



# THE HORNET

April 2025

NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD



# LEADING THE CHARGE

*Excellence in Warfighting*





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## READY TO FIGHT



## SPP HURREX



## REENLISTMENT IN THE SKY



## ON THE COVER



30<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade Combat Team Fielding  
the new Abrams M1A2 SEPv3 Main Battle Tank.  
U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Joe Roudabush



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# FOREWORD

In today's rapidly evolving global environment, the role of the North Carolina National Guard (NCNG) has never been more critical. As we confront emerging threats and complex challenges, our warfighting capabilities must remain at the forefront of our mission. This is our duty to our State and Nation! The Hornet has always been a platform to showcase the strength, resilience, and innovation of our forces, and this issue is no exception.

Our warfighting capabilities are not defined solely by our equipment or technology, though these are essential components. They are also shaped by the dedication, training, and adaptability of our Soldiers and Airmen. Every member of the NCNG plays a pivotal role in ensuring that we are prepared to respond to any threat, anywhere in the world. From maintaining readiness at home to deploying alongside our active-duty counterparts, our ability to integrate seamlessly into joint and coalition operations is a testament to our commitment and skill.

As we continue to advance our capabilities, it is essential that we invest in the training and development of our people. Our people are our greatest asset, and your ability to innovate and adapt in the face of adversity is what sets us apart. Whether it's through enhanced training programs, state-of-the-art equipment, or our partnerships, we must ensure that our forces are always ready to fight and win.

In this issue of The Hornet, we explore the various aspects of our warfighting capabilities, highlighting the advancements that are shaping the future of our force. From cutting-edge technology to the latest in training methodologies that demonstrate the initiative of our small unit leadership, these pages reflect the relentless pursuit of excellence that defines the NCNG.

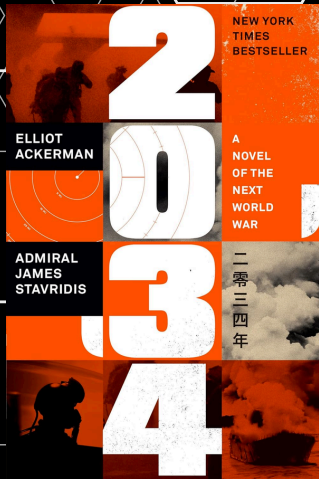
As we look to the future, let us reaffirm our commitment to being the most capable and ready force in the world. Our nation depends on us to protect its interests, defend its values, and secure its future. Together, we will continue to build on our legacy of excellence, ensuring that the NCNG remains a formidable force on the battlefield.

Stay ready, stay resilient, and continue to exemplify the best of our nation's military power.

Maj. Gen. Allen Boyette  
Deputy Adjutant General  
North Carolina National Guard

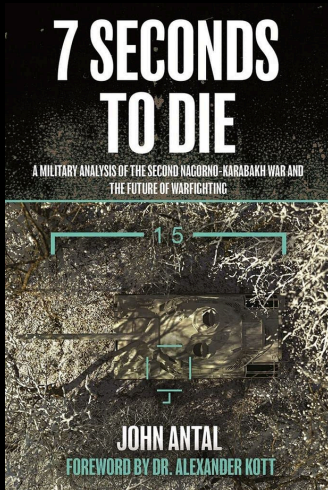






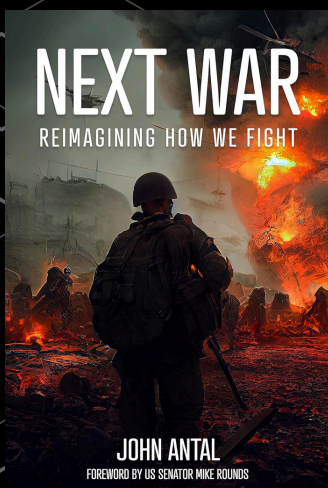
**2034: A Novel of the Next World War**  
by Elliot Ackerman and James Stavridis

A chillingly authentic geopolitical thriller that imagines a naval clash between the US and China in the South China Sea in 2034.



**7 Seconds to Die**  
by John Antal

A military study of the 2020 war between Armenia and Azerbaijan—the first war in history won primarily by unmanned systems.



**Next War**  
**Reimagining How We Fight**  
by John Antal

Will our forces be able to mask from enemy sensors? How will leaders execute command and control in a degraded communications environment? This book addresses these tough questions and more.

# NAVIGATING EXCELLENCE

Elevate your leadership skills with our carefully selected reading and podcast list

In the dynamic landscape of the North Carolina National Guard, leadership and mentorship stand as pillars that not only shape the trajectory of individual careers but also fortify the collective strength of our force. The essence of effective leadership lies not only in guiding troops through the challenges of the present but also in nurturing the leaders of tomorrow. Mentorship, a crucial companion to leadership, provides a conduit for the transfer of wisdom, experience, and values. As we embark on a journey to cultivate these essential qualities, check out our recommended reading list, and tune into these insightful podcasts that illuminate the principles of leadership and mentorship. The recommendations highlighted in this quarter's publication are by Brig. Gen. Wes Morrison, Director of Joint Staff, and articles from [Line of Departure](#).



**Manning Next Generation Main Battle Tank**



**A Bold Experiment**



**Army SOF-Space-Cyber Triad**



# READY TO FIGHT

## *Excellence in Warfighting*

Capt. Timmy Marshburn

RALEIGH, N.C. – Whether maneuvering across rugged terrain, sustaining operations in austere environments, or engaging in complex, multi-domain exercises, the Soldiers of the North Carolina National Guard continue to prove one thing: we are ready to fight.

