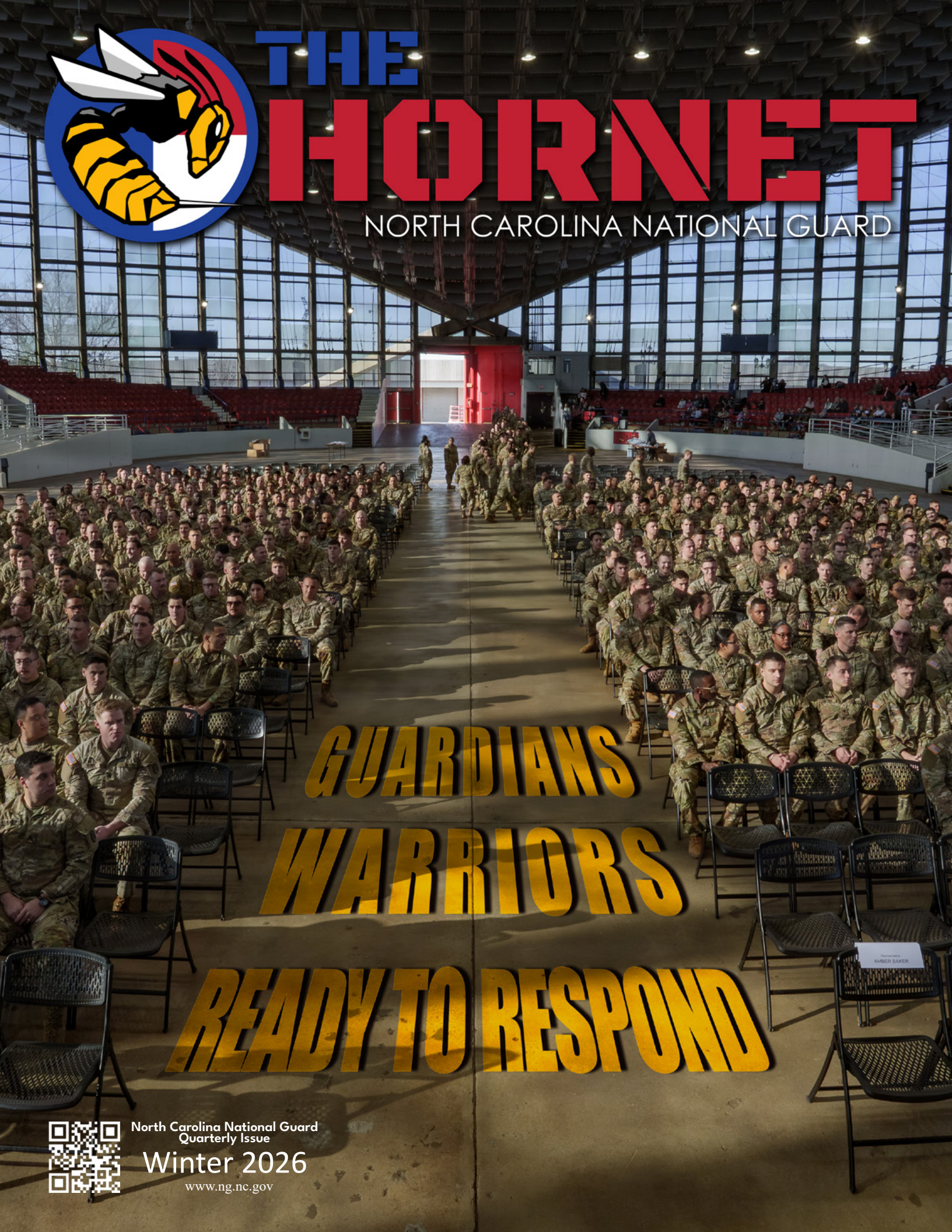




# THE HORNET

NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD



**GUARDIANS  
WARRIORS  
READY TO RESPOND**



North Carolina National Guard  
Quarterly Issue

Winter 2026

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**NC GUARD OPENS NEW  
READINESS CENTER IN  
MCLEANSVILLE**



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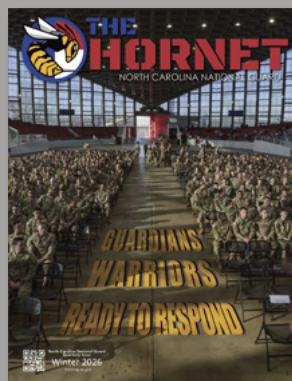
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**STAYING IN THE FIGHT:  
A 19 KILO STORY**



**NC GUARD DEPLOYS  
FOR WINTER STORMS  
FERN & GIANNA**



**ON THE COVER**

Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, file into Dorton Arena for a deployment ceremony in Raleigh, N.C., Jan. 27.

U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Joe Roudabush

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## SENIOR ENLISTED LEADER ARMY

As the State Command Sergeant Major of the North Carolina Army National Guard, I am honored to stand with the Soldiers who form the tip of our spear. These men and women are among the most capable and dedicated professionals in the military.



These Guardians of the Old North State continually answer the call with pride and readiness, performing their duties with absolute professionalism guided by the Warriors' ethos and our core values: mission first, never accept defeat, never quit, and never leave a fallen comrade — whether deployed abroad or serving at home.

As a Noncommissioned Officer, I hold that NCOs are responsible for the training and welfare of our Soldiers. I will continue to challenge our NCO Corps to let integrity guide every decision, to place service before self, and to pursue excellence in all we do. It is our training that prepares our Citizen-Soldiers to stand ready—supporting communities during natural disasters, helping our state recover from hardship, and projecting force when called abroad. This month's Hornet celebrates the spirit of our guardsmen, the dedication of our Citizen-Soldiers and the strength of your North Carolina National Guard.

COMMAND SGT. MAJOR SID C. BAKER  
COMMAND SENIOR ENLISTED LEADER – ARMY  
NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD



## Soldier Support Services **RUCKSACK**

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# NC GUARD OPENS NEW READINESS CENTER IN MCLEANSVILLE

by Mr. Robert Jordan

## A Modern Hub for Strength and Service



The McLeansville community welcomed their newest neighbor and large employer, the North Carolina National Guard, at the groundbreaking for the NCNG Regional Readiness Center, Feb. 11.

