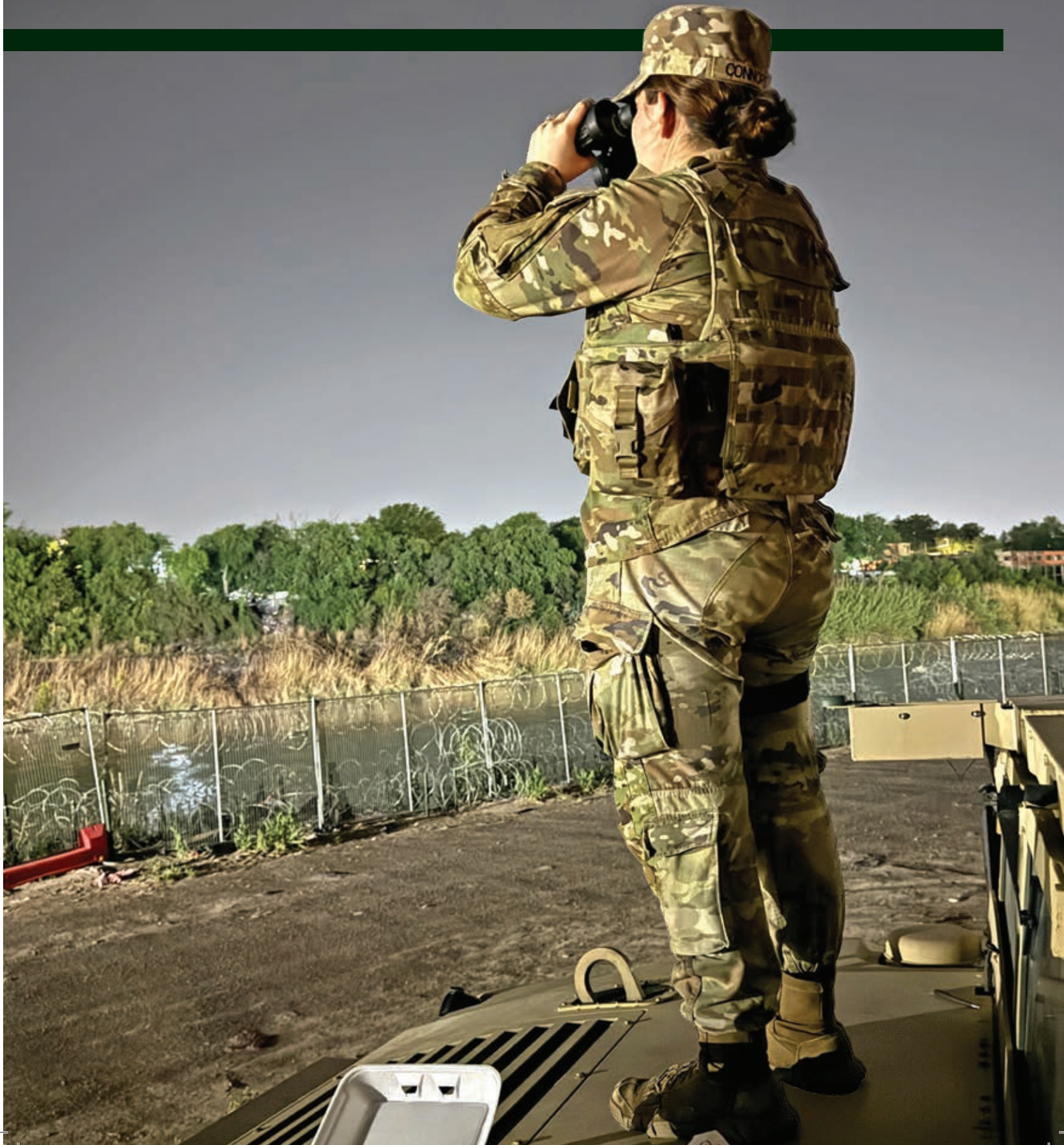


NEW HAMPSHIRE

Spring 2024

GUARDSMAN

MAGAZINE





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Governor of
New Hampshire



**Maj. Gen.
David Mikolaities**

Adjutant General of
the N.H. National Guard

Brig. Gen. John LeBlanc
Commander of the N.H. Army National Guard

Brig. Gen. John Pogorek
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COVER: **Pfc. Macenzi Connors** of 237th Military Police Battalion, New Hampshire Army National Guard, watches for illegal activity at an observation point in Eagle Pass, Texas. Photo by Annmarie Timmins, New Hampshire Bulletin.



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U.S., CENTRAL AMERICAN MILITARY LEADERS REAFFIRM THEIR COMMITMENT TO REGIONAL SECURITY, PARTNERSHIP

Story and photo by Sgt. Maj. Tanya Lumbard, U.S. Army South Public Affairs

U.S. and Central American military leaders gathered in El Salvador on May 21 to reaffirm their shared commitment to regional security and to renew partner-nation engagement and training opportunities for the upcoming years.

The multinational forum, hosted by U.S. Army South, served as the 19th edition of the U.S.-El Salvador army-to-army staff talks and the fifth Central American (CENTAM) Working Group, which was designed to enhance interoperability amongst American, Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Honduran armies.

“This partnership matters,” said New Hampshire Adjutant Maj. Gen. David Mikolaities, principal U.S. Army leader at the conference whose state collaborates regularly with El Salvador as part of the U.S. National Guard’s State Partnership Program. “Based on our shared values and our ideals, we all have a mutual interest of working together to establish a common operating picture so we can help solve the problems that our countries face together.”

Partnership echoed throughout the forum, which began as Maj. Michelle Sharp, Army South intelligence security cooperation chief, shared the successes of the annual CENTAM Regional Intelligence Working Group with Mikolaities, Salvadoran Army Col. Mario Figueroa, Guatemalan Naval Capt. Hector Ortiz, Honduran Army Col. Marco Lanza and their delegations. This working group, now on its third year, is a current agreed-to-action (ATA) between U.S. Army South and Central American partners that focusses on regional security, intelligence issues, and solutions to common threats and challenges.

“This working group provides a venue for each nation’s intelligence professionals to create interoperable regional strategies and strengthen intelligence relationships through sharing and collaboration,” said Sharp, who added that the expanding Army South-led committee recently developed the first-of-its-kind Central American Regional Security and Intelligence Strategy. “The strengths of the partnerships that this committee builds have attracted new regional partners to join.”

Regional partnership is also annually displayed during CENTAM Guardian, a U.S. Southern Command-sponsored and Army South-supported multinational exercise whereby participating countries practice a combined response to simulated regional threats.

