

# *The* FOCUS

NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS THEMES AND MESSAGES

DECEMBER 2025



389 YEARS

1636 - 2025



\*FOR AWARENESS PURPOSES\*  
NOT FOR ACTION

December Observances

- 7 - Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- 13 - Army-Navy Game  
National Guard birthday (389 Years)
- 16 - Wreaths Across America Day
- 20 - Space Force Birthday (7 Years)
- 25 - Christmas

December -  
Year in Review



National Guard members perform various federal and state missions throughout the United States in 2025. (U.S. Army photo illustration by Master Sgt. Whitney Hughes)

Call for year in review content

Did your unit take part in a significant event in 2025? Our Command Information team is welcoming submissions for the 2025 year in review. Submit any photos, video, or content to Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy by Dec. 10. Send content to jonathan.m.soucy.mil@army.mil for review.

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Leadership News and Notes

ARMY PUBLIC AFFAIRS ASSOCIATION

APAA Monthly Photo Competition31 October, 2025

Showcase Your Best Shot & Win an APAA Challenge Coin!

The Army Public Affairs Association (APAA) is excited for it’s **Monthly Photo Competition** to recognize the incredible work of Army Public Affairs Soldiers and civilians. This competition offers participants the opportunity to showcase their best photo of the month for a chance to win an **exclusive APAA challenge coin** presented by the association’s president.

**Competition Guidelines**

- Who Can Participate?
  - All U.S. Army Public Affairs and Visual Information Soldiers and civilians are eligible to enter.
- Submission Requirements:
  - One (1) entry per month per participant.
  - Photos must be taken during the competition month (e.g., for the July competition, photos must be taken between July 1-31).
  - Each submission must include a caption explaining the image, its significance, and the context of the event captured embedded in the metadata or a Word document. The caption must include the photographer’s rank, name, and unit.
    - Ex. Soldiers assigned to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), salute as the national anthems are played during the official ceremony of the 78th year commemoration of Operation Market Garden at Eerde, Netherlands, Sept. 17, 2022. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Joe Canon, 40th Public Affairs Detachment)
  - Files must be submitted in the QR code below.
  - Only publicly released or releasable photos may be submitted; by submitting, participants acknowledge that proper release authority has been obtained.

**Competition Timeline**

- Photo Submission Window: First week of the following month (e.g., Aug 1-10 for July photos).
- Voting Period: Second week of the month (e.g., August 11-14 for July photos).
- Winner Announcement: The winner will be announced that Friday of the second full week (e.g., August 15 for July photos).
- The winning photo will be featured on APAA’s official Facebook page and other digital platforms.

**How Voting Works**

- Submitted photos will be posted on APAA’s official Facebook and LinkedIn pages.
- The audience will vote by reacting to the photo (Like or Love reactions count as votes).
- The photo with the most votes at the end of the voting period will be declared the winner.

**Incentives & Recognition**

- The winner will receive an APAA challenge coin from the APAA President.
- The winning photo and photographer will be highlighted on APAA’s social media platforms and website.
- Winners will receive official recognition from APAA.

**Repeat Winner Rule**

To ensure a fair competition and encourage broader participation, if a previous winner receives the most votes again, they will be acknowledged but will not receive another coin.

We look forward to seeing the incredible talent within our Public Affairs and Visual Information community! Capture your best moments and get ready to showcase your work. For any questions, please contact APAA via our official social media pages or email.

#CaptureTheMission #APAACHallengeCoin #ArmyPublicAffairs #MonthlyPhotoCompetition

Sgt. Maj.’s Corner

Sgt. Maj. Pete Morrison, senior enlisted leader of the National Guard Bureau Office of Public Affairs

Photo competitions have benefits for Guard members

- evaluation bullet points
- service member recognition
- unit, state recognition
- motivation of unit members
- recognition of National Guard excellence in public affairs

Submission link:  
<https://afmstudio.us2.quickconnect.to/sharing/iLDHP0ZN>

On the cover:

The commemorative logo for the National Guard’s 389th birthday, which occurs Dec. 13. (Graphic by Tom Sobczyk)