More than 440 Soldiers assigned to the NCNG's 113th Sustainment Brigade, 113th Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops

Battalion, Support Operations Office, 196th Signal Company, 882nd Engineer Company, and Field Maintenance Shop 9 will serve at the 70-acre campus ready to deploy.

"A lot of training will be done on site, a lot of the training as far as operations training and tactical training," said U.S. Army Col. Teonnie Dotson, commander of the 113th Sus-

tainment Brigade. "We also prepare for any type of call-ups that the governor has for us."

With a slash of scissors state Sen. Phil Berger, state Rep. Alan Branson, Johnston County District 6 Commissioner Bill Stovall, North Carolina Department of Public Safety Chief of Staff San Hoekstra, and NCNG Construction Facilities Management Officer Kenney Cook

joined U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Todd Hunt, the Adjutant General of North Carolina, NCNG State Command Sgt. Maj. Sid Baker, and the builders of the center Robert Carmac, Smith Sinnett Architecture, Seth Hanner, New Atlantic Construction, and Daniel Lynch Jr., Lynch Construction to cut the red ribbon ceremonially opening the site.

"New facilities, like the RRC



**“New facilities inspire Soldiers by giving them something to have pride in and providing a facility that will improve jobs in the local area and promote a sense of community.” – Maj. Gen. Todd Hunt**

and FMS 9, inspire Soldiers by giving them something to have pride in and providing a facility that will improve jobs in the local area and promote a sense of community," Hunt said.

The state-of-the-art facility is the largest financed NCNG construction project as the result of years of planning, coordination, and effort begun in 2018 by leaders from the city of McLeansville, NCNG CFMO with state and federal legislative support. Construction began in 2021.

"This has been a monumental journey and it would not have been possible without the immense support we've re-



ceived from leaders throughout the state," said U.S. Army Capt. Tim Marshburn, an administrative officer assigned to the NCNG's 130th Finance Battalion, 113th Sustainment Brigade.

More than 440 Soldiers can serve and respond to any need with a host of military equipment from the center. The facil-

ities will be used for day-to-day operations and allows Soldiers to respond faster to federal and state active duty missions.

"This facility actually gives the National Guard the ability to be able to respond to the domestic needs of our citizens in the central and western North Carolina area," Dotson said.

The new \$100 million facility blended funding from both

### Facility Highlights

1. MASSIVE CAPACITY ON A 70-ACRE CAMPUS
2. \$100 MILLION JOINT-FUNDED INVESTMENT
3. DUAL-MISSION READINESS
4. ADVANCED ON-SITE TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE



state and federal to help the NCNG respond to areas in when called. Response time is critical when lives and property are threatened.

“It shows that we are being good stewards of North Carolina taxpayer trust,” Hunt said.

The full-time and traditional part-time drilling Soldiers will support the surrounding community. The 113th will be ready to respond at a moment’s notice for the local community and across central and western parts of the state. The FMS technicians will make the best use of taxpayer dollars repairing weapons systems, vehicles, and other equipment beyond the unit level maintenance all Soldiers perform on duty.

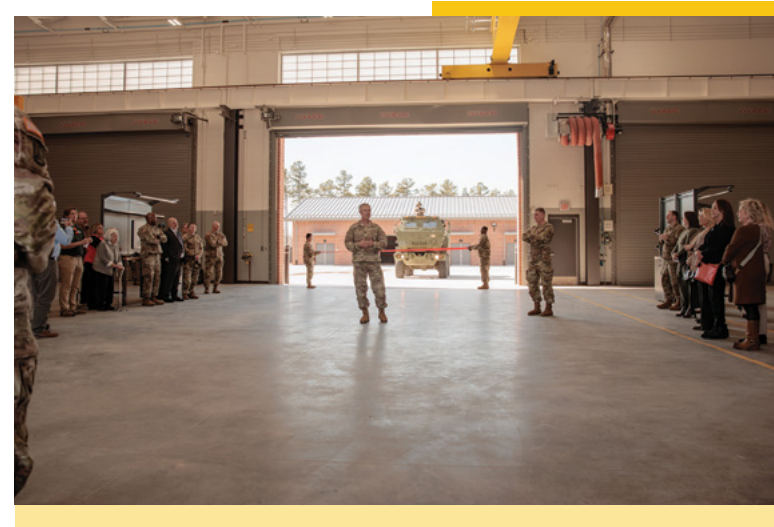
“This modernization of infrastructure keeps the NCNG as a strategic and operational reserve of the Joint Force,” Hunt said.

That infrastructure began to pay back the investment in readiness in about 30 minutes after the ceremony ended as the first vehicle, An M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, rumbled into the FMS.

“It was the center of attention, it is great to see the support maintenance is getting from the state,” said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Clinton Morrison, assigned to Greensboro’s A Battery, 5th - 113th Field Artillery, a HIMARS crew chief. “It is a good feeling that we have this and can continue the fight and mission.”

The guests swarmed over the 22-foot-long, 30,000-pound long-range rocket launcher. Some asked the crew questions as others climbed inside the armored cab.

“We talked with several lawmakers and explained what HIMARS is and how we affect the battlespace,” Morrison said.



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# 60th Troop Command

## Change of Responsibility

by U.S. Army Pfc. Brooke Kentler

Noncommissioned officers and enlisted Soldiers assigned to the 60th Troop Command witnessed a change of responsibility ceremony at the Claude T. Bowers Military Center, Dec. 7, 2025, during which U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Derrick Singletary passed the brigade's senior enlisted leader duties and responsibilities to U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Shipley. The 60th Troop Command is one of the most diverse brigades within the North Carolina National Guard, comprising an assortment of units, all with distinct missions and purposes. Units within the 60th Troop Command include the

42nd Civil Support Team; the 5th Battalion, 113th Field Artillery Regiment; the North Carolina National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion; Company B, 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne); Company B, 1st Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne); Special Forces Detachment-X; the Guard Medical Detachment; the 403rd Rigger Support Team; the 430th Ordnance Company; the 130th Military History Detachment; the 382nd Public Affairs Detachment; and the 440th Army Band. Singletary, who has deployed four times and served in developmental assignments ranging from corporal to command sergeant major, embodies the experience



and resilience that define our senior NCOs.

U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Eric Gavin noted that passing the sword to U.S. Army Col. Jamie Godwin, the brigade commander, symbolized Singletary relinquishing his duties and showing his gratitude for leading the 60th Troop Command's fine Soldiers.

