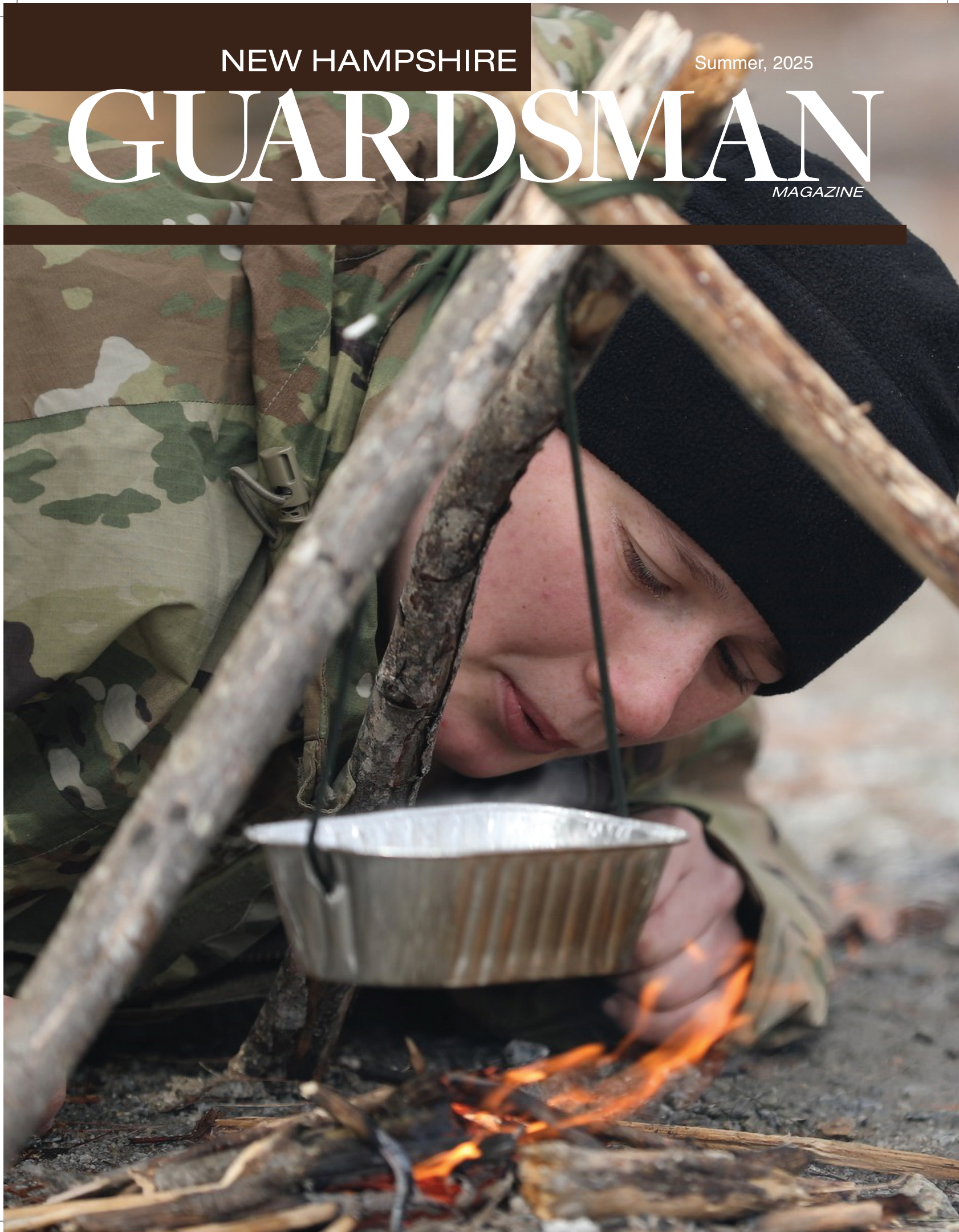


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Commander of the N.H. Army National Guard

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Commander of the N.H. Air National Guard

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ENLISTED FORCE GETS NEW ADVOCATE 4

READY TO LEAD 5

PICTURE PERFECT..... 6-8

NOWHERE ELSE TO GO 9

SNAPSHOTS 10-13

BOULTER & KIERNAN ARE
BEST WARRIORS 14

WHEN THE BAD DAY COMES15

PROFOUND RESPONSIBILITY 16

MAKING SIGNIFICANT STRIDES 17

ARMY WARHORSE RETIRES..... 18

COVER PHOTO: **Pfc. Neive Boulter**, a forward observer with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 197th Field Artillery Brigade, blows on a flame during the warrior task portion of the 2025 NHNG Best Warrior Competition on March 8 at the Edward Cross Training Complex in Pembroke. Boulter won first place in her division and Soldier of the Year. *Photo by Pfc. Makayla Panzer, 114th Public Affairs Detachment.*

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ENLISTED FORCE GETS NEW ADVOCATE

By Tech. Sgt. April Jackson, 157th ARW Public Affairs

The New Hampshire Air National Guard welcomed a new state command chief during March drill.

