Also in attendance were friends, family, retired leaders of the NHNG, and members of the New Hampshire Air National Guard.

French, a traditional guardsman who is a district court judge in Maine, assumed command after serving as the NHANG chief of staff since 2018. He'll be responsible for overseeing 1,300 airmen, ensuring they are prepared for contingency and homeland defense operations for both federal and state missions.

French enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1983. He served as a cavalry scout for two years, patrolling the East German-West German border. After a break in service, he received a direct commission in the NHANG, serving in various roles and deploying multiple times. He was also the staff judge advocate for the 157th Air Refueling Wing from 2002-2012.

After receiving command, French delivered remarks, noting the dedication of the men and women of the NHANG, especially in overcoming the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, and committing himself to their success.

"I promise to do my best to support you every day I continue to serve," French said. He was especially impressed by the commitment of the hundreds of airmen who have been activated in support of the state's pandemic relief efforts.

Farris, who had served as NHANG commander since 2018, will now work as the Air National Guard assistant to the commander of Air Mobility Command, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois.

Atop the dais, Mikolaities highlighted her efforts supporting airmen during her tenure and the key role she played in the selection of the 157th ARW as the recipient of the Air Force's newest aerial refueler, the KC-46A Pegasus.

Following the change of command ceremony, and in advance of her transition to support AMC, Farris received a promotion to the rank of major general.

In a show of gratitude for her more than 25 years of service to Pease and the NHANG, Col. John Pogorek, commander of the 157th ARW, called the formation of airmen to attention and rendered a salute.

*Tech. Sgt. Kayla McWalter of the 157th Air Refueling Wing stands in formation during a change of command and promotion ceremony on May 15 at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington. Brig. Gen. French assumed command of the NHANG from outgoing commander, Brig. Gen. Laurie Farris. Farris was then promoted to major general and will serve as ANG assistant to the commander, Air Mobility Command, Scott Air Force Base, Ill.*

*Photo By Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*





*The 2021 New Hampshire National Guard Marathon Team poses for a team photo in Lincoln, Neb. on May 1. From left are Cpl. Kayla Denison of 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Brigade; 1st Lt. Carley Rotenberg of the 941st Military Police Battalion; 1st Sgt. Eddie Clements of 195th Regional Training Institute; Capt. Raymond Youngs of 941st Military Police Battalion; and Sgt. 1st Class Corey Caza of 1986th Contingency Contracting Team, 195th Regional Training Institute.*

*Courtesy photo by NENG Public Affairs.*

## FOR CARTER

**By Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO**

The 2021 New Hampshire National Guard Marathon Team trekked west to the Great Plains of Nebraska to race in the Lincoln Marathon on May 2.

Five NH soldiers ran time trials against guardsmen from 42 states and U.S. territories for a shot at making the All Guard team.

The competition forges strong bonds between athletes.

“While we do compete against each other, we’re also each other’s biggest supporters,” said 1st Sgt. Eddie Clements of the 195th Regional Training Institute.

Only the top 50 males and 20 females earn coveted All Guard status to race nationally at endorsed events.

Clements made the grade for the fourth straight year, the only Granite Stater who made the cut.

“I went out too hard,” Clements said. “I had a rough day, but I’m happy.”

Though a top squad spot is the ultimate prize, months of training reap other rewards.

“I compete for the National Guard marathon team because it’s a great way to maintain your fitness,” said Sgt. 1st Class Corey Caza of the 1986th Contingency Contracting Team, 195th Regional Training Institute. “It keeps you motivated.”

Caza said he battled severe cramps early in the contest despite drinking at every aid station and consuming about 10 energy gels. But he pushed through and finished strong.

New Hampshire was missing one of its top athletes this year. Spc. Carter Schade, a motor transport operator with the 941st Military Police Battalion, died unexpectedly Jan. 21. He was 20 years old. The team dedicated the race to Schade’s memory.

