



The HORNET

World Wide
Deployments
Medical
Food
Bank
Raleigh
Asheville
MP
Battalion Movement
Civil Unrest

NG Hospital
NG Greif
Camp
Butner
Special
Focus
Collective
Training
COVID-19

cyber
security
Hurricane
Prep
Logistics
Fayetteville
Greenville
State
active
duty
Warehouse Support
Supply Drops
Blackhawk
Jumps
Always
Ready
coronavirus
test site
Face Masks
Ready
Team

DAYS

Of Active Duty

The North Carolina National Guard has experienced an unprecedented amount of activity. From almost a third of the force deployed world-wide to COVID-19 Response, the NCNG Soldiers and Airmen have accomplished the mission and lived up to the motto of a Ready, Reliable, Responsive and Relevant Force.



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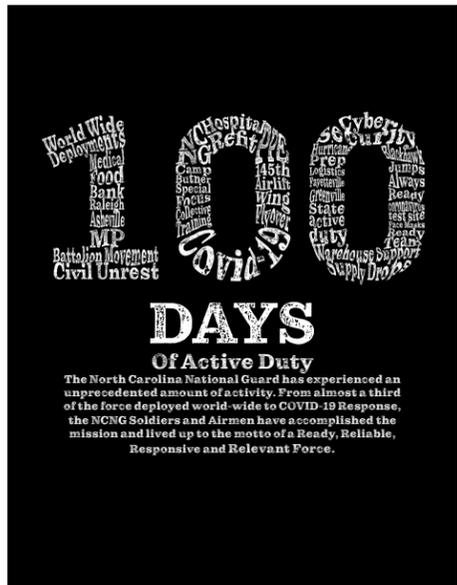
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Layout and design by Staff Sgt. Mary Junell

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On The Cover:

The North Carolina National Guard was activated in early March 2020 to begin assisting with the state's COVID-19 Response efforts. Now more than 100 days later, Soldiers and Airmen are still activated. This graphic represents some of the many things accomplished or supported by the NCNG during those 100 days. Many of the events can be read about in this edition of The Hornet Magazine. Graphic by Staff Sgt. Mary Junell

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Don't Forget!

You can click on the story descriptions above to go directly to that story! Than click the home button to return here!

Where is SFC Jordan?

Can you find the tiny version of Sgt. 1st Class Robert Jordan hidden among these pages? Our well loved photojournalist is hiding somewhere in the Hornet!



Since early March, Soldiers and Airmen have been in warehouses across the state supporting N.C. Emergency Management, the Department of Health and Human Services, and Food shelters to distribute food and medical supplies in support of the COVID-19 response in North Carolina.

North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 113th Sustainment Brigade supported two PPE distribution sites supporting 10 counties across North Carolina on May 15, 2020. The Soldiers brought 432,000 gloves, 44,000 face shields, 45,000 shoe covers, 88,800 procedural masks, and 2800 bottles of hand sanitizer split between the two sites that supported 112 facilities. The facilities were each given 14 days worth of supplies.

The North Carolina National Guard (NCNG) embedded liaison officers in North Carolina Emergency Management (NCEM) offices across the state, April 13, 2020. The liaisons acted as a direct line to NCNG resources available to support NCEM's response to COVID-19 and were an integral part of the Guard's success.

In May, North Carolina Air National Guard's 118th ASOS team participated in a nighttime exercise alongside the 449th Combat Aviation Brigade's AH-64 helicopters providing Close Air Support, a crucial exercise for joint mission readiness.



Soldiers assigned to the North Carolina Army National Guard worked with volunteers and employees of the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC to candle and inspect thousands of eggs in Winston-Salem, NC, May 6, 2020. The NCNG is stepping in to assist Food Banks across North Carolina in some very unique ways. Today, they answered the call to help unload, inspect, grade, and candle thousands of eggs.

North Carolina National Guard celebrated the 245th Army Birthday at a ceremony held at NCNG headquarters in Raleigh, North Carolina, June 12, 2020. The small crowd NCNG Soldiers, Airmen, military retirees in masks as part of COVID-19 precautions, spread out along the headquarters' atrium and watch as Senior Army Advisor to the NCNG Adjutant General, Army Col. Jason Sabat hosts the celebration in honor of the Army's birth on June 14, 1775.

A tribute to the men of the Old Hickory took place June 6th at Hill 314, Mortain-Bocage, France, on the 76th anniversary of D-DAY, honoring the heroic actions of the 30th Infantry Division at Mortain during the battle from August 6 to 12, 1944. Although our command leadership was not able to make the ceremony due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they were there in spirit with donation of the 30th flag flown at Joint Force Headquarters during the Presidential Unit Citation announcement week. The donated 30th flag now flies at Hill 314 in honor of all the Old Hickory men who fought there 76 years ago.

A team of five North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers supported the distribution of school lunches in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School District, starting April 27, 2020. The team, assigned to 1-130th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, are divided between Northside Elementary School and McDouggle Middle School, both in Chapel Hill, N.C., where lunches are being packed by school nutrition staff while the Soldiers provide logistical support. The district has been providing the lunches since schools closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

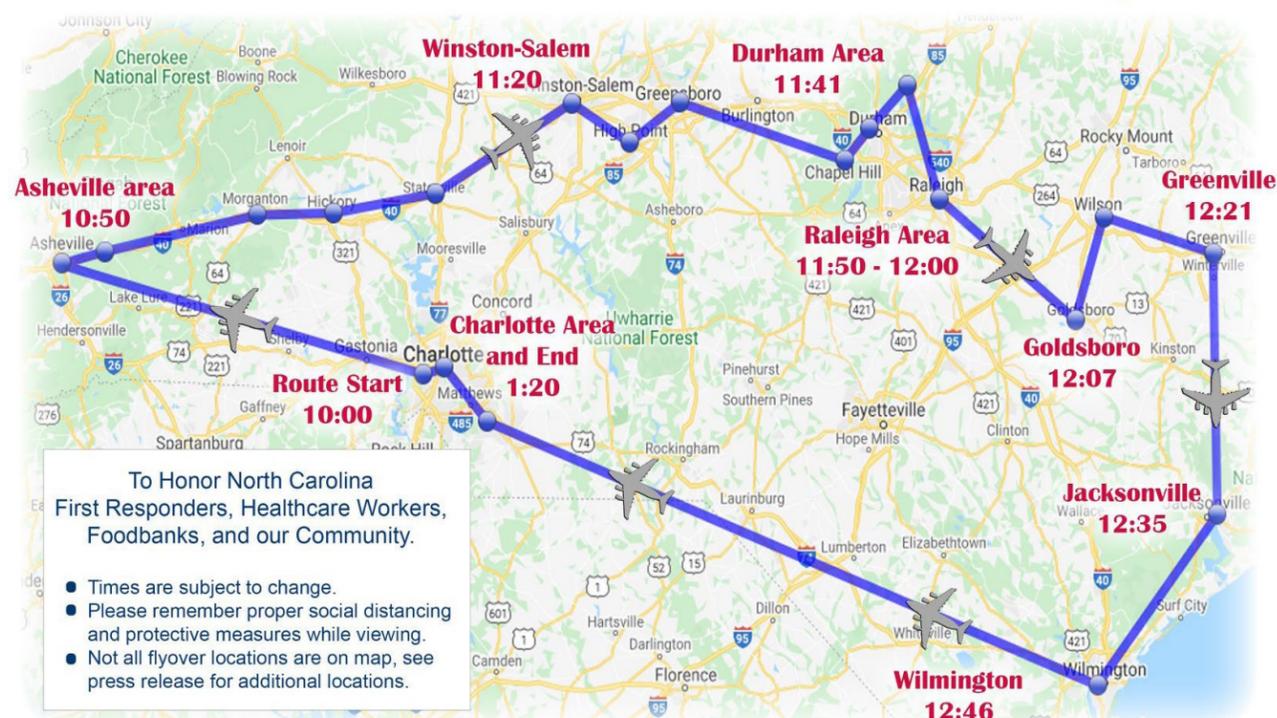
NEWS FROM AROUND THE NEST



North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 1-130 Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 449th Theater Aviation Brigade deliver and rake in mulch during a farming day at the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle in Raleigh, NC, April 29, 2020. The NCG deploys critical capabilities in direct support to the NC Department of Health and Human Services and civilian authorities in order to mitigate the effects of COVID 19, protect infrastructure, and preserve governance. Photo by Maj. Ellis J. Parks



North Carolina Air National Guardsmen assigned to 1145th Logistics Readiness Squadron, prepare personal protective equipment for distribution at a warehouse, Central North Carolina, May 5, 2020. The NCNG and NCANG deploy critical capabilities in direct support to the NC Department of Health and Human Services and civilian authorities in order to mitigate effects of COVID-19, protect infrastructure, and preserve governance. Photo by Sgt. Jamar Marcel Pugh



Operation American Resolve

On 7 May, 2020 the North Carolina Air National Guard's 145th Airlift Wing participated in Operation American Resolve. This Air Force Salute was to demonstrate the Department of the Air Force's continued readiness during the national COVID-19 response, while saluting the American Heroes at the forefront in our fight against COVID-19. These flyovers incurred no additional cost to the taxpayers and were conducted as part of regularly scheduled training. The North Carolina Air National Guard flew in a circular path around the state of North Carolina making sure to fly over as many hospitals and medical centers they could fit into their path.

NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD COVID19 RESPONSE



286 NC Guardsmen on Duty
down from 363 & 940 during peak response

FOOD DISTRIBUTION



4.5M food bank meals

330K school lunches

PPE DISTRIBUTION

3.8M masks

1.6M hand sanitizers

7.7M gloves

763K face shields

200K gowns

704K shoe covers

16K thermometers



165 Phishing Emails & Alerts Investigated

25 Malicious Attacks Thwarted

Cyber Security for NC Emergency Management

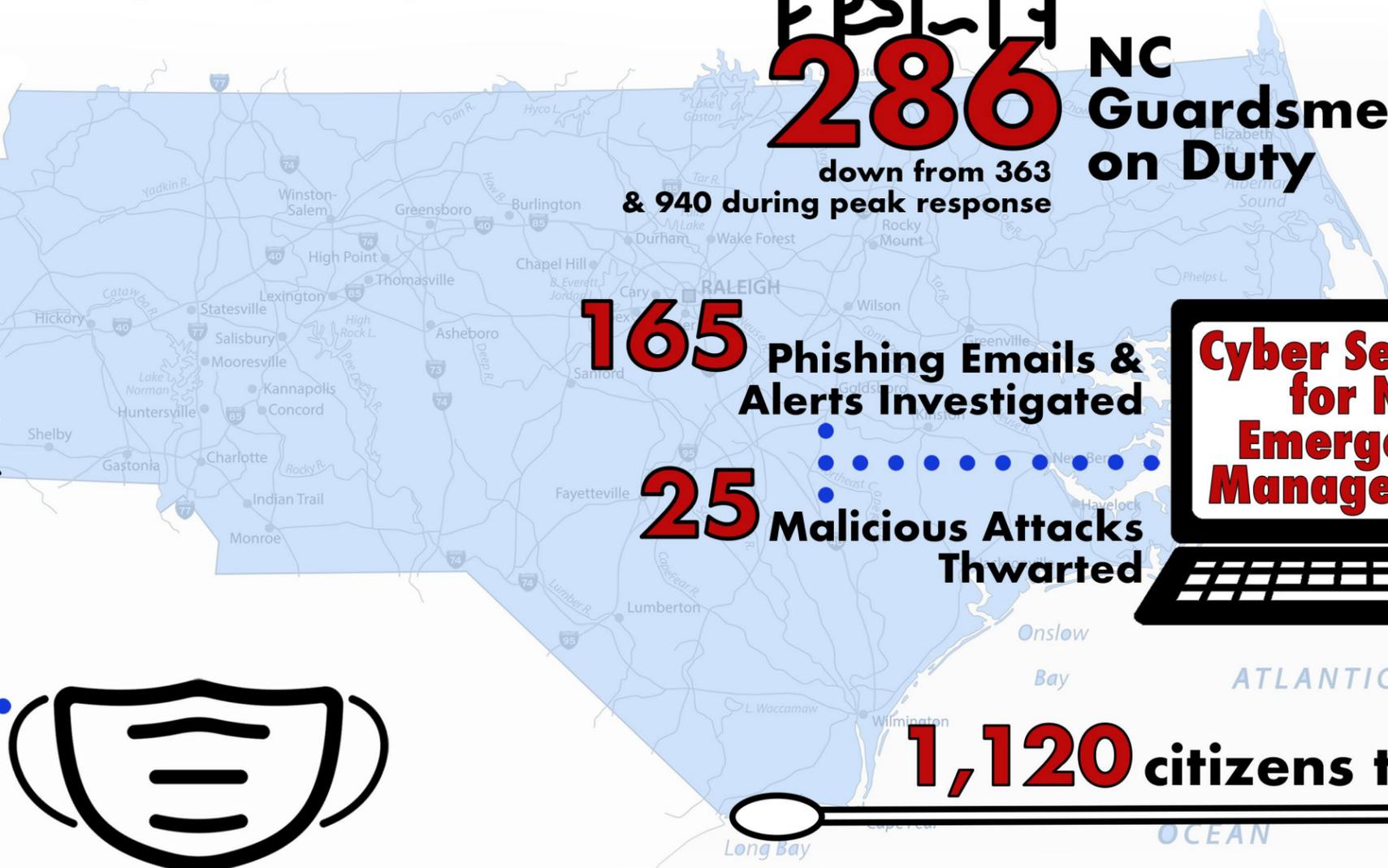
1,120 citizens tested



6.1M pounds of cargo delivered



155K miles driven



Story by Sgt. Hannah Tarkelly

Sgt. Patrick Plemons, assigned to 2-130 Airfield Operations Battalion, shows off the mask made for him by fellow N.C. Guardsmen assigned to the 403rd Quartermaster Rigger Support Team. Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Junell

NCNG: Saving Lives, One Mask at a Time

During a time of uncertainty, while North Carolina's resiliency is being tested, there are ten Soldiers in particular who answered the call to help protect their fellow warriors.

In a mission to save lives, NC Guardsmen assigned to the 403rd Quartermaster Rigger Support Team found a unique way to continue a legacy of selfless service and keep fellow NC National Guard Soldiers and Airmen in the fight.





Parachute riggers of the 403rd QM Rigger Support Team transferred their distinctive set of skills and capabilities into manufacturing protective face masks at their headquarters, on Fort Bragg, for all Soldiers and Airmen on NC COVID-19 duty.

“We are a ten man team... so when each one of these Soldiers received the call they understood that all hands were on deck,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Viviana Paredes, the commander of the 403rd QM Rigger Support Team.

How many people really know what parachute riggers do and their military importance?

“A parachute rigger, 92 Romeo, is the paratroopers last line of defense,” Paredes said. “It is that Soldier that ensures the parachute... is serviceable, is packed properly, is maintained adequately, and is within the perimeter of Army regulations.”

COVID-19 has threatened

the safety of service members and their communities due to the increasingly infectious conditions. Therefore, it was time to take action and help make a difference by putting down their parachutes and picking up mask making materials.

“We have a unique capability of utilizing sewing machines and repairing parachutes which was easily transferable in the production of face masks for our Guardsmen,” Paredes said.

These Citizen-Soldiers sprung into action and broke themselves into two, five man teams to maintain social distance protocols and avoid cross contamination. The masks were produced in an assembly line in which each Soldier was tasked with a specific job to increase productivity and make this life saving equipment in a timely manner.

“We are proud here at the NC National Guard and of course at the 403rd Quartermaster Rigger

Support Team to be an active participant in this mission and to be able to protect the protectors,” Paredes said.

The riggers have handcrafted reliable face masks with a double layer of cotton polypropylene material.

“The mask is light; however, the double layer definitely provides protection from contaminants that we might be carrying as asymptomatic people,” Paredes said.

At the end of the day a non-commissioned officer performs a quality control and assurance check to ensure the mask is suitable for use. After the masks are properly examined they are packaged and ready for distribution through the State Safety Office. The 403rd QM Rigger Support Team planned to make and send out approximately 5,000 masks.

“My riggers feel validated, they feel like their skills are being put to use,” Paredes said. “They feel very proud to start seeing the service members of the NCNG wearing their masks.”

With the thread of a needle and the heart of a rigger, every mask made is another Guardsmen better protected in an unknowingly infected environment.

“If they’re [guardsmen] not protected ...then how can they serve their community and how can they help those around them that are also in harm’s way,” said Staff Sgt. Betuel Monje, a parachute rigger assigned to the NCNG, 403rd QM Rigger Support Team.

The 403rd QM Rigger Support Team have left their homes and placed their own health and safety on the line to help protect fellow heroes and enable the NCNG fighting force to proceed with their mission.

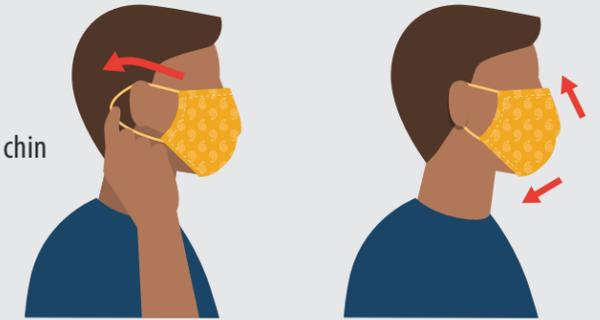
“This goes to the core of what Citizen-Soldiers do,” said Paredes. “Every single Soldier that is on COVID duty probably has another job... and has left their family in order to support the mission of the NCNG. That’s what we do everyday.”