Maj. Michael Garza, Army South G7 Training Readiness Exercise and Army Reserve Engagement Cell planner, discussed CENTAM Guardian’s successes and lessons learned during the forum, sparking collaborative dialogue with Salvadoran, Honduran and Guatemalan counterparts about ways to improve forthcoming iterations.

“The multinational working group enhances future CENTAM Guardian exercises by developing real world contingencies



From left: Honduran Army Col. Marco Lanza, Salvadoran Army Col. Mario Figueroa, New Hampshire Adjutant U.S. Army Maj. Gen. David Mikolaities, and Guatemalan Naval Capt. Hector Ortiz reaffirm their shared commitment to regional security and renew partner-nation engagement and training opportunities during a multinational forum held May 21 in San Salvador, El Salvador. The forum, hosted by U.S. Army South, served as the 19th edition of the U.S.-El Salvador army-to-army staff talks and the fifth Central American Working Group, which was designed to enhance interoperability amongst American, Salvadoran, Guatemalan and Honduran armies.

in a rapidly changing environment,” said Garza. “Continuous collaboration and information sharing will build upon previous exercises.

We are confident allied and partner nations will continue to develop effective training concepts to increase interoperability, functional capacities and capabilities to respond effectively to real world threats.”

The multinational forum also enabled bilateral interactions and strategic-level discussions amongst the partner-nation armies, which culminated with the four principals signing a nonbinding memorandum of understanding and agreeing to multiple army-to-army exchanges, combined exercises and other professional military activities in the upcoming years.

Mikolaities said that overall, the event was instrumental to enhancing interoperability between all four partner nations and that there are common issues affecting the region that must be addressed as a team.

“We have a strong history of partnership and working together,” he said to his Central American counterparts. “Working together to understand the problems, having a common operating picture and domain awareness matters. Our future is stronger when we’re together.”

NEW HAMPSHIRE AIRMAN SAVES LIFE AT GYM

By Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW Public Affairs

Moments after stepping into his local gym, a New Hampshire National Guardsman saved the life of a fellow patron on the evening of April 15.

"There was a man on the elliptical, business as usual, with a few other people walking around," said Airman 1st Class Sokthearrith Dong, an aircrew flight equipment specialist with the 157th Operations Group. "As soon as I walked in, he fell off the machine and slammed his head on the ground."

Another gym-goer yelled for help, and Dong responded.

"I felt for a pulse, but I didn't feel anything," Dong said. "The trainer in there came over to help. We put the AED (automated external defibrillator) on him and followed the instructions."

Outside of the Guard, Dong is a patrol supervisor with the Old Orchard Beach Police Department and has been trained on AEDs for worst-case scenarios. The machine prompted him to start doing compressions and eventually to administer a shock.

"I was surprised," Dong said. "I've responded to plenty of incidents before, but this was the first time I've ever had to administer a shock."

A cycle of compressions passed and the AED announced another wave.

"I remember thinking, 'No way, this doesn't seem right,'" Dong said. "But I kept following the instructions the machine was giving me. It seemed like the man had agonal breathing, but he was still with us."

Soon after, the Saco Fire Department medics arrived, hooked up their EKG and shocked the man a third time.

The man was transferred to Maine Medical Center, treated for cardiac arrest and survived.

"His ability and willingness to initiate emergency care immediately saved this man's life," said David Hamel, the deputy chief with Saco Fire Department. "It goes without saying, Airman Dong came to the needs of a complete stranger in his gravest hour, and for that, we are all grateful."

Dong received first aid, tactical combat casualty care and response training in military and police uniforms.

"Last drill, I went through the TCCC training and I kept thinking, good thing I had that," he said. "I'm not religious or anything, but I got to the gym really late that day, and you know how it goes, everything happens for a reason."

Dong enlisted in the New Hampshire Air National Guard in 2023 and graduated technical training only a month before the incident. He lives just one town over from the gym in southern Maine.

"He hasn't been with us long, but he's got a great work ethic and he's a true Citizen-Airman," said Tech. Sgt. Joel Miller, Dong's supervisor and an aircrew flight equipment specialist with the 157th Operations Group.

Dong said he always wanted to join the Guard.

"I think the thing about the Guard is the great environment here and how they instill being a leader," he added. "You hear all the time it's not just doing the right thing but stepping up when no one is watching."



Airman 1st Class Sokthearrith Dong



Team El Salvador hoists the Remington Centennial Trophy at the 2024 New Hampshire National Guard Combat Marksmanship Match on June 8 at Fort Devens, Mass. The squad successfully defended its title as reigning champions against 20 four-person teams. New Hampshire Army National Guard teams, “Cool-Guy Tabs Plus One” and “Call for Fire,” placed second and third, respectively. From left are **2nd Lt. Jaime Eduardo Peraza Orantes**; **Lt. Diego Ricardo Cuellar Ramirez**; **2nd Lt. Roberto Santiago Torres Alfaro**, and **2nd Lt. José Raúl Moran Rodríguez**.

REPEAT CHAMPIONS

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO

Team El Salvador and Mountain Company Commander Capt. Robert Matzelle defended their titles in the 2024 New Hampshire National Guard Combat Marksmanship Match held June 6 to 8 at Fort Devens, Mass.

The Salvadorans bested a field of 21 four-person squads in the team competition and Matzelle finished as the top individual shooter out of 90 competitors.

“The reason I come out here and shoot is, one, I want to set a good example for my soldiers, and two, shooting is part of my job,” Matzelle said.

Matzelle’s “Cool Guy Tabs Plus One” crew placed second behind an impressive showing from the Salvadorans who along with squads from Cabo Verde and Canada competed for the second straight year.

“Those guys are legit,” Matzelle conceded.

Known simply as the adjutant general’s or “TAG” match, the three-day shoot featured various pistol and rifle events at ranges from 20 to 100 yards in a battle-focused environment.

Marksmen employed two weapons: M4 rifles topped with precision optics and M17/M18 pistols with iron sights. Extensive tactical gear, or “kit,” was worn, including helmets, holsters, ammo pouches and load-bearing vests.

Competitors pushed through nine courses and fired a prescribed number of rounds from a standing, prone, sitting or kneeling

position within strict time limits. One course forced teams to sprint about 100 yards to the firing line to elevate breathing and challenge accuracy. Others mandated quick draws, magazine changes and target transitions.

“The directions, the time, all the minute, nuanced details of each different course of fire, we’re just not accustomed to it yet,” said Lt. Col. Daniel Sawicki of Joint Force Headquarters, who captained his inexperienced “Better Blindfolded” team of airmen. “All of those things, they all just kind of play on top of each other. Makes it a little stressful but in a good way, a fun way.”

