



Connecticut GUARDIAN

The Yankee Courier on page 15

VOL. 21 NO. 7

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

July 2021

New England Soldiers, Airmen join cybersecurity exercise

Capt. David Pytlik
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

HARTFORD, Conn. – Cyber Soldiers and Airmen from around New England gathered June 14-18 at Joint Base Cape Cod to participate in the seventh annual Cyber Yankee cybersecurity exercise.

The exercise pitted Marines and Marine Reservists as the “Red Team” against “Blue Teams” comprised of Guardsmen and industry partners representing critical infrastructure sectors, such as power, water and gas companies. The goal was to enhance the cyber warriors’ ability to thwart malicious actors in the digital space.

The battlefield of choice is known as Persistent Cyber Training Environment, a cyber range tailored to look and feel like a typical utility company. Simulated email and web traffic provided realistic concealment for the red team to carry out attacks.

Blue teams helped industry partners identify unusual activity to uncover attacks and malicious programs, mitigate the attacks, and determine the scope of the damage, attack vector, and most likely culprit.

As the week unfolded, the threats increased and malicious actors made their intentions known. What may have started early in the scenario as a network penetration became a deliberate attack delivered by a red team “inject.”

The exercise planners paid careful attention to the master spreadsheet of injects to be carried out over the week. To move the plot along and help the blue teams determine attribution, the white cell (exercise controllers) provided different intelligence items and news stories, curating the



Lt. Col. Cameron Sprague, deputy exercise director for Cyber Yankee, addresses the exercise controllers and distinguished visitors at the exercise on Joint Base Cape Code, MA, June 14-18, 2021. Cyber Yankee is a regional cybersecurity exercise designed to promote interoperability of National Guard cyber operators among the New England states and build readiness to respond to network attacks.

experience. Based on how an individual blue team was doing, the white cell either pushed the timeline forward or slowed it down.

Though the scenario featured the notional competitor state “Miteopia,” its proxies and unaffiliated cybercrimi-

nals, these types of adversarial forces mirror threats in the real world the past year.

In recent years, the National Guard has become a first

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U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to Task Force Iron Gray, in support of Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, hang a 120mm round during a joint mortar live-fire exercise with French forces assigned to 5th Overseas Interarmes Regiment (5e RIAOM) in Djibouti, May 25, 2021. Joint live-fire exercises allow the United States to build regional cooperation with its allies in order to work together and improve each nation's fighting force.

U.S., French Forces collaborate in joint live fire exercises

Sgt. Amanda Stock
Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa

U.S. Army Soldiers from various companies assigned to Task Force Iron Gray, in support of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), and French Forces assigned to 5e Overseas Interarms Regiment (RIAOM) participated in a joint mortar live fire exercise at the Djiboutian Range Complex, Djibouti, May 25, 2021.

Joint live fire exercises allow the United States to build regional cooperation with its allies in order to work together and improve each nation's fighting force.

"The purpose of this training was to build cohesion between the French and U.S. forces," said U.S. Army Capt. Shane Wilson, Task Force Iron Gray Fire Support Officer. "We were able to work together and see what the French Forces do versus what we do, and how we can improve one another."

Both Task Force Iron Gray and 5e RIAOM used 120mm mortar systems for the training. Cpt. Wilson said using similar systems allows for both units to

observe new ways to conduct mortar training and to view variations in each country's procedures.

"It's good to work with the French and see their procedures, especially in terms of safety, what they do for communications and their fire directions center, and how they put each piece together," said Capt. Wilson. "They didn't have fire supporters out on the hill to do the same as we do with ours, so it was good to see how their process works and how they communicate with one another."

During the training, the lightweight counter mortar radar (LCMR) team was strategically placed at an observation point with a clear view of both units' mortar positions and the impact area. The LCMR team was able to track all rounds fired by the U.S. and French mortars which provided realistic cross-training for Soldiers that are not traditionally radar operators.

This training was the first mortar live fire exercise Task Force Iron Gray conducted with French Forces.

A platoon with the East Africa Response Force (EARF) with Task Force Iron Gray, in support of CJTF-HOA, also

conducted a joint live fire exercise with French Forces assigned to 5e RIAOM on May 17, 2021. The live fire utilized small arms and light weapons, alongside the French Force's armored heavy weapons vehicles.

"We successfully conducted a break contact exercise with French Forces from an enemy that had more personnel than we did," said Pfc. Erik Cravo, an automatic rifleman assigned to the EARF.

Cravo said the joint live fire was a great experience for the EARF because it was the first time most of them have ever worked with allied forces and it was a great opportunity to learn different tactics from the French.

Conducting joint live fire exercises is beneficial to strengthening relationships with our partner nations. Both of these exercises are part of the continuing collaboration and preparation for the future joint combined arms live fire exercise.

Cyber

Cont. from page 1

responder to cyberattacks. In Connecticut, this played out after a vicious ransomware attack on the City of Hartford. The Vermont National Guard responded to a ransomware attack on the University of Vermont Medical Center.

“[We’ve been doing this] since 1636,” said Brig. Gen. John Driscoll, Massachusetts land component commander. “This is just the next phase of the operation. This is about reassuring the public.”

Typically, real attacks occur on state or local networks or private companies. The Guard role is limited to what the host allows.

Given the gray nature of cyber operations, each blue team brought legal counsel to advise each step of the way. The judge advocate generals (JAGs) drafted memorandums of agreement, updating them as warranted. In real life, having these prepared ahead of time, tailored to either a business or public agency, speeds the response.

Cyber Yankee, a regional event that complements more extensive nationwide exercises, also hosted federal participants from the Department of Homeland Security-Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (DHS-CISA) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.



U.S. Marines serve as the "Red Team" for Cyber Yankee at Joint Base Cape Code, MA, June 14-18, 2021. Cyber Yankee is a regional cybersecurity exercise designed to promote interoperability of National Guard cyber operators among the New England states and build readiness to respond to network attacks.

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The 1109th Theater Aviation Support Maintenance Group team responsible for the reconstruction of a CH-47 Chinook helicopter damaged in Iraq poses for a photo with the aircraft. In a first-of-its-kind project for the unit, this team tore the aircraft down to its studs and completely rebuilt it, saving it from the boneyard and giving it a new life.

From Flat lined to Flyable: 1109th TASMG brings new life to battle damaged helicopters

Tim Koster
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

The Connecticut National Guard's 1109th Theater Aviation Support Maintenance Group has a unique mission. The Groton-based unit is one of only four units in the U.S. Army's footprint designated for large-scale rotary-wing maintenance and covers a geographical region spanning fourteen states.

The unit's state-of-the-art maintenance facility allows it the capability to repair and test just about every component in the UH-60 Blackhawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters. While most of the work these Soldiers, technicians, and contractors do on a daily basis is focused on keeping the military's current operational fleet in the air, it recently took on a new, first-of-its-kind project: completely rebuilding two Chinooks that had been permanently grounded after being classified as "battle damaged" following hard landings while operating in Iraq.

The idea for the project came during the 1109th's recent deployment to Kuwait in 2018. While providing theater-level maintenance support for U.S. helicopters flying missions in the region, the team learned about one of the Chinooks they would later revitalize.

