

Connecticut GUARDIAN

The Yankee Courier on page 13

VOL. 21 NO. 6

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

June | July 2020

Guardsman helps community while activated for COVID-19 response

Staff Sgt. Steven Tucker
103rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

DANBURY, Conn. -- Since March, hundreds of Connecticut National Guard Soldiers and Airmen have helped their local communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Citizen-service members have donned their uniforms and helped the same communities they live and work in on a daily basis.

For one activated Guardsman, the response effort continues out of uniform.

U.S. Army Spc. Juan Herrera, 142nd Area Support Medical Company combat medic, helped spearhead a grassroots effort to deliver food to local families in need during the pandemic.

"I actually started helping with the food donations before my orders started," said Herrera. "I had just returned from advanced individual training and was getting things organized to start college. My mom started this initiative and I wanted to support her."

Herrera has been able to source food donations from family members and other local organizations, he said.

Herrera then volunteered to be a part of the Guard's COVID-19 response and was helping deliver medical supplies on duty while delivering food during his off time.

What began as a small operation has evolved into a team of 16 people that has delivered about 61,000 pounds of food to 3,750 people in southwestern Connecticut since March 7, according to the team's tracking data. Herrera, 19, and his family have also helped provide resources to 30 families back in Colombia.

Herrera's team has also delivered to several COVID-positive people, leaving food at their doors for a contactless delivery, he said.

"We use social media which really helps spread the word, so people who need the food are able to reach out to us," said Herrera. "What we've been seeing is low-income families or people who lost their jobs and need help."

The increase in support helped the operation continue while Herrera provided care to



U.S. Army Spc. Juan Herrera, 142nd Area Support Medical Company combat medic, poses for a picture at the Veterans Memorial Armed Forces Reserve Center in Danbury, Connecticut, June 24, 2020. In addition to providing care to COVID-19 patients and distributing medical equipment in his role as a Connecticut National Guardsman, Herrera has helped spearhead a grassroots effort to deliver food to local families in need during the pandemic. (photo by Staff Sgt. Steven Tucker)

COVID-19 patients at Stamford Hospital. There, he was part of a team of Guard medical personnel supporting a U.S. Army Reserve, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Air Force Urban

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Connecticut Guardian, contact the editor
directly.*

Connecticut Guardian

360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105-3795
Phone: (860) 524-4858, DSN: 636-7857
E-Mail: timothy.r.koster.civ@mail.mil

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Contributors

103rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

130th Public Affairs Det., CTARNG

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First Company Governors Foot Guard

Second Company Governors Foot Guard

The *Connecticut Guardian* is an authorized publication for and in the interest of, the personnel of the Connecticut National Guard, State Military Department, State Militia and their families. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the CTNG Hartford Public Affairs Office and is not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, and the Department of the Army or the Department of the Air Force. *Connecticut Guardian* is published monthly in accordance with AR 360-1 and is printed through the Government Printing Office. **Deadline for the August issue is July 20th.**



Army National Guard Soldiers prepare a 660-gallon Bambi Bucket for use under a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter during fire bucket training conducted by aviators from the New York and Connecticut Army National Guards on Tuesday, May 19 at Camp Smith Training Site in Cortlandt Manor, N.Y. Twelve Soldiers were trained during the day-long joint training mission. The training is done annually to prepare for fire season. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Pietrantonio.)

NY and CT UH-60 crews conduct fire-bucket training

1st Lt. Lauren Warner
New York National Guard

CORTLANDT MANOR, N.Y. — UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crews from the New York and Connecticut Army National Guard spent May 19 honing the skills needed to turn a helicopter into a firefighting machine at the New York National Guard's Camp Smith Training Site.

Twelve Soldiers flew three UH-60s to practice scooping up, flying and dumping 2.8 tons of water onto a simulated fire using the Hudson River as both a water source and a target.

The purpose of water bucket training is to coordinate, train and recertify pilots between New York and Connecticut to assist with fighting wildfires. Helicopter crews that may be needed to fight fires have to train with the buckets each spring.

"The most important thing about this mission is building relationships between states and in the future, if we are called upon to work together, we are able to work together seamlessly," said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Peter Haack, a New York Army National Guard pilot from Southold.

The joint exercise was the result of a 2019 Emergency Management Interstate Compact between New York Gov.

Andrew M. Cuomo and Connecticut Gov. Edward Lamont.

"Connecticut is our neighbor to the east, and there are many issues we are dealing with that are enhanced when we work cooperatively," Cuomo said.

The states agreed to conduct an exercise to test their response to a brush fire that crosses state lines.

The last time New York deployed National Guard helicopters on a firefighting mission was in July 2018. Two New York Army National Guard UH-60 helicopters were called to a forest fire in Flat Rock State Forest in Altona, where the aircrews dropped 126,000 gallons of water on the 526-acre fire over three days.

To fight fires, helicopters sling the orange collapsible bucket underneath the UH-60.

The 660-gallon bucket weighs over 250 pounds with no water. It takes at least two people to open the bucket for operational use.

The bucket is attached to a cargo hook on the aircraft and then an electrical connection is made to operate the bucket. A switch is engaged to open the bladder of the bucket and dispense the water over a designated area.

For this training exercise, the Black Hawks followed a

route over the Hudson River, just below the Bear Mountain Bridge, with the bucket slung below the aircraft. The bucket was lowered into the river, filled up, and the water was dispensed at the target location.

This equipment is used to put out wildfires and structure fires, and to set up additional water sources, Haack said.

The training exercise was especially valuable because many of the Connecticut aviators are in the same unit as the New Yorkers, the 3rd Battalion 142nd Aviation, Haack explained.

The battalion's Charlie Company is part of the Connecticut Army National Guard.

"They are our sister company. So, we get to achieve commonality working between the units, face time and partnership between both units," Haack said.

Members of the New York Guard fly together on a regular basis and are aware of their strengths and weaknesses Haack said.

Now, that they are able to partner with Connecticut, they are able to learn their differences and work toward becoming a more efficient, cohesive unit, he added.

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Connecticut and the Battle of Gettysburg

Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Robert Cody
Contributor

The small state of Connecticut sent over 50,000 men to the Union Army during the Civil War, which represented 47% of men between the ages of 15 and 50. They were organized into thirty regiments of infantry, one of cavalry, and two of heavy artillery, as well as three batteries of light artillery. The state's soldiers fought in every major engagement of the war: from Bull Run to Antietam and Gettysburg, in General William Tecumseh Sherman's march on Atlanta and through the Carolinas, to the final days before Petersburg and Richmond.