Staff Sgt. Wayne Comtois, a marksmanship instructor with operations, helped plan and coordinate the match with experience gained from national-level competitions. He and a team of 11 soldiers ensured ranges ran safely, efficiently and provided optimal training value.

“The soldiers and airmen who come here and compete, they learn different techniques,” Comtois said. “They learn different combat related tasks, they bring that back to their units, and they spread the knowledge.”

NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities addressed competitors once all ammunition was expended and final scores were tallied.

“The American public trusts you to do the right thing,” he said. “And that trust is based upon us as American soldiers and airmen being able to do our job. And it all starts here: basic marksmanship fundamentals.”

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

By Senior Master Sgt. Timm Huffman, 157th ARW Public Affairs

The whirl of robots and buzz of drones filled Hangar 253 during the 157th Air Refueling Wing's first-ever event dedicated to inspiring the next generation of STEM leaders May 18.

About 25 local businesses, schools, non-profits, and robotics teams joined with the New Hampshire Air National Guard unit at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington to showcase career paths available in science, technology, engineering, and math fields.

Capt. Kyle Starkweather, a comptroller with the 157th ARW, spearheaded the event.

"We are engaging with the local community, especially those youth organizations that specialize in STEM, to give them a place to display the things they're working on and show some of the STEM opportunities within the Air Force and New Hampshire Air National Guard," he said.

Spark Academy, a local charter school focused on advanced manufacturing, brought its Boston Dynamics Spot robot. The robo-dog caught the eye of FIRST Robotics Competition Team 166, which was demonstrating its disk-tossing robot. The two groups of high schoolers were soon playing robot fetch.

Tim Bevis of FRC Team 166 said the event was important because technology and engineering are fundamental "to our future."

"It's really important to understand the scientific method and core values of engineering at a young age," he added. "So when you grow up you can either go into [a STEM] field or have enough knowledge so you can understand them and understand how technology is changing around the world."

Other exhibitors included:

Civil Air Patrol, 1000 Drones for 1000 Girls, CHI Aerospace, MIT Beaver Works, Lonza, Academy of Model Aeronautics, Armi Biofab USA, NASA, Pfizer, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Pratt and Whitney, LifeFlight of Maine, and Portsmouth Regional Hospital.

Leaders at the 157th ARW said they look forward to hosting more STEM Days in the coming years.

To learn more about the 157th Air Refueling Wing and how they leverage STEM concepts visit: <http://www.157arw.ang.af.mil>



Chop Shop 166, a division of FIRST Robotics from Merrimack, plays fetch with its hand-made robot and a mechanical canine named Spot on May 18 at the first STEM Open House at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW Public Affairs.



Maj. Zachariah Vaughan, a pilot with the 64th Air Refueling Squadron, and his son, Orrick Vaughan, attend the first-ever STEM Open House on May 18 at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW Public Affairs.



Sgt. Connor Decker of the 237th Military Police Company, New Hampshire Army National Guard, surveys the border while on duty at Eagle Pass, Texas.

237TH MILITARY POLICE COMPANY ENCOUNTERS NEW CHALLENGES AT TEXAS BORDER

Story and photos by Annmarie Timmins, New Hampshire Bulletin

EAGLE PASS, Texas (New Hampshire Bulletin) - New Hampshire National Guard Lt. Ryan Camp looked through the border fence separating Texas and Mexico and made a mental note of the pickup truck crawling back and forth along the bank of the Rio Grande. He logged the man fishing and the person he could hear but not see walking through the brush below the fence.

Camp's list of events can grow long by the end of a 10-hour shift.

That's the kind of vigilance, he said, that left his unit prepared to spot a group of migrants crossing the river in darkness Wednesday night. Soldiers intercepted the foursome after they cut the fence and slipped under.

"You have to pay attention and be observant of what's happening not only in front of you at the anti-climb barrier, but what's happening in the river, and what's happening on the opposite bank," Camp said during a patrol last week. "Every encounter we have on the border is different, and we have to adapt every night to every scenario."

Gov. Chris Sununu deployed 15 National Guard soldiers to Eagle Pass, Texas, in early April to help that state stop undocumented

migrants and drugs from coming into the country illegally. The New Hampshire soldiers pair with Guard members from Texas and Louisiana, patrolling 1½ miles of Texas's 1,250-mile border overnight. Camp said they encounter about 50 migrants a night on average, a huge drop from the 5,000 who were arriving in December.

Their orders allow them to do three things: report suspicious or illegal activity to Texas authorities; direct migrants to a legal port of entry; and aid migrants only amid danger to their "life, limb, or eyes."

They cannot arrest or detain migrants. They cannot even give them water.

Pfc. Dennis Harris, 42, of Freedom, was keeping watch from atop a Humvee last week.

"It's more of a safety aspect both for the people that are trying to cross and for the people that are here in the States," he said. "Because, yes, some people that are crossing are obviously family members but there's also other individuals who are crossing that we probably don't want living next door."

Logistically and emotionally challenging

The soldiers' mission, which will keep them in Texas until early June, is likely more logistically and emotionally complicated than it looks from afar. It can be frustrating, they said, to watch a situation unfold and be so limited in responding.

That includes waiting for a person to cut or climb over a fence before calling in Texas authorities and saying no to someone asking for water.

Some migrants ask the soldiers to admit them because they fear for their safety at home. Some appear with young children. They risk drowning in the Rio Grande to get that far. Some spend hours looking for a spot out of the soldiers' sight to cut the fence and slip under. Last week a woman and two men slept two nights against the fence, asking the soldiers to let them in. Camp, who like the other New Hampshire soldiers does not speak Spanish, used Google Translate to communicate with them.



Lt. Ryan Camp of the 941st Military Police Battalion uses Google Translate to communicate with a woman who spent two nights at the border fence in Eagle Pass, Texas seeking asylum.

"She was saying that she would rather be imprisoned here than in Mexico and that Mexico was dangerous," Camp, 26, of Brookfield, said.

Camp recounted a man approaching the fence carrying a toddler in his backpack, through coils of wire with sharp barbs that can quickly shred a pack.

Last week, a group of migrants found an opportunity to climb over the fence unnoticed and cleared a second fence about 200 yards away. To protect themselves against the sharp wire, they drape it with clothes or blankets. Sometimes they light the material on fire to melt the wire.

When troops noticed the migrants fleeing, Sgt. Timothy King, 26, of Fremont, said they responded the only way their orders allow them to: call authorities who have the power to take migrants into custody – if they find them.