Across the state and around the globe, NCNG units are honing their warfighting skills—sharpening readiness, mastering their craft, and building lethal formations capable of winning our nation’s wars.

“We are not just a force in waiting,” said Maj. Gen. Todd Hunt, Adjutant General of North Carolina. “We are a trained, professional, and capable warfighting team, and we are proud of what our Soldiers and Airmen bring to the fight—anytime, anywhere.”

From the infantry squads conducting live-fire lanes at Fort Bragg, to support units mastering sustainment operations at the Sustainment Training Center in Iowa, NCNG Soldiers and Airmen are preparing for large-scale combat operations with a level of precision and grit that sets them apart.

The 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, known as “Old Hickory,” stands at the forefront of the Guard’s armored warfare capability. With M1 Abrams tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles under their command, these Soldiers routinely train in integrated, joint-force environments—proving their combat power alongside active-duty counterparts.







U.S. Army National Guard Soldiers under the 1/139th Regiment field artillery training, fire a M109A7 Paladin Self-propelled Howitzer on Fort Bragg North Carolina on March 25 2025. Live-fire training exercises are essential for Soldiers to become familiar with their skills and gain experience, ultimately improving overall readiness. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Wesley Riley



Meanwhile, the 113th Sustainment Brigade ensures the fight keeps moving. From fuel and ammo to maintenance and movement control, the brigade's logistics expertise enables sustained combat power for any mission set. During recent deployments and warfighter exercises, the 113th has demonstrated exactly why the ability to shoot, move, and communicate relies on strong sustainment behind the line.

But warfighting in the modern era isn't just about steel and firepower—it's about adaptability, integration, and multi-domain mastery. That's why the 130th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade is training in cyber protection, civil-military operations, and tactical command and control. These Soldiers ensure freedom of maneuver for combat units while protecting critical infrastructure and supporting homeland missions.

Throughout every formation—whether it's infantry, engineers, medics, or mechanics—the core of the NCNG's warfighting strength lies in its people.

“Our Soldiers are disciplined, skilled, and driven,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Benjamin Garner, NCNG State Command Sergeant Major. “They bring a wealth of civilian expertise to the battlefield, making them uniquely capable leaders and problem solvers. When the mission gets tough, they get tougher.”

With more than 10,000 Soldiers and Airmen in the force, the NCNG continues to demonstrate unmatched versatility. These warriors are citizens in peace and Soldiers in war. They respond to hurricanes and deploy to combat zones. They train to dominate in close combat and stabilize disaster zones at home.

Every unit, every Soldier and Airman, every mission—they are all part of one fight.

This is the North Carolina National Guard. This is warfighting excellence, and we are always ready.

**CONSIDER  
THIS**   
(the conversation continues)

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U.S. Army North Carolina National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 130th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, 514th military Police Company and 211th Military Police Company, demonstrate proficiency with the M249, M240, M2A1, and Mk19 weapon systems at Fort Barfoot, Va from April 3-6 2025. Familiarization with the crew ensures Soldier readiness as a unit and enhances individual soldier lethality.

U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Wesley Riley





U.S. Army North Carolina National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 130th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, 514th military Police Company and 211th Military Police Company, demonstrate proficiency with the M249, M240, M2A1, and Mk19 weapon systems at Fort Barfoot, Va from April 3-6 2025. Familiarization with the crew ensures Soldier readiness as a unit and enhances individual soldier lethality. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Wesley Riley





Soldiers with the 883rd Engineer Company conducts Annual Training at Fort Bragg, NC Mar. 6, 2025. Soldiers conducted dismounted patrolling lanes, bridge recon & bridge demo. U.S. Army National Guard photo by Cpl. Nigel Hatcher









U.S. Army North Carolina National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 130th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, 514th military Police Company and 211th Military Police Company, demonstrate proficiency with the M249, M240, M2A1, and Mk19 weapon systems at Fort Barfoot, Va from April 3-6 2025. Familiarization with the crew ensures Soldier readiness as a unit and enhances individual soldier lethality.

U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Wesley Riley





# NCNG Hosts GuardX Recruiting Event in Salisbury

Capt. Timmy Marshburn

SALISBURY, N.C. – The North Carolina National Guard (NCNG) Recruiting and Retention Battalion (RRB) hosted a GuardX recruiting event at the Salisbury Armory on April 10, 2025. The event provided high school students from across the region an immersive experience showcasing the Guard's diverse career opportunities, cutting-edge equipment, and the benefits of military service.

Students rotated through interactive stations where they explored military vehicles, aircraft, and weapon systems, gaining firsthand knowledge of how Soldiers operate in real-world scenarios.

One of the students in attendance recently enlisted in the NCNG.

"I have always wanted to do something with my life, and my mom has always pushed me to do my best," said Ryan Laws, a junior at West Rowan High School. "I am going to be a 91B, a wheeled vehicle mechanic. My dad is a mechanic; I grew up watching him and I want to follow in his footsteps."

NCNG Soldiers guided each session, sharing insights on their roles and answering questions about military occupational specialties, leadership opportunities, and how service in the Guard translates into civilian careers.

"This event gives students a real-world perspective on what it means to serve in the National Guard," said Sgt. Joshua Herndon, a NCNG recruiter. "They get to see the equipment we use, talk to Soldiers about their experiences, and even try a Meal Ready to Eat (MRE), which is always a highlight."

Beyond the hands-on demonstrations, students learned about over 150 career fields available in the NCNG, from mechanics and medical support to aviation and cyber operations. Recruiters and current Guardsmen emphasized how service provides paid training, tuition assistance, and certifications that can lead to successful careers both in and out of uniform.