Roughly 1,270 men from Connecticut were at the Battle of Gettysburg. Around 340 men, almost a third, became casualties over the course of the three day battle. One of the army's eight corps commanders, Major General John Sedgwick was from Connecticut. Sedgwick, who was the second most senior general in the Union Army commanded the Sixth Corps. He was killed in September 1864 at the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse, becoming the most senior Union officer to be killed in action. When General Grant heard the news, he could hardly believe it. "Is he really dead?" he asked, later remarking that Sedgwick's death was "greater than the loss of a whole division of troops."

Perhaps the most famous and hardest-hit regiment was the Connecticut 14th, which arrived at the Battle of Antietam after only a few weeks of training. Antietam was the bloodiest single day of the Civil War and the 14th regiment suffered the highest casualties of any Connecticut regiment of the war. At the Battle of Gettysburg, the 14th gained some degree of redemption. Protecting one of the most important points of the Union line, the men withstood Confederate Major General George Pickett's famous charge on July 3, 1863. Soldiers of the regiment leaped over a stone wall, and captured six enemy battle flags. Three men from the regiment, Corporal Christopher Flynn and Private Elijah Bacon of Company K and Sergeant Major William B. Hincks received the Congressional Medal of Honor for valor.

New Haven businessman Lieutenant Colonel Henry Merwin commanded the 27th Connecticut at the Battle of Gettysburg. Major James H. Coburn took command when Merwin was mortally wounded during the charge across the Wheatfield on July 2. Colonel Warren W. Packer of Groton commanded the 5th Connecticut Infantry at the Battle of Gettysburg. It brought 324 men to the battle. The 17th Connecticut was commanded at the Battle of Gettysburg by Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Fowler. He was killed on July 1st, and Major Allen Brady took command. The regiment brought 386 men to Gettysburg, and lost 20 men killed, 81 wounded and 96 missing. Captain John William Sterling,



13-inch seacoast mortars of Federal Battery No. 4 with officers of 1st Connecticut Heavy Artillery, near Yorktown, Virginia, 1862 – Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

a Bridgeport merchant, commanded the Second Battery at the Battle of Gettysburg. It brought 106 men to the field, of whom three were wounded and two missing. The battery was armed with four 14-pound James Rifles and two 12-pound howitzers. It was the only Federal battery to be armed with either type of piece at Gettysburg.

There are monuments honoring the five Connecticut infantry regiments and the one artillery battery that fought on the Gettysburg battlefield. Photographs and descriptions can be found at the website, Stone Sentinels at <https://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/union-monuments/connecticut/>

As Abraham Lincoln put it in the Gettysburg Address, they "gave their lives that the nation might live."

Brig Gen Cody retired from the CTARNG in 2014 and currently teaches 7th Grade US History in Stamford. He may be reached at rmcody81@gmail.com for comments or article recommendations.

Fire

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Connecticut Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jonathan Behuniak, a member of Detachment 2, Company C, 3rd Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, was one of the pilots conducting the fire bucket training for the first time.

Behuniak, a facility instructor pilot based at Bradley International Airport, said that because a full bucket can weigh between 4,000 and 6,000 pounds, the pilot needs a heightened sense of awareness and must coordinate with all members of the crew.

"I just want to do the best job that I can. It is a new mission I have never done," Behuniak said.

The goal, Behuniak said, is to be able to respond within four hours to a fire in the northeast.

"This enhanced response time and training really helps everyone out. You have qualified crews on both sides of the border," Behuniak said.

"When it comes to it, we take a really deep self-pride in being able to help everyone out, our neighbors, our friends, our loved ones," Behuniak said.



A UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter maneuvers to drop water from a 660 gallon Bambi Bucket into the Hudson River during fire bucket training conducted by aviators from the New York and Connecticut Army National Guards on Tuesday, May 19 in Cortlandt Manor, N.Y. Twelve Soldiers were trained during the day-long joint training mission. The training is done annually to prepare for fire season. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Pietrantoni.)

Hererra

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Augmentation Medical Task Force and hospital staff during a patient surge.

Herrera, who arrived to the United States in 2017 and enlisted in 2019, was compelled to help his community in its time of need.

“I didn’t want to stay home and do nothing,” said Herrera. “Even if I hadn’t been put on orders, I would have still tried to help. I had even put in an application with Westport Volunteer Emergency Medical Service before I got orders.”

Herrera’s family has been a source of motivation for him to help both in and out of uniform.

“My mom says you should always help people no matter who they are because that makes a better world for everybody,” Herrera said.

Herrera hopes to see his community do the little things to support one another as they navigate these challenging times. In the long run the little things can make a big difference.

“I asked one Major at the hospital what I could do for patients when we go to their rooms,” said Herrera. “He told me to just pay attention to the little things, whether that’s giving them a blanket or filling their water cup. I just want people to be kind and listen to one another. You may not get something back in return directly, but it can help provide a better community for everybody.”

BENEFITS

Connecticut National Guard Soldiers receive full-time benefits for their part-time service, these include:

- Free tuition to Connecticut State Colleges
- Monthly paycheck
- Student loan repayment (up to \$50K)
- Affordable insurance - health, dental, life
- Montgomery G.I. Bill
- Federal Tuition Assistance
- Enlistment bonuses available if qualified
- Retirement benefits and Thrift Savings Plan
- Paid training and job experience



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ESGR

ESGR's Awards Program Recognizes Supportive Employers

Thad Martin, Chair
CT Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

The Department of Defense will soon recognize the 15 recipients with the 2020 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, the highest honor presented by the U.S. government to employers for their outstanding support to their employees serving in the National Guard and Reserve.

Freedom Award nomination season begins Oct. 1 and closes Dec. 31. ESGR committees then review the nominations and submit their recommendations to advance in three categories - small employer, large employer and public sector. Finally, a national selection board made up of senior Department of Defense officials, business leaders and previous Freedom Award recipients select up to 15 employers to receive this prestigious honor.

Since the award was instituted in 1996, 280 employers have been recognized at annual ceremonies in Washington, D.C. Among those employers were three Connecticut winners - General Electric (2004), Cigna (2015) and Ever-source (2019).

Recognizing supportive employers is a vital component of ESGR's mission to develop and promote supportive work environments for Reserve Component service members. Its 54 committees actively promote the awards program, which advances employer support and strengthens the relationship between service members and their employers. In addition to the Freedom Award, it includes:

- Patriot Award. Any service member or a spouse may nominate individual supervisors for this award, which represents efforts made to support Guard and Reserve employees, including flexible schedules, time off prior to and after deployment, care for families and leaves of absences if needed;

- Seven Seals Award, given at a committee chair's discretion to recognize significant individuals or organizational achievement, initiative or support that promotes ESGR's mission;
- Above and Beyond Award, presented by a state/territory ESGR committee to employers at the local level who go "above and beyond" the legal requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. Additionally, an employer must have had at least one Patriot Award recipient and have signed an ESGR Statement of Support to be eligible;
- Pro Patria Award, an annual honor from each ESGR committee that recognizes one small, one large and one public sector employer in a state or territory; and
- Extraordinary Employer Support Award, which was created to acknowledge sustained employer support for military service. Only prior Freedom Award or Pro Patria award recipients who've demonstrated continued support are eligible for nomination.