"I've seen instances where (migrants) will sit in the brush for probably up to nine or 10 hours," King said. "They are determined. They will just go out there and just take a nap and ... wait until the search gets called off and they can get through."

Soldiers from other states have seen individuals leave infants at the fence and return to Mexico, waiting to see if the authorities take the child into the United States. If they don't, they swim across the river again and collect the child.

Guard members from another state saw a woman give birth at the fence. In that case, soldiers responded because the life of the mother and child were at risk.

"You do everything you can to make sure that if something goes wrong, you can save them," Camp said. "But until then you have to do your job."

He said those experiences take a toll on soldiers. The unit was given resources for mental health treatment when they arrived. Camp and another troop leader, Sgt. 1st Class Cameron Holt-Corti of North Berwick, Maine, watch their soldiers for signs they are struggling and help them seek treatment.

"Our job is simple to describe, but there is nothing simple about it," Camp said.

According to media reports last year, U.S. Customs and Border Protection said 14 of its agents had died by suicide in 2022, the highest count in a single year since it began tracking suicides in 2007.

There are no days off

At the start of his 7 p.m. shift, Holt-Corti, 34, stepped aside, his cell phone to his ear. He was wishing his three children goodnight.

"You miss them, and it's rough on them," he said. "I've talked to them every day."

Each of the 15 Guard members, whose ages range from 19 to 42, left something behind when they volunteered for this mission.

Harris, who also has children, works in construction. Holt-Corti is the director of safety at a welding company. Camp works at Sig Sauer's testing range and looks after his parents. One soldier is trying to keep up with college courses.

"You have to make sure that you're talking with your work, you're talking to your professors," Camp said. "One of the things that can be hard for people is the world doesn't stop while you're gone. So you'll come back and things are different. And you end up playing catch up."

They are staying an hour from Eagle Pass, in Base Camp Alpha, in Del Rio, a commute that stretches their 10-hour shift to 12 hours. They've got a gym and a chow hall that serves a lot of shrimp. They cannot have alcohol on or off duty. Some have to get around in a minivan because the car rental agency had nothing else.

Soldiers work three nights, followed by three days off. But "off" is a misnomer because they use those days to keep their service pistol in working order and keep up with training.

"That's the Army as a whole," Camp said. "When you have a day off, in reality, you don't really have a day off. You have a calmer day."

BACK FROM THE BORDER, TROOPS HAVE NEW PERSPECTIVE: 'IT'S HEAVY IN EVERY WAY.'

Story and photos by Annmarie Timmins, New Hampshire Bulletin

EAGLE PASS, Texas (New Hampshire Bulletin) - The relentless Texas heat, even during their overnight shift, was a challenge. Not every soldier appreciated Edgar, the tarantula living in their gym. The Alamo was less impressive than they expected.

The 15 National Guard soldiers Gov. Chris Sununu deployed to the Texas border in April returned to New Hampshire this month with other memories that were far harder to share. At the top of the list was seeing families, especially children, risk so much, even their lives, to reach the United States.

Sgt. Timothy King wiped away tears recalling the young girl he saw lying on the Mexico side of the border fence, looking near death from heat stroke. Soldiers were denied permission to cut the fence to reach her and instead passed ice sheets over it to cool her body. Before King knew whether the girl, about 4, lived or died, he was called away for a fight involving nearly 100 migrants.

"I called the chaplain and did a prayer for the kid," said King, 26, of Fremont. "I was trying to talk myself out of 'the kid was dead.' It sticks with you more than you think."

Learning later that the girl and her father, also suffering from heat stroke, survived didn't make the encounter any easier to share.

New Hampshire Guard troops have deployed to the Mexico-U.S. border before under federal orders to assist the U.S. Border Patrol. This time, Sununu used \$850,000 in state money to send them to Eagle Pass, Texas, to help it beef up security at its border. The soldiers were not authorized to detain individuals. Instead they monitored for suspicious activity and reported breaches in the fence and illegal crossings to Texas authorities.

In their two-month deployment, the soldiers averaged about 35 detections a night of suspicious activity and illegal crossings. A few migrants tried to run into the woods after clearing the fence but most were "give ups," people who requested asylum immediately, said Spc. Conner Sills.

Nights were often busy even before their 1.5 miles of responsibility along the fence doubled.

"You have to pay attention and be observant of what's happening not only in front of you at the anti-climb barrier, but what's happening in the river, and what's happening on the opposite bank," Lt. Ryan Camp told the Bulletin during its reporting trip to Eagle Pass in April. "Every encounter we have on the border is different, and we have to adapt every night to every scenario."



This was the first deployment to the border for the 237th Military Police Company's three female soldiers, **Pfc. Madalyn Delotto**, **Spc. Kayli Gilman**, and **Pfc. Macenzi Connors**.

When Sununu welcomed the soldiers back Tuesday at the Guard's Pembroke armory, he congratulated them on their work.

"It's not like getting duty in Vegas or somewhere exotic and exciting. It can be a tough place and obviously, tough temperatures, even at night," he said. "There's no doubt you made a difference."

In their two-month stint, nightly detections of individuals went from an average of 35 to zero, a drop soldiers credited largely to Texas' decision to fence off its border with Mexico and line it with soldiers from around the country. As of April, the most

You see it on the news and you're like 'That's sad,' and you change the channel and forget about it. But going down there and seeing it firsthand, it's definitely eye-opening.

- Kayli Gilman, 21, of Weare

recent data available, encounters in the Del Rio sector, which includes Eagle Pass, were down 14.3 percent over last year, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection data.

"People come up (from Mexico to cross) and say, 'Maybe not here,'" King said.

The soldiers declined to talk about the politics of the border or respond to criticism from some New Hampshire leaders who called Sununu's decision to deploy them a political stunt. Nor

would they share their thoughts on learning during their flight home that President Joe Biden had signed an executive order allowing him to close the border under certain conditions.

But the troops will tell you that it's nearly impossible to grasp the complexity of the border crisis from nearly 2,000 miles away in New Hampshire. You need to see it firsthand, they said.

"There are thousands of variables, and when you're not exposed to it, you think there's maybe one or two that go into how a decision should be made," said Sgt. Connor Decker during interviews with soldiers after they returned. "But it's heavy. It's a heavy geopolitical climate. It's heavy in humanitarian services. It's heavy in every single way you could fathom, and it's too complex to say that something is right and absolute and wrong and absolute. It's almost like there is no right or wrong answer to how to handle things."