"GuardX provides an opportunity for different units to link up with RRB. I enjoy having units present because it gives a totally different dynamic to recruiting when we add recruiters, local units, and equipment" said Maj. Josh Forgie, RRB Operations Officer. "This event is impactful for potential recruits because it is a way to showcase Soldiers and their stories for the community to see and hear firsthand."

The event wrapped up with a taste of military life—literally—as students sampled MREs, getting a firsthand experience of field rations.

Students walked away with a new appreciation for the National Guard, having experienced the opportunities it provides. For some, it was an eye-opening introduction to military service. For others, it was the first step toward a lifelong commitment.

"I have been given the opportunity to make something of my life, so I'm taking it," said Laws.



The North Carolina National Guard (NCNG) Recruiting and Retention Battalion (RRB) hosted a GuardX recruiting event at the Salisbury Armory on April 10, 2025. The event provided high school students from across the region an immersive experience showcasing the Guard's diverse career opportunities, cutting-edge equipment, and the benefits of military service. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Shamari Pratt)





U.S. Army National Guard Soldiers under the 1/139th Regiment field artillery training, fire a M109A7 Paladin Self-propelled Howitzer on Fort Bragg North Carolina on March 25 2025. Live-fire training exercises are essential for Soldiers to become familiar with their skills and gain experience, ultimately improving overall readiness. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Wesley Riley





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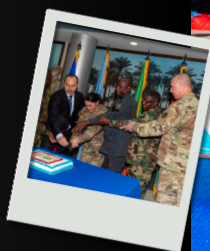
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# NCNG Welcomes SPP Partners to HURREX 2025

Lt. Col. Ellis Parks

RALEIGH, N.C. - Senior leaders from the North Carolina National Guard (NCNG) are hosting representatives from the Republics of Moldova, Botswana, Malawi, and Zambia to take part in a hurricane response exercise in Raleigh, N.C., April 21 through April 26. The six-day event is part of the National Guard's State Partnership program and is another way to strengthen the relationship between the NCNG and its partners.

The National Guard is one of the most dynamic components in the Department of Defense, with over 430,000 Soldiers and Airmen serving in full-time and traditional roles. While their missions at home and abroad are typically separate, the rare moments when they overlap create unique and valuable training opportunities found only in the Guard.

"The military is not only about fighting for the defense of your nation; it is also about helping the people," said U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Todd Hunt, the Adjutant General of North Carolina.

In October 2024, the NCNG activated more than 4,500 service members over 58 days to help the people of western North Carolina recover from the destruction and devastation of Hurricane Helene. These citizen Soldiers and Airmen worked alongside National Guardsmen from 15 other states, more than 1,500 active-duty service members from the 82nd and the 101st Airborne Divisions, members from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), individuals from North Carolina's Department of Public Safety, countless volunteer agencies, and individual volunteers from across the United States and Canada.

The NCNG is seizing the lessons learned from this catastrophic event and sharing them with their State Partnership partners in a first-ever experience for the NCNG/ SPP program.

"The NCNG State Partnership Program is hosting landmark events with key government officials from four partner nations participating in valuable discussions focused on coordinating civil and military responses to domestic crises," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Mike Sterling, the lead planner for the NCNG state partnership program. "This is the first time these types of multilateral discussions have taken place within our program."

NCNG leadership at every level understands and embraces the significance of being part of the community, whether it is our local communities here in North Carolina or our global community around the world.

"This hurricane exercise with our SPP partners shows two things," said U.S. Army Col Pat Henderson, the North Carolina Army National Guard's chief of staff. "How destructive Hurricane Helene was and how the lessons we've learned from it can help people in every corner of the earth."





Global leaders take part in a symposium surrounding domestic operations, such as natural disasters, at Joint Force Headquarters, Raleigh, NC on April 22nd, 2025. North Carolina National Guard hosts a week dedicated to State Partnership Program with the Republics of Moldova, Botswana, Malawi and Zambia to engage in meaningful conversations and exchange information to the overall success of each country. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Shamari Pratt)







North Carolina National Guardsmen assigned to the 105th Military Police Battalion conduct National Guard Reaction Force training in Asheville, N.C., March 8, 2025. The NGRF is a specially designed task force with readily deployable assets prepared to respond to critical incident's that require law enforcement or security support. U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Hannah Tarkelly.





North Carolina National Guardsmen assigned to the 105th Military Police Battalion conduct National Guard Reaction Force training in Asheville, N.C. March 8, 2025. The NGRF is a specially designed task force with readily deployable assets prepared to respond to critical incident's that require law enforcement or security support. U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Hannah Tarkelly.



# The 105th Engineer Battalion of the North Carolina National Guard Mobilizes

Capt. Timmy Marshburn

Raeford, N.C.—The Soldiers of headquarters and support company, 105th Engineer Battalion, held their mobilization ceremony on January 17th, 2025, in Raeford, North Carolina. The event marked the culmination of months of training and preparation. With nearly 140 Soldiers deploying to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, the event showcased the unwavering dedication of the North Carolina National Guard to its motto: "Always Ready, Ready Team."

RockFish Church was filled with hundreds of family members, friends, and supporters, along with fellow NCNG Soldiers, who came together to honor the battalion as they embark on a mission to support regional security and stability.

The ceremony included a symbolic NCNG tradition, the presentation of the NC flag to the unit commander. U.S. Army Lt. Col. Thomas Grabos, commander of the 105th Engineer Battalion, accepted the flag from U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Todd Hunt, the adjutant general of North Carolina. The flag will accompany the unit throughout their deployment—a reminder of home and their mission.

