

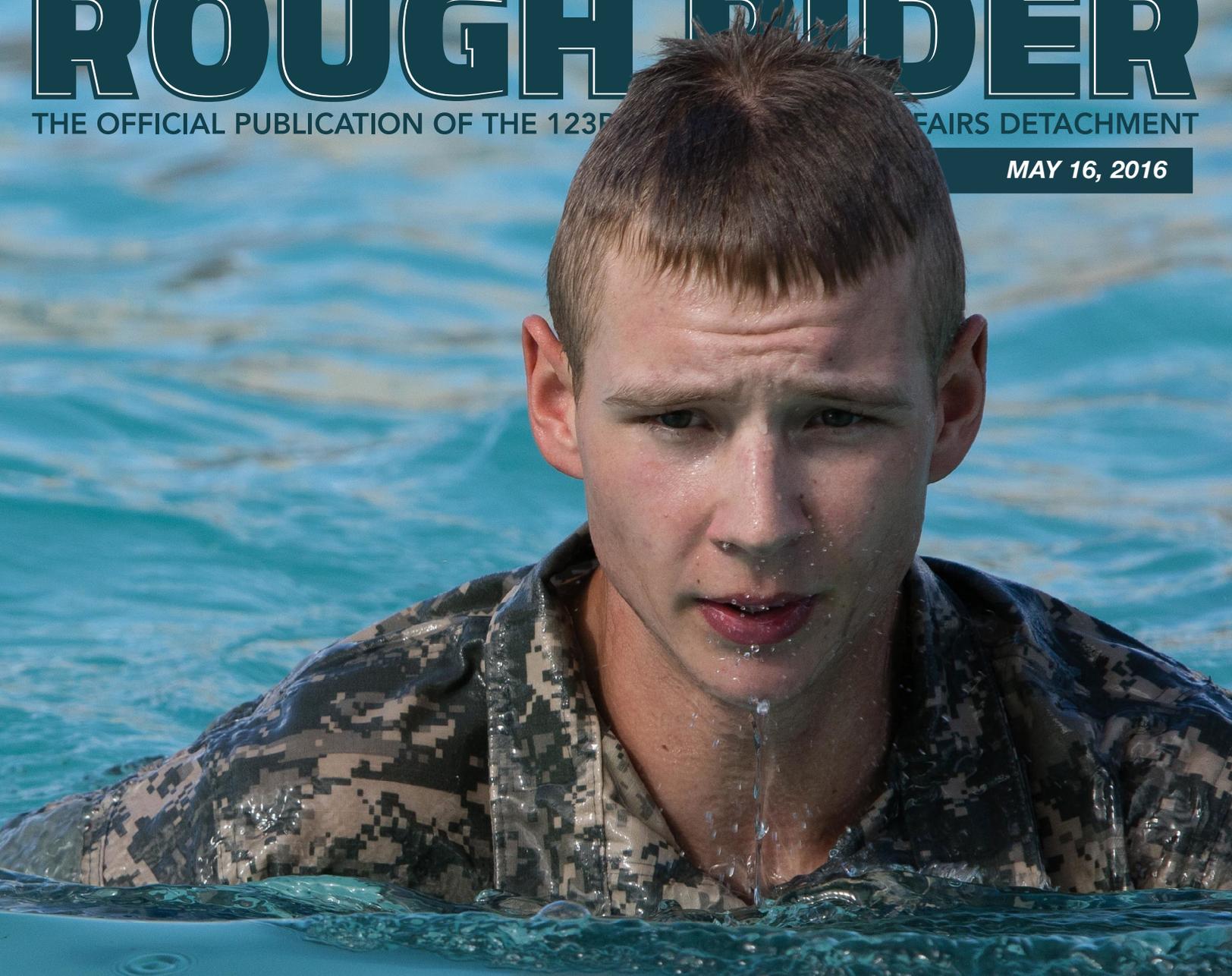
THE ARIZONA

VOL 02, ISSUE 02

# ROUGH RIDER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE 123RD AIRBORNE DIVISION AIR AFFAIRS DETACHMENT

MAY 16, 2016



## ARIZONA BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

SOLDIERS, NCOS,  
OFFICERS BATTLE TO  
REPRESENT STATE

## GERMAN ARMED FORCES PROFICIENCY BADGE

GUARDSMEN, FUTURE  
LEADERS TEST MENTAL,  
PHYSICAL ENDURANCE

## COS RETIRES AFTER 35 YEARS OF MILITARY SERVICE

ARIZONA HONORS COL.  
DYERS DEDICATED  
SERVICE TO COUNTRY



**LT. COL. ERIK SCHROEDER**  
Battalion Commander, 158th CSSB

What increases our Army's combat power more than armor, attack helicopters or any automatic weapon, yet costs nothing and cannot be seen with the naked eye? What gives us the tactical and operational advantage against hybrid threats as well as our traditional foes in the world? The answer is: leaders' employment of commander's intent.

For those among us, of which I feel there are many, who need a refresher course on what actually comprises commander's intent, I will provide a brief review.

Commander's intent is formally found in paragraph three of an operations order (Execution); it follows immediately after the mission statement. Commander's intent is also present whenever leaders discuss their priorities, give direction or describe their desired outcome or solution for a particular tactical scenario, problem or training event. Don't be fooled by the term "commanders" as all leaders can and should use the concept of providing intent when describing their understanding and visualization of a problem during the operations process.

Commander's intent is made up of three parts. And no, one of those parts is not automatically

# THE POWER OF COMMANDER'S INTENT

stating that the operation, mission or task will be conducted "safely," as we often read in many operations orders and fragmentary orders.

The first and most important component of an intent statement is the purpose, ideally described as an expanded purpose. Purpose put simply is the why behind the action being directed. Why does a unit need to seize a bridgehead, conduct a training event or commit their resources toward a particular objective. Expanded purpose is looking one step higher than the why given in the mission statement. Meaning, how does one particular unit's role support the role of another or the mission as a whole.

Providing purpose to our Soldiers not only fosters an environment of individual and team buy-in, it also gives subordinate leaders the ability to seize and exploit the initiative. It allows the leadership on the ground, the same leaders who have access to the most accurate information in the timeliest manner, to make decisions within the confines of the intent provided to them. The flexibility in accomplishing our mission is what separates us from those who chose to be our enemies in today's operating environment.

The second component of a thorough commander's intent is identifying the tasks or portions of a mission that a commander determines must be conducted. These "key tasks" are the parts of the leader's plan that are not negotiable and are essential to accomplishing the mission. Note to junior leaders in our formation: under normal circumstances, if you feel you have more than three or four key tasks for a given mission, you are perhaps a micro manager. Remember, commander's intent encourages disciplined, creative seizing of the initiative. Do not take this away from your subordinates.

A commander's or leader's desired end state is the final component of a complete intent statement. Ideally, desired end state, or the conditions of a desired end state, are described in quantitative

terms whenever possible so to avoid any confusion of what the leader has envisioned as their solution. A simple example would be during the conduct of a weapons qualification, a commander stating that they envision an end state of 90 percent of Soldiers participating in training being proficient in the use of their optics and iron sights, qualifying sharp shooter or better on both sighting systems during day and night conditions.

Commander's intent encourages prudent risk taking, creative problem solving and the seizing and retaining of the initiative. Regular issuance of intent, whether as part of the operations process, issuing of formal orders, or during day-to-day operations increases subordinate understanding of organization priorities and resource management. It creates an environment that fosters buy-in at all levels as everyone understands why they are being told to conduct a particular task or mission. By allowing our subordinate leaders to operate within the intent of their higher headquarters, rather than restricting and constraining their decision making abilities, we create the opportunity to seize and retain initiative at a faster pace and lower level. This is what separates us from our adversaries and is arguably our most important source of doctrine based combat power.

As a leader, have you provided your intent lately?

*Article by*

**LT. COL. ERIK SCHROEDER**  
Battalion Commander, 158th CSSB

**Do you have an interest in English, journalism or photography?** Is your writing style clear and concise? Are you a detail oriented person who enjoys researching facts and issues? Do you possess a background in video editing, voiceover or media relations? Are you a skilled Soldier with a creative side?

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function within their particular job specialties. Being a member of the MPAD means training at one of the most elite Department of Defense schools in the country.

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## COMMAND

The 158th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion commander discusses the most critical component of effective Army combat power -- the employment of the commander's intent.



## GUARD NEWS

In this issue, the AZ ARNG strengthens partnerships with Canadian allies; the community of Gilbert breaks ground on a Veterans park; Chief of Staff retires after 35 dedicated years and much more.



## PHOTO STORY

A Soldier and noncommissioned officer representative from each battalion competes in the 2016 Best Warrior Competition at the Florence Military Reservation.



## PHOTO STORY / COVER PHOTO

Guardsmen and ROTC cadets from universities throughout the State of Arizona participate in the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge. The event tested the fitness and warrior skills of the competitors.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Help honor our heroes on Memorial Day with an observance at Pioneer Park, Get out of the heat during Veterans Fest in Flagstaff, light up the night sky during the Cave Creek Balloon Festival, and much more.