Decker, 28, of Salem, added, "Which is why we leave all the decisions for the people way above us and just carry out what we (are ordered to) do."

Capt. Joshua Lynde, commander of the 237th Military Police Company, did not travel with the soldiers but debriefed with them Tuesday.

"If you only hear something on the news ... what you might experience and realize is that it's not always malicious," he told them. "It's also people who are just desperately trying to find a better life somehow. And then when you see a family unit of parents and children and they just walk 1,000 miles to get there? It's difficult. Sometimes it's those experiences that will help you broaden your perspective."

That was true for Spc. Kayli Gilman, 21, of Weare, who hadn't been deployed to the border before. Asked what stuck most with her, she said a change in perspective.

"You kind of get kind of blind to the fact that we have it so good here in a way," Gilman said. "You see it on the news ... and you're like 'That's sad,' and you change the channel and forget about it. But going down there and seeing it firsthand, it's definitely eye-opening. Now, if I'm having a bad day ... in my head I remember that I could always have it worse. It could always be worse."

Decker, who had deployed to the southern border before, recounted some of those worse moments. He watched several adults with a child trying to make their way over the fence coils of razor wire.

"It tested my personal resolve ... for the safety of that child," he said. "That rattled me. That was really tough to look at (because of) how that could have gone." Decker didn't have to imagine the possibilities because he saw it go badly another night when someone cut their femoral artery trying to clear the fence.

Also challenging was being unable to assist because their orders prohibited them from helping migrants, including getting a child over the fence safely. "We're just the call-out guys (who report incidents). So having to watch is very tough at times," he said.

Sills, 21, of Windham, who had been deployed to the border before, echoed that and recalled seeing a woman hurt her wrist and ankle jumping over the fence as her husband and child waited.

"Her child on the other side started crying. Then her husband started crying and she started crying," Sills said. This played out within sight of the legal port of entry, where the family could have requested asylum. "It's just not a good feeling to have these families that are doing everything they can to get their freedom, but knowing that they're not doing it the right way."



Sgt. Timothy King of the 237th Military Police Company keeps watch on four people at the border in Eagle Pass, Texas. Hours later, they cut the fence upriver, climbed through, and asked to be turned over to the authorities.

Several of the soldiers said as emotionally hard as it was at times, they'd volunteer again.

"You feel like you make a difference," said Pfc. Madalyn Delotto, 21, of Derry. Even if it's small, it still feels good to know that I did what I could at the time, to put on the uniform and do what I signed up to do."

Working alongside National Guard troops from other states gave Pfc. Macenzi Connors, 20, of Sandown, a sense of pride, too. She felt better trained and felt her unit treated the migrants with more respect than she saw from other troops. She wasn't alone.

"We had a lot more discipline than the other states and just seeing how other states treated families versus how we treated them," she said. "I noticed that the first day down there.

FUELING THE MISSION

Airman 1st Class Luke Holland of the 157th Logistics Readiness Squadron connects a refuel tube to a fuel pit under the wing of a KC-46 Pegasus on the flight line June 1 at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington. The 157th delivers thousands of gallons of fuel to aircraft at Pease, daily, ensuring mission readiness. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Hayden, 157th ARW Public Affairs.*



CARRYING THE TORCH

Airman Jacalyn Cox, a metals technology specialist with 157th Maintenance Group, practices welding March 19 at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington. Cox joined the Air National Guard her senior year of high school without any machine shop experience. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW Public Affairs.*

EMOTIONS SOAR

The 157th Air Refueling Wing performed a KC-46A flyover with Vermont's 158th Fighter Wing as part of opening day ceremonies April 9 at Fenway Park. Boston paid tribute to the Red Sox 2004 World Series championship team and honored the life and legacy of beloved knuckleballer Tim Wakefield and his wife, Stacy. Their daughter Brianna threw out the first pitch to her father's former batterymate and current Red Sox coach Jason Varitek. The Red Sox lost to the Orioles 7-1. *Photo courtesy of Maddie Malhotra and Billie Weiss, Boston Red Sox staff photographers.*



SO MUCH MORE THAN A RACE

1st Lt. Christian Urrutia of Joint Force Headquarters crosses the finish line of the New Hampshire National Guard 2024 Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month 5K on April 7 at the state military reservation in Concord. People walked, ran and rucked a 3.1-mile loop around the city in show of support. Urrutia placed first with a time of about 21:15. *Photo by Master Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*



TANGO DOWN

Staff Sgt. Danielle Paolini and **Master Sgt. Corey Sheckler**, defenders with the 157th Security Forces Squadron, extract an "injured" active shooter during an emergency response exercise April 18 at Pease ANG Base in Newington. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157 ARW Public Affairs.*





THE NATURAL

Staff Sgt. Bradford Roberts of 197th Field Artillery Brigade throws a grenade as part of the 2024 Region One Best Warrior Competition on May 14 at Camp Smith, New York. Roberts, a forward observer, competed in his second regional, having earned a selection in 2020 while in the Maine Army National Guard. **Pfc. George Munson** of Charlie Company, 3rd of the 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain), was New Hampshire's other entry. This year's competition, hosted by the New York Army National Guard, spanned four days and tested soldiers on a variety of technical and tactical skills. *Photo by Sgt. Richard Trinh, NYNG Public Affairs.*



GOOD FELLER

Sgt. Joseph Lirette, an interior electrician specialist for 1st Detachment, 185th Engineer Support Company, finishes felling a tree during a field training exercise March 29 at Fort Devens, Mass. *Photo by Sgt. Sean Ferry, 114th Public Affairs Detachment.*

SHOOTERS PARADISE

Staff Sgt. Wayne Comtois, senior marksmanship instructor for the New Hampshire Army National Guard, fires on target during the Salvadoran military's Bicentennial Cup in May at Shangallo Range in Ilopango, El Salvador. The international match in celebration of the founding of the Salvadoran military 200 years ago featured shooters from Mexico, United States, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Panama, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Photo courtesy of Fuerza Armada de El Salvador.



WHAT A RUN

A team of runners from the New Hampshire National Guard joined **Salvadoran Defense Minister René Francis Merino**, center, for a half marathon May 5 in San Salvador, El Salvador in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the Salvadoran military. The marathon was part of a weekend of festivities and military demonstrations in honor of the bicentennial. Courtesy photo.



