



Cowboy Guard

Volume 3, Number 4

1st Quarter Fiscal Year 2016

Year in Review





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On the Cover



Sgt. Kort Riker, a crew chief with C Company, 5th Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment, spends a few hours with his daughter, Kaylee, at a send-off ceremony for his Afghanistan-bound unit at the Army Aviation Support Facility, in Cheyenne, in October.

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Brigade reigns fire in YS

**By Capt. Tom Blackburn
Deputy Public Affairs Officer
Wyoming Military Department**

“Fire mission! Fire mission!”
bellowed in the room.

A scene of organized chaos unfolds, as artillery fire control operators begin the necessary work to clear airspace, send commands to battalion level units and ensure no friendly forces are in the area of the firing location.

This is all done in rapid succession, as lives are at stake on the ground, and the artillery is needed to clear the way for maneuver elements in their attack against enemy forces.

In this case however, the enemy forces are red squares on a map. The friendly forces blue, with allied elements in green. There are no real soldiers on the ground. It's all a simulation.

This entire scene unfolds in a tactical operations center at Joint Base Lewis McCord, outside of Tacoma, Washington, far away from any battlefield or frontline.

Recently, members of the Wyoming Army National Guard's 115th Field Artillery Brigade, with support from subordinate battalion personnel, participated in the Yama Sakura training exercise at JBLM.

As part of a multi-state and unit task organization, the Cowboy Thunder brigade provided simulated artillery fire for the 34th Infantry Division, out of Minnesota.

For the exercise the division trained the joint capabilities of the U.S. Army's I Corps and Japan's military. While other forces were in Japan, all but two of Wyoming's soldiers operated out of Washington.

“Col. (Gregory) Phipps’ (the brigade

commander) philosophy for training the brigade during each training year is executing events one up and one down, meaning we support a higher headquarters and a battalion level headquarters during the year,” said Maj. Nicholas Rayes, brigade executive officer, and officer-in-charge



during Yama Sakura. “Doing Yama Sakura, where we worked with I Corps, meets that intent.”

The exercise did not involve the whole brigade headquarters, but a small element that could operate the essential elements of the TOC and perform the primary mission, which was to unleash accurate artillery fire in support of maneuver elements.

“This was an opportunity for us to operate as a Force Field Artillery Headquarters to support a larger element, like corps,” Rayes said. “We were able to work through many of our processes that are necessary to meet that mission.”

For a week, the brigade worked 12-hour shifts and constantly received fire missions from division level that went through the brigade to battalions. Sitting in the same room were soldiers who pretended to be battalion commanders and executed firing missions into the simulation at their stations. It was an intricate, but useful, portrayal of the fire mission procedures used in real life.

“We were able to execute our fire

missions, and strengthen those procedures,” Rayes said. “We met our objective, but have room to improve. Our potential is high.”

Some of the soldiers were able to observe the importance of the functionality between the various organizational levels during a war-fighting environment.

“One of the things is we got to work all our war-fighting functions together,” said Rayes. “Everyone in each section, even though we weren’t at our full staffing, were able to work as a team and get the job done.”

As an artillery headquarters, the brigade also got to fine tune the coordination involved in shooting long range weapon systems, such as the 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery's High Mobility Artillery Rocket System.

The fires of the brigade were being executed so well, that midway through the exercise, while red squares were moving away from the blue ones on the map, an operations officer brought great news to the TOC. Since the simulation didn't allow for forward observers to see the damage, it was difficult to confirm battle damage. But according to the simulation operators, the 115th was destroying a lot of enemy equipment.

“Our guys are incredible. Everything we do as a soldier, even in our MOS-series jobs, is doing what we're trained to do,” said Sgt. Major Michael Strasser, brigade operations sergeant major. “But we are doing them to a high standard. Really pleased to be in the mix and do that job well.”

By the end of the exercise the 115th was satisfied with the result.

“Honestly, the event was very successful,” Strasser said. “Our soldiers are the ones that made it successful.”

What can you buy with \$30.5 million? A new headquarters building, for one. The Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Airlift Wing has moved roughly 300 of its personnel into its refurbished headquarters, known on the base as "Building 16" after they spent the last 3 1/2 years spread around the property in bland double-wide trailers.

Story continues on page 6





continued from page 4


“Bland” is not a word to describe the new building. Wyoming touches are peppered throughout. Wood planking from beetle-killed trees, wildlife mounts, photos and other historical touches add personality.

“This really is a first-rate facility, so I think the wing is going to enjoy it and I think we’ll be more efficient and effective than we have been in the past,” said Col. Brad Swanson, wing commander, who has made the move from the corner office in the command section’s double-wide to the corner office on the second floor of the 144,000 square-foot building.

The building’s ceremonial ribbon cutting was held Nov. 9. Construction began in March 2012 on what is, currently, the second largest Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization project in Air National Guard history.

Five-R Construction served as the general contractor for the project. Roughly 85 percent of the materials used are recycled products.

Lt. Col. Brett Trippel, 153rd Civil Engineer Squadron commander, said the remodel, as massive in scope as it was, saved millions of dollars over razing it and starting from scratch. “There is so much infrastructure already in place, it would have been a lot more to replace all of it for a building that size that houses that many different functions,” he said.

Among the features added during the building’s renovation: air conditioning. Previously the building’s administrative areas, built in 1946, weren’t necessarily designed for creature comforts. State-of-the-art climate control is one of the features that led to the building receiving a LEED Silver rating from the U.S. Green Building Council. 



Photos by Master Sgt. Charles Delano

Previous page: Wyoming Gov. Matthew H. Mead speaks at the 153rd Airlift Wing headquarters building ribbon cutting, Nov. 9, 2015 in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Top: A conference room in Building 16 features a C-130 light fixture. Middle: Capt. Rusty Ridley, wing executive officer, moves boxes into his new Building 16 office, Dec. 15, 2015. Bottom: A worker puts the final touches on one of the many murals found throughout Building 16.

Heroes awarded

Three Wyoming National Guard members were recognized as 2015 Heroes Among Us. The annual award recognizes selfless service – outside of a military status – performed by our soldiers, airmen and civilian employees.

Two airmen and one soldier were recognized for their quick thinking in assisting other Wyoming residents in times of emergency. The awards are traditionally presented at the October Governor's Reception.

Capt. Paul Kanish, a traditional Wyoming Army National Guard officer serving in Joint Forces Headquarters, assisted victims of a rollover on Wyoming's snowy and ice-covered roads last winter. According to his nominator, retired Command Sgt. Maj. Gayle Baugh, "the bitter cold temperatures that morning combined with the wind funneling through the openings in the cab were quickly causing the injured occupants to go into a state of shock."


Kanish, along with his brother, rendered first aid and transferred the injured victims to their vehicle and to remain warm until medical professionals arrived.

In July, Staff Sgt. Chance Walkama, a member of the Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Security Forces Squadron, went to Outback Steakhouse, in Cheyenne, for a quiet dinner with his wife. When he and his wife arrived, a woman was holding her unbreathing baby. He quickly questioned the mother and discovered the baby quit breathing while they were eating. He performed upper airway thrusts on the child to expunge the food and ensure the child was breathing again.

His nominator, Chief Master Sgt. Doug Rhodes, said the emergency medical technicians who arrived on scene credited Walkama's quick actions with saving the child. "I think this is a very touching story about a good citizen stepping outside of his comfort zone and assisting someone in need," Rhodes said.

This year's third hero, Tech. Sgt. Misty McMullen, also saved someone from choking. McMullen, an active guard and reserve airman assigned to the Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Comptroller Flight, performed the Heimlich maneuver on a fellow Chick-fil-A customer in September.

Her nominator, Lt. Col. Mark Baab, said after receiving the universal sign for choking from the customer, McMullen provided aid. The maneuver successfully dislodged the trapped object.

"These three Wyoming National Guard members exemplify our military values and are fine examples of the men and women we have in our organization," said Maj. Gen. Luke Reiner, Wyoming's adjutant general. 



Tech. Sgt. Misty McMullen (top), an active guard and reserve airman assigned to the Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Comptroller Flight is presented the Heroes Among Us award by Gen. Frank J. Grass, chief of the National Guard Bureau, and Maj. Gen. Luke Reiner, adjutant general. Staff Sgt. Chance Walkama (middle), a member of the Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Security Forces Squadron receives the Heroes Among Us award from Reiner and 153rd Airlift Wing Commander Col. Brad Swanson. Capt. Paul Kanish (bottom), a traditional Wyoming Army National Guard officer serving in Joint Forces Headquarters.

The start of the new year gives us an opportunity to reflect on where our Wyoming National Guard has been over the past year and where we are headed in the year ahead.

Our National Guard continues to be engaged across Wyoming, the nation and the world. I am extremely proud of all that you have accomplished and the important missions you continue to perform.

Currently, we have A Battery 2-300th Field Artillery, Charlie Med, and members of the 187th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron and 153rd Security Forces Squadron deployed. For these members it was another holiday spent away from their families. Please consider sending our deployed members a note, or a care package, and thanking them and their families for their sacrifice and selfless service.

As always, but just to remind everyone, the entire chain of command is just a phone call away if someone needs our assistance.

I have spoken in the past about pending force structure changes and how those changes will impact Wyoming. As we begin to execute these changes, our focus remains on keeping our force at full strength, modernized, trained and ready to answer this state or nation's call at any time.

Additionally, we will continue to make this great organization even better. It is imperative that we continue to excel and produce ready forces in an era of declining budgets. Many of you have volunteered to work on various improvement process teams and will spend time over the next several months thinking through the process of making our organization better.

My vision for this process is that we identify the requirements for improvement and then translate those ideas into actions for our leaders to implement. Our values and ideas will reinforce and support our energy in

**The Adjutant General
Maj. Gen. Luke Reiner**

Generally Speaking



this organization. Examining our systems, leadership and relationships will improve our force as we face the future.

Finally, I ask each of you to remain engaged with our organization and to stay focused on our mission. As soldiers, airmen and civilian employees you strengthen our communities and inspire future generations to serve. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do for our Wyoming Military Department.



First TAG Twitter town hall

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire

Maj. Gen. Luke Reiner, Wyoming's adjutant general, communicates with participants in the first Twitter town hall for the Wyoming Military Department, Dec. 17, 2015.

Reiner communicated with Twitter, via #askWyoguard, and Facebook users, via the wyoguard page, answering questions posed by users.

Another social media town hall is scheduled for February.

In this issue I want to talk about family and friends and their role in stress reduction.

We find ourselves once again with the holidays that have come and gone.

What a great time Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day are for reducing stress and recharging. Though in many cases the holidays themselves can be stressful.

Our organization is under a significant amount of change with the uncertainty of a current National Defense Authorization Act, the downsizing of the active and reserve components of the military, and all that comes with it, like movement and MOS changes. It is easier said than done, but try and put your energy and worry into things you can control.

Unfortunately life doesn't seem to slow down for us when we spend much needed time with family and friends. In many cases work just piles up.

It's this time of year, more than any other, I try to put things in perspective.

If you are not careful the rejuvenating aspects of the holidays are negated with thoughts of work or our current situations.

For instance I think/worry about the 2016 Best Warrior Competition, the Annual EPS Board and the new NCOERs that we must adjust ourselves to.

If I am not careful I can be a shell of myself while at home with the ones I love. It is crucial at these times to put work into perspective. I do a personal brain session to help me with this. It goes like:

If I don't meet a deadline for the 2016 BWC will my wife still love me?

If I forget something in preparing for the EPS Board in January will my paycheck still come?

If I am slow to catch onto the new NCOER will my 60th birthday and subsequent retirement arrive?

The answer to all these questions are yes, yes and yes.

Everything will work out, so I give myself permission to forget about life's stressors and enjoy my family and friends.

