COWBOY GUARD

2023



COWBOY GUARD

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

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A Letter from the Adjutant General

Dear Readers,



Within the following pages, you will get to see the remarkable history and stories of the Cowboy Guard throughout 2023. The missions undertaken by our exceptional team remain nothing short of astonishing.

Serving with our team of dedicated professionals continually humbles us. They are the Sword and Shield for our beloved State and Nation, steadfastly defending our values and interests.

Our greatest strength is our people! You will read in the following pages of the caliber of Soldiers and Airmen in our formations. They are truly an example of the best of the best to deliver on our enduring promise to protect our State and Nation.



We ask you take a moment to learn more about our stories and take time to reflect on the greater purpose we serve. Tomorrow's battles demand the best, and we are committed to assembling a force that is second to none.

Let's unite, empower and inspire one another to rise above the challenges and seize the opportunities that lie ahead. Act now and be part of our journey to shape a better, stronger and more resilient future.

Ride for the Brand!

Sincerely,

Major General Greg Porter
Adjutant General - Wyoming

Chief Master Sgt. Joshua Moore
Command Senior Enlisted Leader

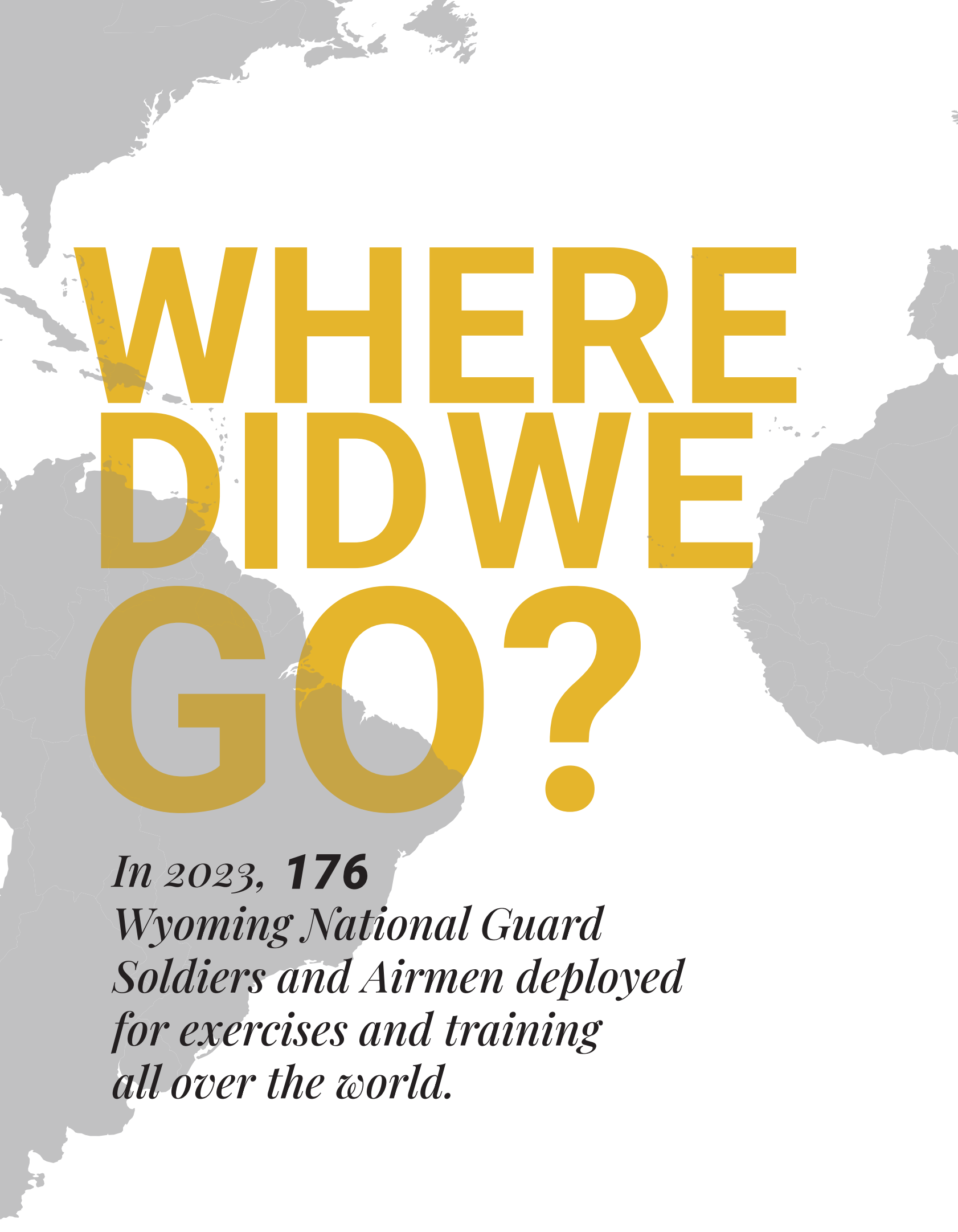
On the Cover

PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. JON ALDERMAN

U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Holly Wooldridge, an aviator with the 187th Airlift Squadron, conducts nighttime 'blackout' training utilizing white phosphor night vision goggles aboard a C-130 Hercules aircraft assigned to the 153rd Airlift Wing, Wyoming Air National Guard, Cheyenne, Wyo., Jan. 25, 2023. The white phosphor goggles, known to provide greater contrast, reduced halo, and reduced eye fatigue, replaced the traditional green phosphor goggles previously used to conduct night tactical training.

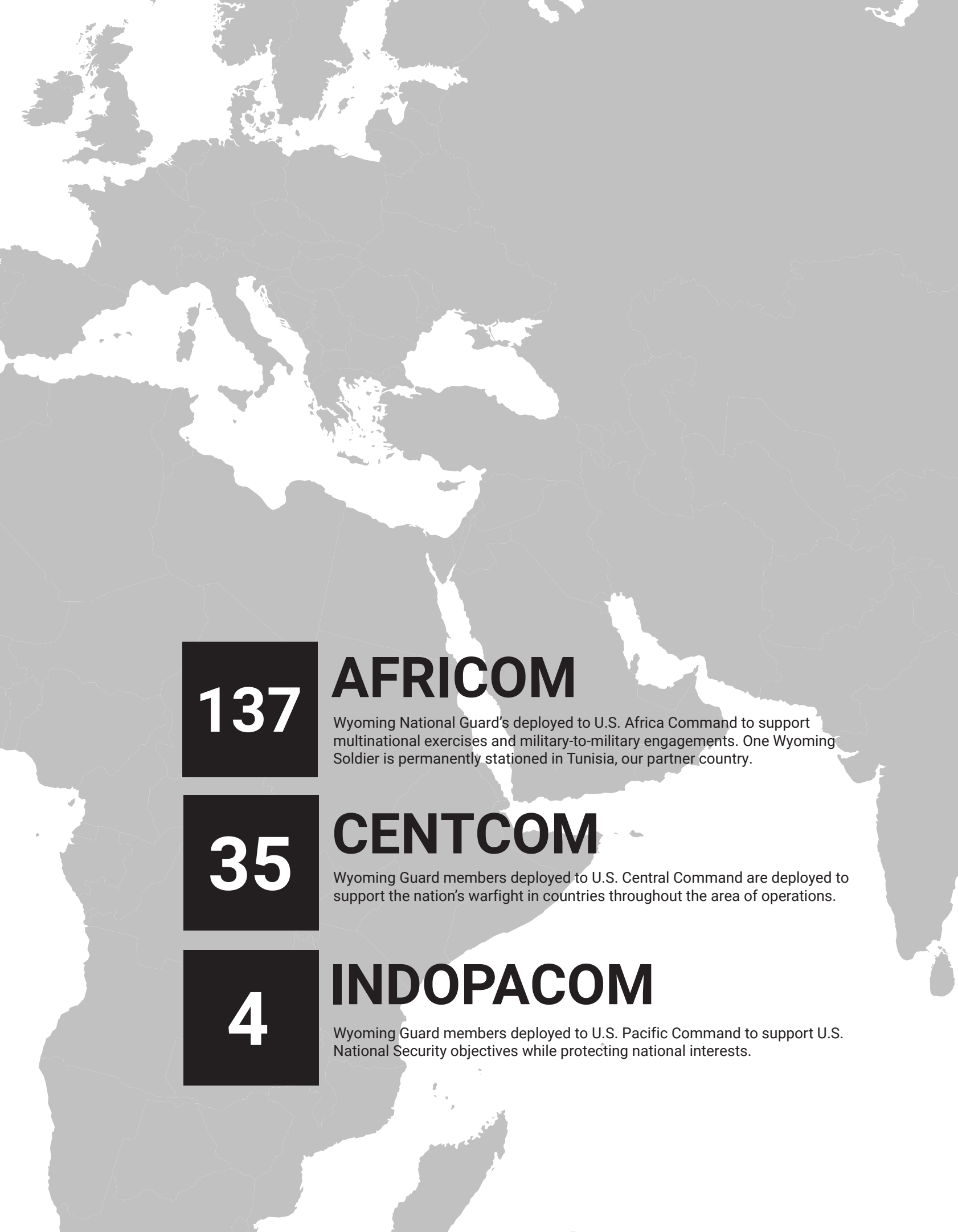






WHERE DID WE GO?

In 2023, ***176*** *Wyoming National Guard Soldiers and Airmen deployed for exercises and training all over the world.*



137

AFRICOM

Wyoming National Guard's deployed to U.S. Africa Command to support multinational exercises and military-to-military engagements. One Wyoming Soldier is permanently stationed in Tunisia, our partner country.

35

CENTCOM

Wyoming Guard members deployed to U.S. Central Command are deployed to support the nation's warfight in countries throughout the area of operations.

4

INDOPACOM

Wyoming Guard members deployed to U.S. Pacific Command to support U.S. National Security objectives while protecting national interests.











WE
ARE THE WYOMING MILITARY DEPARTMENT


U.S. AIR FORCE
1537






STONER


CHRIS VALINE




U.S. AIR FORCE


153d ATF
Paxs
ATF




REINHARDT

Lethality

PHOTO BY PFC. JOSEPH BURNS







The STANDARD-BEARER

Spc. Luke Harrison named Soldier of the Year

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT. 1ST CLASS ASHLEY MOTLEY

U.S. Army Spc. Luke Harrison, a dedicated field artillery radar operator serving in the Wyoming Army National Guard and representing Region VI, has been bestowed with the honorable title of the Army National Guard's Soldier of the Year.

He has earned this esteemed distinction through his remarkable achievements in the 2023 All-Guard Best Warrior Competition, held from July 8-13, 2023, at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska.

U.S. Army Sgt. Bailey Ruff, a skilled horizontal construction engineer serving in the South Dakota Army National Guard, also representing Region VI, has been named the Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year in the competition. This recognition comes from their exceptional performance, unparalleled expertise, and dedication throughout the competition.

"I approached this competition as a training exercise, giving my best effort. Winning the title has made me realize the amount of effort and passion I invested in it. I am incredibly grateful for this victory." - U.S. Army Spc. Luke Harrison

Fourteen competitors, filled with anticipation, gathered at the Sheraton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska, to discover the outcome of the rigorous six-day competition. The events thoroughly tested the adaptiveness and lethality of these Soldiers, pushing them to their limits. The competition featured a series of challenging trials, including the Army Combat Fitness Test, land navigation exercises, shooting matches, and an arduous obstacle course. It ended with a 14-mile ruck march. Each participant showcased their resilience, skill, and determination in their pursuit of victory.

Harrison embarked on his journey to the national competition by participating in additional training for the Wyoming Guard Best Warrior State Competition. Initially, his motivation for signing up was solely to gain further familiarity with various weapons systems and to test his

physical fitness limits.
"I never planned to compete at the state level, but now, here I am," expressed Harrison. "I approached this competition as a training exercise, giving my best effort. Winning the title has made me realize the amount of effort and passion I invested in it. I am incredibly grateful for this victory." In pursuit of triumph, 14 individuals from Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, New York, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, and Wyoming converged in Alaska for the annual competition. These esteemed participants, composed of seven Non-Commissioned Officers and seven enlisted Soldiers, emerged victorious in smaller contests at state and regional levels, signifying their status as the nation's elite within the Army National Guard. Representing their respective regions, each NCO and enlisted Soldier embodied the epitome of excellence in their field.





"Spc. Luke Harrison demonstrated outstanding dedication, commitment, and attention to detail in mastering and performing more than 40 graded tasks and events, leading to him winning the National Guard Best Warrior of the Year in the Soldier category," said State Command Sgt. Maj. Lindsey Schmidt. "He is an example for all our junior leaders who prove effective training, being a good follower, and doing more than the minimum lead to individual success representing all of the Wyoming National Guard."



STORY AND PHOTOS BY MASTER SGT. JACQUELINE MARSHALL | PHOTOS STAFF SGT. KYLEE WARREN

The 153rd Airlift Wing demonstrated their ability to seamlessly transition from peacetime readiness to contingency operations during the Mustang Roller Readiness Exercise at the Wyoming Air National Guard Base, Cheyenne, Wyoming, from May 1-7, 2023. This rigorous exercise tested the unit's capability to maintain and sustain essential home-station missions and testing the process of deploying aircraft and Airmen during degraded conditions. The 153rd Airlift Wing has adopted a new approach to training that emphasizes real-world scenarios to prepare Airmen to be combat-ready.

Earlier this year, Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, discussed this approach being necessary since Airmen and Soldiers are the backbone of the nation's defense strategy. The Mustang Roller exercise is integral to this strategy, equipping Guardsmen with the necessary skills to face present and future threats Mustang Roller was not your run-of-the-mill exercise Airmen at the 153rd were not donning gas masks and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defense gear. Instead, they kicked things up a notch, simulating a range of intense scenarios, including downed drones, riots, and network outages, putting their skills to work.