Staff Sgt. Daniel Cavanna, the work lead on the restoration project, said that some repairs can be difficult to conduct overseas because of the time it can take for special tooling to arrive, affecting the theater's operational readiness.

As these CH-47s sat in Kuwait, inoperable, Cavanna and his team saw an opportunity to not only return these aircraft to the fleet, but to help their unit embark on a project that had never been done before and, if successful, could save the military millions of dollars. Working with the rear-detachment back home, they began the process calculating the costs and laying out the logistical groundwork for getting the helicopter back to Connecticut.

In early 2019, the first of the two helicopters was delivered via a C-17 Globemaster to Westover Air Force Base in Massachusetts before being trucked to the facility in Groton.

Once there, the team stripped the aircraft to its core, with the only thing left intact being the wiring.

Cavanna said the entire project was a joint effort among the aviation maintenance community. Boeing, the manufacturer of the CH-47, sent a team of their own mechanics to help educate the TASMG team about the intricacies of the aircraft and to answer questions. Bill Humes, the Army Aviation and Missile Command engineer stationed at the TASMG worked tirelessly on various repair scenarios of the structural damage and reached out to other TASMGs and maintenance facilities around the country to help acquire parts they didn't have readily available, since much of the work they were doing was atypical for their shop.

"It's a big learning experience for all of us," said Cavanna. "We're getting the chance to really dig into these aircraft in a way we've never done before."

On June 2, 2021, after more than a year of repairs and restoration, the first CH-47 made its first test flight and successfully hovered independently for the first time in more than two years. This was a significant achievement for the TASMG, not only because it was the culmination of something its shop had never done before, but because it was done under the constraints of the safety protocols put in place thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As they begin work on the second helicopter, they hope to take the lessons they learned on the first and apply them to a Standard Operating Procedure that they can share with other maintenance groups that hope to take on similar projects.

According to Chief Warrant Officer 5 Edward Pelletier, the state Army aviation operations officer and CH-47 maintenance test pilot, he believes this kind of maintenance project is the way of the future for the Connecticut TASMG. Although a complete rebuild of a helicopter is expensive, the ability to move these aircraft to the TASMG and conduct these types of repairs will build overall aviation readiness and save millions of dollars compared to the price of a new aircraft.

As soon as the restoration and testing of these helicopters is complete, they are scheduled to be sent to aviation units in need of additional aircraft.



Uruguayan Army Maj. Gen. Hugo Rebollo, U.S. Air Force Col. Tom Olander and U.S. Air Force Maj. Jaime Zambrano discuss tactical airlift operations at the 103rd Airlift Wing in Windsor Locks, Conn. on June 15, 2021. The visit was part of a bilateral State Partnership Program engagement.

Uruguay and CTNG Continue 21-Year Partnership

Capt. David Pytlík
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

HARTFORD, Conn. – Members of the Armed Forces Mission of Uruguay visited Connecticut June 14-17, touring facilities and capabilities throughout the state, as well as the Cyber Yankee exercise at Joint Base Cape Cod.

Major Gen. Hugo Rebollo, senior defense official, Col. Ruben Aquines and Capt. Juan Acosta, air force and naval attachés respectively, typically work at the Uruguayan Embassy in Washington D.C., but visited the state as part of a bilateral trip to build understanding and cooperation between the Armed Forces of Uruguay and the Connecticut National Guard as part of the State Partnership Program (SPP). 2021 marks a 21-year partnership between the Oriental Republic of Uruguay and the State of Connecticut.

The State Partnership Program is unique to the National Guard and pairs state National Guards with international partners. In an era marked by great power competition, the necessity of building and enhancing relationships across the globe is more vital than ever. “SPP supports the security cooperation objectives of the United States and the Geographic Combatant Commands (GCC) by developing

enduring relationships with partner countries and carrying out activities to build partner capacity, improve interoperability, and enhance U.S. access and influence while increasing the readiness of U.S. and partner forces to meet emerging challenges, said Maj. Steven Ortiz, Connecticut’s director of the state partnership program. “The SPP is of great strategic importance to our national defense. What we do here in Connecticut matters; Connecticut National Guardsmen make vital contributions to the Joint Force, executing our national defense strategy by advancing multinational understanding and support with countries such as Uruguay.”

The benefit of this partnership goes both ways. “Events such as these are in best interests of the Department of Defense because it provides a platform to strengthen the partnership between our two nations. Uruguay is a strategic partner of great importance in the world. Montevideo is one of largest and most important ports in the world and Uruguay is a powerhouse in agricultural production and is home to many vital industries. By training together with Uruguay, the SPP helps position the U.S. to react effectively to anticipated or unanticipated global scenarios and work together seamlessly due to previous collabora-

tive experiences,” said Ortiz. In an upcoming engagement, Connecticut Army National Guard engineers plan to visit Uruguay and work with their engineers to drill wells to assist with forest firefighting. Future C-130 aircrew collaboration was also discussed.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, public health ideas and force health protection best practices were exchanged. Not even the pandemic could stop the partnership. “Most recently, we completed a Cyberdefense Subject Matter Exchange virtually with over 70 participants, located in both the US and Uruguay,” said Ortiz. “The intent of that event was to discuss cyberdefense operations, provide briefs from all participants to include CYBERCOM, Fleet Cyber Command, SOUTHCOM/J6 on their capabilities, discuss cyberattacks (both real-world and notional), and we conducted a table top exercise with our partners.”

The Armed Forces of Uruguay, or Fuerzas Armadas del Uruguay, are currently supporting UN peacekeeping operations. They are operational in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with nearly 900 military personnel (Security Council Resolution 1925) and over 200 military personnel in Golan (Security Council Resolutions 350 and 2555.)