"I am privileged to lead a unit that is experienced, determined, and well-prepared," said Grabos, addressing the Soldiers and their loved ones.

Hunt praised the Soldiers' commitment and readiness. "You have answered the call," he said. "You are ready to deploy, and you are going to do well."

The ceremony also highlighted individual accomplishments, with Maj. Gen. Hunt presenting a coin to Sgt. Mary Scott for her exceptional work as a supply technician. Her efforts significantly improved the battalion's equipment readiness.

"We are not just sending Soldiers; we are sending leaders, problem-solvers, and professionals who are ready to make a difference," said Hunt.

Among the Soldiers preparing for their first deployment was Spc. Jordyn Peay. After five years of active duty, Peay joined the NCNG to balance her role as a mother with her passion for service.

"Preparing for this deployment has been bittersweet," Peay said. "I'm nervous and excited, but the training we've done has made me confident in my abilities."

Peay expressed gratitude for her family, who will care for her daughter while she is away. "Their love and support give me peace as I navigate this journey," she said.

The 105th Engineer Battalion has spent the past year focused on intensive training to prepare for their mission. "Some of our best training was with an external evaluator, testing us with scenarios to prepare for command-and-control missions overseas," said Huneycutt. "The Soldiers will maintain a U.S. military posture in Southwest Asia to deter and react to possible threats by strengthening defense relationships and building partner capacity."

As the ceremony concluded with the playing of the Army Song, the Soldiers of the 105th Engineer Battalion stood tall, ready to represent North Carolina and the United States on their mission overseas.

For these Soldiers, today was more than a farewell—it was a testament to their preparation, their commitment to service, and the enduring support of the community they leave behind.

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(the conversation continues)



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The North Carolina National Guard 105th Engineer Battalion and their families gather for a deployment ceremony at RockFish Church in Raeford, North Carolina, on January 17, 2025. RockFish Church hosted the deployment ceremony for the 105th Engineer Battalion, welcoming hundreds of friends and family as they send off their soldiers. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Wesley Riley)





Airman with the 145 Air Wing conduct SERE Water Survival Training. U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Reanna Hartgrove





Airmen with the 145<sup>th</sup> Air Wing conduct SPRO Training.  
Photo by Tech. Sgt. Juan Paz





# North Carolina National Guardsman Reenlists in the Sky

Staff Sgt. Denné Allen

GABORONE, Botswana- Sgt. Darci Weaver, a medic with Headquarters & Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, 30th Brigade, experienced a once in a lifetime opportunity; reenlisting aboard a C-17.

Weaver had just finished participating in exercise Southern Accord 2024 in Botswana, Africa.

Southern Accord is a bi-annual joint exercise sponsored by U.S. Africa Command and led by U.S. Army Southern European Task Force, Africa (SETAF-AF). Running from Aug. 5-15, the exercise brings together U.S. Army and Air Force personnel and Botswana Defence Force counterparts to conduct a variety of training to include humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, as well as peacekeeping and aeromedical evacuation. The exercise is designed to enhance bilateral military capabilities and interoperability.

Weaver was an integral piece of the medical team present for Southern Accord 2024.

“Sgt. Weaver is an energetic, motivated, and highly skilled medic,” says Lt. Col. Joseph Dixon, Physician Assistant, Medical officer in charge. “That used her leadership ability and civilian experience as a direct force multiplier to ensure the health and safety of all soldiers during Southern Accord 2024.”

Reinvigorated by the experience Southern Accord provided, Weaver was ready to take the next step and reenlist.

A native of Fort Liberty, she joined the North Carolina National Guard in 2019 as a Combat Medic. While awaiting her acceptance into a nursing program, she wanted to find something that would provide her with skills that would transfer to her career. Joining the National Guard seemed like the obvious choice as her father, mother, and stepmother were all in the military.

“My mom and stepmom were both combat medics,” says Weaver. “Hearing their stories and how they both went on to become nurses was inspiring. I’m really just following their path because I am also a nurse.”

Weaver appreciates the unique experiences she has had as a medic in the NCNG.

“I get to come here and it’s like a new family, the people I’ve gotten to meet. I’ve made friends for life,” she says. “You don’t get that anywhere else and I think that’s really special.”

Weaver is currently an ER Nurse with Duke health and looks forward to not only continuing her career as a medic, but also creating stronger bonds between the NCNG and her civilian community.

“To be able to spread this perspective and change the mindset that a lot of civilians have on the military is really cool,” she says. “I’m honored, truly, to be part of an organization that gives me these opportunities.”





Airmen with the 145<sup>th</sup> Air Wing conduct SPRO Training.  
Photo by Tech. Sgt. Juan Paz









U.S. Air Force maintainers from the 145th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron tow a C-17 Globemaster III inside a hangar at the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport base, March 28, 2025. It takes 11 maintainers to safely tow the aircraft into the hangar with four engine stands.  
U.S. Air National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Mary McKnight





## North Carolina National Guard Showcases NCHART Capabilities

Capt. Shamari Pratt

RALEIGH, N.C. - Soldiers from the North Carolina National Guard's 449th Combat Aviation Brigade participated in a showcase hosted by North Carolina Emergency Management at NCNG Joint Force Headquarters in Raleigh, N.C. on April 17, 2025. The showcase highlighted the wide range of capabilities that the state can employ during natural disasters and emergency response efforts.