This time of year can be full of worries, like the money you spent on Christmas gifts, a vehicle that's on its last

State Command Sergeant Major
Commmd Sgt. Maj. Tom Allan

From My Foxhole



leg, or perhaps relationship issues.

I hope you enjoyed the time off you need and deserve. Work and all that comes with it can be handled in this new year.

Your family needs you to be healthy and present. Not just present physically, but emotionally as well.

So do yourself a favor and begin 2016 by promising to spend as much time as possible with family and friends, and do all the things you enjoy.

I have ultimate faith in the soldiers of this great organization, and I know we will get through these dynamic times.

Deb & I wish you a blessed and fulfilling New Year.

Help us make Cowboy Guard better

Let us know what you like about Cowboy Guard and how we can make it better. We've created a web-based form for you to provide inputs to our magazine. Please take a moment to fill out the form found at this link:

<http://bit.ly/cowboyfb>.

From challeNGed cadet to challeNGing cadets

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class
Jimmy McGuire
Wyoming Army National Guard
Public Affairs NCOIC

Seven years ago the cadre used to call him Cadet Brown; today the cadets call him Sgt. Brown, and his three sons call him Dad.



Cadre Team Leader
Michael Brown
now

At 23, Wyoming Cowboy Challenge Academy's newest cadre team leader Michael Brown has lived a lot of life and is using his dark past to shed some light on a bright future.

That wasn't the case in 2008 when the troubled teenager was facing jail time after returning to a facility in Sheridan after a holiday break and failing a urinalysis. The National Guard-sponsored WCCA was starting its seventh class and agreed to accept Brown, a Cheyenne native, into the 5 1/2-month residential program for at-risk youth.

"They said I'd get off probation if I could do this," Brown said. "I still struggled here though. I didn't want to go along with the program. It took about a month of getting reamed

and smoked to learn how to shut up and say 'Roger sergeant,' and move on."

Seven years later he returned to the academy as a cadre member and he's helping shape young lives at the same place that shaped him into a responsible adult.

Admissions Placement Coordinator Theresa Smith has worked at WCCA since it started in 2005. She remembered Brown fondly and was impressed with his resiliency after a rough start at the Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center-based academy. "He came here as a ninth grader," she recalled. "He had skipped high school, but he left here with his GED."

Brown said he had a real change of heart after the first few weeks of the program and decided to set his sights on a military career. If he was to accomplish that, he said he knew he had to graduate high school.

"It was a lot of work and pressure, but I knew what I wanted to do then, so I got it done," Brown said.

He initially joined the Wyoming Army National Guard's Recruiting and Retention Battalion.


Smith saw him a few years later when he was driving in Guernsey towing the Guard's climbing wall to a recruiting event.

I rolled down the window and yelled 'Hey Michael Brown!' We visited for a while, and I asked him if he would speak at a Work Force

Services function representing WCCA as a graduate," Smith said. "I was nervous because he used a lot of slang (as a cadet). He blew me away. He was so well spoken."

Brown said he enjoys giving something back to the place that turned him around.

"I thought it would be nice for the young men and women to have a cadre who actually went through it," he said. "I can say, 'It's not easy, but it's doable. You can make it.' I think it's more of a respect thing for me. They respect that I did it, and they respect that I'm here now, so they actually push themselves. They don't argue with me. I talk to them as I would have expected to be talked to. I think they really appreciate that."

A lot of people could have given up on that kid who was always in trouble, but a new generation of young people have something to look forward to with an experienced trainer in their corner. 



Cadet Michael Brown
then

Wyoming hosts Region 6 Best Warrior competition

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire

Wyoming Soldier of the Year Spc. Tyler Nieters, of Cody and the Wyoming Army National Guard's 133rd Engineer Company assembles one of three weapons during the "Pandora's Box" event at the Region 6 Best Warrior Competition last May at Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center. Blindfolded competitors were given a foot locker with three unassembled weapons systems and 15 minutes to put together as many as they could.

2015



Deployment allows for unique visit

By Deidre Forster
State Public Affairs Officer
Wyoming Military Department

During her most recent deployment Capt. Christy Rippel had a chance to break away from duties in the base medical clinic and hit a local destination — the South Pole.

The temperature was brisk for a spring day in Antarctica, minus 68, but it was a goal for the veteran flight nurse who has stepped foot on five of the Earth's seven continents.

Rippel spent much of the fall at McMurdo Station, Antarctica, deployed as part of Operation Deep Freeze, a joint service mission which supports domestic civil authorities in support of the National Science Foundation, the lead agency for the United States Antarctic Program.



Courtesy photos

Above right: Capt. Christy Rippel, a flight nurse with the Wyoming Air National Guard's 187th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron poses at her most recent deployment location, McMurdo Station, Antarctica.

Above: Capt. Christy Rippel examines a patient at the McMurdo Station clinic, in Antarctica.



Rippel, who has been a member of the Wyoming Air National Guard's 187th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron for almost five years, spent her 45-day ODF deployment working in the station's clinic and dealing mostly with cold symptoms, known locally as the "McMurdo Crud." She also helped other clinic personnel learn tricks of the trade while having limited resources, and orienting civilian medical staff to medical evacuation on military aircraft.

Lt. Carly Rivera, the 153rd Airlift Wing's installation deployment officer, said most non-combat deployments, like Rippel's, are done on a voluntary basis outside of normal deployment schedules. In fact, three Wyoming Air Guard personnel recently supported ODF. "There are always opportunities for people to volunteer," she said, adding timelines for volunteer deployments vary from 45 days to upwards of six months.

Rippel said the military support for ODF includes airlift to, from and within the continent, as well as medical evacuation of personnel to the closest high-tech medical facilities, more than 2,500 miles away.

"Considering our limited resources and anywhere from a 5- to 8-hour

flight to New Zealand, even one patient if sick or hurt bad enough could be considered a mass casualty," Rippel said, adding that one patient had to be medically evacuated for kidney stones because McMurdo didn't have the follow-on medical requirements for that condition.

The cooperation among the various group of military, scientists and medical professionals makes for a great sense of community, she said. "This is really an international microcosm and I will miss the sense of community here."

As the only female military member in the four generations of her family who has served, Rippel said she is proud of her work whether in combat, like her Operation Enduring Freedom deployment, or by supporting humanitarian missions, like hurricane relief, and training other medical professionals, as she did during a State Partnership Program exercise with the Tunisian military.

"We train for combat but our goal is peace," she said. "What better way to demonstrate that than providing support in Antarctica, the only continent in the world dedicated to the peaceful mission of science and exploration?"

Alpha Battery prepares & executes historic deployment

By Sgt. Ashley Smith
Public Affairs Specialist
197th Public Affairs Detachment

The soldiers of A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery, validated their field artillery skills June 26 as they stepped closer to becoming the first Wyoming Army National Guard artillery unit since the Korean War mobilized to perform field artillery missions.

A Battery soldiers, fired rockets from the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, at Wyoming's Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center.

It is an annual requirement for the fire direction center and launcher crews to certify on the HIMARS, but this year it is imperative to mission readiness, said Maj. Robert Lejeune, 2-300th FA operations staff officer.

"They'll repeat it one more time before going down range," he said. "But it's a significant step in their training, and their annual certification will carry them forward so that they can

be ready to do their job down range."

The validation verifies the crews are able to receive the mission, input the information correctly to ensure calculations are accurate, affirm the rocket will land on target and then send the rocket when an execution order is given, said Lt. Col. Henry Cudney, 2-300th FA commander.

Soldiers participating in the training were handpicked by their command, all of whom are sworn to protect and defend this country, said Cudney.

Even though the unit has deployed several times during the last 13 years, the deployment ushers in some historical moments for the Wyoming Army National Guard.

"It's very significant from our standpoint," said Lejeune. "This will be the first time the unit has deployed to Afghanistan, but, more importantly, since the Korean War, it's the first time the unit has deployed to execute its field artillery mission."

The unit deployed in October.

During Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 2-300th FA

was tasked with missions they were unfamiliar with, he said. The new missions varied from security to convoy escorts. A few soldiers even got the opportunity to go out on embedded training teams.

Now, it is the legacy from the 300th Armored Field Artillery Battalion deployment to the Korean War that continues on. "I think it informs our mentality and our drive," said Lejeune. "It takes a person who is aggressive, who has a quick mind, and is willing to work hard to do the things that need to be done."


Those abilities are abundant in the Cowboy State, said Cudney. "There is no better soldier than a Wyoming Army National Guard soldier." 



Photo by Master Sgt. Charles Delano

Snow plows remove snow in front of C-130 aircraft assigned to the 153rd Airlift Wing, Wyoming Air National Guard, Dec. 16, 2015, in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The National Weather Service reported a daily maximum snowfall record for Dec. 15, 2015, at Cheyenne Regional Airport with 6.7 inches of snowfall, breaking the old record of 3.3 inches set in 1892.

Finding balance as a citizen soldier/airman

Editor's note: Approximately 70-75 percent of the Wyoming National Guard is comprised of traditional soldiers and airmen who fulfill their military obligations one weekend every month, two weeks a year. With so many in the force juggling the responsibilities of civilian careers, education and military responsibilities we set out to find out how the traditional members in our formations balance their responsibilities and manage their time. In the next few editions of "Cowboy Guard" we'll show you how one traditional soldier and one traditional airman are making this happen.

Finding Balance as an M-Day Soldier:

Capt. Christina Bullington

Bullington is from Westminster, Colorado, and currently lives in Torrington.

MOS (military occupation speciality): 70E, Patient Administration Association Healthcare Administrator
Unit: Wyoming Army National Guard Medical Detachment



Years of service: 11
Relationship status: Married to Capt. Matthew Bullington, commander of Bravo Company, 960th Brigade Support Battalion.

Balance means being able to fulfill her military duties, be successful in her career as a teacher, and take care of her 4-year-old

son. Bullington is a dual military soldier, meaning both she and her spouse are currently serving in the military.

On being dual military: "We definitely couldn't do it without our family. We have a 4-year-old boy and I would say 90 percent of the time we have drill on the same weekend. Grandma kinda always knows that when we give her our schedules, it's Grandma and Papa's weekend.

"I think a catch in the system is that they attempt to be very family-oriented but when you have dual military it's very difficult to attend each other's or one person's family events because you have your own military obligations. So, that can become a little bit difficult."

On civilian employment: "We're both teachers but we have different employers. My husband teaches in Goshen County at Torrington High School and I work at Saint Joseph's Children's Home in Torrington.

Finding Balance as a DSG Airman:

Senior Airman Olivia Hartshorn

Hartshorn is from Bishop, California, and currently lives in Laramie.

AFSC (Air Force Specialty Code): 4N051, Aerospace Medical Service Journeyman

Unit: 153rd Medical Group, Wyoming Air National Guard

Years of Service: 3

Relationship Status: Single

Balance means trying to juggle full-time college courses at the University of Wyoming while also excelling at her military career and keeping up with her professional military education.

On being a DSG (drill status guard member):

"It is difficult sometimes juggling a full-time student schedule and also studying for career development courses and upgrade training, but it is both manageable and rewarding if you push yourself and strive for excellence."



On civilian employment:

"I am currently a full-time student at the University of Wyoming where I am majoring in communication, and minoring in psychology. I will be receiving my bachelor's next fall. Honestly,

once you practice and implement good time management with school and the Air National Guard, it makes combining these jobs and lifestyles so much easier."

On communication: "Communication is HUGE. It is a vital part of my everyday life in regards to school and drill weekends. I can definitely attribute this skill to my success with both of these. Utilizing your chain of command is the key to getting all of your tasks accomplished during drill weekends. Also I strongly believe that effective communication results in unit cohesion. Drill weekends can definitely get stressful, even with effective communication skills. I'm honestly very grateful to have a unit that excels in this category. This makes the weekend run smooth, and every task that is put before us is finished in a timely manner."