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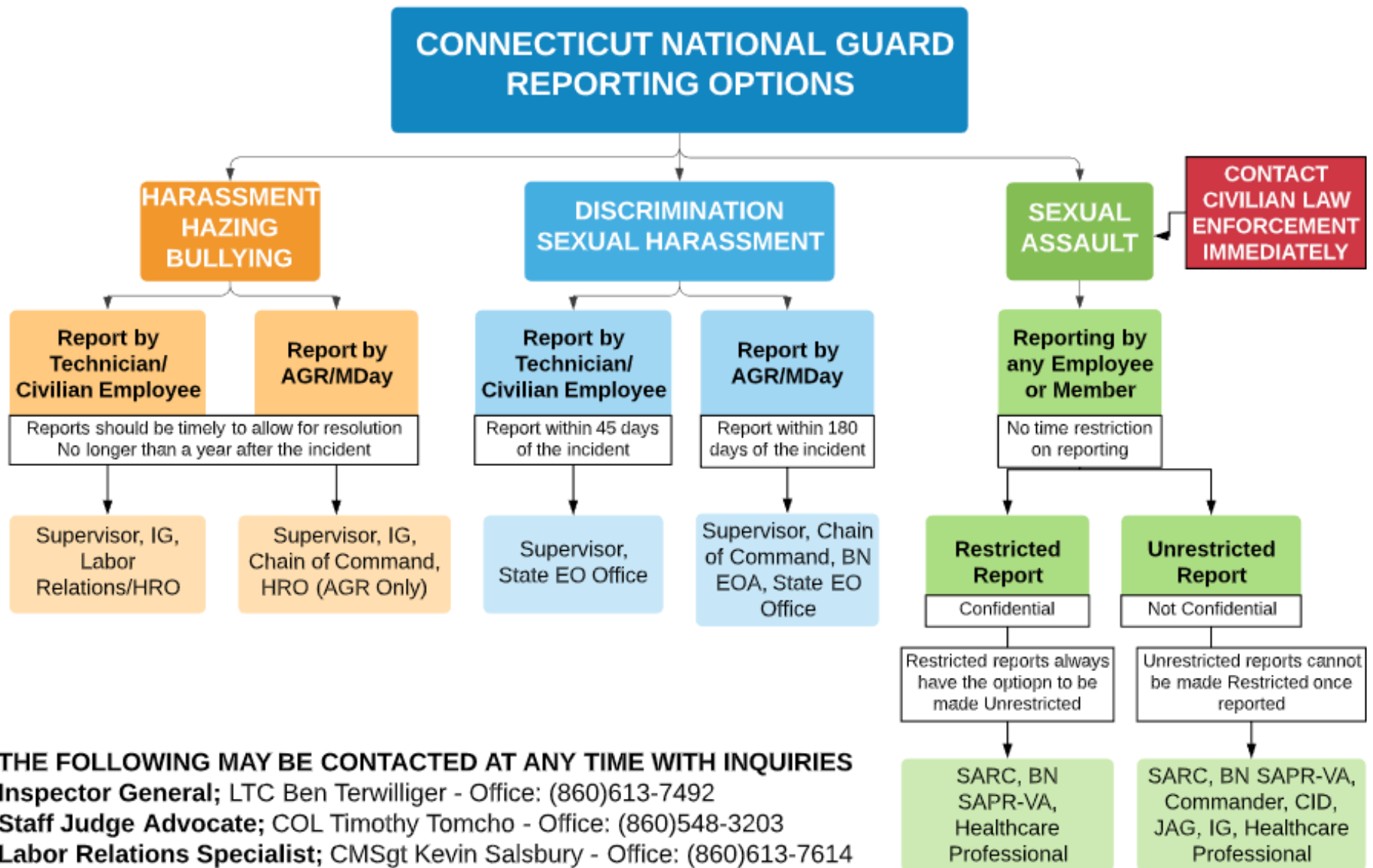
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State Chaplain; Lt Col Eric Wismar - Office: (860)548-3240; Cell: (860)883-5278

Recruiting & Retention

SPC Dubai, one of our highly motivated soldiers from 118th Medical Battalion has recently extend her contract for additional 6 years in order to continue her growth and career in the Army National Guard. SPC Dubai is a mother to a 5 month old son and works full time as a technician for the Field Maintenance Shop (FMS1). She is enthusiastic and devoted to her career and wishes to grow in this field. Currently enlisted as a Power Generation Specialist (91D), she is planning to attend Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic (91B) school as well as complete her Basic Leader Course that will allow her to take a next step in her career by becoming a SGT. SPC Dubai is dedicated to the army and her profession and hopes to become one of the Warrant Officers in our ranks. I, SGT Messon Lopez (118th MMB Retention NCO) and SFC Mike (MAYCOM Retention NCO) look forward to seeing your growth within the Army National Guard. Congratulations



What's Your Story?

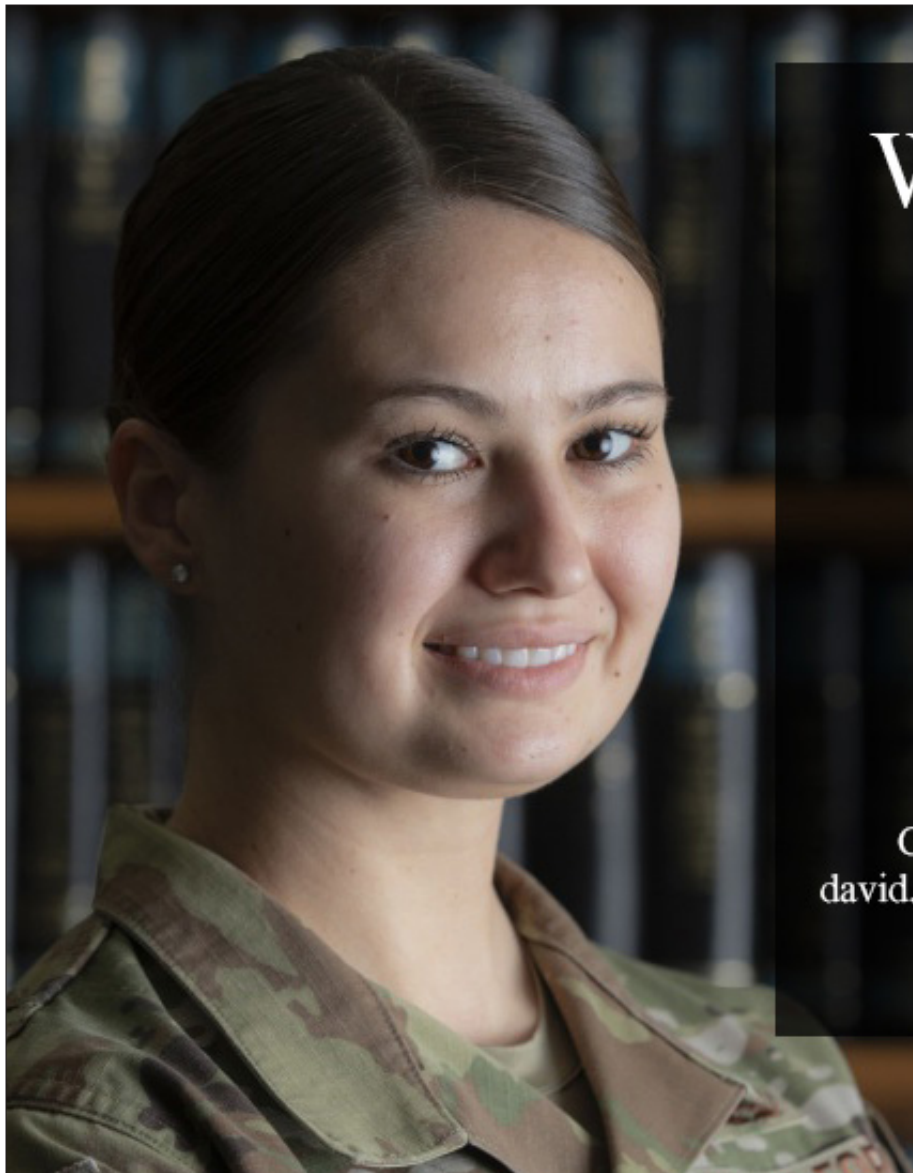
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7/21	WOODBURY	6:30PM-8PM	43 HOLLOW RD	RB
7/21	BERLIN	6:30-8PM	51 LOWER LANE	JC/BB/BQ
7/22	WINDSOR	6:30-8:30PM	TOWN GREEN	RB/JC/BQ
7/23	MANCHESTER	7-8:30PM	MCC BANDSHELL	RB/BB
7/27	ROCKY HILL	TBD	ROCKY HILL VA	JC/BB/BQ
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Traveling in the New Normal

Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie Cyr (ret.)
Contributor

The Covid Pandemic has changed the way we travel. As people are beginning to plan travel or revisit plans that were canceled or deterred by Covid. There is hope for creating a safer environment for travel as vaccination rates increase. But it won't happen overnight. We look to travel in what has been termed the new normal. It means taking precaution to protect ourselves and others around us. Fully vaccinated individuals are less likely to contract or spread Covid-19. Both domestic and especially international travel can increase the risk of getting the new Covid-19 variants. This article provides information compiled from the CDC (Center for Disease Control), TRICARE, and Consumer Reports. Individuals should wait at least two weeks after you are fully vaccinated before commencing travel to build immunity. Consider individual risk factors, including age and medical issues that increase the risk of severe illness from Covid-19 and its variants for the traveler and those with whom they live.