In 1840, the War Department adopted the unique NCO sword, a fully functional weapon not intended for display, but rather for hard and dedicated use. Historically, the sword was worn by noncommissioned officers for over 70 years and through major conflicts such as the Mexican-American War, the Civil War, and the Spanish-American War, making it a symbol of America's military heritage.

"Command sergeants major may come and go, but the sword remains razor sharp," Gavin said. The sword symbolizes the authority, discipline, and responsibility the outgoing command sergeant major entrusts to the incoming command sergeant major. The legacy of the NCO sword is central to all change of responsibility ceremonies.

"Godwin passes the sword to Command Sgt. Maj. Shipley, delegating authority and entrusting him with the responsibility and care of the unit," Gavin said.

Shipley enlisted in October 2000 and deployed from 2012 to 2013 with the 882nd Engineer Company in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. His personal achievements through the years include

the Distinguished Order of St. Martin, meritorious service medals, and several other commendations.

"Throughout his career, he's had diverse staff roles from company admin NCO to brigade operations sergeant major, and leadership roles ranging from corporal in the 163rd Area Support Medical Company to command sergeant major of the 236th Brigade Engineer Battalion," Gavin said.

The sword's presentation during



responsibility but the continuation of the brigade's standing history, traditions, and commitment to excellence.

**"Command sergeants major may come and go, but the sword remains razor sharp," - Sgt. Maj. Eric Gavin**

the ceremony highlights the commander's trust in the senior enlisted leader. It serves as a visible reminder to the Soldiers that their senior NCO safeguards order and discipline, all while finally passing it on to the incoming leader of the 60th Troop Command.

As the ceremony concluded, Soldiers, leaders, families, and guests honored both the outgoing and incoming senior enlisted leaders, marking not only a transfer of



Would you like to know more?



# CHIEF MASTER SGT. RANKIN TAKES REINS AS 145TH AIRLIFT WING COMMAND CHIEF

by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Reanna Hartgrove



U.S. Air National Guard photos by Staff Sgt. Reanna Hartgrove

U.S. Air Force Col. Marshal T. Haylett, commander of the 145th Airlift Wing, presents a ceremonial sword to U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Tracie B. Rankin, the incoming command chief of the 145th AW.

Members of the North Carolina Air National Guard stand during the 145th Airlift Wing command chief change of responsibility ceremony



U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Tracie B. Rankin assumed responsibility as command chief of the 145th Airlift Wing from U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Jeremy S. Mullins during a change of responsibility ceremony at the Air National Guard base in Charlotte, North Carolina, Feb. 27.

Rankin, a 28-year member of

the 145th Airlift Wing, becomes the senior enlisted leader responsible for advising wing leadership and advocating for the readiness, welfare, and professional development of the wing's enlisted force.

"Assuming the role of command chief is the highest honor of my career, and I am humbled by the trust placed in me by wing

leadership," Rankin said. "It means carrying out the wing commander's intent, priorities, mission, and vision with the main focus on the readiness of our Airmen."

Rankin began her military career in 1997 as a supply Airman and has held several leadership roles across the wing, including 145th Logistics Readiness Squadron quality assurance, 145th Mission Support Group first sergeant, 145th AW Inspector General superintendent, 145th Force Support Squadron force development superintendent, and 145th FSS senior enlisted leader. Her vast experience has prepared her to serve Airmen across the organization.

She succeeds Mullins, who served as the 145th AW's command chief and helped shape initiatives focused on strengthening warrior ethos, empowering noncommissioned officers, and advancing professional military education. Rankin intends to build on that foundation while introducing an additional focus on integration across the wing.

"My vision is to forge the wing into one lethal, unbeatable team by empower-

ing our Airmen to lead and make decisions at the lowest level," Rankin said.

During the ceremony, Mullins reflected on his longstanding professional relationship with Rankin and their shared journey through the enlisted ranks. He described the moment in which they understood their leadership calling.

"At that point, we were all in on this Air Force thing, and we knew that we wanted to do more to serve the greater good," Mullins recalled. "So it's really awesome to be standing here today being able to hand the reins over to her and see that dream become reality."

Rankin said she is most excited about leading the Airmen of the 145th AW and continuing the legacy established by Mullins. Key focus areas that Rankin outlined to guide her tenure are strengthening warrior ethos, empowering noncommissioned officers, advancing military education, and improving integration across the enlisted corps to break down organizational silos.

"As excited as I am for her and all that she's going to do with the position,"

Mullins said, "I'm even more excited for you all, because I know what kind of legacy she will leave while she's here, and I'm willing to bet it will be unmatched for years to come."

Rankin emphasized that Airmen should expect a leader who listens, serves, and challenges the organization to continually improve. She also encouraged junior enlisted members to remain committed to lifelong learning and professional development.

"My leadership philosophy is to be humble, vulnerable, and uncomfortable," Rankin explained. "This means I will admit mistakes, be transparent to build trust, and ensure we never become complacent. I have absolute faith in every one of our Airmen as we write the next chapter together."

The change of responsibility ceremony formally marks the transfer of enlisted leadership authority and symbolizes continuity, trust, and commitment to mission readiness within the wing.

U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Tracie B. Rankin gives her first speech as command chief of the 145th Airlift Wing during a change of responsibility ceremony at the Air National Guard base in Charlotte, N.C., Feb. 27.



Would you like to know more?





# CHIEF MASTER SGT. MULLINS: A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP.

U.S. Air National Guard photos by Staff Sgt. Reanna Hartgrove

The North Carolina Air National Guard held a retirement ceremony for U.S. Air Force Command Chief Master Sgt. Jeremy S. Mullins on March 1, 2026. Mullins served as the 145th Airlift Wing command chief for the past 2 1/2 years, providing senior enlisted leadership and advising the wing commander on matters affecting readiness, morale and professional development of Airmen across the wing.



# MAJ. GEN. ALLEN R. BOYETTE: 31 YEARS OF SERVICE.

photos by Mr. Robert Jordan

The North Carolina National Guard celebrates the service of U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Allen R. Boyette, NCNG deputy adjutant general, at the NCNG Joint Force Headquarters in Raleigh, N.C., Dec. 19, 2025. Boyette retired after 37 years of service, including 31 in the NCNG, serving the state and nation with several wartime deployments and several state active duty missions.



Would you like to know more? 

