

# THE BEACON

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE 124TH FIGHTER WING

Spring 2023



COMBAT EXCELLENCE - ALWAYS ON MISSION



ALWAYS ON MISSION

# DIRECTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

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## IMPORTANT NUMBERS AND CRISIS LINES:

- Idaho National Guard Crisis Lifeline (Call):  
208-272-TALK (8255)
- Joint Operations Center (Complete Directory  
of IDNG Resources):  
208-272-5755
- Free and Confidential Counseling Services:  
Case Manager: 208-918-0346
- Chaplain Corps: 208-272-4311  
Army: 208-272-6468  
Air: 208-608-4825

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Assists soldiers and families in developing knowledge and skills to improve physical, behavioral and emotional health through wellness promotion and preventative measures.

Provides brief solution-focused interventions utilizing evidence-based educational materials. Offers support and monitoring of desired behavioral health change plans.

## ANG DIRECTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH:

- All ANG DPHs are familiar with the active components of a Mental Health Provider's role
- DPHs are "Trilingual"-they speak the language of AD/ANG/CIV
- Are fully integrated adjuncts to the Guard Medical (GMU) Team
- Are subject to routine peer review and care of oversight
- Information shared during Visits/Consults is kept confidential with a few exceptions. Ask your DPH for details.

## ADDITIONAL ROUTINE FUNCTIONS:

- Suicide Prevention Program Manager
- Disaster Mental Health
- Deployment Mental Health Support
- Master Resiliency Training Facilitator
- Yellow Ribbon Program Support
- CAB/CAT member
- Community Capacity Building & Outreach

# COMMANDER'S PRIORITIES

## 124TH FIGHTER WING VISION:

*“To be America’s premier Fighter Wing; developing and retaining warfighters for our Nation and guardians for our State.”*

Within this vision we must execute our enduring priorities:

01

### MISSION

Defending our Nation and supporting the State of Idaho will always be our overriding priority. We will test our ability to complete the mission through multiple readiness exercises in a contested environment while attempting to simulate a near-peer threat. We are all familiar with the adage of crawl, walk, and run. The National Defense Strategy dictates the time for walking is over, and we must prove our ability to run when the mission dictates. We will continue to be ready to assist the Governor if needed for any emergency that arises. You have proven your ability to do this through the COVID-19 pandemic.

02

### PEOPLE

We can’t accomplish the mission without our personnel, their families, employers and the surrounding community. As members of the Idaho Air National Guard, we must maintain our readiness to meet the mission. We must ensure to take care of the basics, ancillary training, physical fitness, and the courses that are required so we can focus on our primary duties. Force Development and Professional Military Education are critical skills that allow us to succeed as an organization; attend the courses, learn from them, and share your knowledge. Remember Service Before Self, does not mean to not care for oneself and family; as stated in the Blue Book, *“Airmen must practice self-care first to be able to serve others.”* Take the lead to be a better Airman and Wingman.

03

### FUTURE

We must continue to pursue modernization of our facilities and equipment to prepare for a future fighter mission at Gowen Field. Regardless of higher headquarters pursuit and engagement to bring a new fighter mission to Idaho, we must remain focused on fielding the mighty A-10Cs that are on our ramp right now. We are always ready when called to support the fight. We need to engage with our Joint partners, while capitalizing on our current mission sets, A-10Cs, Cyber Operations Squadron, Air Support Operations Squadron, and Medical Group’s care teams.

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# 124TH FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

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## WING COMMANDER

Col. Chad Kornberg

## CHIEF OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Maj. Rebecca Solosabal

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Capt. Bonnie Blakely

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS SUPERINTENDENT

Senior Master Sgt. Joshua Allmaras

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

Staff Sgt. Mercedee Wilds

Staff Sgt. Joseph Morgan

Senior Airman Jady Eisenbrandt

Mr. Ryan White

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## WHERE TO FIND US



124THFIGHTERWING.ANG.AF.MIL



FACEBOOK.COM/124FW



INSTAGRAM.COM/124FIGHTERWING



FLICKR.COM/124FW



TWITTER.COM/124FIGHTERWING



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## ON THE COVER

Staff Sgt. Beau Little, munitions systems airman with the 124th Munitions Flight, deconstructs bombs during drill, Gowen Field, Mar. 4, 2023.