Most travel requirements have been lifted for domestic travel. Requirements for international travel are changing as this article is being written. Travelers will need to follow the requirements wherever they travel. Some states and localities still have requirements for testing, reporting travel, and self quarantining, and these change as levels of infection change. Consider the level of infection at the destination and assess individual risk. The CDC has an interactive travel planner for checking the requirements and restrictions for state, territorial or local travel.

People traveling in the new normal are divided into categories of vaccinated and non-vaccinated. Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to get tested before or after a trip or quarantine if traveling within the United States and traveling internationally do not need testing unless it's required at your destination. Returning to the U.S., the traveler will need a negative test within three days before returning to the U.S. or proof of recovery from Covid-19 in the last three months.

The CDC recommends that unvaccinated individuals avoid both domestic and international travel. If unvaccinated individual need to travel, the CDC has the following recommendations. Test before and after travel to reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19 or one of its variants. Get a viral test one to three days before travel. Delay travel until receiving test results and carry a copy of the results when traveling. Upon return from

traveling, repeat the viral test, and even if the test is negative, reduce nonessential activities for seven days.

Once the decision to travel has been made there are ways mitigate the risk of getting Covid. Some measures are mandated such as properly wearing a face mask on planes, trains, buses, and other forms of transportation. Masks must be worn by both vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals and fit snugly covering both mouth and nose.

Everyone should follow these safe travel tips. Avoid anyone who appears sick. Maintain social distancing as much as possible. Touch shared surfaces like handrails, elevator buttons, kiosks, and countertops as little as possible. Wear masks indoors where there are large or crowded group of people. Wash hands often.

Air travel appears to be the safest of public transportation due to the how air is circulated and filtered. But flights can be crowded and that make social distancing difficult if not impossible on flights. TSA and airlines have taken measures both on planes and in terminals to make travel safer. Traveling by trains, buses, or other ground transportation have the same risks, so be sure to be aware of your surrounding and take precautions.

Car travel is in many cases is the preferred mode of travel during the pandemic. It gives you more control of your environment, but you'll still need to consider the stops you make. It is recommended that you make a few stops as possible. Use masks and keep hands clean with sanitizer when stopping. Consider taking food and water rather than stopping at restaurants or stores, remembering also that many places have curtailed business hours and are not fully opened yet. Choose restaurants the offer drive-thru or curbside service when picking up a meal on the road. Finally, wipe off the button or gas nozzles before pumping gas. Then clean hand with sanitizer and soap and water as soon as possible.

The hotel industry has instated enhanced cleaning and best safety practices to protect guests. Check any major chain's website for information about how it's protecting guests and staff. When it's time to pack, make sure to include any medications you might need and include face masks, tissues, disinfectant wipes, hand sanitizer and thermometer as part of a health safety kit.

Traveling in the new normal poses some challenges. Access your risk vaccinated or not, as to where, when, and how you will travel. Remember, if you are sick, stay home, and if unvaccinated, consider postponing travel until you are fully vaccinated.

NOT FEELING LIKE YOURSELF?

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Even pain or trouble sleeping can hurt mission readiness. Talk to your health care provider if you feel unusually:

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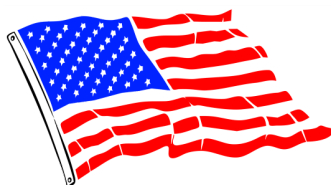
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Planning to travel abroad?

Sgt. 1st Class Steven Carpenter
Contributor

Per AR 380-67, paragraph 9-9, all members of the Connecticut Army National Guard must inform their Chain of Command of all Foreign Travel outside of Military Duties. The Soldier must be given the travel briefing by their Level II Anti-Terrorism Officer. It is then the responsibility of the Soldiers Chain of Command to contact the State Personnel Security Manager with the following information:

- Soldiers Name**
- DoD ID**
- Phone (available during travel)**
- Email (available during travel)**
- Country Visited (Include any countries traveled through where remaining more than 24 Hours)**
- Hotel/Address staying during travel**
- Reason for Travel (Vacation, Business, Family Visit, etc.)**
- Alternate POC during travel including phone and email**
- Start Date**
- Return Date**

Upon return, the Soldier will notify their Chain of Command of their safe return and to establish a time for their Foreign Travel Debrief from the Level II Anti-Terrorism Officer. The debrief should occur as quickly as practical. The debriefing can also be scheduled prior to travel to ensure time for coordination and planning for both parties. If coordinat-



ed prior to travel, extra time should be allotted from the scheduled return date in case of travel emergencies.

With the increased emphasis on Soldier Security Readiness, we must do our best to ensure we are tracing all foreign travel as it is monitored and recorded digitally in the Soldiers individual security record through the Defense Information System for Security (DISS). Failure to properly report travel will have implications upon security clearance reapplication requests.

Any questions can be directed to the State Personnel Security Manager, SFC Steven M. Carpenter, at 860-524-4809 or steven.m.carpenter3.mil@mail.mil.

NGACT RETIREE & FULL TIME STAFF PICNIC



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U.S., Niger Forces Conduct Joint Mortar Training Event

Sgt. Brandon Julson
Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa

U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry, 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in support of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) and Nigerien Soldiers participate in a month-long U.S. mortar system training event at Tondibiah, Niger.

The purpose of the joint training is to share and teach mortar system procedures to Nigerien mortar leaders and enable them to train current and future Nigerien mortar teams.

“Not only is this the first-time U.S. forces have trained the Nigerien military on the M224 60 Millimeter mortar system but also marks the first-time Task Force Iron Gray has stepped foot in Niger, Africa.” said U.S. Army Captain Michael Tu, Taskforce Iron Gray HHC Company commander.

Starting in May, eight Task Force Iron Gray Mortar trainers began teaching 25 Nigerien Soldiers the classroom portion of the training event.

“The classroom and hands-on portions of this training are where the foundation of everything is built, said Capt. Tu. “The classroom training begins with classes on the use of Lensatic, M2 compasses, protractors, map reading and MGRS, then gradually goes into mounting the mortars, small/large deflection and elevation adjustments.”