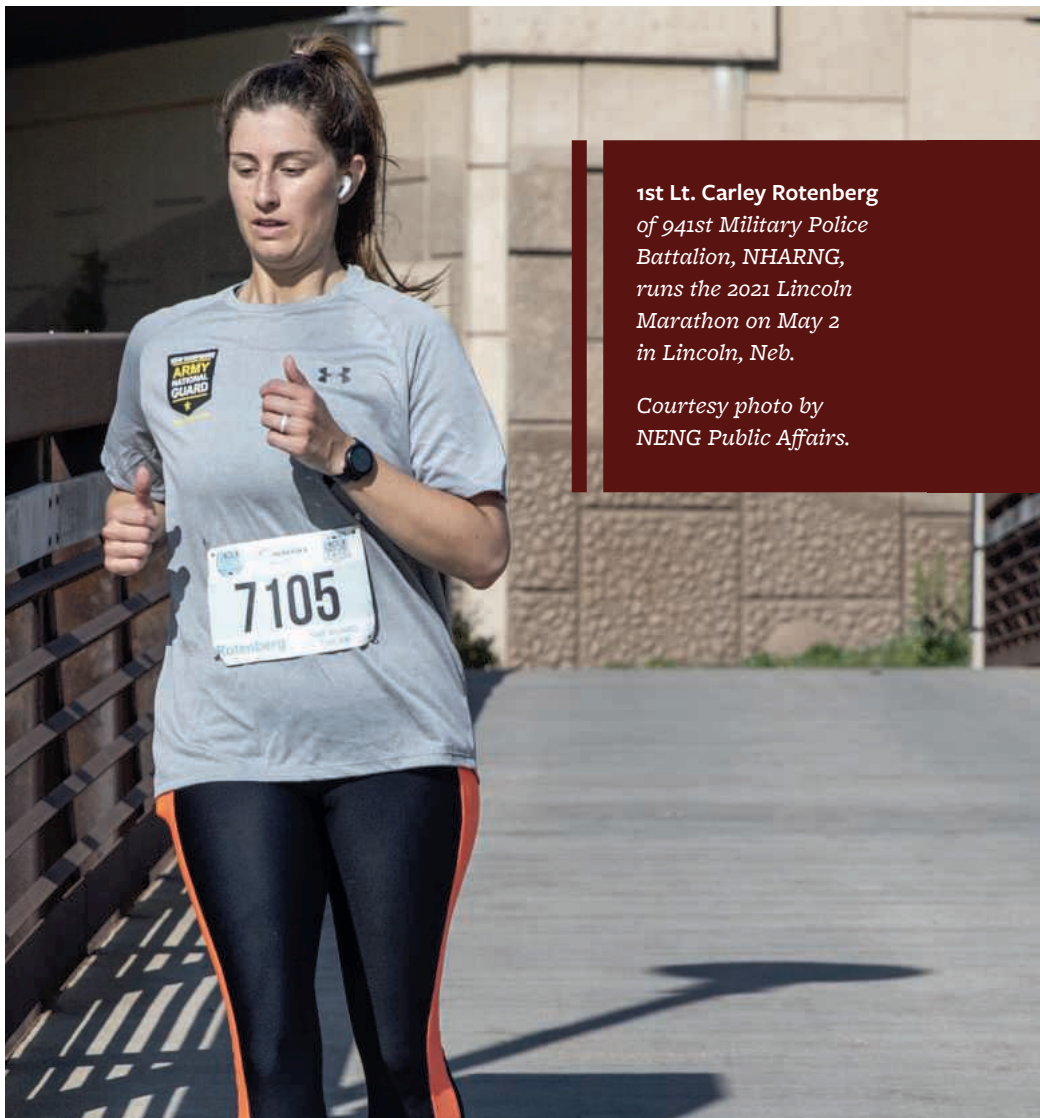
One by one, sun-beaten runners crossed the finish in summerlike heat.

“It was not easy out there today,” Clements said as he fought back tears and pointed skyward. “I had to ask Carter to help me. It was a tough day.”

