

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Fall 2022

GUARDSMAN

MAGAZINE



CASH REFERRAL PROGRAM



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

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COVER PHOTO: Pfc. Bailey Vachon, fire control specialist with the 197th Field Artillery Brigade, eyes a target during Eager Lion on Sept. 5 in Jordan. The brigade is deployed to the Middle East, serving as field artillery headquarters for U.S. Army Central Command.

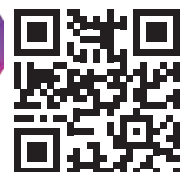
Photo by Sgt. Mark Hayward, 197th FAB PA NCOIC.



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MESSAGE TO THE FORCE

The New Hampshire National Guard was recognized as one of the best “companies” in the state to work for in 2022 after placing 8th in NH Business Magazine’s annual contest.

What a fitting way to end the training year.

It’s the second time in as many tries our organization has achieved the distinction, a direct reflection of the culture we have fostered through hard work, accountability and respect for one another. Each of you deserve credit for this outstanding achievement.

As we grapple with an onerous recruiting market, it’s more important than ever that we maintain the high standards of readiness we have set for ourselves, and what the citizens of this great state have come to expect and appreciate.

After two years of pandemic-driven operations, our performance in FY22 has been anything but a reset under the Mission Triad of fighting and winning our nation’s wars, securing the homeland and building enduring partnerships. Especially, the last quarter.

Fighting and Winning Our Nation’s Wars

The headquarters battery of the 197th Field Artillery Brigade is on the home stretch of its deployment as the field artillery headquarters for U.S. Army Central Command, which includes Jordan, Syria, Qatar and Kuwait.

The 197th FAB has become the standard bearer for field artillery superiority in the Middle East since its first deployment during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004. Then, the brigade was conducting security operations in an area of responsibility about the size of a county or two in New Hampshire. Three deployments later, HHB is performing its core mission, coordinating fires across multiple countries. Instead of dealing with local tribal leaders, the brigade’s mid to senior leadership is engaging with senior military leaders up to the national level.

Within the same AOR, a three-man crew from the 1986th Contingency Contracting Team has been supporting contracting activities for CENTCOM in Kuwait.

We also have an officer stationed in Germany for a two-year tour with U.S. Army Europe.

In the coming months, another 460 NHARNG soldiers are preparing for deployments in support of the Southwest Border Mission and Operations Inherent Resolve and Spartan Shield. One of our medical officers is scheduled for a rotation in support of the ongoing U.S. mission at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The NHANG has one airman stationed in Kuwait with another seven preparing to deploy later this year. At Pease, we welcomed back the active associate wing after a three-year deactivation. The return of the 64th Air Refueling Squadron this summer coincides with the full complement of KC-46A aircraft coming online. The 64th is expected to grow to 160 airmen by December 2023.

Securing The Homeland

During the summer, we completed two innovative readiness training exercise or IRTs, an ingenious program that leverages annual training requirements with tangible benefits to local communities. Soldiers from Detachment 1, 185th Engineer Support Company constructed a much-needed dishwashing station at Greenfield State Park, and a joint NH Army and Air Guard medical team provided Cherokee Nation, Oklahoma with more than a quarter of million dollars’ worth of health care during a two-week medical readiness mission.

Since April, NHARNG medevac crews have supported 10 search and rescue missions with Fish and Game.

Additionally, we fielded a volunteer search and rescue team. More than 40 soldiers and airmen have signed on to help our state partners fill a gap in coverage of the state’s southern tier. Last month, the NHNG VSAR joined teams from across the state for a day of familiarization and training led by Fish and Game, State Police, and our NHARNG aviators.

In July, Senior Airman Amy Granfield, a public health technician with the 157th Medical Group, reminded us of what it truly means to serve when she saved the life of a severely injured jet skier on Long Pond in Pelham. To control profuse bleeding, Granfield applied a tourniquet she fashioned from her water ski line. She credited her quick thinking to a combination of military training and clinic site work.

Enduring Partnerships

After a bit of a COVID hiatus, our state partnership program has returned to prominence with a renewed focus on our long-standing alliance with El Salvador and a promising start to our new relationship with Cabo Verde. Under the steady hand of SPP coordinator Capt. Mario Rey, we completed a string of successful key leader engagements with both countries. We also conducted inaugural exchanges with the Salvadoran military’s cyber security division and officer academy.

In August, Gov. Sununu signed Senate Bill 360, which makes Guard spouses eligible for tuition waivers at any state community college. This is the first of what we hope will be many advantages we can pass on to our spouses and families to help bolster reenlistments as well as recruitments.

The NHNG was also one of six states recently chosen for a pilot program that will provide free day-care during drill weekends. Additionally, we are planning to unveil a wellness program that will provide a stipend for a gym membership or exercise equipment for eligible guardsmen and women.

Last week, the state veterans cemetery celebrated its 25th anniversary, a momentous occasion that followed the passing the Burial Equity for the Guards and Reserves Act. The new law, passed in June, allows those who served in the Guard and Reserves to be buried in state veterans cemeteries alongside their brothers and sisters in arms.

As we begin a new training year, I am confident we are well positioned for whatever might arise or we are called upon to do. There is no doubt that recruiting remains our biggest concern. Our common denominator is selfless service. It’s what inspires us to keep wearing the uniform. Indeed, it’s our greatest passion and biggest draw. All of us must make a concerted effort through our words and actions to appeal to next generation of citizen soldiers and airmen. The future Amy Granfields are out there, ready to do their part.

Thank you for answering the call and for making the NHNG one of the most revered organizations in the state. It continues to be my honor and fortune to serve alongside you.

Sincerely,

Major General David Mikolaities

Adjutant General
New Hampshire National Guard

FOR THE LOVE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Courtney Rorick, 114th PAD NCOIC

More than 150 volunteers from search and rescue teams across the state, including eight from the New Hampshire National Guard, gathered at Cannon Mountain on Sept. 10 for an annual familiarization day hosted by Fish and Game, State Police and NHARNG aviation.