A mortar is a weapon that fires explosive projectiles onto a target. Typical mortar teams consist of a gunner, assistant gunner, squad leader and an ammo man.

“Being efficient on the weapon system, and having self-confidence with their part in the gun team is necessary to training success,” said Sgt. Timothy Thorland, Task Force Iron Gray Mortar System Instructor.

The last week of the classroom portion of the training Nigerien Soldiers were tested on basic hands-on gunnery skills.

“The training the Nigerien soldiers are experiencing is extremely rigorous and the purpose of assessing them is to make sure they retained what we have taught,” said Sgt. 1st Class Ben Simon, Taskforce Iron Gray Mortar Platoon Sgt. “It is our job to make sure they are ready to utilize these skills.”

A weeks later, the Nigerien entered into a dry-fire mortar exercise that demonstrated what they have learned from the classroom portion of the training event.

“Working in the field and having hands-on practice on the equipment is super valuable,” said Sgt. Almost Apha Zazo Abdou, Nigerien soldier. “I have learned how to make correct mortar system calculations and adjustments during this training.”

According to Sgt. Almost Apha Zazo Abdou working together with the U.S. was a huge success.

“We really enjoy the relationship between U.S. and Niger force and hope in the future the U.S. forces will keep training our forces,” said Sgt. Almost Apha Zazo Abdou, Nigerien soldier.

The Soldiers of Task Force Iron Gray definitely appreciated the significance and opportunity of the training event.

“The value of the training is priceless,” said Spc. Will Visel, assigned to HHC, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry, 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in support of the CJTF-HOA. “Every day I look forward to partnering with and training the Nigeriens to better understand the M224 60 Millimeter mortar system.”

A couple days later, the Nigerien soldiers returned to the classroom for a combat lifesaver training conducted by Spc. Noah Silk, Task Force Iron Gray Combat Medic.

“Teaching a combat lifesaving class is very important because medicine and techniques are always changing,” said Silk. “The Nigerien soldiers already have basic knowledge of CLS but this is just a great refresher to update their techniques.”

The CLS course is intended to bridge the gap between the minimally-trained average soldier and the highly trained Combat Medic.

The mortar training event concluded with a graduation ceremony that celebrated the month-long training the Nigerien soldiers have finished.

“The value of all this training is very significant, as this enables our Nigerien counterparts to become proficient in the employment of M224 60mm Mortar System,” said Tu. “Along with bringing valuable knowledge and techniques back to their respective units.”

The benefit from the joint mortar training event is two-fold – providing Nigerien soldiers with a tangible skill, while also bolstering the partnership between U.S. and Niger forces.

“We have had a very long relationship with the United States,” said Col. Maj. Moussa Salaou Barmou. “Being able to work together in this capacity is very good for Niger.”

KFOR, Kosovo community members unite for river cleanup

Courtesy Story
KFOR Regional Command East

MITROVICA/MITROVICĚ, Kosovo - U.S. and Swiss soldiers assigned to Regional Command-East, Kosovo Force, along with residents of North and South Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, worked together to clean up trash near a bridge on June 19.

Over 40 people helped clean and bring the communities together. The event demonstrated the commitment and effort it took by everyone to cooperate to work toward a better and cleaner community.

Cleaning trash encouraged collaboration between multiethnic groups and environmental responsibility, said 1st Lt. Umberto Lusso, a Soldier with the Swiss Armed Forces and officer in charge of the RC-E Kilo 2 Liaison

Monitoring Team.

Alongside residents of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë was the Center for Lifelong Learning Lighthouse, a non-governmental organization which focuses on combating social and economic problems through lifelong learning.

“This was the first multiethnic event and cleanup on the bridge in the last four years I’ve lived here,” said Stefan

Kalaba, a member of the NGO.

A cleanup of this size takes time to plan and many volunteers to come together from both communities.

“We breathe the same air, we walk the same grass, and we are all equal,” said Arta Ibishi Citaku, one of the organizers of the cleanup and resident of South Mitrovica/Mitrovicë. “I sent emails, posted flyers and reached

out to fellow community members to gain volunteers in helping to assist with the cleanup.”

U.S. Soldiers who recently arrived at Camp Bondsteel to support KFOR’s aviation task force also volunteered to help, giving them an early opportunity to get out and see the local area.

“We want to make a difference any way we can and help support the local population,” said Sgt. Jose Bustamante, a Manchester, Connecticut, native and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear specialist with the 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, Connecticut Army National Guard.

The cleanup concluded with several volunteers planting new trees along a part of the river.



U.S. Soldiers assigned to Regional Command-East, Kosovo Force, and a local resident pick up trash along a bridge in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, Kosovo, on June 19, 2021. Over 40 people volunteered to help with the cleanup, including U.S. Soldiers and Swiss Armed Forces Soldiers and residents from both North and South Mitrovica/Mitrovicë. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Cole Barbee)

The YANKEE COURIER



VOL. 21 NO. 7

EAST GRANBY, CONNECTICUT

July 2021

Connecticut Air Guard upgrades C-130H fleet

Master Sgt. Tamara Dabney
103rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The Connecticut Air National Guard, home of the 103rd Airlift Wing 'Flying Yankees', is upgrading its fleet of C-130H Hercules aircraft. The first of seven H3 model C-130s arrived at Bradley Air National Guard Base in June 2021. The H3s will replace the Connecticut Guard's current fleet of aircraft, which consists of H1 models.

In November 2020, the United States Air Force selected Guard units to receive C-130J Super Hercules aircraft as part of a plan to upgrade C-130 fleets across the force. J models, introduced in 1999, are the newest model C-130s available. Units, such as the 103rd, that currently have H1s and have not been selected to receive Js, are upgrading to H3s.

"For the last seven years, we've been flying the oldest H models in the fleet, the 1974 model H1s," said Col. Stephen R. Gwinn, 103rd Airlift Wing Commander. "As a product of the acquisition of more J models into the Air National Guard, we've had the opportunity to retire H1s, and take some of the other unit's H3s."

In 2013, the Connecticut Guard underwent a mission conversion to become a tactical airlift wing. As part of the conversion, the Connecticut Guard replaced its C-21 A Learjet fleet with H1s. The H3s that the Connecticut Guard will be receiving for this year's upgrade were produced between 1992 and 1996, which is 18 to 20 years newer than the H1s. Because the H3s are newer, replacement parts are more readily available. The upgrade will enable the 103rd to continue its current mission with greater efficiency, using more advanced technology.

"From a maintenance perspective, I would equate this to working on a 1974 car and trying to find the pieces and parts, versus working on a car from the early to mid 90s," said Col. Thomas Olander, 103rd Maintenance Group Commander. "Obviously, the technology that we currently have in our H1 variants is 1970s, analog technology. What you're seeing in these 1990s variants is more digital technology."

Like mileage on a car, the number of hours that an aircraft has flown is tracked. Fewer flight hours on an aircraft signify less wear and tear. The 103rd's new fleet of H3s will have thousands less flight hours than the H1s in its older fleet.