On family: "Family time is essential and I can't stress that enough. The closest family I have is in Colorado. I am very grateful my sister lives in Fort Collins so I am able to see her very often since I live in Laramie."

New faces & places

By Capt. Tom Blackburn
Deputy Public Affairs Officer
Wyoming Military Department

Changes are coming to some Wyoming Army National Guard unit's location and force structure.

With recent national budget control decisions decreasing the size of the National Guard and force structure updates by the U.S. Army, the Wyoming Army National Guard will make changes to meet the new guidance.

The most dramatic change will be the deactivation of the 1041st Multi-Role Bridge Company and the activation of an infantry company in Southwest Wyoming next year. These moves are based on national-level guidance with further analysis done by the state's Army operations office.

"Some of these changes are driven by the National Guard going from 350,000 to 335,000 (soldiers), some by the U.S. Army changing the structure of some units, which we have in the state, and some by the reorganization of units across the country," said Col. Jesse Kirchmeier, current Wyoming Army National Guard chief of

staff, who oversaw the planning for the re-organization as the prior deputy chief of staff for operations.

The 183-person bridge company, which has been in the Wyoming Guard since 1997, will be deactivated as part of the downsizing mandated by national budget control measures.

That will occur by the end of the next federal fiscal year. The loss of the multi-role bridge company will have minimal impact on the Wyoming Guard's ability to perform its community response missions.

The new infantry company, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry, with its 131 available positions, will be stationed in the armories in Evanston and Afton, which formerly housed the 1041st.

The unit will fall under the 94th Troop Command, out of Laramie, but still maintain a training relationship with its parent battalion in Alaska. Personnel will start transferring into the Wyoming unit during fiscal year 2016.

Infantrymen are known for fighting on foot and their proficiency with firearms and other hand-held weapons.

"Having the new infantry company will help us with recruiting in that part of the state," said Kirchmeier.

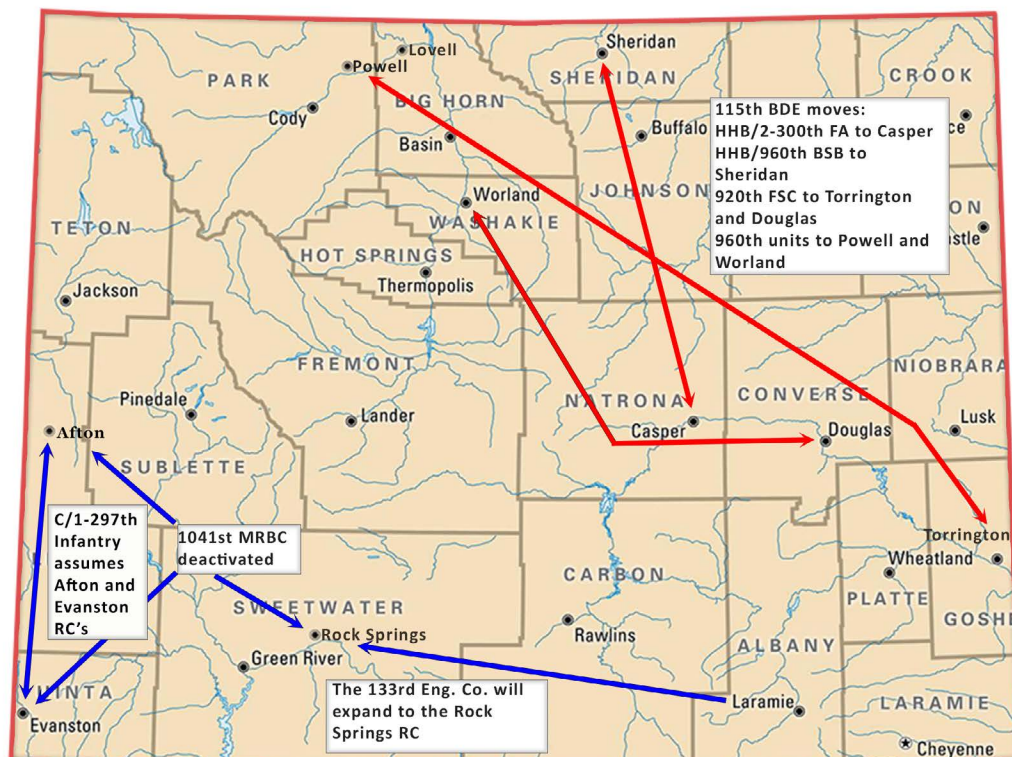
Also, other units will see some change because of updates made to unit force structure by the U.S. Army.

The 133rd Engineer Company will receive an additional platoon, expanding the Laramie-based company into the

Rock Springs armory, formerly assigned to the 1041st, ensuring the Guard maintains a presence in Sweetwater County.

"They will receive a new vertical platoon, to go with the two horizontal platoons they have now," Kirchmeier said. "This will increase their capabilities. Before they could build airfields and roads, missions like that. Now they will also be able to build structures and buildings."

Guidance is already being given to commands to support soldiers' efforts in retraining for positions within their current units or in another Wyoming Army Guard vacancy.



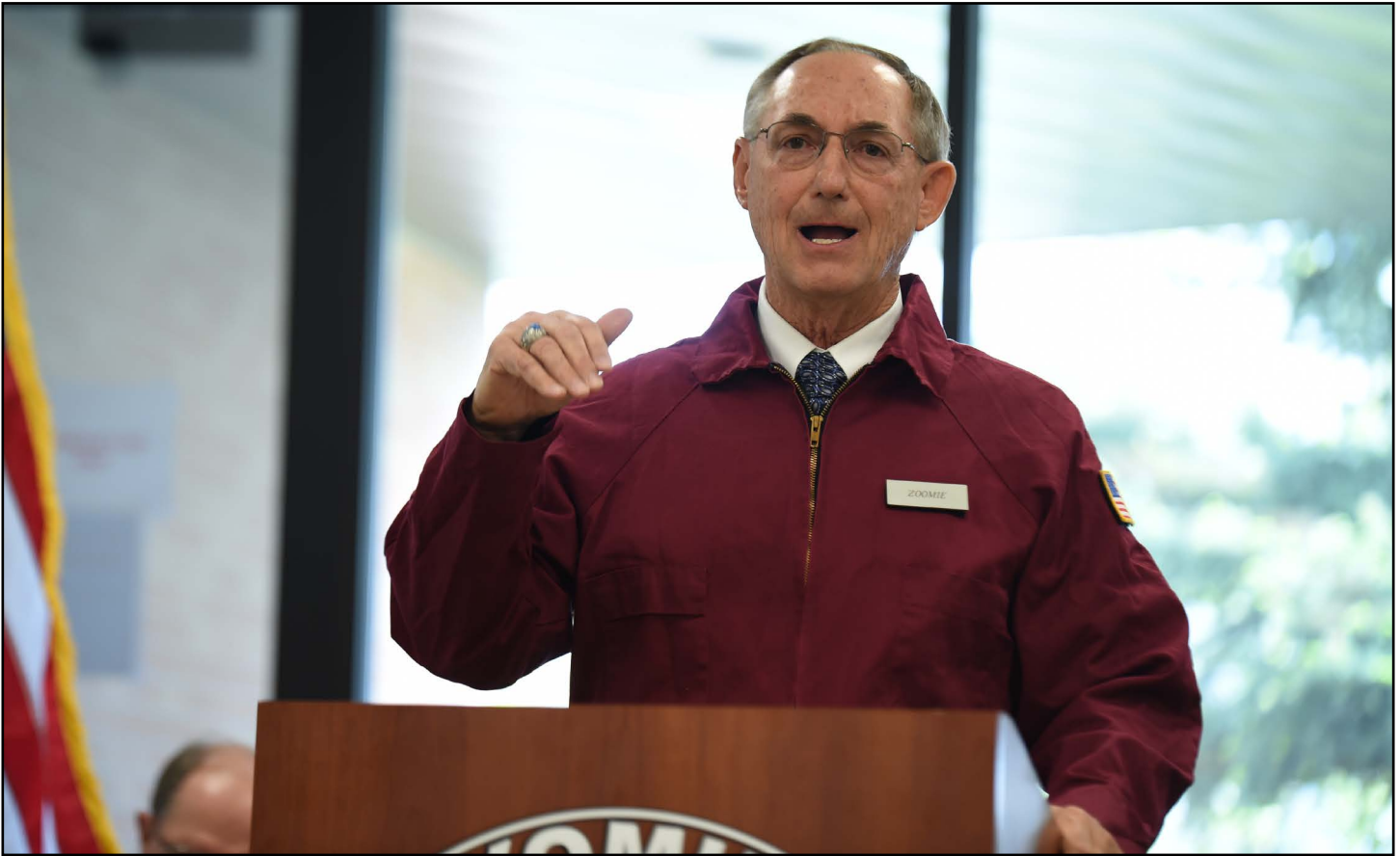


Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire

Retired Wyoming Air National Guard Col. Jim Barr, was the first director of Wyoming STARBASE Academy. He donned his director's flight suit to address the large crowd attending the 20th anniversary open house.

STARBASE Academy turns 20

Wyoming STARBASE Academy turned 20 in 2015 and celebrated with a party at its Cheyenne base.

In April the Wyoming STARBASE Academy, a Department of Defense youth program operated in partnership with the Wyoming National Guard and Wyoming Military Department, hosted graduates, former instructors and directors, local politicians and members of the public to celebrate the program's 20th anniversary in Wyoming.

All Cheyenne fifth-grade students attend STARBASE with their classroom teacher for five days of "hands-on, minds-on" experiential learning in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

Now retired Maj. Gen. Charles J. Wing was Wyoming's adjutant general in the mid-90s when a proposal to adopt the program here came across his desk.

Wing said in his remarks to the crowd at the Raper Armory, where STARBASE is now headquartered, that he thought it was a good program, and subsequently had


his staff research its feasibility in Wyoming.

"It's going to take the support of the school district and the backing of the principals," Wing said to his staff, while listing some potential obstacles outside of the Guard's control.

"Times were tough back then and we knew we weren't going to get state funding, but we figured even if the federal funding dried up in a few years, we've enriched the lives of several thousand students," he added.

Once Wyoming Guard leaders determined it was a good fit, and the aforementioned parties were on board, Wyoming Air National Guard Col. Jim Barr was brought on board as the first director. The now-retired colonel spoke at the open house and even donned his 20-year-old maroon flight suit for the occasion.

"It's amazing that, in 20 years, there have been more than 20,000 students come through STARBASE. That is over 500,000 hours of experience-based learning," Barr said.

The program is still going strong and has even expanded its teaching to junior high students, home schoolers and students from neighboring towns. 



First off, on behalf of the entire Wy-ARNG staff, I hope you had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Particularly to our deployed soldiers and their loved ones. Please know that our thoughts and prayers were with each of you over the holiday season.

The holidays bring with them a season of high emotions, both happy and sad. As we move onto 2016, I would ask each of you to find your "battle buddy" and reach out to them and make sure they are okay. This is also a season of reflection and as I think about where we have been, where we are, and where we are headed, I wanted to let you know how proud I am to be part of this great organization and how proud I am to serve with each of you.

Last year was a year of uncertainty and angst, but it was a year that turned out fairly well for the Wy-ARNG. Yes, we are losing slots and the 1041st Multi-Role Bridge Company. Those affect both traditional

and full-time soldiers, but it is not as bad as it could have been.

The Budget Control Act cut 15,000 slots from the Army National Guard. We will deactivate the 1041st and the 960th Brigade Support Battalion will downsize by 114 slots, but we had also anticipated that we might lose more. Yet because Maj. Gen. Reiner, Col. Kirchmeier and others had met with NGB and convinced the "powers that be" to be merciful, we gained an infantry company to offset the loss of the 1041st.