The goal of the training is to build team networking while exposing participants to various aspects of rescue operations such as land navigation, GPS usage, litter carries, and hoist and aircraft safety.

Two years in the making, the Guard's volunteer search and rescue team or NHNG VSAR is the newest in the Granite State and on the Volunteer Council for New Hampshire.

"This is the first time we've trained with the New Hampshire National Guard search and rescue team," said Lt. James Kneeland, search and rescue coordinator for Fish and Game. "Their background will be an asset when it comes to training moving forward."

While there is a long-standing relationship between Fish and Game and the aerial MEDEVAC units of the NHARNG, the VSAR is only now coming to fruition.

For pilots like Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Wareing of the 238th Aviation Regiment (MEDEVAC), knowing fellow guardsmen are on the ground as volunteers provides a level of comfort to him and his team.

"It was really exciting to land today and see soldiers and airmen out here learning how to conduct these searches," said Wareing,

who has conducted countless rescue missions as a prior medic and crew chief. "These service members are going to help us to do our part of the mission better."

The NHNG team is starting with a higher experience and knowledge base than the average volunteer might, said Kneeland, who worked with NHARNG State Command Sgt. Maj. William Ferland to field the group this year.

"Without the volunteers, we can't make our mission," Kneeland said. "Search and rescue is not nearly as successful without them."

Two of the volunteers participating were Pfc. Jordan Graham and James Small.

"I saw this as an opportunity to do more for individuals on a closer level," said Small, a mechanic with the 3643rd Brigade Support Battalion.

Graham, a firefighter in his civilian career and a fire control specialist with Charlie Battery, 1st of the 103rd Field Artillery Regiment, agreed.

"I've learned so much from those within my community," Graham said. "Being able to be there for them in their time of need and knowing I can help them puts a smile on my face."

Last year, 4,816 volunteer hours were spent on search and rescue missions in the state.

"I love New Hampshire and I love the people here," Small said. "It's part of my responsibility to give back to them because they've given me such a beautiful place to live."



Nikki Gamman and K-9 **Gunner** of New England K-9 Search and Rescue conduct noise acclimation with a NHARNG aviation crew during annual search and rescue training held by N.H. Fish and Game at Cannon Mountain in Franconia on Sept. 10.

HOLY HUDAK

In what may be the greatest individual performance in a state TAG match, 1st Lt. Andrew Hudak of the 237th Military Police Company collected 14 first-place and five second-place awards in this year's shoot.

Hudak took first or second in 19 of 26 individually scored categories during the NHNG Combat Marksmanship Match held July 27 to 30 at Fort Devens, Mass.

It was Hudak's first time competing. The newcomer won both the

individual overall and novice individual crowns while earning the Governor's Twenty tab.

"I always wanted to shoot in the TAG match, and I happened to have a few days off of work," he said.

In the team competition, Hudak's squad "Wasted Potential" bested a field of 18, finishing with top honors in the grand aggregate championship. They earned five first-place awards, three second-places and a third place.



1st. Lt. Andrew Hudak of the 237th Military Police Company displays the 19 individual awards he earned at the NHNG Combat Marksmanship Match on July 30 at Fort Devens, Mass. *Photo by Spc. Kelly Boyer, 603rd Public Affairs Detachment.*

“We all had a great time, and the best part of the weekend was the training value and the camaraderie with everyone,” Hudak said. “It’s important for us to have this kind of cohesion and time spent working together.”

A total of 72 competitors including NHNG soldiers, airmen and four marksmen from the Cabo Verdean special forces vied for individual and team honors.

NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities complimented match organizers, led by Capt. Patrick Randall, Staff Sgt. Joseph Wyner and a small support staff. The live fire was held on six different ranges.

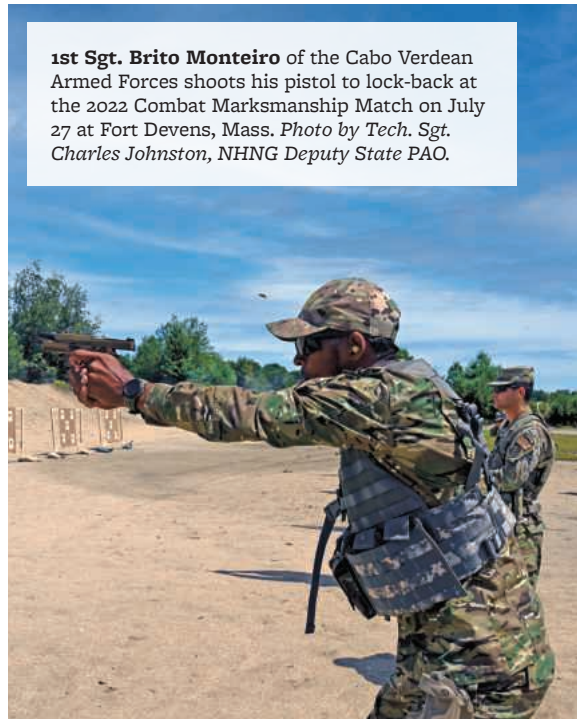
“I’ve been doing this a long time,” Mikolaities said. “This was by far the best one I’ve ever shot.”

NHARNG State Command Sgt. Maj. William Ferland pointed out the 40-hour competition, which comprised 16 individual and team matches and 600 rounds of ammunition per shooter, was the equivalent of about 12 years of shooting the minimum annual qualification rifle course.

“If you want to shoot and train, come to a TAG Match,” Ferland said.

- Compiled by Spc. Kelly Boyer and Sgt. 1st Class Rick Frost of the 603rd PAD, and NHNG Public Affairs.

1st Sgt. Brito Monteiro of the Cabo Verdean Armed Forces shoots his pistol to lock-back at the 2022 Combat Marksmanship Match on July 27 at Fort Devens, Mass. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.



Cabo Verde's "Team Delta" engages targets in the "Know Your Limits Barricade" team event during the NHNG Combat Marksmanship Match on July 30 at Fort Devens, Mass. Photo by Sgt. Nulise Francois, 603rd Public Affairs Detachment.