We all hear about the state of the world in the news, and we're preparing to take on any threat that comes our way. This exercise helps solidify our readiness further." - Tech. Sgt. Phillip Roybal

Multi-capable Airmen rose to the challenge, proving that they were ready to move from peacetime to contingency operations at a moment's notice. Approximately 80

ROLLING TO VICTORY

153rd Airlift Wing demonstrates skills at Mustang Roller Readiness Exercise

members from the wing were tasked with deploying to the 152nd Airlift Wing in Reno, Nevada, to continue the exercise and showcasing their skills.

"The big factor is that this could potentially happen in real life," said Tech. Sgt. Philip Roybal, Logistics Planner for the 243rd Air Traffic Control Squadron, who participated as a Cargo Deployment Function Wing Inspection Team member during the exercise.

"We all hear about the state of the world in the news, and we're preparing to take on any threat that comes our way. This exercise helps solidify our readiness further. We're used to preparing for conflict elsewhere, but when it comes to our front door, it's a little bit different. So we're seeing people think on their toes, making decisions at the lowest level to channel up."

As the day progressed, the scenarios evolved, testing the Airmen's ability to navigate through various levels of security protocols and measures used by military personnel and first responders during missions or in response to a threat, including situations involving loss of resources such as power or internet capabilities.

Not only were Airmen being evaluated, but the wing inspection team was also under inspection by the Air Mobility Command Inspector General's team. "We're here to watch the watchers and inspect the wing inspection team to ensure they're capable of inspecting during the exercise," said Master Sgt. Ryan DeLaughter of the AMC IG team.

Although this was DeLaughter's first time inspecting a guard base, it's worth noting that today's National Guard units have similar readiness requirements as their active-duty counterparts.

DeLaughter started his day by sitting through the Wing Commander's briefing, where Col. Barry Deibert, 153rd Airlift Wing commander, asked the room, "Why do we do these exercises?" Many members answered differently, but Deibert emphasized that "this exercise is ultimately preparing us for war." DeLaughter continued, "We are in the profession of arms, and it is our job to be prepared when the flag goes up. We must be ready and ensure

that everyone knows what they are doing when it is time to go to war."

During the exercise, Airmen faced several challenges, such as preparing the C-130 Hercules aircraft for military passengers and equipment. Staff Sgt. Chelsea Schneider was one of those Airmen. She typically works in Air Transportation for the Logistics Readiness Squadron, but she was part of the joint inspection team during the exercise. "I'm specifically a hazardous cargo inspector. I am looking through all of our regulations to make sure everything's good. All the paperwork is good to go, and then make sure everything is properly marked," said Schneider.

Schneider's central role in the exercise was crucial as she safely transported various hazardous cargo.

"There are different types of hazardous cargo, and some are compatible with each other while others are not. So we inspect and verify if the cargo can be shipped with other types of cargo on the same aircraft. For instance, we inspect generators to see if they've been properly drained of fuel before shipping them because they are classified as independent pieces of cargo," Schneider explains.

Along with her team, they ensured everyone was transported safely.

As the exercise progressed, it became clear that the development of the Mustang Roller exercise involved a significant amount of planning. Senior Master Sgt. Jennifer Yack played a significant role as a member of the 153rd's Office of the Inspector General. Her task during the exercise was to ensure the proper execution of actions and control of the entire exercise, which continued as Airmen deployed to Reno.

Yack explained that the exercise was designed to draw inspiration from real-world events, and they used the guidance provided by Gen. Mike Minihan, commander of Air Mobility Command. Gen. Minihan emphasized the importance of preparing for potential near-peer threats, which was a significant factor in the creation of this exercise.

"We wanted to bring that to the home station because it's where the threat will hit us first. So much of the exercise focused on the cyber impacts you would see. It also hit on preparing to execute if we go to a war tomorrow." Yack continued, "Colonel Deibert said at the beginning of this exercise. This is why we exercise, to be war-ready at all times."

The IG team achieved its goal of preparing for potential threats and continued to do so while Airmen were in Reno, showcasing what it looks like in a real scenario, working alongside another unit. "The 153rd doesn't go alone during a deployment but rather with other units," said Yack. "This exercise was a chance to practice deploying as if it were real. The unit is able to merge with the 152nd and establish itself at an expeditionary airbase, getting a better idea of what their flying missions will look like. Pilots will fly through different sorties together either with two or four aircraft. Where they could encounter challenges like simulated surface-to-air missiles or better known as Smokey SAMs."

"This exercise was a chance to practice deploying as if it were real...the exercise showcased a lot of out-of-the-box thinking and a willingness to move away from the traditional attitude of "that's the way we've always done it." - Senior Master Sgt. Yack

Midway through the exercise, Yack had already observed positive progress, like the service member's willingness to think outside the box and embrace future challenges.

"For example, on the pre-deployment function line, Airmen had to figure out how to meet the line's intent when they did not have access to the regular equipment to process people through the Personnel Deployment Function line," said Yack.

She highlighted other significant positives in the exercise, particularly many units' hard work and dedication. "There was a lot of hustle. And I saw that recommendations made by the Inspector General's office in the past were being implemented, which led to improvements in various processes."

This positive outcome brought happiness and positivity to the IG world, which can often be perceived as negative.

"The exercise showcased a lot of out-of-the-box thinking and a willingness to move away from the traditional attitude of "that's the way we've always done it," said Yack.

"Airmen followed Col. Deibert's intent, indicating they were ready to embrace the future and not be confined to the past. Therefore, it is crucial to continue in this direction, leveraging the expertise of the wing's talented individuals to push the envelope and keep moving towards better preparedness for the future."


U.S. AIR FORCE
YACK


USAF
ULINE





Guardsmen Take *Aim*

STORY BY MASTER SGT. JACQUELINE MARSHALL | COURTESY PHOTO

The sharpshooters of the Wyoming National Guard recently blazed a trail at the 52nd Winston P. Wilson Small Arms Championship in North Little Rock, Arkansas, from April 30 through May 5, 2023.

This high-stakes competition, hosted by the National Guard Marksmanship Training Center, attracted the best shooters nationwide, putting their skills to the test in various challenging scenarios.

The "Cowboy State" was represented by a talented group of Soldiers and Airmen, including Sgt. Tyler Holloway, who earned first place for novice expert in the competition rifle match.

Despite contending with 20-plus mph winds and harsh, direct sunlight that impacted their accuracy on targets downrange, the Wyoming team members learned a lot from their fellow guardsmen and they sharpened their skills during the weeklong competition.

"Our shooters were up against some tough competition, but they showed the world what Wyoming is made of," said Sgt. 1st Class Brant Knight, senior human resources sergeant for the 960th Brigade Support Battalion.

"The team may not have taken home the gold, but we gave it our all and returned stronger."

Throughout the week, the Wyoming team showcased their mastery of firearms and commitment to excellence. The team said the competition was tough, but they bonded with guardsmen from across the 50 states, learning valuable lessons and refining their skills for future matches.

"Being part of this competition was an incredible experience," said Master Sgt. Brian Nafziger, flight chief for the 153rd Security Forces Squadron, Wyoming Air National Guard.

"We may not have won this year, but we gained a lot of knowledge and confidence that will make us even stronger next time around."

The Winston P. Wilson Small Arms Championship has concluded for this year, and the Wyoming Guardsmen are already anticipating next year's competition. With their skills honed and determination unwavering, they are prepared to face any challenges that arise and showcase their abilities as Wyoming National Guard sharpshooters.

DELTA





Delta Company Triumphs at Annual Trainings

PHOTOS BY PFC. JOSEPH BURNS

In the heart of Wyoming, Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, wrote another chapter of excellence for their annual 2023 trainings. With unwavering unity and proficiency, these National Guard Soldiers conquered the rugged terrain, proving their mettle. The sun may have set, but their dedication and indomitable spirit continue to shine brightly, reminding us that in unity, there is strength. Bravo, Delta Company.





COMPANY

Aviators *Welcomed* Home

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MASTER SGT. JACQUELINE MARSHALL

On Aug. 4, 2023, Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon and Maj. Gen. Greg Porter, adjutant general of Wyoming, and distinguished leaders of the Wyoming National Guard, proudly welcomed home the members of Alpha Co., 2nd Battalion, 149th Aviation, Wyoming Army National Guard, during a ceremony held at the Laramie County Community College Center for Conferences & Institutes in Cheyenne.

The Soldiers who returned from a nine-month deployment to the Middle East were honored and recognized for their dedication and service to the nation. The event invited family, friends, and community members to celebrate the safe return of the men and women who served overseas.

"We express our profound gratitude and admiration to the members of Alpha Company for their sacrifice and commitment to duty," said Gov. Gordon. "Their efforts have significantly impacted us, and we proudly welcome them back home."

Maj. Gen. Greg Porter also commended the Soldiers for their exceptional service. "The commitment displayed by Alpha Company reflects the high standards upheld by the Wyoming Army National Guard," Porter said. "Their dedication is evidence of the spirit of service that defines our Guard."

Throughout their deployment, the Soldiers of Alpha Company had the support of their families, friends, and community members. The "Welcome Home" event allowed these supportive networks to come together and express their gratitude for the sacrifices made by the Soldiers.

The Wyoming National Guard values its personnel, and the return of Alpha Company holds significance for the state and the nation. The professionalism demonstrated by these individuals during their deployment reflects the core values of the Wyoming Army National Guard.





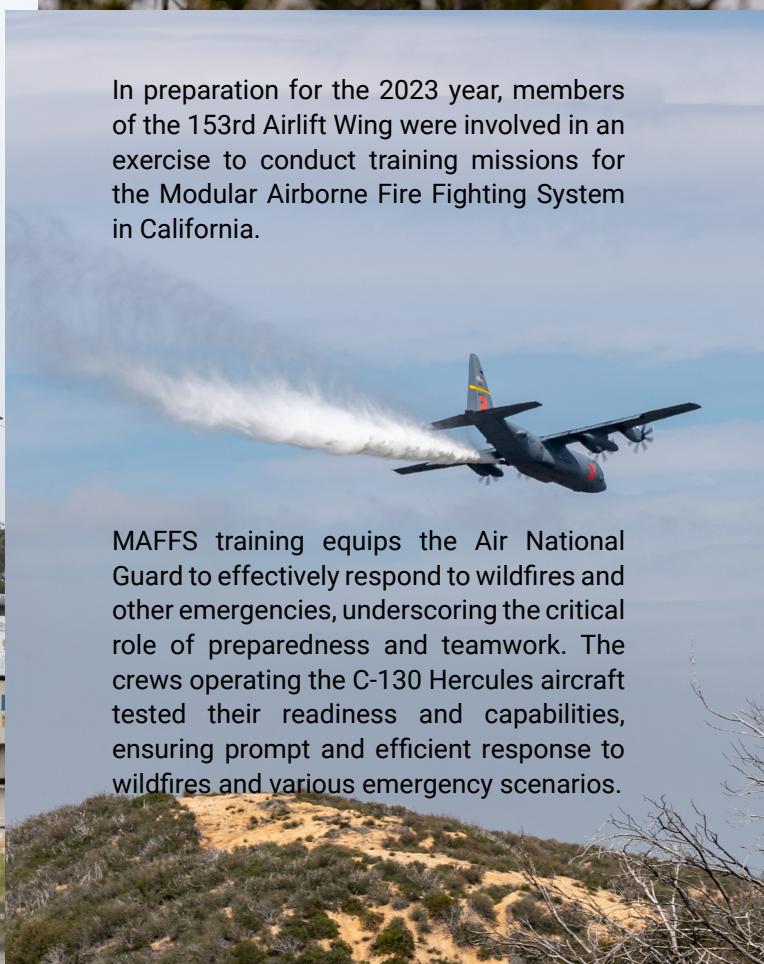


Wings of PREPAREDNESS

PHOTOS BY SENIOR AIRMAN EDWARD HERMSEN



In preparation for the 2023 year, members of the 153rd Airlift Wing were involved in an exercise to conduct training missions for the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System in California.



MAFFS training equips the Air National Guard to effectively respond to wildfires and other emergencies, underscoring the critical role of preparedness and teamwork. The crews operating the C-130 Hercules aircraft tested their readiness and capabilities, ensuring prompt and efficient response to wildfires and various emergency scenarios.



Unleashing Lethality

Soldiers compete at the 2023 TAG Match

STORY BY MASTER SGT. JACQUELINE MARSHALL | COURTESY PHOTOS

In the midst of Wyoming's ever-changing weather, Soldiers and Airmen line up and take their positions along marked points. As the commanding instructor's voice cuts through the air, a dozen rifles rise in unison, poised for action. A resounding horn blares, unleashing a symphony of bullets that tear through the chambers and speed toward their targets, their echoes reverberating through the surrounding hills.

From June 1-4, 2023, over 20 Wyoming National Guard service members gathered at the Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center for the annual Adjutant General's State Marksmanship Competition, known as the "TAG Match." This rigorous event featured a series of rifle and pistol challenges designed to test participants' marksmanship skills and physical fitness. Competitors were not only vying for victory in the various matches but also had their eyes set on a prestigious accolade: the coveted Governors Ten Tab. This esteemed recognition is awarded to those who demonstrate exceptional marksmanship, ranking among the top 10% of all competitors.

The match is historically known for providing advanced marksmanship training. It also fosters a competitive environment that allows Wyoming Soldiers to enhance their skills, enabling them to train their fellow unit members more effectively.

Competitors were classified into different categories, distinguishing them from novice and open classes, ensuring a level playing field. Utilizing the M4 Carbine Rifle and the M17 Pistol, the matches in TAG Match resembled those found in the renowned Winston P. Wilson National Shooting competitions. The ultimate goal of this event is to identify the participants who will be moving on to the prestigious Marksmanship Advisory Council Region 6 Championship.