The showcase included demonstrations from first responders and specialized state assets such as the North Carolina Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team (NCHART), which integrates the North Carolina National Guard, State Highway Patrol, and local fire departments.

The NCNG provides air assets, which includes Blackhawk and Lakota helicopters equipped for hoist rescues, with the Lakota capable of landing in confined spaces. During Hurricane Helene, the NCNG executed over 500 rescue missions, including 165 complex hoist rescues with these assets.

"As a member of NCHART, we respond to events such as Hurricane Helene. There were a lot of different complex missions that we accomplished out there," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Kevin Jaminez, a NCNG UH-72 pilot. "Some require the rescue hoist to get people out of their collapsing homes. Some just required us to land in tight spaces to get people out of immediate danger."

Recently, the NCHART team rescued and extracted an injured firefighter in Asheville, N.C. on March 25, 2025. The team consisted of two NCNG pilots, one NCNG crew member, and one NCNG medic.

"It wasn't easy, but it was satisfying knowing that we could contribute to helping out the citizens of North Carolina," said Jaminez.





North Carolina Emergency Management hosted a resource showcase of the State Emergency Response Team. Highlighting the wide range of capabilities available to support disaster and emergency response efforts in Raleigh, NC, April 17th, 2025. The event featured demonstrations and briefings from local first responders and specialized state assets, including the North Carolina Search and Rescue Program, the North Carolina Hazardous Materials Regional Response Team Program, the NC National Guard, the State Highway Patrol, the North Carolina Office of EMS' healthcare preparedness program, and the NC Troopers Association Human Remains Detection K-9 Unit. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Wesley Riley)







Soldiers with the 113th Sustainment Brigade conduct realistic medic, combat lifesaver and buddy aid training during Annual Training at Camp Butner.  
Photo by Mr. Robert Jordan







# North Carolina National Army Guard Leader Earns Acclaimed General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award

RALEIGH, North Carolina – United States Army Chief Warrant Officer Two Michael Gibbs, joined his peers in the active duty, reserve, and other National Guards as one of the most outstanding junior officers in the entire Army.

“His hard work and dedication to the National Guard is unmatched and this award symbolizes that effort,” NCNG Command Chief Warrant Officer Todd Woodard said.

This year National Guard leaders highlighted seven elite up-and-coming leaders from the approximately 28 thousand lieutenants, captains, and junior warrant officers serving in the 54 states and territories nationwide.

Gibbs's award is a singular distinction as the only National Guard warrant officer chosen for this award.

“I had no idea, thank you all for the recognition,” Gibbs said.

His career started as an enlisted Soldier. His resume blends civilian training and experience with Bank of America with military instruction and coursework. Those skills were honed by real-world cyber missions including state active duty and federal responses.

Gibbs' prior recognitions include being part of the 2023 National Guard cyber team that won the 2022 SANS NetWars Department of Defense Services Cup.

“I look forward to continuing to have an impact in the Guard and the organization as a whole to better protect our country,” Gibbs said.

Gibbs and the other recipients are scheduled for a national award ceremony later this year.

The award is inspired by the career and legacy of Army General Douglas MacArthur, a veteran of World War I, World War II, and the Korean War who served as the superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He addressed the cadets at the academy coining the phrase 'Duty, Honor, Country'.



Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, meets with the National Guard cyber team that won the 2022 SANS NetWars Department of Defense Services Cup cybersecurity competition at the Pentagon Sept. 22, 2023. Teams from all service branches took part in the two-day competition, with the Guard team taking top honors for the third consecutive year.





U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Daniel Rodgers, Staff Sgt. James Rutkowski and Staff Sgt. Matthew Temple, 145th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chiefs, manually washes a C-17 Globemaster III inside a hangar at the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport base, March 17, 2025. The maintainers wash each aircraft every 180 days from the last wash date. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Mary McKnight)





# Soldier Support Services **RUCKSACK**

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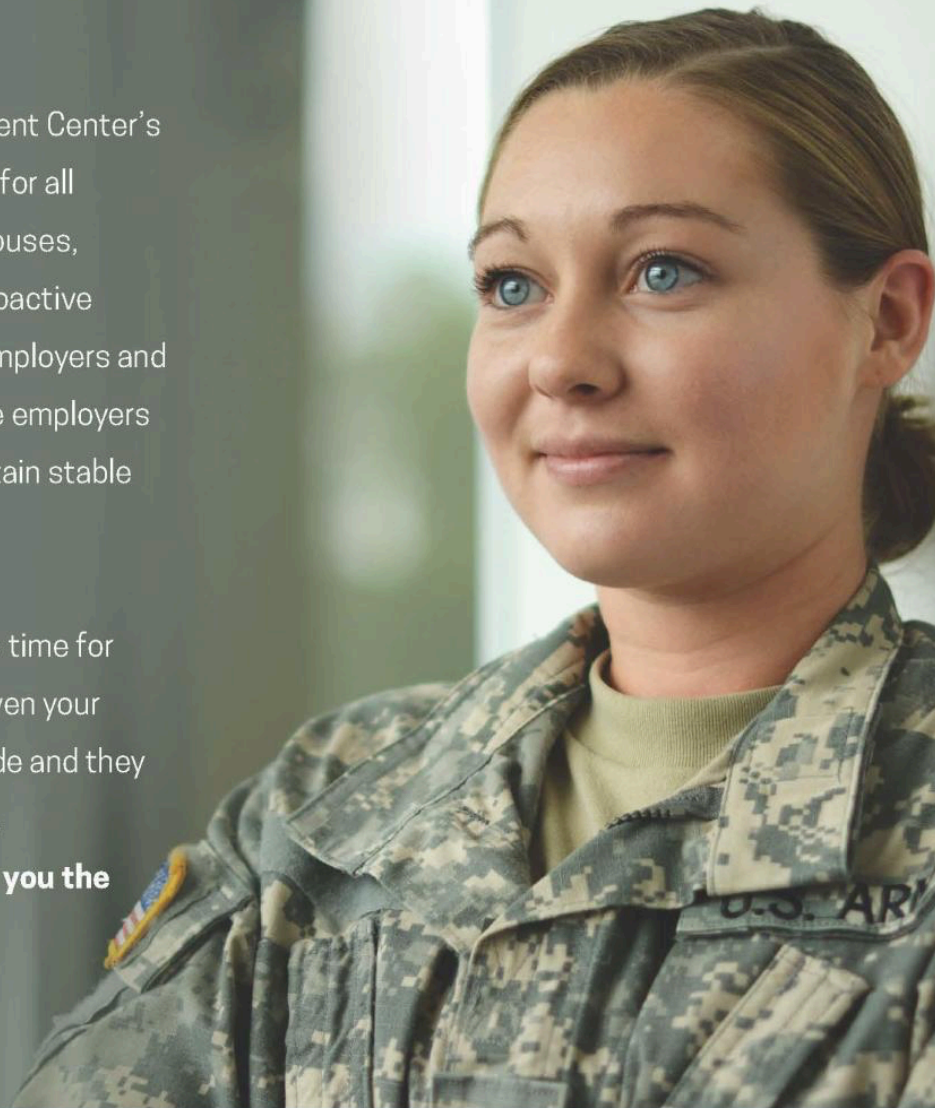