A PALPABLE, HIGH-SPEED CONNECTION

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

Inside the Salvadoran military's tactical training center, known as Centro de Entrenamiento Tactico, a cyber team from the New Hampshire Air National Guard shared new ideas with the country's growing cyber security unit.

The exchange, held in San Salvador, El Salvador from Aug. 22 to 26 under the New Hampshire National Guard-El Salvador State Partnership Program, focused on digital agendas, policies and tools to protect infrastructure and prevent vulnerabilities.

"This is what the state partnership program was built to do," said Chief Master Sgt. Frederick Balas, chief enlisted manager of the 157th Communications Flight. "Sharing ideas to help them grow, learning about the ways we can support their needs, and answering questions that ultimately strengthen their systems and their security procedures."

Salvadoran forces are working to form an official cyber security unit by 2024 with eight full-time members, according to 1st Lt. Marvin Giron, executive officer for the Salvadoran cyber security

unit. It's a top priority for Salvadoran Defense Minister René Merino.

Briefings from the 157th CF team explored powerful tools to help the Salvadorans achieve that goal within their capabilities and budget.

"We may not have the exact same resources, but the group explained accessible programs that scan for vulnerabilities, how they work and how to manage them," said Ingrid Estrada, a software engineer assigned to the Salvadoran unit.

"There is a lot of pressure on our team to develop, support and guide the country in the direction we are trying to achieve," she continued. "Cyber is everywhere and it touches everyone. It's a huge project for a small group, but this training demonstrated it is possible and it gave us resources to get there."

Between them, the NH airmen and Salvadorans represented a range of technical experience and rank. For some, this was their



Staff Sgt. Nathan Proulx, Tech. Sgt. Alan Dwyer (left), and Master Sgt. Robert Bell of the 157th Communications Flight, prepare to brief the Salvadoran military's cyber security team during a four-day, cyber exchange under the NHNG-El Salvador State Partnership Program at the Centro de Entrenamiento Tactico in San Salvador, El Salvador on Aug. 24. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW PA.*



Airmen, soldiers and civilians from El Salvador and the New Hampshire National Guard participated in a joint cyber exchange in the Centro de Entrenamiento Tactico, El Salvador, on Aug. 24.

first experience with the state partnership, while others have been involved since the first cyber exchange in 2016.

“Their leadership configuration mirrors the organization structure we presented and discussed during the previous mission,” said Tech. Sgt. Alan Dwyer, a client systems operations technician with the 157th CF and a member of the first New Hampshire team to work with El Salvador through SPP. “It’s so cool to see what was just a few people managing cyber protection turn into the formation of a cyber unit.”

Dwyer and Staff Sgt. Nathan Proulx, a client systems operations technician with the 157th CF, demonstrated open-source scanning software, training plans and automated tools. The airmen showed how the programs allow members to practice commands in a text-based operating system and ultimately support a stronger infrastructure.

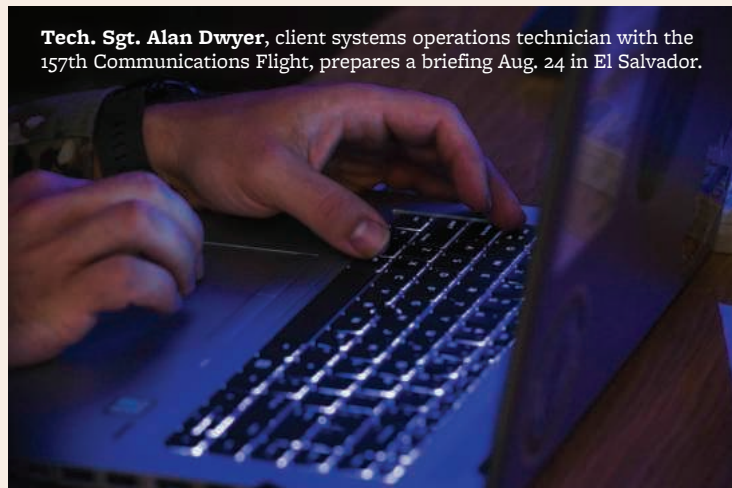
“In order to support a strong national cyber security network, all of our members need to be certified and trained,” Giron said. “We hope to supplement our digital agenda with these training plans and methods for sharing information.”

“It is something we will keep close to our hearts,” he added. “The mentality of collaborating as a unit will help us achieve our future goals.”

By the end of the week, there was a palpable, high-speed connection between the two groups. Although they spoke different languages linguistically, they laughed and learned from one another while sharing the importance of becoming stronger together.

“The cyber landscape is only getting more complicated and more hostile,” Dwyer said “We are stronger when we are willing to learn from one another.”

Tech. Sgt. Alan Dwyer, client systems operations technician with the 157th Communications Flight, prepares a briefing Aug. 24 in El Salvador.



LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

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

Berlin Regional Airport, a spartan airstrip nestled near the White Mountains, hosted an open house Sept. 16 for the New Hampshire Army National Guard and area residents.

North Country locals lined the runway to welcome a Black Hawk helicopter from Charlie Company, 238th Aviation (Medevac) as it touched down—an appearance requested by Marcel Leveille, the airport manager.

Local residents have expressed concerns about noise levels, if a proposed lease agreement between the NHARNG and the airport is consummated. The facility's location has been identified as ideal for aerial rescue operations, maintenance, and training in the area.

"I think they got to see the Black Hawk wasn't as noisy as they thought it would be," said Leveille, who made sure attendees were present to witness the landing. "They also got to meet with pilots, if they had concerns."

NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities and the flight crew mingled with attendees to answer questions about the aircraft and plans to build a new hangar there.

"We're trying to simulate a deployed environment through training and reps in the geography of the White Mountain National Forest," Mikolaities said. "This can also be an economic driver to help the airport and the town."

For two hours, people excitedly snapped selfies with soldiers and the helicopter. Attendees, including a group of K-6 students from nearby Milan Village School, were also treated to an in-close view of the cockpit and controls.

Berlin's mayor shared in the enthusiasm.