## BOOK REVIEW

Historian Stephen E. Ambrose details the events of June 6, 1944 that helped turn the tide of World War II in favor of the Allied Powers. Author Dean Koontz extends his paranormal series with "Odd Thomas."



## TRAVEL & LEISURE

Antelope Canyon may not be one of the 7 Natural Wonders of the World, but it should be on any outdoor enthusiasts list interested in some of the most iconic images of the Southwest.

# OUTSTANDING SOLDIER & AIRMAN OF THE YEAR

To nominate Guardsmen for the Rough Rider, please contact the 123rd MPAD

**SPC. ANTHONY CHAGOLLA**

**SGT. 1ST CLASS  
ROLANDO TORRES DIAZ**

**1ST SGT. ROBERT MCMAHON**

**CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2  
GEORGE WADE**

**CAPT. JERETT BURMAN**

**STAFF SGT. BRIAN HATLEY**

**TECH. SGT. PETER SULISTA**

**TECH. SGT. ROSE CORMIER**

**MASTER SGT. SEAN PIERCE**

**SENIOR MASTER SGT. JACK MINAYA**

**CAPT. BRODIE JOHNSON**

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Staff Writer ▶ **SPC. LIZ SMITH**

## ON THE COVER

PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. BRIAN BARBOUR

Arizona Army National Guard Spc. Michael Kringle, a forward observer assigned to the Recruiting and Retention Battalion, completes his second lap of a 100-meter swim event March 5 at Florence High School in Florence, Ariz. The swim was one of several events that took place during testing for the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge.



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# GUARDSMEN ON THE STREET

WE ASK GUARDSMEN WHAT MEMORIAL DAY MEANS TO THEM.



**PV2 ALEJANDRO LUGO**  
1404th Trans Co. Flagstaff

“To remember the legacy of the soldiers who have died in combat.”



**PFC SHAINA ROANHORSE**  
1404th Trans Co. Flagstaff

“Remembering those who served the country and gave the ultimate sacrifice.”



**PFC CARLOS BUENRROSTRO**  
3666th Trans Co. Phoenix

“Honor to those who have fallen defending our country to give us freedom.”

# CANADIANS, GUARDSMEN FORGE PARTNERSHIP



Arizona Army National Guardsmen from the 158th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion and the 39th Service Battalion, Canada, participate in a pre-convoy briefing during a preparatory training exercise in Nogales, Ariz., April 8 - 10. The event was part of a relationship building exercise between Arizona and their Canadian counterparts dating back to 2011.

**NOGALES, Ariz.** – The Arizona National Guard has partnered with Canadian armed forces since 2011, exchanging information and developing partnerships for the purpose of fostering mutual interests and long-term relationships.

“The partnership training is in preparation for Cougar Defender, a large summer exercise, which both the Canadian military and the Arizona Army National Guard will provide direct sustainment and support to a brigade size element fighting a force-on-force conflict,” said Lt. Col. Erik Schroeder, 158 Combat Sustainment Support Battalion commander.

The 72-hour exercise integrated the 39th Service Battalion in order to familiarize Canadians and Guardsmen with each other in preparation for future operations. Maj. Frederick Dennis, operations officer with the 39th Service Battalion, Canada, said Soldiers from the two countries drove in the same vehicles, slept in the same tents and did everything together.

“The combined exercise is about building relationships and learning the same terminology when conducting future combined operations,” Dennis said. “If they are talking wrenches they are talking about the same wrenches, if they are ordering food they will be speaking the same supply terms.”

Schroeder said training partnerships with the Canadians increases overall capabilities by introducing subject matter experts from both countries. Noncommissioned officers and commissioned officers have to become all knowing in order to teach their

Canadian counterparts.

“I felt very welcomed, and everyone is helpful in sharing knowledge,” said Sgt Wayne Lysholm, one of the 30 Canadians who came to Arizona for the training mission. “The exercise is going quite smoothly. We are finding a lot of the systems, and the ways we do things are very similar.”

Schroeder said, in the past, the U.S. participated in conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and fought alongside our allies. In the future, U.S. servicemembers will fight alongside U.S. allies as members in coalitions.

“Partnership training improves our relationships with allies and increases our operability, so when the call does come in to work with coalition forces – we are ready,” Schroeder said.

*Story and photo by*  
**SGT. CRYSTAL REIDY**

# COMMUNITY BREAKS GROUND ON VETERANS PARK, VIETNAM MEMORIAL WALL



Local and state leaders break ground on the long-awaited Welcome Home Veterans Park in Gilbert, Ariz., March 19, as hundreds of veterans and community members observe. The ground blessing and breaking ceremony is a years-long effort by hundreds of volunteers and local and state leaders to build a 7.7 acre park to honor veterans and provide resources to veterans throughout the state. The park will have an 80 percent replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington D.C..

**GILBERT, Ariz.** – Imagine going to war. You witness heart wrenching images of a ravaged country and maybe lose battle buddies. All you dream of is the safety of your homeland and perhaps a hero's welcome, but instead, you and your fellow service members are welcomed to protests, hatred and an ungrateful nation.

Thousands of Vietnam veterans vowed to never allow service members to be treated with disrespect when they returned home from a warzone like they were. Never again would service members be told to change out of their uniforms and to never speak of their service again. Instead, these Vietnam veterans have worked to ensure redeploying brothers and sisters in arms would always come home to a hero's welcome.

Local and state leaders gathered to break ground on the long-awaited project as hundreds of veterans and community members observed the ground blessing and breaking for the Welcome Home Veterans Park in Gilbert, Arizona, March 19.

"A ground blessing is about purification. In order to advance a noble and sacred mission, one has to make sure the vehicle first is clean and pure," said Rick Romley, Vietnam Veteran and former Maricopa County Attorney and honorary OWH chair. "So here we all are, standing and sitting on a clean slate."

Dave Munsey, Fox news meteorologist and Vietnam veteran, emceed the event with inspiring keynote speakers: Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery, KFYI Radio personality Mike Broomhead and Mayor of the Town of Gilbert John Lewis.

"The Welcome Home Veterans Park will assist in supporting the 'Never Again' mission by ensuring all veterans have a place to call home," said Lisa Rigler, Operation Welcome Home president.

The 7.7 acre park will be dedicated to healing, educating and inspiring veterans and the community. The park will be anchored by an 80 percent scale of the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington D.C. and future phases will include an education and resource center.

"We are devoted to resources for all veterans and especially in the area of employment," Rigler said. "When a veteran calls or walks through the door we will be unwavering in helping them get to the resources that they need."

Romely said this groundbreaking marks an important transition. He pointed out that tomorrow we start building a park, erecting a wall, constructing an education and resource center.

"Tomorrow we start healing, educating, and inspiring. Tomorrow, the real work begins," Romley said.

Special appearances included Chandler ROTC, The Duttons singing group, and the 108th Army Band, Arizona Army National Guard. The ground blessing was conducted by Tony McDaniel from the Gila River Indian Community.

"Now that the ground has been blessed, it is hallowed ground. We will protect it and create a safe place for all veterans to come and get what they need," Rigler said.

Also featured at the event was a "Living Wall," comprised of 60 volunteers of varying backgrounds who will stand as a symbolic representation of the Vietnam Memorial Wall, which will anchor the park.

"This ceremony marked an important time for Welcome Home Veterans Park. This is when the dream so many of us have shared begins to take physical shape," Rigler said. "This property is more than dirt; it has a heartbeat. Just like the Vietnam Wall is more than a wall, it has a soul – because of the 58,307 individuals it represents."

Story and photo by  
**SGT. CRYSTAL REIDY**

# SOLDIER PROVES HEART, DETERMINATION AT BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION



*Spc. Mariah Madaras hydrates and prepares for the first ruck march of the day at the Best Warrior Competition on April 2. The two-day event tests Soldiers on basic soldiering skills and features a Soldier and noncommissioned officer from each battalion.*



*Spc. Mariah Madaras, from HHC, 158th MEB, ruck marches from station to station at the Best Warrior Competition in Florence, Arizona.*

**FLORENCE, Ariz.** – A young, petite Soldier walks into a crowded room in the Browning-Miller Readiness Center at the Florence Military Reservation in Florence, Arizona. She lays down her over-filled rucksack and quickly starts to pull issued items out for inspection. Her mentor rehearses the day's possible events, both know the physical and mental challenges of what the day will bring.

A group of Soldiers are handpicked from every battalion in the Arizona National Guard to compete in the annual Best Warrior Competition. This rigorous event tests the knowledge, skill and ability of each participant technically and tactically.

Spc. Mariah Madaras was chosen from the 158th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade in the Headquarters and Headquarters Company. She impressed the majority of trainers and senior enlisted personnel throughout the course. Even after 12 hours of weapons qualification, first aid, assembling weapons and ruck marching in the Arizona heat, she continued with a strong diligent spirit.

"I absolutely love doing all of this stuff," Madaras said. "It's awesome to me, so I was really excited and pumped like, 'I get to put weapons together?' I was really excited to do the tasks. It was great to come out here and show everyone what I

can do."