How to Safely Wear and Take Off a Cloth Face Covering

Accessible: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

WEAR YOUR FACE COVERING CORRECTLY

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily
- Do not place a mask on a child younger than 2



USE THE FACE COVERING TO HELP PROTECT OTHERS

- Wear a face covering to help protect others in case you’re infected but don’t have symptoms
- Keep the covering on your face the entire time you’re in public
- Don’t put the covering around your neck or up on your forehead
- Don’t touch the face covering, and, if you do, clean your hands

FOLLOW EVERYDAY HEALTH HABITS

- Stay at least 6 feet away from others
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Wash your hands often, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds each time
- Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available



TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTH FACE COVERING CAREFULLY, WHEN YOU’RE HOME

- Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
- Handle only by the ear loops or ties
- Fold outside corners together
- Place covering in the washing machine
- Wash your hands with soap and water



Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators, both of which should be saved for health care workers and other medical first responders.

For instructions on making a cloth face covering, see:

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Army and Air Guard Medical Technicians Set Up COVID-19 Medical Support Shelter

By Master Sgt. Nathan Clark

Soldiers and Airmen from the North Carolina National Guard work with the NC Department of Health and Human Services and the NC Department of Emergency Management to create a Medical Support Shelter in Hamlet, North Carolina on April 29, 2020.

The purpose of a Medical Support Shelter is to provide a sheltering capability for at-risk individuals with medical needs for 24 hour operation periods. During the COVID19 pandemic response this medical shelter would provide relief to the health care system by supporting

patients who were not at risk of infection but still needed medical care. This is the first time that Army and Air Guard medical teams have activated to work in together with this type of situation and location.

“Medical Support Shelters like this one are to take on low acuity patients to help relieve hospitals in the event that they become overrun with COVID19,” stated Col. Greg Hawkesworth, Commander, 145th Medical Group.

The Medical Support Shelter is led by the NC Office of Emergency Medical Services and the 145th

Airlift Wing Medical Group and 156th Aero-Medical Evacuation Squadron and is staffed with NC Army and Air Guard doctors, physicians assistants, nurses, medics and administrative personnel.

Airmen 1st Class Savannah Bartlett, 145th Medical Group Nurse, said

“We have touched up our training to make sure we are providing the best quality care that we can.”

The NCNG medical team practiced for the arrival of patients, trained on health and wellness testing equipment and conducted inventories of medical supplies while also conducting medical drills prior to accepting live patients.

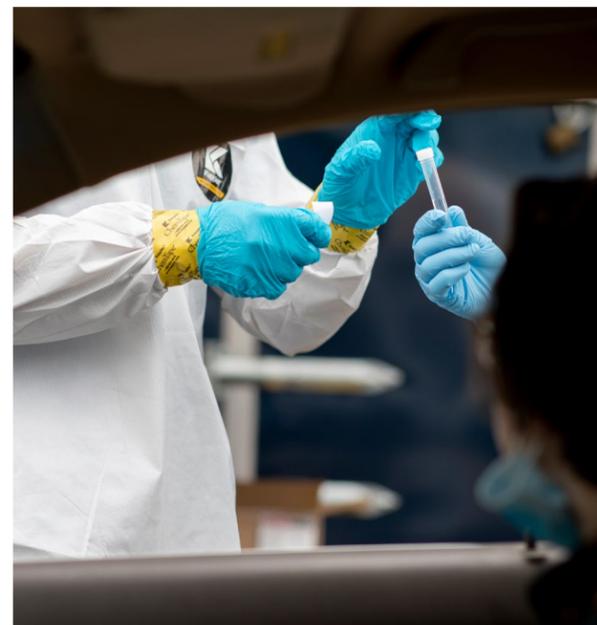
“This has been a great opportunity to share clinical knowledge, even on the fly to a deployed location, I am honored and eager to help,” said Bartlett.



COVID-19 TESTING CONTINUES WITH NC NATIONAL GUARD SUPPORT



A North Carolina Army National Guard Soldier gathers test samples while supporting local health and emergency officials during a drive-thru COVID-19 test site.



BY STAFF SGT. MARY JUNELL

North Carolina National Guard Soldiers and Airmen assigned to the 42nd Civil Support Team supported a drive-thru COVID-19 test site at Deep River Elementary School in Sanford, North Carolina, May 27-28, 2020.

The test site was open to the community and was a product of Lee County Emergency Management, North Carolina Health and Human Services, and Piedmont Health Services.

The Guardsmen collected about 500 samples in two days. This is the second time they have supported a COVID-19 test site; the first tested employees at a Chatham county chicken processing plant on April 23, 2020.

North Carolina Air National Guard Senior Master Sgt. Lee Kuberacki, one of the Guardsmen supporting the test site said the Civil Support Team uniquely adapted to this kind of work because of their background in chemical, biological, and radioactive safety, and how to operate around it.

“Additionally, we have a lot of training in sample techniques,” said Kuberacki, who serves as the team’s operations non commissioned officer. “Every one of us has had some degree of experience in taking samples of different types, be it chemical or

biological.”

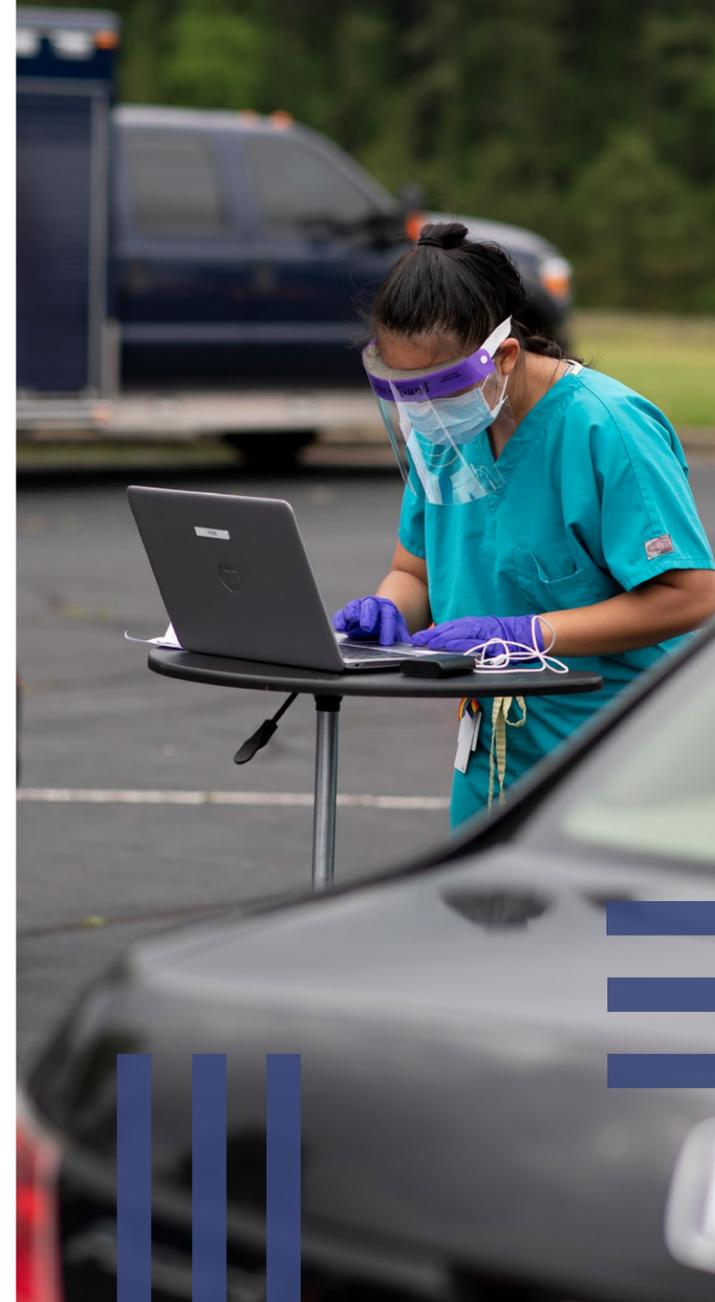
The Guardsmen collected the samples by rubbing a cotton swab in a circular motion just inside the opening of both nostrils of people who pulled up in their cars to be tested; unlike the previous COVID-19 test where a six-inch-long swab was inserted deep into the nasal passages.

Kuberacki, who was also recently tested using the less invasive method, said the test tickled a little, and people should not be worried about getting tested when available.

Misy Drake, the chief operating officer for Piedmont Health Services, said the North Carolina National Guard’s support made it possible for them to test more people.

“Back at our clinic we’re averaging probably 20 tests a day per site,” Drake said. “Yesterday [with the Guard] we did close to 300 tests. That’s the difference that the Guard makes in terms of just expanding outreach and being able to reach more people to get them tested.”

More than 900 NCNG Soldiers and Airmen have been activated in response to COVID-19 relief efforts to support NC Emergency Management, N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, and their local communities.

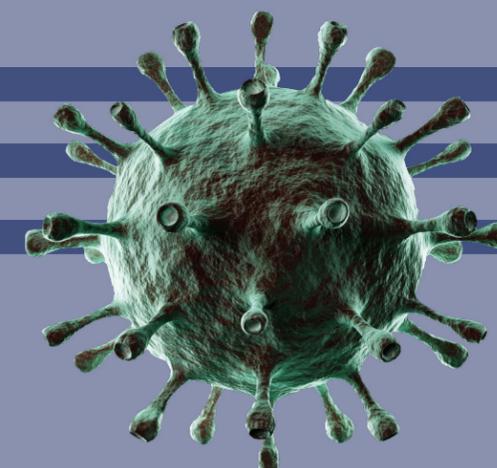


Know Your W's

WEAR
a cloth face covering.