So, 2016 looks to be a better year for us. But I am asking each of you to help with our end strength. I need each of you to stay in our organization and I need each of you to provide leads regularly. We are currently below our authorized end strength after the transformation (we currently hover around 1,551 and our new end strength is 1,590). This worries me, because if we do not achieve 100 percent or above, we run the risk of further cuts.

Brig. Gen. Steve Mount
Assistant Adjutant General – Army



Together I know we will meet our end strength and make the transition as painless as possible. **RIDE FOR THE BRAND!**

Brig. Gen. Steve Rader
Assistant Adjutant General – Air



Well, here we are on the cusp of a new year. It seems amazing that 2015 is completely behind us. As we look in the rearview mirror, we can see that it was a very busy year and there is much to be proud of.

We had successful deployments of multiple unit personnel overseas and a flood response in support of Lusk, Wyoming. We had significant participation in the Angel Thunder exercise last June. Our personnel were in charge of the Wildland Fire Fighting Air Expeditionary Group and participated in this year's MAFFS deployments in support of the Forest Service to fight domestic wildfires. Our maintainers moved into their new facilities in a completely refurbished Building 16. Many of the rest of our displaced units finally moved back into Building 16 in December, or will get into the building this month, after three years in temporary facilities. That will complete the second largest SRM project in ANG history (more than \$30 million).

We built a new simulator facility that will hopefully house a C-130 simulator in the coming years. We worked through the process of divesting the WyANG of their active

duty associate squadron, the 30th Airlift Squadron, and four of our C-130 aircraft. All that while quietly improving our manning and readiness numbers. Overall, an outstanding year!

While we never know ahead of time everything that we will be required to do this year, we do know that things don't seem to be slowing down. We have about 150 of our personnel scheduled to deploy to various locations throughout 2016. We know that Wyoming will be involved with C-130 engine upgrade testing, and the C-130 modernization program will likely bring aircraft avionics upgrades. Wyoming will once again lead the MAFFS efforts, if called upon, as Col. Scott Sanders continues as the mission commander for another year. As announced earlier, we will transition to new Wing leadership in the coming months when Col. Paul Lyman takes over upon Col.

See RADER page 33

Wyoming Nation



Maj. Gen. K. Luke Reiner,
The Adjutant General

Brig. Gen. Steve Mount,
Assistant Adjutant General – Army

Brig. Gen. Steve Rader,
Assistant Adjutant General – Air

Brig. Gen. Gregory Porter,
Director of the Joint Staff

Wyoming Army National Guard

(commander; senior enlisted – if different from commanding unit)

Joint Force Headquarters – Maj. Jonathan Seelye; 1st Sgt. William Spaulding

197th Public Affairs Detachment – Capt. Christian Venhuizen, Sgt. 1st Class Frank Marquez

Detachment 1, 891st Trial Defense Team – Maj. Jonathan Seelye

Medical Detachment – Col. James Massengill; Sgt. Maj. Steve Stoughton

Training Center – Col. John Papile; Command Sgt. Maj. John Woolery

Wyoming Recruiting and Retention Battalion – Lt. Col. Dean Hunhoff; Sgt. Maj. Robert Butz

84th Civil Support Team – Lt. Col. Christopher Troesh; Senior Master Sgt. Douglas Bare

213th Regiment Regional Training Institute – Col. Steve Alkire; Command Sgt. Maj. Jayson Walford

1st Battalion, 213th Regional Training Institute – Maj. Jason Salsgiver; Command Sgt. Maj. Jayson Walford

94th Troop Command – Lt. Col. Shane Crofts; Command Sgt. Maj. Shawn Fisher

C Company, 5th Battalion, 159th General Support Aviation Brigade – Maj. Justin Durtsche

Detachment 3, B Company, 777th Aviation Support Battalion – Maj. Justin Durtsche

133rd Engineer Company – Capt. Michael McGee, 1st Sgt. Jason Spaulding

67th Army Band – Chief Warrant Officer 3 Rob Phillips

1041st Engineer Company – Capt. Daniel Johnson,

Detachment 53, Operational Support Airlift Command – Chief Warrant Officer 5 Randy Sindelir

115th Field Artillery Brigade – Lt. Col. Greg Phipps; Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Laird

Headquarters, Headquarters Battery, 115th Field Artillery Brigade – Capt. Joe Spieker 1st Sgt. Michael Taylor

148th Signal Company – Capt. Cory Castle

Headquarters, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery – Lt. Col. Terry Jenkins; Command Sgt. Maj. Thad Ehde

Headquarters, Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery – Capt. Josh Talcott

A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery – 1st Lt. Zachary Jerry

B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery – 1st Lt. Scott Simmerman

920th Field Support Company – Capt. Daniel Marshall

Headquarters, 960th Brigade Support Battalion – Lt. Col. Kent Porter; Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Warner

Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 960th Brigade Support Battalion – Capt. Jeremy Wagner

A Company, 960th Brigade Support Battalion – Capt. George Ogirma

B Company, 960th Brigade Support Battalion – Capt. Matthew Bullington

al Guard leaders



Brig. Gen. Eric Mann,
Chief of Staff – Air

Col. Jesse Kirchmeier,
Chief of Staff – Army

Command Sgt. Maj. Tom Allan,
State Command Sergeant Major

Chief Master Sgt. William Whipple,
State Command Chief
Master Sergeant

Wyoming Air National Guard (unit commander; senior enlisted, first sergeant – if different from commanding unit)

Wyoming Air National Guard headquarters – Col. Pat Moffett; Chief Master Sgt. David LeFurge, Chief Master Sgt. Alan Stoinski

153rd Airlift Wing – Col. Brad Swanson; Chief Master Sgt. Michael Abbott; Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Turner

153rd Comptroller Flight – Lt. Col. Robert Baab

153rd Maintenance Group – Col. Pete Linde; Chief Master Sgt. Douglas Franklin

153rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron – Lt. Col. Todd Davis; Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Cowley

153rd Maintenance Squadron – Maj. Carl Johansen; Chief Master Sgt. John Moritz, Chief Master Sgt. Scott Wagner

153rd Maintenance Operations Flight – Maj. Elizabeth Evans; Senior Master Sgt. Charles Tarter; Master Sgt. David Banner

153rd Medical Group – Col. Jeffrey Storey; Chief Master Sgt. Jeremy Nash; Master Sgt. Thor Rasmussen

153rd Mission Support Group – Col. Shelley Campbell; Master Sgt. Mark Ramler

153rd Communications Flight – Maj. Jason Allen; Chief Master Sgt. Leslie Raney

153rd Security Forces Squadron – Capt. Sean Deveau; Chief Master Sgt. Doug Rhodes

153rd Logistics Readiness Squadron – Lt. Col. Matthew Gallegos; Chief Master Sgt. Eric Adams, Chief Master Sgt. Exie Brown; Master Sgt. Jason Bishop

153rd Force Support Squadron – Maj. Kristin Haley; Chief Master Sgt. Milissa Fowler

153rd Command and Control Squadron – Lt. Col. Christopher Howard; Senior Master Sgt. Joshua Moore, Senior Master Sgt. Travis Opsal; Master Sgt. Heather Schaffer

153rd Civil Engineer Squadron – Lt. Col. Bret Trippel; Chief Master Sgt. Michael Brown, Chief Master Sgt. Lee Horstman, Chief Master Sgt. Erik Smith; Master Sgt. Frank Wilson

153rd Operations Group – Col. Justin Walrath; Chief Master Sgt. Darren Nogle

187th Airlift Squadron – Lt. Col. Jeremy Schaad

153rd Operations Support Squadron – Lt. Col. Alan Brown; Chief Master Sgt. Ray Arnold, Chief Master Sgt. Jack Goeken

187th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron – Lt. Col. Michelle Mulberry; Master Sgt. Tiffany Sinner

243rd Air Traffic Control Squadron – Maj. Jeremy Burton (acting); Chief Master Sgt. Paul Zaring; Master Sgt. Brian Bowen

OEF ends, Wyo. Guard engagements continue

By Deidre Forster
State Public Affairs Officer
Wyoming Military Department

Since 2001 the Wyoming National Guard, like much of the nation's military, has been decisively engaged in various operations around the world, mainly in the Middle East, fighting insurgents, terrorist organizations and injustice to protect the world.

At the end of 2014, the last – and longest – of those combat operations ended. Operation Enduring Freedom was officially declared complete on Dec. 26, 2014, 13 years and 80 days after it began.

OEF bookended other combat operations, most notably Operation Iraqi Freedom (March 2003 – August 2010), as well as a variety of other operations, exercises, humanitarian missions and troop exchanges for which the Wyoming Army and Air National Guard deployed members.

OEF and OIF were the largest deployments the Wyoming Army and Air Guard have completed. The first Wyoming Guard members went out the door not long after the terrorist attacks in September 2001.

By mid-December of that year, more than 80 members of the Wyoming Air National Guard had deployed to Oman, in the Middle East, and were among the first waves of American military members sent out to combat the War on Terror.

In all the Wyoming Air National Guard would deploy someone 1,578 times in direct support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The majority of the airmen deployed at least twice, some as many as six times, during that combat operation.

But they didn't stop there. For Operation Iraqi Freedom the Wyoming Air Guard deployed airmen 555 more times. Adding those major conflicts in with the various other global and national operations, exercises and missions, the Wyoming Air National Guard has deployed someone 3,766 times since 2001.

One airman, Master Sgt. Beau Bybee, deployed with the 153rd Maintenance Squadron six times for Operation Enduring Freedom and once for Operation Iraqi Freedom. He has also deployed seven other times among those combat deployments.

He said everything from military rank to deployment location and life events make each deployment different.

"When you deploy as an airman your job is simple; the only thing you have to really do is what you're told to do," he said. "Once you start getting rank then the responsibility starts to evolve more, such as shift leads, going off-station for recovery of aircraft, and managing personnel and aircraft for inspections and missions."

Bybee's early deployments were as a bachelor. Now, married with two children, deployments take on new difficulties. "It did get a lot harder to leave each time, the last deployment I was on I missed some very important things like my daughter's fifth birthday, her first day of school, my wife's birthday and our anniversary," he said.

Missing family milestones is not a reason for Bybee to miss a deployment. Serving the country is why he joined the military in 1998. "Who wouldn't want to be 'the guys' that helped deliver the beans and bullets to the guys in the trenches, who are in a far worse situation, and make their day," he said.

The Wyoming Army National Guard joined the overseas fight

on Jan. 7, 2003, when 26 members of its 4th Infantry Division, Rear Operations Center, deployed to Tikrit, Iraq. All but one soldier, Capt. Robert Lucero, would return in April 2004. Lucero, who died in Iraq, in September 2003, was the first Wyoming National Guard member to die while on a combat mission since the Korean War.

The Wyoming Army National Guard has deployed someone 2,271 times for various combat, humanitarian and exercise missions around the world. Of that number, 196 soldiers have deployed to Afghanistan, 818 to Iraq and 951 to Kuwait in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Like the airmen in the Wyoming Air National Guard, many have deployed multiple times.

Among the other missions executed by the Wyoming National Guard during the years of Operation Enduring Freedom was safeguarding civilian travelers for Operation Noble Eagle. The organization provided 207 soldiers to support physical security measures at Wyoming's airports prior to the founding of the Transportation Security Administration.

Hurricane recovery, third-world medical assistance, humanitarian aid, peace-keeping in Kosovo and a myriad of other non-combat missions have also continued to keep the almost 3,000 Wyoming National Guard members decisively engaged since the turn of the century.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Brandon Erdmann was deployed to Bosnia on a peacekeeping mission when the planes hit the World Trade Center towers. He has deployed four additional times since then, spending roughly four years flying helicopters for federal missions since 2003.

"There's a high level of gratifica-



See ENGAGEMENTS on page 31

Wyoming Air Guard transfers four C-130H aircraft

By. Capt. Megan Hoffmann
Public Affairs Specialist



By the end of October 2015, Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Airlift Wing, returned to its original fleet of eight C-130 aircraft, losing four that it gained nine years ago.