Competitors have a sponsor who mentors them from training for the BWC to walking with them every step of the way in the event. Madaras' sponsor was Sgt 1st Class Jacob Allen from the HHC, 158th MEB.

"We had 2 ½ weeks to prepare for this," Allen said. "She was willing to come in every day. We did PT together. We did all the warrior tasks. She also competed in the Bataan Death March a couple weeks ago, so that helped out with the ruck march; she also did the Air Assault Qualification Course about a week ago. She's done roughly 40 miles of ruck marching in the past two weeks."

On Madaras' first drill with the 158th MEB, Allen asked her to participate in the BWC. It was her strong motivation and keen intellect that convinced Allen to enter her into the competition.

"Not only has she done all the warrior tasks but she's also proven that she can do them," Allen said. "She has the ability to train Soldiers further down the road. She wants to become the first infantry woman in the Arizona National Guard; she wants to go to Ranger School."

Her unstoppable driving force comes from a prestigious military family; footsteps to proudly follow.

"It's kind of been in my family for a while,"

Madaras said. "My grandpa was an infantryman in the Vietnam War. He was one of the first Marines to touch boots-to-ground, and my dad was a Navy Seal. I just figured, 'I'm going to do my part.' I turned out to love it."

Despite Madaras' small frame, her positive attitude and desire to becoming a great leader far exceeds a number in measurement.

"Physically, you can do anything if you put your mind to it," Madaras said. "Physically, my legs hurt; I've had to climb up mountains with this rucksack that's half of my body weight. But mentally, your mind can take you anywhere."

The drive she carries not only goes beyond competitions and qualification courses, but, as a future non-commissioned officer, she will be able to train and mentor Soldiers. For the footsteps that were emplaced before her, she will continue paving the way one impactful footstep at a time.

*Story and photos by*  
**SGT. REBA BENALLY**

# COS RETIRES AFTER 35 DEDICATED YEARS



Col. Leonard H. Dyer, Jr., a Bear Lake, Pa. Native, joined the Arizona Army National Guard in 1988 after serving in the U.S. Marine Corps. His final active duty assignment at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, is what brought him to Arizona, where he retired at the Russell Auditorium, April 3, as the chief of staff of the Arizona Army National Guard after 35 years of military service.

A tall, physically fit senior officer walks through the large hexagonal rotunda of the Arizona National Guard Joint Force Headquarters building. Soldiers and Airmen alike recognize his commanding military presence, and they willingly give him well-deserved respect.

“Good morning, sir,” hails a junior Soldier passing through the rotunda.

A kind smile and genuine greeting – the other side of his stately and authoritative aura – is returned to the Soldier. The respect the former Arizona Army National Guard Chief of Staff, Col. Leonard H. Dyer, Jr, garners is well-earned, both as a professional leader of Soldiers and as a whole-hearted human being whose example of dedication is easy to follow.

Dyer, a native of Bear Lake, Pennsylvania graduated from Eisenhower High School in Russell, Pennsylvania in 1979.

He began his military service, shortly after graduating high school, with the U.S. Marine Corps, where he spent eight years as an enlisted active duty Marine. His final active duty assignment at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, is what brought him to Arizona.

In 1988, Dyer joined the Arizona Army National Guard as an officer candidate.

Dyer completed Officer Candidate School as a quartermaster officer (supply and logistics) and served in that career in several different

assignments as a company commander and battalion commander. He went on to serve as the deputy chief of staff of personnel, then as the deputy chief of staff of operations before becoming the Arizona Army National Guard chief of staff.

“His resolute dedication to duty has led him to take on a whole lot of different assignments and endure quite a bit of adversity, both at home, in his duty, and on the road,” said Air Force Maj. Gen. Michael T. McGuire, the Arizona National Guard Adjutant General. “At every turn I have never seen Colonel Dyer waver in his resolute dedication to his duty.”

Dyer places a very high importance on the personal relationships he has built throughout his career.

“My biggest memories of the military are the people that I have had an opportunity to impact and that have impacted me,” he said. “There is nothing more rewarding for me than to train alongside other Soldiers and do the things that are necessary for us to be ready units. So I would say the most impacting thing for me is just the day-to-day interactions with Soldiers.”

Brig. Gen. John Hoefert, Arizona Army National Guard Land Component Commander, echoed the significance Dyer places in the Soldiers serving with him.

“He is committed to the mission, he is committed to the organization and most importantly by those

two commitments, he really is committed to the Soldiers of the Arizona Army National Guard,” Hoefert said. “That’s what I mean when I say loyalty. Up the chain and down the chain, Len Dyer never has a bad thing to say about anybody.”

The Arizona National Guard bid farewell to Dyer, in a retirement ceremony held at Russell Auditorium April 3, celebrating his contributions during his 35-year military career.

McGuire presented Dyer with the Legion of Merit Medal during the ceremony.

“We in Arizona were the lucky beneficiaries of having, then Staff Sgt. Dyer, transfer to the Guard,” McGuire said.

Dyer’s advice to those attending the retirement ceremony was that having military presence is not about how well Soldiers wear the uniform or how high they score on a physical fitness test. He counseled those in the room to make the mission happen, to make their subordinates lives better, to care for their wellbeing, and to inspire them to reach for greatness.

Story by

**SGT. AMBER BOHLMAN AND  
SGT. 1ST CLASS ROBERT FREESE**

Photo by

**STAFF SGT. ADRIAN BORUNDA**

# AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES CONTROL THE SKIES



Nashville, Tenn., resident Sgt. Brian Bertram, Glendale, Ariz., resident Sgt. Nicholas Robinson, San Tan Valley, Ariz., resident Capt. Sherri Gregoire, Tucson, Ariz., resident 1st Sgt. Trevor Varney, and Phoenix resident Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Stockard pose outside their headquarters for Company F, 1st Battalion at Camp Buehring Kuwait, Feb. 8.

**KUWAIT** – Imagine for a moment you’re in the cockpit of a \$30 million helicopter. You’re monitoring gauges, and controlling the aircraft as you fly back to home base the morning flight was pretty uneventful, weather was predicted to be good. You’re low on fuel, and can’t wait to get home for a quick meal and some rest after a long mission.

On your inbound approach you call the tower to get an airfield status on weather. Instead of the clear blue sky giving you the visibility needed to land safely, you get some bad news: a dust storm has appeared in vicinity of the airfield. You look out the window and see a giant tan wall of dust completely obscuring your approach.

Not having enough fuel to turn back you must commit to the approach. Except that you won’t be able to see the ground. What do you do, who do you call? In cases like the scenario above, pilots must resort to their instruments, and the skilled guidance of Air Traffic Services to help them bring the aircraft safely to the ground.

Arizona Army National Guard’s Company F, 1st Battalion, 168th Air Traffic Services, is a small company stationed with the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade at Camp Arifjan and Camp Buehring, Kuwait. ATS is made up of seasoned personnel with the experience needed to support aviators in safely completing their mission.

“Company F operates 24 hours a day, with less than 45 personnel across two countries and three airfields,” said Capt. Sherri Gregoire, a San Tan

Valley, Arizona, resident and the ATS commander. “We maintain safety of the skies so pilots can focus on their mission and not worry about a mid-air [collision].”

Company F’s overall mission is to provide air traffic control services to American, NATO and host nation aircraft operating within U.S. ARCENT’s area of responsibility. At Camp Buehring, Company F Soldiers operate the Ground Control Approach Facility, work in the tower and Airspace Information Center alongside civilian contractors.

When an aircraft is threatened by adverse weather conditions, ATS Soldiers can radio instructions to the pilots allowing them to approach the airfield and set down safely.

“ATS uses the Air Traffic Navigation, Integration and Coordination System,” said Sgt. Brian J. Bertram, an air traffic control operator from Nashville, Tennessee, who has deployed three times previously. The ATNAVICS is equipped with a radar dish with a range of 60 nautical miles, and an antenna which gives precise aircraft locations.

“The dome is pressurized and temperature controlled to keep the dome upright and to keep instruments cool,” said Spc. Eric Glenn, a Tucson, Arizona, resident currently on his second deployment with the 40th CAB. “One must enter through a double door airlock, similar in principle in to the fictional movie *The Martian*, when Matt Damon had to walk into the HAB.”

“Military service in my family is a strong tradition. I also like telling pilots what to do,”

Glenn said. “I am also a civilian-rated pilot; for me it comes full circle, as pilots are calling into ATS you can inform pilots of conditions or situations occurring in front of them prior to it happening that mitigates hazards. Understanding both perspectives in the air and on the ground keeps our military pilots airborne, and safe.”

Gregoire is unique as a company commander; most ATS units receive a newly minted aviation commander. Gregoire is branched as an adjutant general (AG) or administrative officer in the Army National Guard the difference is she brings 22 years of military, civilian and contractor experience as a certified air traffic controller. Thanks to this unique blend of qualifications, Gregoire can not only direct her Soldiers in ATS operations, but is knowledgeable in the administrative needs of her Soldiers.