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## Remembering the 30th Infantry Division: North Carolina National Guard Leaders Pay Tribute at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

Capt. Timmy Marshburn

Arlington, Va. - Maj. Gen. Todd Hunt, The Adjutant General of North Carolina, Brig. Gen. Wes Morrison, Assistant Adjutant General-Maneuver, Command Sgt. Maj. Benjamin Garner, North Carolina Army National Guard Senior Enlisted Leader, and Command Sgt. Maj. Sidney Baker, 30th Armor Brigade Combat Team Command Sergeant Major, were joined by visitors and members of the 30th Infantry Division Association as they laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, December 17, 2024.

The ceremony marked the 80th anniversary of the day the 30th Infantry Division entered the Battle of the Bulge, one of the most harrowing and pivotal conflicts of World War II. The wreath used during the ceremony served as a symbol of gratitude and remembrance for the Soldiers of the 30th Infantry Division.

"The wreath-laying is in honor of those of the 30th Infantry Division who were killed in action or missing in action," said Hunt. "Their ultimate sacrifice in the name of freedom will never be forgotten."

Eighty years earlier, the 30th Infantry Division—known as "Old Hickory"—was called to action. The division was resting in Holland after their victory at Aachen when they were handpicked to block the German advance in the Malmedy-Stavelot area. As the Soldiers boarded trucks for the front lines, they heard Axis Sally on the radio, naming them "Roosevelt's SS"—a moniker that reflected the division's ferocity in battle.

Two days later, on December 19, 1944, Old Hickory delivered a critical blow to the German counteroffensive. At Stoumont, Belgium, they defeated Kampfgruppe Peiper, halting the advance of the German counteroffensive's lead element. The 30th Infantry Division's efforts didn't stop there.

Through the weeks that followed, they contributed to a series of decisive counterattacks that culminated in Allied victory in January 1945 at key locations such as La Gleize and St. Vith. Captured German Soldiers from the infamous 1st SS Panzer Division revealed that their officers had assured them they wouldn't face Old Hickory, knowing the division's reputation for unyielding resilience—a promise that proved false.





Brig. Gen. Morrison, who recently commanded the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, reflected on the gravity of the wreath laying and the honor of being part of the heritage of the 30th Infantry Division.

“Being at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and Arlington helps us reflect on the sacrifices made eighty years ago by so many in the largest battle in our Army’s history,” said Morrison. “It motivates me to ensure we are doing our best to carry on the legacy they forged for the 30th Infantry Division, the North Carolina National Guard, and our United States Army so long ago. We ensure we continue the legacy by being always ready to meet challenges at home or abroad, just as they did in the Battle of the Bulge.”

As the wreath was placed, its vibrant colors stood out against the marble tomb. The actions of the 30th Infantry Division in the winter of 1944 serves as a testament to the enduring spirit of service. Today, that spirit lives on, remembered and revered, as their legacy continues to inspire future generations of Soldiers.

“The Soldiers of the 30th Infantry Division legacy lives on in the Soldiers still wearing the ‘Old Hickory’ patch today. These Soldiers come from North Carolina, South Carolina, and West Virginia,” said Garner. “Since the European Campaigns of WWI and WWII, ‘Old Hickory’ has been ready and answered the call. This has been displayed in the multiple combat deployments to the Middle East fighting the War on Terror, and most recently in the response to the devastation in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. There is no doubt that when the next call comes, the Soldiers of the 30th Infantry Division legacy will be ready to answer the call.”







Capt. Hurd of India Company, 230<sup>th</sup> fires the .50 cal machine gun at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Rudy Rodriguez





883rd Engineer Company conducts urban breaching operations at Fort Liberty, North Carolina during annual training in support of mobility operations as part of their combat engineer military occupational specialty requirements. Photo by 883rd Engineer Company





## 27 Missions and Counting

Capt. Timmy Marshburn

GREENSBORO, N.C. – For many, serving in the North Carolina National Guard means answering the call when their state and nation need them most. Few exemplify this commitment more than Sgt. 1st Class Alexander Yeniscavich, a dedicated Soldier assigned to the 690th Quartermaster Platoon, 113th Special Troops Battalion, 113th Sustainment Brigade. Over his distinguished career, he has mobilized on state active duty (SAD) for an astonishing 27 different missions and multiple deployments.