"The Adjutant General's annual shooting match encourages healthy competition, tactical proficiency, and imparts the fundamental principles of basic and advanced marksmanship," remarked Master Sgt. Morgan Jenkins, a senior marksmanship coordinator for the Wyoming National Guard's TAG Match.

Following the fierce competition, first and second-place winners were announced in both team and individual



matches. The TAG Match Championship Team title was awarded to Team Alpha from the 960th Brigade Support Battalion, who clinched victory for the third consecutive year. The winning team consisted of Sgt. 1st Class Brant Knight, Sgt. Wayde Phelps, Sgt. Joseph Marchese, Sgt. Dustin Bohannon, and Sgt. Caleb Morland.

Three outstanding competitors, Wayde Phelps from the 960th BSB Team Alpha, Capt. Luke Meyer from the 115th Filed Artillery Brigade Team Charlie, and Staff Sgt. Brett Tillery from the 115th FAB Team Alpha, exemplified extraordinary skill and dedication, earning them the prestigious Governors Ten Tab. In recognition of their exceptional marksmanship, these accomplished individuals will proudly wear the Governor's tab on their upper-left sleeve, signifying their remarkable achievement. To further commemorate their accomplishment, they will also receive a signed certificate from Wyoming's TAG, Maj. Gen. Greg Porter.

"We often speak of building lethality, and when everyone possesses exceptional shooting skills, knows their roles, and understands their comrades' responsibilities, our growth potential becomes limitless," emphasized Sgt. 1st Class Brant Knight, reflecting on the event's significance.

As the Wyoming National Guard continues to foster a culture of excellence and preparation, the TAG Match stands as a testament to their commitment to building a formidable force capable of tackling any challenge that lies ahead.

2023 TAG Match Results

Individual Category Winners

Aggregate State Champion	Sgt. Wayde Phelps
Expert Rifle	Sgt. 1st Class Brown
Novice Rifle	Staff Sgt. Brett Tillery
Pistol Expert	Sgt. 1st Class Brant Knight
Novice Pistol	1st Lt. Andras
Multi-Gun	Sgt. Maj. Paul Bennick
Novice Multi-Gun	SPC Rhode
Anti-Body Armor	Sgt. Wayde Phelps
Novice Anti-Body Armor	1st Lt. Andras
Reflexive Fire	Sgt. Wayde Phelps
Novice Reflexive Fire	1st Lt. Andras
Mountain 10	Sgt. Maj. Paul Bennick
Novice Mountain 10	Tech. Sgt Styers
Close Quarters Battle	Sgt. Wayde Phelps
Novice Rifle	Staff Sgt. Brett Tillery

Team Category Winners

State Champions: 960th BSB, Team Alpha | Team Coach - Sgt. 1st Class Brant Knight, Team Captain-Sgt. Wayde Phelps, Sgt. Joseph Marchese, Sgt. Dustin Bohannon, and Sgt. Caleb Morland.

State Runner-Up: 115th Forward Support Battalion, Team Alpha | Team Captain - Master Sgt. Boname, Sgt. 1st Class Brown, Staff Sgt. Tillery, and Spc. Harrison.

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TAKING FLIGHT

DEPLOYMENT TO U.S. AFRICOM | STORY AND PHOTOS BY MASTER SGT. JON ALDERMAN

In late November 2023, the 153rd Airlift Wing, Wyoming Air National Guard, in Cheyenne, Wyoming, geared up for a significant deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Over 130 troops, including flyers, maintainers, and support personnel, were on their way to the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility.

"Embarking on our federal mission is truly exhilarating," expressed U.S. Air Force Col. Barry Deibert, wing commander of the 153rd Airlift Wing, Wyoming Air National Guard.

"Our team, comprising flyers, maintainers, and support entities, dedicated nearly a year to rigorous training and honing skills for real-world missions. Countless hours were devoted to flying, aircraft preparation, and ground training. Contributing to the rich legacy of the 153rd Airlift Wing, spanning over 75 years, is exceptionally rewarding. Our remarkable men and women overcame numerous challenges in launching our aircraft. Their dedication shines brightly, and we are profoundly thankful for their resilience and commitment to mission success."

Deibert shared that launching their aircraft presented its own set of challenges, but the men and women of the 153rd demonstrated their dedication, resilience, and commitment to mission success.

The primary mission of the C-130 Hercules aircraft was tactical airlift, involving the transportation of troops and cargo, a responsibility these Airmen were now ready to undertake overseas. The Wyoming Air National Guard expressed its deep appreciation for the continued support here at home and the entire nation.



Strengthening Combat Readiness



STORY AND PHOTOS BY PFC. JOSEPH BURNS
Attached to Delta Company

In May 2023, Delta Co., 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment executed rigorous training exercises at the training area in Lovell, including convoy operations, situational training exercises, field training exercises, and driver training. Maintaining peak combat efficiency is the goal of these exercises.

The company devoted three days and two nights to the training, reinforcing their defensive positioning, berm drills (alternating fire behind cover), support/attack by fire training, and a wide array of other combat drills. Among the highlights were the drivers' confidence course and mounted vehicle maneuvering, which proved instrumental in boosting proficiency.

"Even though I didn't make it up the hill, the course was fun," stated Pvt. Creston Muffett, a dedicated driver for one of the unit's high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles. "I still learned valuable lessons, and my confidence in driving a Humvee has significantly improved." The drivers' training included challenging tasks, such as navigating steep inclines, testing the Soldiers' skills.

As part of their ongoing readiness, Delta Co. credited their intensive preparation for live-fire operations,

scheduled for the end of July, with preliminary training successfully completed in June.

Capt. Eric Rush, the commanding officer of Delta Co., commended the dedication and professionalism displayed by the troops during the training. He was proud of the Soldiers' commitment to maintaining the highest combat standards. He emphasized the importance of such training in ensuring the unit's readiness for any potential mission.

The company looks forward to honing its lethality and enhancing cohesion in the live-fire exercises," said Rush. "As they continue to push their operational capabilities to new heights, Delta Co. remains steadfast in their commitment to serving and protecting the nation."





From *Flight* to *Squadron*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STAFF SGT. KYLEE WARREN

The 153rd Communications Flight at the Wyoming Air National Guard Base officially became the 153rd Communications Squadron during their re-designation ceremony in Cheyenne, Wyoming, on Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023.

Current Wyoming Air National Guard members and leadership from the Wyoming Guard Bureau attended the ceremony to support the change.

Lt. Col. John Jasper, Commander of the 153rd Communications Squadron, oversaw this transition. He offered critical insight during the ceremony.

"The digital world is fantastic and sometimes scary, especially when we consider the speed at which change occurs," Jasper said during the ceremony. "With these changes, we've seen a multitude of threats arise. The Air Force and the National Guard Bureau have recognized these threats, and to help mitigate them, they have begun moving communications flights to squadrons."

The core mission of the 153rd Communications Squadron is to provide superior cyber support focused on the needs of the wing's customers and mission partners. As such, cyber professionals deliver reliable and secure communications to ensure the success of their national, state, and community missions.

Jasper explained that due to the way they're organized, flights have less agility or flexibility than squadrons do when facing a looming threat of this magnitude.

Senior Master Sgt. Eric Farmer, Operations Superintendent at the 153rd Communications Squadron, oversees the day-to-day affairs of the career. He explained that the Communications Squadrons manage most of the base's information and communications technology and infrastructure. Their duties encompass serving Wyoming's Airmen with reliable computers, steady internet, capable printers, working landline phones, and an efficient help desk. They also ensure that the base has secure communications capabilities. Finally, these Communications Airmen protect the communications infrastructure that Wyoming Air National Guard's 1,200 members rely on.

"We've got a wide variety of responsibilities, from network operations to plans and implementation, to records and publications, to information involving cyber security," Farmer said. "Anywhere where there's some modern communications device, Comm Squadron is involved."

In light of these responsibilities and the changing dynamic of Cyber Warfare, the Communications career field has been making several changes over the last 18 months, said Chief Master Sgt. Emily Collins, Senior Leader at the 153rd Communications Squadrons. "The career shifted from a support Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) to an operational AFSC."

Collins explained that Air Force Cyber professionals will increasingly work on objectives that defend and protect Air Force communications against Cyber Warfare and support their base with communications and information technology needs. "This will require more resources, flexibility, and people above and beyond what a flight would allow," Collins said.

The journey to become a squadron has been a long one. However, it began at a grassroots level. Jasper explained that roughly eighteen months ago, many Communications Flights across the Air National Guard recognized they needed to become Squadrons to meet future missions' demands.

"Communications Flights as they are currently organized are not going to meet the coming threat," Jasper said. "This new arrangement as a Communications Squadron allows for better flexibility in the future of Cyber Warfighting." Understanding this, Jasper, Collins, and their team assembled a pack to submit to the National Guard Bureau. Jasper and Collins explained that the National Guard Bureau recognized the need across the







Communications career. The Bureau pushed to include multiple communications flights in one approval process, thus streamlining the work and time needed to meet the demands of an increasingly volatile cyber environment.

The Airmen at the 153rd Communications Squadron is weathering the changes well, said Collins. “I am extremely proud of how flexible the Airmen in this Squadron have been. They remain positive, always pushing forward and exercising resilience as a supportive and tight-knit team.”

Jasper echoed Collins in her appreciation of these talented and intelligent Cyber Airmen.

“I know how hard the mission is, and my job is to make sure the people in the Squadron have what they need to accomplish the mission,” Jasper said. “The people make the mission work, and here at the 153rd Communications Squadron, they are fantastic.”

Most of these Airmen participated in Saturday’s ceremony and stood at ease to hear Jasper’s thoughts on this transition.

“This change will help establish and set Communications Airmen on course for the future missions on the horizon,” Jasper said. “I’ll close with this: fear not change, for it is the only constant, and your Cyber professionals have the watch.”





Resilience

PHOTO BY SPC. RACHAEL TOFFLEMEYER



SERVICE *before* SELF

Service before self is one of the U.S. Air Force's core values, which is instilled in us from day one. It guides us to prioritize mission success over personal interests when wearing the uniform and stepping into our roles. Remembering this ethos is expected under the watchful eye of peers and supervisors. It is in those moments when we might not be wearing the uniform, amid everyday challenges and pressure, we truly display our courage and willingness to serve others.

STORY AND PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN EDWARD HERMSEN

Airman 1st Class Nathan Johnson, an aerospace medical technician assigned to the 153rd Airlift Wing, Wyoming Air National Guard, in Cheyenne, Wyoming, had recently completed his technical training at Keesler Air Force Base, Biloxi, Mississippi.

Having received his emergency medical technician license less than 24 hours prior, Johnson was on his way home aboard the first leg of his trip to Houston in August 2023. "I was sitting in my seat when a PA announcement asked for any medical personnel on board to identify themselves to a flight attendant," Johnson recounted.

Responding promptly, Johnson was brought to a passenger who had fallen unconscious and unresponsive during the flight. Alongside Johnson, another fellow passenger answered the call to help.

"He and I worked together to assess the patient," Johnson said. "We made sure she was breathing and went through our emergency medical services run sheet, answering questions like how conscious she was, whether her airway was secured, and if she was bleeding—things like that."

The emergency occurred with about an hour remaining on the flight. While considering landing at the closest airport, they ultimately chose to proceed to Houston, the better option due to the area's available hospitals. Johnson and the fellow passenger continued working with the patient, taking vitals and administering oxygen, ensuring she was breathing and recovering until they could land the plane in Houston, Texas.

"Once you've engaged with a patient from an EMT standpoint, you can't leave that patient until you can get them to a higher level of care," Johnson explained. "I told the guy with me he could go, and I would stay with the patient because he had family waiting for him outside the airport."

"We ended up waiting at the gate inside the plane with the patient—myself, the flight attendant, and the pilots. The thing is, I couldn't leave the patient, and they couldn't leave the plane until everyone had exited. So, we waited until paramedics could arrive to transfer the patient to a higher level of care."

Eventually, firefighters and paramedics arrived on the scene, allowing Johnson to transfer control of his patient to the paramedics properly. However, during these events, Johnson missed his connecting flight to Denver International Airport. Johnson continued, "The way I see it is if I were a sick passenger, I would want anyone who could help to do whatever they could—even if it's the bare minimum of help they could provide. That was my thought on it. If I could do anything to help and step in, I should do that to the best of my ability."

Fortunately, Johnson only had to wait a few more hours to catch another flight from Houston to Denver, allowing him to continue his journey back to Wyoming and reunite with his family after several months away from them.

The actions of Johnson truly exemplify what it means to prioritize service before self.

Johnson quickly and without hesitation answered the call for help and waited by the passenger's side until paramedics arrived, even at the cost of missing his connecting flight. This Airman's actions exemplify the Air Force core values.



In a remarkable display of courage and quick thinking, Staff Sgt. Jason Gosselin, Camp Guernsey's Training Center Command supply sergeant, became a hero on the morning of Sept. 15, 2023, in Guernsey, Wyoming, as he intervened to save a civilian's life.

The incident occurred when Gosselin was conducting unit business in Guernsey. As fate would have it, a civilian who had exited his truck momentarily forgot to engage the parking brake. The unattended truck began rolling, eventually trapping the gentleman beneath its weight.

Without hesitation, Gosselin said he sprang into action, assessing the dire situation. Recognizing the urgency of the matter, he swiftly collaborated with others present to free the trapped civilian from beneath the truck. His quick response prevented what could have been a disastrous outcome.

"In a moment of instinct, I was in the right place at the right time to help. I heard a truck horn and saw a man knocked down by his rolling truck, and my immediate reaction was to sprint over and stop it. It was a surreal experience, and I'm just grateful I could assist," said Gosselin.