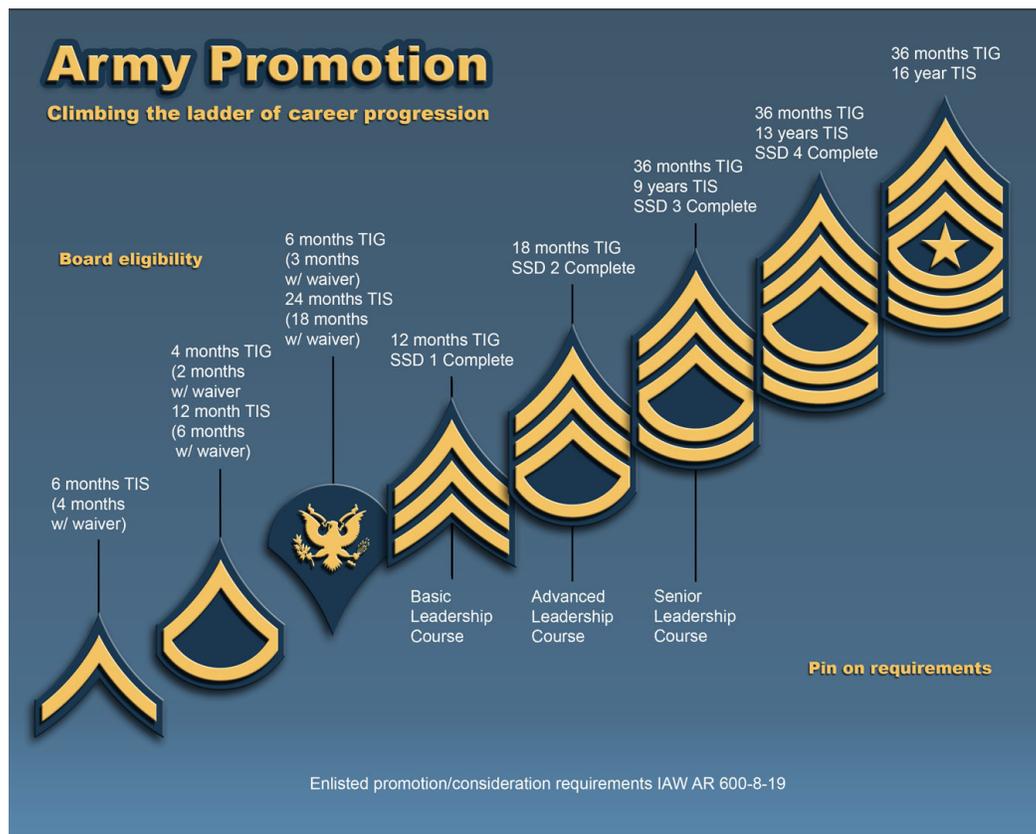
First Sgt Trevor Varney, a resident of Tucson, Arizona, is the senior enlisted member of Company F. This is a rare time in which an ATS Company’s first sergeant and commander are both certified air traffic controllers.

“In every aspect of Fox Company ATS you will find the professional definition of citizen soldiers,” said Command Sgt. Major Troy Eck, the 40th CAB command sergeant major

Story and photo by

**1ST LT. AARON DECAPUA**

# PROMOTION PROCESS: Q & A WITH AZARNG STATE COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR



**PAO:** Some Soldiers have expressed a concern regarding the training funding available to the state to attend BLC/ALC. This year with the budget in place, many are being told funding is only available for Annual Training or school, not both. Currently there are Soldiers on wait lists to attend BLC/ALC near the end of the fiscal year and not scheduled for AT. If funding for a school slot becomes unavailable the service member risks having a non-creditable year. How are the state and units adjusting for this and who will make the decision on the priority for attendance for the Soldier?

**CSM:** Let me start by saying that commanders set priorities. With that being said, the reason the AZARNG is choosing to use AT funds to cover pay and allowance costs for schools is that by using AT funds for NCOES. This preserves funding in the schools account. What does that mean to you? More Soldiers are able to attend school. No Soldier or officer in this state is in danger of having a non-creditable year of service due to budget issues. Commanders will make the call between Unit AT and NCOES. If more funding becomes available then Soldiers

may be able to do both.

**PAO:** Due to the mounting need to attend BLC, does the state have the capability, or will it be able to obtain the capability in the future, to host our own BLC courses similar to how we conduct Officer Candidate School, Warrant Officer Candidate School, or the Military Police re-class courses?

**CSM:** I'm not sure there is any more need than we have ever had for BLC. There may be a higher urgency on the Soldier's part to attend BLC (and every other NCOES) in the future, because their promotion depends upon completing it. BLC quotas have not generally been a problem for us to get. Our Regional Training Institute is not tasked to conduct BLC, and I doubt they will be in the near future. It is relatively inexpensive for us to send Soldiers to BLC in Utah where it is currently hosted.

Story by  
**SGT. WESLEY PARRELL**

*Editors note: This is the first article in a series of four articles.*

As the Arizona Army National Guard enters the promotion season many of the enlisted personnel have seen changes to the regulations regarding career advancement and the promotion process through guidance published by the AZARNG personnel office.

In order to provide a better understanding of the changes and address some concerns expressed by guardsmen with the new process, the state public affairs office sat down with the Arizona Army National Guard's State Command Sergeant Maj., Patrick Powers, to take a look at career progression for the leaders of tomorrow.

**PAO:** This new promotion cycle has seen many changes from previous ones. One of the most noticeable is the change regarding the Basic Leadership Course, and Advance leadership Course attendance as well as the Structured Self Development course requirements. Can you elaborate on the specifics as to how these changes will affect Soldiers who are striving to promote this year or next?

**CSM:** There are some significant changes to the

Army National Guard promotion system, and hopefully I can clarify them a bit for everyone. SSD is now a prerequisite for promotion consideration (boarding). Soldiers must have the appropriate SSD for their rank completed before they can board for the next higher rank. After they board for the next higher rank, assuming they make the promotion list in the "Best or Highly Qualified" zones, they may be selected for and moved into a higher position. They will not be promoted to the rank of the higher position until they complete the Noncommissioned Officer Education System courses required for that rank. This same process repeats itself at every stage of a Soldier's career. As an example – a sergeant (E-5) that has already graduated from BLC must complete SSD-2. After completing SSD-2 and the time-in grade requirement, the sergeant submits a packet to board for staff sergeant (E-6). If the sergeant comes out high enough on the promotion list, and is selected for a staff sergeant position, the sergeant is moved into that staff sergeant position. After the sergeant completes ALC, he will be promoted to staff sergeant. After being promoted, SSD-3 is the next step in this NCO's progression. So to board you must complete SSD, and to be promoted you must complete NCOES.

# SOLDIERS SUPPORT FIRST RESPONDERS



Members of the Arizona Army National Guard supported the City of Mesa Police Department's 2016 Family Appreciation Day here, Feb. 20, at the Mesa Police Training Facility. More than 2,500 police department personnel and their families were treated to an amazing day of fun and food including a chance to sit in a UH-60 Black Hawk and climb a rock wall provided by the Arizona Army National Guard Recruiting.

**MESA, Ariz.** – Members of the Arizona Army National Guard supported the City of Mesa Police Department's 2016 Family Appreciation Day here, Feb. 20, at the Mesa Police Training Facility.

More than 2,500 police department personnel and their families were treated to an amazing day of fun and food including a chance to sit in a UH-60 Black Hawk and climb a rock wall provided by the Arizona Army National Guard Recruiting.

"Today is a great opportunity to show how the Arizona Army National Guard works with our civilian partners like the Mesa Police Department in Defense Support to Civil Authorities missions, which is part of the overall Army Guard mission," said Chief Warrant 3 Richard Klauer, an instructor pilot with 2-285th Aviation Regiment.

DSCA is the process by which United States military assets and personnel can be used to assist in missions normally carried out by civil authorities. These missions have included: responses to natural and man-made disasters, law enforcement support, special events, and other domestic activities.

Event coordinator Barbara McReynolds explained that the event is in its eighth year and is designed to honor the men, women and families of the Mesa Police Department, who are dedicated to protecting and serving our community.

"This event is an opportunity for the community to show support to the men and women of

“**TODAY IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW HOW THE ARIZONA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD WORKS WITH OUR CIVILIAN PARTNERS**”

...

our department and applaud their service," McReynolds said. "It really means a lot to have

members of the military here today to help us."

Klauer said the event was a great opportunity to support law enforcement officers and their families.

The public doesn't have to wait for official appreciation days to thank officers, McReynolds says. Other ideas are to send a card of support to local law enforcement or share a positive story about law enforcement on social media.

"Most importantly, if you see a police officer, thank a police officer," said Klauer.

Along with the Guardsmen, more than 90 vendors, multiple restaurants providing free samples, a kid's zone with a bounce house, petting zoo and pony rides, along with the police specialty vehicles on display and a small car show kept the families entertained.