Inside a large hangar at Pease Air National Guard Base, nearly a thousand airmen stood in formation as Chief Master Sgt. Bernard Cho assumed responsibility of the NHANG's enlisted force from state Command Chief Master Sgt. Pranav Zaveri during a ceremony March 8.

Zaveri, known on base as "Chief Z," served as the 13th state command chief for the past three years. In his final address, he offered words of encouragement and advice.

"You must remain steadfast and resolute, focusing on the values that bind us: duty, honor, and country," said Zaveri, who retired after 31 years in the U.S. Air Force and NHANG. "Let us not allow external forces to fragment our ranks, but rather, let us draw strength from our unity and shared commitment."

The state command chief plays an important role few understand, said Brig. Gen. William Davis, commander of the NHANG. They are the top enlisted leader for the state's Air National Guard and serve as the senior enlisted advisor to National Guard leadership at the state level.

The position focuses on the career and well-being of airmen, Davis said. In New Hampshire, that means the readiness, operational utilization, professional development, morale, and welfare for 900 souls.

During his first address as state command chief, Cho thanked his family, fellow enlisted and commanders for their mentorship and guidance.

"There's no way this inner-city kid from a broken family gets here by himself," he said. "You have all shaped me into the leader I am today, and I am committed to honoring that legacy by serving you and the airmen of this organization to the best of my ability."

Cho vowed to advocate for airmen and ensure their voices are heard. "We have incredible airmen, unparalleled dedication, and a legacy of excellence to build upon," he said. "Thank you for your trust, your service, and your commitment to our mission."



From left, **Brig. Gen. William Davis**, commander of the New Hampshire Air National Guard, passes the Joint Force Headquarters guidon to **Command Chief Master Sgt. Bernard Cho**, incoming state command chief, during a change of responsibility ceremony March 8 at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington. Cho, formerly of 157th Maintenance Support Group, succeeded Command Chief Master Sgt. Pranav Zaveri as the state's 14th state command chief. *Photo by Master Sgt. Charles Johnston, JFHQ Public Affairs.*

From left, **Brig. Gen. William Davis**, commander of the New Hampshire Air National Guard, salutes **Chief Master Sgt. Pranav Zaveri** during his retirement ceremony March 8 at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington. The retirement followed a change of responsibility ceremony, during which **Chief Master Sgt. Bernard Cho** succeeded Zaveri as the new state command Chief. Zaveri retired after 31 years of active duty and Guard service and was awarded the Legion of Merit. *Photo by Master Sgt. Charles Johnston, JFHQ Public Affairs.*





Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kathryn (Katie) Scott

READY TO LEAD

By Staff Sgt. David Marquis, JFHQ Public Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kathryn (Katie) Scott became the New Hampshire Army National Guard's eighth state command chief after she assumed responsibility from Chief Warrant Officer 5 George Munson during a March 9 ceremony in Concord.

"I have full confidence that Katie will continue to advocate for our warrant officers and strengthen our corps for the future," said Munson, who retired after a 37-year career as a U.S. Army aviator.

As the state's senior warrant officer, Scott will serve as the principal advisor on all matters related to warrant officer training, professional development, and career management.

"It's an honor to follow in Chief Munson's footsteps," Scott said. "I look forward to serving and supporting the talented warrant officers of the New Hampshire Army National Guard."

Scott enlisted in the NHARNG in 2000 as a chemical, quartermaster repairer and later transitioned into human

resources, holding various leadership roles.

She deployed to Iraq in 2005 with the 1159th Medical Company in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and has been instrumental in managing personnel policies and operations within the state's Joint Force Headquarters.

She converted to the warrant officer corps in 2009.

"Her vast degree of experience across the state, both in Joint Forces Headquarters and our operational commands, will be instrumental in championing our successes while taking on new challenges," NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities said.