Gosselin received an impact award from the Wyoming Army National Guard in recognition of his exceptional heroism and commitment to the community's well-being. This award acknowledges his dedication and willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty.

"Our Soldiers continually exemplify the spirit of service and selflessness, going above and beyond their regular duties to positively impact our communities. This incident is a shining example of their dedication to the greater good," said Lt. Col. Scott Morey, garrison commander at Camp Guernsey. The incident is a powerful reminder of our service members' positive societal impact shared Morey.

Morey and the Wyoming National Guard commend Gosselin for his selflessness and quick response in a critical moment, underscoring the invaluable contributions of our Soldiers to the greater good. This incident stands as a testament to the dedication and heroism exhibited by our military personnel.



Soldier's *heroic act* *Saves* Civilian's Life

STORY BY SGT. KRISTINA KRANZ | COURTESY PHOTOS



from Service to the *Crown:*

Soldier named Miss Wyoming USA

STORY BY MASTER SGT. JACQUELINE MARSHALL
COURTESY PHOTOS

In a stunning display of talent, poise, and military service, Sgt. Rebecca Bridger of the Wyoming Army National Guard's 67th Army Band made history by winning the Miss Wyoming USA 2023 title on May 13, 2023, at the CAM-PLEX Heritage Center Theater in Gillette. Bridger, known as Beck, captivated the hearts and minds of her fellow service members and the entire state with her remarkable journey from Soldier to beauty queen.



"I am overwhelmed with gratitude and excitement having won the Miss Wyoming USA 2023 title," she expressed. "Not only did I work incredibly hard leading up to the competition weekend, but I also had the opportunity of working with amazing members of the community of Sheridan, Wyoming, who poured into my preparation each step of the way."

The 27-year-old Soldier from Sheridan possesses a radiant charisma and captivating stage presence that stood out throughout the Miss Wyoming USA pageant. In addition to her musical prowess as a vocalist in the Army Band, she has consistently demonstrated devotion to her military duties and the community.

Through her Warrior Women Project, Bridger plays a crucial role in supporting aspiring females entering military service by offering guidance, insights, and resources. Notably, she previously claimed the title of Miss Wyoming 2018 and participated in Miss America 2019.

"When you learn how to maximize your potential, the final outcome is truly the icing on the cake," - Sgt. Rebecca Bridger

She displayed resilience by balancing rigorous military training and responsibilities with demanding pageant preparations. Navigating a challenging schedule of drills, rehearsals, and community service commitments, she attributes her success to determination and the constant support of her community.

"It's said that success isn't necessarily about the outcome, but rather, the journey along the way," Bridger said. "When you learn how to maximize your potential, the final outcome is truly the icing on the cake."

As Miss Wyoming USA, Bridger plans to raise awareness about women's crucial contributions to the military and their unique challenges.

"My life's purpose is much greater than myself; I trust that I've been called to be a light for women around the world. I pray that my story ignites a flame for women to achieve anything they set their minds to, whether wearing the Army Combat Uniform or the Miss Wyoming USA sash and crown," she said.


ARMY

A Lasting Impression through Professional Military Education

STORY BY MAJ. JAMES FISHER | COURTESY PHOTOS



The Wyoming Air National Guard sends several officers to various yearly professional development opportunities each year. Among those opportunities is Professional Military Education. PME is part of a developmental system that helps prepare officers from all services for command and staff work in a joint context. "A primary part of our Wyoming mission is to provide ready and professional personnel and formations capable of winning the fight. To do this, we need to invest in our leaders and provide them with training to improve their ability to think critically and operate strategically, all of which PME offers," said Brig. Gen. Michelle Mulberry, Chief of Staff of the Wyoming Air National Guard.

Recently, Lt. Col. Wendy Allison returned from her year-long assignment to Air War College at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. While anyone can take 30 seconds to learn the overarching details of PME online, it was nice to speak with Allison and get her honest take on the entire experience. As members of the Air National Guard, they are constantly juggling multiple responsibilities at once, so when in-residence opportunities like AWC pop up, they are often left making the tough decision to temporarily leave or uproot their family, say farewell to friends and put their full-time civilian positions on pause. Allison did what many service members do: she and her son uprooted from Cheyenne and went to Alabama for the year-long school. Although it was a tough decision, she is pleased to have made that call. For her, Air War College was a fantastic experience that offered invaluable tools that will aid her throughout the rest of her life.

Most Valuable Takeaways

The Air War College curriculum boasts courses that help officers think critically and strategically, all while considering a holistic approach from a joint operational lens. Course topics range from Foundations of Strategy to Regional Security Studies, Strategic Leadership to Future Air, Space, and Cyberpower. While there, Allison honed her leadership skills through her studies but more so through her daily interactions with classmates. The diverse team dynamic made this experience so profound and memorable for Allison. For instance, everyone who attends AWC will get the opportunity to travel to various parts of the world for two weeks to experience the political, military, economic, and cultural aspects of the different geographic combatant commands. Students visited five continents and were hosted by partner nations. Allison volunteered to stay in the U.S. and host the International Fellows on their trip around the continental U.S.

"My group visited Colorado, Nevada, and Texas," said Allison. "The best part of this trip was spending time with people from 21 different countries, hearing about their struggles, and learning about things they are doing that the U.S. could learn from."

Transitioning back into an academic environment can be challenging. According to Allison, "the school does a good job of easing students back into academia, and there are many resources to help. It's a lot of work, but it was worth it." Another great experience stemmed from participating in a Research Task Force. These were groups assembled to focus research efforts on specific, pre-identified topics. Several were offered in lieu of writing a personal research paper or attending a different elective.

"I was part of the Resiliency Task Force where we took a deep dive look at Air Force resiliency efforts from the 'spectrum of resilience' including mind, body, social, and spiritual health," said Allison. "It was a very interesting program, and we all got to brief our research papers to General Minihan, the commander of Air Mobility Command."

Allison's paper looked at wolf packs as a model of building belonging up, down, and laterally in the chain of command. Her paper won the Professional Development Award for the academic year 2023 for Air War College.

In-Residence vs. Distance Learning

This question runs deep for many drill-status guardsmen across the nation. Leaving family and friends behind is often the primary reluctance, but leaving full-time employers for a year is also a tough pill to swallow. Although Allison shared some of these initial reluctances, she ultimately came away with a new appreciation for in-residence PME.

"We get the opportunity to just focus on school rather than trying to juggle family, life, work, and school like with distance learning PME," said Allison.

"The best part of being in-residence is the people we meet. Each seminar is intentionally built to have a diverse group of people from diverse backgrounds. I learned so much this year from my classmates. As a guardsman, and especially as a drill-status guardsman, there are elements of the Air Force we are never exposed to or have limited exposure to, and being in-residence, we get a much broader exposure to the Air Force and Department of Defense. At the same time, I get to tell the Guard story and expose my active-duty classmates to things they've never considered."

PME offers tremendous value to servicemembers within their military roles, but its impact on civilian employment is equally important to consider. Civilian employers will benefit significantly from the added experience, training, and overall strategic understanding developed at school. So, instead of being seen as a long-term absence from your civilian job, it should be considered a fantastic development opportunity that will yield positive second and third-order effects within the organization for years to come.

What Helped Along the Way

Throughout the year, Allison felt supported by her family, friends, and supervisors back home. "The faculty at AWC was especially awesome because I've never been around so many humble yet brilliant people," she said. "My assigned faculty were never arrogant or belittling. If we had family or health issues, they worked with us. It was a very positive environment." It was essential to sustain a steady work-life balance throughout school, which required her to be deliberate with her time, Allison added.

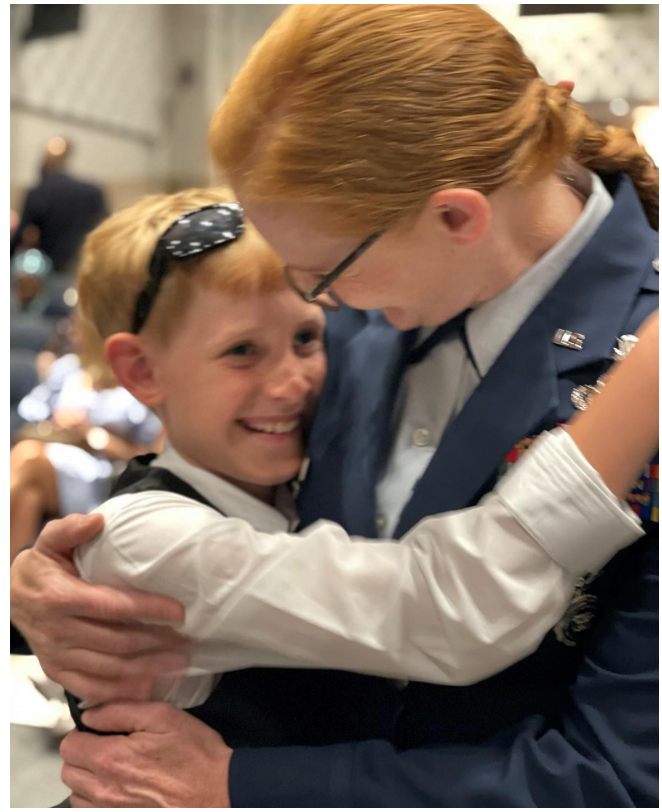
"Towards the end of school, I found a horse rescue organization and spent time caring for the horses and helping with riding lessons and trail rides. I wish I had found them earlier in the year. It was a great 'brain break' from all the studying."

In-residence PME is hard, but it becomes your primary job. To Allison, the entire experience was all worth it in the end.

"As Citizen Airmen, we must split our lives to serve; being in residence gives us a break from that. A year seems like a long time, but this year flew by for me. The people we connect with at in-residence PME will keep popping back into our lives and serve as good connections moving forward, aiding our ability to accomplish the mission."

"The people we connect with at in-residence PME will keep popping back into our lives and serve as good connections moving forward, aiding our ability to accomplish the mission." - Lt. Col. Allison







STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT. KRISTINA KRANZ

Tech. Sgt. Danie Moore is a dedicated production recruiter for the Wyoming Air National Guard. She has also been making waves not only in her military career but as a devoted volunteer at the Wyoming State Fair, which ran from Aug. 15-19, 2023. Moore, whose recruitment responsibilities span the regions of Lusk, Douglas, Casper, Gillette, South Dakota, and up through Cody, embodies the true spirit of community engagement.

At the heart of the fair, Moore serves as a vital member of the Friends of Agricultural, Industrial, and Recreation Posse, a group of volunteer ambassadors dedicated to supporting the future of Wyoming's youth through the Wyoming State Fair.

"We help set up the panels for rodeos. We help with the rodeo; we help with mutton busting. We do 4-H and FFA scholarships for first-time exhibitors. If people need rides, we give them rides. We provide water. We're at the needs of the fair. We're here from 7 a.m. till close," Moore explained when asked about her role.

The FAIR Posse is a diverse group of individuals. They are former 4-H or FFA members, ranchers, business owners, and even former National Guard Active Guard Reserve members who volunteer their time.

Moore's journey with the posse began when she was a 960th Brigade Support Battalion Soldier in Douglas.

"Master Sgt. Douglas Fenton was my readiness noncommissioned officer, and he would ask who wanted to help at the fair. We would get put on orders for the week, and I did that for the entire time I was with the 960th," She recalled. "Then he said you should come to a FAIR Posse meeting. I started doing that, then I was on the board and then an officer. Being a recruiter now, it's too much time, so now I just volunteer."

"Having people out and getting to know some of the key influencers of the fair is rewarding." - Tech. Sgt. Moore



a *Dedicated* Volunteer

Moore finds immense joy in her role as a posse member. She enjoys connecting with influential individuals in the fair community and debunking misconceptions about the Wyoming State Fair.

Creating a positive and engaging experience for fairgoers is a core mission of the posse. Moore attributes their success to the trust they build within the community.

“Just by the trust that we build. Like everybody that comes every year, those people know to stop at the posse shack here on the midway. They know we have water, they can get a ride, and they know we help with many rodeo events. So, just building that trust in the community,” said Moore.

Balancing her volunteer responsibilities with her role as a recruiter has been seamless for Moore. Posse meetings are held monthly, usually in the evening, which allows her to be flexible with her schedule.Her presence at the fair also aligns well with her recruiting mission.

“I think it’s great because it’s a state fair. You have the opportunity to get out of your booth and mingle with people and go see the cow shows, pig shows, you get to meet a lot of the educators from all the different counties in Wyoming, and you get to build that rapport and trust with them,” Moore said.

“Honestly, I use state fair as getting to meet people and putting the idea of I could join the Guard, whether it’s Army or Air, in their heads. When school starts, they’re like, I saw you at the county fair, or I saw you at the state fair. You’ve already built that trust.”

Moore suggests further increasing the military’s presence, particularly during the rodeo preshow at Military Appreciation Day, to enhance community engagement with the military and the Wyoming State Fair.

Last year’s preshow featured a performance from a mounted color guard, a flyover, and VIPs from the military. It was a huge hit. This year’s preshow included a color guard and a re-enlistment ceremony. The Douglas High School band also opened the preshow by playing the “Armed Forces Medley.”



Breaking the Silence

Veterans Leading the Way in Mental Health Advocacy

STORY BY MASTER SGT. JACQUELINE MARSHALL | PHOTOS COURTESTY OF PUBLIC BROADCASTING SERVICE

In the heart of Wyoming's military community, a group of dedicated individuals is stepping into the spotlight, ready to share their stories of resilience, recovery, and the power of seeking help. The recent PBS documentary series, "A State of Mind: Confronting our Mental Health Crisis," sheds light on these heroes who not only have served their country but are also inspiring others to confront their own mental health challenges.