RANGER HOPEFULS

Ranger School hopefuls from the New Hampshire Army National Guard review land navigation techniques during the ranger assessment May 10 at the Edward Cross Training Complex in Pembroke. The biannual event gauges participants physical fitness, mental toughness and overall tactical knowledge. Competitors selected for a school seats train for approximately a year before attending. *Photo by Sgt. Sean Ferry, 114th Public Affairs Detachment.*

CYBER YANKEE

Staff Sgt. Adam Wong of New Hampshire Army National Guard's 136th Cybersecurity Detachment briefs defense team operations during Cyber Yankee 2024 on May 14 at Joint Base Cape Cod in Sandwich, Massachusetts. The 136th attended with NH Air National Guard's 157th Communications Squadron to hone digital battle skills during the tactical cyber operations exercise, held May 6 to 17. They joined guardsmen from across New England, Michigan and IT specialists from the U.S. Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Space Force. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW Public Affairs.*



HEAVY RECOIL

Master Sgt. Anthony Brown, a combat arms instructor with the 157th Security Forces Squadron, shoots an M240B on May 14 at Camp Ethan Allen in Jericho, Vermont. The team shot and qualified with M320 grenade launchers, M240B and M249 machine guns. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Elliot Boutin, 157th ARW Public Affairs.*

PISTOLEERS

From left, **Sgt. 1st Class Joe Wyner**, **Capt. Patrick Randall**, **Sgt. 1st Class David Musso**, and **Tech. Sgt. Connor Cunio** of “New Hampshire Team Alpha” marksmanship squad and their coach, **Staff Sgt. Wayne Comtois**, pose with a plaque and medals during the 53rd Winston P. Wilson Small Arms Championship awards ceremony May 4 in North Little Rock, Ark. The team placed third in the “Combat Pistol Team Aggregate” category against top military shooters from around the country. Teams Vermont and South Dakota placed first and second, respectively, while Team Arkansas was crowned 2024 match champion. *Courtesy photo.*



HANGING TEN

From left, **Sgts. Widmac Laterion** and **Benjamin Bedard**, flight medic and crew chief for the 238th Medevac Company, scan the coastline during a training flight in early April on São Vicente island, Cabo Verde. Thirty NH guardsmen from the 238th conducted simulated rescue missions and provided basic medical training to Cabo Verdean military personnel and first responders for Granite Falco, a month-long training exercise with its newest state partner. *Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. Joel Coelho, 238th Medevac Company.*



THROWBACK

Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Galimberti of Joint Force Headquarters addresses fellow soldiers, family and friends during his retirement ceremony May 5 at the Heritage Room on the Concord military reservation. The Gilford native retired after 21 years of military service in the U.S. Army and New Hampshire Army National Guard. *Photo by NHNG Public Affairs.*

BETTER YOU

Pfc. Anabel Bobadilla of the 237th Military Police Company exercises during a health and wellness camp hosted by The Regional Training Institute on May 8 at the Edward Cross Training Complex in Pembroke. Six New Hampshire guardsmen and three from Rhode Island participated in the annual program, which promotes overall physical readiness. *Photo by Sgt. Sean Ferry, 114th Public Affairs Detachment.*



ANOTHER THREE

From left, **Capt. Jeremiah Neault** administers the reenlistment oath to **Staff Sgt. Thais Ricci**, a personnel specialist with Joint Force Headquarters on June 1 at the state military reservation in Concord. "It's truly my honor and privilege to reenlist you this morning," said Neault, who described Ricci as a "quiet professional." Ricci has served in the Guard for six years. *Photo by Master Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*



TREATING THE WOUNDED

Sgt. Logan Campbell, a team leader with Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain), treats a notional casualty during a trauma lane April 19 at the Edward Cross Training Complex in Pembroke. The Medical Detachment hosted a five-day, combat lifesaver course in April for New Hampshire Army National Guardsmen with nonmedical specialties. Soldiers trained on new equipment and learned updated medical standards for battlefield casualties. *Photo by Sgt. Sean Ferry, 114th Public Affairs Detachment.*

WORTH HIS WAIT

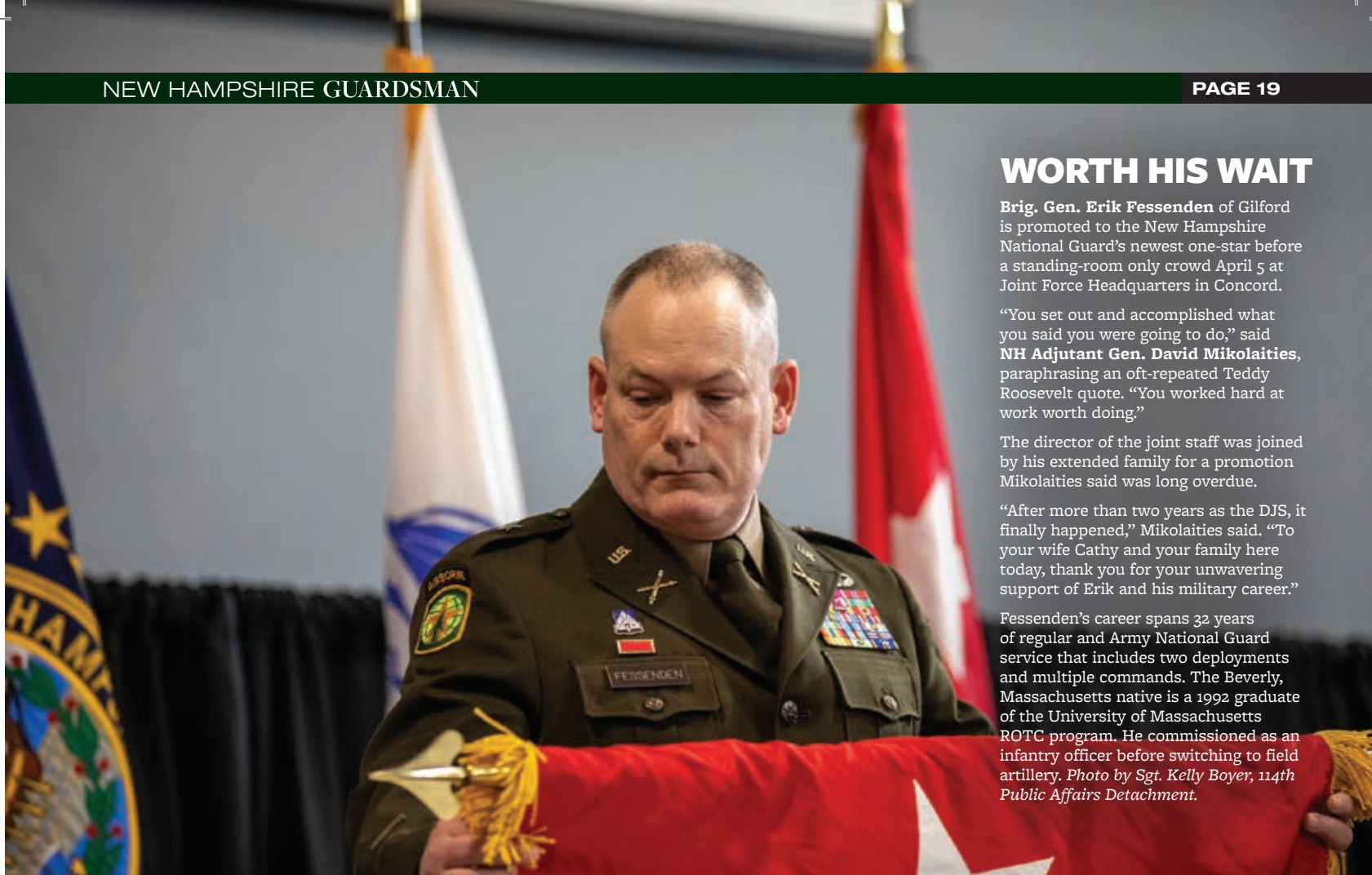
Brig. Gen. Erik Fessenden of Gilford is promoted to the New Hampshire National Guard's newest one-star before a standing-room only crowd April 5 at Joint Force Headquarters in Concord.