In 2006, the 153rd Airlift Wing welcomed the 30th Airlift Squadron to its ranks, making it the first guard-based unit in the U.S. Air Force's Air Mobility Command to gain an active duty associate unit. With the active-associate, came personnel, missions, and four aircraft, upping the size of the Cheyenne-based unit's C-130 fleet to 12.


Lt. Col. Todd Davis, 153rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron commander, oversaw the transfers from Cheyenne to the Nevada Air National Guard's 152nd Airlift Squadron.

"The aircraft transfers to Reno are essential for our maintenance personnel to return to a pre active-asso-

ciate organization," said Davis. "While the additional aircraft certainly offered more scheduling flexibility to support our high operations tempo, the four aircraft also drove additional maintenance actions which we are not adequately manned for anymore. Transferring these aircraft internal to the Air National Guard is also a plus since Reno will end up with aircraft about 15 years newer than what they previously possessed."

Davis said the loss of the active duty squadron, combined with other National Defense Authorization Act requirements for streamlining the nation's C-130 fleet, resulted in Wyoming's C-130 reduction.

"We are not losing any capabilities," said Col. Brad Swanson, 153rd Airlift Wing commander. Airlift, aeromedical evacuation, troop transportation and aerial firefighting will still be conducted by the wing.

"Even with eight C-130s, we'll still maintain the highest operational tempo we've seen in decades," Swanson said. "We will still be able to carry out our state and federal missions." 

Readiness center replaces 1957 armory

The new Afton Readiness Center was dedicated in September.

Built at a total project cost of \$13.5 million, it includes the readiness center and a vehicle storage building comprising 42,842 square feet of space on an 83,000 square-foot compound.

Amenities include a 5,400 square-foot assembly hall; sports floor; a complete audio-visual system; 1,380 square feet of classroom space, with sub divisible classrooms; video teleconferencing capability; 1,300 square feet of commercial kitchen space; 600 square feet of physical fitness space; a 1,200 square-foot simulation trainer; an equipment cleaning station; vehicle fueling pumps; two vehicle wash bays and 12,000 square feet of enclosed parking.

"A goal of the military department and the National Guard is to integrate with the local community," said Col. Jesse Kirchmeier, Wyoming Army National Guard chief of staff during the September 16 dedication ceremony.


"We would like to recognize the land owners and the Star Valley High School for their eagerness and desire to work together to complete a multi-faceted and civic based building that will benefit the local community for many years to come," he said.

Artwork and taxidermy by local students, as well as local professionals is exhibited throughout the readiness center, and reservations are already being taken for community events.

The facility was constructed under the design-build delivery method, which allows for a unique teaming between the owner, the architect and general contractor to work together towards a common goal. It also meets the standard for a LEED Silver Certification for superior energy efficiency and sustainability.

Funding was provided by both the state and federal government. Kirchmeier thanked the state of Wyoming for the timely allocation of funds that allowed the project to start two years ahead of schedule.

The readiness center replaces the 19,000 square-foot Afton Armory, built in 1957. It was deemed sufficiently inadequate by units stationed there over the past 58 years, most recently Detachment 1 of the 1041st Engineer Company.

"It's night and day," said Staff Sgt. David Cox, 1041st readiness non-commissioned officer. "Even the communications system is something else. Emergency responders from any organization should be able to communicate with anyone should that need arise." 



Meet the Military Department

Editor's note: Each quarter we spotlight two Wyoming Military Department employees by asking them a series of 10 questions. Meet Chrissy Renfro and Maj. Colin Hess.

How long have you worked for the Wyoming Military Department?

Renfro: Not very long, only since Oct. 28!

Hess: I am active duty USAF. I have worked for the Wyoming Military Department for one week.

What is your current job title/position in the organization?

Renfro: I am the Wyoming Army Guard's DPH (director of psychological health).

Hess: My current position is Command Inspector General for the state.

What other positions (to include prior military service) have you held in the organization?

Renfro: I am a complete newbie.

Hess: I started my career as a weapons loader on F-15s stationed at RAF Lakenheath, United Kingdom. From there I was stationed at F. E. Warren AFB, as an ICBM launch officer. My next assignment was as at Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado, where I held the positions of flight commander, assistant director of operations, and chief of standardizations and evaluations, all in the missile warning field. My latest assignment was at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, with NORAD/USNORTHCOM where I was chief of the missile and space domain, as well as lead missile and space instructor.

What is your favorite aspect about working for the organization?

Renfro: I just enjoy being able to support our service members and their families. I grew up as an Air Force "brat," moving from base to base every 2-3 years, and back then there were no services for families. I appreciate being a part of the new ways of thinking.

Hess: I love working in the joint environment. From what I have seen, this is a fantastic and dynamic organization with a crucial mission to support. I am looking forward to all that I will learn from serving here, as well as the opportunity of supporting the great people that make the mission happen.

What is the best piece of advice (personal or career-wise) you have ever been given?

Renfro: Personal advice: Always carve out time for yourself. It's critical to your mental health. Career advice: If you want to enjoy your job, never attend meetings. (Only half joking.)

Hess: A squadron commander once told me early on to, "always take care of the people." If the people are taken care of you rarely have to worry about the mission. This advice has served me well in my career. That and "don't mess up security." That one speaks for itself.



Chrissy Renfro
S-FERST

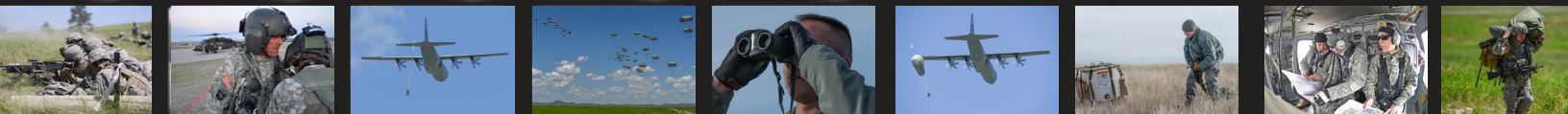


Maj. Colin Hess
Joint Force Headquarters

Paratroopers invade Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center

Photo By Master Sgt. Charles Delano

U.S. Army paratroopers assigned to the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 143rd Infantry Regiment, jumped from a C-130J Super Hercules aircraft assigned to Keesler, Air Force Base, Mississippi, June 8, 2015, at Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center, in Guernsey, Wyoming. About 200 soldiers from A Company, B Company, C Company and D Company jumped at Jonn Edmunds Drop Zone.



Base tests ability to survive active shooter

By Master Sgt. Charles Delano
PA Superintendant
153rd Airlift Wing

Every day, armed military personnel provide security for installations across the globe. But, what if, the very same airman tasked to protect personnel and assets becomes an active shooter? This is the scenario the Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Security Forces Squadron tested Dec. 18 at the Cheyenne Air National Guard base.

Secretary of Air Force Deborah James recently issued a memorandum for military bases to test the effectiveness of active shooter and lock down procedures. The 153rd Airlift Wing's exercise involved a lone gunman, armed with a M-4 assault rifle and 14 magazines filled with blanks, "shooting" airmen and attempting to evade capture.

"We wanted to test the worst-case scenario where an armed security forces airman is the gunman," said Capt. Sean Deveau, 153rd Security Forces Squadron commander. "Our No. 1 priority is the security of the base. We train and test our response to these types of situations to make us better at securing the base."

The exercise began around 9:30 a.m. The "shooter," for the exercise, exited a vehicle and began his shooting spree outside the newly renovated wing headquarters building. Airmen within the building observed the member as an active shooter and informed security forces.


The base initiated lockdown procedures while the shooter attempted to enter several other buildings.

"This was a good exercise. It was realistic and helped me see how fast a situation like this can develop," said Senior Airman Karen Klein, a member of the 153rd Logistics Readiness Squadron. "My adrenaline was pumping."

Several security forces airmen chased down and fatally wounded the active shooter as part of the training exercise. Upon completing all the necessary building sweeps, emergency responders attended to injuries and the exercise ended.

Observers from the 153rd inspector general wing inspection team graded security forces personnel on base lockdown and response, security forces response, and recovery after the active shooter was eliminated.

Security forces airmen assigned to the 90th Missile Wing, F.E. Warren Air Force Base, also observed the exercise to get an understanding of how the National Guard wing conducts active shooter exercises.

Observers said the exercise was a success with the most notable aspects being how difficult it was for the shooter to enter the buildings. They also commended the communication between members of the sweep teams. 



Photos by Master Sgt. Charles Delano

Top: Master Sgt. Tim Merritt, a member of the 153rd Logistics Readiness Squadron, tends to Senior Airman Karen Klein's simulated wounds, during an active shooter exercise. Above: Airmen assigned to the Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Security Forces Squadron clear a room in the headquarters building.



HARTSHORN from page 14

mie. The rest of my family lives in California so we only get to see each other over Thanksgiving and Christmas.

"This is one of the reasons that I stress how important family and family time is to not only me, but my family as well. When I do get the chance to visit my family I am completely shut off from everything else. I try to focus all my energy and attention to make the time we do get to spend together memorable. That is the most important and special time for me and I cherish it every chance I can. Also, I am very grateful for the people I have met in the clinic who have become my second family and also my friends I have made at school. I feel very fortunate to have such kind and influential people surrounding me at all times. It makes living so far from home so much easier and more enjoyable as well."

Advice to other airmen: "I think the best advice I can give to other Airmen is don't forget about 'you time.'" It is so easy to get so caught up in everything that we sometimes forget to take care of ourselves.

"I like to remind myself that I need to put aside some time during the day to do something that makes me feel good. Whether that is going to the gym, reading a book, going to see a movie or even just sit down and relax for an hour, it is essential to remember to do these things for ourselves, or whatever brings you happiness. Remember to always respect yourself and others around you. To me always remaining professional is one of the most important lessons I have learned and has helped me in all aspects of my life.

You need to know that everyone is different but we are all humans and need to be treated as such."

Suicide awareness a priority in WyARNG

By Sgt. Ashley Smith
Public Affairs Specialist
197th Public Affairs Detachment

It was near midnight in Camp Buehring, Kuwait, mid-way through his tour. Maj. Leon Chamberlain received word a soldier in camp wanted to see him. When he met with the soldier, they sat at an old rusty picnic table.

During their time together, the soldier admitted that if Chamberlain hadn't met with him, he would have killed himself.

Chamberlain, who served as the Wyoming Army National Guard behavioral health officer, recalled the bittersweet memory. He met with the soldier during their training prior to the deployment. He knew about the soldier's experiences and trouble on the job, and was inclined to believe there was a chance the soldier could hurt himself. He spent hours developing a relationship with the soldier.

"You're talking about people," Chamberlain said. "You're talking about them not because they are someone's son, daughter or parent, but (because they're) a human being. The military doesn't function without human beings."

The kind of attention the Army is giving to suicide prevention is paramount in saving lives and helping with individuals, Chamberlain said.

Annually, the force is reminded in continual training to keep an eye on battle buddies in an effort to combat the feelings of suicide or other distressing situations by following these simple steps: Ask, Care, Escort.


The ACE program teaches soldiers to ask the individual if they are thinking about committing suicide, care for their battle buddy enough to understand they are in pain, and escort them to their chain of command, a chaplain or a behavioral health professional.

The Army also offers Ask, Care, Escort Suicide Intervention and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training for soldiers.

For many years, military culture portrayed soldiers seeking help for mental illness as weak.

"If people feel like there is a stigma for coming forward, then there is going to be an issue with them getting the help that they need to have," said Trish Bannon, the Wyoming Military Department's joint psychological health coordinator. "But once we have that stigma reduced people that come forward will rise tremendously."