Story and photo by  
**SGT. CRYSTAL REIDY**

# SUN SETS ON TRAINING FOR JAPANESE STUDENTS AT THE 162ND FIGHTER WING



First Lts. Toshiaki Kawanishi and Fumita Sakyu walk out to an F-16 Fighting Falcon at the Arizona Air National Guard's 162nd Wing located at Tucson International Airport prior to a day of training. As Japan prepares to mark five years since a massive earthquake triggered a tsunami that devastated its northeast coast, these two Japanese students have completed their F-16 pilot training here.

First Lt. Toshiaki Kawanishi climbs up into the cockpit of an F-16 Fighting Falcon during his pilot training at the Arizona Air National Guard's 162nd Wing located at Tucson International Airport.

**TUCSON, Ariz.** – Japan turned to the premier training program here after the disaster left the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) short on F-2 training aircraft. Although there are no F-16s in the Japanese inventory, the multi-role F-2 is based on the F-16 design, with modifications to meet the needs of the JASDF.

After almost five years, the JASDF is ready once again to continue training students at home. First Lts. Toshiaki Kawanishi and Fumita Sakyu are the final Japanese students to complete the basic course in Tucson.

Kawanishi said training here gave them the opportunity to practice in a unique environment with the vast airspace and training ranges – a far cry from the mountains and forests of their native country.

Alongside students from the United States, Iraq, Poland, Norway, Singapore, Denmark, Morocco, and the Netherlands, they enjoyed the exceptional weather and immense land ranges offered in Southern Arizona.

“We cannot accomplish the mission with only one country,” said Kawanishi. “This is a good opportunity to learn about other nationalities and personalities, and to be able to apply that to the mission in the future.”

“We train everyone at the same level and to the same objectives,” said Maj. Matthew Hodges, one of the instructor pilots responsible for the JASDF training in Tucson.

The partnerships that are built here during

**“WE CANNOT ACCOMPLISH THE MISSION WITH ONLY ONE COUNTRY.”**

training enable our nations to go to war together and achieve the same standards and objectives, said Hodges.

Now that they have successfully completed training here, the two students will move on to Matsushima Air Base, Japan.

Kawanishi said he will remember the “Burger Burn Fridays,” when students from other countries get together after a long week of training and have lunch together, building long-lasting, mutually

beneficial relationships.

“There are a few U.S. students that are going on to Misawa, so we are planning to see them again and show them around Japan,” said Kawanishi.

Over the next six months at Matsushima, Kawanishi and Sakyu will become fully qualified F-2 fighter pilots, and ready to protect their nation against potential threats.

“These students are on top of things every day and their study habits are impeccable,” said Hodges.

Instructors at the 162nd Wing average more than 2,400 flying hours in the F-16, graduating more than 4,000 students since the wing began training international students 27 years ago.

“The pilots have a lot of experience,” said Kawanishi. “The stories they shared about how they felt in a combat situation were so amazing.”

The 162nd fighter pilot training program continues to be the face of the U.S. Air Force to the world and provides the best trained coalition war-fighting partners for the U.S. and allied nations.

Story and photos by  
**2ND LT. LACEY ROBERTS**

# ARIZONA NATIONAL GUARD PARTNERS WITH PONDEROSA FIRE ADVISORY COUNCIL



Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Shay (left), Sgt. Guadalupe Heredia, Master Sgt. James Borchardt and Maj. Ashley Philbin (right), work in the tactical operations center during an exercise with the Ponderosa Fire Advisory Council, April 22, at Camp Navajo in Belmont, Ariz.



Staff Sgt. Faron Moody, a medic with the 996th Area Support Medical Company inserts an intravenous needle into the arm of a dummy during the training with the Honor Health Military partnership.

**BELLEMONT, Ariz.** – Smoke rose from an open field of dry grass where Soldiers laid bloodied, burned and scattered, moaning in pain as first responders arrived at the site of a crashed Black Hawk helicopter.

Firefighters arrived, assessed the scene and moved into action working to rescue the surviving Arizona Army National Guard Soldiers.

The exercise, which simulated a crashed Arizona Guard Black Hawk helicopter resulting in mass casualties and a wildfire, involved participants from Coconino County Response Team, AZARNG 198th Regional Support Group, Camp Navajo Fire Department, Belmont Fire Department, Guardian Ambulance and Air and the Forestry Service.

This helicopter crash was an emergency response exercise hosted by the Ponderosa Fire Advisory Council who partnered with the AZARNG for the training April 22, at Camp Navajo.

The exercise was designed to increase the readiness and interoperability of local emergency responders and National Guard personnel throughout Coconino County.

“We operate on a philosophy in Northern Arizona that no single agency out here possess the resources to respond to a large incident on their own,” said Robert Rowley, emergency manager with Coconino County, Arizona Emergency Management.

Firefighters from Camp Navajo Fire Department

hosed down the simulated helicopter wreckage and moved the injured Soldiers to a casualty collection point as medical transport vehicles traveled to the site.

Guardsmen setup a tactical operations center, or TOC, in the 1404th Transportation Company’s armory on Camp Navajo where Soldiers worked on laptops and communicated via radios in front of a large projection screen.

Detailed coordination is required for personnel, facilities and supplies during a large-scale, multi-agency event or exercise such as the one held on Camp Navajo.

The exercise scenario planned for the 198th to drill on Camp Navajo during the crash and called into action because of their proximity to the incident, said Master Sgt. James Borchardt, who served as non-commissioned officer in charge of personnel for the exercise.

Borchardt said the 198th Soldiers gained valuable experience and learned from the scenario, which had large amounts of information come in rapidly.

One of the 198th’s tasks was to create an area for the emergency personnel responding to stage prior to heading to crash site.

“We organized the front end, so there wasn’t chaos going to the chaos,” Borchardt said.

Along with organizing staging areas, the 198th also assisted with installation and site access, said

Maj. Chad Abts, support operations officer for the 198th RSG.

More than 200 participants including 41 Guardsmen participated in the exercise at Camp Navajo.

“It’s been a great opportunity to actually get out, and work with civil authorities and enhance our relationships with them,” Abts said.

Guardsmen with simulated injuries, made more realistic with latex props and fake blood, were treated on site before paramedics and EMTs loaded the Soldiers into ambulances for transport to a medical facility.

The exercise proved that the National Guard is a valuable resource in the event of an emergency that can be tasked with a mission and complete it, Abts said.

Rowley said he thinks the role of the National Guard as a player in emergency response is probably something that is going to occur more often.

“As a result let’s not be strangers, this is what this type of exercise is for,” Rowley said. “To make sure we aren’t exchanging those business cards on our first big incident.”

Story and photos by  
**STAFF SGT. BRIAN BARBOUR**

# AZNG READINESS CENTER TAKES FALLEN SOLDIER'S NAMESAKE



Maj. Gen. Michael T. McGuire, the adjutant general, Arizona National Guard, presents Patty Rabjohn, Staff Sgt. Thomas D. Rabjohn's mother, a plaque during the Staff Sgt. Thomas D. Rabjohn Readiness Center building dedication ceremony at Papago Park Military Reservation, Jan. 9, 2016. The plaque is a replica of the one in front of the building recognizing Rabjohn's selfless service. Rabjohn was killed Oct. 3, 2009, while attempting to disarm a series of improvised explosive devices in the Wardak Province of Afghanistan.

Soldiers, Airmen and Phoenix Police officers came together Jan. 9, at Papago Park Military Reservation for a building dedication and renaming ceremony to honor Staff Sgt. Thomas D. Rabjohn, an explosive ordnance disposal technician killed in action Oct. 3, 2009.

During his second deployment to Afghanistan, Rabjohn was trying to disarm an intricate series of improvised explosive devices in the Wardak province. Moments before one IED detonated, he warned his fellow team members of the hazard. His actions were considered heroic – he not only sacrificed his life, he saved the lives of two fellow Soldiers.

"This is an opportunity for us to recognize one Soldier who paid the ultimate sacrifice," said Maj. Gen. Michael T. McGuire, Arizona National Guard adjutant general. "Certainly his sacrifice was no greater than all the other members of the American professions of arms who have given their lives, but in this particular case this Soldier doubled down on service."

Rabjohn not only served in the Arizona Army National Guard for 13 years, he was also a Phoenix Police Officer for seven years. His loss impacted the community as a whole.

The loss of Officer Rabjohn had a huge impact on the Phoenix Police Department, said Chief Joseph G. Yahner, police chief, Phoenix Police Department.

"He was very well respected within the central city precinct. He was a field-training officer," Yahner said. "He just did an outstanding job for his community. He had a lot of friends and was just very well respected."

Rabjohn started serving his country in 1989. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps as a Rifleman and after four years of service he was honorably discharged. After a three year break in service, Rabjohn joined the Arizona Army National Guard as a Fire Direction Survey Chief with 1st Battalion, 180th Field Artillery Regiment.

In 2003, Rabjohn deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom with 1/180th FA Security Force. After returning from his first deployment Rabjohn was assigned to the 363rd Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company.

Rabjohn's sacrifice had a significant impact on his family. His brother, Brian and nephew, Spc. Dakota Hodge, were both motivated to make a difference and follow in his footsteps by joining the Arizona Army National Guard.