"You set out and accomplished what you said you were going to do," said **NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities**, paraphrasing an oft-repeated Teddy Roosevelt quote. "You worked hard at work worth doing."

The director of the joint staff was joined by his extended family for a promotion Mikolaities said was long overdue.

"After more than two years as the DJS, it finally happened," Mikolaities said. "To your wife Cathy and your family here today, thank you for your unwavering support of Erik and his military career."

Fessenden's career spans 32 years of regular and Army National Guard service that includes two deployments and multiple commands. The Beverly, Massachusetts native is a 1992 graduate of the University of Massachusetts ROTC program. He commissioned as an infantry officer before switching to field artillery. *Photo by Sgt. Kelly Boyer, 114th Public Affairs Detachment.*



A PILOT'S PILOT

After a 37-year career as an Air Force aviator, commander and senior advisor, **Maj. Gen. Laurie Farris** retired March 1, her last assignment as Air National Guard assistant to the commander of Air Mobility Command.

During a retirement ceremony at the Pentagon, Farris received the Distinguished Service Medal, which is presented for exceptionally meritorious service to the government in a duty of great responsibility, in combat or otherwise.

Farris spent most of her service in the New Hampshire Air National Guard as a KC-135 pilot, supporting Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Restore Hope, Southern Watch, Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Prior to her D.C. post, Farris served as both the commander of NHANG and as the ANG assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs. She is a 1987 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Sarah McClanahan, ANG Public Affairs.*



SNAPSHOTS

CABO VERDE GAINS INSIGHT FOR EXPANDED AVIATION MISSION

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW Public Affairs

Leadership from the Cabo Verde military visited the 157th Air Refueling Wing for a three-day state partnership exchange focused on aviation operations May 7 to 10.

“These visits continue a line of effort to better our partnership and to continue forming touch points where we can share our expertise,” said Capt. Kirsten Arends, bilateral affairs officer for the New Hampshire National Guard-Cabo Verde State Partnership Program. “As their aviation mission expands, we are able to genuinely collaborate and support their growth.”

Led by Col. Domingos Correia, director of national defense for the Cabo Verde Armed Forces, the leadership team included a pilot and maintenance engineer. They toured maintenance hangars, the air traffic control tower, flight simulator, logistics readiness warehouse and small air terminal at Pease. They flew on a KC-46 Pegasus and spent a day at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Concord.

“The hope is to build off this week’s visit and be able to provide meaningful support to our Cabo Verde partners as they explore a new mission,” said Capt. Stern, commander of the 260th Air Traffic Control Squadron. “This exchange allowed our partners to understand our military training program and how our military controllers seamlessly integrate into the larger national airspace system.”

The Cabo Verde leadership trio gained familiarization with the ins and outs of operational missions and support functions.

“It gives us a great perspective of how New Hampshire operates,” Correia said. “We appreciate the warm welcome, and we look forward to building these relationships.”

This is the third time Cabo Verde leadership has visited Pease since the state partnership began in 2022. They discussed and planned future efforts under the program.

“The State Partnership Program is an invaluable,” Arends said. “The interactions between all our members from logistics, legal, medical, operations and our leadership are authentic connections and genuine opportunities to build and learn from one another. They truly can’t be replicated in any other way.”



Maj. Bryant Burns, a pilot with 157th Operations Group, prepares the KC-46 simulator with **Col. Domingos Correia**, director of national defense and a pilot for the Cabo Verde Armed Forces, during a base tour May 7 at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington. The tour was part of a three-day state partnership exchange focused on aviation operations.



At right, **Senior Master Sgt. Daryl McPhee**, boom operator with 157th Operations Group, guides, from left, **Capt. Sophia Soares**, **Col. Domingos Correia**, and **Capt. Antonio Valério** of the Cabo Verde Armed Forces through the 157th Air Refueling Wing KC-46 fuselage trainer May 7 at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington. The tour was part of a three-day state partnership exchange focused on aviation operations.



Leadership from Cabo Verde, including **Col. Domingos Correia**, the West African nation's director of national defense (fourth from left), gather with New Hampshire Guardsmen on the flight line during a State Partnership Program exchange May 9 at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington.

RUCK OF AGES

**By Master Sgt. Charles Johnston,
NHNG Deputy State Public Affairs Officer**

Sixty-one New Hampshire Guardsmen braved the Scandinavian crucible of the Norwegian Foot March on May 4 in Concord.

Soldiers and airmen clad in camouflage, combat boots and 25-pound packs navigated a timed 18.6-mile course around the state military reservation for a chance to earn a foreign military badge.

Thirty-nine competitors emerged victorious. Of the 22 who did not qualify in the allotted time, 14 failed to finish.

The origins of the march, known as the Marsjmerket, dates to 1915 when the Norwegian military used it to gauge combat readiness. Guard organizers coordinated the event through the Consulate of Norway in Boston to adhere to traditional rules and guidelines.

Participants earn a bronze badge for completing their first march, silver for a second time and gold if they successfully finish five marches.

Besides the allure of a shiny new uniform bauble, competitor motivations varied. Sgt. 1st Class Rick Frost of the 195th Regional Training Institute was looking for a new challenge.

"I want to do something that I've never done before," said the 53-year-old as he adjusted gear, packed snacks, and drank water near the starting line. "I'm not trying to compete. I like these types of events where it's just you against you. My goal is to try to finish. I'm not trying to hack with the younger soldiers."