# TARHEEL HOMECOMING



**North Carolina National Guard 2025-2026**

**People**

- 10,000+ Soldiers & Airmen
- 753 Army & 262 Air AGR
- 112 Air Technicians (dual status)
- 134 Army & 71 Air Title 5 Technicians
- 324 State Employees
- 35 Contractors
- 2,420 Total Full-Time Military Staff

**FY25 Enlistment Mission**  
1031/1060 (97.3%)

**FY25 Retention Mission**  
1086/1163 (93.4)

**State Partnership Program**

- 2025
  - AFRICOM-7 (HURREX, training, conferences)
  - Botswana-14 (Recruiting Initiatives, engagements)
  - Malawi-4 (HURREX, engagements)
  - Moldova-37 (PEACE SHIELD, FIRE SHIELD, HURREX, engagements)
  - Zambia-9 (HURREX, engagements, assessments)
- 2026 (planned)
  - Botswana-43 (Engagements)
  - Malawi-19 (HURREX, engagements, assessments)
  - Moldova-30 (PEACE SHIELD, FIRE SHIELD, engagements)
  - Zambia-26 (Engagements, assessments)

*Always Ready - Ready Team!*



The North Carolina National Guard Association Tarheel Homecoming returns to the NCNG Joint Force Headquarters in Raleigh, N.C., Dec. 12, 2025. The NCNG Association hosts the event each year to give NCNG retirees and their families a chance to reconnect and learn what the NCNG is doing today at home and worldwide.

(Photos by Mr. Robert Jordan, North Carolina Department of Public Safety)

# SPACE-A REOPENS: UNUSED SEATS INTO UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEYS.



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The Space-Available (Space-A) check-in counter of the David Small Air Terminal at the Charlotte Air National Guard Base

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The David Small Air Terminal: Servicing the 145th Airlift Wing.

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### TERMINAL OPEN

## NEWS ALERT: 145TH AIRLIFT WING TERMINAL UPDATE.



Space Available Terminal opened Feb. 1, offering qualified military, retirees, and family opportunities to fly aboard military aircraft.



# NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD



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# 145TH AW HOSTS SPP VISIT WITH MALAWI AND ZAMBIA

by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Zeno Kang

The North Carolina Air National Guard hosted a visit for its state partners from the Malawi and Zambia air forces, through the National Guard's State Partnership Program, at the Air National Guard base in Charlotte, North Carolina, Jan. 12-16.

The visit focused on Guard personnel sharing best practices in logistical readiness, aircraft maintenance practices, and flight operations to support the Malawi and Zambia air forces to modernize their logistics.

"The purpose of this visit was to build relationships with our partner nations," said U.S. Air Force Col. Selicia Mitchell, 145th Airlift Wing deputy commander. "North Carolina has four partner nations — Botswana, Moldova, Malawi, and Zambia — and while we've built relationships with Botswana and Moldova over decades, our partnerships with Malawi and Zambia are still growing."

During the visit, partner nation representatives toured the C-17 Globemaster III and interacted with key personnel about aircraft operations, providing them with an inside look at how the Guard prioritizes aircrew safety and standardization.

"Showing our aircrew flight equipment demonstrates what we do to keep our pilots and loadmasters safe," said U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Nicholas Banwart, 156th Airlift Squadron pilot. "We hope our partners



U.S. Air National Guard photos by Senior Airman Zeno Kang

Members of the Malawi air force observe the cockpit of a C-17 Globemaster III at the Air National Guard base in Charlotte, N.C., Jan. 13. Through the National Guard's State Partnership Program, the 145th Airlift Wing hosted a visit from its partner nations, Malawi and Zambia, to share operational, maintenance and logistical practices in support of modernizing the aviation logistics for the Malawian and Zambian air forces.

can take some of these practices back to their home organizations to help increase their effectiveness and safety."

Standardization was a key topic throughout the visit, as it pertained to aviation safety and operational effectiveness.

"When people think of standard evaluation, they think checkrides are our No. 1 focus," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Chris McGarvey, 145th Operations Group chief of standardization and evaluation. "But we have other programs that we manage and ensure that training standards are being taught correctly and operated in accordance with regulations."

Standardization not only applied to the pilots, but also to the logistics and maintenance to sustain aviation operations.

"We have a standard operational framework that minimizes lost time and allows us to receive a quality product," said U.S. Army Capt. Jacob Knox, 449th Combat Aviation Brigade Headquarters logistics management officer. "Maintenance drives operations, operations drive maintenance, and without a strong sustainment framework, operations slow down and readiness is impacted."

Throughout the visit, Airmen and Soldiers highlighted the importance of standardizing aviation logistics and maintenance, explaining how it



Members of the 145th Airlift Wing and the Malawi Air Force interact with each other inside a C-17 Globemaster III at the Charlotte Air National Guard Base, Charlotte, N.C.



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Cory M. Hughes, an aircrew flight equipment technician with the 145th Operations Support Squadron, demonstrates the use of a flotation device to members of the Malawian and Zambian air forces.

provides a safe and mission-ready aircraft to support aviation operations. Partner nation representatives also toured the 145th Logistics Readiness Squadron by observing four critical areas within logistics readiness: air transportation, vehicle operations, materiel management, and petroleum, oils, and lubricants.

"Logistical knowledge is essential because it directly influences a unit's ability to deploy, recover, and sustain assets," said U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Taliqua Scott, materiel management superintendent of the 145th LRS. "These types of visits help to reinforce our commitment to our state partners and



U.S. Army Captain Jacob T. Knox, a logistics management officer with the 449th Combat Aviation Brigade Headquarters, conducts a presentation on aviation logistics at Army Aviation Support Facility No. 2, Salisbury, N.C.

pinpoint the need for critical logistical knowledge, both at home station and abroad."

The SPP visit concluded with a shared commitment to reinforce the importance of logistics, maintenance, and operations in building readiness and strengthening international partnerships.

"Defense is more than just equipment — it's having the right people, training, skills, and processes in place to fly, fight, and win," Mitchell said. "By sharing our best practices, we're ready to support them as they [the Malawi and Zambia air forces] continue to build their fleet of aircraft."