"The H3s we're receiving average about 10,000 total flight hours versus our current fleet, in which each airplane averages almost 30,000 flight hours," said Olander. "We're gaining about 20 years of life and about 20,000 flight hours on each airplane. So, this is a significant upgrade from our current fleet. We're hoping that, between failures of parts, less wear and tear on the engines will ultimately result in less unscheduled maintenance on these aircraft, which makes them more available to the Operations Group to fly them."

The C-130, often referred to as the workhorse of air mobility, was first introduced in 1957. The four-engine turboprop aircraft operates globally, during peace and wartime, and performs a wide range of operational missions, including combat air support, natural disaster relief, aeromedical evacuation, weather reconnaissance and Antarctic ice resupply.

Though the C-130H has undergone multiple upgrades, the H3 and H1 appear to be identical when viewing the outside of the aircraft. Among other similarities, both the H1 and H3 models can carry up to 92 troops or 42,000 pounds of cargo, depending on how the aircraft are configured.

Notable differences between the two models can be found in the avionics packages. Avionics package improvements in the H3 include ring laser gyroscopes for the inertial navigation system, GPS receivers, night vision device compatible instrument lighting, and an integrated radar and missile warning system.



The Connecticut Air National Guard receives H3 model C-130s as part of a plan to upgrade the 103rd Airlift Wing's fleet of aircraft, June 2, 2021 at Bradley Air National Guard Base, Connecticut. The H3s are replacements for the Connecticut Guard's fleet of C-130H1 aircraft.

"The majority of the airplane [H3] is absolutely identical [to other C-130H models]," said Gwinn. "The biggest difference in this airplane is the cockpit. It's a big deal when you're in the airplane and flying, because it's a much better system with a lot less room for error. It's a lot more accurate, so it actually is going to keep us safer when doing things like flying in the weather or flying in formation."

The 103rd's mission is to provide tactical airpower and mission support, domestically and world-wide. The H3 upgrade will contribute to the 103rd's mission capabilities by reducing manpower requirements, lowering operating costs, and providing life-cycle cost savings over the H1s.

"You'll get more production out of the airplanes, which will make us able to respond better to the domestic operations," said Gwinn. "You'll get more productivity out of the airplanes because they'll require a lot less man hours to fix and get over to operations, which means that our execution rate in the operations group will be that much better. The capabilities that we gain bring the risk down, and it's all about risk management."

Gwinn piloted the 103rd's first H3 flight from West Virginia to Connecticut. According to Gwinn, the H3 is not only more technologically advanced, but also more comfortable to operate.

"First and foremost, the one I flew was definitely quieter," said Gwinn. "We're flying an airplane that was designed and built in the 1990s, so it actually has modern avionics and systems and more creature comforts. It has more radios that worked well, and systems in the airplane that were more fluid and smoother than the H1. Then, last but not least, there's actually a toilet in this airplane, which is a big deal for our female crew members and all of our crew members for our long flights across the ocean and traveling around the world."

Gwinn feels the H3s will help maintain the relevance of the 103rd's mission.

"We feel that being given these H3s is setting us up for long-term success and relevancy in the Air National Guard," said Gwinn. "We're going to work hard to make them even better and modernize them."

The 103rd's C-130H upgrade is expected to be complete by September 2021.

Pride Month Highlight: Tech. Sgt. John Testa, third-generation Airman

Tech Sgt. Steven Tucker
103rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

In February 2009, John Testa became a third-generation Airman when he joined the Connecticut Air National Guard.

“I was in [the University of Connecticut pre-pharmacy program], and tuition at the time was expensive,” said Testa. “My father was Security Forces in the Air Force Reserve and mentioned that the Air Guard might be able to help out, and it would be a great opportunity to gain a lot of skills. My grandfather also served in the Army Air Corps during World War II.”

Testa joined the Guard as an administration specialist in the 103rd Maintenance Group. The skills he gained in training inspired a new career path.

“I switched from pre-pharmacy to business and then graduated from Southern Connecticut State University around my sixth year in the Guard,” said Testa. “I think the team management skills I gained in the Guard definitely helped in my civilian career—now I work at a solar energy and energy efficiency company managing a team of eight.”

Soon after Testa began his career, the Don’t Ask Don’t Tell Repeal Act of 2010 was signed into law, allowing gay, lesbian, and bisexual people to serve openly in the U.S. Armed Forces.

“I think it was a good experience going into the military then because you could be your true self,” said Testa.

A diverse force joining together for a common cause gives an added measure of strength for the U.S. military, said Testa.

“As long as we can complete the mission all together, that’s the thing that counts,” said Testa. “Being yourself

and building diversity will make us more powerful. In the end, we’re all working together to get the mission done regardless of who it is.”

Testa highlighted his leadership as an example of individuals that have fostered an inclusive environment for its diverse force that contributes to the mission.

“I got married in 2018 to my husband and we’re expecting a child in July,” said Testa. “Everyone is supportive from my supervisor, Tech. Sgt. Dylan Platt, to [103rd Maintenance Group commander] Col. Thomas Olander, so I think you can just be more open, and it builds an environment for everyone to better work together.”

This environment was key to getting through the challenges associated with multiple mission conversions during the course of Testa’s career, he said.

“When I joined, the A-10s had recently departed and we had the C-21 mission,” said Testa. Going through inspections with my supervisors, we got outstanding unit awards and built the group stronger. And then it was a great experience to see the C-130s come in [beginning in 2013] after all of our hard work, and now seeing the newer [C-130H3 aircraft] arrive. Seeing that process from losing a mission to now being one of the best airlift wings in the Guard has been incredible.”

Creating an inclusive environment benefits the entire force when faced with stressors unique to military service, said Testa.

“No matter who is by your side, we all have each other’s backs,” said Testa. “We’re supporting each other through hardships and tough times.”

With 12 years of service, Testa is keeping these ideas close to him as he continues to advance as a leader in the Guard.



Tech. Sgt. John Testa, 103rd Maintenance Group administration specialist, at the main hangar at Bradley Air National Guard Base, East Granby, Connecticut. Testa is a third-generation Airman with 12 years of service and an advocate for other LGBTQ+ service members.

“I’ve done my professional military education, so I’m on track to be a Master Sergeant,” said Testa. “That’s my next big step in the military.”

Testa continues to advocate for others who share a similar story.

“A lot of people maybe haven’t come out yet, so hopefully my story helps others live their true self, build a better career, and helps the force as a whole in accepting each other and being supportive,” said Testa. “If anyone ever needs help, definitely reach out to me and I’m more than happy to speak with them and help them out.”

What is phishing?

Tech Sgt. Patrick McNamara
Contributor

Phishing is a form of social engineering in which a malicious computer user manipulates a victim to disclose sensitive information to include: user names, passwords, SS number, and PII/PCI data.

Phishing is delivered through email, text, and phone (vishing) calls. There are several different types of phishing as well.

Phishing is delivered usually in mass phishing campaigns. These can be emails that seem legit (official wording, logos, URL/sender email) but always contain a link or clickable area that will lead to a malicious site or malware download.

Spear phishing is a special targeted attack against someone. Spear phishing may include references to information related to that person directly, and/or use real names, and associates. This is especially dangerous because it adds a more personal touch to the attack, allowing the target to be more trusting of the sender. Victims will be researched and studied prior to this type of phishing.