These practice bombs are shipped from Saylor Creek Bombing Range to Gowen Field for disassembly and reassembly.

(U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Joseph R. Morgan)

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# THE TRADITIONAL

## Building Up Students and Building Up Bombs

Story by Staff Sgt. Joseph Morgan



For Staff Sgt. Beau Little, being a traditional munitions systems specialist with the 124th Munitions Flight is about opportunity.

After completing his undergraduate degree from Boise State in psychology, drawn by the connection he felt to youth-centered human services, he became a 7th grade resource room teacher at West Junior High School in the Boise School District.

“At that time, I lived with two Idaho National Guard members,” said Little. “I saw their lifestyles, the benefits they received, the opportunities they had for travel, and the unique jobs they got to do and thought this could really fit into my life. So I decided to enlist.”

Now, when Beau isn't teaching, he's supporting the 124th Fighter Wing's flying mission by assembling missiles, bombs, ammunition, and countermeasures such as chaff and flares.



“My biggest factor [for enlisting] was my commitment to a life of service,” said Little. “Serving my community through teaching students with disabilities & coaching soccer and basketball to serving in my church, and now serving my country through the guard.”

During Little’s time in the guard, he has traveled to Afghanistan and Alaska. Because of his exceptional work ethic and leadership as a noncommissioned officer, he was recently nominated for the 2022 Outstanding Airman of the Year award. Since joining, he’s used his benefits to get his master’s degree in teaching.

New enlistees are given the option of serving for up to six years before reenlisting. Little just reenlisted for another six years.

“I think the guard is the perfect sweet spot for anyone considering military service,” said Little. “You get to expand your skill set, plant roots at a single home station and so much more.”





# SKEESICK PROMOTES



Lt. Col. Anthony Skeesick, the former 124th Logistics Readiness Squadron commander and newly appointed Idaho Air National Guard Director of Staff, promotes to colonel during a ceremony in Brooks Auditorium at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, January 7, 2023. The event was attended by family, friends and fellow Airmen.



Photos by Senior Master Sgt. Joshua Allmaras



Northwest Machining and Manufacturing tour the 124th Fighter Wing's aircraft maintenance hanger, Gowen Field, Idaho, April 6, 2023. This Meridian, Idaho-based machining company has been manufacturing a critical landing gear component for the A-10 Thunderbolt II's at Gowen Field for decades.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Joseph Morgan

# ONE TEAM, ONE FIGHT:

ARMY AND AIR JOIN FORCES FOR MASS  
CASUALTY, MEDEVAC TRAINING

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Story and photos by  
Master Sgt. Becky Vanshur

Idaho National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, as well as active duty counterparts joined forces with a one-team, one-fight mentality for joint training during a mass casualty exercise on Feb. 4 near Gowen Field.

“The best way to grow our mindset of becoming more operational and ready for a deployed environment is to train with the nearby resources, such as the Idaho Army National Guard and our active duty counterparts,” said Senior Master Sgt. Virginia Holmgren, a respiratory therapist from the Idaho Air National Guard’s 124th Medical Group. “Forming relationships with the other branches helps us to become familiar with each other’s capabilities and to practice working together because when we are in a deployed environment we will be working with the other branches in the fight.”

Medical personnel from Gowen Field’s 124th Medical Group and active duty medical personnel with the 366th Medical Group from Mountain Home Air Force Base teamed up for several mass casualty events, which also included the use of medevac Soldiers and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters from the Idaho Army National Guard’s 1st of the 168th Aviation Regiment to participate in the medical evacuation scenarios.