"The amount of fuel they're going to purchase from the airport authority will make this airport totally self-sufficient," Paul Grenier said.

Crowd support was overwhelmingly positive.

Kevin Masters, local resident and Air Force veteran, said the airport is currently underutilized and would benefit from an increased Guard presence.

"If it's going to be for mountain rescue, it's a lot closer to where they need it," Masters said.

Esther Gilbert of Berlin was optimistic about the potential financial benefits.

"We need something to help our economy," Gilbert said. "I think it's a nice idea."

At least one Milan homeowner was skeptical.

Bonnie Hamel called the open house a "dog and pony show," and said the proposal lacks an official noise study. She owns a horse property near the runway and explained the helicopters frighten them.

Although the airport is geographically in the town of Milan, it is owned by the neighboring city of Berlin. Hamel said the proposal's support stems mostly from those more insulated from noise, vibration, and usage frequency.

"I'm in support of our military, but I'm not sure what the benefit is yet," she said. "I've got somebody intruding on my peace and quiet on Earth."

Others scoffed at such concerns.

"The tractors make more noise than [guardsmen]," said Scott Briere, Milan firefighter and airport employee.

"It's better than the four-wheelers," commented Melvin French of Gorham, which drew laughter from attendees.

While Mayor Grenier supports the proposal, he said he takes the criticism seriously.

"I don't want to minimize the issues these people have, so we're going to work to make sure there aren't any," Grenier said. "The general and I are committed to addressing any residential concerns that may arise."

Mikolaities specified that future training and operations would always be conducted with a "fly neighborly" mindset. Pilots would fly runway approaches most considerate of nearby homes, for example.

"We want to be good community partners while affording guardsmen the opportunity to train up here," Mikolaities said.



New Hampshire Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities meets with town officials and residents alongside a NHARNG Black Hawk helicopter during a Berlin Regional Airport open house Sept. 16 in Milan.

SHE USED SKI ROPE FOR A TOURNIQUET

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

Senior Airman Amy Granfield rendered lifesaving first aid to a boating accident victim on Long Pond in Pelham, New Hampshire, on July 24.

Granfield, a public health technician with the 157th Medical Group, was later recognized by New Hampshire Marine Patrol for saving the woman's life.

"One of my goals this summer was to get up on the surfboard off the back of the boat," Granfield said. "My brother and I were wake surfing pretty much all morning with our friends Joe and Eric, and it was the first time I really got it."

"We had planned to go pick up Joe's daughter that morning," she explained. "Joe was surfing at the time, so we stopped the boat, he climbed back in and that's when everything happened."

A Jet Ski traveling at a high rate of speed crashed into the side of Granfield's boat, knocking Granfield, her brother, and Eric overboard.

"I didn't see them coming until they were about five feet away," she said. "My brother fortunately saw them from further away, but you know when you see someone flying on a jet ski you don't think they're going to hit you, you think they're going to turn."

"They just kept getting closer and closer and he started screaming 'Joe, move the boat, move the boat!'" she said. "My brother and Eric barely jumped off, I was flung off the back and Joe ducked into the front of the boat."

The female operator of the Jet Ski and her passenger ended up in the water severely injured. Granfield said all she remembers is a catastrophic crashing sound, then silence.

"It was as if there was no one on the lake, then as soon as I came up out of the water everyone was on the lake and coming towards us," she explained. "I heard Joe from the boat yell 'is anyone dead?' and that's when the panic set in."

Granfield swam to the boat to find her brother John, Eric and Joe, all alive with minor injuries. Then she saw the girls in the water. One was floating in and out of consciousness and the other had severe injuries on her leg causing major blood loss.

"I swam over as fast as I could to the girl with the injuries and Eric helped me get her onto the swim platform; her entire patella bone was exposed and she was losing so much blood," Granfield said. "That's when I yelled for a tourniquet, but nothing ever happens on the lake, so no one was carrying a tourniquet. I told Eric to get me the ski rope and we tied it as tight as we could."

The team of four restarted the boat and drove the Jet Ski operator and passenger to the closest beach, where a police officer was waiting. Granfield and the officer applied a tourniquet and transferred the patient to the paramedics.

"Granfield's quick thinking and courage helped save a life," said NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities. "It's these values and virtues under the uniform that matter and remind all of us what it truly means to serve."

Following the incident, Granfield said she would not have been able to do what she did without her training and the family and friends she had with her that day.

"The combination of both my military training and clinical site work was the reason I knew what to do," she said. "I didn't have to think because we do so many trainings, it was ingrained in me, but I really couldn't have done it without John, Eric and Joe."

"We train in the military as a team, and we learn that by doing things as a team everything is more efficient and more successful," she added. "That's exactly what happened on the boat. We were the perfect team."

Granfield plans to continue her nursing education and stay in orthopedic patient care. She said while still a bit shaken up from the accident, she also plans to get back up on the surfboard.

"Next year for sure," she said. "Right now, I work full time at an orthopedic center, working with bones and doctors, and this experience just reinforced how much it means to me. I love patient care; I love taking care of people."



Senior Airman Amy Granfield, a public health technician with the 157th Medical Group, poses on the flightline at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington, New Hampshire.

COMMUNITY CRAFTSMAN

Spc. Noah Smialek of Detachment 1, 185th Engineer Support Company, rips a deck board for a new dishwashing station June 23 at Greenfield State Park. The construction project was an Innovative Readiness Training initiative, a program that leverages military resources for various community improvements. Carpenters, electricians, and plumbers of the 185th were able to complete their annual training requirements while simultaneously upgrading park facilities. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*

NEW HAMPSHIRE GUARD SNAPSHOTS

1st Lt. Chris Lind of the 197th Field Artillery Brigade navigates an obstacle course during the annual Ranger assessment at Fort Devens, Mass. on Sept. 17. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Courtney Rorick, 114th PAD NCOIC.*

THE AIR UP THERE

Tech. Sgt. Connor Cunio of the 157th Air Refueling Wing navigates an obstacle course during the annual Ranger assessment at Fort Devens, Mass., on Sept. 17. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Courtney Rorick, 114th PAD NCOIC.*

NEW HAMPSHIRE GUARD **SNAPSHOTS**



UNRIVALED

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sukari Statton-Bill presents **Chief Warrant Officer 5 Tina Corliss** an engraved sword, a parting gift from fellow soldiers, during a retirement ceremony for Corliss on Oct. 6 at the state military reservation in Concord. Corliss retired after 35 years of service. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*

237TH MILITARY POLICE COMPANY MOBILIZES TO SOUTHERN BORDER

Soldiers of the 237th Military Police Company load duffle bags in the cargo hold of charter plane Oct. 26 at the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport. About 120 soldiers left for a year-long mobilization along the southern border in support of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.