Col. Rich Knowlton the Camp Guernsey camp manager added, "This is a threat we need to meet head on. We need to look our soldiers in the eye and see another heart. Make sure that they are good and their families are good. If any of them need help, we will get help for them to make sure that they stay alive, and stay a part of our force and our family."

The Wyoming National Guard has a very attentive staff, which is available around the clock to respond to calls for help. For more information, call Military One Source at 1-800-342-9647. 

Vietnam vets receive proper “welcome home”

By Capt. Tom Blackburn
Deputy Public Affairs Officer
Wyoming Military Department

The tears flowed freely as the words echoed in the vastness that was the Casper Events Center.

Welcome home.

Repeatedly, that phrase was said during the four-day Wyoming Vietnam Veterans Reunion in Casper, Wyoming, in June, where 700 veterans sat, with friends and family members joining their loved ones who had served in Vietnam. But, unlike many of today's returning service members who return home to welcome receptions and gyms full of cheering loved ones, the Vietnam era veteran never received that treatment.

Until now.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the U.S.'s initial involvement of combat troops in the Southeast Asia war, the Wyoming Veterans Commission, in partnership with the Department of Defense and its national commemoration program, organized the first state-sponsored Vietnam veteran reunion, with “Welcome Home” as its theme.

“We learned from most Vietnam-era veterans, their service was never acknowledged and they definitely were never welcomed home,” said Larry Barttelbort, director of the Wyoming Veterans Commission. “That generation of veterans is directly responsible for ensuring our post-9/11 veterans receive the welcome home they so richly deserve. ‘Welcome Home’ was the natural theme.”

For the nearly 700 veterans in attendance, most returned home to cold, harsh realities. When Saigon fell in 1975, the Vietnam veteran's service faded into the history books,

much like Saigon and South Vietnam, renamed Ho Chi Minh City and consolidated into the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, respectively.

“We didn't have a welcome home when we got home,” said Lee Alley, a Vietnam veteran and veterans commission commissioner. “When I came home, I immediately went back to the University of Wyoming and the veteran wasn't accepted on campus. I basically hid my veteran identity. You couldn't talk about it on campus.”

The reunion's mission was to bring together as many Wyoming veterans as possible and give them a proper welcome home.

“The state's Wyoming Veterans Welcome Home Day law was signed by Gov. (Matt) Mead in 2011 and each year a team has visited three to four towns with a welcome home ceremony,” said Barttelbort. “We learned these local events were very well received and wanted to replicate that on a statewide basis.”

Besides a welcome home ceremony, presided over by Mead and other dignitaries, there was a benefits fair, memorial service, parade, and a dinner with special guest, war correspondent Joe Galloway.

It was an event focused on remembering the past, and also cherishing the service of so many Wyoming veterans.

There had been previous reunions, but this was the first event that was state sponsored. The reviews were positive.

From June 4-7, veterans visited with each other, sharing stories of patrols through rice paddies, missions on the Huey helicopter and remembering the spray of the South China Sea on U.S. naval ships. It was a great time to rehash old memories that possibly had lain dormant since the image of Hueys lifting off from the U.S. embassy in Saigon in 1975.

“It was past my expectations, the

thank you

from the
vets and
families,”
said Alley,
who also

helped
organize the
event. “From

the families, we got thank yous, I had wives tell me ‘My husband changed before my eyes at the event.’”

The reunion also gave the local community an opportunity to be involved in welcoming home these veterans. During the parade, after a long line of vehicles, motorcycles and military trucks passed, a large group of walking Vietnam veterans were applauded loudly and cheered.

Also family members were warmly invited to all events, so that they could witness and hear some of the stories that may have never been told. The interest from the community was evident after the first day of registration.

Expectations were modest from the planning committee, with numbers of attendees expected to be in the 400s. However, that estimate grew quickly.

“Initially, we had 380 vets register with about 400 family members,” Barttelbort said. “We had another 300 vets and untold number of family members walk-up (to registration). We knew we would have walk-ups, but never in those numbers.”

Even with the increased amount of veterans, the event rolled forward.

As veterans throughout the week-end signed a big map on the floor, documenting their tours overseas and inspected military equipment they once used years before at the Wyoming Veterans Museum, the message remained the same.

Welcome home. ∞



DEPARTMENT from page 22

What are your favorite hobbies?

Renfro: Reading; family movie night; camping; hiking; watching "Game of Thrones," "Drunk History," and "The Walking Dead;" travel.

Hess: Reading, woodworking, running, and anything to do with my family.

If you were granted three wishes for whatever you want, what would you ask for?

Renfro: One: a modest home on two acres of mountain-side property in Kauai. Two: to eat whatever I want and never gain weight. Three: for my daughters to have self-confidence, good judgment, and find their calling in life.

Hess: I wish for each of my children to reach their full potential, to leave a lasting positive legacy in this position when I move on, a vacation home on the Italian Riviera.

If you could hold any job you wanted, what would it be, and why?

Renfro: I would love to either be a helicopter pilot and work for the tourist companies in Hawaii, or run an animal refuge. I've ridden on helicopters be-

fore and thought it was the most fun thing I've ever done. Exhilarating! I would also enjoy the aspect of teaching tourists about what they're seeing and the importance of preserving the beauty of Hawaii. For the second, I love animals. Simple. I suspect, however, that it sounds more fun than it probably actually is.

Hess: I would love to work in the space lift industry with human spaceflight and launching satellites.

Where do you see yourself in 20 years?

Renfro: Retired and working happily in Hawaii (in case you hadn't picked up on that already). Since I can't fly helicopters, working at least part-time in some capacity. I can't imagine not working.

Hess: I see myself retired and spending my time visiting family and traveling the world with my wife.

Finish this sentence: I think the most important thing in life is. . . ?

Renfro: There are two things: first, always live by the golden rule (treat others the way you'd like to be treated), and second, having friends you know you can count on when times are tough.

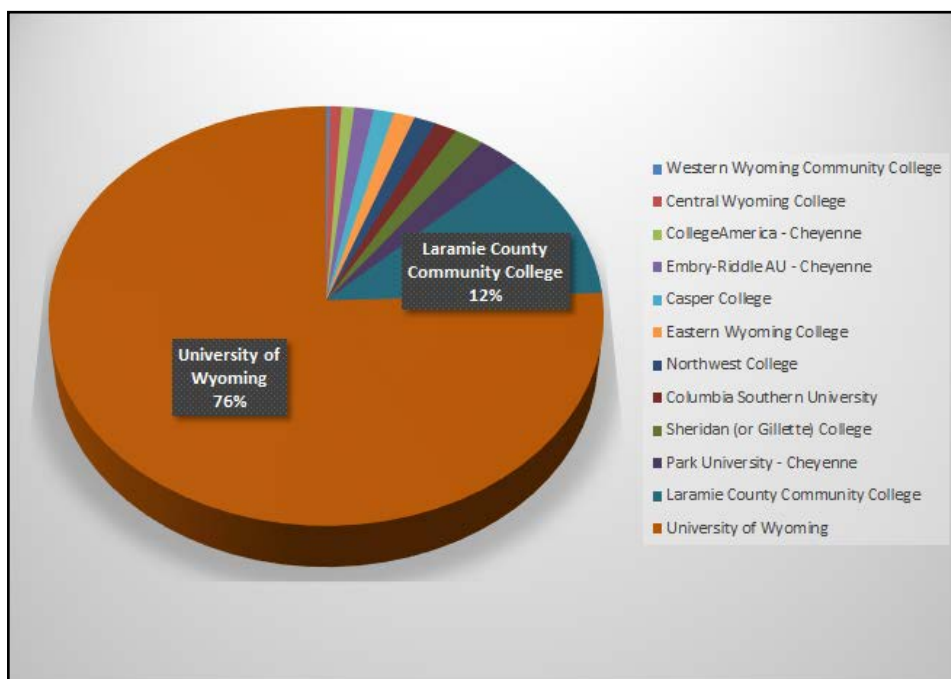
Hess: God, family, and this nation hands down!

Tuition assistance continues to benefit soldiers and airmen

The Wyoming National Guard Educational Assistance Plan, in 2015, disbursed \$515,953.23 in tuition to 11 Wyoming institutions.

The educational assistance was granted to the Wyoming National Guard by the Wyoming Legislature in 2001. It allows Wyoming National Guard members to attend approved Wyoming colleges and the University of Wyoming for free. Soldiers and airmen can receive one degree with the program.

Traditionally the majority of the money expended goes toward degree programs at the University of Wyoming; in 2015 almost \$390,000 was distributed to UW to cover WyNG members' tuition. Laramie County Community College, in Cheyenne, received the second largest amount in disbursements last year, \$60,123. The other six community colleges and four approved private schools in Wyoming received less than LCCC, with a combined disbursement total of \$65,839.



Local Civil Support Team trumps nation in incident responses



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire

Members of the environmental crime sampling team conduct preliminary analysis on a suspicious container during training in Jackson Hole, Wyo.

**By Capt. Megan Hoffmann
Public Affairs Specialist
Wyoming Military Department**

They accept varying work schedules, being on-call 24/7, 365, and committing several hours to several days at the scene of an incident - their mission necessitates they do so.

Members of the Cheyenne based 84th Civil Support team have the mission of supporting civil authorities at incident sites, operating throughout the entire Cowboy State and in CST sector 6, which includes Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska. The team is a conglomeration of Army and Air Force personnel who have formed a very close relationship with the Wyoming Office of Homeland Security and local and state emergency management officials.

"Their ability to respond quickly and work with local first responders is phenomenal," said Rob Cleveland, who has been the director of emergency management for Cheyenne and Laramie County for the past 15 years. "They possess the ability to supplement local first responders through the use of critical equipment and their extensive



knowledge base. They also work very well with the local populous and the relationship that the community and local first responders have with them is a pretty special one."

The team, which responds to chemical, biological, and nuclear incidents, as well as natural and man-made disasters, are largely self-suffi-

cient at what they do. At any given time, the team consists of around 22 full-time Active Duty Guard personnel who possess more than 15 different military specialties. They are required to deploy a functional response force within 3 hours of being called upon. It can take each team-member 24 months to be fully trained for a position on the team, averaging 1,800 hours of job training.

"Theoretically we can respond to any incident in all 50 states and territories. If something bad happens, a local responder will call in a request, typically to the Wyoming Office of Homeland Security, and from there several follow-on phone calls run through the proper channels and the response is staffed," said the 84th CST's commander, Lt. Col. Christopher Troesh.

Not only does the CST cover widespread territory in their responses, but their list of qualifications is extensive.

"We are constantly, training, maintaining and respond-



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire
1st Lt. Sarah Apel, senior science officer, inspects a sample collected by the environmental crime sampling team during training in Jackson Hole, Wyo.

ing,” said Sgt. 1st Class Trevor Cotton, medical noncommissioned officer for the 84th CST. “It’s what we do. The very technical, specified training we receive is phenomenal.”

In 2014, the 84th CST - in the least populated state - led the nation in total responses with 11. In fact, over the last three years, the 84th CST has been at, or near the top of, the national rankings in responses each year. They are able to operate in contaminated environments, perform mobile laboratory analysis and provide robust communications capabilities, as well as a plethora of other capabilities.

Last year, their responses varied from dealing with natural disasters and suspicious packages, to environmental crimes and chemical detection. They worked several flood responses in Carbon and Albany counties as well as the Big Horn Basin. Just recently the team responded to flooding in Niobrara County in June, primarily in Lusk; and assisted with a swift water rescue for a stranded motorist.

The team also responded to potential environmental crimes last year as they worked alongside the Wyoming Department of Agriculture to investigate a case where unknown substances were killing trees in Jackson, Wyoming.

The team was tasked with determining what was causing the trees to die and how to prevent further damage in the area. They determined what chemicals were present and traced them back to a resident who was killing trees for a better view around his property. The findings in this

instance mitigated any further damage to vegetation in the area.