The change of responsibility ceremony marked a significant moment in the state's military leadership, ensuring a smooth transition of responsibility and continuity of leadership within the Guard's warrant officer ranks.

PICTURE PERFECT

By NHNG Public Affairs

Cols. David Mattimore and Nelson Perron were taken aback for all the right reasons during their first trip to El Salvador.

The New Hampshire National Guard's senior Army and Air aviation commanders met their counterparts from the Salvadoran Air Force during the Ilopango Air Show, which featured a KC-46A flyover by the 157th Air Refueling Wing and performances by the 39th Army Band on Feb. 1 and 2.

It was the fifth time in six years the band or Wing have appeared at Ilopango under the New Hampshire National Guard-El Salvador State Partnership Program, now in its 25th year.

"We couldn't walk 10 feet without someone wanting to take a picture with us," said Perron, commander of the 157th ARW and tanker pilot. "Being appreciated for what we represent — being

in the United States military and the New Hampshire National Guard — was humbling."

With temperatures in the 90s, a small contingent of uniformed NH guardsmen strolled among a throng of thousands, soaking in the largest annual aviation and aerobatic exhibition in Latin America with a deep sense of wonder. Never mind they were drenched with sweat.

"It was great to see how much they like our band," said Mattimore, state Army aviation officer and Black Hawk pilot.

While there was some discussion of future aviation exchanges with the Salvadorans, the focus was more informal and relaxed, Mattimore said.

From left, **Col. Nelson Perron**, commander of the 157th Air Refueling Wing, **Col. Pablo Soriano**, chief of staff of the Salvadoran Air Force, **Chief Master Sgt. Kevin Reiter**, command chief of the 157th ARW, and **Col. Rafael Melara**, commander of the Salvadoran Air Force Academy, exchange gifts at the Ilopango Air Show in El Salvador on Feb. 1. *Photo courtesy of Salvadoran Air Force.*



A gift exchange solidified what was an unforgettable weekend. They visited a small surfing village on the Pacific coast and hot springs near the Guatemalan border.

They also sampled a traditional Salvadoran staple, pupusas, which are hand-pressed tortillas made of corn or rice stuffed with refried beans, cheese or a combination of the two.

“I’m a huge fan now,” Perron said.

“I would absolutely have them again,” Mattimore added.

A ceremony to recognize the 25th anniversary of the state partnership, begun in 2000 and guided by four adjutants general and seven defense ministers, is being planned for later this year.



Col. Nelson Perron, commander of the 157th Air Refueling Wing, poses for a photo at the Ilopango Air Show in El Salvador on Feb. 1. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. April Jackson, 157th ARW Public Affairs.*



A view of the Ilopango Air Show in El Salvador on Feb. 1. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. April Jackson, 157th ARW Public Affairs.*

Col. David Mattimore, state Army aviation officer for the New Hampshire National Guard, receives a gift from **Col. Pablo Soriano**, chief of staff of the Salvadoran Air Force, at the Ilopango Air Show in El Salvador on Feb. 1.
Photo by Tech. Sgt. April Jackson, 157th ARW Public Affairs.



NOWHERE ELSE TO GO

Story and photos By Staff Sgt. David Marquis, JFHQ Public Affairs

A mobile dental clinic stationed outside the Manchester Health Department on March 8 provided free dental care to uninsured children, thanks to a collaboration between the department's oral health program and the New Hampshire Army National Guard Medical Detachment.

The initiative aims to address the pressing dental health needs of children in low-income families who otherwise lack access to treatment.

"These kids have nowhere else to go," said Andrea Iasillo, a certified public health dental hygienist with the Manchester Health Department. "They don't have any money, they don't have any insurance. So this collaboration is bringing the treatment to the children who need it most."

The program identifies children based on financial and medical criteria. Families must earn 250% below the federal poverty level, and many of them do not qualify for Medicaid due to various factors.

"For those kids who have Medicaid, it's easy to get them a dentist because dentists get reimbursed," Iasillo said. "But many of these families don't have medical or dental insurance, so here we are today treating them."

According to Iasillo, untreated dental issues are the leading childhood disease in the U.S., often causing school absences and difficulties concentrating in class.

"It's a disease," she said. "A lot of this is preventable through education, but many families don't realize how important baby teeth are. They don't know that sugar causes cavities, or that baby teeth are placeholders for adult teeth. If you lose them too soon, your adult teeth won't come in properly, which affects speech and eating."