AIR POWER

Tech. Sgt. John Radcliffe, a mechanic with the 157th Maintenance Group, hoists an auxiliary power unit into the KC-46A Pegasus on Sept. 28 at Pease ANG Base. Photo by Staff Sgt. Victoria Neslon, 157th ARW Public Affairs.



BEST IN STATE

New Hampshire National Guard soldiers and airman pose for a Business NH Magazine photo shoot Aug. 10 at Pease Air National Guard Base. The magazine rated the Guard a top-10 state employer. Back row: Sgt. 1st Class Jason Collins, Capt. Mario Rey, Staff Sgt. Dean Van Tassel, Senior Victoria Johnson, Capt. Jeremiah Neault; in front, Tech. Sgt. Natalie Belongie and Pack, the 157th Air Refueling Wing's official mascot. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.



NEW HAMPSHIRE GUARD **SNAPSHOTS**

NONSTOP

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Tim Hayden, 157th ARW Public Affairs

Airmen from the 157th Air Refueling Wing completed a 22-hour flight August 3 - 4, one of the longest ever for a KC-46A Pegasus refueler.

The mission, dubbed a super sortie, tested critical operating systems while executing heavy on-loads and off-loads of fuel with multiple aircraft types. It also demonstrated the ability to seamlessly interchange multiple flight crews over a long period of time.

During the mission, airmen conducted multiple aerial refueling and receiving operations over the east coast of the United States and Canada. The crew then flew to Alaska to participate in Exercise Red Flag, an aerial combat training hosted by the U.S. Air Force, before traveling across the Pacific Ocean to Saipan.

Crewing the mission were seven pilots, two boom operators, six maintainers, and a physician's assistant. Rather than adhering to a rigid hourly schedule, the pilots distributed the flying workload between themselves on an as-needed basis, guaranteeing that they all had adequate rest to complete the mission.

The flight length allowed the airmen to test the crew amenities on the plane fully. They prepared and consumed meals with the ability to heat and refrigerate food; they slept in bunks at regular intervals; maintained hygiene with running water and lavatory services; and regulated the temperature on board the airplane, assuring crew comfort throughout the entire flight.

"The knowledge gained throughout this sortie will help the KC-46 community grow its tactical footprint," said Maj. Chris Williams, a pilot with the 157th. "It was truly an honor to be a part of it."

The mission began with a refueling four F-15s from Barnes Air National Guard Base, Massachusetts, off the coast of New England, before receiving fuel from a KC-135 from Pittsburgh Air National Guard Base, Pennsylvania. It then rendezvoused with a KC-135 from the Maine Air National Guard, which refueled the jet as it turned northeast towards Bangor, Maine.

While flying over central and western Canada, the Pegasus received multiple on-loads of fuel from a companion Pease KC-46. This additional fuel gave the aircraft the surplus load it needed to continue to the Red Flag exercise in Alaska successfully and ultimately to its destination in Saipan.

"This mission was awesome for all of us who've been trying to figure out the ins and outs of this new airplane," said Capt. Josh Stewart, pilot with the 157th.

A Pennsylvania Air National Guard KC-135 Stratotanker flies ahead of a Pease KC-46A Pegasus off the coast of New England during an Aug. 3 Super Sortie endurance flight.

During the sortie, airmen also became the first KC-46 crew in history to stand up a mission planning center, or MPC, on board the airframe. Thanks to the diligent work and technical understanding of two of the crew members, the MPC provided access to real-time, mission-critical planning data in flight from anywhere in the world. The standup of the MPC marked a major tactical milestone that will be utilized in future missions.

"We were able to demonstrate one hundred percent mission system capability," said Maj. Bill Daley, pilot and chief mission planner.

The Pegasus is the Air Force's newest aerial refueling platform. It can hold up to 212,299 lbs. of fuel and can also be used for cargo lift and aeromedical evacuations. Pease Air National Guard Base is the first in the Air National Guard to fly the new jet and is home to 12 of the new planes.

"I'm incredibly proud of the 157th Air Refueling Wing," said Daley. "This was a complete team effort to make everything work."



Master Sgt. Mike Windy, boom operator with the 157th Air Refueling Wing, conducts an aerial fueling on a KC-46 Pegasus in the sky off the coast of New England on Aug. 3.



A New Hampshire Army National Guard Black Hawk helicopter lowers a 130-foot line to extract a rusted metal culvert from Nash Stream on Oct. 19.

NHNARNG AVIATION LEADS NASH STREAM PRESERVATION EFFORTS

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

New Hampshire Army National Guard aviation helped mitigate an ecological hazard in the North Country last week.

Two rusted culverts were sling-loaded from Nash Stream by a Black Hawk helicopter, hoisted up through the forest canopy with a 130-foot line and cargo net.