Whaling is like a spear phishing attack except is targeted against high executives and CEO’s etc. The goal again, is to get the target to divulge sensitive information to launch another attack or steal credentials, download malware etc.

Phishing Indicators

- Misspelling of common English words throughout email

- A user’s name is almost never used in a common phishing email, rather a generic greeting like “dear user” or “dear user@yahoo.com”
- URL’s in email will have long and odd looking addresses (hover over the link to see the destination address)
- Spam email coming from a financial or legitimate institution in which the user is a part of
- The email greeting may have your name in it and the body may start out sounding like a legitimate request for details but again there may be misspellings
- May contain jargon unique to the “whale’s” company/organization, to make the email sound more real

How to prevent phishing

Don’t click on or reply to any URL’s/senders if the information wasn’t requested by you.

If the sender’s email address ends with a .ru .cn etc. it may be coming from a nation state hacking group. .Ru and .Cn Russian, and China respectively, are especially known for phishing campaigns and malware attacks. For example, “ebaysupport.com.cn”

Never click on any attachments from emails you can’t verify the legitimacy of and never give personal information over the phone unless you can verify the recipient.



Members of the Connecticut Air National Guard, 103rd Air Control Squadron stand in formation during a briefing by Maj. Gen. Fran Evon, The Adjutant General of the Connecticut National Guard, April 15, 2021 in Orange, Connecticut. Members of 103rd ACS deployed to multiple locations in Southwest Asia and the United States in support of Operation Inherent Resolve and Mission Resolute Support.

Faced with challenges, first-time deployers seek growth

Master Sgt. Tamara Dabney
103rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

In May 2021, members of the 103rd Air Control Squadron deployed to multiple locations in Southwest Asia and the United States in support of Operation Inherent Resolve and Mission Resolute Support. Despite being faced with challenges, first-time deployers Staff Sgt. Jalissee Vazquez and 2nd Lt. Ryan Ordille see their deployment as an opportunity for professional growth.

In 2016, while working three jobs and attending pre-medical school, Vazquez decided she would join the military. She was familiar with the military, as some of her closest family members had served in the active duty components of the Marine Corps and Air Force. However, Vazquez was not aware of the Air National Guard until she researched military opportunities on the internet.

“I always wanted to be in the military, because my family has a military background,” said Vazquez. “I didn’t even know there was an Air Guard, but I did my research and it worked out for me.”

Vazquez met with a Guard recruiter with hopes of working in aerospace medicine, which would complement her college major and allow her to stay within her comfort zone. The recruiter instead convinced Vazquez to accept a position in a field unrelated to medicine where she would also be one of very few women in her squadron.

“I’m a radar technician,” said Vazquez, followed by a smile and a short sigh. “And I’m the only female in my shop. I’m like the epitome of a woman in a man’s world in that section sometimes. It can be a bit challenging, but I really like it.”

Air Control Squadrons provide real-time detection, identification and surveillance of air traffic, and command and control (C2) of joint operations. Radar specialists, like Vazquez, install and maintain the equipment utilized by air traffic controllers and pilots.

As Vazquez packed her deployment bags, she wondered what new challenges she would face while deployed. The uncertainty was reminiscent of how she felt when she initially joined the Guard. She had no idea what she would be faced with in her new working environment. However, stepping outside of her comfort zone five years ago to become a radar specialist enabled Vazquez to learn new job skills. Also, being the only woman in her duty section enhanced her ability to work with different types of people. She hopes that stepping outside of her comfort zone to deploy will yield the same benefits.

“I’m excited, but I’m also kind of nervous because it is my first one, so I don’t really

know what to expect,” said Vazquez. “But I did choose this job because they told me this is a job that frequently gets deployed. So, the [challenges] were something that kind of factored in to me wanting to deploy.”

Ordille, a cyber operations officer with the 103rd ACS, joined the Guard in 2017. Like Vazquez, he was uncertain of what to expect on his first deployment.

“I’m a bit nervous, but I’m excited and ready,” said Ordille who works as a software engineer outside of the Guard. “This is my first time deploying, so I don’t know what to expect. Also, I’m the only commissioned officer from our unit going to a location within the continental United States, so yQeah, some challenges are there.”

Before Ordille received his officer commission, he was an enlisted command and control battle management operator assigned to the 103rd ACS. Having come from a family with several military veterans, Ordille was inspired at an early age to join the military.

“I come from a military family, so it’s always been something in the back of my mind,” said Ordille. “I knew I didn’t want to just sit at a desk for the next 40 years. I wanted to do something to contribute back to the community, my family, and do something interesting, which is why I joined the Guard.”

While enlisted, Ordille volunteered to deploy numerous times, but no deployment opportunities were available. He would not be offered a chance to deploy until a few months after he became a commissioned officer. The timing of the deployment allowed little time for Ordille to become comfortable in his new role as a commissioned officer. The timing of Ordille’s wedding added to the time constraint; he got married less than a month before he deployed, which meant Ordille and his new wife had a limited amount of time to spend together before he departed. Despite the difficult timing, Ordille looks forward to working with more experienced members of the 103rd ACS and developing his leadership skills while deployed.

“I wanted to get experience as a lieutenant going out there,” said Ordille. “I wanted to get to know the people who I’ll be working with for the rest of my career and learn a lot. On the civilian side, I’m an engineer, so I really like to like see how processes work. I’m excited that we have a great crew that’s going with us with a lot of experience.”

Approximately 100 members of the 103rd ACS are supporting Operation Inherent Resolve and Mission Resolute Support. 103rd leaders expect most of the deployers to return home to Connecticut by Fall 2021.

CT Guard Airmen featured in Air Force recruiting ad

Master Sgt. Tamara Dabney
103rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Growing up, 1st Lt. Alexandra Pagoni and 2nd Lt. Jeremi Johnson remember seeing military recruiting commercials on television. Neither of them ever imagined that they would one day be featured in one.

In April, Pagoni, a pilot assigned to the 118th Airlift Squadron, and Johnson, an Intelligence Officer with the 103rd Operations Support Squadron, starred in a commercial to promote the Air National Guard.

Members of the Air Guard are able to serve in the military part-time while pursuing full-time civilian careers. The commercial, part of the 'Serve Your Way' campaign, highlights how and why Air National Guard members serve in the Guard.

Pagoni began flying in private airplanes with her father, retired Lt. Col. Robert Pagoni, when she was five years old. She knew, years before she received her first official flying lesson at the age of 16, that she wanted to be a pilot. Inspired by her father, a former A-10 aircraft pilot and weapons systems officer on the F-111 aircraft, the younger Pagoni joined the Connecticut Air National Guard in 2017. Both father and daughter appear in the commercial.

"So growing up, my dad was an A-10 pilot stationed at [Barnes Air National Guard Base in Westfield, Mass.], so I was always around flying," said Pagoni. "My grandfather was a pilot in the Air Force as well, so it's just something I've always grown up around and I've always wanted to fly."

The Tolland, Connecticut native is stationed at Bradley Air National Guard Base, home of the 103rd Airlift Wing, located in East Granby, about a half hour away from her childhood home. Pagoni said being stationed at Bradley has afforded her the opportunity to serve with some of the most highly skilled pilots in the Air Force.