The New Hampshire Army National Guard has played a critical role in expanding access to dental care. Among the volunteers was Capt. Viet Nguyen, a dentist with the Medical Detachment who traveled from Connecticut to participate in the clinic.

"We're here to support the community by providing dental care to underserved populations," Nguyen said. "Most of the people we see today either don't have insurance or have very low incomes, making it difficult for them to afford dental care. Many private practices don't accept these patients, but we're here to make sure they get the treatment they need."

Nguyen, who provides pro bono care at his private practice, said his motivation stems from a personal commitment to service.

"For me, serving is my purpose," he said. "Yes, I have bills to pay, but when is enough, enough? We live in a country where food is abundant, where we can sleep safely at night.

Giving back is my way of saying thank you for the blessings I've received."

The Manchester Health Department, which has been providing oral health services since the 1970s, aligns this initiative with its broader vision: "to be a community where everyone can achieve optimal health."

The department's mission emphasizes disease prevention, health promotion, and access to high-quality care, particularly for underserved populations. Officials say the collaboration with the National Guard is vital to that effort.

"If the National Guard wasn't here, these kids wouldn't be getting the care they need," Iasillo said. "We'd have to find a dentist with a big heart who would take them in for free, which is not easy. Instead, we have providers who are willing to go above and beyond—what might have been scheduled as one or two fillings turns into four or five. They're really finishing treatment plans for these kids."

For Nguyen, the smiles on children's faces make it all worthwhile.

"It's almost addictive," he said. "You see a patient walk out happy, pain-free, and that's what drives me. I signed up to serve however I can, and dentistry is my way of doing that."

With eight children receiving treatment on Saturday, organizers hope to continue and expand the partnership.

"These families truly appreciate it," Iasillo said. "When we tell them we're going to get their child free dental care, they don't miss appointments—they show up half an hour early. They know how special this is. And without the National Guard coming regularly, these kids would have nowhere else to go."



Capt. Viet Nguyen, a dentist with the New Hampshire Army National Guard Medical Detachment, and staff treat a patient inside the Manchester Health Department's mobile dental clinic. National Guard soldiers volunteered their time to provide free dental care to underserved children in the community.



CONTEMPORARIES

From left, **Brig. Gen. John LeBlanc**, deputy commanding general (National Guard), U.S. Army Southern European Task Force, Africa, speaks to a **São Tomé and Príncipe** representatives at the opening ceremony of African Land Forces Summit 2025 in Accra, Ghana on April 7. LeBlanc also serves as commander of the New Hampshire Army National Guard. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Aaliyah Craven, U.S. Army Public Affairs.*



OF LIKE MIND

From left, **Maj. Jeremy Saunders**, bilateral affairs officer for the New Hampshire National Guard-El Salvador State Partnership Program, joins **1st Lts. Kevin Melara, Melvin González, Suami Salguero, Jonathan Barquero, and Steven Melara** for a howitzer portrait in March at Joint Base Cape Cod. The Salvadoran artillery officers embedded with Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 103rd Field Artillery Regiment for a week of field maneuvers through the New Hampshire National Guard-El Salvador State Partnership Program. *Courtesy photo.*



FAR FROM A FAIRY TALE

Staff Sgt. Todd Desmarais, a team chief for the 12th Civil Support Team, is cut out of his hazmat suit after displaying a notional injury during a chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear response exercise April 9 at Storyland in Glen. The scenario ensures team members can quickly and safely remove hazmat suits in the event of an injury. *Photo by Pvt. Josephine Malloy, 114th Public Affairs Detachment.*



LOST AND FOUND

Sgt. Matthew Witcher, a fuel supply specialist with Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment (MEDEVAC), builds a shelter during a search and rescue field training exercise April 12 at the Edward Cross Training Complex in Pembroke. Soldiers from the NHARNG company practiced building shelters during a final evasion tactics event. *Photo by Pfc. Makayla Panzer, 114th Public Affairs Detachment.*



TWO NIGHTS IN EL SALVADOR

Sgt. 1st Class David Selmer, drummer with the 39th Army Band, plays the opening beat of “We Will Rock You” on Feb. 2 at the Ilopango Air Show in El Salvador. Photo by Sgt. Kelly Boyer, 114th Public Affairs Detachment.