WAIT
6 feet apart.
Avoid close contact.

WASH
your hands often use or
hand-sanitizer.

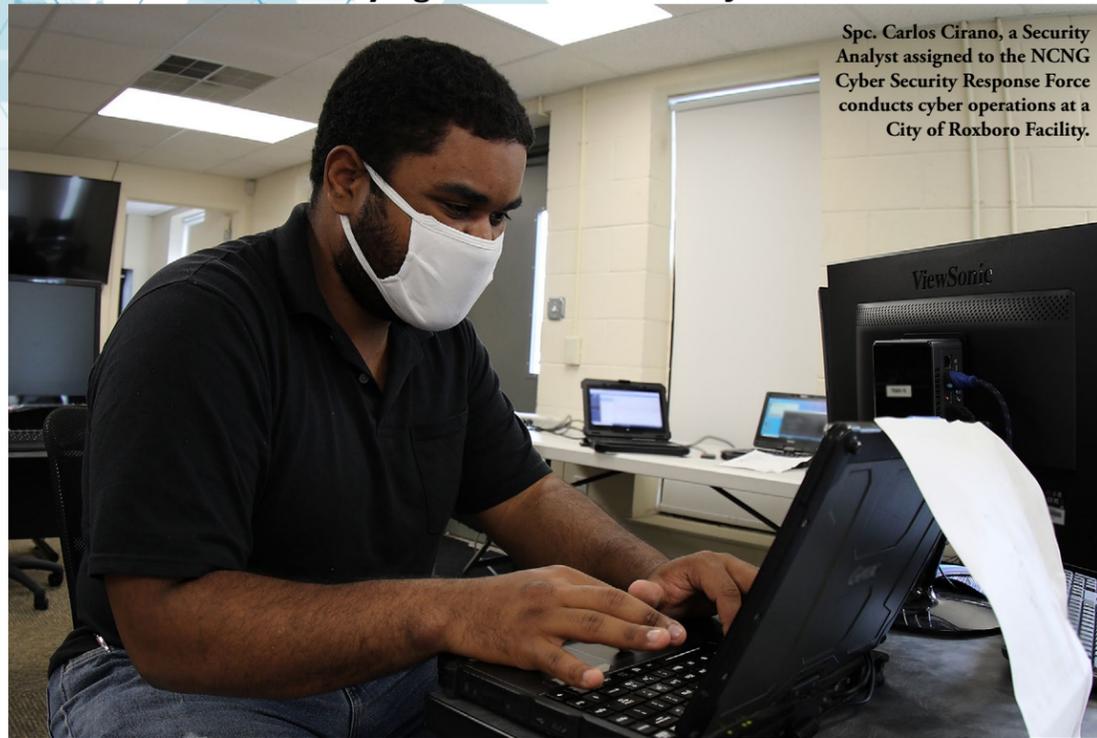


"ADDITIONALLY, WE HAVE A LOT OF TRAINING IN SAMPLE TECHNIQUES. EVERY ONE OF US HAS HAD SOME DEGREE OF EXPERIENCE IN TAKING SAMPLES OF DIFFERENT TYPES, BE IT CHEMICAL OR BIOLOGICAL."



NC Guard Deploys Cyber Security Response Force

By Sgt. 1st Class Robert Jordan



Spc. Carlos Cirano, a Security Analyst assigned to the NCNG Cyber Security Response Force conducts cyber operations at a City of Roxboro Facility.

More than two dozen North Carolina National Guard (NCNG) Soldiers and Airmen deployed in June across North Carolina helping local and state agencies including the North Carolina Department of Information Technology, North Carolina Board of Elections and North Carolina Emergency Management with cyber operations.

They are part of the NCNG Cyber Security Response Force (CSRF), a team of full time NCNG personnel and Soldiers and Airmen who leave their civilian jobs and deploy on order as needed for state and nation.

"We (the NCNG and state and local agencies) been working together for some time," North Carolina Emergency Management Information Technology Security Compliance Specialist Mark Brighter said.

Ongoing missions ranged from repair of local government computer software to protection of state election digital infrastructure.

North Carolina Army National Guard (NCARNG) Spc. Carlos Cirano brings civilian acquired skills and education, military training and more than a dozen real world state active duty deployments to the mission. He worked at local government facilities in Person County and the city of Roxboro in North Carolina helping restore city and county computer networks after a cyber-attack in late May.

It was an active environment as he collaborated

with local computer technicians to bring the damaged systems back online.

"You are here to help, you never know what to expect," said Cirano.

At the NCNG Joint Force Headquarters in Raleigh operations continued protecting state election computer systems. Much of the action was located at the CSRF Operations room, it is a hive of keyboards, cables, computers, monitors and communication systems.

Leaders checked manuals and coordinate staffing requirements with state government peers. Soldiers monitor cyberspace for any evidence of malicious activities online that may threaten the elections computer systems. This information was rapidly collected and shared with other state and local professionals to better prepare staff and protect systems.

"It is very challenging, I am always learning something," NCARNG Sgt. Clintonia Crocker, a Nodal Network Operator assigned to the CSRF said.

There were regular conference calls with managers of state and local election staff. The professionals shared the latest information from a variety of sources. Priorities were shifted to improve response and protect critical systems.

The CSRF is part of the NCNG's mission to protect North Carolina critical infrastructure from all threats natural or man-made.

NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD EMPLOYMENT CENTER

The North Carolina National Guard Employment Center's purpose is to increase career opportunities for all Reserve Component Soldiers, Veterans, Spouses, and qualifying dependents by developing proactive positive relationships with North Carolina employers and connecting our service members with those employers through all available channels in order to obtain stable careers and optimal retention.

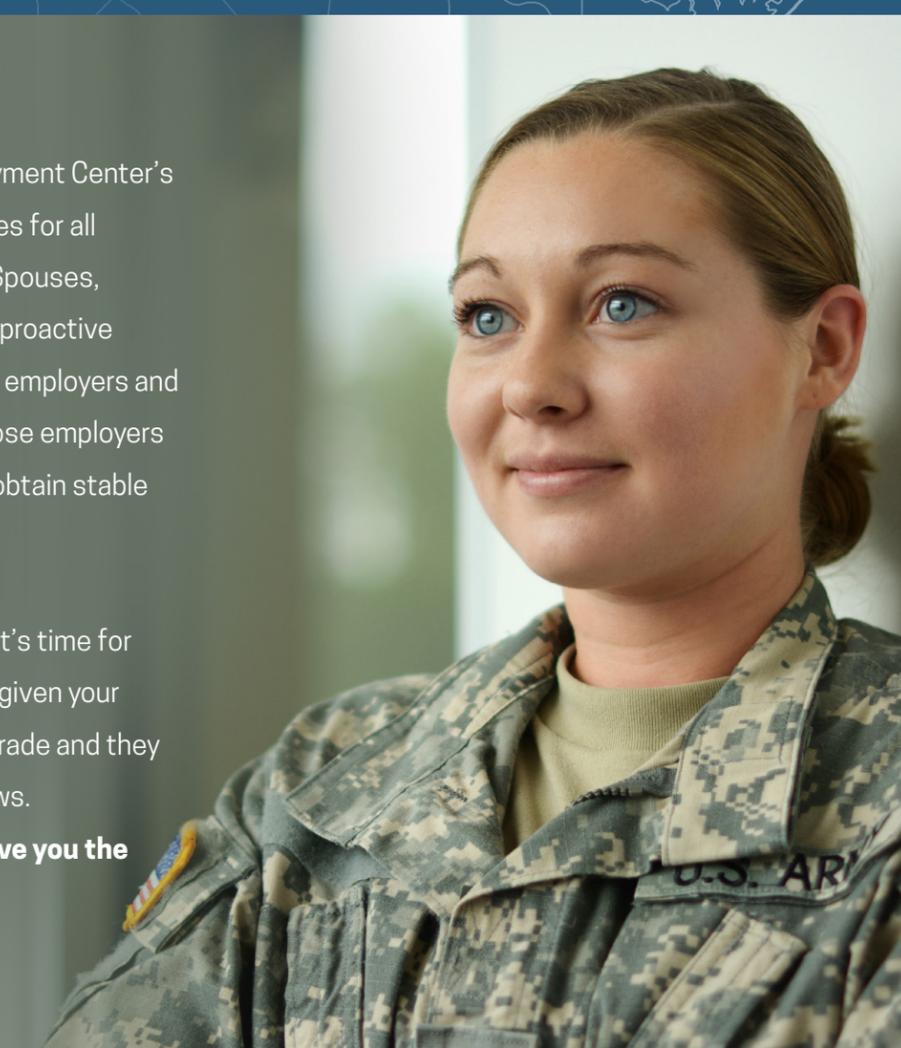
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Spc. Christian Newton stands on East Carolina University's campus, where he is a student, wearing riot gear in preparation to assist local authorities.