January Observances

Why I Serve Spotlight  
Financial Wellness Month  
National Mentoring Month

1 - New Year’s Day  
Army Aviation Birthday

9 - Law Enforcement Appreciation Day

14 - Ratification Day  
(end of American Revolution)

January - Future

Community Engagement

Please send Army National Guard flyover requests at least six weeks prior to the event to allow for staffing at National Guard Bureau and Army Communications and Outreach Office (formerly Office of the Chief of Public Affairs). Be sure to check the Department of Defense Form 2535 for Federal Aviation Administration review and signature, as this is often a cause for delay in completing packets in-state. ARNG civic leader flights are staffed by the Joint Force Headquarters public affairs office in accordance with regulations, National Guard Bureau Public Affairs, and Aviation Standardization guidance, with Adjutant General level approval.

Air National Guard flyover requests are coordinated and approved through the Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs Aerial Events website. ANG civic leader flight requests must be submitted to NGB-PA for approval at least four weeks prior to the flight. Packet requirements and instructions are on Teams: National Guard PAOs>Community Engagemen>Files. Submit requests to: [ng.ncr.ngb-arng.mbx.ngb-community-engagement@army.mil](mailto:ng.ncr.ngb-arng.mbx.ngb-community-engagement@army.mil)



An Ohio Air National Guard pilot assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, flies an F-16 Fighting Falcon over Ohio Stadium, in Columbus, Ohio, March 1, before an National Hockey League Game as part of the National Guard’s community engagement program. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Mikayla Gibbs)

February -  
Special Update

New Army media competition categories

KLW SOP	Sept. 23, 2025
<b>I. Summary of Change</b>	
<b>-23 September Update:</b> Administrative edits throughout	
<b>-17 September Update</b>	
-Clarifies eligibility for civilian contestants	
-Removes Letter of Endorsement requirement for Kathy Canham-Ross Organization of Distinction	
-Clarifies workflow for units included in Army Transformation Initiative (see Page 9)	
<b>- Changes:</b>	
-Timeline for award submissions to HQDA adjusted (see Page 6).	
-Entry to DVIDS categories now limited to enlisted CMF46 service members through Sgt. 1 <sup>st</sup> Class, and civilian PA/VI employees through GS-12.	
-Non-DVIDS categories now submitted to and judged exclusively at HQDA level.	
-Requirements for Public Affairs Officer “Rising Star” Award (see Page 20)	
-Eligibility for Public Affairs Organization of the Year (Command Information) restricted to 2-star and below commands.	
- Essay topic for Sgt. Maj. Dawn Kilpatrick Memorial AUSA Scholarship	
<b>- Adds:</b>	
- New Category: Master Communicator of the Year	
- New Category: Soldier Communicator of the Year	
- New Category: Civilian Communicator of the Year	
- New Category: Digital Media Campaign of the Year	
- New Category: Operator-Maintainer of the Year	
- New Category Name: Spc. Hilda I. Clayton Military Photographer of the Year	
- New Category Name: Public Affairs Liaison of the Year (formerly Unit Public Affairs Representative of the Year)	
- New Category Name: Kathy Canham-Ross Organization of Distinction (formerly Public Affairs Organization of the Year – Community Engagement).	
- New eligibility requirement for Military categories: must include a valid Army Fitness Test from 2025.	
- Appendix D: Entry Templates	

For full details on the new Keith L. Ware award categories see the Standard Operating Procedures in the link below:

[https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/klw/admin/2025-26\\_klw\\_sop.pdf](https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/klw/admin/2025-26_klw_sop.pdf)

February Observances

- 1 National Freedom Day (13th Amendment)
- 2 Army Nurse Corps Established (1901)  
Groundhog Day
- 4 USO Birthday (1941)
- 8 Super Bowl LX
- 14 Valentine’s Day
- 16 Presidents Day
- 17 Mardi Gras
- 19 Coast Guard Reserve Birthday (1941)
- 23 Iwo Jima Flag Raising