SNAPSHOTS

VIRTUALLY LETHAL

Tech. Sgt. John Raymond of Joint Force Headquarters engages electronic targets on a weapons training simulator May 3 at the state military reservation in Concord. The simulator mimics the weight, recoil, form and function of real pistols and rifles to enable skills development in a more convenient, safe and controlled environment. The system tracks hits and misses of projected static and moving targets and keeps score for each shooter. Photo by Master Sgt. Charles Johnston, JFHQ Public Affairs.



DUST UP

Sgt. Kyle Almonte, a motor transport operator for the 744th Forward Support Company, New Hampshire Army National Guard, adjusts the sling legs on an ammunition pod during a multinational sling-load operation May 17 at African Lion 2025 in Tan-Tan, Morocco. *Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Forester, U.S. Army Reserve Public Affairs.*

BOULTER & KIERNAN ARE BEST WARRIORS

A forward observer and an electrician earned Soldier and NCO of the Year after winning their respective divisions in the 2025 New Hampshire National Guard Best Warrior Competition held March 5 to 9 at multiple locations across the state.

Pfc. Nieve Boulter of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 197th Field Artillery Brigade and Sgt. Christopher Kiernan of Detachment 1, 185th Engineer Support Company bested a field of 18 competitors, including 11 soldiers, two airmen, and five troops from New Hampshire's state partnership countries – two from El Salvador and three from Cabo Verde.

Both will represent New Hampshire at the 2025 Region 1 Best Warrior Competition, which includes winners from across New England and New York. The NHNG will host this year's competition May 19 to 23.

Boulter, who joined the NHARNG a year ago, credited her sponsor and last year's top NCO, Staff Sgt. Bradford Roberts, for her success.

"I probably wouldn't be able to do this without him," Boulter said. "He helped me so much."

Kiernan, runner-up for Soldier of the Year in 2023, thanked a higher power for his performance.

"I'm grateful for the strength God gave me," he said. "I'm glad that I can make my leaders proud because they've put a lot of effort into me."

The five-day competition included day and night land navigation, an expert physical fitness test, warrior tasks, a marksmanship assessment at Sig Sauer Academy, a formal board interview, and a 12.4-mile ruck march along Route 1A from Odiorne State Park to Hampton Beach.

Pvt. Nahún Ramírez, a Salvadoran sniper, took first in the ruck with a time of 1:58:42. While New Hampshire's state partners are not eligible for the titles in either division, they have consistently finished well during the past several years of competing in the BWC.

"The best thing for New Hampshire National Guard soldiers and airmen is the fact that they can compete with and meet our partner nations," said NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities. "It's all about allies and partners. We don't fight alone."

--compiled by Sgt. Sean Ferry, 114th Public Affairs Detachment



Pvt. Nahún Ramírez, a Salvadoran sniper, takes first place in a 12.4-mile ruck march during the 2025 NHNG Best Warrior Competition on March 9 at Hampton Beach. Ramirez finished with a time of 1:58:41. Photo by Sgt. Sean Ferry, 114th Public Affairs Detachment.

WHEN THE BAD DAY COMES

Story and photos by Sgt. Kelly Boyer, 114th PAD

The New Hampshire National Guard hosted more than 300 participants from the military, government, private industry, and state partnership countries for a two-week cyber defense exercise May 5–16 at the Edward Cross Training Complex in Pembroke.

Now in its 11th year, Cyber Yankee 2025 simulated a large-scale cyberattack on critical infrastructure across New England.

“As global cyber threats continue to escalate, exercises like Cyber Yankee remain essential to U.S. national defense,” said Lt. Col. Dupuis, chief information officer for the New Hampshire Army National Guard and exercise director. “With our expanding scope of threats, growing list of partners, and emphasis on real-world applicability, Cyber Yankee stands as a model for whole-of-government cyber response.”

The scenario, conducted within a Department of Defense standardized training platform, revolved around unattributed cyberattacks on fictional utilities. In the first week, participants received role-specific technical training. In the second week, five joint and multinational blue teams defended simulated infrastructure networks while interacting with role-players acting as corporate CIOs and IT staff.

Red team adversaries provided realistic opposition, while white team observers ensured training remained focused and adaptive.

“This exercise has been a really valuable experience,” said Spc. Jonathan George, a cyber operations specialist with the NHARNG’s 136th Cyber Security Detachment who recently transferred from the infantry. “I’m learning a ton. It’s great to be part of a large-scale event that feels realistic and put my knowledge into practice.”