Many of these awards are progressive and build on the previous honor and Connecticut ESGR Employer Outreach volunteers can help service members better understand the awards process and provide guidance throughout the nomination process.

Not every employer can be a Freedom Award winner, but we can work together to ensure employers have received all the recognition they deserve for their efforts to support their military employees and enhance defense readiness.

For more information on ESGR's awards program, con-



tact Connecticut ESGR Volunteer Support Technician Ben Beaudry at (860) 524-4970 or Benjamin.A.Beaudry.ctr@mail.mil. To speak with an ESGR Customer Service Center representative, call (800) 336-4590 and select Option "1."

As COVID-19 Mobilizations End, National Guard and Reserve Members Should Understand Their USERRA Rights and Responsibilities

Thad Martin, Chair
CT Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

Across Connecticut and around our nation, we've seen National Guard and Reserve men and women answer the call in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many reported for missions right here at home utilizing their military training to provide vital support to their communities and states.

Bottom line up front: If you are or have served as part of a COVID-19 response you are entitled to job protections when returning to your civilian employment.

What your orders say matters!

As you prepare for your transition, here are some frequently asked questions you might find useful:

Does a member of the National Guard or Reserves called to duty in response to the COVID-19 emergency have employment and reemployment protections under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)?

- Yes, if called to duty under federal authority. National Guard or Reserve duty under federal authority (such as Title 10 or Title 32) is covered by USERRA.

- National Guard duty under state authority, commonly referred to as State Active Duty, is not covered under USERRA. However, members of the Connecticut National Guard serving on State Active Duty have similar employment protections under state law and should contact the Judge Advocate General's office in Hartford for assistance.
- Note that the authority under which orders are issued can change, even in the course of a service member's performance of service.

Can a service member be furloughed or laid off upon return from uniformed service?

- Yes, if it is reasonably certain that he or she would have been furloughed or laid off had he or she not been absent for uniformed service.

If you believe this is not the case with your employer, reach out to ESGR so we might advise you on how to proceed.

For more information, contact Connecticut ESGR Volunteer Support Technician Ben Beaudry at (860) 524-4970 or Benjamin.A.Beaudry.ctr@mail.mil. To speak with an ESGR Customer Service Center representative, call (800) 336-4590 and select Option "1."



U.S. Army Spc. Christian Diaz, an engineer assigned to the 250th Multi-Role Bridge Company, prepares a breach charge during a training event at Stones Ranch Military Reservation in East Lyme, Connecticut, June 15, 2020. This two-day event was part of the unit's two-week annual training. The first day revolved around classroom instruction and breach charge construction followed by a day at the range to use the charges and simulate breaching doors and creating access points to buildings when one doesn't exist. (Photo by Tim Koster)

250th MRBC Conducts Urban Breach Training

Tim Koster
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

Soldiers assigned to the 250th Multi-Role Bridge Company conducted urban breach training at Stones Ranch Military Reservation June 15, 2020.

This two-day event was part of the unit's two-week annual training. The first day revolved around classroom instruction and breach charge construction followed by a day at the range to use the charges and simulate breaching doors and creating access points to buildings when one doesn't exist.

Although the Soldiers assigned to the 250th are bridge engineers, a basic understanding of demolition is one of the many skillsets they possess but don't get the opportunity to regularly put into practice.

"At basic training, when we're learning our job skill, we train with the 12B – which are combat engineers – and their primary [job] is to breach and blow things up," said Spc. Samantha Pozo, a bridge engineer assigned to the 250th MRBC, "so this is giving us the opportunity to brush up on our skills.

As a unit, we build bridges. We've done a couple of raft bridges, a couple of land bridges ... we're pretty proficient in building our bridges, so it's a fun experience to blow some things up and get some training we don't usually get. It's a good time."

Pozo also said most the demolition training her unit has

conducted in the past focused on larger explosives, such as C4, but reinforcing her breaching skills has been beneficial because it's a more realistic skillset she may be called upon to use on the modern battlefield.

Breaching charges are created using detonation cord, which consists of a high-explosive core wrapped in a waterproof plastic coating, and a blasting cap. The Soldiers constructed multiple charge shapes, such as one to wrap around a door handle and another to stick onto a wall. Each of these designs serve a different purpose, but with the same result: to give entry into an otherwise inaccessible location.

According to 1st Lt. Michael Fazzino, the officer in charge of the range, although demolition isn't a primary job skill for the 250th, part of the unit's strength comes from the versatility of its Soldiers, some of whom are qualified in multiple engineering Military Occupational Skills and cross-training in skill sets helps broaden the scope of each Soldier's knowledge.

This training event required the Soldiers to work in teams, allowing them to not only build their skills but also the bonds they share as Soldiers and teammates.

We train together and we fight together, said Pozo. There's been a lot of good teamwork and a lot of good camaraderie; it's been a good training and team building experience, that's for sure. Each of the teams have done a great job.



Soldiers assigned to the 250th Multi-Role Bridge Company detonate breach charges during a training event at Stones Ranch Military Reservation in East Lyme, Connecticut, June 15, 2020.

Retiree Voice

TRICARE for Life and Medicare work Together

Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie Cyr
Contributor

TRICARE for Life is a wraparound Medicare comprehensive health care coverage for TRICARE beneficiaries who have Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B. Beneficiaries are covered regardless of age or where you live. TRICARE for Life (TFL) allows the freedom to get medical care from any Medicare-participating or non-participating provider. Beneficiaries can also see care at a military hospital or clinic if space is available. Make the most of your health coverage by knowing how TFL and Medicare work together.

After receiving medical care, Medicare-providing providers file your claim with Medicare. After Medicare pays its portion, the claim is automatically forwarded to TRICARE. If there is other health insurance, its portion will be paid. TRICARE will pay after Medicare and the other health insurance has paid. TFL and Medicare work together to minimize your out of pocket expenses.

You will not have out of pocket expenses when seeking care from a Medicare participating or non-participating providers when the costs are covered by both TFL and Medicare.

Medicare is the primary payer and approves healthcare services for payment. Sometimes, there are health expenses which may not be covered by TFL and/or Medicare. If Medicare doesn't approve a service because it has determined the service to not be medically necessary, TFL will also not pay. If Medicare denies a claim, you can appeal. If Medicare reverses its decision, and provides coverage, then TFL will also reconsider. In the event Medicare does not pay for a service because you have used up your Medicare benefits, TFL becomes the primary payer. You will then be responsible for your TFL deductible and cost-share. In addition, Medicare limits the amount and cost of care it covers. TFL may cover these costs after Medicare benefits run out.