“This exercise is a great example of how the Idaho National Guard is committed to the joint warfighting doctrine in support of the National Defense Strategy,” said Brig. Gen. Tim Donnellan, Idaho Air National Guard commander. “The 124th Medical Group coordinated this incredible training using combat proven units from the Idaho Army National Guard, the Idaho Air National Guard, and the Gunfighters of the 366th Fighter Wing.”

During the scenarios, combat medics performed treatment and stabilized casualties at a field medical tent in a simulated deployed location. The focus for the combat medics during the mass casualty scenarios was an emphasis on Tactical Combat Casualty Care. The TCCC is the military guideline for trauma life support in pre-hospital combat medicine, designed to reduce preventable deaths while continuing to maintain operation success.

“With our new DoD guidelines for the TCCC, it requires us to have more hands-on deck and for more Airmen to be familiar with trauma care in responding to worse injuries out on the field rather than the typical self aid and buddy care that we have focused on in the past,” said Senior Master Sgt. Davis Nguyen, the 124th Medical Group Function Area Manager.

Once medics respond and stabilize casualties, they could then recognize the patients that needed more advanced critical care at a hospital outside of the combat field location and the 9-Line medevac call requesting the Black Hawk medevac team was made. In combat, the 9-Line is an emergency medevac request with an accurate report of combat injuries that is often the difference between life and death.

The ground combat medics and the Black Hawk flight medics worked together to stabilize the casualty during flight until they reached the simulated higher echelon of medical care.

Additional scenarios required protective gear to be worn during a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear event while Idaho National Guard Soldiers conducted hoist rescue training, allowing Airmen the chance to gain insight into a full range of rescue capabilities of the medevac Soldiers.

“I am proud of the commitment of the men and women in this joint, total force exercise demonstrating the incredible talent and the first class training capabilities we have here in Idaho,” said Donnellan. “We will continue to maintain our readiness for the immediate fight while preparing for any conflicts of the future.”



# Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

## AVAILABLE SERVICES

- Access to restricted and unrestricted reporting
- Connection to non-clinical support services
- Support in notifying law enforcement, if desired
- Access to victim advocate support services
- Connection to medical and mental health resources as needed



**Amanda Nowak**  
SARC/SAPRM

All Airmen and dependents ages 18+ are eligible to make a report of sexual assault through the 124thFW Sexual Assault Prevention and Response office.

For more information please contact the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Amanda Nowak



208-954-3369

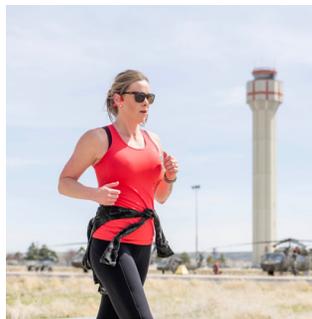


[amanda.stone.2@us.af.mil](mailto:amanda.stone.2@us.af.mil)

# SAPR 5K



The Idaho National Guard hosted a Denim Day 5K run on April 26, 2023, as a part of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. Participants and attendees, prior to the race, signed a proclamation committing the organization to a culture free of sexual assault, focused on member support and advocacy. Denim Day started in 1999 following an Italian Supreme Court case in the 1990s in which a rape conviction was overturned because the victim was wearing tight jeans. Denim Day asks people to wear jeans as a visible way to highlight misconceptions surrounding sexual violence.



# CARRYING THE TORCH:

Chief promotes; son enlists

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Joseph Morgan



**F**ollowing a legacy of family military service, 124th Medical Group Operational Readiness Superintendent, Senior Master Sgt. Virginia Holmgren received a Stripes for Exceptional Performers II Program promotion to chief master sergeant after seeing her oldest son, Nathan Holmgren enlist in the Idaho Air National Guard the same day at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, March 4, 2023.

Holmgren began her military career with the Colorado Air Force Reserves at Peterson Air Force Base in 2003. After deploying to Iraq in 2008, and seeing the critical care air transport team in action, she became a respiratory therapist and joined the CCATT mission. She joined the IDANG in September of 2017.