Meet the Faces of Courage

Among the remarkable individuals featured in this powerful documentary are Chief Warrant Officer 4 Nathan Galloway, Michelle Mulberry, and Tim Sheppard, each with a unique perspective on the mental health crisis within the veteran community.

A Shared Mission

Episode 5 of the series, titled "The Battle Inside: Veterans and PTSD," delves deep into Wyoming's proud tradition of military service. It explores the often-hidden struggles of veterans who return home, grappling with depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and haunting flashbacks. In this episode, we hear directly from these Soldiers about their own mental health crises and how they found the strength to overcome post-traumatic stress.

CW4 Galloway, a Community Relations Officer for the Wyoming Military Department Public Affairs office and a 30-year veteran of the Wyoming Army National Guard, offers a poignant insight into the challenges veterans face when they return to civilian life. He shares, "We have a lot of veterans who face problems that aren't necessarily left on the battlefield." His own journey towards healing involved



the support of his wife, his congregation, and a crucial intervention from a compassionate friend who recognized the signs of trauma.

Breaking Down the Walls of Isolation

Mulberry, director of the WYMD's Integrated Primary Prevention Team, highlights the isolation many veterans feel. "It is not uncommon to hear our veterans talking about that loneliness, feeling of the loss of camaraderie that they had when they were serving in the military," she says. In Wyoming, where rural living is the norm, isolation can be both a blessing and a curse. It's a challenge that the community must confront together.

A Lifeline of Support

Sheppard, the director of the Veterans Commission, spearheads an initiative called "Veterans Talking to Veterans." This innovative program encourages veterans to engage with each other, share their experiences, and speak openly about their struggles. It's an opportunity for healing, understanding, and building a stronger support network. Galloway emphasizes the importance of seeking help and surrounding oneself with a support system. "If trauma is not addressed and caught, it's like a boiling pot of water, and it'll eventually boil over," he warns. His story serves as a powerful reminder that it's okay to ask for help.

A Plethora of Resources

Mulberry reminds us that there are abundant resources available for veterans in need. From Soldier and family readiness counselors to the VA, the vet center, chaplains, and local churches, support is within reach. The crucial step is for the veteran or the person in need to take that first step and reach out.

The PBS documentary has brought to light the stories of these remarkable individuals who are not only veterans but also advocates for mental health awareness. They stand as living proof that seeking help is a sign of strength, and by sharing their experiences, they inspire others to do the same. In the heart of Wyoming, these heroes are breaking the silence and leading the way toward a brighter, more resilient future for all veterans.

Their message is clear: it's okay to ask for help and together, we can confront our mental health crisis and emerge stronger on the other side.





In a world filled with stories of courage and heroism, sometimes the most remarkable heroes are the ones who walk among us unnoticed until the moment they're called upon to make a difference.

Senior Airman Perrin Winden, a member of the 153rd Airlift Wing's Operational Support Squadron in Cheyenne, Wyoming, is one such unsung hero. His selfless act on July 28, 2023, showcases his dedication to duty and reminds him that heroes can be found in the most unexpected places.

Winden's journey to becoming a Senior Airman at the 153rd Airlift Wing is marked by his prior service in the Army, where he honed his skills and developed the discipline that would later define his actions in a lifesaving situation. With four years of service behind him, he had already shown his dedication to serving his country. Little did he know that his military training would soon be put to the test in a civilian setting.

On that day in July, Winden was working on a construction project at the same job site where the Wyoming Department of Transportation dispatched a surveyor. It was an ordinary day's work for the surveyor until lunchtime took an alarming turn. As she began to choke on her lunch, panic ensued. Her lips turned a frightening shade of purple, and the universal sign of crossed hands over her throat signaled her dire need for assistance.

Without a moment's hesitation, Perrin Winden sprang into action. His military training had instilled a sense of responsibility for the welfare of those around him. He recognized the situation's urgency and remembered his training in basic medical procedures, including the Heimlich maneuver. Winden approached the distressed woman, who was now blue in the face, her breath wholly obstructed, and immediately began administering the lifesaving technique.

For almost a full minute, Winden persisted in performing the Heimlich maneuver, each second feeling like an eternity. The pressure and stress of the moment were undoubtedly immense, but he remained steadfast in his efforts.

"It felt like the longest minute of my life," Perrin said. Finally, a glimmer of hope emerged as the woman began coughing, her airway clearing. Winden had succeeded, and the woman could breathe again. He said the relief that washed over him was immeasurable; it was a moment he would never forget.

In the aftermath of this lifesaving intervention, Winden returned to his work, seemingly unfazed by the heroic act he had just performed. To him, it was merely an instinctive response to a dire situation, a reflection of his training and commitment to the well-being of others. He did not seek recognition or praise; Winden said he was doing what needed to be done.

"I don't think I'm a hero. I feel like if it were someone else in my place, they'd do the same thing," Winden said.

It was this humility and selflessness that truly defined him as a hero. Winden's actions that day are a poignant reminder that heroes are not always clad in capes or celebrated with grand gestures. They are ordinary individuals who rise to the occasion with determined resolve when faced with extraordinary circumstances. Winden's military background had instilled in him the values of duty, honor, and selflessness, which shone brightly when it mattered most.

The fact that heroes like Winden exist among us, quietly going about their daily lives until the moment calls for their bravery, is a testament to the incredible potential within all of us. Winden's story inspires us all, a reminder that we can make a difference in the lives of others by simply taking action, even in the most unexpected of circumstances.

As we go about our daily routines, let us take a moment to reflect on the unsung heroes like Senior Airman Perrin Winden who walk among us. Their selfless acts of bravery may often go unnoticed, but they serve as a beacon of hope and a testament to Xsometimes seem chaotic and uncertain, their stories remind us that heroes are indeed all around us, just waiting for the opportunity to make a real difference.

"EVERYDAY HERO"

STORY BY STAFF SGT. LEE MURPHY
PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN EDWARD HERMSEN



Responsiveness

PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. JON ALDERMAN





RAPID RESPONSE



Wyoming Air Guard deployed for Wildfire Suppression Operations

STORY BY MASTER SGT. JACQUELINE MARSHALL | PHOTOS BY STAFF SGT. KYLEE WARREN

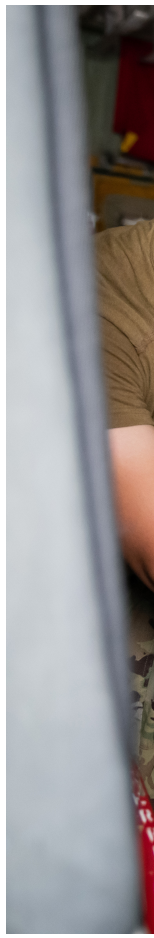
The Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Airlift Wing out of Cheyenne, Wyoming, mobilized to support fire suppression efforts in Klamath Falls, Oregon, on Aug. 3, 2023. At the request of the National Interagency Fire Center, U.S. Northern Command deployed two C-130 Hercules aircraft equipped with Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems to assist with wildland firefighting operations across Western states.

The 153rd Airlift Wing and the 302nd Airlift Wing with the U.S. Air Force Reserve in Colorado Springs, Colorado, each contributed one aircraft, and the C-130s reported to Klamath Falls Airtanker Base, Oregon.

The Air Force's U.S. Northern Command's Air Component Command oversaw the military aerial operation supporting federal and state efforts.

"We were fully prepared to undertake this crucial mission. The MAFFS aircraft played a pivotal role in combating wildfires, and their swift deployment to affected areas allowed us to respond rapidly to emerging fire incidents," stated Col. Barry Deibert, commander of the 153rd Airlift Wing, Wyoming Air National Guard. "Our primary goal was to enhance aircraft operations, ensure the protection of lives and property, and support the multiagency firefighting response effort," said Deibert.

The U.S. Forest Service owned the MAFFS equipment and supplied the fire retardant, while the DOD provided the C-130 H and J model aircraft, flight crews, and maintenance and support personnel to fly the missions.







"The MAFFS Airmen stood ready to support our interagency partners as the wildfire season began," said U.S. Air National Guard Col. Matthew Glynn, Air Expeditionary Group Commander and Vice Commander for the 146th Airlift Wing. "2023 represented the 50th anniversary of this critical partnership between the Department of Defense, the U.S. Forest Service, and other state and federal agencies."

The MAFFS were versatile fire-retardant delivery systems designed to seamlessly integrate with military C-130 aircraft, requiring no significant structural modifications. This adaptability allowed the aircraft to be converted into airtankers swiftly as the situation demanded. Capable of delivering up to 3,000 gallons of fire retardant in under 10 seconds along a quarter-mile stretch, the MAFFS offered a powerful firefighting solution. The system was quickly loaded into the rear of the military aircraft and employed a rear left-side nozzle to release the retardant precisely.

For 50 years, the MAFFS program aided with the extinguishing of some of the United States' most deadly wildfires in the nation's history.



National Guard Rescue *MISSIONS*

Wyoming Army National Guard Helicopter Crew Partner in Rescues

BY PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF | COURTESY PHOTOS

On July 25, 2023, at approximately 7 p.m., the Big Horn County Sheriff's Department received an Inreach SOS activation from a party of 7, including an 18-year-old male with an injured leg, stranded at 12,200 feet on Cloud Peak.

Due to the challenging altitude and hot temperatures, Guardian Air Medical could not reach the injured subject. In response, a Wyoming Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew assigned to the Army Aviation Support Facility in Cheyenne was called upon to initiate an extraction mission using a hoist-capable UH-60 Black Hawk.

Ground teams were swiftly dispatched to the West Ten Sleep trailhead to begin their ascent toward the injured party. One of the ground teams successfully reached the stranded party at approximately 5:30 a.m. on Wednesday. The injured subject received medical treatment from the ground team's skilled personnel, and five party members were later accompanied back to their camp.

At 6 a.m., the Black Hawk departed from Cheyenne and arrived in Greybull, where it was fueled before picking up three Big Horn County SAR members, also part of the esteemed Wyoming Hoist Team. Shortly after, the Black Hawk flew to the Cloud Peak area, and the three Wyoming Hoist Team members were inserted via hoist to reach the injured subject. The air crew executed three successful hoists within five minutes, extracting the injured subject, a companion, and the remaining ground team SAR member.

> Together, as a unified force, the Wyoming National Guard remains steadfast in its commitment to serving the community with dedication, skill, and compassion.

Following the extraction, the injured subject was flown to the Tyrell Ranger Station and transferred to a waiting Cody Regional Health ambulance for further medical attention. The UH-60 Black Hawk returned to Greybull Airport for refueling before returning to the mountain to safely drop off the second subject at their camp. Subsequently, the remaining ground team SAR members were airlifted out to the trailhead parking area.

The Wyoming National Guard leadership appreciates the dedicated SAR team members for their commitment to duty, responding diligently to this call even after completing their regular day's work and hiking many miles through the night. The aircrew from the WYARNG also receives special recognition for their early morning flight to facilitate the extraction and ensure the safe return of the ground teams.

Notably, the Wyoming National Guard's teams have responded to more than 10 calls in the last 30 days, and any assistance received is genuinely appreciated. Gratitude is also extended to the ground medical teams, Guardian Air Medical, and the hardworking dispatchers who work diligently to uphold community safety.

Together, as a unified force, the Wyoming National Guard remains steadfast in its commitment to serving the community with dedication, skill, and compassion.

Subsequently, another mission swiftly followed and the unit was activated again.

2023







On Aug. 15, 2023, the WYARG UH-60 Black Hawk crew, working alongside local agencies, completed a challenging 24-hour rescue mission that spanned two days. Their impressive skills and perseverance showcased the exceptional rescue abilities of these Soldiers.

The incident unfolded at Box Elder Canyon in Converse County, Wyoming, where Ray Daugherty and his companion DJ Gonzales found themselves in a dangerous situation. While ascending the canyon on the evening of Aug. 14, Daugherty tragically lost his grip and plummeted approximately 12 feet onto a rock. His arm sustained severe damage due to the impact.

With a swift assessment of the situation, Gonzales quickly ascertained that their predicament required outside assistance. Leaving Daugherty, he climbed out of the canyon and promptly alerted relevant authorities, setting the wheels in motion for a rescue operation.

A coalition of responders, including Converse County Sheriff's Office personnel, Converse County Search and Rescue, Glenrock Volunteer Fire Department, Glenrock Emergency Medical Services, and the Wyoming Army National Guard, collaborated to locate Daugherty nearly eight hours after the ordeal began.

Recognizing the necessity of a helicopter lift for Daugherty's extraction, the Wyoming Army National Guard stepped up to the challenge. As the sun rose on Aug. 15, a team of guardsmen executed an aerial evacuation, airlifting Daugherty to a designated staging area. From there, he was transported to a hospital in Casper for further medical attention, which included a six-hour surgery to reconstruct his elbow.

In a testament to the determination of these guardsmen, a subsequent incident unfolded as a first responder encountered distress during their ascent of the canyon. Once again, the Wyoming Army National Guard was called into action, conducting an expedited airlift of the second patient from the canyon, ensuring timely access to medical care at a hospital in Casper, Wyoming.

These operations highlight the readiness of the Wyoming Army National Guard and its commitment to safeguarding lives in challenging circumstances.



Vigilant Guard:
A test in preparedness

STORY BY MASTER SGT. JACQUELINE MARSHALL | PHOTOS BY MASTER SGT. JON ALDERMAN

The Wyoming National Guard stood poised to demonstrate their strength and readiness to the world through its first-ever Vigilant Guard exercise from June 12-15, 2023. This comprehensive emergency response exercise enhanced public safety and community preparedness and showcased our state's resilient spirit.