Sometimes health services are provided where the provider does not participate in Medicare. The provider cannot bill Medicare, TFL will process the claim as the second

payer unless you have other insurance. TFL will pay its portion of the amount as if Medicare had processed the claim. The individual will be responsible for the remainder of the billed charges. As a side note, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) providers can't bill Medicare.

There are medical services that are covered by Medicare only. For example, Medicare covers up to 20 acupuncture treatments yearly, and chiropractic services that are not covered by TRICARE. TFL will pay nothing. You are responsible for the Medicare deductible and cost-shares. The website, www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/IsItCovered, lists specific services covered by TRICARE.

Conversely, Medicare does not cover services received outside the United States and U.S. territories. TFL becomes the primary payer when health services are received overseas. There might be no limit to the amount that nonparticipating out of network providers may bill. TFL will pay, but the recipient of care is responsible to pay any amount that exceeds TRICARE's allowable charges, in addition to the deductible and cost-shares. It is important to remember that when services are not covered by Medicare or TRICARE, you are responsible for the entire bill.

Since TFL is the only overseas payer, you should be prepared to pay the entire bill upfront for services. You then submit a claim to TRICARE Overseas Program claims processor. You must include proof of payment.

Knowing how TFL and Medicare work together can save time and money, not to mention unanticipated or non-covered procedures or services. It is important to know what each entity covers and what costs may be the insured individual's responsibility.

TRICARE publishes a handbook each year which explains its coordination with Medicare. It is free and easy to download from the TRICARE website. Just google Tricare for Life. The website TRICARE4u has excellent resources for navigating TFL.

TFL and Medicare work together to provide retired military financial support for medical services. It is important that beneficiaries keep informed about services covered, and costs to avoid larger medical bills than necessary.

CONNECTICUT NATIONAL GUARD HELPLINE



In an effort to support the needs of our service members and their families, the Connecticut National Guard has a 24-hour HELPLINE.

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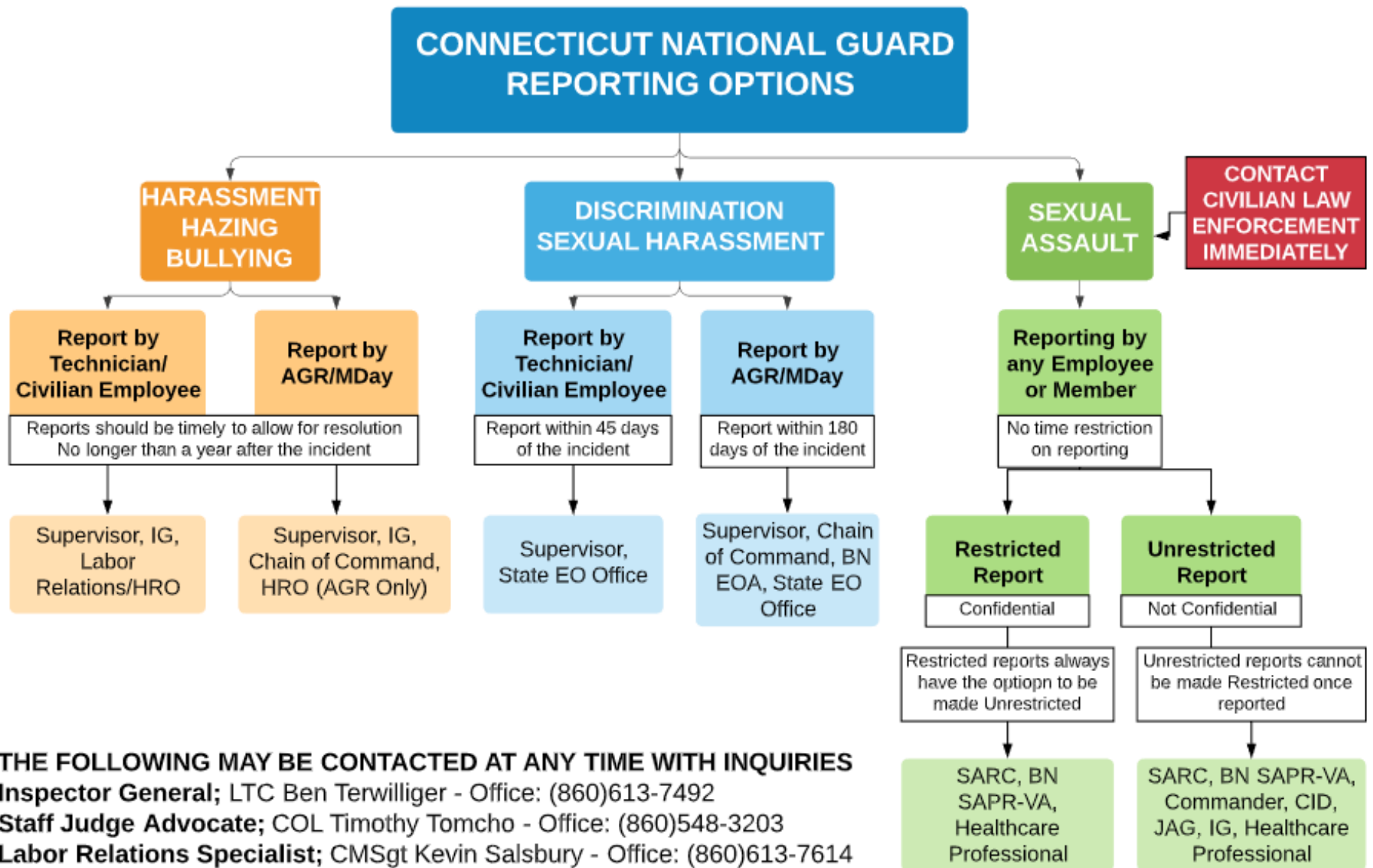
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State Chaplain; Lt Col Eric Wismar - Office: (860)548-3240; Cell: (860)883-5278



Soldiers use a Bridge Erection Boat to move a section of the Improved Ribbon Bridge along the Thames River in New London, Connecticut June 11, 2020. This training provided opportunities for the Soldiers to refine and improve their bridge building skills in a semi-uncontrolled environment. (Photo by Tim Koster)

250th MRBC Conducts Bridging Operations Training

Tim Koster
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

Soldiers assigned to the Connecticut National Guard's 250th Multi-Role Bridge Company conducted wet and dry bridging operations training along the Thames River in New London and Stones Ranch Military Reservation, respectively, June 11, 2020.

On the Thames River, these Soldiers used a small fleet of Bridge Erection Boats to construct an Improved Ribbon Bridge, a collection of interchangeable floating raft sections that can be assembled into various configurations to serve a multitude of purposes.