“I come from a long-line of military service,” said Holmgren. “My Dad retired after 23 years in the Army, my husband retired from active duty Air Force service last year and my brother works in the 124th Fighter Wing’s Cyber Operations Squadron.”

According to the 124th MDG Commander, Lt. Col. Lora Bennett, Holmgren has been instrumental in the development of the unit’s CCATT mission from organizing joint medevac training with the Idaho Army National Guard’s State Aviation Group to recruiting and training cardiopulmonary technicians and volunteering as the CCATT Sustainment and Training Manager for the National Guard Bureau.

“She is truly an amazing leader, organizer and manager,” said Bennett. “She truly deserved this STEP II promotion.”





As Nathan continues in the footsteps of those generations of family members who served before him, he says he's never felt pressured to join in spite of his family's legacy.

"Since World War II, I've had family members serving in the military," said Nathan. "So my decision to join was, in part, motivated by that. It's a family tradition. But they've always been supportive of anything I've wanted to do and I made the decision to join. This is going to help me progress in life. I'm excited to see where it takes me."

Over the next several months, Nathan will be shipped off to Air Force Basic Military Training where he'll learn the basics of being an Airman before attending his technical training to become a surgical technician. From there, he'll return to Gowen Field to work with the Ground Surgical Team, a self-contained six-person ground surgical team designed to provide damage control, resuscitation and surgery in austere environments.

The Air National Guard STEP II Promotion Program was developed to provide promotion opportunities to exceptionally performing guard enlisted leaders. According to Lt. Col. Bennett, STEP II promotions happen only twice each year across the wing.

Receiving a military education in the medical career field is just the start for Nathan.

"I came in for the benefits and stayed for the people," said Holmgren. "We have some of the brightest Airmen here in the medical group and I'm grateful for this opportunity to serve them."

"I'm hoping to get my master's in nursing and the guard is going to make that possible," said Nathan. "I've always wanted to help people. Now, I'll be able to do that through the military and then on the civilian side."

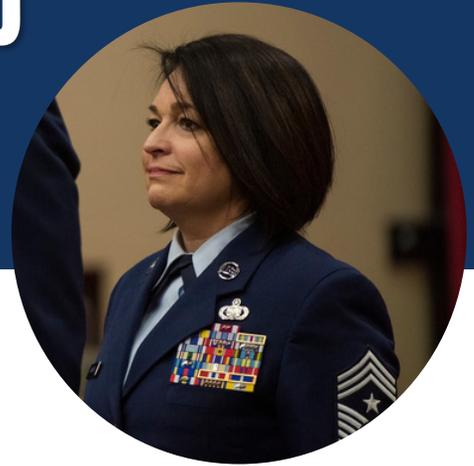
As Holmgren finds herself at the top of her military career, she now has the opportunity to pass the torch on to her son as he begins his own career in the military.

Serving in the Air National Guard will help Nathan reach his life goals and will allow him to continue his family's legacy of service.

"I told him that while he's trying to figure out life, you can join the guard, receive money for education and get a good job," said Holmgren. "His surgical tech job will be viable outside of the guard as well."



# STATE COMMAND CHIEF RETIRES



Chief Master Sgt. Kelly Bongiovi retired on April 1, 2023, after 32 years of military service to her state and nation and after serving in the role of Idaho Air National Guard state command chief master sergeant for the past 2 1/2 years.

As the Idaho Air National Guard's senior enlisted leader, Bongiovi advised the commander of the Idaho Air National Guard, Brig. Gen. Tim Donnellan, on all enlisted matters.



"She has faithfully and tirelessly dedicated herself to the Idaho Air National Guard, especially over the last two and a half years as our state command chief," said Donnellan. "She has always been an advocate for our Airmen and has led the charge in ensuring that opportunities are available at all ranks. I am confident in the legacy she passes on, and grateful for her positive impact on thousands of past, present, and future Idaho Air National Guard Airmen."