For the first time, U.S. Space Force participated.

“It’s been very validating to see that our technical capabilities are up to par,” said 1st Lt. Kayla Santos, deputy mission planning cell chief with the 65th Cyberspace Squadron. “This exercise has given us the opportunity to operationalize what we’ve learned.”

“Even more valuable has been learning how to report up,

manage information, and communicate effectively across larger, joint teams,” she added. “That’s been huge for a small, newly structured unit like ours.”

Other participants included the U.S. Marines, Coast Guard and National Guard cyber units from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Department of Energy, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts also played key roles.

Private sector and National Guard state partners Albania, the Bahamas, El Salvador, Israel, Kenya, Paraguay, and Uruguay enhanced realism and strengthened multinational collaboration, Dupuis said.

“This exercise is really about building two critical things: communication and trust,” said Maj. Gen. Terin Williams, special assistant to the director of the Army National Guard for cyber matters and keynote guest. “When the bad day comes, it’s the relationships forged here, across military, civilian, and international partners, that will make us ready and able to respond together.”



Some of the more than 300 players in Cyber Yankee 2025 operate as part of Blue Team 2 on May 14 at the Edward Cross Training Complex in Pembroke. The team was composed of cyber professionals from the New Hampshire and Vermont National Guards, and Salvadoran military.

PROFOUND RESPONSIBILITY

By NHNG Public Affairs

After a three-year hitch, Lt. Col. Samuel Weber relinquished control of the 12th Civil Support Team to Maj. Lyndsey Fleming during a change of command ceremony Jan. 10 at the state military reservation in Concord.

Weber, who has served in numerous command and staff positions in his 19 years with the New Hampshire Army National Guard, will be assigned as the deputy chief of staff for personnel.

Fleming, who began her military career as one of the founding members of the CST in 2005, becomes the first U.S. Air Force officer and first woman to lead the specialized response unit, which is unlike any other in the National Guard.

"The second I left the team I wanted to be back," recalled Fleming after she finished her first stint with the 12th CST, a six-year tour as an enlisted airman. "It was a dream of mine."

The 12th CST was fielded 20 years ago as part of a presidential directive to protect "the homeland and Americans against unconventional threats." Its implementation was fast-tracked after 9-11, giving every state or region a quick reaction force of 11 soldiers and 11 airmen trained to assist first responders with a nuclear, biological or chemical incident.

In 2007, the 12th CST became fully operational. It has responded to 13 real-world incidents and conducted more than 400 standby missions.

Fleming is the team's eighth commander.

"I will be here, on the ground, and at your side," said Fleming in her first address to the unit. "I will listen, lead by example, and do everything in my power to ensure you have the resources, guidance, and support needed to achieve excellence."



Maj. Lyndsey Fleming, incoming commander of the 12th Civil Support Team, presents the unit guidon to **1st Sgt. Christopher Duquette**, senior enlisted advisor for the 12th CST, during a change of command ceremony Jan. 10 at the state military reservation in Concord. The passing of the guidon from incoming commander to unit first sergeant signifies her trust and confidence in the soldiers and airmen of the unit. *Photo by Sgt. Kelly Boyer, 114th Public Affairs Detachment.*

MAKING SIGNIFICANT STRIDES

By New Hampshire National Guard Public Affairs

New Hampshire Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities traveled to Cabo Verde in March to honor his military colleague and friend, Adm. Antonio Monteiro, who is retiring later this year as the country's chief of defense.

Monteiro was instrumental in helping establish the New Hampshire National Guard-Cabo Verde State Partnership Program in 2022.

"He will be missed," said Mikolaities, who presented Monteiro with a Minuteman statue for his "unwavering support of the partnership."

"It wouldn't have grown as fast as it has without his steady hand," Mikolaities added.

The general's visit also included office calls with U.S. Ambassador Jennifer Adams and Cabo Verde Minister of Defense Janine Lelis.

"What began as a new partnership has quickly transformed into a lasting bond," said Adams during a reception at her residence. "One of the many highlights has been the successful execution of Granite Falco, our first joint exercise, which brought together both our military and civilian experts to engage in real-world challenges. It is these types of initiatives that demonstrate the strength of our cooperation and the depth of our commitment to one another."

Since the partnership's launch three years ago, the NHNG and Cabo Verde have hosted nearly 40 exchanges involving aviation, medical assistance, and humanitarian and legal support.

"We've made significant strides," Adams said.