# GLOBAL

## North Carolina National Guard Leaders Welcome British Army Reserve



North Carolina National Guard leaders welcome British Army Reserve Maj. William Squire and Capt. Stephen Savage, 101st Royal Artillery, to NCNG Joint Force Headquarters in Raleigh, N.C., Nov. 4, 2025, to discuss future training collaborations. The U.K.'s integration with the HIMARS unit supports future acquisition of the system while strengthening its partnership with the NCNG. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Wesley Riley)



# REACH

## North Carolina National Guard Leaders Welcome Moldovan Delegation



U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Todd Hunt, North Carolina adjutant general, and Elaine Marshall, North Carolina secretary of state, welcome Igor Grosu, Moldovan speaker of parliament, and the Moldovan delegation to the NCNG Joint Force Headquarters in Raleigh, N.C., Dec. 8, 2025. The meeting continued conversations on ways to strengthen their partnership as the NCNG approaches 30 years with Moldova in the State Partnership Program. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Wesley Riley)

Would you like to know more? 

# HONORING VALOR: NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARDSMAN RECEIVES PURPLE HEART

by Mr. Robert Jordan & U.S. Army Maj. Patrick Montandon



Soldiers of the North Carolina National Guard's 130th Military History Detachment, 60th Troop Command, normally record other units' history, but U.S. Army Staff Sgt. David Hunt, a historian in the 130th MHD, added to their own as he was presented the Purple Heart on March 6 at the NCNG Joint Force Headquarters in Raleigh, North Carolina.

An Afghanistan veteran, Staff Sgt. Hunt received the Purple Heart for wounds during Operation Freedom's Sentinel in 2019 while serving in the Georgia Army National Guard. This storied decoration is the oldest award still presented to American service members, given to those who have been wounded or killed while serving in combat.

The ceremony was an opportunity for the NCNG to learn about the origins of the Purple Heart, highlight the valor and service of Staff Sgt. Hunt, and recount some of the events that led to him receiving the medal. It was also an important opportunity to join his



peers, as several NCNG Purple Heart recipients in attendance were recognized.

"I truly appreciate the past Purple Heart recipients here today ... Without Soldiers like you, we would not be the greatest country in the world. I truly appreciate you, your sacrifice, and your service to this great nation," said U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Todd Hunt, the Adjutant General of North Carolina, who served as the presiding officer for the ceremony.

"I've conducted a lot of ceremonies in the past, and I will say this one has a very special meaning to me," Maj. Gen. Hunt said. "Although the Purple Heart is not really a medal you want to receive, it's a medal that tells a story. A story of courage. A story of sacrifice. A story of selfless courage."

Staff Sgt. Hunt was part of a special forces operational detachment conducting a 48-hour partnered operation with Afghan Coalition forces to destroy



**"ALTHOUGH THE PURPLE HEART IS NOT REALLY A MEDAL YOU WANT TO RECEIVE, IT'S A MEDAL THAT TELLS A STORY. ... A STORY OF SELFLESS COURAGE."**

**- Maj. Gen. Todd Hunt**

Islamic State group – Khorasan, or ISIS-K, elements. When his squad came under attack, Staff Sgt. Hunt returned fire and neutralized imposing threats. When an improvised explosive device ignited, Staff Sgt. Hunt temporarily lost consciousness, eventually resulting in his receiving the Purple Heart. Despite experiencing physical and mental effects from the blast, he continued to lead his team and stay in the fight for the next two days.

As the medal was pinned to Staff Sgt. Hunt's uniform, he symbolically joined the previous recipients, who "embrace Staff Sgt. Hunt in another brotherhood of our Army," Maj. Gen. Hunt said.

As a historian, Staff Sgt. Hunt made the connection of how the 130th MHD attended the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge the previous weekend. This historic battleground commemorates the first major victory of American Patriots in the Revolutionary War, in 1776, and



not long after, Gen. George Washington established the Badge of Military Merit (now known as the Purple Heart).

"I think it's interesting, and it feels incredibly powerful this medal is one of the very few tangible things to our current Army from that very earliest day of the patriot revolution," Staff Sgt. Hunt said. "With this link in my mind, I would like to say that I am incredibly humbled to receive this medal. I feel as though all of us who were there ... that day in ... Afghanistan, were doing the job we all signed up to do as infantrymen."

The Purple Heart remains a solemn reminder and powerful distinction of the sacrifices made by the men and women who have served and defended our nation. While an exact number of recipients by location is difficult to confirm, it is estimated that over 12,000 Purple Hearts have been awarded to service members wounded or killed in Afghanistan since 2001. Staff Sgt. Hunt joins 39 current NCNG service members and employees who have received the Purple Heart.



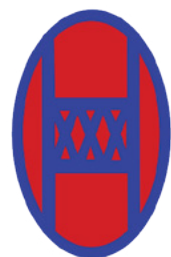
Would you like to know more?

# STAYING IN THE FIGHT: A 19 KILO STORY

by U.S. Army Lt. Col. Ellis Parks



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Joe Roudabush



Since 1983, Soldiers from the North Carolina National Guard who dreamed of being part of an M1A1 Abrams tank team may have found a home in the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team as 19 Kilos - tankers. Many of these Soldiers may have seen the power of the M1 at history museums or on shows

like G.I. Joe or Transformers. Whatever inspired these young tankers, it drove them to be part of a unique brand of Soldiers, heroic in their nature and secure in their tanker boots.

In the next few months, many of these young, armored warriors are dismounting their trusty tanks and moving on to different military occupational specialties. As part of the Department of War's modernization programs, the 30th ABCT "Old Hickory" will exchange their M1A1 and M2 Bradley infantry vehicles for the lighter and nimbler

M1301 Infantry Squad Vehicles.

"For the last 30-plus years, we have been an armored brigade combat team in one format or another," said U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Wes Morrison, NCNG Assistant Adjutant General – Maneuver and former 30th ABCT commander. "So, we're [30th ABCT] 1 of 7 National Guard brigades that are going to be transitioning."

The National Guard's shift from an armored brigade to a mobile infantry brigade is based on observations seen in Ukraine, where lighter vehicles that can easily maneuver around littoral environments are more effective. For the tankers, this change does not mean the end of a career, but on the contrary, it is a test of the tankers' fortitude to overcome new terrain.

"I love being a tanker. But when it was time for me to pursue something different, I did," said U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Darius Jenkins, a former tanker in the 30th ABCT, and now an AH-64D Apache pilot in the 449th

Combat Aviation Brigade. "I really loved being an armor crewman. The gunner position is probably the best job in the Army."