During the ceremony she was awarded the Idaho Distinguished Service Medal and presented with the official certificate of retirement.



Bongiovi enlisted in August 1991. She spent most of her career working nearly every logistics position in the 124th Fighter Wing before becoming the wing's command chief in 2018 and before her current state command position. She recognized her husband, Hal, who also retired from the Idaho Air National Guard in 2020 and she thanked her children for their support.

Congratulations on your retirement, and good luck in your future endeavors!

# NEW COMMANDS



124TH MISSION SUPPORT GROUP  
Col. Anthony Skeesick



224TH CYBER OPERATIONS  
SQUADRON  
Lt. Col. Kyle Erickson



124TH AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE  
SQUADRON  
Maj. Meghan Strabala



124TH SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON  
Capt. Joey Morlock



# GERMAN SOLDIERS TRAIN WITH IDAHO AIR NATIONAL GUARD A-10 PILOTS

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Story and photos by Crystal Faris

Soldiers from the German Army's 6th Battery of the Artillery Battalion 345 joined forces with A-10 Thunderbolt II pilots assigned to the 124th Fighter Wing's 190th Fighter Squadron Feb. 11-22, to conduct close air support training at Saylor Creek Range, Idaho.

"The 190th Fighter Squadron supports and encourages this training so we are prepared and familiar with our NATO counterpart's tactics, techniques, and procedures," said Lt. Col. Mike "Jack" Hampton, 190th Fighter Squadron commander. "The training also enables us to establish lasting relationships that we can rely on during times of war."



“The visiting soldiers from Idar-Oberstein, Germany, consisted of joint terminal attack controllers, who coordinate, integrate and direct the actions of combat aircraft engaging in close air support operations, and joint fire observers, who augment JTACs by relaying target data. The unit has trained in Idaho annually since 2016.

“The 190th accepts us here, dedicates training to us and improves our tactical training,” said a JTAC instructor from the German Army. “They honor our unit, and I am very proud in the trust that they set in us.”

The joint training between the Idaho Air National Guard and German forces incorporated NATO TTPs utilizing A-10 aircraft to prosecute targets ranging from armor, artillery, bunkers, revetments, aircraft, simulated enemy combatants, moving targets, surface to air threats and more.

“All of these target sets are incorporated into one training range, which delivers unmatched training compared to anywhere else in the world,” said Hampton. “Each training mission is complex and detailed to mirror any future conflicts in or around the European Theater but can also be used in any region of the world.”



Located approximately 43 miles southeast of Gowen Field, Saylor Creek Range offers an impact area three miles wide by six miles long, where air and ground assets can employ live munitions.

A joint fires platoon sergeant with the German Army said the training site is unlike anything they have in Germany.

“In Germany, our soldiers never get into realistic situations like they do in Idaho because of training restrictions,” said the platoon sergeant. “Here you can be 500 meters away while a 2,000-pound bomb is flying off the jet. It helps our soldiers to see live munitions hit their targets because then they know what they say to pilots really matters.”

On the range, the German soldiers rehearsed various training scenarios to refine their procedures while both forces worked to hone their joint communication.

Later this year, members of the 124th Fighter Wing will deploy to Germany in support of Air Defender 2023.



# IDAHO AIR NATIONAL GUARD

## Airman & Family Readiness Program

The Airmen & Family Readiness Program (AFRP) serves as a one-stop information and referral center for single, married, active-duty, Guard, Reserves, civilians who work on base, and retired members as well as their families. One of its major functions is to ensure personnel and their families are connected with the appropriate service on and off site.

### SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES PROVIDED BY THE AIRMAN & FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM INCLUDE

- Deployment Preparation & Reintegration
- Personal and Family Readiness
- Child & Youth Services
- Air Force Aid Society
- Personal Finances Readiness
- Exceptional Family Member Support
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Career Development
- Transition to Civilian Life
- Casualty Assistance
- Emergency Financial Assistance



### FOR MORE INFO CONTACT:

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