The IRB team started the day by practicing the construction a five-float raft, a configuration of three bridge sections and two ramps. Once created, the Soldiers can use the Bridge Erection Boats to push the float from one shore to another, giving the military a solution to transporting vehicles, troops, and supplies across otherwise impassable bodies of water.

The unit chose the Thames River for this training exercise because of the increased complexity of working on a moving body of water.

"Unlike lakes and ponds, this actually has a current so it gives a lot more training value," said Staff Sgt. Joshua Liskiewicz, team leader for the 250th. "You get a little more challenge on moving water."

"Working against the current is tough," said Spc. Daniel Lovallo, boat operator, adding: Constantly having to keep the boat in check to counter it to construct the bridge is full of challenges and everyone needs to work together as a team to ensure success.

Each team is comprised of Soldiers who fill three roles: the build crew, deck hands, and boat operators. The build crew is responsible for taking the individual raft pieces and fitting them together in the desired configuration. After the rafts have been deposited into the water, the deck hands tie off the bridge pieces to the boat for transportation. And the boat operators drive the boats to maneuver the floats to the assembly area.

With the inevitable turnover of Soldiers throughout the year – due to completed contracts and professional broadening assignments - training events like this allow experienced engineers to refine their skills and new Soldiers to learn from their seasoned counterparts.

"We are coming to a point where Soldiers progress and their career paths take them in different directions," said Liskiewicz. "So, when we have new soldiers, we like to get them out there and start training because the faster we can get them to know what we know, the better off we are."

Meanwhile, at Stones Ranch, other members of the 250th worked together to construct a Dry Support Bridge. The DSB is a static bridge that allows military units to cross gaps

in terrain up to nearly 151 feet wide.

Like the IRB, the DSB is constructed in segments and requires a significant level of teamwork and communication to ensure a safe and timely execution of its construction. With a well-trained team, the bridge can be erected in ninety-minutes, but as a training event, the unit spanned the bridge construction over multiple days to maximize the learning opportunities for both seasoned and new Soldiers.

"Our communication is top notch," said Cpl. Ostap Lisowitch, a crane operator in training. "Everyone understands safety is the most important thing. If we need to go slow, we go slow and make sure everyone is safe, we don't break anything on the bridge, and everything gets done properly."

By the end of the unit's annual training, both teams will be more proficient in their bridging skills which can be instrumental in both overseas tactical and stateside civil emergency scenarios, proving the Connecticut National Guard with critical capabilities in their dual state and federal missions.



A Soldier assigned to the 250th Multi-Role Bridge Company ground guide's a humvee across the unit's Dry Support Bridge they constructed at Stones Ranch Military Reservation, June, 11, 2020. (Photo by Tim Koster)

COVID
CORONAVIRUS
DISEASE
19

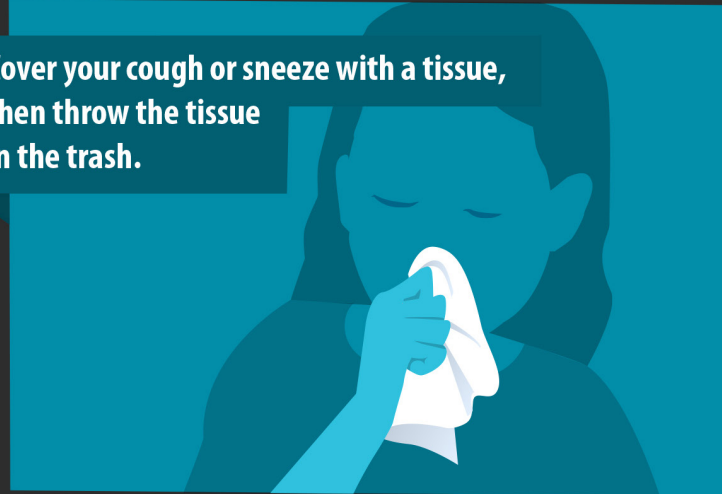
STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

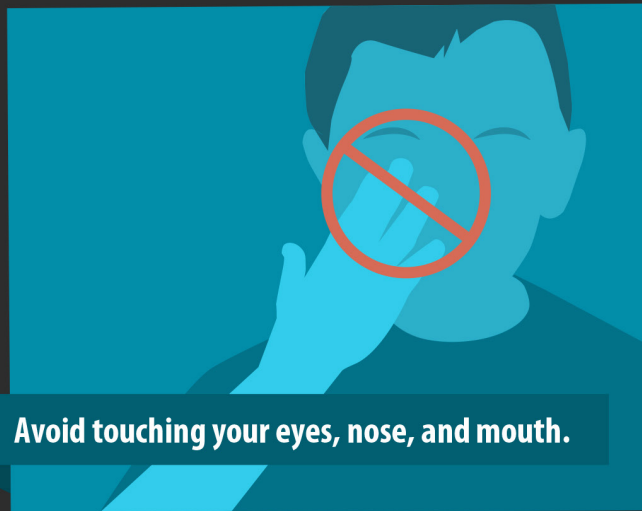
Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