Jenkins, a native of Benson who spent approximately 14 years as a tanker with the 30th ABCT, served as a tank driver, loader, and gunner before leaving to be a warrant officer in 2018. Jenkins is now qualified to fly the AH-64E Apache Guardian, the AH-64D Apache Longbow, and the UH-72A Lakota. Although Jenkins has fully embraced the life of a pilot, he fondly reflects on his time as a tanker in "Old Hickory."

"It [being inside of an M1A1] feels like being Iron Man. The M1 Series tank was designed with very little extra space internally," Jenkins said. "Firing the main gun is a unique

experience. You feel a full-body compression alongside the recoil from the blast, and then the smell of the burnt propellant fills the air, and the clinking of the discarded aft cap follows. It's something very few people get exposure to."

Jenkins' transition from being part of a team that operates one of the most destructive forces on the ground to piloting an unmatched force in the air was not an easy choice. For many, like Jenkins, being tankers in the NCNG's 30th was their dream come true, but their call to serve has and will continue to expand their dreams beyond their tanks.

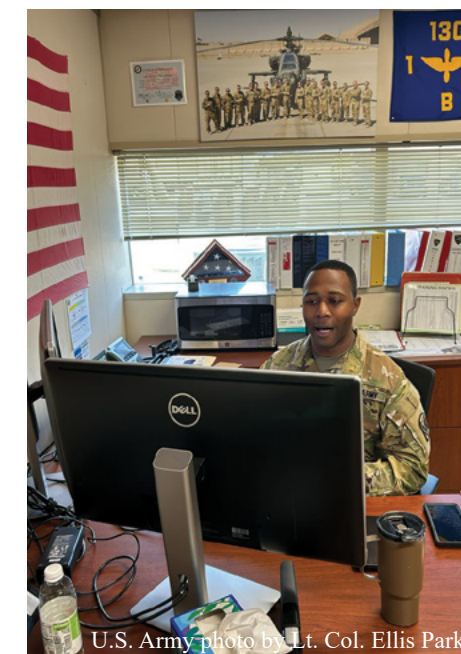
"While deployed to Kosovo with A Co 252, I got to conduct air assaults from a UH-60 Black Hawk, basically, missions where troops are flown to

**"For the last 30-plus years, we have been an armored brigade combat team in one format or another."**

*-U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Wes Morrison*



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Joe Roudabush



U.S. Army photo by Lt. Col. Ellis Parks

a location and dropped off. I learned that we had Apache(s) in our inventory [and] ... I thought it would be a logical progression to take some of the skills I learned from my time in armor and use them to go and fly," Jenkins said. "I left [tanking] to take on new adventures and serve the NCNG in different ways while I still had time to do it."



U.S. Army photo by Lt. Col. Ellis Parks



U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. Joe Roudabush

# THE 120th MOBILIZES IN SUPPORT OF SPARTAN SHIELD

by U.S. Army Sgt. Nigel Hatcher

Operation Spartan Shield began in 2012 to improve partner capacity, enhance regional security, strengthen military readiness, and deter enemy aggression throughout the Middle East and Southwest Asia. The 120th Infantry Regiment last supported Operation Spartan Shield in 2014, marking the regiment's most recent deployment prior to this mission.

"Our Soldiers are more than ready to take on this task," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Matthew Taylor, commander of the 120th Infantry Regiment. "I am extremely humbled and honored to be able to lead

this group of warriors in support of such an important mission."

Taylor, a native of Fayetteville, North Carolina, is a career infantry officer who received his commission through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps at East Carolina University in 2008. He assumed command of the 120th Infantry Regiment in January 2025 and has overseen the regiment's rigorous training in preparation for deployment.

"Make no mistake about it, Tuskhogs — you will be ready," Taylor said. "You are trained, you are disci-

Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, file into Dorton Arena for a deployment ceremony in Raleigh, N.C.



Lt. Col. Matt Taylor, commander of Task Force Tuskhog, passes the North Carolina flag to Command Sgt. Maj. Christian Dalby, Task Force Tuskhog Command Sergeant Major.

**"MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT, TUSKHOGS — YOU WILL BE READY"**  
- Lt. Col. Matthew Taylor.



Task Force Tuskhog will join approximately 250 Soldiers from the Missouri National Guard in support of Operation Spartan Shield.

plined, and you will stand ready just as those warriors stood before you."

The ceremony celebrated the history and legacy of the 120th Infantry Regiment and was attended by Soldiers, their families and friends, North Carolina legislators, and senior leaders from across the North Carolina National Guard.

"We wear their patch — we cannot fail," said U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Wes Morrison, North Carolina National Guard Assistant Adjutant General — Maneuver.

The 120th Infantry Regiment consists of Soldiers from nearly every county in North Carolina. Like many National Guardsmen, they balance military service with civilian careers and family life. These Soldiers will temporarily set aside their normal routines to serve overseas in support of allies and partners, reinforcing security and stability throughout the region.



# SOUTHERN BORDER MOBILIZATION: LEADERSHIP VISITS

## 130th MEB Welcomes Senior Leaders during Crucial Deployment



# STRENGTH, READINESS, PRECISION:

## THE 120th INFANTRY REGIMENT AT FORT BLISS For Operation Spartan Shield



Soldiers from the 130th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade receive a visit from Brig. Gen. Wes Morrison and Brig. Gen. Cristina Moore while mobilized to the Southern Border on March 3. (U.S. Army photos by Capt. Shamari Pratt)

North Carolina National Guard Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, conduct exercises in support of Operation Spartan Shield at Fort Bliss, Texas, Feb. 1-28. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Nigel Hatcher)



# FROM ASHEVILLE INFANTRY TO NATO SENTINELS: 109th MP WRITE NEW CHAPTER IN CENTURY-OLD LEGACY

by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Joe Roudabush



109th Military Police Battalion pose for a unit photograph before their mobilization ceremony.

The distance between the mountains of Asheville, North Carolina, in 1888 and the NATO frontiers of Eastern Europe in 2026 is measured in more than just miles. It is measured in nearly 14 decades of military evolution.

Nearly 138 years after its formation as a local infantry unit, the North Carolina National Guard's 109th Military Police Battalion, now headquartered in Kinston, North Carolina, continues its legacy of service. On Feb. 2, approximately 60 U.S. Army Soldiers stood in formation at the Kinston armory for a mobilization ceremony ahead of their deployment in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

The mobilization ceremony marked more than the beginning of a deployment; it marked a unit's continued tradition of constantly adapting to the nation's needs. The 109th has evolved from the Spanish-American War to the trenches of World War I, and finally to its conversion to military police in 1968.