As military personnel, first responders, and critical stakeholders converged across the state, a persistent message echoed through the simulated disaster scenario. It was a testament to our commitment to safeguarding our communities and ensuring our readiness for adversity.

"The purpose of VG is to provide an opportunity for local, state, and federal assets to come together and work together to build responsiveness, partnerships, and preparedness through the State of Wyoming to any natural or manmade disaster that might occur," said Lt. Col. Jonathan Seelye, Battle Joint Director of Military Support, Wyoming National Guard.

In Campbell, Crook, Johnson, Laramie, Natrona, Park, Platte, Sheridan, and Weston counties, the exercise unfolded with expected chaos, captivating the attention of residents and onlookers, and the participants fought to bring order. The increased presence of emergency response personnel, military vehicles, and aircraft bore witness to the extraordinary capabilities and resources.

While Vigilant Guard 2023 primarily focused on testing response capabilities, agency coordination, and communication systems, it also served as a grand stage to showcase the Wyoming National Guard and the state's readiness.

Throughout the exercise, the participants took great care to minimize disruptions and ensure community safety. Temporary road closures and traffic diversions near exercise locations were necessary, and the public diligently followed the guidance of law enforcement and emergency personnel.

"Over the last year, Wyoming has had a handful of emergencies, some localized flooding, and a severe winter storm outbreak. Many of the lessons we are learning here and the relationships we build will make the next set of those challenges go much more



smoothly," said Spencer Pollock, Preparedness Section Chief, Wyoming Office of Homeland Security. "We look forward to applying the lessons learned from Vigilant Guard and applying them to future disasters."

All participants viewed Vigilant Guard 2023 as a critical exercise, emphasizing readiness and resilience. It served as a demonstration of our state's commitment to overcoming challenges. The Wyoming National Guard expresses its gratitude for the public's support in our collective efforts to enhance preparedness.

SCAN TO WATCH VIDEO




FIRE
RESCUE
HAZ MAT


U.S. AIR FORCE





PHOTOS BY MASTER SGT. JON ALDERMAN

the Faces *of* Vigilant Guard



Legacy Unfurled:
133rd to 307th

A new era dawned as the 133rd Engineer Support Company, Wyoming Army National Guard, lowered its flag in a poignant casing of the colors ceremony. In this solemn moment, Capt. Ethan Carswell, the outgoing commander, passed on his command, paving the way for the emergence of the new 307th Engineer Utilities Detachment, now under the leadership of 1st Lt. Kyle Schinkel. This transformative flag casing and change of command ceremony unfolded on Sept. 9, 2023, at the Regional Training Institute on Camp Guernsey.

The change-of-command ceremony holds deep-rooted significance, where the outgoing commander symbolically relinquishes responsibility and authority by passing the brigade colors to the incoming commander, thus beginning a new dawn of leadership for the incoming commander and the brigade.

Each military unit possesses its unique flag, commonly known as "colors," carried by a color guard designated by the unit commander during military ceremonies. When a unit is deactivated, it is customary to hold a "Casing of the Colors" ceremony, a ritual that commemorates the unit's history. In this instance, the ceremony paid tribute to the rich heritage of the 133rd as it gracefully made way for the 307th. Despite being smaller, the 307th is poised to continue the storied traditions of the 133rd.

Capt. Ally Jeran, serving as the master of ceremonies, acknowledged Carswell's exceptionally meritorious service as the 133rd commander from Nov. 11, 2020, to Jan. 6, 2023. Her words underscored the profound impact of Carswell's leadership on the unit, enhancing readiness, mission preparedness, and nurturing future leaders within the organization.

Throughout its history, the 133rd has responded to numerous natural disasters, conflicts, and wars. In May 2023, they extended their reach to Tunisia, collaborating with international partners to provide training. Their remarkable achievement included the construction of a shoot house involving the placement of 10,000 sandbags and the foundation work for an improvised explosive device training facility.

Carswell reflected on their accomplishments, "From working in remote areas of their beautiful state to foreign lands where the unit overcame language barriers to build partner capacity. The 133rd's legacy within Wyoming holds a special place in the hearts of many."

Lt. Col. Nicholas Rayes, commander of the 941st Troop Command Battalion, praised the 133rd's global accomplishments, from projects in Panama, Honduras, and Germany to Tunisia. Their versatility spanned road construction, airfield runway work, dike construction, and shoot house erection. Much of the 133rd's history is intertwined with their commitment to local communities



during times of crisis. They showcased resilience, camaraderie, and expertise while making their communities safer.



In 1979, following Thanksgiving Day, they answered the call during a blizzard, engaging in snow removal and rescue efforts for two weeks across Albany, Laramie, and Platte Counties. In 1983, the 1st Platoon undertook the formidable task of extending the Camp Guernsey Army Airfield by 1,600 feet and widening it by 40 feet, an enduring achievement.

Rayes summarized the 133rd's heritage as one of professionalism, faithful service, and expertise. Their history encompassed vital contributions to major flood responses in Laramie and Cheyenne. Swift action during the floods of 1984 and 1985 averted disaster in Laramie and aided Cheyenne's recovery efforts.

1st Sgt. Stacey Hiser, 133rd 1st Sgt., expressed gratitude," I'm thankful that I had the opportunity to work alongside these dedicated individuals and witnessed their progress through the ranks.

The 133rd's legacy of constructing runways and parking lots and contributing to community projects, including demolition and earthwork, leaves an indelible mark on the state of Wyoming. Carswell summarized, "You all have so much to be proud of from your time in the 133rd." The 133rd's time and effort spent in the aid of their state leaves an engaging legacy for others to follow.

STORY BY PFC. SAMANTHA BUTKOVICH | PHOTOS BY SGT. KRISTINA KRANZ





Partnerships

PHOTO BY SGT. KRISTINA KRANZ





STRENGTHENING *PARTNERSHIPS*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT. KRISTINA KRANZ

The Wyoming Army National Guard's 133rd Engineer Support Company recently engaged in a fruitful collaboration with the Tunisian engineers in May, forging a valuable partnership through the State Partnership Program. The exchange aimed to provide essential support and training with the Tunisian 61st Engineers and Tunisian Brigade of Special Forces during a Joint Combined Training Exercise in Bizerte, Tunisia. This initiative enhances military capabilities and fosters strong relationships between the two nations.

Through the SPP, the 133rd connected with the 61st and BFS, giving them a valuable opportunity to share knowledge, skills, and experiences. Together, they worked through joint exercises, training programs, and workshops to improve their expertise and develop innovative solutions for different challenges. The units focused on tasks like developing infrastructure, construction, and logistical support, which are crucial for ensuring Soldiers can perform their duties effectively. The primary objective was to enrich the readiness and effectiveness of Tunisia's Special Forces in carrying out complex missions.

The Sgt. Maj. of the 61st Tunisian Army Engineers praised the teams saying, "Everyone did a great job. This facility will help create more training opportunities for our

Tunisian Soldiers and space for training. I want to thank the 133rd for all they have done. I've been doing this for 28 years, and building relationships is always good."

By sharing their expertise and learning from each other, both groups improved their engineering capabilities, effectiveness in operations, and professional growth.

"The main goal of this exchange was not just to provide training but also to encourage collaboration and teamwork with our international partners in Tunisia," explained Capt. Ethan Carswell, commander of the 133rd Engineer Support Company.

"It establishes a foundation that allows both teams to enhance their skills, broaden their perspectives, understand different cultures, and develop professionally globally. This partnership strengthens our strategic ties with Tunisia and supports global security."

This partnership goes beyond the military organizations involved and positively impacts the communities they serve. By leveraging their engineering expertise, the joint efforts of the 133rd with the 61st and BFS will contribute to infrastructure development and the overall resilience of both nations. According to the 133rd, it demonstrates the commitment of both countries to strengthen their relationship, promote peace, and enhance military capabilities.



PHOTO BY SFC STEVEN ALLRED







Governor's *Day*

STORY BY MASTER SGT. JACQUELINE MARSHALL



PHOTO BY SGT. KRISTINA KRANZ

The Wyoming Army National Guard proudly hosted a momentous occasion, Governor's Day, at Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center in Guernsey, Wyoming, on June 10, bringing together Soldiers from across the state for a day of celebration and unity.

Governor's Day marked a significant milestone for the Wyoming Army National Guard, representing the first time since 2016 that an event of this scale has been organized.

The gathering showcased the Soldiers' camaraderie, resilience, and commitment to serve and protect the State of Wyoming.The event commenced with an honorable visit from Governor Mark Gordon and the First Lady, Jennie Gordon, who graciously received a tour of Camp Guernsey and had the opportunity to inspect his Soldiers in a formal Pass and Review ceremony. Their presence added to the already vibrant atmosphere of pride, camaraderie, and renewed purpose among the attendees.

After the ceremony, Gov. Gordon and First Lady mingled with Soldiers in the formation, viewed stunning military equipment displays, and met and enjoyed lunch with command teams from across the state at the All Ranks Club.

The Wyoming National Guard sincerely thanks all the Soldiers who participated in this remarkable event and to Governor Mark Gordon and the First Lady for their support and presence. Their commitment to the state and its defenders is greatly appreciated.



PHOTOS BY SPC RACHAEL TOFFLEMEYER



SHOOTING FOR THE STARS: STARBASE partners with Eastern Shoshone Tribe

STORY BY PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF | COURTESY PHOTO



The Wyoming STARBASE Academy, in collaboration with the Eastern Shoshone Tribe, successfully concluded a four-day space-themed STEM camp that provided students with an unparalleled opportunity to delve into the wonders of space and engage in various hands-on educational activities. The camp was held at the Eastern Shoshone Tribe Boys and Girls Club in Fort Washakie, Wyoming, from July 10 to 13, 2023.

Throughout the camp, young learners had the unique chance to explore space-related concepts while participating in various engaging and interactive activities. These activities were meticulously designed to foster a love for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, inspiring curiosity and igniting a passion for learning among participants.

The diverse curriculum encompassed activities such as constructing and launching different types of rockets, crafting intricate 3D solar systems, and delving into the world of robotics through building and coding two distinct types of robots — the bristle bots and spheros. Each activity was thoughtfully curated to provide a holistic experience, combining education with enjoyment.

The partnership between the Wyoming STARBASE Academy and the Eastern Shoshone Tribe underscores a commitment to extending STEM education to students who might not have access to such opportunities otherwise. Recognizing the value of fostering young minds' interest in science and space, the program organizers brought this innovative camp to a wider audience beyond their traditional STARBASE program.

"By taking our program on the road and collaborating with the Eastern Shoshone Tribe, we aimed to ensure that all students, regardless of their circumstances, can experience the thrill of learning about space and STEM subjects in an engaging and interactive manner," said Germaletta Brown, Wyoming STARBASE Academy director.

The success of this space-themed STEM camp is a testament to the impact of cross-community partnerships and the power of experiential learning. Both the Wyoming STARBASE Academy and the Eastern Shoshone Tribe are elated to have provided students with a memorable and enriching educational experience that has the potential to spark lifelong curiosity and passion for science and technology.



Find out more about our STARBASE program!

scan me to learn more


SPEAK
POKEMON
DAMA'S
BOY


Wyoming
PURPLE





COURTESY PHOTOS





Like a *Boss*

Soldiers' Employers Gain Military Insight

STORY BY MASTER SGT. JACQUELINE MARSHALL | PHOTO BY MAJ. CRAIG HEILIG

Employers of Wyoming Army National Guard Soldiers had the opportunity to participate in the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Boss Lift on June 2, 2023. The event, hosted by the Wyoming Army National Guard in Cheyenne, Wyoming, included activities such as flights in a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter, discussions with Wyoming Army National Guard leadership, sampling Meal's Ready to Eat, and hands-on experiences with different weapons.

The day aimed to provide employers with a better understanding of the unique challenges, skills, and dedication demonstrated by their Wyoming Army National Guard employees. ESGR's goal is to foster a deeper appreciation among employers for the contributions of Guard and Reserve members.

"Without the support of our civilian employers and communities, we cannot effectively do our jobs," said Col. Toby Alkire, Chief of Staff for the Wyoming Army National Guard.

"The boss lift is our way of recognizing those employers that have gone above and beyond in supporting our Soldiers."

The highlight of the boss lift was a helicopter flight, allowing employers to witness the precision and skill of UH-60 Black Hawk pilots as they flew over scenic landscapes. This experience provided insight into the complexity and expertise required in Army aviation. Throughout the event, employers engaged in conversations with Wyoming Army National Guard leadership, who shared personal experiences and emphasized the significance of military service. They also discussed the transferable skills Guard and Reserve members bring to their civilian jobs, deepening employers' understanding of these qualities.

To provide an authentic experience, employers had the opportunity to sample MREs, gaining firsthand knowledge of the portable meals used by Soldiers during deployments. This activity allowed employers to appreciate the resourcefulness and adaptability required in challenging environments.

The day concluded with employers handling and familiarizing themselves with a range of weapons used by the Wyoming Army National Guard, guided by trained professionals. This experience gave employers a newfound respect for the precision, discipline, and responsibility involved in military operations.

Wyoming's ESGR chapter, in collaboration with the Wyoming Army National Guard, continues to cultivate strong relationships between employers and their military employees, ensuring a supportive work environment that honors the service and dedication of Guard and Reserve members.

Partnership for *Success*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT. KRISTINA KRANZ

The Wyoming National Guard announces its first-ever corporate sponsor, Simon, a Colas company, as part of the esteemed Partnership for Your Success program (PaYS). On June 28, 2023, a sponsorship ceremony was held at the Joint Forces Readiness Center in Cheyenne, commemorating this significant milestone. Distinguished attendees included Wyoming Congresswoman Harriet Hageman, Wyoming National Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Greg Porter, and corporate leadership from Simon and Colas.