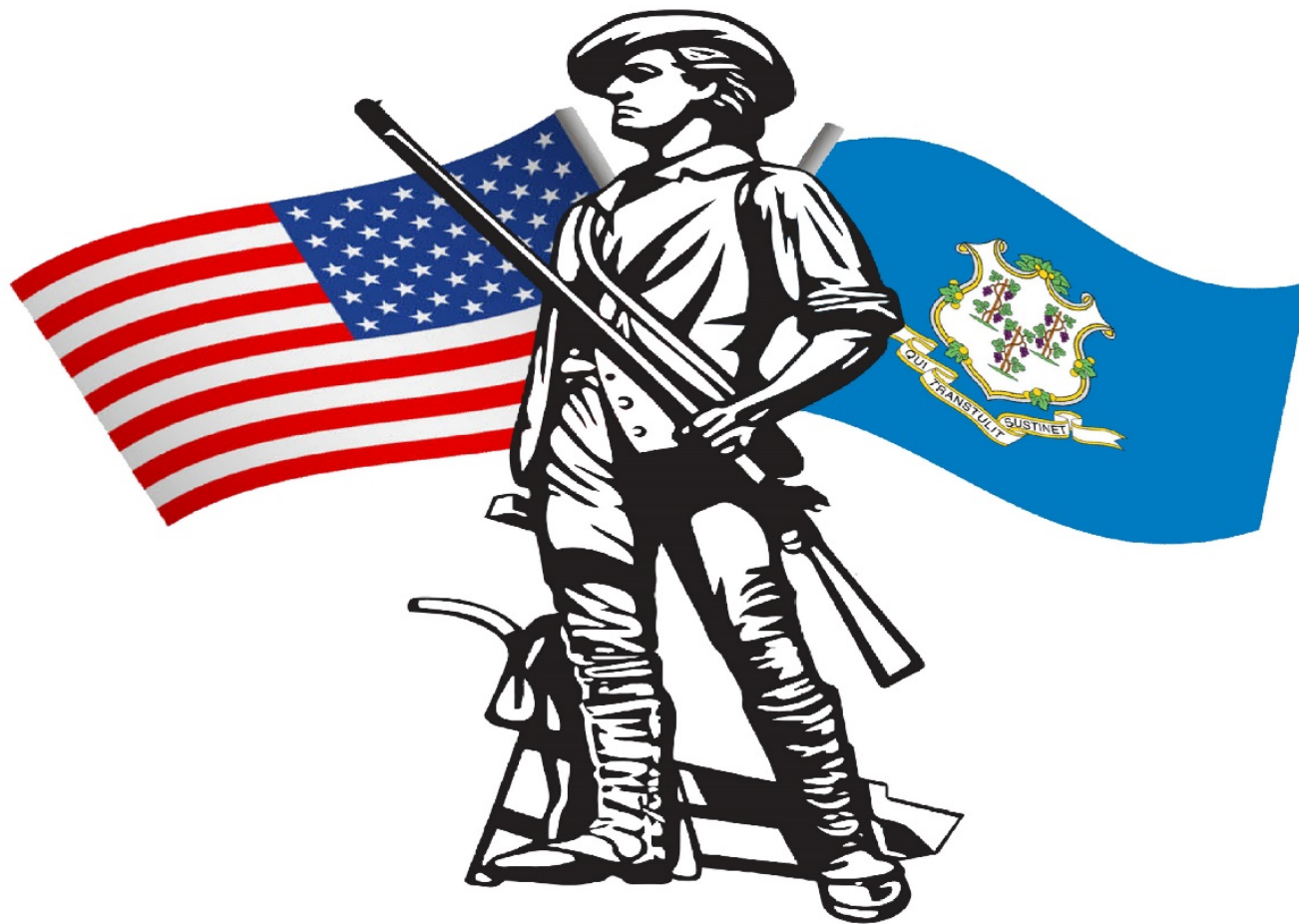


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Senior Airman John Donnelly, III is one of many Guardsmen who have been called to state active duty in response to the COVID-19 crisis. During an interview, Donnelly discussed his experience in the Guard. (Photo by Tech Sgt. Tamara Dabney)

Airman Highlight: Senior Airman John Donnelly, III

Tech Sgt. Tamara Dabney
103rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Senior Airman John Donnelly, III grew up watching his father serve in the Connecticut Air National Guard. Following in his father's footsteps, the recently promoted Senior Airman joined the Guard in 2017 and is currently assigned to the 103rd Civil Engineer Squadron. Like his father, Donnelly is well on his way to having an impactful and enduring career in the Guard.

Donnelly is one of many Guardsmen who have been called to state active duty in response to the COVID-19

crisis. His first COVID-19 mission was in April, when he and fellow members of 103rd CES went to Stanford Hospital to set up 250 beds for patient overflow. During an interview, the 20-year-old Connecticut native discussed his experience with the COVID-19 response and how his career in the Guard has enhanced his life, both personally and professionally.

Interviewer: What thoughts went through your mind when you first heard about the COVID-19 pandemic? Did you think you would be called to respond?

Donnelly: I knew there was a possibility, but I did not

expect it to get this big. Knowing the state of New York, I figured, once it grew there, it had a good possibility of coming here and us also being affected by it.

Interviewer: This is your first time on state active duty, right? How do you feel?

Donnelly: I'm definitely excited to see the full power of the Air National Guard being used, especially for state and domestic needs. So I was excited for that and I was excited to get out of quarantine and stay busy helping out the peo-



Master Sgt. Jon Favreau, assigned to the 103rd Air Wing, poses for pictures with his child at Bradley Air National Guard Base, Nov. 7, 2019. The 103rd Air Wing returned from a four month deployment to Kuwait in support of Operations Spartan Shield and Inherent Resolve. (Photo by Tim Koster)

Parenting Resources for Managing at Home During COVID-19

Military OneSource

Coronavirus disease 2019 restrictions are beginning to relax. However, many parents are still working and teaching their children at home. And that can be exhausting. The Department of Defense is committed to helping you manage. Add some new activities to your toolkit. Try some apps for self-care. And reach out for support if you need it. Here are resources to help you stay the course.

Activities resources

For preschool age children:

- The National Head Start Association has ideas for learning at home.
- Sesame Street for Military Families has many resources. Find videos, items to print, mobile apps, games and activities. There is even a section on health emergencies.
- ZERO TO THREE is about babies and toddlers. Try the At-Home Activity Guide. See “Explore Our Topics” on the homepage. Check out videos and articles. Learn about early learning, play, sleep, discipline and more.
- THRIVE provides free online parenting support. It comes from the Department of Defense and the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State. The new program helps with raising children 0-18. It features healthy recipes, online family support and much more.

For youth and teens:

- You may be schooling at home. Your children may be finishing the year online.

But free online learning resources can help. The Morale, Welfare and Recreation Digital Library, for example, has resources for all ages.

- Another resource for military youth and teens is Military Kids Connect. It lets children connect to an online community of other military kids. It has teen-led tours, a message board and more. Try this link they suggest for some fun NASA activities to do at home.

Resilience resources

- Military families know that life challenges can inspire us to be our best selves. This time at home lets us practice stress-management skills and try new tools. These resources can build resilience:
- These recommended wellness apps are free. You can use them on your mobile device. So they can go with you anywhere. Some are designed for service members and parents. Others are designed for children, like Parenting2Go, and Sesame Street’s Breathe, Think, Do.
- The Department of Defense provides free, confidential, non-medical counseling to service members and their families. Licensed counselors are available 24/7. Learn more or call 800-342-9647. Online chat and OCONUS call options are also available.
- Stay up to date on all the latest information on COVID-19. For updates and information specific to your location, visit your installation’s official website. You can also follow your installation’s Facebook, Twitter or Instagram platforms. For Department of Defense updates for the military community, visit Defense.gov, follow Military OneSource’s Facebook, Twitter and Instagram platforms, and continue to check the Coronavirus Updates for Our Military Community page for updates.

Donnelly

Cont. from page 13

ple that need help in these hospitals. It's a good experience.

Interviewer: What inspired you to join the Guard?

Donnelly: There's a lot of reasons why I wanted to join the Guard. One is to serve the great state of Connecticut. My father was a Guardsman here in the Civil Engineer Squadron for almost 20 years. It's just a great experience that not a lot of people will have the privilege to have. So, just taking that into consideration, I thought it'd be best to pursue it and join something that can help people and help our state and our country.

