

The FOCUS



JANUARY 2026

NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS THEMES AND MESSAGES

January Observances

Why I Serve Spotlight
Financial Wellness Month
National Mentoring Month

1 - New Year’s Day
Army Aviation Birthday

9 - Law Enforcement Appreciation Day

14 - Ratification Day
(end of American Revolution)

January - Future

Community Engagement

Please send Army National Guard flyover requests at least six weeks prior to the event to allow for staffing at National Guard Bureau and Army Communications and Outreach Office (formerly Office of the Chief of Public Affairs). Be sure to check the Department of Defense Form 2535 for Federal Aviation Administration review and signature, as this is often a cause for delay in completing packets in-state. ARNG civic leader flights are staffed by the Joint Force Headquarters public affairs office in accordance with regulations, National Guard Bureau Public Affairs, and Aviation Standardization guidance, with Adjutant General level approval.

Air National Guard flyover requests are coordinated and approved through the Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs Aerial Events website. ANG civic leader flight requests must be submitted to NGB-PA for approval at least four weeks prior to the flight. Packet requirements and instructions are on Teams: National Guard PAOs>Community Engagement>Files. Submit requests to: ng.ncr.ngb-arng.mbx.ngb-community-engagement@army.mil



An Ohio Air National Guard pilot assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, flies an F-16 Fighting Falcon over Ohio Stadium, in Columbus, Ohio, March 1, before an National Hockey League Game as part of the National Guard’s community engagement program. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Mikayla Gibbs)

On the cover:

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Mike Herreros, 109th Electromagnetic Warfare Squadron, Hawaii Air National Guard, inspects antenna equipment at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, at the start of exercise Resolute Space 2025, July 8. The exercise demonstrated the Space Force’s ability to operate in contested, dynamic environment with joint and international partners. (U.S. Space Force photo by Lt. Col. Victoria Hight)

Leadership News and Notes

Media Contest Update

The time has come to recognize our public affairs Soldiers and Airmen, and the outstanding work produced this year! Attached are both the 2025 Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware Communications Awards Standard Operating Proceedure and the 2025 Chief Master Sgt. Douglas W. Morrell Media Awards SOP, along with some other guidance that will help you and your units and states.

Due to Defense Media Activity canceling the Department of War awards, the DVIDS awards portal will no longer be used for submitting or judging for either competition.

For the KLV competition:

The deadline to submit your products to NGB is Jan. 15, 2026 by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. This includes all categories. The KLV SOP states that categories M-S are to be sent directly to the Army Communications and Outreach Office, **but the Army National Guard will submit those categories to NGB and we will submit them up for you.**

All content for the competition will be submitted with the KLV entry form (found on pages 42-43 of the SOP) and a KLV spreadsheet (attached) to accompany each states’ submissions. Each state will send one email with all of their entry forms and a KLV spreadsheet to both Senior Master Sgt. Sarah Mattison, sarah.e.mattison4.mil@army.mil and Master Sgt. Whitney Hughes, whitney.r.hughes.mil@army.mil. NGB will only accept one submission, per category, per state. Please provide a KLV Point of Conact for your state in case we need to reach with any questions.

For the MMA competition:

The deadline to submit your products to NGB will be Feb. 13, 2026 by 11:59 p.m. EST.

Key changes include:

Category Reduction: With the elimination of the DOW contest, the traditional PA categories were reduced from 34 to six.

Simplified Submission Process: The attached Unit & Major Command Submissions spreadsheet will be used for all submissions, replacing the DVIDS awards module. NGB will only accept one submission, per category, per state.

Each state will send one email with an MMA spreadsheet to Senior Master Sgt. Sarah Mattison, sarah.e.mattison4.mil@army.mil, who is the POC for the award program. NGB will only accept one submission, per category, per state. Please provide a MMA POC for your state in case we need to reach out with any questions regarding your submissions.

We look forward to seeing the great work that’s been done across the National Guard and recognizing those who have excelled!

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions for submissions for either the KLV or the MMA competitions.