From scrubs to riot gear; National Guard Medic answers the call

By Staff Sgt. Mary Junell



Newton had just ended state active duty for the COVID-19 response before being called up to support local authorities in the same town where he is a student.

Spc. Christian Newton has had a busy Spring semester.

Like students across the county, Newton's classes at East Carolina University migrated online, but unlike the majority of college students, he was also one of the more than 900 Soldiers and Airmen activated with the North Carolina National Guard to support local health and emergency personnel respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Newton, a combat medic with the 514th Military Police Company, was part of a team setting up and working at a hospital in Hamlet, N.C., where he said their main mission was taking an influx of non-COVID-19 patients from hospitals around the state to relieve front-line health care workers.

In addition to his duties

as a medic, Newton was able to complete his schoolwork during his limited downtime. He is working towards his degree in multidisciplinary studies from ECU in Greenville, N.C.

On May 21, 2020, Newton was deactivated and returned to his family's home in Cape Hatteras, N.C. Ten days later, he was activated again, but for a completely different mission.

"As a medic, I'm here for everyone," Newton said. "I'm here to support my unit. I'm here to support law enforcement and working with local EMS to protect the civilians."

Prior to his recent activation, civil unrest broke out in cities across the country in response to the death of George Floyd, including the

city of Greenville, N.C.

On Sunday, May 31, 2020, Gov. Roy Cooper activated approximately 450 North Carolina National Guardsmen to support local authorities safeguard citizens and property across the state.

Newton and Soldiers from the 514th are part of that group and since Monday have been on standby to support Greenville law enforcement.

Newton said his unit is supporting local law enforcement and protecting those who are peacefully protesting.

On Tuesday a protest was scheduled in the afternoon in downtown Greenville. Newton and his unit staged at East Carolina University's Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium with other law enforcement.

"I got the best of both worlds; I became a medic in the Army."



Soldiers with the 514th Military Police Company line up outside the bus station in Greenville, N. C.

North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers with the 514th Military Police Company make preparations to support local authorities in Greenville, North Carolina on June 2, 2020. The Soldiers were part of approximately 450 Guardsmen mobilized to support local authorities safeguard the lives and property of North Carolinians and help ensure individuals are able to exercise their right to peaceful protest in the wake of civil unrest across the state.



Newton said he had been to every football game before the school closed because of the pandemic and it was an eerie feeling to be in the stadium dressed in riot gear.

“I’m kind of relieved because I know the area,” Newton said. “I know a lot of people here. I feel like if I were to run into someone that’s not doing what they’re supposed to be doing I could have influence over

that.

“I don’t want them to see me any sort of way, see me as the bad guy,” Newton said. “I want everyone to know that we’re here for you guys, we’re here to protect you. We’re not the oppressors, we’re not out to get anybody, we’re here for you guys.”

About two hours after arriving at the stadium, part of the 514th, including Newton, left the stadium

and positioned themselves closer to the protest, waiting inside the bus station with other law enforcement in case they were needed.

Newton may be faced with different situations during a protest. He may see trauma victims prior to them being rushed off to the hospital where he was less than two weeks ago, doing

clinical work but he said he is prepared.

“It’s definitely a big change,” Newton said. “You just have to always be ready. I know I’ve received some of the best training any of our medics could get, on the civilian side I have a lot of experience as well. I’m just ready for whatever happens, I hope that I can treat to the

best of my ability should I have to.”

Newton said he has always had a desire to help people and it is what led him to join the military. His mom is a nurse and his dad retired from the U.S. Marine Corps in 2019.

“I’ve always loved helping people,” he said. “I got the best of both worlds;

I became a medic in the Army. It’s always been my passion to help out whenever I can. I don’t like to see people hurt, I don’t like to see people suffering so being here really gives me a sense of pride.”

Some of the Soldiers in the 514th supported law enforcement during the civil unrest in Charlotte, N.C. in

2016, unlike Newton, who has been in the guard for only two years.

“This is my first riot response so I’m kind of nervous going into it but I trust my team,” Newton said. “I trust everybody here. I know we have some of the best training.”

The Greenville protest ended by the time the 8

p.m. curfew began and the Soldiers of the 514th MP Co. moved from the bus station back to the stadium.

Between school, supporting the COVID-19 response, and now supporting law enforcement, Newton has learned a lot this year and he said he will take those experiences with him for the rest of his life.

Special Focus Exercise Collective Training Helps Maintain Unit Readiness

Story By Sgt. Odaliska Almonte

Soldiers with the 105th Engineer Bn., provide security during Special Focus Exercise Collective Training at Camp Butner, North Carolina, June 10, 2020. Photo by Sgt. Wayne Becton

Amid the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, North Carolina National Guard soldiers continue to train during a Special Focus Exercise Collective Training at Camp Butner, N.C., June 8-12, 2020.

Soldiers with the 5-113th Field Artillery, 151st Mobility Augmentation Company, 171st Engineer Company Sapper, 881st Engineer Support Company, and 882nd Engineer Company trained on tasks and drills for combat and emergency unit readiness.

The training scenarios

are part of the Special Focus Exercise testing the Soldier's ability to secure control points to support state and local first responders and county emergency management agencies.

Capt. Jonathan Dunlap, commander of the 881st Engineer Support Company, and a veteran of many

domestic operations said the training prepares the Soldiers to help state and local first responders when needed.

"For my unit supporting domestic operations can be anything from providing security to support local law enforcement all the way to hurricane response, which is our normal mission, where

we are helping people and making sure first responders can get where they need to go to save lives," Said Capt. Dunlap. "We are there for the community."

For many soldiers, training for domestic operations is not only about mission readiness but the sense of being part of something bigger than

themselves.

"My favorite part of my job is to know that we went out and made a difference in our community and had a hand in securing our land and our citizens," said Staff Sgt. Corey Adams, assigned to the 881 Eng. Support Company. "When we have to be out with our brothers

and sisters, it is our duty to protect them."

In these unprecedented times, the N.C. National Guard has been in the forefront, supporting our state and local partners, and will continue to be readily available.

"We have been very active this year, and any request

for our assistance has been to ensure the public safety of our community regardless of the issue, whether it is COVID-19 or any pending hurricanes that could come," said Dunlap. "It is very rewarding to know that we can look one day and know that we have helped our community."

Spc. Amber Cohen, 449th Theatre Aviation Brigade, distributes meals, prepared at the Elizabethtown Middle School, to the citizens in Bladen County.

A BEACON OF HOPE

As the coronavirus swept through the Nation, schools closed their doors in order to help safeguard students and stop the spread of the virus.

School buses stopped in their tracks, there were classrooms with no teachers, desks with no students and hallways that were once filled with life were now vacant. But the

North Carolina National Guard was there to help in a time of need; a beacon of hope in a time of darkness. Students in Bladen County, N.C. were particularly affected by

COVID-19, leaving them and their families in a dire situation. COVID-19 caused unemployment to sky rocket and families struggled now more than ever to feed their children.

By Spc. Hannah Tarkelly

According to Amy Stanley, the Director of school nutrition for Bladen County schools, 76% of students attending Elizabethtown Middle School would receive free or reduced meals during the school year. Therefore, most of the meals children received during the weekday derived from the school meal programs.

“On a daily basis typically students are here at school and they’re able to get those lunches...but COVID-19 has impacted our society so much,” said Jamal Dunham, principal of Elizabethtown Middle School. “We transitioned to virtual schooling but kids still need to eat.”

Meals the community relied on to help feed the children of Bladen County vanished when tragedy struck the Nation. With parents out of work and students without a meal plan, the uncertainty of when their next meal would come became a mystery and a gut wrenching horror.

“Without those meals they’re not going to have the nutrition that they need,” Stanley said. “When we get out of school on Friday and come back on Monday there are many children that do not eat during that weekend so to go three or four months without the children eating would be devastating to the families and to the children.”

Schools were no longer in session but their desire to help remained strong. Leaders of Bladen County decided to take action and called upon the North Carolina Army National Guard to help provide school breakfast and lunches to students all across the County.

“The National Guard has stepped in and provided our district the opportunity to support children through natural and healthy eating habits,” said Dunham. “We would not have been able to make the impact we’re making without the help of the National Guard.”

On April 27th, 55 Soldiers from various units across North Carolina including the 1131st Charlie Company; Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 449th Theatre Aviation Brigade; Alpha and Bravo Battery, 5th Battalion, 113th Field Artillery Regiment; and the 1454th Transportation Company arrived in Bladen County.

“It was just amazing to see how quickly they were able to come in, integrate into the system, and just hit the ground running,” said Robert Taylor, superintendent at Elizabethtown Middle School.

The Guardsmen provided assistance to seven different schools throughout the County, including Elizabethtown Middle School. Their collaborative mission to help the hungry began early in the morning as Soldiers worked long hours with the school staff to make and prepare meals. Finally, the meals were loaded onto school buses and were off to their usual routes.

