

The FOCUS



AUGUST 2025

NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS THEMES AND MESSAGES

August Observances

National Back to School Month
National Immunization Awareness Month
Antiterrorism Awareness Month
National Traffic Awareness Month

1 Woman Astronomers Day

2 National Friendship Day

4 Coast Guard Birthday (1790)

7 Purple Heart Day

10 DOD Birthday (1949)

14 Navajo Code Talkers Day

15 Victory over Japan Day (1945)

19 National Aviation Day

19-25 National Aviation Week

19-25 Liberation of Paris (1944)

24-28 World Water Week

21 National Senior Citizens Day

26 Women’s Equality Day

29 Marine Corps Reserve Birthday (1916)

August - Domestic Operations



South Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 125th Multi-Role Bridge Company, 122nd Engineer Battalion, conduct bridging operations during Vigilant Guard in Milan, Tennessee, May 13. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jordan Wright)

Tennessee hosts Exercise Vigilant Guard

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Tennessee National Guard hosted Exercise Vigilant Guard May 12-18, which focused on statewide disaster response training and included the Tennessee Guard and more than 30 state and federal agencies.

Co-sponsored by U.S. Northern Command and the National Guard Bureau, the exercise saw participating agencies and National Guard members from Tennessee, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming, respond to realistic major disaster scenarios designed to improve mission command and relationships among federal, state, and local agencies.

“These exercises, where we operate jointly and with various emergency responders, are crucial to our

organization’s readiness,” said U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Warner Ross, adjutant general of the Tennessee Guard.

“The more we work alongside one another, the more we fine-tune our policies and procedures. Building these relationships are vital to our effectiveness, and continuing to practice what we do will make all of us much better when it’s time to respond to the real thing.”

This year’s exercise scenario is based on a 7.5 magnitude earthquake occurring along the New Madrid Seismic Zone near Tipton County. Exercise participants worked together to respond to numerous situations and conduct search and rescue, critical site security, and respond to large infrastructure failure.

Media Team Themes

U.S. service members continue to support efforts carrying out President Donald Trump’s executive orders on protecting the territorial integrity of the United States. Trump promised to secure the southern border, and the DOD has been on the job there since January.

Leadership News and Notes

NGB-PA Army E7 Job Announcement

The National Guard Public Affairs Office is hiring a One Time Occasional Tour public affairs NCO in the rank of SFC. NGB-PA seeks a highly competent 46S with a track record of success.

Applicants must have excellent writing, photography, video production, and editing skills. Proficiency in Adobe Creative Suite applications required. Must have excellent written communications skills, specifically in news and feature writing, and a solid understanding of copy editing and AP style.

The successful candidate must demonstrate proficiency in photo and video editing. Proficiency in interview techniques is a must and expertise in joint and service regulations governing the release of information through traditional and social media channels is required. The position requires travel and frequent integration with

community leaders, general officers, and other senior leaders. The applicant must independently manage themselves and PA assets while on mission.

Applicants are required to submit a one-page PDF portfolio containing, at a minimum, three examples of personally produced written stories, three examples of video products and five photos with captions. DVIDS URL links to the products are acceptable formats for submission. Applicants are encouraged to submit up to three more examples of their choice.

The point of contact for questions and applications is: Sgt. Maj. Pete Morrison
peter.d.morrison.mil@army.mil
Work: 520-671-6733
Cell: 207-632-0108

Army Public Affairs Center - Career Field Update

See full briefing attached to this PDF

Highlights:

Army public affairs propenent representation moves into U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command

- Disestablishes Army Public Affairs Center
- Establishes U.S. Army Public Affairs School and Army Proponent Office – Public Affairs

Division PAO manning

46V Training conversion deadline Sept. 13, 2026

- Non-completion: bar to re-enlist, reclassification to needs of the Army

On the Cover:

U.S. Soldiers assigned to the 108th Medical Company, 213th Regional Support Group, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, run with a litter during a medical training exercise at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, July 18. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Aliyah Vivier)

September Observances

National Hispanic Heritage Month
(Sep 15 - Oct 15)
National Preparedness Month
National Suicide Prevention Awareness
Prevention Month