In a separate ceremony March 18 at the the 3rd Military Region in Praia, Mikolaities joined Monteiro as guest of honor to celebrate the 100th birthday of Justino Lopes, one of Cabo Verde's most revered freedom fighters, also known as the Day of Unity.



From center left, **Adm. Antonio Duarte**, chief of defense for Cabo Verde, and **NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities** celebrate the 100th birthday of **Justino Lopes**, one of Cabo Verde's most revered freedom fighters, during the 3rd Military Region Day of Unity celebration March 18 in Praia, Cabo Verde. *Courtesy photo.*



From left, NH Adjutant **Gen. David Mikolaities** and **Cabo Verde Defense Minister Janine Lelis** discuss the future of the New Hampshire National Guard-Cabo Verde State Partnership Program, now in its third year, at the Ministry of Defense on March 19 in Praia, Cabo Verde. *Courtesy photo.*



From left, **Adm. Antonio Monteiro**, chief of defense for Cabo Verde, and **NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities** catch up in Monteiro's office prior to the 3rd Military Region Day of Unity celebration March 18 in Praia, Cabo Verde. Monteiro is retiring later this year. *Courtesy photo.*

ARMY WARHORSE RETIRES

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. David Marquis, JFHQ Public Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer 5 George Munson, outgoing state command chief of the New Hampshire Army National Guard, was honored in a retirement ceremony March 9 at the state military reservation in Concord.

The event, attended by senior military leaders, colleagues, friends, and family, marked the end of a distinguished, 37-year career and celebrated Munson's long-standing service and leadership within the Army aviation community.

Among those in attendance were NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities and Col. Douglas Fortier, chief of staff for the NHARNG.

In his remarks, Fortier reflected on Munson's decades of service, emphasizing the impact he had on Army aviation and the warrant officer corps.

"As an aviator, George learned the importance of lift—the force that keeps an airplane flying, opposing the downward force of gravity," he said. "Or in the case of Ginger (his wife) and George, lift is redefined as family: the force that keeps a soldier soaring, opposing the downward force of three decades of service."

Munson's career spanned critical moments in modern military history, from the Cold War era to today's evolving battlefield. A master Army aviator with more than 6,700 total flight hours—including 1,466 combat hours—Munson flew rotary and fixed-wing aircraft in multiple conflicts. His leadership helped shape the training and readiness of warrant officers throughout New Hampshire.

In his remarks, Munson credited his success to his family, fellow soldiers, and mentors who guided him throughout his career.

"To my wife Ginger and my children—thank you for supporting me all these years," Munson said. "I am really excited to have more time to spend with you."

Munson also reflected on the mentorship he received, highlighting key figures who shaped his career, including his former commanders and colleagues.

"I encourage all of you to reflect on why you chose this profession and how you can better our organization," he said. "We all come from different backgrounds and have chosen this honorable life."

The ceremony included several prestigious recognitions for Munson and his family. Mikolaities presented the Legion of Merit to Munson. Additionally, the State of New Hampshire presented him with flags flown over the State House in his honor. Ginger Munson was recognized with the Order of Our Lady of Loreto, an award given for outstanding contributions to Army aviation families.

As part of the tradition, Munson was also presented with a shadow box commemorating his career and a symbolic rudis, a wooden Roman gladiator sword representing his transition from service to retirement.

Fortier concluded his speech by acknowledging Munson's enduring legacy.

"For 36 years, he's been a wise warhorse for the Army, bringing laughter to our early mornings and wisdom to our toughest challenges," he said. "George, your dedication has shaped our success, and your friendship has made this more than just a workplace."



From left, New Hampshire Army National Guard field artillery warrants **Scott Canavan** and **Joseph Villalon** present **Chief Warrant Officer 5 George Munson** with a replica artillery shell during his retirement ceremony March 9 in Concord. The commemorative gift, signed by fellow guardsmen, honors Munson's 37 years of dedicated service and leadership in the Army aviation community.

TWICE THE BENEFITS

From left, **Staff Sgts. Gillian Gosselin** and **Olivia Conley** returned to their alma mater in April to share the perks of serving in the 157th Air Refueling Wing, including 100 percent college tuition. Following in their father's footsteps, the fraternal twin sisters joined the New Hampshire Air National Guard after graduating from Laconia High School in 2017. They went through basic training and technical school together. *Photo courtesy of New Hampshire Air National Guard Recruiting.*

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