"You embody the lineage and honor of those first citizen-soldiers who mustered here in North Carolina in 1663," said U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Wes Morrison, NCNG Assistant Adjutant General - Maneuver. "You carry with you the honorable history of military police from the North Carolina National Guard who've mobilized for Desert Storm, Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantana-

mo Bay, and Europe since 1991."

Now, the "War Devils," as the battalion is known, are set to coordinate military law enforcement operations in support of NATO allies and partners. For the 109th's commander, U.S. Army Lt. Col. Michael Phelan, the Soldiers standing in the armory represented the level of dedication required to transition from citizen-soldier to active-duty asset.

"This is the most cohesive, best prepared, and highest performing unit that I've ever been a part of," Phelan said, noting the months of extra drills and training days the unit undertook. "Every one of you is critical to our overall mission success."



Would you like to know more?



**"THIS IS THE MOST COHESIVE, BEST PREPARED, AND HIGHEST PERFORMING UNIT THAT I'VE EVERY BEEN A PART OF ..."** - Lt. Col. Michael Phelan

The ceremony was steeped in the traditions that bind the Guard's past to its present. In a custom dating back to Desert Shield, U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Todd Hunt, the Adjutant General of North Carolina, presented a North Carolina state flag to Phelan. That flag will fly over the unit's headquarters in Europe, a visual reminder of the home front they leave behind.

For the families seated at the Kinston armory, the sentiment was less about 1888 and more about the year ahead. Phelan and Morrison both took time to acknowledge that while the Soldiers wear the uniform, the families bear the weight of the empty chair at the dinner table.

"Your love and support are the unseen force that ensures our mission will be successful and the light



Maj. Gen. Todd Hunt, the Adjutant General of North Carolina, presents the North Carolina state flag to Lt. Col. Michael Phelan, commander of the 109th Military Police Battalion.

that will lead us home when our mission is complete," Phelan told the families.

Morrison echoed that sentiment, assuring the families that the Guard would support them in return. "Your strength and love keep us grounded, and for that we are immensely grateful," Morrison said. "We will be here for you while your loved ones are deployed."

As the Soldiers of the 109th Military Police Battalion prepared to leave the Kinston armory behind, Phelan gave the formation a final charge linking the challenges awaiting them in Europe with the resilience embedded in their unit's history.

"Together, we will rise above every obstacle, overcome every challenge, and successfully complete our mission," Phelan said. "Up from the ashes."

# STORM SURGE:

# WINTER STORM FERN & GIANNA

by Mr. Robert Jordan

U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Brittany Burton



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Wesley Riley

# NC GUARD DEPLOYS FOR WINTER STORMS

A historic winter storm bore down on North Carolina, and state and local resources were stretched beyond their limits. The North Carolina National Guard answered the call to save lives and property.

On order of North Carolina Gov. Josh Stein, NCNG commanders began the planning and preparation needed to activate Soldiers and units statewide.

Soldiers from multiple units on state active duty brought skills, more than 180 vehicles, and specialized equipment for missions from Jan. 22 to Feb. 3.

“Most of these Soldiers that responded to this were involved in Hurricane Helene ... This was our largest call-up since Hurricane Helene,” said U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Wes Morrison, NCNG Assistant Adjutant General – Maneuver.

Beginning Jan. 22, in armories and readiness centers, NCNG officers, noncommissioned officers, and Soldiers prepared force packages, teams of Soldiers, and equipment designed for disaster

response. Tow cables, snow chains, and other equipment were checked and rechecked. Vehicles and generators were topped off with fuel.

This readiness was critical. Soldiers and Airmen began preparing for the storm before the storm arrived on Jan. 24. They began arriving at their units on Jan. 23, where they drew equipment and vehicles. They served under the North Carolina Emergency Management Regional Readiness Centers. There they joined other state and local government agencies, civic groups, nonprofits, and other partners.

“We are working out in counties and local municipalities just to support the people, anything they really need,” said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Aaron Youngblood, NCNG J3 Domestic Operations chief.

Fern rolled into western North Carolina, bringing snow, sleet, freezing rain, and record low temperatures statewide. Interstates, U.S. and state highways, and local roads became impassable, and power failed.

At each of the North Carolina

Division of Emergency Management branches, Eastern, Central, and Western, requests from across the state came in. Local and state partners, including the cities of Edenton, Williamston, and Farmville, and Surry and Polk counties, needed the Soldiers for a variety of missions, including vehicle recovery, supply delivery, and transportation support.

“The biggest thing across the state is that we are keeping the highway corridors open. That is one of our biggest mission sets, supporting the North Carolina Department of Transportation ... so that transportation network stays open,” Youngblood said.

Every day, NCNG leaders worked with state government partners to make the best use of money, equipment, and personnel. The number of force packages peaked at over 100 with more than 480 Soldiers and Airmen drawn from nearly every county in North Carolina on duty.

“If they get into trouble and they need help, we can see where they



U.S. Army Soldiers with the 211th Military Police Company assist North Carolina Emergency Management and North Carolina State Highway Patrol during Winter Storm Fern in Farmville, N.C., Jan. 31. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Dabein Walker)



A North Carolina National Guard Soldier installs snow chains on a Humvee during state active duty for Winter Storm Fern in Lenoir, N.C., Jan. 31. The NCNG has mobilized resources across eastern, central, and western North Carolina, assisting North Carolina Emergency Management during the storm. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Sgt. David Yensan)

Would you like to know more?



are located to help get resources to them,” said U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Wells Hayes, NCNG J3 Joint Operations Center technician supervisor.

The storm continued across the state, crossing west to east, blanketing all of North Carolina in a wintry mix.

“When you have small roads in rural areas, especially the deep mountains, they are hard to traverse, especially when they are snowy and icy. Humvees and some of our vehicles are a little bit better at that,” Youngblood said.

Missions grew in number and complexity, transporting patients, critical medical personnel, and supplies, and supporting local and state law enforcement by recovering vehicles and clearing roads. The North Carolina National Guard Cyber Security Response Force protected and defended North Carolina’s digital infrastructure.