Interviewer: Traditional Guardsmen, such as yourself, typically have a lot of things going on other than serving in the Guard? What are you involved in outside of the Guard?

Donnelly: I'm a sophomore at UConn, I'll be finishing

up my sophomore year in May. I'm a civil engineering major right now. As difficult as that may seem, it's exciting. It's something I want to pursue and it's something that may help my career in the Guard. With that in mind, I am involved in a bunch of extra-curricular activities, such as I joined a fraternity on campus- Sigma Phi Epsilon; I'm the Executive Secretary in that. I'm also part of a Greek Bible study that I created with a missionary on campus as part of FOCUS [Fellowship of Christian University Students]. I play recreational lacrosse and I help coach youth programs.

Interviewer: You are a member of the Civil Engineer Squadron and you're majoring in civil engineering at UConn. Have you always been interested in civil engineering?

Donnelly: I think I knew I wanted to become an engineer, just due to how much I liked math and science in high school. I really didn't know much about civil engineering and then I applied to the program at UConn and

got accepted. I think the combination of my experience in the Guard and my time at UConn studying civil engineering has really meshed well together and I see it as something I enjoy and I look forward to pursuing.

Interviewer: How would you characterize your overall experience with the Guard?

Donnelly: It's given me a lot of opportunities that not a lot of younger kids have coming out of high school. I was able to help plan projects that we were doing on DFTs [Deployment for Training], like in Hawaii and certain projects around the base, so that gave me some project management and planning experience. That's nice to put on a resume and it's helped me get through internships pretty early on in my UConn career. And then, personally, it's just allowed me to grow as a leader. It's taught me discipline, taught me how to respect my elders and just respect the environment that I'm in and just do my very best in everything that I do.

OneSource, family and spouse programs still available

Department of Defense

The Department of Defense is closely monitoring the impact of the new coronavirus on service members, their families and survivors. Resources offered through Military OneSource, the Military and Family Life Counseling program and the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program continue to serve the military community.

"We are working hard to provide timely and accurate updates and helpful resources for our service members and their families," said Kim Joiner, deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy. "Our families can feel confident about finding official information and guidance on our websites and social media platforms. While we have made necessary changes in response to this pandemic, one thing remains the same – our commitment to serving our military community."

What's new

- A dedicated section is available on Military OneSource to keep service members and their families informed about the impacts of COVID-19 on the military community.
- Beginning March 24, Military OneSource will offer nonmedical video counseling for children and youth who may feel overwhelmed by the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Military OneSource will be live on Facebook Monday through Friday at noon EST to highlight available resources. All videos will be available for on-demand viewing.

What's the Same

- Military OneSource is available 24/7/365 to help service members and their families manage stress and challenges related to COVID-19, as well as provide non-medical counseling and support. Call 800-342-9647 or connect via live chat.
- Military OneSource specialty consultations, such as relationship support, new MilParent support, health and wellness coaching and more.
- Financial counseling and MilTax services.
- Language services, including real-time interpretation and translation services.
- Access to resilience tools, including CoachHub, Moodhacker and Love Every Day.
- Access to the MWR Digital Library including education and entertainment resources.
- SECO career coaches remain available. Call 800-342-9647 or connect through live chat to schedule an appointment.
- Online SECO tools and resources remain available, including My Individual Career Plan, or MyICP, the Research Occupations Tool, the Scholarship Finder, the College Scorecard Tool, MySECO Resume Builder, and more.
- SECO online events and webinars are still active, including the Military Spouse Employment Partnership Partner Connect discussion and the Virtual Military Spouse Symposium.



What's Changed

- Nonmedical Counseling: While Military OneSource continues to offer non-medical counseling by telephone (800-342-9647) and online via secure chat and video, in-person counseling may be affected or unavailable depending on state and local policies. Families are encouraged to check with their local providers to confirm.

Military OneSource, a DoD-funded program, is both a call center and website that provides comprehensive information, support and resources on every aspect of military life. Service members and the immediate family of active duty, National Guard and Reserve (regardless of activation status), survivors and DoD expeditionary civilians are eligible for Military OneSource. Veterans and their immediate family members are eligible for Military OneSource up to 365 days post-separation or retirement. All services are available at no cost.

Air Force Recruiting Service solidifies Total Force partnership with Air National Guard

Master Sgt. Chance Babin
Air Force Recruiting Service Public Affairs

In an historic milestone for the Total Force recruiting enterprise, Air Force Recruiting Service and Air National Guard Recruiting and Retention signed a mutual support agreement that will combine resources and integrate staff to enhance marketing and advertising.

“This is another leap forward in our journey to have one Total Force recruiting effort,” said Maj. Gen. Ed Thomas, AFRS commander. “Having our Air National Guard join forces under the same, single contract with Air Force Recruiting Service will drive even greater collaboration and ensure we work as one world-class team getting the message out about serving full time or part time in the Air Force.”

For the Guard, this contract will enhance opportunities to reach a broader audience and strengthen the Air Force brand.

“This collaboration between the Air National Guard and Air Force Recruiting Service is the most significant integration initiative to date for marketing and represents a long term relationship that will bolster brand awareness and lead generation for both components for years to come,” said Brig. Gen. April Vogel, the National Guard Bureau’s Manpower, Personnel, Recruiting and Services director. “The ANG is excited about the expanded reach this partnership with AFRS and its commercial partners brings to the Guard.”

For the ANG and AFRS, the support agreement boosts their ability to reach potential applicants and inform them on the opportunities to serve full time or part time.

“This support agreement between the ANG and AFRS recruiting is unprecedented – we’re literally making history. I can see this effort opening the door for other partnership opportunities within the Air Force, as whole Total Force,” said Lt. Col. Jacob Chisolm, AFRS Strategic Marketing Division deputy. “This support agreement allows ANG and AFRS to pool our resources, creating a synergistic effect that will foster ingenuity and innovation across the components by forcing us out of our comfort zones and opening our eyes to new ways of doing business.”

The Air Force is embarking on a Total Force recruiting enterprise approach to recruit the nation’s best talent. Recently the Air Force Reserve officially became the fourth group with AFRS as part of a classic association.

“The return on investment from this joint venture will be more significant than our previous individual efforts,” Vogel added. “A Total Force initiative like this strengthens our ANG missions. It helps contribute to a unified message across the components because we recruit together, train together and fight together—one Air Force, with multiple ways to serve.”

The ANG’s advertising contract expired just over 10 months ago, so getting back to having a contract and being able to have a consolidated message will allow the ANG to get the word out about opportunities to serve in the Guard.

“By combining our resources – funding, time and talent – we will be able to deliver a product that does a much better job of telling the Total Force Air Force story and educating the American public on opportunities to serve in our Air Force, full time or part time,” Chisolm said. “I don’t want to speak for the ANG, but I’m sure they’re very excited to ‘turn the lights back on’ and get their message out to the American public. I’m just happy we’re able to use the contracts and relationships we already have in place to give an assist.”