"In the Wyoming Guard, we prioritize four essential lines of effort: lethality, resilience, responsiveness, and partnerships. We couldn't exist as a National Guard without the partnerships with our families and employers," expressed Wyoming National Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Greg Porter. "Today, we recognize an exceptional partnership with Colas and the Simon company. I cannot overstate how thrilled we are about this collaboration."

The PaYS program serves as a conduit between businesses seeking to employ military personnel and deserving Soldiers committed to serving their country while preparing for their future. Soldiers are guaranteed a job interview and potential employment opportunities through this program. PaYS is open to all Soldiers in the regular Army, Army Reserves, Army National Guard, Army Cadet Command, and the Army ROTC.

Simon Contractors, founded by James Simon in North Platte, Nebraska, in 1954, has witnessed remarkable growth, capturing the attention of Colas, who acquired the company in October 1994. Operating under Colas North America, Simon Contractors boasts multiple locations in Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, and South Dakota. "I want to thank the Wyoming National Guard for this incredible opportunity and partnership. Without them, we would not be standing here today," said Trevor Tipotsch, Simon's President. "At Simon, our people are everything for our business. Without their dedication, we could not sustain growth and accomplish our objectives. We are truly excited and eagerly anticipate the possibilities that the Army PaYS relationship can bring to Simon."



This groundbreaking collaboration between the Wyoming National Guard and Simon, a Colas company, sets a commendable precedent for fostering meaningful partnerships that bridge the gap between military service and civilian employment. By joining forces, both entities are poised to achieve remarkable success and contribute to the professional development and well-being of Soldiers and the community.



EDUCATORS *EMBRACE* CHALLENGE

STORY AND PHOTO BY SGT. KRISTINA KRANZ

From Aug. 1-3, the Wyoming National Guard hosted the 3rd Annual Educator Leadership Rendezvous at the Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center in Guernsey, Wyoming. This three-day event brought together educators from across the state to immerse themselves in the military experience. Emphasizing leadership and culture-building strategies through a military lens, the ELR aimed to fortify the bond between educators and the military, fostering readiness in Wyoming students for college, career, and military pathways.

Squad leader Staff Sgt. David Mounts from the Army Guard stated, "I'm thrilled to be a part of this year's ELR, where we can share incredible opportunities with our civilian counterparts, especially the educators. Many of them may not fully grasp the scope of what the Air and Army Guard represents in our state. By continuing these events annually, we hope to bridge that gap. I want to come back next year."

Throughout the event, educators experienced thrilling activities like flying in a C-130 Hercules and a UH-60 Black Hawk, repelling down a 40-foot cliff, and familiarizing themselves with various military-grade weapons systems.

Additionally, they received training in land navigation and room clearance, skills they put to the test during a land navigation and paintball event the following day.



Under the guidance of 1st Lt. Andrew Bonfield, the officer in charge of the event, 36 educators, alongside a dozen plus service members, embraced the challenge of stepping out of their comfort zones. As Bonfield remarked, "We push our educators beyond their comfort zones, helping them build resilience while ensuring their safety. This experience enables them to return to their classrooms equipped to educate their students."

The ELR provided a distinctive approach to acquaint educators with the military world, going beyond mere descriptions and presentations. Organized into squads and facilitated by Army and Air National Guard leaders, participants engaged in teamwork-oriented challenges, allowing them to develop practical leadership skills.

Becky Junge, a teacher from Casper, expressed her gratitude, stating, "I am incredibly grateful for this experience and partnership, as well as the outstanding individuals leading and serving the state of Wyoming. The laughter, camaraderie, learning, and fun were unforgettable."

The ELR successfully showcased the military world to educators and enabled them to acquire firsthand knowledge they can share with their students. By supporting this initiative, the Wyoming National Guard continues to make strides in fulfilling the state's mission of preparing all students for college, career, and military readiness. For educators interested in participating in future ELR events, please contact Robin Grandpre at 307-777-5315.

Taking "Air Traffic Control" to a *New Level*



STORY AND PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN EDWARD HERMSEN

The 243rd Air Traffic Control Squadron based with the 153rd Airlift Wing, Wyoming Air National Guard, in Cheyenne, Wyoming, held a ceremony to usher in new robust radar capability, on Aug. 17, 2023.

"With the addition of this seven-scope fixed radar Approach Control," said Maj. Daniel Hochhalter, the commander of the 243rd Air Traffic Control Squadron, "the 243rd became the most robust and dynamic ATCS in the Air National Guard. Not only is our deployable mission leading the charge towards converting to a Combat Airfield Operations Squadron, but our home station operation (controlling the Cheyenne Regional Airport) has had a significant value added to local aviation due to this expansion from our antiquated 1960s technology 14K radar to the new age Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System we christened today."

The 243rd is responsible for providing air traffic control to the 153rd Wyoming Air National Guard and the local Cheyenne Regional Airport. The new equipment includes the addition of seven STARS radar scopes and the congruent technology that accompanies these state-of-the-art systems. This equipment opens new doors for the 243rd, allowing the ability to procure an ASR-11 radar to be installed directly at the Cheyenne Airport. "Which would provide radar coverage all the way to the ground (allowing even better safety of flight during inclement weather). Additionally, the addition of an ASR-11 radar would open the door to potential airspace expansion, which leads to more positions and manning, as well as control into airports such as Camp Guernsey, one of our strongest joint military partners," said Hochhalter.

"This new equipment and strategic ability ensures an even greater sense of airspace surveillance. Greatly improving the ability of the 153rd's militaristic missions and the safety of the local Cheyenne Regional Airport. Personally, I gain so much satisfaction out of watching my Red-tailed Hawks passionately working toward improving this unit," Hochhalter continued.

"Through their expertise and intrinsic motivation to leave a legacy, I am truly privileged to lead such a revolutionary group of people toward a future that will require air traffic and airfield operations services anywhere, anytime, on any surface. We are the Red-tailed Hawks, and we are fired up!"

INSPIRING *TOMORROW'S* LEADERS



STORY BY SENIOR AIRMAN EDWARD HERMSEN | PHOTOS BY MASTER SGT. JON ALDERMAN & SGT. KRISTINA KRANZ

The Wyoming Air National Guard hosted its third annual Discovery Day on Sept. 28, 2023, in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Discovery Day focuses on igniting curiosity, creativity, and ambition in the next generation.

This year was a resounding success, showcasing all aspects of STEM through interactive demonstrations and hands-on learning experiences for over 1,800 students from Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska.

"Discovery Day is essential because it provides hands-on opportunities for potential future careers for these kids," said Lt. Col. Varun Purohit, a pilot with the 153rd Wyoming Air National Guard and the Director of Discovery Day. "We cover science, technology, engineering, art, and math—all represented here. It provides numerous opportunities to explore potential careers down the road."

Discovery Day is a collective effort, with dozens of local colleges, universities, businesses, and government organizations from surrounding areas joining forces.

According to Lt. Col. Purohit, this year's event featured 45 different exhibitors who showcased their specific field of expertise in a fun and engaging way, all on their own dime. The first Discovery Day hosted by the Wyoming Air National Guard saw just over 200 student visitors. The following year, the number increased to 800. This year, the attendance grew to over 1,800 students from 16 different schools. Senior Master Sgt. Codiann Moritz, an airfield manager and coordinator for Discovery Day, mentioned, "Next year, we're going to have an air show as well. So not only will you be able to see all our vendors, but you'll also see our performers."

Discovery Day's success is defined by its mission—to inspire, educate, and guide youth toward fulfilling futures. The hope and goal are that young participants left with newfound interests and aspirations. The community and the Wyoming Air National Guard find fulfillment in knowing that they contributed to building a brighter tomorrow.

The invitation is extended to join in this mission, and there is anticipation of continued collaboration that will inspire the leaders of tomorrow.



DISCOVERY DAY





Camp Guernsey *Celebrates* Newest Barracks Project

STORY BY MASTER SGT. JACQUELINE MARSHALL AND PHOTO BY CHIEF WARRANT OFFICE 4 NATHAN GALLOWAY

Camp Guernsey, Wyoming's premier military training facility, marked a significant milestone on June 1, 2023, with a momentous groundbreaking ceremony for its newest barracks project. The event brought together military officials, dignitaries, and community leaders to commemorate the beginning of this highly anticipated construction endeavor.

The groundbreaking ceremony showcased all involved parties' strong commitment and dedication to enhancing the infrastructure and facilities at Camp Guernsey. The state-of-the-art barracks project aims to provide modern and comfortable living quarters for the brave men and women serving in the military.

During the ceremony, Maj. Gen. Greg Porter, Wyoming National Guard adjutant general, Ed Delgado, Mayor of Guernsey, and Col. James Ezell, Construction and Facilities Management Officer for the Wyoming National Guard, delivered inspiring speeches, emphasizing the importance of Camp Guernsey as a vital training hub and the need for updated facilities to support the training and development of service members. In addition, the event served as a testament to the support from the local community and the broader region towards the military.

"It's a great day for the Wyoming Army National Guard as we officially break ground for the construction of a new barracks facility," said Ezell. "This important facility will profoundly enhance the way Camp Guernsey trains the Cowboy Guard and will dramatically increase the sleeping space for our Soldiers. This barracks, which is part of a 25-year Master Design Plan, will be the first of six barracks buildings on the east side of the Camp Guernsey parade field. It will set the stage for Camp Guernsey to become one of the top training facilities in the region when completed."

With the groundbreaking complete, construction on the new barracks will soon be underway, ensuring that Camp Guernsey continues to provide exceptional training opportunities and accommodations for the military personnel who utilize the facility, which will enhance the overall experience for service members and contribute to the ongoing success of the camp.

"On behalf of Maj. Gen. Gregory Porter, we want to thank Mayor Delgado, Guernsey's local elected officials, and the community of Guernsey for their support and participation in this process," said Ezell.

State of the Art **Facility**

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT. KRISTINA KRANZ

The Wyoming Military Department held a groundbreaking ceremony on May 2, 2023, for their new state-of-the-art military vehicle maintenance shop. The new facility, located at 3219 Coffeen Ave. in Sheridan, next to the Army National Guard armory, is expected to be completed by 2025.

The facility will play a critical role in ensuring the readiness and operational capabilities of the Wyoming Army National Guard's fleet of vehicles from several of the state's northern armories. Distinguished guests, military officials, and community leaders attended the groundbreaking ceremony to commemorate this important milestone in developing the new facility.

According to Col. James Ezell, the construction and facilities management officer for the Wyoming Military Department, "We're thrilled that all of the pieces came together in putting this vehicle maintenance shop here. We want to thank the city of Sheridan for having the Army National Guard here and supporting us."

The facility will replace the old one in Lovell and will serve as a multipurpose shop in a more centralized location. With 3-5 bays, storage, and administrative spaces, the facility will perform maintenance and services for vehicle inspections to ensure that vehicles are in top condition for Soldiers.

Sheridan has been a part of the Wyoming National Guard tradition and heritage for 135 years. Facilities like the vehicle maintenance shop only happen with the support and partnerships from communities like Sheridan.

Sheridan Mayor Rich Bridger expressed his excitement about the new facility, saying "This is very exciting. I'm delighted it came to fruition. This addition to our National Guard unit is nothing but a benefit for this city. I want to thank you for deciding to come to Sheridan."










U.S. ARMY





For generations, the Wyoming National Guard has shared a deep-rooted connection with Cheyenne Frontier Days, capturing the spirit of volunteerism that transcends their military service. In the National Guard, the commitment to both country and community is a way of life, and this dedication extends far beyond their call of duty.

During CFD, service members eagerly join the ranks of volunteers at the "Daddy of 'em All" to contribute their time and energy to this iconic event. For over 100 years, Cheyenne has welcomed over half a million visitors from around the globe to partake in the rich tapestry of the Western way of life.

At the heart of this cultural celebration lies the rodeo, one of the largest outdoor rodeos on the planet. Over 2,500 individuals from all walks of life come together, year in and year out, to ensure the success of the "Daddy of 'em All." It stands as a tribute to the sense of community and camaraderie that characterizes both the Wyoming National Guard and Cheyenne Frontier Days as they celebrate their shared heritage in the heart of cowboy country.

Wyoming National Guard's ***Cowboy Spirit*** at *Cheyenne Frontier Days*

STORY BY WYNG PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE | PHOTOS BY SGT KRISTINA KRANZ | SSGT KYLEE WARREN

STORY BY SFC RICHARD COLE AND PHOTOS BY MSGT JON ALDERMAN | SGT KRISTINA KRANZ

The 67th Army Band "Wyoming's Own," a beacon of musical talent and community service, had a remarkable year in 2023. This dedicated group of Soldiers and musicians served not only Wyoming but also the nation through a myriad of events, including Soldier support, family activities, recruiting efforts, public diplomacy, and community relations. With over 57 performances, they reached an impressive 35,000 people throughout the state. Here are some of the highlights that made 2023 a memorable year for the 67th Army Band.

Wyoming Music Educators Association Conference: In January, the 67th Army Band's music performance team, known as "Independence Rock," took center stage at the annual Wyoming Music Educators Association Conference in Sheridan, Wyoming. They delighted around 400 all-state music students with a repertoire that spanned famous country, pop, and rock songs. The performance, held at Sheridan High School, was a standout moment during the conference, leaving a lasting impression on the young and aspiring musicians.