"It affected me in a lot of different ways," said Rabjohn's brother, Spc. Brian Rabjohn. "It changed my whole life, and what I thought was important in life. I no longer have the job that I was in for seven years; instead I went and joined the military."

The loss of Rabjohn was devastating to those deployed with him, especially one of his closest friends.

"Tom's death left a hole that could never be filled. I cherish the memories and the thoughts that I have of him," said 1st Sgt. Cliff Schiller. "He was the guy you could trust with anything; work, home life, personal life, secrets and details – anything."

The memorialization of Rabjohn has made a positive impact on both the National Guard community and the Phoenix Police Department, allowing his sacrifice to never be forgotten.

"The armory dedication means a lot to me for the simple reason that a man never dies as long as his stories are remembered and his name is not forgotten," Schiller said.

Story and photo by  
**SGT. AMBER BOHLMAN**

# ARIZONA'S BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

FLORENCE, Ariz. -- Arizona Army National Guard Soldiers representing the best from their respective units gathered at Florence Military Reservation April 2-3 to compete to be the best junior enlisted, noncommissioned officer and first sergeant at this year's best warrior competition.

Three first sergeants, nine NCOs and 11 junior enlisted Soldiers were tested in a wide variety of basic Soldier tasks under the Arizona sun and on the dry and sparse landscape that makes up FMR.

Between each event, Soldiers had to navigate through the rocky, hilly desert terrain with temperatures that climbed in to the 90s.

The Soldiers were loaded down with the gear they needed for the subsequent tasks and had to carry this load from one point to the next. Sweat was already forming on the brow of some Soldiers at the beginning of the ruck marching.

"They're tested to the max out here," said Sgt. 1st Class Barry Kiel, the NCO overseeing the events created for the competition.

Soldiers competed in a wide variety of tasks – everything from basic marksmanship, radio operations, assembly and disassembly of machine guns to basic medical skills, map reading and land navigation.

"It all begins with heart and it [leads] to personal courage to overcome many of these obstacles ... it really allows the Soldiers to look deep within themselves and overcome what they may have thought was impossible," Kiel said.

Sgt. Erin Buzani, a transportation operator with the 1404th Transportation Company, was one of the competitors for the title of NCO of the Year.

"These kinds of competitions provide an opportunity for other Soldiers to see that we are competing ... but we can also come together and fight

for one another in stressful situations," Buzani said.

That is what these Soldiers did; If a Soldier fell behind they would motivate each other keep going.

"I work hard every day to improve myself and the military is one of those ways that I've done that," Buzani said. "This competition helps us be better for one another.

Each Soldier and NCO had a sponsor, or experienced mentor, who helped them prepare for the competition and provided motivation and support during events.

Sgt. 1st Class Rolando Torres Diaz, a recruiting and retention NCO with the Recruiting and Retention Battalion, who was competing for the title of NCO of the year, had last year's state and regional winner in his corner.

"Having Staff Sgt. Zapata as my sponsor was a great deal of [positive] influence; he was last year's winner for the state and regionals," Torres Diaz said. "Seeing the level of intricacy and high degree of competition helped me prepare for this quite well."

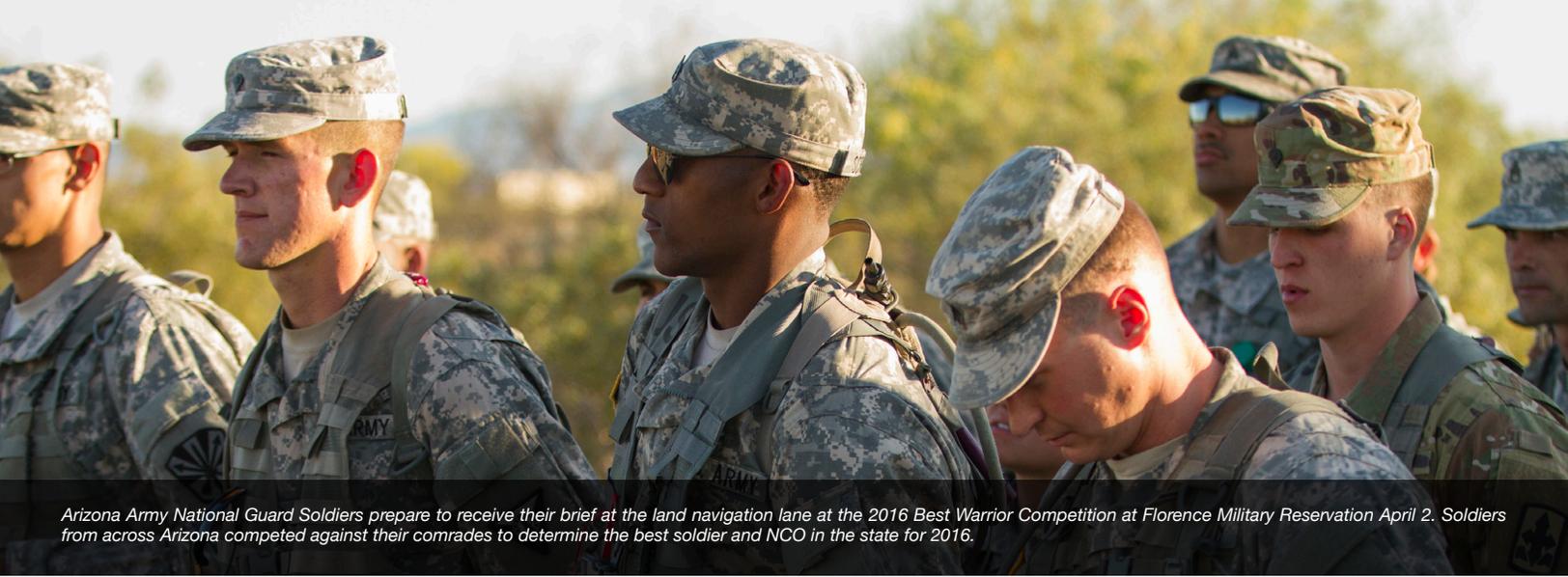
In the end, Torres Diaz said it was more about knowing one's self in order to decide if you can compete with the best.

"You have to have that internal drive, you have to ask yourself if you're good enough, can you cut it," he said.

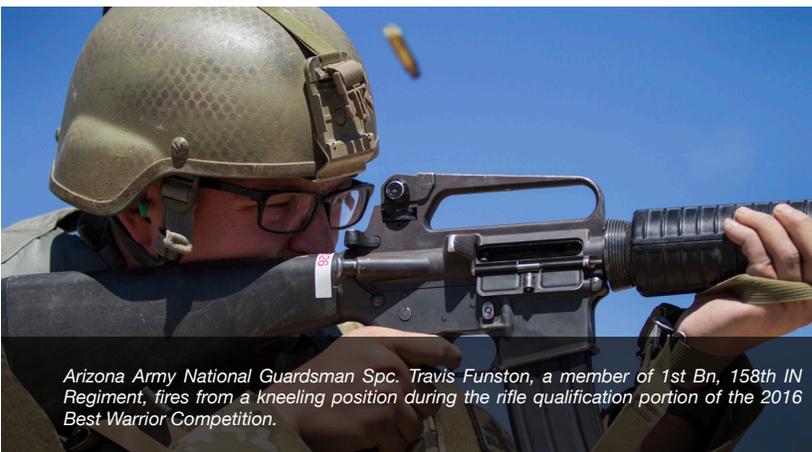
The Arizona Army National Guard will announce the winners of the Best Warrior Competition April 30 at the third annual Outstanding Soldiers and Airmen of the year banquet. Those winners will go on to competition against the best warriors from six other states at the Region VII Best Warrior Competition hosted here later this year.

*Story and photos by*

**STAFF SGT. ADRIAN BORUNDA**



Arizona Army National Guard Soldiers prepare to receive their brief at the land navigation lane at the 2016 Best Warrior Competition at Florence Military Reservation April 2. Soldiers from across Arizona competed against their comrades to determine the best soldier and NCO in the state for 2016.



Arizona Army National Guardsman Spc. Travis Funston, a member of 1st Bn, 158th IN Regiment, fires from a kneeling position during the rifle qualification portion of the 2016 Best Warrior Competition.



Specialist Mariah Madaras, a member of the Headquarters Headquarters Company, 158th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, attempts to finish assembling her M249 Squad Automatic Weapon weapon before time runs out.



Sergeant Erin Buzani, a transportation operator with the 1404th Transportation Company, identifies the corrections she needs to make to properly zero her M16A2 during the marksmanship zero lane.



Staff Sgt. Hayden Keener, a member of the 215th Regional Training Institute, finishes the last section of the ruck march, ending at the land navigation lane at the Best Warrior Competition.



Competitors in the 2016 Arizona Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition ruck April 2 from one lane to another on Florence Military Reservation carrying all their gear needed for each lane of the competition. Each Competitor had a sponsor who helped train them before the competition and motivate and provide advice during the competition.