For the ANG, now having a marketing contract means they can start planning campaigns to spread the word about opportunities in the Guard.

“Joining the integrated marketing contract not only allows the Air National Guard to join AFRS for Total Force advertising and events at the national level, but we’ll also have local marketing plans for the 54 states and territories where we have units,” said Col. Nashid Salahuddin, ANG Recruiting and Retention Division chief. “In the coming months we’ll be working with states to develop and implement their plans.”

Another move that is taking place is adding ANG personnel to the AFRS marketing team at Headquarters AFRS. The Air Force Reserve made this move roughly a year ago as part of the Total Force Recruiting initiative.

“To support our integration efforts with AFRS the Air National Guard will integrate additional staff positions at AFRS,” said Col. Shaunte Cooper, ANG Advisor to the AFRS



Air Force Recruiting Service and Air National Guard Recruiting and Retention signed a mutual support agreement that will combine resources and integrate staff to enhance marketing and advertising. Events like the Virginia Air National Guard attending the GRIT Fitness Festival at the Hampton Roads Convention Center March 7, 2020, will now have Air Force recruiters representing the service’s Total Force; regular Air Force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Lucretia Cunningham)

commander and AFRS integration chief. “The focus this year are positions in the marketing division to support the integrated marketing contract.”

Working on this agreement has been a process and has taken some time, but it was important to both parties that the deal get done.

“Because AFRS is subordinate to Air Education and Training Command, all support agreements are managed by the AETC/A4 Readiness Program office. The program manager, Brian Sharp, was very helpful in keeping us on task and abreast of any changes or requirements needed to keep our package moving in the right direction,” Chisolm said. “The biggest lesson learned is that constant communication is a must. The approval process required a preliminary review by both component’s comptroller, logistics and legal teams. This step was instrumental in making sure the final coordination went smoothly.”

In addition to recruiting for the regular Air Force, the Air Force Reserve and the Air National Guard, Total Force recruiting also encompasses the Air Force Academy admissions, Air Force Civilian Service and Air Force ROTC. The Air Force now recruits for America’s newest military branch, the U.S. Space Force.

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Service Member and Family Support Center Staff Directory



William A. O'Neill Armory: 360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105

Open Monday-Friday

Director, Service Member and Family Support Center	Kimberly Hoffman	kimberly.j.hoffman.civ@mail.mil	(800) 858-2677
Deputy Director	Melody Baber	melodycheyenne.c.baber.civ@mail.mil	(860) 548-3276 (desk) (860) 883-2515 (cell)
Family Assistance Center Coordinator	Andrea Lathrop	andrea.e.lathrop.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 524-4938 (desk) (860) 883-6934 (cell)
Family Assistance Center Specialist	Olga Castellanos	olga.i.castellanos.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 493-2797 (desk) (860) 883-6949 (cell)
Family Assistance Center Specialist	Vacant		(860) 524-4897 (desk) ☐
Senior Family Readiness Support Assistant	Linda Rolstone	linda.b.rolstone.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 524-4963 (desk) (860) 680-2209 (cell)
Family Readiness Support Assistant	Joy Tyler	joy.a.tyler.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 548-3283 (desk)
ARNG Yellow Ribbon Program	SPC Matthew Yotka	matthew.t.yotka.mil@mail.mil	(860) 493-2796 (desk) (860) 500-3058 (cell)
Lead Child & Youth Program Coordinator	Michelle McCarty	michelle.m.mccarty4.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 548-3254 (desk) (860) 883-6953 (cell)
Survivor Outreach Services Coordinator	Jason Perry	jason.t.perry.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 548-3258 (desk)
Military OneSource Consultant	Scott McLaughlin	scott.mclaughlin@militaryonesource.com	(860) 493-2722 (desk) (860) 502-5416 (cell)
Personal Financial Counselor	Reggie Harwell	pfc.ct.ng@zeiders.com	(203) 233-8790 (cell)
State Support Chaplain	Lt Col Eric Wismar	eric.a.wismar.mil@mail.mil	(860) 548-3240 (desk)
Transition Assistance Advisor	Fausto Parra	fausto.g.parra.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 524-4908 (desk)
Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve	Sean Brittell	sean.r.brittell.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 548-3295 (desk)
Connecticut Military Relief Fund	Russell Bonaccorso	russell.bonaccorso@ct.gov	(860) 524-4968 (desk)
Citizen Soldier For Life Career Readiness Counselor - Hartford	Peter Orschiedt	porschiedt@patriotenterprisesllc.com	(860) 524-4894 (desk)
Citizen Soldier For Life Career Readiness Counselor - Middletown	Donna Calvi	dcalvi.csfl@gmail.com	(860) 613-7568 (desk)

Windsor Locks Readiness Center: 85-300 Light Lane, Windsor Locks, CT 06096

Open Monday-Friday

Family Assistance Center Specialist	Lisa Middlebrook	lisa.n.middlebrook.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 292-4601 (desk) (860) 883-2704 (cell)
Family Assistance Center Specialist	Steven Czelusniak	steven.e.czelusniak.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 292-4602 (desk)

Veterans' Memorial Armed Forces Reserve Center: 90 Wooster Heights Road, Danbury, CT 06810

Open Monday-Friday

Family Assistance Center Specialist	Nancy Cummings	nancy.a.cummings.ctr@mail.mil	(203) 205-5050 (desk) (860) 883-2746 (cell)
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New London Armory: 249 Bayonet Street, New London, CT 06320

Open Monday-Friday

Family Assistance Center Specialist	Michelle Powell	michelle.powell12.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 772-1422 (desk) (860) 221-5540 (cell)
Citizen Soldier For Life Career Readiness Counselor	Kara Fernandez	karafernandez.csfl@gmail.com	(800) 858-2677

103rd Airlift Wing: 100 Nicholson Road, East Granby, CT 06026

Open Monday-Friday

Airman and Family Readiness Program Manager	Kasey Timberlake	kasey.b.timberlake.civ@mail.mil	(860) 292-2730 (desk) (860) 462-0379 (cell)
Family Assistance Center Specialist	Lisa Middlebrook	lisa.n.middlebrook.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 292-2595 (desk)
Yellow Ribbon Support Specialist	Laura Cohen	laura.b.cohen.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 292-2772 (desk)

Niantic Readiness Center: 38 Smith Street, Niantic, CT 06357

Open Monday-Friday

Family Assistance Center Specialist	Jay Jennett	jay.s.jennett.ctr@mail.mil	(860) 739-1637 (desk) (860) 883-2720 (cell)
Personal Financial Counselor	Rhona Heyl	pfc3.ct.ng@zeiders.com	(860) 287-7552 (cell)

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