After collecting his medal, Capt. Raymond Youngs of the 941st Military Police Battalion recalled his personal 26.2-mile crucible.

“I slowly started feeling the wheels come off at 22,” recalled Youngs as he gasped. “Then it was survival mode. Finish for Schade.”

They all finished for Schade. Clements at 3:01:24, Caza at 3:53:17 and Youngs at 4:03:54; Cpl. Kayla Denison of 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Brigade and 1st Lt. Carley Rotenberg of the 941st Military Police Battalion crossed at 4:48:02 and 5:37:21, respectively.



**1st Lt. Carley Rotenberg** of 941st Military Police Battalion, NHARNG, runs the 2021 Lincoln Marathon on May 2 in Lincoln, Neb.

Courtesy photo by NENG Public Affairs.



**Sgt. 1st Class Corey Caza** of 1986th Contingency Contracting Team, 195th Regional Training Institute, NHARNG, poses at University of Nebraska’s Ed Weir Stadium following his May 2 Lincoln Marathon finish in Lincoln, Neb.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.



### BLACK LIGHT

Airman 1st Class Matthew Black of the 157th Security Forces Squadron, NHANG, stands watch at a power plant on Jan. 21 in Washington, D.C. About 50 NH guardsmen were mobilized to the National Capital Region to provide security for the presidential inauguration.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.

### CHIN UP

Staff Sgt. Danica Whorton gives Duke a scratch on the chin while his owner receives a COVID-19 shot at the Hooksett vaccination site Feb. 25.

Photo by Pfc. Devin Bard, 114th PAD.



NEW HAMPSHIRE GUARD  
SNAPSHOTS



**RIGHT TO THE HEART**

*Capt. Alexa Hayes of the 157th Medical Group, NHANG, administers Moderna vaccine Feb. 11 in Concord. Guardsmen administered hundreds of tests and vaccinations each day at the former Sears Auto Center at Steeplegate Mall.*

*Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*

**SERIOUS RUNNER**

*Staff Sgt. David Musso, Headquarters and Service Company, 3643d Brigade Support Battalion, NHARNG, crosses the finish line at the Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (SAAPM) 5K road race April 11 at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington. About 80 people participated in the event, held annually to promote awareness and support survivors of sexual assault. Race coordinators were happy to host the in-person event after conducting it virtually last year due to the pandemic. "This year is better because obviously an event in person is a lot more personable," said Michelle Warren, the state sexual assault response coordinator. "It really shows support. You can see it and everyone comes together; that energy is amazing."*

*Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*



NEW HAMPSHIRE GUARD SNAPSHOTS

**WINTER TRACTION**

*Snowshoe-clad recruits conduct a patrol during February drill at the New Hampshire National Guard Training Site in Center Strafford.*

*Photo by Sgt. Brianna Passi, NHARNG Recruiting.*



**BUH-BYE ABU**

*From left, Senior Airman Christopher Parent, Staff Sgt. Dexter Stone and Senior Airman Christopher Albertelli of Task Force Distro sport their Airman Battle Uniforms (ABU) at a PPE warehouse March 31 in Concord. They wore the ABU a final time before the Operational Camouflage Pattern (OCP) uniform permanently replaced the digital tiger stripes April 1.*

*Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*



**ONE LAST TOAST**

*NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities presents Brig. Gen. William Conway with the Legion of Merit at his retirement ceremony held at Joint Force Headquarters in Concord on April 10. Conway, outgoing director of the joint staff for the NHNG, was honored for an Army career that spanned 35 years in the Special Forces, Reserve and National Guard. He joined the NHARNG in 2015 serving as chief of staff before taking over the joint helm. He was joined by family, co-workers, and friends.*

*Photo by Staff Sgt. Rick Frost, 603rd PAD NCOIC.*



**GUARDSMEN STAGE IN NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION**

*New Hampshire guardsmen slumber in a parking garage Jan. 19 in Washington, D.C. They staged there overnight to respond to the Capitol area, if necessary.*

*Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*

NEW HAMPSHIRE GUARD SNAPSHOTS



**RUCK STARS**

*About 100 New Hampshire National Guardsmen take off at the start of the Norwegian Foot March on May 29 from the Army Aviation Support Facility Concord. Soldiers and airmen rucked 18.6 miles, wearing packs weighing at least 25 pounds. The Norwegian Foot March, or Marsjmerket, dates back to 1915 as a test of marching endurance for soldiers of the Norwegian military. A strategic goal was to be able to move larger units of troops over a great distance swiftly and in a manner that enabled them to efficiently be combat ready after the march. Competitors who finished within times set by age and gender earned a foreign service badge.*

*Photo by Cpl. Mark Hayward, 114th PAD.*

## NEW HAMPSHIRE GUARD *SNAPSHOTS*

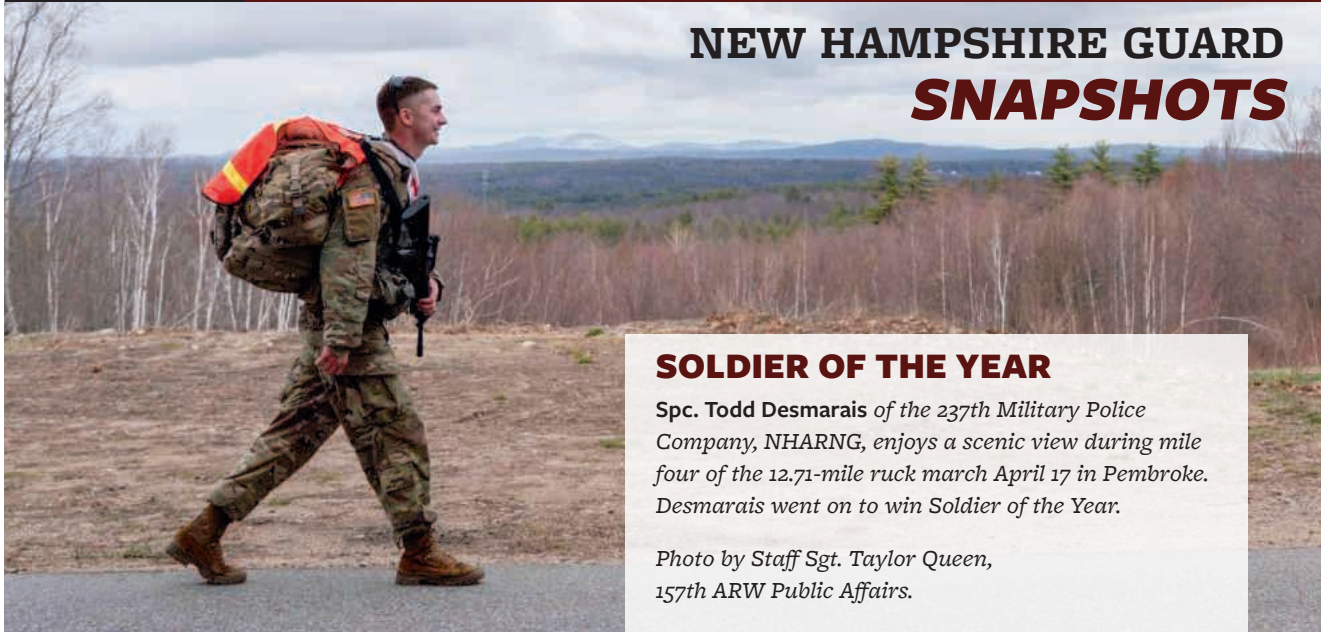
### GOOD RANGE

*Staff Sgt. Martina Ramsey of the 157th Security Forces Squadron fires a M203 grenade launcher April 8 at Camp Ethan Allen Training Site in Jericho, Vt. About 20 airmen from the 157th conducted weapons qualification in preparation for a six-month deployment to the Middle East this summer.*

*Courtesy photo by Tech Sgt. Joseph Melanson, 157th SFS.*



# NEW HAMPSHIRE GUARD SNAPSHOTS



## SOLDIER OF THE YEAR

Spc. Todd Desmarais of the 237th Military Police Company, NHARNG, enjoys a scenic view during mile four of the 12.71-mile ruck march April 17 in Pembroke. Desmarais went on to win Soldier of the Year.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Taylor Queen, 157th ARW Public Affairs.