# GUARDSMEN, CADETS EARN GERMAN ARMED FORCES PROFICIENCY BADGE

The glint of a gold badge on the Army service uniform is not something you see every day. The sight of its gold eagle sitting majestically above a soldier's name tape stands out and makes others take notice. More than 70 competitors representing the Arizona Army National Guard and Arizona State University, Grand Canyon University and Northern Arizona University Army ROTC programs, competed for the honor of wearing that eagle on their Army blues, March 5.

The German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge (GAFP-B) is a military decoration of the Bundeswehr, the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Germany. The country's infantrymen are required to compete for and receive the gold badge in order to graduate their initial schooling and join their fellow Soldiers in the field. For the United States Army, the GAFP-B is one of the few foreign awards approved for wear, and it sets the wearer apart from his or her peers.

Pvt. Saul Lucero, HHD 1-158th Infantry Battalion, said when he heard about the competition a week ago he knew it was something he wanted to do and despite the short window he was determined to walk home with the gold badge.

"I just joined the [infantry] scouts," Lucero said, "I'm the youngest one there and I wanted to set myself apart from the crowd and earn the respect of my peers."

He said when the competition started he didn't think it looked all that hard, but as the day went on he was feeling the drain. Despite blisters that covered his feet and blood seeping in his boots, Lucero made it all the way back to receive the gold badge that he had worked hard for all day.

In order to earn their badge, Soldiers and cadets had to make it through a grueling day of trials beginning with three basic fitness tests of shuttle runs, flexed arm hang and a 1,000-meter run all taken in sequence. The Soldiers and cadets then moved to the pool where they swam 400-meters in their combat uniform. They then had to remove their uniform in deep water without assistance from others or the pool structure.

After a short break for hygiene, the Soldiers and cadets were off to the 9 mm pistol range where they fired six rounds for their weapons qualifications. Finally, they road marched carrying a 35-pound ruck sack.

There are three levels to the award: gold, silver and bronze. A competitor's placement in events leading up to the road march determine the distance he or she will ruck: six, nine or 12 kilometers. This competition is non-gender specific and every competitor must meet one minimum standard to receive their badge.

Cadet Matt Farberov, ASU Army ROTC, has earned the GAFP-B twice in the past few years, the silver his sophomore year and then he returned to earn the gold his junior year.

"I would tell any cadet or Soldier the GAFP-B is an opportunity to see if you can compete on the German Infantry level," Farberov said. "It's a huge token of pride for an American Soldier to wear."

He went on to say that the opportunities to earn the badge are limited as it must be administered by a Senior NCO or officer from the German Army and they are not readily available to everyone.

Sgt. Maj. Matthias Wendorff, German Liaison NCO at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., has completed this test 15 times in his career and was on hand to observe the competition and to verify its validity.

"It is amazing to see these Soldiers and cadets do in one day what we do traditionally in two," Wendorff said. "They are motivated and smiling and it is amazing to see. It's a good feeling to see the pride in their faces as they finish the competition and receive their badges."

At the end of the day Wendorff presented six bronze, 16 silver and 30 gold GAFP-Bs to the day's competitors.

Sunnyslope recruiting NCOIC, Sgt. 1st Class John Acosta, who earned the gold badge after the long grueling day, said that the partnership with the college ROTC cadets is a valuable experience that allows the participants, cadets and Soldiers alike, to see what it takes to set themselves apart from the rest.

"I encourage Soldiers to participate in events like this, anytime you can do something extra, out of the ordinary, something to set yourself apart from the field," Acosta said. "Push yourself and challenge yourself. If you are remaining stagnant you are not growing."

*Story by*

**SGT. 1ST CLASS MONETTE WESOLEK**

*Photos by*

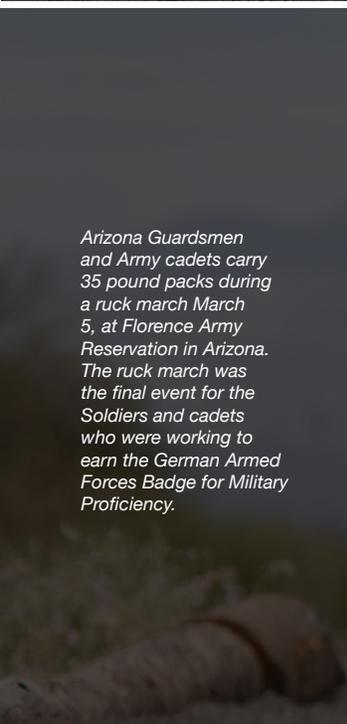
**STAFF SGT. BRIAN BARBOUR**



Arizona Army National Guard Soldiers and Army cadets get ready to begin a timed ruck march while carrying 35-pound packs at Florence Military Reservation in Arizona. March 5. The ruck was one of several timed events the Soldiers and cadets needed to complete in order to be awarded the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge, a military decoration of the Bundeswehr, the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Germany.



Arizona Army National Guard Soldiers and Army cadets pick up their pace during the ruck march as they compete against the clock at Florence Military Reservation in Ariz.



Arizona Guardsmen and Army cadets carry 35 pound packs during a ruck march March 5, at Florence Army Reservation in Arizona. The ruck march was the final event for the Soldiers and cadets who were working to earn the German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency.



Army Reserve Sgt. Alex Travalent with the 387th Military Police Battalion tends to the blistered feet of Arizona Army National Guard Pvt. Saul Lucero with Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment 1-158th Infantry Battalion after Lucero completed the 12-kilometer ruck march.



Arizona National Guard Soldiers and Army cadets have their speed and endurance challenged during a 11 x 10 meter sprint test March 5, at Florence High School in Ariz. The sprint was one of three events Soldiers and cadets participated in during the basic fitness test required to earn the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge.



*Pvt. Saul Lucero, an infantryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment 1-158th Infantry Battalion, takes aim at a paper target with an M9 pistol on a range at Florence Military Reservation, Ariz., March 5. The event, which involved firing six shots into a silhouette target from the prone, kneeling and standing positions, was one of several events Lucero had to complete in order to earn the gold German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge.*



*Uniformed Arizona Army National Guard Soldiers and Army cadets swim laps in order to complete a 100-meter swimming event at Florence High School in Florence, Ariz.*



*German Sgt. Maj. Matthias Wendorff, a liaison noncommissioned officer at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., awards Arizona National Guard Spc. Michael Kringle, a forward observer with 1st Battalion, 487th Field Artillery Regiment, Detachment 1, the gold German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge during an awards ceremony March 5 at Florence Military Reservation in Florence, Ariz. Kringle was one of more than 70 Arizona Guardsmen and Army cadets who competed for the privilege to wear the badge, which is a military decoration of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Germany.*

## MEMORIAL DAY



Share a historical view of Memorial Day with guest speaker Eduardo Pagan, Associate Dean and Professor of History at ASU, author and one of the hosts of the popular PBS series, History Detectives, at Pioneer and Military Memorial Park, located at 1317 W. Jefferson Street in Phoenix, Ariz. Various Civil War groups and Buffalo Soldiers will be represented during the 33rd annual Memorial Day observance, Monday, May 30. Admission to the event is free.

For more information call 602-534-1262 or [christopher.m.melvin2.mil@mail.mil](mailto:christopher.m.melvin2.mil@mail.mil)

## VETERANS FEST



Take a break from the summer heat in Flagstaff during the 10th Annual Flagstaff Armed Forces Day Parade and Veterans Fest on Saturday, May 21, being held from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Historic Downtown Flagstaff on Aspen Avenue in Flagstaff, Ariz. Presented by Military Order of the Purple Heart 793, observance activities will include the AFD Parade, Warrior Thunder Bike Rally, a tribute to law enforcement and a “Veterans Fest” honoring the U.S. Military, the American Veteran and their Families.

For more information, contact John Davison at 928-286-7446, or email [flagstaffafd@gmail.com](mailto:flagstaffafd@gmail.com)

## BALLOON FEST



Join us for the Seventh Annual Cave Creek Balloon Festival on Saturday, May 28, 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. on the driving range of the Rancho Mañana Golf Course. This years festival will include live music by Madison Holmes, Juntion 10, Eagles tribute band. There will also be a Civil Air Patrol Color Guard Presentation, Missing Man Flyover by Warbird Squadron 20, Fireworks, face painting, a large kids zone, locally brewed four peaks beer, various food vendors and a massive balloons show.

Fore more information, visit [cavecreekfestivals.com](http://cavecreekfestivals.com)

## INDEPENDENCE DAY



Last year, Travel + Leisure magazine asked readers to name their favorite town for celebrating Independence Day. Flagstaff finished first in the poll. The celebration begins early in the morning at Heritage Square as four waves of runners see how fast they can cover a mile on a portion of the parade route. Even if they're really slow, they have two hours before being overtaken by a parade float. Additional activities include an ArtWalk on Friday, July 3, with free admisson and Art in the Park Friday through Sunday, July 3-5, at Heritage Square, 111 W. Birch Ave. Admission is \$30.

Fore more information, visit [teamrunflagstaff.com](http://teamrunflagstaff.com).

## GEEKDAD DAY



The Arizona Science Center is offering free admission to dads and grandfathers, plus a “sweet surprise for the first 200 in the door.” Visitors can paint their own masterpiece in the “Body Depot” from 2:30-3:30pm. The Arizona Science Center is participating in Wired magazine’s “National GeekDad Day” — and celebrating Father’s Day with several hands on activities.