1 Labor Day

2 National V-J Day (1945)

4 National Wildlife Day

7-13 Suicide Prevention Week

11 Patriot Day and National Day of Service
and Remembrance

16 National Voter Registration Day 4th
Tuesday in Sept.

18 Air Force Birthday (1947)

19 National POW/MIA Recognition Day

22 Autumn Equinox

27 National Family Health and Fitness Day
(Last Saturday of September)

28 National Gold Star Mother’s and Family
Day (Last Sunday of September)

September - Reform

Army introduces new fitness test for 2025

*By U.S. Army Sgt. Woodlyne Escarne,
Defense Media Activity*

FORT MEADE, Md. — The U.S. Army officially adopts the Army Fitness Test as the new test of record for Soldiers starting June 1. The change will replace the Army Combat Fitness Test and introduce updated scoring standards that emphasize readiness and combat effectiveness.

Soldiers will have until Jan. 1, 2026, to meet the new AFT requirements without facing adverse actions. Active-duty Soldiers in 21 designated combat specialties must additionally meet the more rigorous combat standard of a minimum score of 350 points total, with a minimum of 60 points in each event. National Guard and Reserve Soldiers in those same specialties will have until June 1, 2026, to meet these requirements. The passing score for all other specialties is 300 points, with a minimum of 60 points in each event. Active Guard Reserve Soldiers and those mobilized on orders exceeding 60 days must meet the Jan. 1, 2026, suspense.

“The AFT is designed to improve Soldier readiness and ensure physical standards [and] prepare Soldiers for the demands of modern warfare,” said Sgt. Maj. Christopher Mullinax, senior enlisted leader, deputy chief of staff for Operations, Army Headquarters. “It emphasizes holistic fitness over event-specific training and is grounded in performance.”

The decision to replace the ACFT with the AFT follows 18 months of analysis

[Click here for AFT score chart PDF](#)
NIPR users copy and paste: <https://tinyurl.com/4jmyhxx4>

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October - Cyber

Texas, Nebraska Guard Train With Czechia
Against Cyber Threats



Story and photo By: U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jasmine McCarthy

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. — Hidden within a discreet concrete building, teams from various states and countries collaborate across screens and keyboards for Cyber Shield 2025.

For the May 30 to June 13 exercise, 28 states and 15 state partners have come together to share best practices and lessons on how to defend the cyber front. One cyber team, composed of Air and Army National Guardsmen from Nebraska and Texas, has been working closely with its shared partner, Czechia.

Czechia became partners with Texas and Nebraska in 1993 through the Department of Defense National Guard Bureau State Partnership Program. The program involves cooperation between both militaries, cultural exchanges and shared training. Exercises such as Cyber Shield allow both partners to use their knowledge to train for and react to real-world scenarios.

“It’s important to work with our state partners because we do not know everything that is out there,” Abella said. “Bringing in our state partners through the program allows us to understand how they operate in the cyber world and helps us build alliances,” said 1st Lt. Karina Abella, a cyber operations officer from the 72nd Brigade Combat Team with the Texas Army National Guard

Cyber Shield is the longest-running and largest Department of Defense cyber exercise. This year, about 900 National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, Guardians and civilian cyber professionals from around the world are gathering to participate in training and a cyber defense exercise.

“For those who would like to come and do an exercise like this, they should do it as it is a good experience,” Hernandez said. “In the future, I believe that warfare is going to take a different approach towards cyber, so we should always be ready.”

October Observances

National Cyber Security Awareness Month

Oct. 13 - Navy Birthday (250 Years)

Oct. 13 – Columbus Day

Oct. 26 - National Day of the Deployed

Oct. 31 - Halloween

Community Relations

Please send Army National Guard flyover requests with six weeks lead time to allow for staffing at National Guard Bureau and the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs. Be sure to check the DD Form 2535 for Federal Aviation Administration review and signature, as this is often a cause for delay in completing packets in-state. Air National Guard flyover requests are processed through the Secretary of the Air Force for Public Affairs Aerial Events website. Send ANG Civic Leader Flight requests with at least four weeks’ lead time.

ARNG CLFs require TAG-level approval and must be staffed in accordance with regulations.

You may email us for flyover and CLF packet instructions. All requests should be submitted to our org. box: ng.ncr.ngb-arng.mbx.ngb-community-engagement@army.mil