## NCO OF THE YEAR

Sgt. Brianna Passi of Recruiting and Retention Battalion, NHARNG, smiles after placing first in the 12.71-mile ruck march event of the NHNG 2021 BWC on April 17 in Pembroke. Passi went on to win NCO of the Year.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Taylor Queen, 157th ARW Public Affairs.



## PROLIFIC DISPLAY

Col. Andrew Anderson of Nottingham receives a shadow box from State Command Sgt. Maj. William Ferland during his retirement ceremony March 25 in Concord. The outgoing chief of staff of the NHARNG was honored for 27 years of Army service, which included four years of active duty and multiple command and staff assignments in the NHARNG.

Photo by Tech Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.



## TASK FORCE VACCINATION

Senior Airman Erin Linhares, an aerospace medic with the 157th Medical Group, draws a dose of COVID-19 vaccine March 12 at the Exeter vaccination site. The task force has administered hundreds of thousands of COVID-19 vaccines.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW Public Affairs.



### COVERING OUR FLANK

*Alpha Company, 1/169th Aviation Regiment stands at attention during a deployment ceremony April 17 at the NHNG Army Aviation Support Facility in Concord. Led by Capt. Ian Hanson and 1st Sgt. Craig Courser, the 24 soldiers are joining Army Guard rotary wing units from Puerto Rico, Maryland and Connecticut for an 11-month deployment to Kosovo in support of Operation Joint Guardian.*

*Courtesy photo by Thomas Roy, NH Union Leader photographer.*



## NEW HAMPSHIRE GUARD SNAPSHOTS

## KIT CATS

*Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW PA*

At the height of the pandemic in January, the NHNG team assigned to the state public health lab in Concord was responsible for sending out nearly 3,000 COVID-19 test kits a day.

The work made it possible for 220,000 New Hampshire residents to be tested.

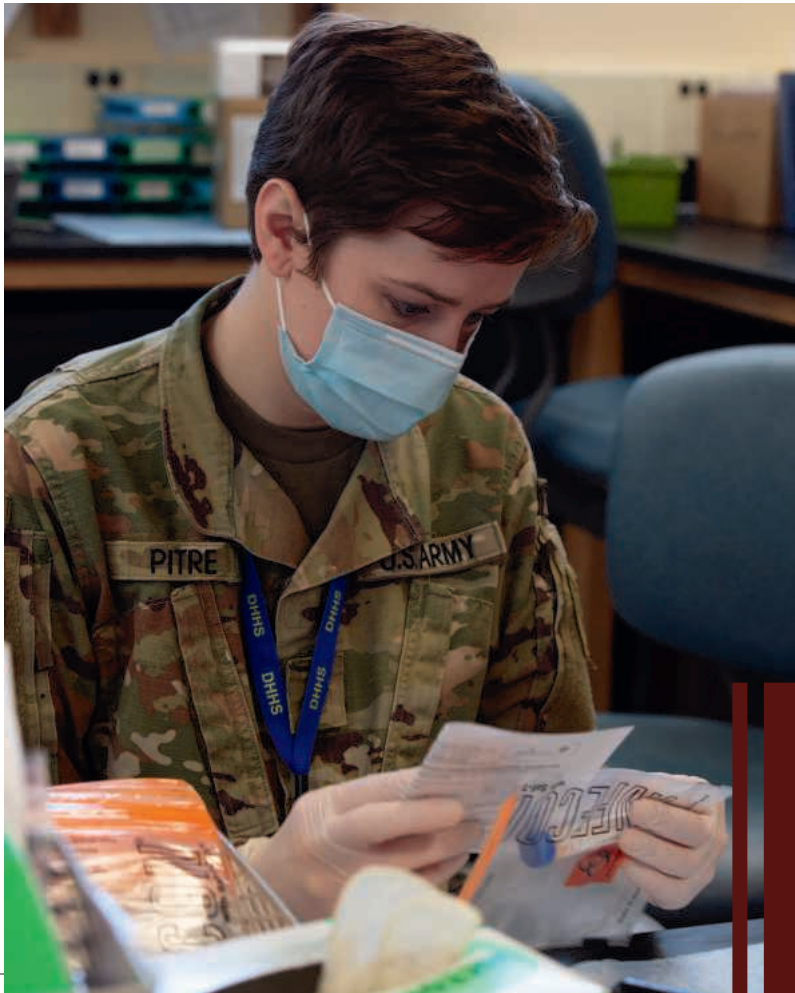
“The guardsmen have been willing to help in every capacity,” said Stephanie Locke, a Department of Health and Human Services employee and administrator with the COVID-19 Coordinating Office. “They have been instrumental getting us to where we are now.”