“The team work is just phenomenal,” said Maj. Ashley Perdue of HHC, 449th TAB. “Working with the cafeteria staff we all just melded... it’s been a really great experience.”

With a limited workforce, the NCNG played a key role in helping Bladen County produce and distribute mass quantities of food on a daily basis. The Guard helped Bladen County provide approximately 45,000 meals a week that were distributed daily along 26 bus routes.

“The feeding of the children during this COVID crisis has been a really tremendous effort,” said Taylor. “Having the National Guard here has made a tremendous difference in terms of how we serve people.”

During a time of social distancing, school buses were as rare a sight as an ice cream truck in the dead of winter. Nonetheless, children of Bladen County were once again able to hear the sweet sound of the

roaring engine as their yellow beacon of hope approached their bus stop. Their unexpected guardian angel had arrived. However, the last thing the kids expected to see were boots emerging from the bus as the doors opened.

“At first they were kind of standoffish and scared not used to seeing the uniform,” said Spc. Amber Cohen, assigned to the 449th TAB. “Now they’re running up to me like I’m family...and giving me hugs on my leg.”

The experience ended up being more than just a duty and job, especially to Cohen. The word family was used to describe the relationship the staff and Soldiers developed while working for the same cause. It brought new perspectives and grateful hearts as these heroes in green served their community.

“They’re people of our own,” Cohen said. “It feels like it’s a family. You get to see the smiles on their faces...and you know that when you hand them that food they’re going to be eating for lunch and breakfast the next day at the very least.”

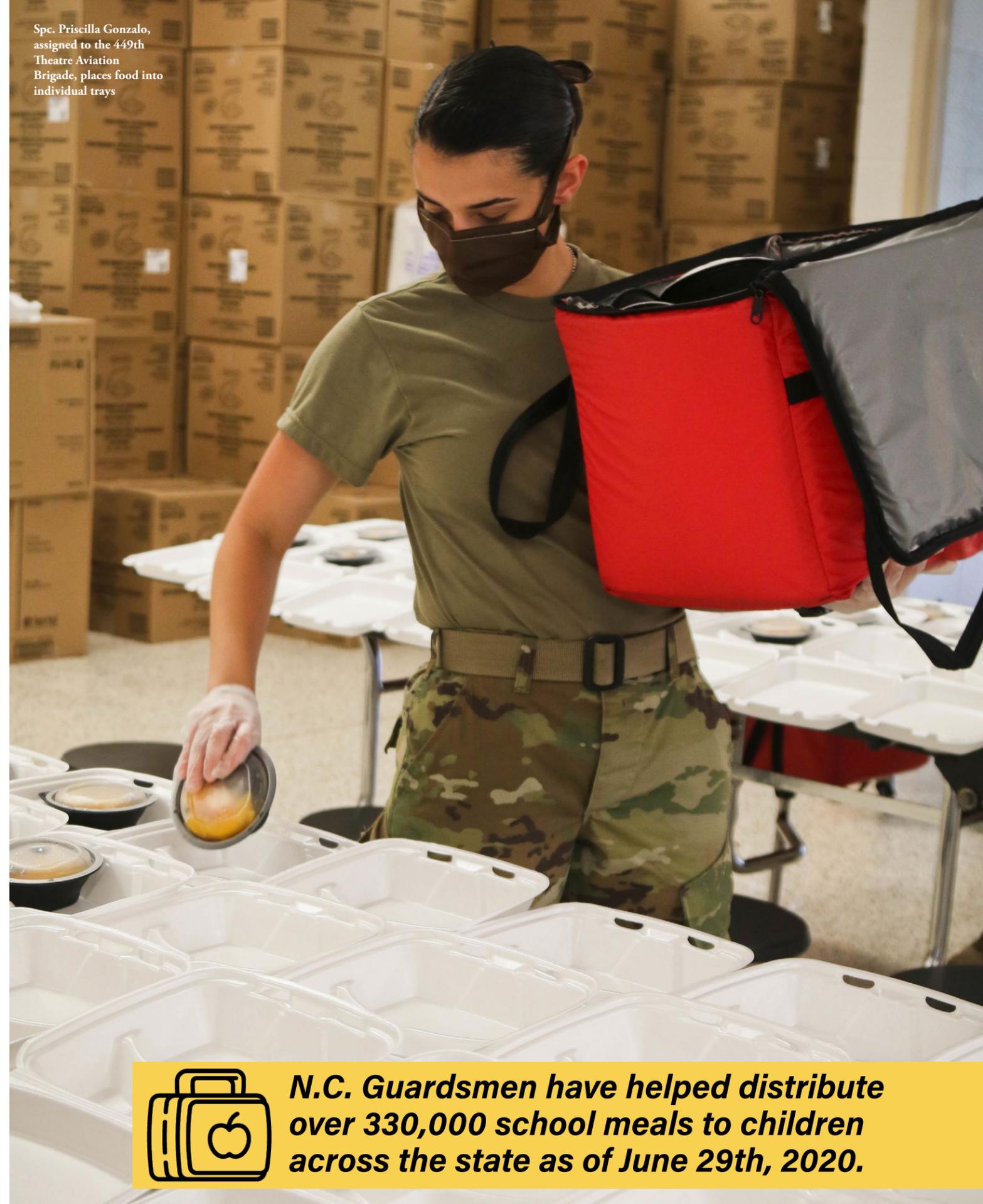
An unlikely hero quickly became a friendly face that the children greeted with warm hugs and bright smiles.

“The National Guard in Bladen County will be a lasting memory for everyone,” said Taylor. “The Guard is actually helping out communities in ways that they have never imagined.”

The dedication and perseverance of the Elizabethtown Middle School staff and Soldiers served food and hope to many children. A time of tragedy evolved into an unexpected experience of unity and camaraderie.

“The National Guard has made an impact here at Elizabethtown Middle School and is touching the lives of the students here in Bladen County,” said Dunham. “The National Guard has done some phenomenal work. We are blessed to have you on our side.”

Spc. Priscilla Gonzalo, assigned to the 449th Theatre Aviation Brigade, places food into individual trays



N.C. Guardsmen have helped distribute over 330,000 school meals to children across the state as of June 29th, 2020.

The holiday celebrations of "Tis' the season" are months away, and for the North Carolina National Guard (NCNG) it's "Tis the season" to be prepared for hurricanes.

NC Army National Guard Maj. Aaron Youngblood, Director of Military Support at Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) in Raleigh, NC, mentioned how he continually coordinates with NC Emergency Management, meeting almost daily on several topics from sheltering to safety.

"We are focused on our priority vehicles, force packages and preparation for an initial safety recon which we call 'Spearhead' which includes a significant number of Medium Tactical Vehicles (MTVs) and Humvee (HMMWV) vehicles," said Youngblood.

As everyday life very slowly attempts to get back to normal from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic, the NCNG plans to continue following proper government mandated COVID-19 standards. Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and proper social distancing will be enforced once guardsmen deploy for hurricane response within the state.

"We are going through our force packages, checking our readiness, trying our best to get everything ready and organized and making sure we have the appropriate COVID PPE in addition to the Hurricane PPE," Youngblood said. "The best we can do at this point is to stay prepared."

Youngblood believes

the Guard's Hurricane preparation strategies will lead to mission success.

"We're as good as we ever have been," Youngblood said. "I feel like units have gotten a lot of practice over the past months calling up troops and getting them ready for missions. I think we are in pretty decent shape."

Youngblood explains who will be on alert once an emergency is at hand.

"Our joint operation center will maintain situational awareness. They're constantly monitoring 24/7," he said. "The meteorologist with the State Emergency Response Team will give us information and predictions that we need to station our units."

Last year's mission deployed over 500 guardsmen and 183 vehicles to support the state off North Carolina during Hurricane Dorian. "We are robust in the state of North Carolina with our capabilities," said Youngblood.

The NCNG holds true to fulfilling it's mission to be always ready, reliable, responsive, and relevant to protect the lives and property of all North Carolinians during emergency declarations.

Although we only recently entered the season, the North Carolina National Guard is already getting ready for the next

URRICANE.



**THE DUALITY OF
THE
CITIZEN-
SOLDIER:
NC GUARDSMEN
MAINTAIN
THEIR SCHOOL
WORK AND
GRADUATE
WHILE
ACTIVATED
FOR
COVID-19
RESPONSE
EFFORTS**

Across North Carolina, National Guard Soldiers and Airmen answered the call to support their communities when Gov. Roy Cooper activated the NCNG to support COVID-19 response efforts. Some of those Guardsmen were finishing up their Spring semesters of college online due to the pandemic, and others officially graduated while serving their state during a time of crisis.

College students across the country found themselves in situations they never expected during the Spring 2020 semester; on-campus classes moved to online formats, campuses closed and graduation ceremonies canceled.

For Cpl. Chase Boozer, the changes brought on by the Coronavirus are only part of what he has experienced in this final semester of his undergraduate program at North Carolina State University.

He was one of more than 900 Soldiers and Airmen with the

North Carolina National Guard (NCNG) who were activated in support of the COVID-19 response, and he was also supposed to walk across the stage at his graduation ceremony on May 9, 2020.