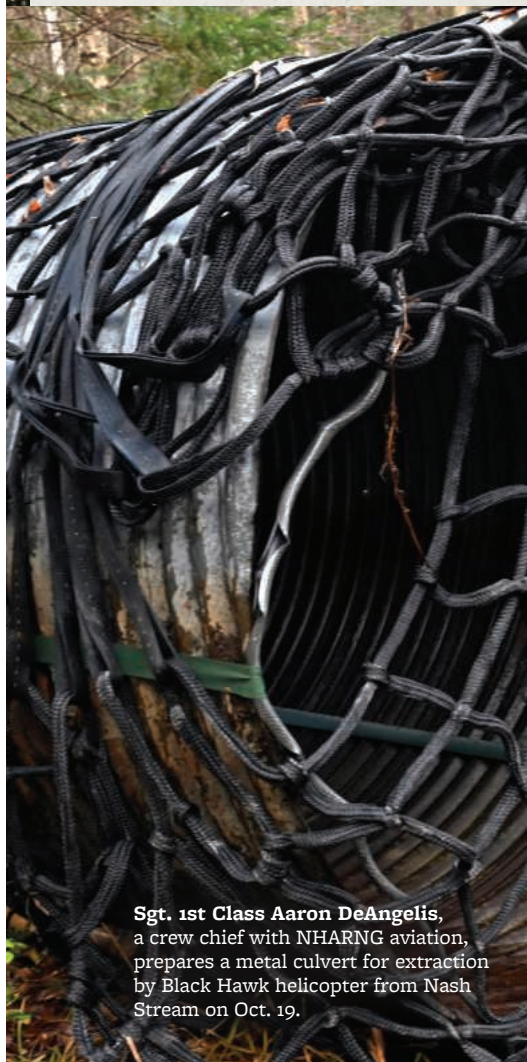
John Magee, Department of Fish and Game fish habitat biologist, said the culvert disposals follow \$1.5 million in various brook trout restoration efforts.

“We’re getting rid of stuff that shouldn’t be in the streams, making the habitat better for brook trout” Magee said.

Both culverts were lifted to a drop zone a few miles away, where they could be more easily hauled for safe disposal.

The entire operation was made possible through the Innovative Readiness Response program, which provides guardsmen with real-world training opportunities in their community. And though the NHARNG works regularly with Fish and Game during search and rescue operations, the three-way partnership with the Department of Cultural and Natural Resources was a first.

“I think it was a great program,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 John Blair, who helped organize the mission. “It got us the opportunity to do some training that we normally don’t get the opportunity to do.”



Sgt. 1st Class Aaron DeAngelis, a crew chief with NHARNG aviation, prepares a metal culvert for extraction by Black Hawk helicopter from Nash Stream on Oct. 19.



Sgt. Jordan Ford, crew chief with NHARNG aviation, secures sling load equipment inside a Black Hawk helicopter Oct. 19 at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Concord. Ford and his crew later extracted two rusted metal culverts from Nash Stream.

THE BENEFITS OF FAMILY

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

Free college tuition for all New Hampshire National Guard spouses.

That's the new service benefit, one previously reserved just for uniformed soldiers and airmen, signed into law with the passing of Senate Bill 360.

Gov. Chris Sununu signed the bill during a small ceremony Aug. 3 at the state military reservation's Heritage Room in Concord. The event was attended by guardsmen, families, and bill sponsors to include state Sen. Sharon Carson of Londonderry.

"I'm well aware of what you folks go through every day, and I know how important your families are to you," Carson said. "What a great thing to be able to do, to extend this benefit to your spouse and let them know that you're in it for them as well."

To qualify, guardsmen must have finished an initial service obligation of at least six years and then commit to a minimum four-year contract. While the benefit can be transferred back and forth between member and spouse, both cannot use it simultaneously.

NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities said New Hampshire is only the second state with this kind of education perk, an incentive he hopes bolsters reenlistments.

"We can't do it without our employers or our families to support our part-time force," Mikolaities said. "This is the first, direct, tangible benefit that we can give to each spouse to try to retain an all-volunteer force."

Spouses may apply the tuition waiver to any school in the state's community college system. It does not apply to private postsecondary schools.

"We're very excited to welcome the spouses and members to our colleges," said Shannon Reid, executive director of government affairs and communications for Community College System of New Hampshire. "Please come and work with us."



State Sen. Sharon Carson addresses attendees after **Gov. Chris Sununu** signed Senate Bill 360 into law during a ceremony Aug. 3 at the state military reservation's Heritage Room in Concord.



Gov. Chris Sununu and **NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities** hold up Senate Bill 360 after it was signed into law during a small ceremony Aug. 3 at the state military reservation's heritage room in Concord. Also in attendance were state Sen. Sharon Carson, the bill's sponsor, and Shannon Reid, director of government affairs and communications for Community College System of New Hampshire.



Civilian employers join New Hampshire National Guardsmen at Fort Drum, New York, to watch 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Regiment fire High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems on July 21.

A RARE GLIMPSE OF THEIR GUARDSMEN IN ACTION

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

Twenty-five employers got a rare and up-close view of what New Hampshire National Guardsmen do while away from their full-time civilian jobs July 21.

A Boss Lift shuttled the group in a KC-46A Pegasus refueler from Pease Air National Guard Base to Fort Drum, New York to watch 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Regiment fire its High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS).

“This event enables employers to both see and appreciate what we do,” said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Samon, officer in charge. “It hopefully garners their support for our guardsmen who train to be available and ready while balancing two careers.”

In recent years, the NHNG has experienced a historical uptick in training and activations. Pandemic relief missions called up nearly a third of the organization. West Coast wildfires and deployments to both the Middle East and Southwest Border further taxed resources. The backing of civilian employers during that period was crucial to mission accomplishment.

“We need your support to keep those service members on our team,” said NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities. “What you do is invaluable.”

Brian Bilodeau of NH Department of Transportation supervises Staff Sgt. Matthew Plantier, a DOT communications specialist who balances a full-time career with his part-time guard service. Bilodeau has come to appreciate their partnership, despite Plantier’s absences due to various guard commitments.

“We know that’s his responsibility, and he’s helping our country,” Bilodeau said. “We know what he’s doing is really important.”

Eileen Liponis of NH Food Bank employed dozens of citizen-soldiers during the height of the pandemic. They supported operations due to a volunteer shortage. Guardsmen planted crops, cooked food, and distributed meals across the Granite State for months.

“It’s an honor to be here,” Liponis said. “The guard really saved our ass during COVID.”

Between their roundtrip flight, guests were bused to the field and lunched with soldiers of the 197th. After they donned Kevlar helmets for an up-close viewing of live-fire HIMARS training.