From hurricanes and winter storms to civil unrest, Yeniscavich has been on the front lines of nearly every major crisis in North Carolina over the past decade. His dedication to service, leadership in challenging environments, and willingness to sacrifice his time for his fellow citizens make him a standout figure in the NCNG community.

Yeniscavich, a resident of Oak Island, enlisted in the National Guard in 2004 and has served in multiple states, including Virginia, Arizona, and North Carolina. His first experience on SAD came during his time in the Virginia National Guard, where he supported various emergency response missions. Since then, he has consistently stepped up whenever duty called.

“This is my 27th state active duty,” Yeniscavich said. “That’s going to be between here and Virginia. I’ve spent about 10 years in North Carolina and 10 years in Virginia.”

One of his most memorable missions took place nearly a decade ago when he mobilized to Puerto Rico for a month-long response to Hurricane Maria.

“It was a really bad one,” he recalled. “A lot of the buildings didn’t have roofs on them, and there wasn’t running water. I remember that one well—our mission was clearing debris and fallen trees, and supporting the local population by delivering bottled water and supplies.”





The National Guard is a dual mission force, taking on roles both locally and globally. Yeniscavich understands that domestic missions like SAD is one of the essential duties of a National Guardsmen.

“I feel like in the National Guard, state active duty is probably our most important role,” Yeniscavich said. “As a civilian, I get to put the uniform on and perform functions that actually help my community, people around me, infrastructure, police, and North Carolina Department of Transportation.”

With 27 missions under his belt, Yeniscavich has become a mentor to many younger Soldiers, passing down hard-earned wisdom on disaster response, teamwork, and resilience. When asked for advice for junior Soldiers, he emphasized readiness and commitment.

“Just make sure you pack all your necessary gear and make sure everything is good to go at home,” he advised. “I’m just happy that junior Soldiers are participating in their career.”

Traditional National Guard Soldiers like Yeniscavich often have careers outside of their military service and SAD missions can put a strain on the servicemember and their employer. Balancing military service with civilian responsibilities is no easy feat, but Yeniscavich credits his employer for their unwavering support.

“My civilian employers definitely strengthen my ability to come out here and perform these roles, make sure that my position is safe for me—very supportive.”

However, he acknowledges that being away from home is one of the biggest challenges of SAD.

“The ones that are more than a week or longer, yeah, being away from home, family. That’s always tough.” Even after 27 mobilizations on SAD, Yeniscavich remains eager to serve whenever called.

“I don’t do this for recognition, I do it because it’s my job and because I love this state and the people in it,” he said. “As long as I’m able, I’ll keep answering the call.”

With the NCNG constantly preparing for future missions, one thing is certain: when the next crisis arises, Sgt. 1st Class Yeniscavich will be ready, embodying the spirit of service that defines the NCNG.









U.S. North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers from the 505th Engineer Battalion and recruiting and retention battalion partake in the Charlotte Tunnel to Towers event at the Bank of America stadium in Charlotte NC on April 27, 2025. Tunnel to Towers Foundation was formed to honor Firefighter Stephen Siller who laid down his life during 9/11 and since then has broadened to an organization supporting Gold star families, fallen first responder families, and veterans. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Wesley Riley





The North Carolina National Guard (NCNG) hosted the 2025 Combined Military Ball in Charlotte, N.C. on March 22, 2025.  
U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Aimee Trinidad





Soldiers from the 1-130 ARM conduct a capabilities brief of the AH-64E Version 6 for Soldiers and Officers of the 30<sup>th</sup> ABCT and 236 BEB at Fort Bragg, N.C.  
Photo by 883rd Engineer Company





## North Carolina National Guard Hosts Cyber Student Competition

Mr. Robert Jordan

There was a hacker in North Carolina National Guard headquarters, 22 of them to be precise, and they were there by invitation only. The NCNG Cyber Security Response Force hosted a cyber capture the flag competition at NCNG Joint Force Headquarters in Raleigh, North Carolina, April 11, 2025. Teams from various high schools and local colleges tested their cyber skills against each other and challenges including web exploitation cryptography reverse engineering during the NCNG outreach event.

“It is hands-on and they got exposure,” Army Lt. Col. Seth Barun, the NCNG chief of cyber operations, said.

The hackers began their competitions under the watchful eye of the North Carolina National Guard cyber security response force.

“It is a recruiting and outreach for cyber security response force,” Essence Thomas, NCNG CSRF cyber threat intelligence branch chief said.

The challenges tested both individual talent and team building.

“It is really interesting to see how they bring out their own strengths and pull out the best from their teammates,” Nicole Baize, SparkLab Leader of Southeast Guilford High School said.

Each team settled in behind networked laptops with access to a virtual environment that simulated many real-life scenarios of an open and vulnerable network system.





“It reinforces basic cyber skills and knowledge that can be used in everyday life or organizations they may work in someday,” Thomas said.

There was a constant murmur of hints, suggestions, and ideas between teammates, “I’ll try to hit the AI you two try going the other way . . . try it this way,” against an ever-present clatter of hands on keyboards.

“It is a lot of fun to see, these are the skills you can’t teach in a classroom it forces students to look beyond themselves,” said Baize.