Boozer, who was working on a degree in applied mathematics with a minor in economics, said he emailed his professors as soon as he was notified he would be part of the group of Guardsmen supporting local emergency and health officials.

"I knew by answering that call I would be put in difficult

situations to complete both my classes and my duties here at the Guard," said Boozer, a fire direction specialist with 5th Battalion, 113th Field Artillery Regiment. "But I always keep it in the back of my mind that this is a possibility and it is my responsibility to respond to crisis when my country needs me."

Federal laws and regulations protect military students who are activated for overseas deployments and domestic operations, which includes the response to the current pandemic. Professors and

universities typically work with service members to make up work or allow students to drop classes without penalty.

With less than a month from the end of the semester, Boozer wanted to finish school, even if it meant having to study after a full day supporting the Orange County Emergency Operations Center where he and others with his unit are working during the COVID-19 response.

"I've been studying every night till midnight, and then waking up at 6 a.m. to come in



"IT IS MY RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPOND TO CRISIS WHEN MY COUNTRY NEEDS ME."

and work," Boozer said. "I had a coding project for numerical analysis class and I finished it up late Saturday night. It was a huge relief to get everything turned in."

Boozer has been working on his degree since January 2014 and in that time, he deployed twice with the North Carolina National Guard.

"Most people won't know all the work that I put in to finish my degree through two deployments and state active duty and all the [annual trainings,]" Boozer said. "I remember going down to Fort Bragg and studying in my tent at night because I had a test on Monday morning. Those experiences will stay with me for the rest of my life."

Boozer is not alone in his experience, another Soldier activated with him is also in school while supporting the

response to the pandemic.

Spc. Joey Radman, also a fire direction specialist with 5th Battalion, 113th Field Artillery Regiment, has been working on his degree in Cyber Security Management and Policy from the University of Maryland Global Campus and did not let the activation slow his progress.

"I had spent a year away from school on deployment and during the deployment, I had set a goal for myself to complete my degree by 2021," said Radman, who was already attending online classes before the pandemic closed schools. "When I was told that I was activating for COVID-19, I was conflicted, but I was ensured by my command team that I would be allocated plenty of time to complete my schoolwork while assisting my community."

Like Boozer, Radman has also been finding time to complete

his studies around his military duties. He said that by bringing his laptop with him he is able to knock out portions of his homework during his lunch break.

"It has not been easy, but proper time management is crucial in both military and civilian life," Radman said. "Using the time management skills I have learned throughout my military career has allowed me to stay up to date on all my assignments."

As the semester comes to an end, graduations are canceled and Guardsmen are still activated.

Although the future is still uncertain, one thing is certain; the Soldiers and Airmen of the North Carolina National Guard are standing by ready to support the citizens of North Carolina, no matter what challenges they face.

NCNG helps hand out 30,000 lbs of food

By Staff Sgt. Mary Junell

North Carolina Army National Guardsmen assigned to the 449th Theater Aviation Brigade helped Action Pathways' Second Harvest Food Bank transport and hand out food at the Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville, N.C. on May 7, 2020.

The Guardsmen worked alongside volunteers from the food bank, Team Rubicon and Fort Bragg to hand out more than 30,000 lbs of food, approximately 25,000 meals, to nearly 1,200 Cumberland County residents.

Each family received a box of canned and dry goods, a box of produce, a bag of frozen chicken and a bag of apples.

Residents began lining up in the coliseum parking lot shortly after 2 a.m. and by the time distribution

started at 10 a.m. hundreds of cars filled the lot and a line of cars stretched down the road in hopes of getting food assistance.

"It's a lifesaver," said Katherine Hill, who had made it into the parking lot before the line "You're short on food, you're not working, it's a great help to get this."

Sgt. Melissa Jordan, assigned to 1-130th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 449th Theater Aviation Brigade, was one of about 30 guardsmen helping load cars and direct traffic; something she was happy to do.

"Knowing people are in need and I'm the one getting to help them, it's a great feeling," Jordan said. "Whether it's something like this or a natural

disaster, I joined the Guard to help people."

The Guardsmen packed the boxes of food and delivered them to the Coliseum parking lot before assisting with distribution.

Social distancing and other protective measures have made it hard for Action Pathways and the Second Harvest Food Bank to get volunteers. The North Carolina National Guard's support has been essential to food distribution operations happening across the state.

"Having the logistics handled by the National Guard has made this so much more efficient," said Lonnie Ballard, chief executive officer for Action Pathways. "The Guard really did help to multiply our efforts."

There are currently more than 900 North Carolina National Guard Soldiers and Airmen positioned across the state helping local emergency and health officials with the response to COVID-19.

NCNG and NC Civil Air Patrol Keep Citizens Protected

By Spc. Hannah Tarkelley

North Carolina Army National Guard (NCARNG) Soldiers work alongside the North Carolina Civil Air Patrol and North Carolina Emergency Management (NCEM) during a Personal Protective Equipment distribution in Raleigh N.C., May 28, 2020.

Soldiers from various units across North Carolina including: the 875th and 878th Engineer Company, the 1133rd Engineer Detachment, the 505th Forward Support Company, and the 505th Headquarters and Headquarters Company combined their efforts to help protect local citizens from

COVID-19.

"The great thing about the Guard is that they're members of our community that are called up to help when we need them," said Jason Witte, Capt. in the North Carolina Civil Air Patrol.

The NCARNG helped distribute PPE, such as; face masks, face shields, gloves, and shoe covers to long term care facilities in the area.

Spc. Mitchel Virgilio, assigned to the 1133rd Engineer Detachment, is one of the many warriors who have stepped up to help their community in a time of need. "It's rewarding," Virgilio said. "It's really cool to be here to help out, knowing that what you're doing is benefiting the community."

Virgilio is currently an educator, virtually teaching ninth grade students through online classes due to COVID-19. He has continued to teach his classes despite being activated to help local communities.

"My main job is a

teacher, so I work with the community," Virgilio said.

Virgilio said he is able to keep in touch with his students and help them with their school work while joining his fellow battle buddies to help everybody else.

Cadets from the North Carolina Civil Air Patrol have also joined the fight in helping protect local citizens.

"The cadets are helping with the packing and loading of PPE," said Sgt. Eric Wilson, assigned to the 878th Engineer Company.

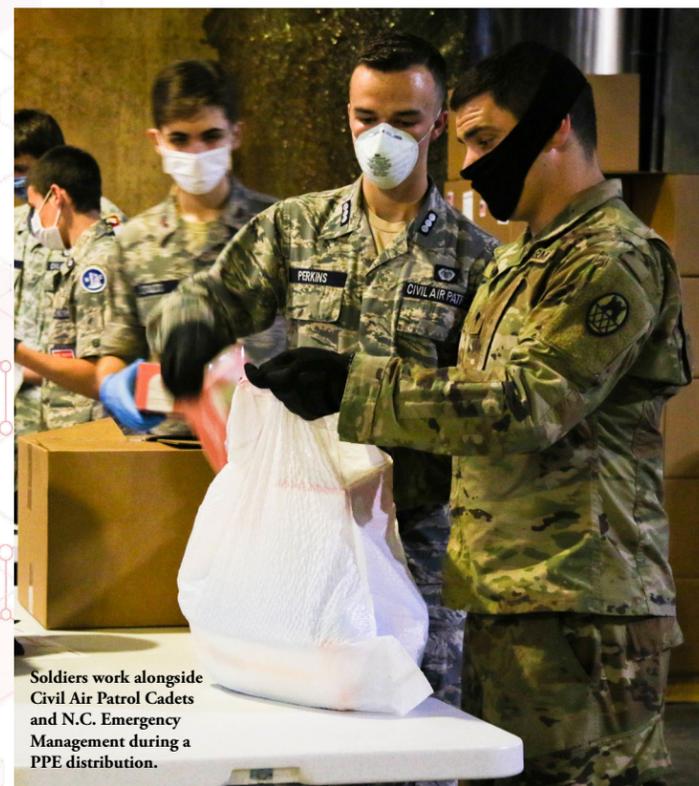
The NCARNG and cadets worked side by side in stations to ensure citizens received their PPE in a quick and efficient manner.

"From the cadet perspective I think it's been wonderful," Witte said. "They can actually get out into their community and help out."

Witte expressed the importance in which the cadets were able to experience and participate in a joint mission with fellow service members.

"They (NCARNG) were great about bringing our cadets in and helping them feel welcomed and comfortable," Witte said. "The attitude the Guardsmen have shown with that can-do type attitude is good for the cadets to see because they're going to emulate that."

The NCNG is working with NCEM, N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, and local food banks to help support COVID-19 relief efforts.



Soldiers work alongside Civil Air Patrol Cadets and N.C. Emergency Management during a PPE distribution.



Soldiers work alongside Civil Air Patrol Cadets and N.C. Emergency Management during a PPE distribution.



Soldiers assigned to the 449th Theater Aviation Brigade and other volunteers load boxes of food into vehicles.