One of those youngsters was Pfc. Xavier Glidden of Bravo Battery, 197th Field Artillery Brigade.

"I just want to challenge myself, push myself and see what I can do," Glidden said. "And honestly, I like rucking."

Maj. Heath Huffman of the 157th Air Refueling Wing was enticed to compete by the joint Army-Air nature of the contest. An accomplished marathoner and biathlete, he finished first with a time of just under three and a half hours.

"It's a beautiful day," Huffman said after crossing the finish. "Smooth sailing."

But many encountered troubled waters along the 30-kilometer course. They endured blisters, pain and dehydration, resulting in a 36% competitor attrition.

"It wasn't bad until about halfway through the third lap," said Master Sgt. Kenneth Boff of Joint Force Headquarters, who crossed the finish with about 15 minutes to spare. "The last two or three miles, really good cramping going on. I dehydrated and stopped sweating."

Frost battled through sore calves and hip flexors to qualify with under nine minutes left.

"It was a little bit harder than I thought it was going to be, that's for sure," Frost said as he approached the finish.

Master Sgt. Kenneth Boff of Joint Force Headquarters laces up for the 18.6-mile Norwegian Foot March on May 4 in Concord. Boff was one of 39 out of 61 competitors to successfully complete the event in the prescribed time, finishing in about 4:24:00. *Courtesy photo.*



Maj. Heath Huffman of the 157th Air Refueling Wing approaches the finish line of the 18.6-mile Norwegian Foot March on May 4 in Concord. Huffman placed first in a field of 61 competitors with a time of about three and a half hours. *Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Courtney Rorick, 114th Public Affairs Detachment NCOIC.*



ARMY NATIONAL GUARD PROMOTIONS

Private (PV2)

Ajaya Acharya
Hanna Belanger
Lukas Boulanger
Abigail Carr
Daniel Carter
Jack Cataldi
Kymanii Clarke
Lionel Content
Mark Doucet
Leevi Elliott
Zachary Gallagher
Aiden Hamlett
Zackary Houde
Michael Ings
Tate Kapise
Alexander Kiley
Jacob Leyden
Chase Martinez
Dylan McIntyre
Zachary Miracle
Edward Nadreau
Trevor Pacheco
Jhonson Peguero
Leland Perron
Halley Pierson
Adam Price
Raeshaun Williams Rebenson
Addison Rodger
Jordan Roode

Brayden Rostron
Dylan Stanley
Kayson Valiphanh
Benjamin Williams

Private First Class

Nieve Boulter
Timothy Bradish
Julian Chmiel
Olivia Cook
Christian Cordio
Edwin Feliz
Gabriel Fret
Carlos Javier Pagan Gonzalez
Aabhusan Gurung
Aric Huter
Sabastian Johnson
William Antonio Elija Keldo
Samuel Kfoury
Sydney Heureux
Brady Legassie
Gavin Letourneau
Carlos Martinez
William Scott
Martin Sierra
Logan Virtue
Cody Vongsa
Brody Wesler
John Wilson

Specialist

Johnathin Bailey
Ayune Bernardo
Jacob Caffrey
Tyler Campbell
Joseph Costa
Patrick Elder
Acevedo Gomez
Gabriel Guertin
Elijah Hashem
Miguel Hernandez
Christian LaValley
Edward Moore
Anh Nguyen
Matthew Nicholls
Joshua Ostertag
Waleed Shahin
Michael Somers
Dominic Stengle
Colby Stinson
Patrick Wheeler

Sergeant

Jordan Bailey
Christopher Beasley
Jake Benouski
Claire Brough
Charles Carroll
Peter Censabella
Peter Cook

Zackery Cressy
Brandon Decato
Kali Dwyer
Jordan Graham
Kayla Hadley
Alexander Hildreth
Jacky Lim
Tyler Pischinger
Meo Ramberg Pihl
Stephen Smith
Marissa Urban

Staff Sergeant

Jared Booth
Brianna Brack
Zachary Chivell
Danielle Dempsey
Todd Desmarais
Madison Johnson
William Johnson
Dylan Jones
Zachary Joy
Matthew Komisarek

Sergeant First Class

Willie Barron
John Cooney
Matthew Cotton
Christopher Malone
Jensine Morin
Courtney Rorick
Alexandria Tichy

Master Sergeant

Bernard Hudgens
Thomas Newcomb

First Sergeant

Kevin Wheeler

Sergeant Major

Edward Clements

Chief Warrant Officer 3

Christopher Wareing

Chief Warrant Officer 4

Luke Koladish

Chief Warrant Officer 5

Eric Boyer

Second Lieutenant

Louise Groton

Captain

Matthew Pelletier
Christian Urrutia

Lieutenant Colonel

Logan Kenney

AIR NATIONAL GUARD PROMOTIONS

Airman First Class

Hannah Douglas
Djulya Ferraz Fer Gould
John Mormando
Shawn Pierre

Timothy Gregoire
Molly Harris
Kayla Orner
Nathan Ramsdell

Senior Airman

Kohl Abt
Thomas Coneys
Kyle Freeman
Nathaniel Godin
Robson Gomes
Cade Goulet
Benjamin Hathaway
Luke Holland
Maxwell Jerram
Luke Murray
Kevin Nguyen
Nicholas Pitcher
Johnathan Roberts
Samuel Strange
Alexander Swanson

Master Sergeant

Kaleb Booth
Brittany Cline
Gregory Lewis
Patrick Petersen
Liza Roy
Matthew Schultz
Rodney Turgeon
Andrew Wahl

Senior Master Sergeant

Dustin Bugado
Lori Johnson
Daryl McPhee
Matthew Slattery

Chief Master Sergeant

Joshua Connery
Paul Lawrence

Captain

Taylor Gamble
Nicholas Gray

Staff Sergeant

Alexa Casarella
Karina Decillatorres
Benjamin Lagueux
Claudia Vargas Arenas

Technical Sergeant

Jake Bumbaca
Kevin Canney
Joseph Chase
Devon Dean

Major

Brian Benson
Joseph Everett

Lieutenant Colonel

Joel Webley



Lt. Col. Logan Kenney's new rank is fastened by his daughter, Kira, with his son, Felix, during a promotion ceremony May 3 at the state military reservation in Concord. With 16 years of service and a deployment, Kenney planned to serve four after he commissioned through the University of New Hampshire ROTC program. Instead, one assignment led to another. He excelled in jobs no one else wanted, he shared. *Photo by Master Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*

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