The soldiers and airmen have assisted the lab with each phase of a COVID-19 test kit, including the assembling and mailing. Once a test has been shipped back to the lab, they verify the specimen and patient information.

They’ve also drafted standard operating procedures so the lab will be prepared if there are future outbreaks.



*The NHNG team assigned to the state public health lab in Concord gather for a photo in the inventory room of the Department of Health and Human Services building Feb. 23. The guardsmen assist DHHS employees with COVID-19 test kit preparation, inventory, receiving and cataloging patient information.*



“The past few months (DHHS employees) have been able to focus on getting results out and to the public,” said Staff Sgt. Kelly James, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the team. “That’s something far more pertinent than building the kits or worrying about incoming supplies.”

The long and sometimes chaotic days have paid off.

“I never realized just how much DHHS does,” James said. “I guess I just took it for granted. But having an efficient and caring team, who have initiative to go and do what is needed to help the employees here has been so rewarding. It’s become a really great partnership and friendship.”

Now that demand for test kits is slowing, James added that her team has been able to catch up and prepare for future tasks. That included organizing the basement stock room complete with a barcode system.

*Spc. Emily Pitre, a carpentry and masonry specialist with the 160th Engineer Company, NHARNG, verifies information on a COVID-19 test kit Feb. 23 at Department of Health and Human Services in Concord.*

## HE JOINED FOR THE BENEFITS, NOW HE'S AN OLYMPIC HOPEFUL

By Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO

A blistering heat wave rolled through in early June, gripping the region with 90-degree heat and humidity. So what better time to prepare for the upcoming ski season. Well, at least for one NH Army National Guardsman.

Spc. Thomas Echelberger of the 195th Regional Training Institute is a biathlete for the NHNG and Olympic hopeful. He trained in Jericho, Vermont, June 7-17 at an invitation-only biathlon training course. The program trains top Nordic athletes for a chance to represent the United States in the Olympics and other international competitions. His All-Guard training commitment is scheduled for two weeks a month until biathlon season starts in the fall.

“What’s so impressive is the fact he was selected for the All-Guard Development Team after only one season competing in the sport of biathlon,” said Maj. Robert Burnham, officer in charge of the NHNG team. “This is an incredible opportunity for Tom and the NH National Guard.”

The biathlon is a sport that combines cross-country skiing and rifle marksmanship. Athletes race 10-20 kilometers through a series of trails and target ranges, ever mindful of breathing and heart rate for more steadied and accurate shooting. While still somewhat obscure here in the U.S., the sport is wildly popular in Europe.

Though a biathlon newbie, the 26-year-old Echelberger has been an avid skier since he was a kid. He once held a top-10 NH rating on Hopkinton High School’s cross-country squad and competed on University of Vermont’s club team.

Echelberger’s former high school coach, Rob Nadeau, credits his success to a disciplined mental approach.

“Nordic skiing is something that you have to be able to do the basic things really well over and over again,” Nadeau said. “Tommy fundamentally understands that the sport itself comes down to being able to perfect certain things and being able to focus on that.”