NCARNG ayuda a ciudadanos de habla hispana durante COVID-19*

By Spc. Hannah Tarkelly

On the brisk morning of May 9th, a long line of cars stretched down the street from the Second Harvest Food Bank Northwest in Winston-Salem, N.C. Behind the masked covered faces, hopeful eyes peered out over their steering wheels, all from various backgrounds. Each pair of hands that gripped the steering wheel were the hands of those that shared a multitude of experiences that had led them to seek help at their local food bank.

North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers of the 1452nd HET Transportation Company walked with clipboards in hand and a determined stride, ready to help their community.

As the Soldiers came to a halt at the driver's side window of each car they asked a series of questions pertaining to the quantity of food needed to properly register each family. While serving a diverse community, these NCARNG Soldiers were able to communicate in each citizens' native language; particularly Spanish.

COVID-19 has brought a wave of uncertainty that has left many families struggling to afford basic necessities due to a loss of jobs and reduced hours. Therefore, the NCNG has stepped up during a time of need by utilizing their dual capabilities as Citizen-Soldiers to provide help that goes beyond their normal duties.

"It's our job as Citizen-Soldiers to help out the people of our areas," said Sgt. Timothy Spence, assigned to the 1452nd. "I believe it is important for Soldiers to answer

the call...because we are also people who live in these communities."

Members of the 1452nd were among the 940 NC Guardsmen many who put aside their civilian jobs and re-prioritized their efforts to help the community in any way possible.

"As members of the 1452nd we are naturally 88 Mikes, truck drivers, so we do not interpret normally, but since we are Citizen-Soldiers we are able to speak to these people in ways that other people can't," Spence said.

These Soldiers, although not recognized as trained interpreters, utilized their bilingual abilities and volunteered to help their community.

"Our community is incredibly diverse so during these food bank distributions we do have a large number of individuals who are Spanish speaking," said Eric Aft, CEO of the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC. "For us at the food bank, we do not have many Spanish speaking staff members... but having the Soldiers be able to bridge that gap is really critical."

Aft continued, "It can be scary for people to ask for assistance especially when you don't speak the same language and therefore, being able to have someone communicate with you in your native language provides a lot of comfort. These Soldiers are a part of making that happen."

Members of the 1452nd had their own personal motives not just as Soldiers but human beings who have ties and loved ones within the

community.

As Soldiers and active members of their communities they have witnessed first hand the effects of COVID-19.

"I have personally dealt with people out of jobs," Spence said. "My mother is out of a job right now. She's not able to pay for the bills that are usually accustomed to our life-style. Therefore, I feel better that I'm able to help out people in my city... so they can be able to eat and be able to survive this unprecedented situation."

Sgt. Adela Gomez of the 1452nd recalled an emotional encounter with some of the families seeking help at the local food bank. She was one of a few on site who were able to use her bilingual abilities to speak and connect with fellow citizens in need.

"You see some of them crying and you get emotional but it's a good feeling to be helping out," Gomez said. "I'm just thankful that I got the opportunity to come out here and help, not just Hispanics but everyone in general."

The NCNG continues to work with North Carolina Emergency Management, N.C. Department of Health and Human Services and local food banks to help support COVID-19 relief efforts. To date the NCNG has assisted in distributing about 1 million food bank meals and over 73,000 school lunches across the state.

"To be a Citizen-Soldier it means a lot because...it brings great honor to our families and to the communities here," Gomez said.

Sgt. Alondra Morales, 1452nd HET Transportation Company, utilizes her bilingual capabilities to assist citizens with the registration process during a food distribution.



*NCARNG assists Spanish-speaking citizens during COVID-19



AIRBORNE

**WITH THE 403RD
QUARTERMASTER RIGGER
SUPPORT TEAM**

BY STAFF SGT. MARY JUNELL

A Soldier with the North Carolina Army National Guard drifts towards a field at the Stanley County Regional Airport, New London, North Carolina on June 18, 2020.

North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers from three units came together to conduct airborne operations at the Stanley County Regional Airport, New London, North Carolina on June 18, 2020.

The 403rd Quartermaster Rigger Support Team and B Company, 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, were supported by a Black Hawk helicopter team from the 449th Theater Aviation Brigade to help the units perform static-line, airborne operations.

During a static-line jump, the Soldier's parachute is attached to the aircraft by a length of webbing material that pulls their parachute open as they jump.

The 403rd is a small team of Soldiers including parachute riggers and jumpmasters. They are required to stay current on training to support other units in the N.C. Guard.

"As long as we are proficient, we're able to pack and provide chutes for the airborne community," said Sgt. Richard Barath, the training non commissioned officer for the Rigger Support Team. "It also allows us to maintain proficiencies in rigging supplies for possible humanitarian efforts."

The 403rd Rigger Support Team is a new unit to the N.C. Guard, having been stood up less than three years ago.

Having a rigger support team in-state means less outsourcing for the N.C. Guard, specifically in regards to their High-Altitude, Low-Opening (HALO) parachutes that are used in freestyle type jumps.

"Being able to do this

in-house provides a closer network for units who need to maintain their airborne status and proficiency," said Spc. Jeremy Lamber, a parachute rigger with the 403rd. "Previously, HALO chutes were coming from out of state and now they're going to be able to be provided in-state."

Before joining the National Guard, Barath saw first-hand how riggers can support operations outside of the scope of airborne jumps.

"I was part of a huge humanitarian effort while on active duty in Haiti after the earthquake," Barath said. "I saw how rigging supplies that could be air-dropped to people in places inaccessible by land or sea was a huge help to that community in their time of need."

As the state prepares for hurricane season, Barath said he hopes that they can do the same thing to help North Carolinians should it be needed.

As the state prepares for hurricane season, Barath said he hopes that they can do the same thing to help North Carolinians should it be needed.

A Soldier with the North Carolina Army National Guard drifts towards a field at the Stanley County Regional Airport, New London, North Carolina on June 18, 2020.



North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers ride in a 449th Theater Aviation Brigade Black Hawk helicopter at the Stanley County Regional Airport, New London, North Carolina on June 18, 2020.



A Soldier with the North Carolina Army National Guard drifts towards a field at the Stanley County Regional Airport, New London, North Carolina on June 18, 2020.



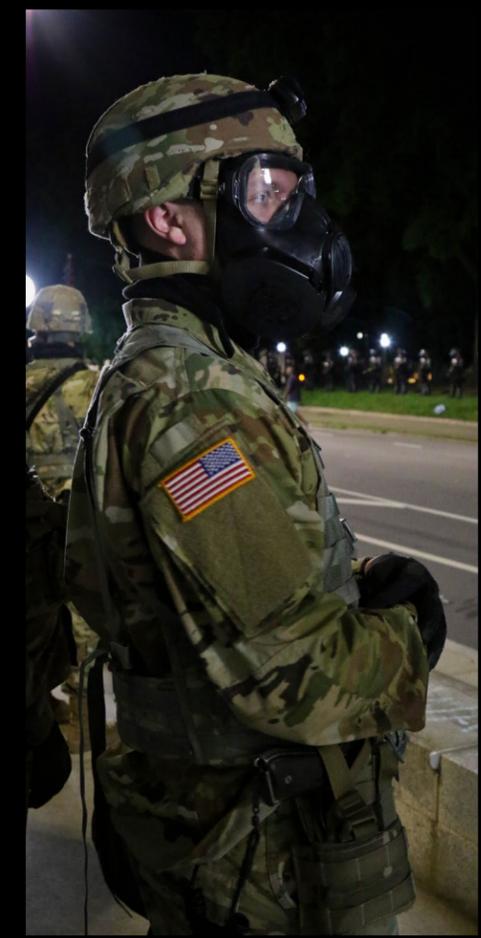
Sgt. Richard Barath, the training non commissioned officer for the North Carolina Army National Guard's 403rd Quartermaster Rigger Support Team does a final inspection of a jumper's parachute and equipment.





Approximately 450 N.C. Army National Guardsmen were activated on May 31, 2020 to support law enforcement in their effort to safeguard the lives and property of North Carolinians and the ability for individuals to exercise their rights to peaceful protest.

Photos by Staff Sgt. Mary Junell and Spc. Hannah Tarkelly





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The Mission of the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) Program

The SHARP program helps to achieve the goal of the Secretary of Defense to eradicate sexual assault and sexual harassment from the military. SHARP helps to create an Army culture where all Soldiers have the values, tools, and skills to prevent sexual violence. SHARP also provides sensitive care and confidential reporting for victims of sexual assault while holding offenders accountable for their actions.

The goals of the SAPR Program are to:

- (1)** Create a climate that minimizes sexual assault incidents, which impact Army personnel, Army civilians, and Family members, and, if an incident should occur, ensure that victims and subjects are treated according to Army policy.
- (2)** Create a climate that encourages victims to report incidents of sexual assault without fear.
- (3)** Establish sexual assault prevention training and awareness programs to educate Soldiers.
- (4)** Ensure sensitive and comprehensive treatment to restore victims' health and Well-being.
- (5)** Ensure leaders understand their roles and responsibilities regarding response to sexual assault victims, thoroughly investigate allegations of sexual assault, and take appropriate administrative and disciplinary action and subjects are treated according to Army policy.