February Observances

1 National Freedom Day (13th Amendment)

2 Army Nurse Corps Established (1901)
Groundhog Day

4 USO Birthday (1941)

8 Super Bowl LX

14 Valentine’s Day

16 Presidents Day

17 Mardi Gras

19 Coast Guard Reserve Birthday (1941)

23 Iwo Jima Flag Raising

February - Special Update

New Army media competition categories

KLW SOP	Sept. 23, 2025
I. Summary of Change	
-23 September Update: Administrative edits throughout	
-17 September Update	
-Clarifies eligibility for civilian contestants	
-Removes Letter of Endorsement requirement for Kathy Canham-Ross Organization of Distinction	
-Clarifies workflow for units included in Army Transformation Initiative (see Page 9)	
- Changes:	
-Timeline for award submissions to HQDA adjusted (see Page 6).	
-Entry to DVIDS categories now limited to enlisted CMF46 service members through Sgt. 1 st Class, and civilian PA/VI employees through GS-12.	
-Non-DVIDS categories now submitted to and judged exclusively at HQDA level.	
-Requirements for Public Affairs Officer “Rising Star” Award (see Page 20)	
-Eligibility for Public Affairs Organization of the Year (Command Information) restricted to 2-star and below commands.	
- Essay topic for Sgt. Maj. Dawn Kilpatrick Memorial AUSA Scholarship	
- Adds:	
- New Category: Master Communicator of the Year	
- New Category: Soldier Communicator of the Year	
- New Category: Civilian Communicator of the Year	
- New Category: Digital Media Campaign of the Year	
- New Category: Operator-Maintainer of the Year	
- New Category Name: Spc. Hilda I. Clayton Military Photographer of the Year	
- New Category Name: Public Affairs Liaison of the Year (formerly Unit Public Affairs Representative of the Year)	
- New Category Name: Kathy Canham-Ross Organization of Distinction (formerly Public Affairs Organization of the Year – Community Engagement).	
- New eligibility requirement for Military categories: must include a valid Army Fitness Test from 2025.	
- Appendix D: Entry Templates	

For full details on the new Keith L. Ware award categories see the Standard Operating Procedures in the link below:
https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/klw/admin/2025-26_klw_sop.pdf

March Observances

National Nutrition Month

3 National Anthem Day
Navy Reserve Birthday (1915)

13 K-9 Veterans Day

17 St. Patrick’s Day

19 Operation Iraqi Freedom Began (2003)

25 National Medal of Honor Day

29 National Vietnam War Veterans Day

March - Space

ANG units in six states transition space mission to Space Force



California Air National Guard members with the 216th Electromagnetic Warfare Squadron pose for a photo with Space Force leadership prior to a transition of operational responsibility at Vandenberg Space Force Base, California, Sept. 5. (Photo by: Senior Airman Kevin Hernandez)

Story by: Ashley George, U. S. Space Force Combat Forces Command

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. – On Oct. 1 Space Operations Command took operational responsibility for nine designated space missions under the Air National Guard, a move designed to preserve mission effectiveness while streamlining the organization, training, and equipping of space professionals for long-term lethality.

This transition is part of the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act, section 514, which directed the Department of the Air Force to transfer covered space functions from the Air Guard to the U.S. Space Force. Once fully implemented, the Space Force will be able to manage their unique military force more effectively to meet current and evolving mission requirements, while simultaneously improving retention and quality of life.

“The Space Force’s operational responsibilities are critical to national security and this substantial, but necessary, transfer is another milestone to building a warfighting service and advancing the nation’s defense posture,” said U.S. Space Force Lt. Gen. David N. Miller, Jr., commander of Space Operations Command. “We will continue to build a unified team, capitalizing on the talent, experience and dedication that ANG personnel bring to the Space mission.”

A total of nine Air Guard missions, across six states, will transfer their space mission to Space Operations Command; those missions include electromagnetic warfare, intelligence, missile warning, and satellite communications. The new structure will capitalize on skillsets developed outside the military to continue delivering unmatched space capabilities.