"Being part of the 103rd is a really awesome experience," said Pagoni. "I fly with some of the most well-trained and knowledgeable pilots that the Air Force has. I've grown a lot as a pilot, and I hope to continue becoming the best pilot I can for the Wing."

Pagoni's long-term goal is to become an instructor pilot. She hopes to be a role model for aspiring pilots, particularly young women.

"I want to pass along what I've been taught, over the years," said Pagoni. "I definitely know that there's a lot less female pilots than there are men and I'm hoping that, over the years, we'll get more women signed up to be pilots. I've never felt like I've been treated differently at the unit because of my gender. I'm hoping that through more community outreach, both on our side and the recruitment side, we can show that women are in the cockpit."

The commercial features Airmen in various Air Force career fields. Pagoni expressed the importance of each Airman's role in accomplishing the Air Force Mission to Fly, Fight, and Win – Airpower Anytime, Anywhere.

"There's so many people that allow us to go out and fly each day," said Pagoni. From the flight engineers, loadmasters, maintenance, to intelligence, everyone is contributing to this mission to make every single flight happen. And without, we wouldn't be able to do what we do."

While Johnson said he remembers seeing commercials



1st Lt. Alexandra Pagoni (right), a pilot assigned to the 118th Airlift Squadron, participates in a video shoot for a commercial to promote the Air National Guard, April 7, 2021 at Bradley Air National Guard Base, Connecticut. The commercial, part of the 'Serve Your Way' campaign, highlights how and why Air National Guard members serve in the Guard.

for various branches of the military as a child, he did not recall ever seeing a commercial specifically for the Guard. He learned about the Guard by researching military education benefits online and speaking with his brother, who served in the Army Guard. Johnson decided to join the Connecticut Air Guard in 2014 to help pay for his college education.

"I joined because I wanted to go back to school, but I wanted help paying for it," said Johnson. "The Air Guard looked as if it was going to be the vehicle to help me achieve that, along with serving."

Johnson said anyone who is in search of a part-time job with benefits should consider joining the Guard.

"The Guard provides so many opportunities," said Johnson. "If you want a part time job with affordable health care. If you want to go to school, or potentially pick up a new trade or learn something, the Guard provides you the ability to go cross train and learn a craft that you can apply to the civilian world, while still paying you at the same time."

The Guard's education benefits are what initially moti-

ated Johnson to enlist. However, serving alongside and developing relationships with his fellow Airmen is what inspired him to remain in the Guard beyond his initial term of enlistment.

"The number one benefit would be the relationships that are established," said Johnson. "I have made with the people that have been good to me mentorships people are coming behind me. But I will say number one will be the people. Along with that ability and an opportunity to serve locally."

Looking back on his humble beginnings growing up in Waterbury, Connecticut, Johnson credited the Guard for giving him a greater outlook on his life.

"The Guard helped me see the potential in myself," said Johnson. It taught me to tap into everything that is within me, as opposed to letting it go to waste. It has given me a lot more discipline and opened my eyes to things that I've never been able to see before."

The commercial was released to the public in June 2021. To learn more about joining the Air National Guard, visit goang.com.



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexis Coppola (right), 103rd Maintenance Squadron isochronal crew chief, and Airman 1st Class Nicholas VanDine, 103rd Maintenance Squadron fuel systems specialist, practice detainee procedures during a training course on flight line security taught by the 103rd Security Forces Squadron at Bradley Air National Guard Base, East Granby, Connecticut, June 5, 2021. The training course taught maintainers techniques for bolstering security, responding to potential threats before Security Forces personnel arrive, and was a part of an Air Force-wide effort to build multi-capable Airmen embodying the Ability to Survive and Operate (ATSO) mindset.

103rd Airlift Wing trains multi-capable maintainers

Tech Sgt. Steven Tucker
103rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

EAST GRANBY, Conn. – Airmen from the 103rd Security Forces Squadron partnered with the 103rd Maintenance Group on June 5 to conduct flight line security training. The course was part of an ongoing Air Force-wide effort to develop multi-capable Airmen embodying the Ability to Survive and Operate (ATSO) mindset.

During two training sessions throughout the day, Security Forces instructors taught aircraft maintainers how they can use their familiarity with flight line operations and personnel to bolster security of restricted areas and detect if something or someone may be out of the ordinary.

“Today was more of a baseline training that encompassed how they are responsible for the [aircraft],” said Tech. Sgt. Dedrick Baublitz, 103rd Security Forces Squadron instructor. “It gave them their responsibilities as far as being the first line of defense because they are the subject matter experts of all the personnel that are in maintenance. They’d be the first person to pick out if someone doesn’t belong.”

The restricted area of a U.S. Air Force flight line is typically indicated by a red line perimeter marked on the pavement. Personnel with the appropriate badge may access the restricted area through marked entry control points. Security Forces personnel patrol the area to prevent access by unauthorized personnel and respond to anyone who crosses directly over the red line instead of an entry control point.

Baublitz emphasized the use of interpersonal skills to talk through a situation and figure out if a person is a potential threat or just having a bad day.

“A lot of the time when people do cross the red line not using the entry control points, it’s because they forget for a moment or they make a mistake—everybody is human,” said Baublitz. “So we’ll ask ‘Do you realize you just broke red? Do you have a restricted area badge? Let’s figure this out.’”

Maintainers practiced challenge techniques on the Bradley Air National Guard Base flight line to get experience working through a potential threat situation. The Airmen also

learned how to detain or relocate a potential intruder and delay them until Security Forces arrives.

“No matter where we go or where we deploy as aircraft maintainers, our job is to protect the aircraft as well as maintain it, and what better way than to get with Security Forces and learn the basic challenging procedures if someone were to cross the red line,” said Capt. Jennifer Artiaco, 103rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron commander. “If we were to go to an austere environment and we had to protect the airplane on our own outside of here, we have to build those multi-capable Airmen, so that they do feel confident in themselves to conduct security measures.”

Developing multi-capable Airmen prepares the force to operate within the U.S. Air Force’s Agile Combat Employment model—a method to engage near-peer competitors in contested, austere environments.

“We can no longer expect to operate in the same relatively uncontested environments we experienced during the last twenty years,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Pagoni, 103rd Maintenance Group deputy commander. “The next fight will require us to do more with less. This new environment will challenge our maintainers to perform their core [job] duties while simultaneously providing support to other base functions. This has been described throughout the Air Force as the multi-capable Airmen (MCA) concept. This weekend’s training is a preliminary step for the maintenance group to bring the MCA concept to the 103rd Airlift Wing.”

The training was mutually beneficial, said Artiaco.

“It’s been such a great experience,” said Artiaco. “I think the more we can network and the more we’re reaching out and partnering, the better off we’ll be. We’ll be able to have those experiences and get that knowledge-base to have multi-capable Airmen.”

Baublitz agreed.

“It’s another piece to strengthen the force overall,” said Baublitz. “The maintenance group slogan ‘Keep ‘em Flying’ is what we’re all here to do, everyone piggybacks off one another to get that mission done, and this training is going to help.”



Service Member and Family Support Center Staff Directory



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