Each team earned points for capturing one of thirteen flags, each specific challenge, and points for the most efficient way of doing it.

“If there was a big problem we came together, it was a great environment,” Burgin Wilber, a student from Broughton High School in Raleigh said.

The competition was very tight several hours into the event with only one flag separating the leading teams.

“It was very impressive, I would do it again,” Arianna Glover, a Southeast Guilford High School student on the winning High School team said.



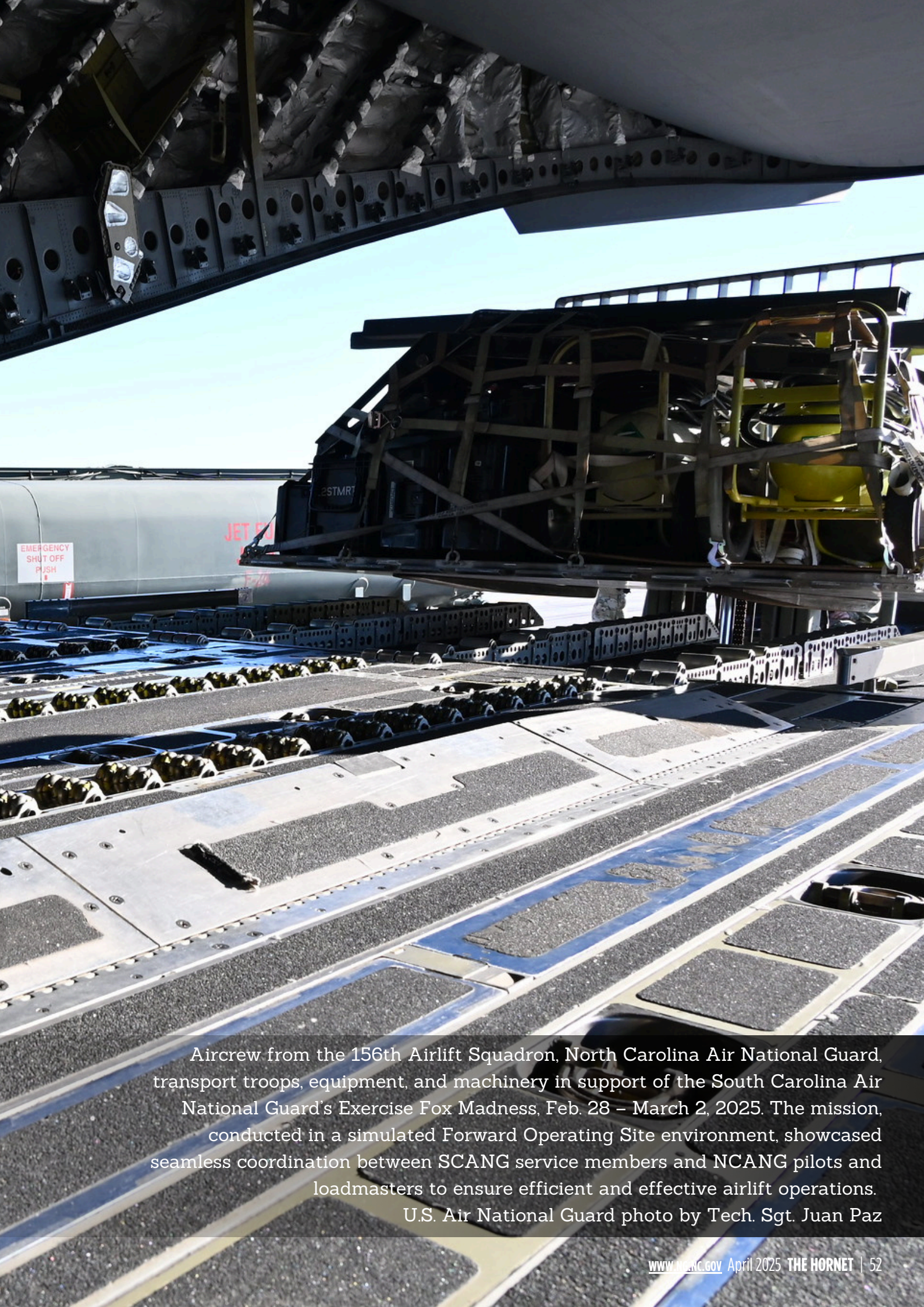
Four hours of competition later the Campbell University team took first after a tiebreaker with the second-place team of students from Southeast Guilford High School and Broughton High School in Raleigh.

“We would love for you (the teams) to work for us someday, one of our missions is to protect state infrastructure,” said Barun.









Aircrew from the 156th Airlift Squadron, North Carolina Air National Guard, transport troops, equipment, and machinery in support of the South Carolina Air National Guard's Exercise Fox Madness, Feb. 28 – March 2, 2025. The mission, conducted in a simulated Forward Operating Site environment, showcased seamless coordination between SCANG service members and NCANG pilots and loadmasters to ensure efficient and effective airlift operations.

U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Juan Paz





The North Carolina National Guard (NCNG) receives a donation of approximately 10,000 gun locks from NC S.A.F.E. as part of an effort to keep the ball rolling on gun safety and decline of suicides rates in Raleigh NC, on February 26th, 2025. After our first year without a suicide in the NCNG, this donation will help us continue our efforts to maintain this achievement each year on a larger scale.

U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Wesley Riley





Brig. Gen. Wes Morrison receives a capability brief and hands-on demonstration with the recently fielded MRAD sniper rifle from Soldiers in the 1-120<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment at Fort Bragg, N.C.  
Photo by Lt. Col. Andrew DeLaney





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