The CST also responded to chemical spills on Wyoming highways and interstates as well as assisting the county coroner’s office in Gillette in identifying the presence of possible chemicals utilized in a suicide.

“When we got the call about the chemical suicide, it was a blizzard and it took us three days to get on site,” Cotton said. “When we finally got to the scene, it was 25 degrees below zero outside, but the local responders were extremely happy to see us arrive.”

After running lab analysis, the CST was able to detect the chemicals present in the suicide, which provided essential information for the follow-on investigation and ensured to coroner would not be exposed to lethal chemicals when performing his job.

“Not every response we deal with is life or death. However, certain responses could be fairly serious or even catastrophic if dealt with improperly. We always take our job extremely seriously, regardless of the specifics of each incident,” said Troesh.

The relationship the CST has formed with local officials is rarely seen, as it is very strong with the WOHS and Laramie County EMS.

“The cool thing about Wyoming is that the entire state and WOHS have fully embraced the Wyoming Military Department and CST. We are integrated extremely well and have a great partnership. We feel extremely fortunate to have this kind of relationship.

“This is the coolest gig in the guard,” Troesh added. “We get to travel all over the state, we do a lot of cool training, and most of all, we are always out helping in the community, which is what really matters.”

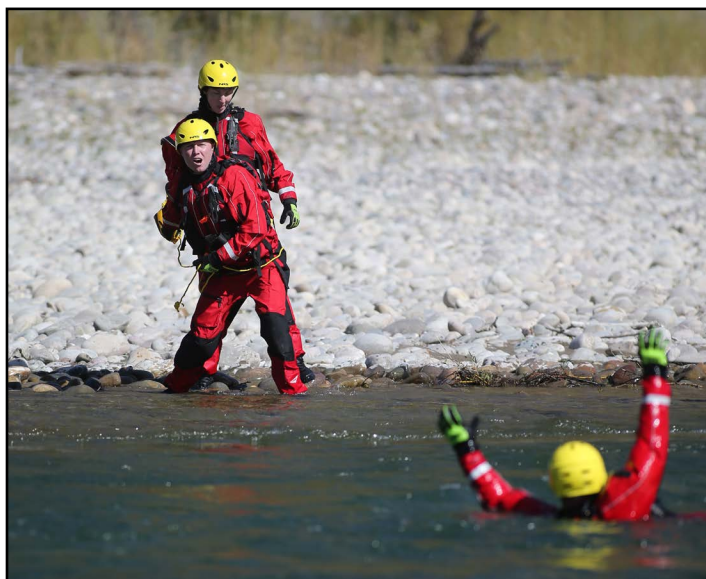


Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire
Physicians assistant Capt. Michael Sprosty throws a safety rope while Staff Sgt. Amanda Green acts as his back up during swift water rescue training in Jackson Hole, Wyo.

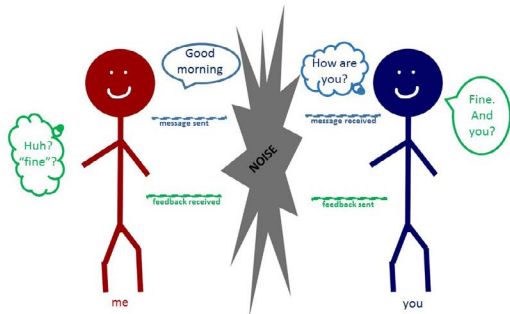
Sometimes communicating is a bit ... hard to do.

Talking is easy.

Communicating is more difficult.

A popular communication theory, and one of the simplest, suggests communication is nothing more than someone sending a message and someone else receiving it.

But that simplistic explanation leaves out the two most complicated parts about communicating: interference and feedback.



There is a bunch of “noise” floating around that the message has to fight through to reach the recipient.

In the case of our public affairs efforts, noise can be everything from computer firewalls, junk mail filters (yes, I know there are some of you who send all my email to the spam folder), mission requirements, hunger pangs, attitudes, etc. All of those things do a great job of interfering with communication.

Do I talk at you, or communicate with you? Without feedback I don’t know.

I’m attempting to communicate with this column; I won’t know if my attempt was successful unless someone calls and tells me they read it. When I don’t know if we’re successful, things in the PAO get a little dicey. Just ask my staff.

As the person attempting to communicate (i.e. doing much of the message sending) for the Wyoming Military Department, those two pieces of the communication puzzle really annoy me because they are pretty much out of my control.

No, I’m not a control freak – despite what the staff will tell you. But I do know that my office pushes a lot of communication to our internal and external audiences and honestly, it’s sometimes hard to know if or when they were received. And that really bugs me.

Public Affairs Officer
Deidre Forster

Comm Check



I hope when my staff spends time crafting engaging stories about the great things being done in the Wyoming Military Department we are communicating with you.

I hope when we choose a distribution channel, like Cowboy Guard, or Instagram (do you follow us?) or our newly redesigned website (go visit in mid-January, it will be hella cool) that we are communicating with you.

I realize the cacophony of interference is sometimes overwhelming, but could ya let me know, every once in a while, that the message has been received?

Maybe I’ll get feedback with this promise: The first five people to come to my office with the typo in this column highlighted in pink get a batch of homemade cookies.

I’m not above bribery.



**Have a concern, question, comment, unresolved issue?
TAG Communication Action Line may be the place to
call 307-772-5330**

A couple of months ago I was approached by Staff Sgt. Amy DeBoer to do an article in the next edition of Cowboy Guard pertaining to the GRACIE self-defense program.

She was very enthusiastic about the self-defense program and how it could complement our current SAPR program.

GRACIE Academy created the Women Empowered Gracie Defense Systems. The program is tailored to target sexual assault scenarios by teaching Gracie Jiu-Jitsu techniques. The 153rd held its first class during October drill.

GRACIE is taught by the husband and wife team of Master Sgt. Devin and 2nd Lt. Charrolet Henry. The two volunteer their time to teach our fellow airmen how to defend themselves against sexual assault.

The GRACIE program is the latest initiative targeting sexual assault that goes beyond the computer-based training and PowerPoint briefings airmen receive.

The GRACIE program starts by teaching airmen to be aware of their surroundings and recognize various warning signs. Trust your gut: If you get a bad feeling about a location or a person, leave immediately. If an individual offers you a drink and you say no and they insist, it's a red flag.

It also teaches about the triangle of victimization. A triangle of victimization refers to the three pieces every sexual assault has: a perpetrator, a target and an opportunity.

Take one of these pieces away and the sexual assault doesn't happen. The ultimate goal of the program is to reduce the risk and frequency of assaults by education and, as a last resort, self-defense.

According to a study the RAND Corporation conducted,

State Command Chief
Chief Master Sgt. Bill Whipple

The Chief's Corner



sexual assaults have been on the decrease in the military the last couple years. I believe programs like GRACIE are a factor in the reduction of sexual assaults in the military.

Let me emphasize, GRACIE is a free volunteer program open to all ranks or status; if you are interested in the class, contact Staff Sgt. Amy DeBoer at 772-6375.

ENGAGEMENTS from page 20

from doing the job you joined to do," said Erdmann, who joined the Wyoming National Guard in 1989 as a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot. He said the common denominator among the various missions – humanitarian, state active duty, or combat – is knowing each has a purpose. "Every mission is a real mission; that elevates your willingness to accept risk for executing the missions."

During one of his deployments to Afghanistan, in 2009, Erdmann earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, for flying a UH-60 that hoisted five wounded soldiers out of an ambush.

"I'm proud of what I do but that doesn't make me who I am. Deployments create experiences that help shape

tion that comes

who we are but those experiences by themselves are not the sole measure of my character."

The ability to successfully complete combat missions, like Operation Enduring Freedom, humanitarian aid missions for things like hurricane recovery, or fighting floods and fires on state active duty, is what will ensure the Wyoming National Guard continues to be a sought after military force, said Brig. Gen. Steve Rader, commander of the Wyoming Air National Guard.

"Our motto is 'Always Ready. Always there' and we are," he said. "We will continue to deploy overseas, throughout Wyoming and across state lines. While our deployment pace may slow, it will not stop for our Wyoming airmen or soldiers." ~

SPP bridges the gap

By Capt. Megan Hoffmann
Public Affairs Specialist
Wyoming Military Department

The best relationships are like fine wine - they get better with time. This paradigm holds true in that in order to build trust, understanding and vitality in any relationship, the concept of time is a key component.

The National Guard's State Partnership Program is no exception to this idea. Its roots have grown deeper, stronger and more complex in the more than 20 years since the program's inception. According to the National Guard, the SPP first evolved in 1991 with the idea that it would be beneficial to pair soldiers and airmen with military partners from host nations, therefore bridging the physical, political, economic and military gap between the United States and foreign territories. It was the hope that this partnership would become a mutually beneficial tool for both the U.S. and the host nation, facilitating cooperation, understanding and friendship along the way.

The Wyoming National Guard was able to jump on-board with SPP in 2004 when they partnered with Tunisia, a small country in Northern Africa that sits between Libya and Algeria.

Wyoming's pairing with Tunisia was far from coincidental as the decision was made due to commonalities the state and country shared in climate, environment, economy and military interests. Militarily, the

Wyoming Air National Guard operates C-130 aircraft, as does the Tunisian military; the Wyoming Army National Guard is heavily focused on field artillery, as is the Tunisian military; the Wyoming Army National Guard flies UH-60 aircraft, and Tunisia is in the process of procuring that airframe and training prospective UH-60 pilots. The partnership just made sense.

SPP has also extended its reach beyond military-to-military relations, as it served as a catalyst for initiating the Arabic Studies Program at the University of Wyoming.

This program, which came about after former U.S. Ambassador Gordon Gray visited Wyoming in 2011 urging support for educational initiatives for Tunisians, allows five students per academic year to attend the University of Wyoming, in Laramie, to attain their bachelor's degree while receiving in-state tuition.

"We have an Arabic program at the University of Wyoming in no small part due to the State Partnership Program's assistance in tying us with universities in Tunisia, facilitating faculty exchange and program initiation. It's been a real boom to us," said Anne Alexander, director of UW's international programs.

Alexander, who also serves as the university's associate dean of the UW Outreach School, said Tunisia has also asked Wyoming to help build an educational curriculum that would mirror what Wyoming Technical Institute, also in Laramie, teaches to students interested in fields dealing with automotive, plumbing, electrician and heating, ventilation and cooling systems as

those fields furnish a particularly useful and transferrable skill-set.

"The State Partnership Program has led to great ties in business and in other areas of higher education, which has been wonderful," she added.



Members of the Cheyenne Frontier Days committee, local elected officials, and staff at the University of Wyoming, have had the opportunity to visit Tunisia while in their official capacities, with the goal of fostering

this mutually beneficial relationship with the Tunisian military and civilians.

The SPP has also allowed the Wyoming National Guard to consistently have a physical presence in-country serving as the bilateral affairs officer. In the fall of 2015, Maj. Terry Oedekoven served in that capacity.

Besides having someone stationed in the partner country, the SPP also has someone in Wyoming coordinating the program. While Oedekoven was in Tunisia, Maj. Eric McCoy served as the Wyoming National Guard's SPP coordinator here.

The Wyoming-Tunisia SPP celebrated their 10th anniversary in 2015, and looks to continue taking steps in the positive direction in the program's future.

"It is my hope that Wyoming can build a relationship with Tunisia that is as strong and united as other SPP relationships that I know," said Oedekoven.

As time progresses, so does the relationship between Wyoming and Tunisia, like wine, growing stronger and sweeter through time. ∞

BULLINGTON from page 14

"The hard part that I think most people don't realize is that I think in most civilian jobs you can leave your job and just leave and not do anything and it waits until you get back.