The slender soldier is still learning the basics, like skiing with a long gun slung across his back. But his basic military proficiency with an M4 carbine carries over nicely to the sport’s .22 rifle and shooting silver dollar-sized targets, 50 meters away.

“I think the coolest thing about biathlon is that it’s a competitive endurance sport,” Echelberger said. “But you have to maintain your heart rate and shift your focus completely from moving yourself forward to getting rounds downrange accurately.”

He enlisted in the guard a year and a half ago to help with student loans, for the health care benefits and to achieve a greater sense of purpose through service. Biathlon is just a bonus.

“I didn’t join the Guard to be a skier,” said Echelberger, who plans to attend Army artillery fire control training. “But it’s just the coolest opportunity I could have ever envisioned.”



**Spc. Thomas Echelberger**  
of the 195th Regional  
Training Institute,  
NHARNG, shoots at  
the Biathlon Spring  
Fling on March 3 at  
Fort Kent, Maine.  
Echelberger placed  
sixth out of 35  
competitors.

*Courtesy photo.*

## TAKING IT ALL IN STRIDE

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO

New Hampshire guardsmen mobilized to Washington, D.C. for a week last January to provide security for the presidential inauguration.

They arrived in the National Capital Region on Jan. 16 and secured lodging at a local hotel before several days of rehearsals and mission planning. Spirits remained high despite 36-hour shifts, sleeping in parking garages, and changing missions.

After guarding an office building and then staging at the Department of Agriculture through the inauguration, the team of 50 New Hampshire citizen soldiers and airmen continued its security mission at a power plant until Gov. Chris Sununu ordered their immediate return.

The mobilization integrated soldiers and airmen from various NH Guard units, which hasn't always been commonplace.

"Pre 2020, we often worked within our silos," said Maj. Brooks Hayward of the 941st Military Police Battalion, the contingent's officer in charge. "The Air did their thing while the Army did its own. But especially with the COVID response and then some civil unrest events taking place over the summer, we've worked

pretty closely together."

The historical significance of the inauguration mission was not lost on the guardsmen.

"I don't know the next time I'll be in D.C. in this particular role," said Maj. Sherri Pierce, commander of the 157th Security Forces Squadron. "I think the airmen and the soldiers really enjoyed being here. It's a once in a lifetime kind of event."

Pierce's sentiments were echoed by even her most junior airmen.

"I never would have expected to be here down in D.C. during an inauguration, but I'm glad I got to do it," said Airman 1st Class Matthew Black. "It's a good experience."

Evan after mobilization extended past Inauguration Day, there was no shortage of positive energy and teamwork.

"The soldiers and airmen who went on this mission have been absolutely outstanding," Hayward said. "They have taken it all in stride."



*Spc. Joseph Lirette of the 160th Engineer Company, NHARNG, and fellow guardsmen march through the streets of Washington, D.C., on Jan. 20. A team of about 50 NH guardsmen stood watch into the early morning hours at a security post near the Capitol, then staged nearby on alert status for the inauguration.*



*Airmen of the 157th Security Forces Squadron, NHANG, stage in the streets of the National Capital Region Jan. 20.*

*New Hampshire Guardsmen pose at the Capitol Jan. 19 in Washington, D.C.*



## CAUSING A ROW

*Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO*

About 54 NH guardsmen competed in a 26.2-mile row-a-thon on the drill hall floor at Joint Force Headquarters on March 24, the brunt of competitors from various missions assigned to the state's COVID-19 task force.

Soldiers and airmen on nine teams took turns rowing on electronic, stationary exercise machines during the grueling 2.5-hour event.

Why?

“Because we can,” joked Sgt. Steven Prewitt of the 237th Military Police Company and Team 3 member.

Though originally planned as a small, atypical fitness event, teams filled and grew in number quickly as interest spread across the task force.

“It builds morale and esprit de corps,” said event organizer Command Sgt. Maj. Rachael Fleharty-Strevig. “People get to meet people from across the organization.”