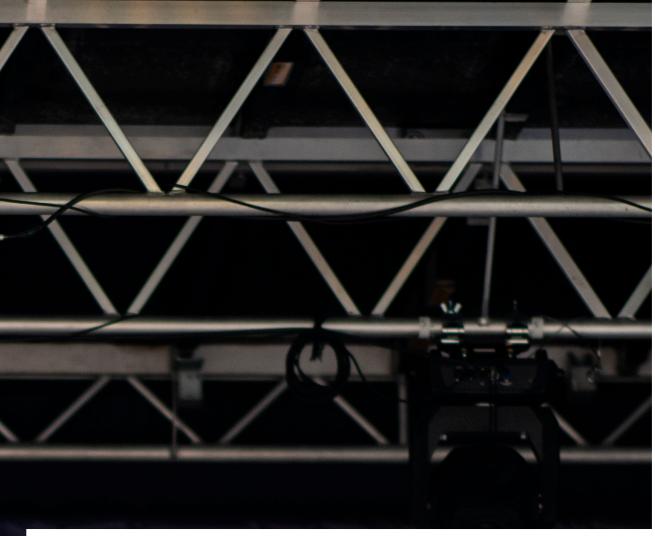
State Recruiting Tour: In April, the band put their collective annual training to good use by embarking on a state recruiting tour for the Wyoming Army National Guard. They made stops in Laramie and Sheridan, where they engaged with high school audiences and the wider community. The tour featured captivating performances by music teams such as "Frontier Brass," a New Orleans-style brass band; "Warrior Bard," a Celtic/folk ensemble; and the ever-energetic "Independence Rock," specializing in rock, pop, and country music. These performances not only entertained but also educated audiences on the essential mission of the WYARNG.

Cheyenne Frontier Days: The 67th Army Band "Frontier Brass" and "Independence Rock" teams took the stage at Cheyenne Frontier Days, an iconic event that draws crowds from far and wide. The Frontier Brass band graced one CFD parade, while Independence Rock rocked the streets during two parades.

Their performance at the Cheyenne Depot Plaza in front of approximately 5,000 CFD attendees and Cheyenne locals on July 26 was a resounding success. Independence Rock's electrifying show not only provided entertainment but also served as an opportunity to convey the strategic messaging of the adjutant general. It was a performance that will be remembered as one of the best and most well-received in the history of the music performance team.

The 67th Army Band's 2023 journey was a harmonious blend of musical excellence and community engagement. They enriched the lives of thousands through their artistry while simultaneously promoting the vital mission of the Wyoming Army National Guard. As they continue to serve and inspire, the 67th Army Band's commitment to both music and community remains.

PHOTO BY MSGT JON ALDERMAN









“Wyoming’s Own” *67th Army Band*



Award Recipients
2023 Governor's Reception

(Top Left) Retired Senior Master Sgt. Robert Born is presented the Wyoming National Guard Association Medal for Excellence for is service and support of the Wyoming National Guard. (Top Right) Tim Sheppard, executive director for the Wyoming Veterans Commission, is presented a Meritorious Service Award for his contributions to the Vets Feeding Vets program through the Veterans Commission. Robin Gradpre, project and performance manager for the Wyoming Department of Education, is presented the Patrick Henry Award for her support and contributions to the WDE's partnership with the Wyoming National Guard (Bottom).







PHOTOS BY SGT KRISTINA KRANZ

COWBOY GUARD 135 BIRTHDAY







Wyo. Air Guard Already Has Role in Viet Nam

Bureau that the Wyoming Guard would be mobilized.

"We don't have priority units at this time," he said.

He said the authorized strength of the Wyoming Army National Guard was for 1,665 officers and men.

"We had about 1,279 available as of June 30," he said.

He said the total state air guardsmen was 632 — "pretty close to the authorized strength."

Congregational Church Founder Here for Visit

The Rev. Horace Parsons and Mrs. Parsons of Keokuk, Iowa will be visiting at the First Congregational Church of Casper Sunday, July 18. Parsons helped organize this church in 1954 and was its minister until 1959, when he accepted a call to the First Congregational Church of Keokuk.

Also visiting in Casper with the Parsons are Dr. and Mrs. Herman Lindeman, the parents of Mrs. Parsons. Dr. Lindeman is well-known in Casper as he helped Mr. Parsons organize the local Congregational Church and

On May 30, 2023, a crowd gathered at Joint Force Headquarters to join in celebrating the rich heritage of the Wyoming National Guard. The Cowboy Guard, established 135 years ago, has served a vital role as the Sword and Shield of the state and nation. With a history that predates Wyoming's statehood, the Guard has served domestically and abroad, protecting the homeland and contributing to the nation's efforts. From the Wyoming National Guards' earliest days to the modern era, its members have exemplified bravery, sacrifice, and dedication.

About the Wyoming National Guard

1,102 *Full-Time Employees*

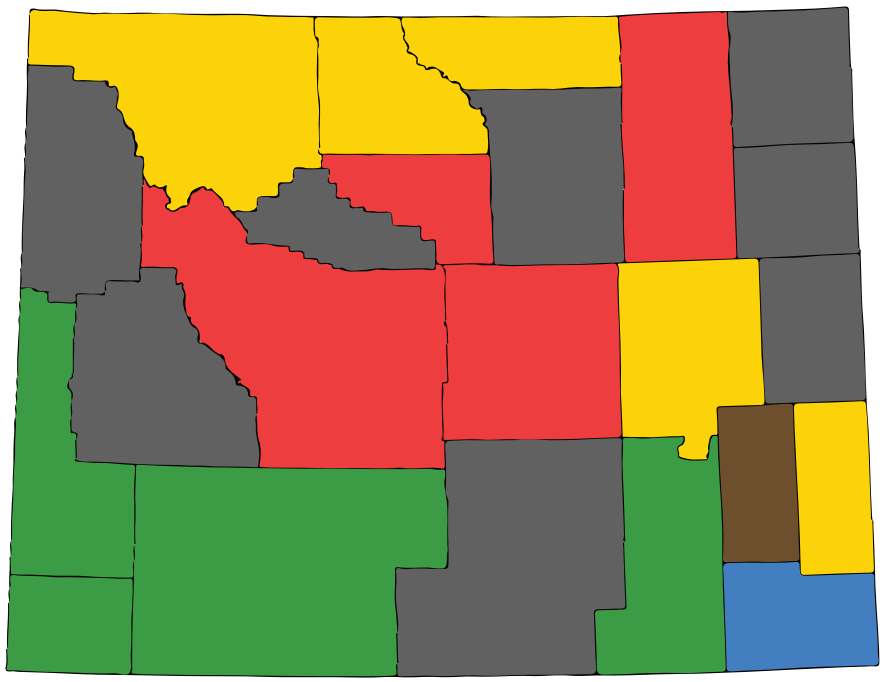
190 ***Army AGR***

253 ***Army Tech/T5***

282 ***Air AGR***

188 ***Air Tech/T5***

189 ***State***



Wyoming Army National Guard
Members live in
23 Wyoming Counties
and 35 States



Wyoming Air National Guard
Members live in
18 Wyoming Counties
and 46 States



$123.71 Million Budget

$114.4m Federal

$9.31m State

**Numbers are a snapshot as of Sept. 30, 2023*

WHERE WE SERVE

WYOMING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD | **CHEYENNE**
Wyoming Army National Guard - BG Steve Alkire, CW5 Doug Drost, SCSM Lindsay Schmidt
Joint Force Headquarters - MAJ Patrick Hartzel, 1SG Adrienne Gibbs
Wyoming Medical Detachment - CPT Ariel Hunt, 1SG David Vanderpool
84th Civil Support Team - MAJ Casey Henry, 1SG Aaron Benson
115th Fires Brigade - COL Alex Fisher, CSM Deborah Manzanares | HHB - CPT Jeff Gradowski, 1SG Johnny Taylor
148th Signal Company - CPT Collin Gahm-Nakos, 1SG Rafael Andrade
Recruiting and Retention Battalion - LTC Paul Leoni, CSM Edmundo Herrera
G Company, 1st Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment - CPT Dustin Wambach, 1SG Andrew Monnin

960TH BRIGADE SUPPORT BATTALION | **SHERIDAN (HQ), LOVELL, POWELL, DOUGLAS, TORRINGTON**
LTC Corey Castle, CSM Timothy Smith | HSC - CPT Christopher Vallejo, 1SG Chancy Elkins
920th Forward Support Company - 1LT Wyatt Wingett, 1SG Wilder Hatch

94TH TROOP COMMAND | **LARAMIE (HQ), ROCK SPRINGS, WHEATLAND, EVANSTON, AFTON**
COL Jakob Norman, CSM Bill Spaulding
941st Batallion - LTC Nicholas Rayes, CSM Katherine Zwiefel
133rd Engineer Company - CPT Ethan Carswell, 1SG Stacey Hiser
197th Public Affairs Detachment - 1LT Chelby Rush, SFC Ashley Motley
67th Army Band - CW2 Brett White, 1SG Richard Fertig
C Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment - 1LT Hunter Hinckley, 1SG William Corkins
D Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment - CPT Eric Rush, SGM Curtis Jacobs

CAMP GUERNSEY TRAINING CENTER | **GUERNSEY**
COL Scott Morey, CSM James Swingholm
213th Regiment - LTC Amy Henry, 1SG Ishmael Campbell
1st Modular Training Battalion - LTC Amy Henry, 1SG Ishmael Campbell

2-300TH FIELD ARTILLERY REGIMENT | **CASPER (HQ), GILLETTE, LANDER**
LTC Michael Kingman, CSM Spencer Jolley | HHB - CPT Matthew Buchanan, 1SG Christopher Upton
A Battery, 2-300th - CPT Jacob Brabender, 1SG Jason Lutz
B Battery, 2-300th - CPT Greyson Buckingham, 1SG Evan Bock

WYOMING AIR NATIONAL GUARD | **CHEYENNE**
Wyoming Air National Guard - Col Barry Deibert, Col Brian Diehl, CMSgt Douglas Rhodes
153rd Airlift Wing - Col Barry Deibert, CMSgt Douglas Rhodes, SMSgt Jacqueline Carlson
153rd Comptroller Flight - Lt Col Freddie McMillan, SMSgt Carrie Galaz
153rd Operations Group - Col TJ Gagnon, CMSgt Sarah Brewster
187th Airlift Squadron - Lt Col Jonathan Holland, MSgt Douglas Benton
187th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron - Lt Col Jason Arndt, CMSgt Thor Rasmussen
153rd Operations Support Squadron - Lt Col Jeremy Burton, SMSgt Todd Davis
243rd Air Traffic Control Squadron - Capt Daniel Hochhalter, SMSgt Gary Purnell
153rd Maintenance Group - Col Gary Monroe, CMSgt Janna Holcomb and CMSgt Scott Wagner
153rd Maintenance Squadron - Lt Col Carl Johansen, CMSgt Christopher Carlson and CMSgt Larry Quinn
153rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron - Lt Col Naomi Donovan, CMSgt John Moritz
153rd Maintenance Operations Flight - Maj Josh Eveslage, SMSgt Laura Brow
153rd Mission Support Group - Col Nicole Chavez, CMSgt Erik Smith
153rd Logistics Readiness Squadron - Lt Col Tina Tweedy, CMSgt Jesse Johnson and CMSgt Christopher Lujan
153rd Civil Engineer Squadron - Lt Col Matthew Sturtevant, SMSgt John Deese
153rd Force Support Squadron - Maj Shelia Sells, CMSgt Denise Hondel
153rd Security Forces Squadron - Capt Terrence Bell, CMSgt Jennifer Lovering
153rd Communications Flight - Maj John Jasper, CMSgt Emily Collins
253rd Command & Control Group - Col Jason Allen, CMSgt Robert Merrill
153rd Command & Control Squadron - Lt Col Eric Hill, CMSgt David Ziegelbauer
253rd Support Squadron - Lt Col Tonja Moon, SMSgt Mark Ramler
253rd Security Forces Squadron - Maj Travis Huntley, SMSgt Michael Coughenour
153rd Medical Group - Col Peter Cronin, CMSgt Theresa Sheheen

**The roles and titles reflect the majority of the 2023 calendar year*





STATE EMPLOYEES OF THE WYOMING MILITARY DEPARTMENT

WYOMING NATIONAL GUARD

LEADERSHIP



Gov. Mark Gordon
The Commander & Chief



Maj. Gen. Gregory C. Porter
The Adjutant General



Brig. Gen. Michelle Mulberry
Chief of Staff ~ Air



Col. Toby Alkire
Chief of Staff ~ Army



Col. Tina Tweedy
Director of Staff - Air



Chief Master Sgt. Joshua Moore
Command Senior Enlisted Leader



Command Sgt Maj. Lindsay Schmidt
State Command Sergeant Major



Chief Master Sgt. Svend Larsen
State Command Chief Master Sergeant



Mr. Doug Shope
Wyoming Military Department Deputy Director



Brig. Gen. Steve Alkire
Assistant Adjutant General ~ Army



Brig. Gen. Justin Walrath
Assistant Adjutant General ~ Air



Brig. Gen. David Pritchett
Director of the Joint Staff



Col. Barry Deibert
153rd Airlift Wing Commander



Col. Jason Salsgiver
U.S. Property & Fiscal Officer



Chief Warrant Officer 5 Doug Drost
State Command Chief Warrant Officer



Mr. Tim Sheppard
Wyoming Veterans Commission Director



Mrs. Germaletta Brown
STARBASE Academy Director



Col. Ken Johnston
Civil Air Patrol, Wyoming Wing Commander

**LEADERSHIP LISTED IS FOR THE MAJORITY 2023*





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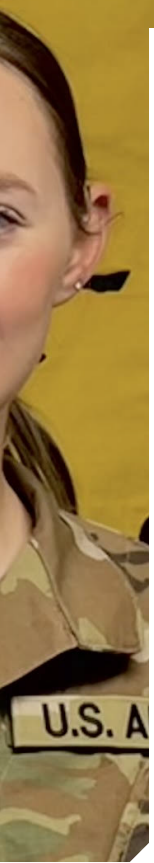

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