"But being a teacher, you really have to plan. Even for just a five-day school week you have to plan almost every single minute of every day of what someone else is going to teach. Sometimes it's difficult because you have to do a lot of extra planning beforehand just to be gone. Some people can just say 'Hey, I'm not going to be here next week, see ya the week after' like no big deal. That's not



the way it is for us, that makes it a little bit more difficult."

On communication: "I think a large part of it is to make sure your chain of command knows maybe your job expectations and explain to them, 'I have to do all of this preparation before I come to military drill.

"I just tell them that I will do my best to give them as much notice as I can. When I got my FY16 training schedule and letter from the unit I gave it to them immediately and said these are the dates I need. Of course I always put at the bottom, 'everything is subject to change and will notify you as soon as I can.

"Whenever I send emails or have to do anything I always try to write to my employer and the pay lady- 'Thank you for your support in this matter' (to give credit where it's due)."

On family: "We definitely enjoy our quality family time as much as we can. Our son has just kind of known all of this life that Mommy and Daddy have teacher work and we go to school and then we have Army work and he knows the difference when we put our uniform on and he says bye.

"Family comes over and they say 'Where's Dad?' and he says 'Oh, he's at Army work.' If either of us do have a family event and we can't make it, Grandma can usually bring our son to us if she can. We just try to spend as much time as we can that we do have.

"Like when my family wants to come and visit, typically we don't like to do extravagant things before or after drill weekend because we just spent the weekend apart, and

the next weekend is our weekend. We definitely have clear boundaries with our families and say we haven't been together in a month sometimes- if it's the summer months of (annual training) - and we say, 'Don't talk to us because we need some family time.'

"I think our son needs that just part of family and life. My husband and I had a unique promotion experience because we both got promoted to captain about a month apart and he didn't have drill but I did, so we both got promoted to captain at the same time at my drill and had our son pin both of us. I thought that was probably cool and unique and doesn't happen very often even throughout the Guard."

Advice to other soldiers: "Always make time for yourself, or you and your family- whatever applies. Make sure that you set clear boundaries and communicate those boundaries and expectations to your chain of command and help them understand you.

"In one of the leadership conferences we had years ago they had a lady come from Casper College and talk about generations training. It was probably one of the best Army trainings I had. She talked about how the greatest generation, and their morals and values and beliefs and how they're different from the millennials and how we have different work-life balance values as well.

"I think that's still true today, we have 50- and 60-year-old higher ranking people that run the show that expect those old values but yet they have younger teens and 20s soldiers and the values of those people are different- it's more of 'We're here to get the job done as fast as we can, as soon as we can so we can get back to our families.' Where the older generation is more 'We're working sun up to sun down and we'll push in as much as we possibly can, and that's what our job is.

"I think recognizing that gender and even rank and age difference and that people's values are different and changing is key in communicating to your leadership so that they know where you're coming from because the expectations can kind of be different and I think they're kind of assumed unless you bring them up."

RADER from page 17

Paul Lyman takes over upon Col. Brad Swanson's return to NGB. Of course we stand ready for whatever domestic emergencies (floods/fires/etc.) crop up in the coming year.

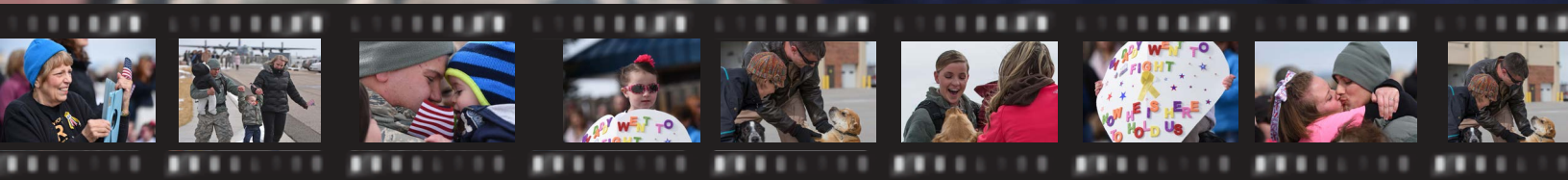
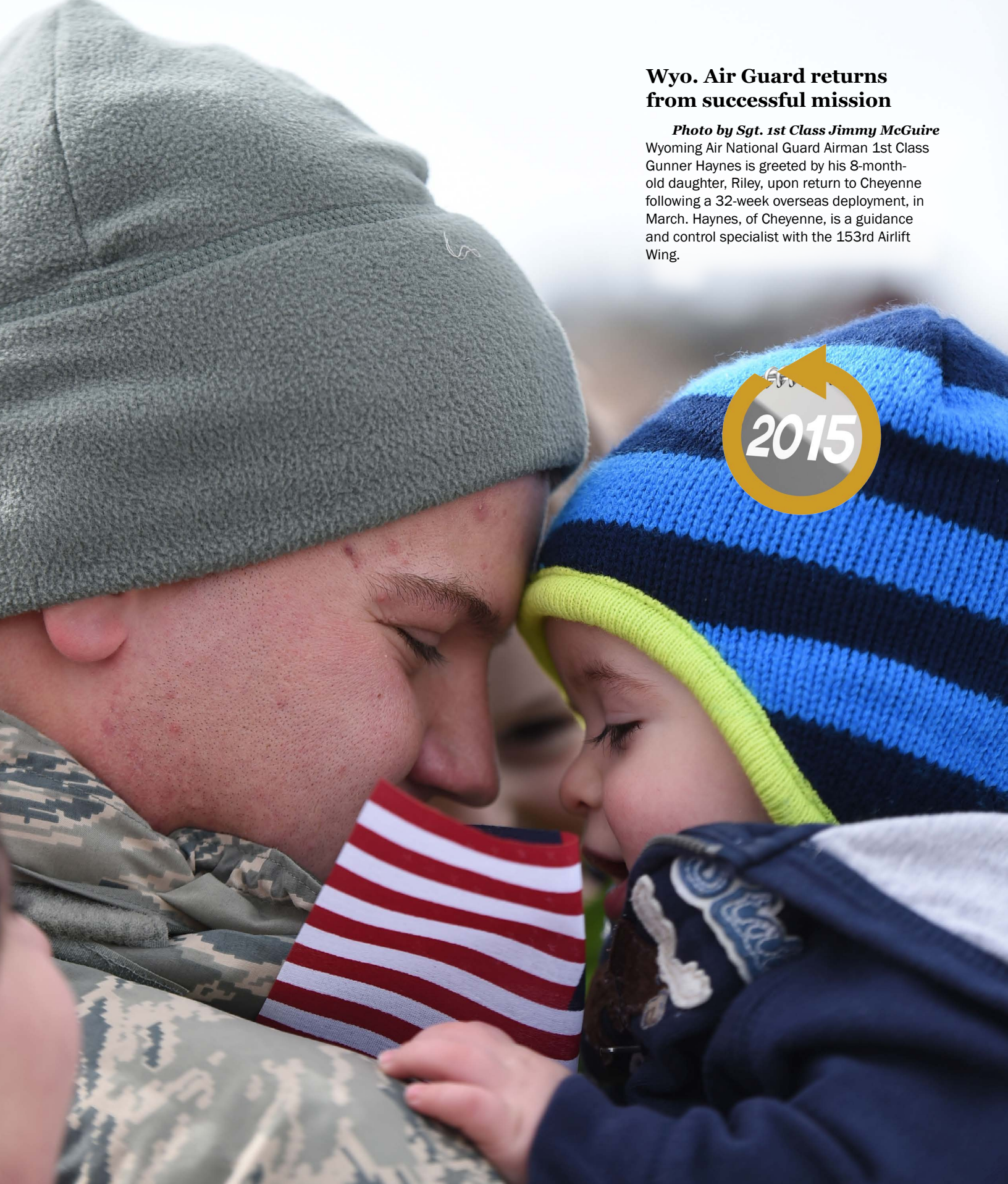
Hopefully we can continue to build upon our progress in improving our strength and readiness numbers. I am confident that we stand ready to meet any challenge that may come our way.

So as we begin 2016, which I believe will be another successful year, I want to offer each and every one of you a heartfelt "Thank You" for your continued exemplary service to our state and our nation. I hope you all had a very happy holiday season. I hope that you spent quality time with friends and family. Best wishes for the new year.

Wyo. Air Guard returns from successful mission

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire

Wyoming Air National Guard Airman 1st Class Gunner Haynes is greeted by his 8-month-old daughter, Riley, upon return to Cheyenne following a 32-week overseas deployment, in March. Haynes, of Cheyenne, is a guidance and control specialist with the 153rd Airlift Wing.



Mustangs and \$2 bills

By Staff Sgt. Dan Molineaux
Historian
Wyoming Military Department

During World War II, throughout every region involved with the conflict, the importance of air superiority became apparent to Allied and Axis commanders alike. This realization would lead to a major reorganization of the armed forces in the United States, and the Wyoming National Guard was at the forefront of this fundamental shift.

Before the founding of the U.S. Air Force in 1947, Wyoming was already putting into the works a small group of men, many of them veterans of the preceding war, who would form the roots of the WyNG that exists to this day. First organized in a small hangar on the southwest side of Cheyenne Municipal Airport on Aug. 10, 1946, these early Guard members would begin drilling even before the first aircraft arrived.

The 187th Fighter Squadron was equipped with P-51 Mustang fighters which began arriving in November 1946. Originally classified as the P-51 Mustang, the USAF Strategic Air Command re-designated the aircraft F-51 in 1948.

By mid-1947 the number of personnel and aircraft assigned to the unit had vastly increased, however, no field training was held during the year due to a shortage of vitally needed equipment.

By 1948 the unit was operating with a full complement of aircraft and pilots. Enlisted ranks were also increasing. The first field training exercise was held in August 1948 at the Cheyenne location. Five squadrons, including the Wyoming unit, attended field training in Casper, Wyo. in 1949.

Intensive gunnery and bombing training was run at the Split Rock range, near Casper. In 1950, the unit saw full training operations in Grayling, Michigan.

Present at this training was 1st Lt. Robert Rock, a vet-

eran of World War II, and Cheyenne resident.

He remembers the Mustang pilots as being a great bunch of men and “the rowdiest, wildest bunch of guys I ever knew.” Although Rock never had the opportunity to deploy with the pilots to Korea, he spent several years working and training with the group in Cheyenne and on their annual summer training missions.

He also remembers fondly a practice put into place by his superiors who wanted to demonstrate to local businesses the importance of the guard to the business community.

“The guard at that time wanted to be better known in the community because most of our activities were not well publicized,” Rock said. “So our commanding officer took to paying us in \$2 bills each month. When we spread them around town, people began to take notice.”

This practice continued for many years, with business owners quickly coming to understand the importance of the guard to the local economy through the use of the unique denomination.

The Mustangs would stand as the primary aircraft from the beginning of the Wyoming Air National Guard from the earliest days until being replaced by the C-45 Expeditor in 1953. During its usage in the guard, the plane was enjoyed and appreciated by the founding members of the unit.

“It had a very distinct sound, which I loved,” remembered Rock. “I could always pick one out of other aircraft noises since it sounded so throaty and harmonious. Its profile was also unique, the plane could always be identified among aircraft.”

The early fliers of the WyANG would serve with distinction with their Mustangs in the Korean War, but pay a high price for their service. On the final day of their annual training in 1950, the Korean War would officially begin, with the unit being called to active service on April 1, 1951. Midway through that year, pilots of the unit were ordered to Southwest Asia.

Eighteen pilots flew more than 1,500 combat missions; eight were killed in action. Airmen of the unit served in Korea and all corners of the globe. Late in 1951, the unit was moved to Clovis Air Force Base, Clovis, New Mexico.

The unit was released from active duty on Jan. 1, 1953.

“I still feel sad about all those guys” Rock said, referring to the high pilot loss during that war. “Such fine young men, they never had the chance to grow old.”



Wyoming Military Department

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