Despite only bragging rights at stake, fierce intensity and gamesmanship were on full display.

Strategies varied, but most teams swapped out athletes after just a minute or two of fervent rowing to optimize endurance and time. Some squads rotated through with the precision of a NASCAR pit crew, helping each other get in and out of Velcro foot fasteners.

“There really is no point to it,” said Senior Airman Christopher Albertelli of the 157th Maintenance Squadron. “Just doing it for the fun of it, trying to push ourselves to the limit and give it all we can as a whole task force.”

Between relays, competitors cheered each other on, gasped for air, dripped sweat, and guzzled sports drinks. They also kept a watchful eye on a computer-projected wall display, which tracked each team's position.

“We're catching up to the teams in front of us,” said Sgt. Terron Thomas of the 3643d Brigade Support Battalion and Team 8 member. “We're going to win!”

Thomas's group finished last, despite the enthusiastic prediction.

The “Abercrombie Row Team” of five airmen and one soldier won with a time of 2:30:29.

The team included Tech Sgt. Alan Bauman, Tech Sgt. Elijah Davies, and Staff Sgt. Dexter Stone of the 157th Civil Engineer Squadron; Senior Airman Ryan Gordon of the 157th Logistical Readiness Squadron, Senior Airman Christopher Albertelli of the 157th Maintenance Squadron (pictured), and Staff Sgt. David Selmer of the 39th Army Band.



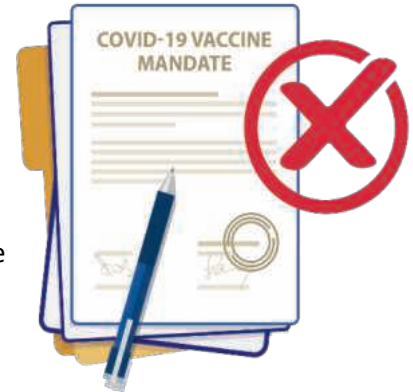
**Senior Airman Christopher Albertelli** of the 157th Maintenance Squadron, NHANG, helps power his “Abercrombie Row Team” to victory during a Task Force Granite row-a-thon March 24 in Concord.

## Myths, Facts About COVID-19 Vaccines

#GUARDFACTS

### Can CDC mandate I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

**No.** The federal government does not mandate (require) vaccination for people. Additionally, CDC does not maintain or monitor a person's vaccination records. Whether a state or local government or employer, for example, can require or mandate COVID-19 vaccination is a matter of state or other applicable law. Please contact your state government or employer if you have other questions about COVID-19 vaccination mandates.



### Will a COVID-19 vaccine give me COVID-19?

**No.** None of the vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that the vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. Sometimes this process can cause symptoms, such as fever. These symptoms are normal and are signs that the body is building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19.

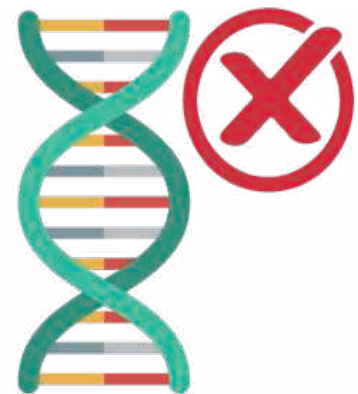


It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity (protection against the virus that causes COVID-19) after vaccination. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and still get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.

### Will a COVID-19 vaccine alter my DNA?

**No.** COVID-19 vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way.

There are currently two types of COVID-19 vaccines that have been authorized and recommended for use in the United States: messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines and a viral vector vaccine. Both mRNA and viral vector COVID-19 vaccines deliver instructions (genetic material) to our cells to start building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. However, the material never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept. This means the genetic material in the vaccines cannot affect or interact with our DNA in any way. All COVID-19 vaccines work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop immunity to disease.



*For more information, visit: [ngpa.us/VaccineMyths](https://ngpa.us/VaccineMyths)*

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