Raji Gupta, a program manager with Amazon, was impressed by New Hampshire's technologically advanced refueler and combat proven rocket launchers.

"These are people who just live among us," Gupta said. "They have somehow gone through this training and that they can do this for our country is just remarkable to me."

The display was a big hit for Tyler Partridge, a landscaper from Deerfield. After the last rocket soared through the sky and the smoke cleared, he joked he might rename his business, "HIMARS Landscaping."

"I've seen some cool things, but nothing like that," Partridge said. "That was a once-in-a-lifetime experience."



Sgt. Amanda Kiley and **Bonnie Montague** jump for joy during 197th Field Artillery Brigade's annual training at Fort Drum, New York, on July 21. Kiley and Montague work together in the civilian sector at Community Partners, a community mental health center.

New Hampshire National Guard soldiers of 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Regiment fire a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) on July 21 during annual training at Fort Drum, New York.

ACROSS THE AFRICAN SAVANNA

By Staff Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW Public Affairs

On the morning of Sept. 13, a bus of endurance athletes from around the globe left Nairobi, Kenya, and rumbled across hundreds of miles into the wide-open wilderness of Eastern Africa.

After their seven-hour journey, the cramped and sweaty passengers stepped off the bus and into their base camp at the Lewa Conservancy. That was just the beginning. The runners would embark on a 143-mile ultramarathon, across four wildlife conservancies in support of wildlife rangers, who protect Africa's most endangered species.

First across the finish line was an Air National Guardsman from Hampton Falls, New Hampshire. Senior Master Sgt. Jeff Delorey, the superintendent of health services with the 157th Medical Group, finished 41 minutes ahead of the second-place competitor.

"It was challenging, the heat we were in, the environment, the mental grit, all of it," said Delorey. "When I crossed the finish line, I was emotional. My heart and mind couldn't be fuller from this journey."

Over the course of five days Delorey trekked along winding dirt roads through baking grasslands, rocky hills, riverbeds and mountain forest teeming with East African wildlife.

"We were out in the wild with all of the beautiful animals, following the roads and paths that the rangers use to navigate around while they are protecting the wildlife," Delorey explained.

"A small percentage of the time we were running through very small rural villages and meeting the people and the children that lived there."

Lengths of the race legs varied from 24 miles to 30 miles each day. The runners passed three checkpoints during the daily stages with available water, medical care and a time check.

"We had the checkpoints for security and refueling," Delorey said. "A couple sections we were running within feet of these enormous baboons, cape buffalo and elephants. The rangers and directors did everything in their power to make the course safe, but you still had to be vigilant running on the animals' land."

The runners finished the first four stages at temporary base camps built by teams of race crew. The small seas of tents were settled around a community structure and a fire pit.

"There was a ton of value in the nights by the fire, sharing stories and hearing about the lives of people," Delorey said. "It makes you realize how important and how much value there is in connecting with humans from other parts of the world."

"We learned more about the whole reason why we were there too," he said. "The rangers who are protecting the wildlife knew anything and everything about the plants we saw, the landscape and the animal behaviors. It was so inspiring; they were wonderful humans and just true warriors."

The For Rangers Ultra is centered around raising funds for the welfare of wildlife rangers. According to the Wildlife Conservation Society, the largest and longest standing field conservation program in Africa, poaching activities for rhinos and elephants have reached catastrophic levels in the past decade.

"It's an incredibly dangerous job," Delorey said. "The rangers risk their lives every day protecting the beautiful populations that have been decimated through poaching and industrialization. The whole race gave me a better understanding of conservation and appreciation for the rangers' work."

Delorey originally planned to compete in September of 2020 but the race was postponed two years in a row during the height of the pandemic. He still managed to find a silver lining and took the obstacle in stride.

"There were a couple times during his training that he would share setbacks, but they never got in his way," said Maj. Michelle Mastrobattista, administration officer for the 157th MDG. "He was bummed when the race was postponed, but he took it as a chance to train more. He was always positive and had a great attitude."



From left, **Senior Master Sgt. Jeff Delorey**, superintendent of health services for the 157th Medical Group, and **Cherif Nait Saada**, a competitor from France, are cheered on during the For Rangers Ultramarathon on Sept. 18 in Kenya, Africa. *Courtesy photo.*

"I don't think he set out to win," she added. "I wasn't surprised because he always does his best, but he did this race to challenge himself and that is an amazing feat on its own."

After waiting through global setbacks and becoming a father in the year before the event, Delorey said the journey felt surreal and he was ready for the challenge.

"I felt very prepared," he said. "I think there are a lot of similarities to how you approach goals in the military and how you approach them in endurance races. You have to constantly go through your checklist and it's all really strategic. You can't let your mind wander too much because there are so many things going through your head to make sure you are running efficiently and safely. The same way you do in the military."

"I think my experiences in the Air Force have made me stronger for this race that certainly tested my resolve," he added. "[The Air Force] has taught me how to cope with challenges, navigate obstacles and adapt in real-time."

Delorey said he felt a sigh of relief as he crossed the finish line, three years of waiting and dedicated training left on the African savannah, but this race was just the beginning.

"I loved it and I think I found my niche in terms of athletics," he laughed. "It's a challenge personally and I love what I gain from being around the other athletes competing."

"My wife is so supportive, and my family is really the reason I'm able to do this," he added. "They make me excited for what is on the horizon. My biggest take away is I want to keep going."