Dads who attend are eligible to enter to win a family 4-pack for the Arizona Science Center’s “Math Alive!” exhibit. There are also plenty of fun exhibits for the whole family.

For more information visit [www.azscience.org](http://www.azscience.org)

## ARIZONA PARKS

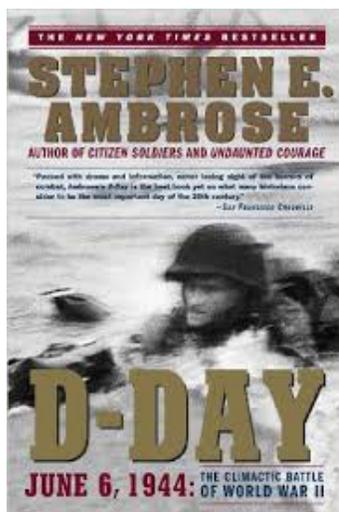


A “Wonderland of Rocks” is waiting for you to explore at Chiricahua National Monument. The 8-mile paved scenic drive and 17-miles of day-use hiking trails provide opportunities to discover the beauty, natural sounds, and inhabitants of this 11,985 acre site.

Visit the Faraway Ranch Historic District to discover more about the people who have called this area home. Annual National Parks Passes are available to military memebers for free. So go get your pass and start exploring today.

For more information on Arizona Parks, visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov) or call (520) 824-3560

# D-DAY JUNE 6, 1944: THE CLIMACTIC BATTLE OF WWII



Stephen E. Ambrose does an amazing job of describing the realities of the Depression Era of the 1930s. A story about boys brought up in a world where those who fought for their country were not always valued as they are today, and they were thrust into a war they didn't want.

Ambrose, a distinguished historian and author of other works such as *Undaunted Courage*, *Band of Brothers* and *Citizen Soldiers*, portrays the different men who shaped the Battle of Normandy. With more than 1,400 interviews with American, British, Canadian, French and German veterans, Ambrose details different plans of invasion, and how men rose to action when they had no other choice.

Ambrose goes into detail of the 24 hours from midnight June 5 and 6 to midnight June 6 and 7. The views of what happened from the perspective of a French child, an American paratrooper, a German sergeant and many more.

A total of 150,000 men landed in Normandy in one day. A huge feat that was pulled off by the Allies and involved a massive deception that had Nazis looking for an assault that

would never come at Calais.

There were preliminary air attacks across Northern France paralyzing Germans from above, and a naval armada of 5,000 ships. Back in England, men and women alike worked to sustain fighting personnel.

Ambrose really brings you in with his detail, and descriptions of everything that went on during this battle.

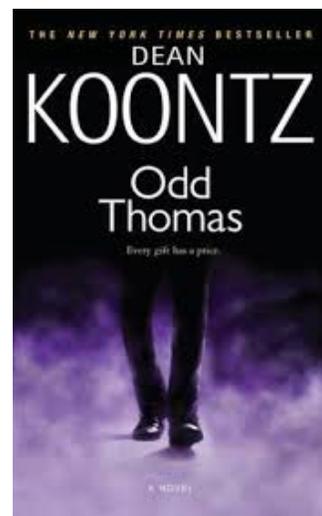
The interviews with WWII vets come to life, and this book brings a battle from long ago to the front of the imagination. Reading what these men went through. The desperation they felt when plans fell apart, and despair at participating in another huge war. On a positive note this book also recognizes individual acts of heroism that may have otherwise gone unnoticed, from citizens to troops alike.

Another theme seen throughout the book is the teamwork between 12 nations. Not only does this book give a clear picture of what happened that day, I think it's a good reminder that war is anything but pretty, from anyone's perspective. War is a brutal reality when freedoms are threatened.

Ambrose goes on to quote Dwight Eisenhower from a letter to his brother that said "Hitler should beware the fury of an aroused democracy." Eisenhower's words proved to be true when the all the best men came from the different Allies and triumphed.

*Book review by*  
**SPC. LIZ SMITH**

# ODD THOMAS



Dean Koontz, an American writer known for his suspense thrillers with elements of horror, fantasy, science fiction, mystery and satire, is the author of one of my favorite book series, the "Odd Thomas Series." This particular series is currently boasting more than 7 books, including three graphic novels and a film adaptation.

The book starts off in the fictional town of Pico Mundo, California, in a breakfast joint with a very special short-order cook named Odd Thomas.

What makes Thomas a special person is his ability to see spirits and in his own way connect with them. He sees the dead as well as bodachs, which are dark creatures that lurk around people who are going to cause a death or are going to die and seem to feed off the pain of others. Despite the strange gift he's been blessed with, Thomas has a positive outlook on life and in most people he runs across.

Thomas lives what he calls a simple life, partially due to not wanting to be around larger populations that could interfere with his abilities. Something he also didn't mention to his parents because he was afraid of how they would abuse his power and the fear of the bodachs causing a fatal accident if he made it known he could see them.

Thomas has a very small circle of people he trusts and keeps close, including a few stubborn ghosts who refuse to leave. His girlfriend

Stormy being one, and also the only person who has a full knowledge of what Thomas sees. Chief Porter, of the Pico Mundo Police, who has a little understanding of what Thomas sees, acts almost as a surrogate father to him. Last is his friend Little Ozzie, a large man, who also has a small amount of knowledge about Thomas's gift, but he is generally a great comfort to Thomas.

To start the story and gain an understanding of what Thomas's ability means, he is approached by the ghost of a young girl who was brutally murdered, and due to his unique understanding of the dead, Thomas is psychically led to her killer. This opening really introduces us to the kind of world that he deals with on a regular basis, and even Thomas says not too much later in the story, "I see dead people. But then, by God, I do something about it."

This story revolves around Thomas noticing an oddly large amount of bodachs surrounding the town and one man in particular. Leading him to believe that the whole town is in for a disastrous surprise that could only end in bloodshed. Through a series of events Thomas uses his intuition to help prevent and lessen the catastrophe that would have otherwise occurred.

One of the things I love most about Koontz's stories is he walks the line between humor and macabre. Just as the story gets to an extremely tense point he breaks through with a bit of dry humor.

The great thing about this series is it sucks you in and keeps you going, each of his Odd Thomas novels matches the last with fantastic plot and story line. If you enjoy suspense thriller type books, than this one is a great read and highly recommended.

*Book review by*  
**SPC. LIZ SMITH**

# Antelope Canyon

## EXPLORE YOUR ARIZONA NATIONAL PARKS

**M**aneuvering throughout a maze of sculpture-like sandstone canyons in Northern Arizona brings peace to oneself from the mundane life, especially Antelope Canyon.

Antelope Canyon is one of the top 25 places to visit in the world. Located southeast of Page on the Lake Powell Navajo Tribal Park, it is maintained by the Navajo Nation and can be accessed by tours only.

Adventurous Antelope Canyon Photo Tours is the only tour company in the area that gives access to other canyons within the area and night photo tours as well. Although Antelope Canyon is the most popular, the other canyons like Rattlesnake, Mountain Sheep and Owl Canyon are quieter, with less tourists and gives you the chance to soak in all that Mother Nature has to offer.

The tour guides grew up near Page and are very knowledgeable of the area and camera equipment, if you plan to do the photo tour. The guides prioritize the best possible photo shooting opportunities throughout the day, which could rush you a little, but it's well worth it.

There are two parts of Antelope Canyon, upper and lower. Upper Antelope Canyon, which is apart of the AACPT's tour packages, is famous for the beams of light that reach the bottom of the canyon floor from April through September; the Lower Antelope Canyon can be accessed by a separate tour company.

Walking into the massive opening of the Upper Antelope Canyon almost feels as if you are walking into a tranquil cathedral. The sunlight and dark shadows highlight the curves and colors of the Navajo sandstone. The tour guides can help with camera setup for the famous "Heart of the Canyon" or "Bear of Antelope Canyon," and if you're lucky, a tour guide may play the flute as you explore. Something about this sacred place leaves you peaceful and energized.

Tourist attractions surround this beautiful Northern Arizona town. Lake Powell, Horseshoe Bend and the Colorado River are minutes away with rafting, biking and camping with most companies giving military discounts. If you are able to extend your vacation, places like Monument Valley, Zion National Park in Utah and the Grand Canyon are a few hours away.

Arizona is full of beauty from the Saguaro deserts to the snow-capped White Mountains. Get out and explore Arizona!

*For more information,  
visit [www.navajoantelopecanyon.com](http://www.navajoantelopecanyon.com)  
or call (928) 380-1874.*

*Article and photos by*  
**SGT. REBA BENALLY**



# PARTING SHOT



Staff Sgt. William Gibbs, tactical aircraft maintenance, performs preflight checks on an F-16 Fighting Falcon at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., April 1, 2016. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Christopher Boitz). For a chance to have your photo featured in the Parting shot, please send submissions to: [arizroughrider@gmail.com](mailto:arizroughrider@gmail.com)

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