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD PROMOTIONS

Private (PV1)

Kyle Ayers
Johann Badaoui
Benjamin Bouchard
Kacia Campbell
Jaslyn Coldwell
Madalyn Delotto
Carlos Dow
Alex Dyer
Matthew Feole
Harrison Gamache
Nendoe Gleekia
Ethen Hall
Dennis Harris
Ji Hwang
Colt Janes
Peter Kratovil
Taylor Markwith
Pyrrhon Mugenga
Shereen Munir
Tristan Patten
Luciano Quezada
Corey Santana
Tanyan Scott
Jonathan Slankard
Matthew Slover
Rozalia Vajda
Richard White

Private (PV2)

Konnor Abbott
Akili Moise
Ayune Bernardo Da Silva Fernandes
Tyler Biron
Christopher Brown
Marvin Corporan
Marnie Crichton
Quynh Dang
Patrick Elder
Julie Fredricksen
Bradley Gamelin
Carson Geha
Acevedo Gomez
Connor Manning
Robert Marquis
Tristan Mayville
Michael Mbwana
George Munson
Christian Nepa
Dillan Norcross
Michelle Otgonbaatar
Mintiney Pham
Treshaun Rebenson Williams
James Rouillard
Jake St. Cyr
Ashley Stephens

Private First Class

Benjamin Antonellis
Benjamin Carter
Zachary Corliss
Anthony Dowd
Gregory Dushkin
Leen Ghanayem
Christopher Giordano
Ariana Krom
Alexander Macleod
Colin Mehalek
Nore Mendes
Michael Morissette
James Munson
Alexander Otova
William Perkins
Simon Quinn
Ryan Saucier
John Savage
Jacob Shapiro
Liam Snowden
James Spencer
Jenelle Welenc

Specialist

Trevor Abbott
Amy Bruneau
Brendan Bunnell
Brandon Burns Roy
Abigail Conlon
Cameron Courtemarche
John Currie
Joshua Curry
Paige Dillon
Gage Dionne
Gary Eddy
Tyler Etheridge
Justin Fitzgerald
William Forman
Camden Foshier Soucy
Corey Garry
Matteo Giler
Maria Goodwin
Gabriella Guarniere
Meagan Hinxman
Evan Jacobsen
Christopher Kiernan
Vincent Kirathi
Gregory Kotlyarsky
Appalachia Kunz
Brayan Rivera Laguer
Andrew Lane
Kyle Lawton
Dustin Lester
Rachel Lester
Brenna Lynn
John McCarthy

Peter Michelson
Benjamin Nadeau
Jerry Nineza
John Palazzi
Olivia Palmiter
Madelyn Petersen
Noah Phillips
Andrew Purington
Shawn Roberts
Anna Salisbury
Conner Sills
Nicole Skare
Tovah Stonner
Taya Tarquinio
Phillip Tatro
Troy Utton
Bailey Vachon

Corporal

Jacob Barrington
Todd Bouchard
Brooke Labraney
Edgar Saucier

Sergeant

Ray Atencio
Paul Buckley
Dylan Cherry
Dylan Conway
Mary Cordwell
Nicholas Curro
Ryan Day
Roderick Feirick
Cory Foote
Jeremy Foote
Daniel Foster
Britney Hill
Hunter Hinxman
Timothy King
Matthew Komisarek
Christopher Licona
Christian Lorenzo
Sawyer Lyman
Cameron Marin
Michael Olson
Tyler Pepin
Dylan Rebelo
Scott Rich
Liam Rogers
Lily Rousseau
Madalyn Stella
Stosh Szatko
Naila Thompson
Leon Toscano
Jesse Tucker
Aaron Tupper
Austin Vandevander

Staff Sergeant

Davis Jollimore
Matthew Bruneau
Eric Chase
Jacob Engelhardt
Gabrielle Hurd
Isabella Igoe
Bradley Johnson
Carson Lowe
Thomas Murphy
Shane Ordway
Brianna Passi
Steven Pierce
Austin Pollard
Bradford Roberts
Chayce Steffiare
Matthew Thayer

Sergeant First Class

Anthony Mcinnis
Adam Rich
Jobbie Todd
Nicholas Valade
Raul Zubicaray

Master Sergeant

Benjamin Duval
Jeffrey Garand
Justin Mcneff
Andrew Shannon

First Sergeant

Andrew Smith
Steven St. Laurent

Sergeant Major

Luis Cepeda
Christopher McWilliams

Command Sergeant Major

Peter Laflamme

Warrant Officer

Samuel Kappler

Second Lieutenant

Dorcas Callender
Cameron Holdsworth
Bryce Murdick
Nathan Riggs
Sean Rocheleau
Darrin Varnum

Captain

Harrison Schwartzman

Lieutenant Colonel

David Devoy
Emily Kamal

AIR NATIONAL GUARD PROMOTIONS

Airman First Class

Emma Anderson
Bethanie Weller
Joshua Williams

Senior Airman

Max Allen
David Beauregard
Joshua Chandler
Mitchell Dionne
Paige Dunleavy
Aspen Dyer
Connor Major
Caleb Paquette
Leah Pisiello
Charles Roush
Dalton Roy
Robert Shatinsky
Zachary Whipple
Eric Wong
Garon Woods

Staff Sergeant

Richard Bittle
Ryan Brown
Brian Chamard
Alkim Dato
Sean Gill
Ian Kay
Jordan Moore
Peter Murray
Christopher Parent
Jacob Phoerung
Tamlin Soucy
Tobias Warner

Technical Sergeant

Kristofer Anthony
Carl Berridge
Kyle Godfrey
Jacob Kelly
Hoang Nguyen
Joshua Poticha
Alexandra Potter
Matthew Wade

Master Sergeant

Robert Bell
Nikki Healey
Coty Hubbard
Eric Labbe
Donald Linscott
Brandon McClellan
Michael Morris
Jose Pagan
Malcolm Tevanian

Senior Master Sergeant

David Caton
Ian Harper

Chief Master Sergeant

Matt Morgan

First Lieutenant

Nicholas Carano
Tyler Grady

Captain

Jamie Boutin

Major

Piers Osborne
Joshua Stewart
Ryan Sychterz

Lieutenant Colonel

Ryan Cunningham
John Lockard
Robert O'Donnell
Autumn Ricker
Matthew Valentino



Aaliyah Cepeda fastens her grandfather's E-9 chevron during his promotion ceremony Oct. 15 at the New Hampshire National Guard Heritage Room in Concord. **Luis Cepeda Jr.**, the enlisted branch chief, is the NHNG's first Latino sergeant major. Standing by is his daughter (Aaliyah's mother) Jasmine Cepeda. Photo by NHNG Public Affairs.

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