“Threat actors will take advantage of individuals and organizations during winter storms. You are more likely to click on text messages or emails that talk about



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Wesley Riley



U.S. Army Soldiers with the 1452nd HET Transportation Company assist the North Carolina Department of Transportation and North Carolina State Highway Patrol with vehicle recovery during Winter Storm Fern in Dobson, N.C., Jan. 31. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Brittany Burton)

news that’s currently happening around you,” said Sharon Atkins, a cyberthreat intelligence analyst with the North Carolina National Guard Cyber Security Response Force.

There was no rest for the weary as North Carolina was literally digging its way out of Winter Storm Fern, when Gianna added over 10 inches of snow in parts of the state, keeping NCNG Soldiers on duty. This occurred just after one of the larger NCNG deployments in support of an ongoing U.S. military mission.

“We [the NCNG] flew approximately 800 Soldiers out of Fort Bragg for their federal mission,” Morrison said. “They’ll be heading to the Middle East ... after a short train-up, and so with that and the 341 [Soldiers presently serving on state active duty as of Jan. 31] is a good example of the National Guard’s dual mission and the capabilities of the North Carolina National Guard.”



U.S. Army Soldiers with the 5th Battalion, 113th Field Artillery Regiment assist a stranded vehicle along Interstate 95 during Winter Storm Fern. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Josh Smith)

# FROM DRILL TO DUTY: SOLDIERS PROVIDE CRITICAL AID OUTSIDE ARMORY



by U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Bridget Pittman-Blackwell



Soldiers from Alpha Company, 236th Brigade Engineer Battalion, were first on the scene of a two-vehicle accident Feb. 26 in front of the National Guard armory. What began as a routine Inactive Duty Training weekend quickly turned into an emergency response led by the Soldiers inside.

The accident, which involved two vehicles, including one driven by a grandmother, occurred

just outside the armory entrance in Wadesboro. Unit members said they heard the impact and responded quickly.

“We ran outside, assessed the scene, got everyone out of the vehicles. We had half the unit out there,” said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Austin Adkins, a native of Peachland and resident of Laurel Hill.

U.S. Army Capt. Jeremy Willman, a native of Clayton, began directing traffic and coordinating responses as Soldiers secured the area. Road kits and flares were deployed while emergency medical services were contacted.

“We popped out the road kits, road flares, started directing traffic, called EMS,” Willman said.

According to Soldiers on scene, the driver expressed concern only for the children in the back seat. Willman shifted his attention to the rear of the vehicle, removing the first child, while U.S. Army Sgt. Joseph James, a native of Charlotte and resident of Lexington, removed the second child.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Rahmon Adeshokan, a native of Lagos, Nigeria, and a Greensboro resident, assisted the grandmother from the vehicle, helping her safely exit. The unit used aid bags to render care and assess for injuries while others comforted family members.

“We really just tried to comfort the family, especially the kids ... they were really scared,” Willman said.

As the situation stabilized, Adkins captured a photograph of Willman comforting one of the children, offering reassurance while emergency vehicles approached. The image shows Willman crouched at eye level with the child.

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Brett Campa, a native of Charlotte, a Lexington resident, and a police officer with the town of Dallas, was also among the first to respond.

“Wearing two uniforms means being ready to serve anytime and anywhere, whether on or off duty,” Campa said. “When the call for help comes, service always comes first.”



U.S. Army Capt. Jeremy Willman comforts a child after a vehicle accident in front of the Wadesboro Armory. Soldiers from Alpha Company, 236th Brigade Engineer Battalion, responded to the vehicle accident while waiting for emergency services to arrive on the scene. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. 1st Class Austin Adkins)

# BALANCING SERVICE & AMBITION: THE DUAL JOURNEY OF A WARFIGHTER

by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Zeno Kang



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Taylor J. Holden, a team leader with the 145th Security Forces Squadron, fires the M18 from a kneeling position at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department Training Academy Range.



U.S. Air National Guard photos by Senior Airman Zeno Kang

**B**alancing four passions is no easy task for any one person, not even an Airman. U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Taylor Holden is a defender in the North Carolina Air National Guard, a natural-hair stylist, a graduate student, and a cadet leader for the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. As each responsibility demands her full commitment, she approaches each as an opportunity to overcome.

The story of how she learned to balance her roles began when she enlisted in the U.S. Air Force Reserve.

Holden expressed her goal was to attend college and experience campus life. She shared that when she learned about the Air Force Reserve, she realized that she could pursue her education while being financially supported through it.

After completing her basic military training and technical school at the U.S. Air Force Security Forces Academy, Holden returned home as a security forces specialist and began her

coursework at Cape Fear Community College. She later transferred to the University of North Carolina Wilmington, where she earned a bachelor's degree in sociology with a minor in criminology.

While in the Air Force Reserve, she expanded her knowledge of law enforcement and tactical operations.

"My experience in security forces shaped my sense of leadership and discipline by showing me that I need to look from different perspectives and be aware of other people's perspectives," Holden said. "Not just my own."

Holden then deployed to Kuwait and began to apply for graduate school at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and North Carolina A&T State University.

Holden decided to enroll with N.C. A&T and transition to the Guard to be closer to her home in Greensboro.

That change allowed Holden to pursue a master's degree in business administration with a concentration in human resource management, while also pursuing her passion as a hairstylist.



"I'm still figuring out exactly what I want to do," Holden said. "If I decide to open a salon, a business degree will help me manage it, and if I choose not to work in a salon, I can always pursue a career in human resources."

Holden has been styling hair since childhood and eventually earned her certification from the Millennium Trade Academy as a licensed natural hair care stylist. Hair-styling became a way to support herself through school and invest in her future despite her demanding schedule.

"I enjoy being a

hairstylist," Holden said. "It allows me to invest in myself and in others for the long term."

While in graduate school, Holden envisions commissioning into the U.S. Air Force. She hopes to inspire and influence positive change before and after her commission.

"Excellence in All We Do is one of our core values," Holden said. "I feel like that's something that I still hold within me."

While balancing all of her passions, she acknowledges exhaustion from the mental shifting between her work and limited personal time. Through the challenging days, she learned to adapt to an ever-changing schedule by planning her weeks in advance, preparing herself the day before, and leaning on peers who support her when tasks overlap.

"When times get tough," Holden said, "just know that it's going to be for that time period and it'll end up changing. Just keep going and don't be so hard on yourself because we're all human."

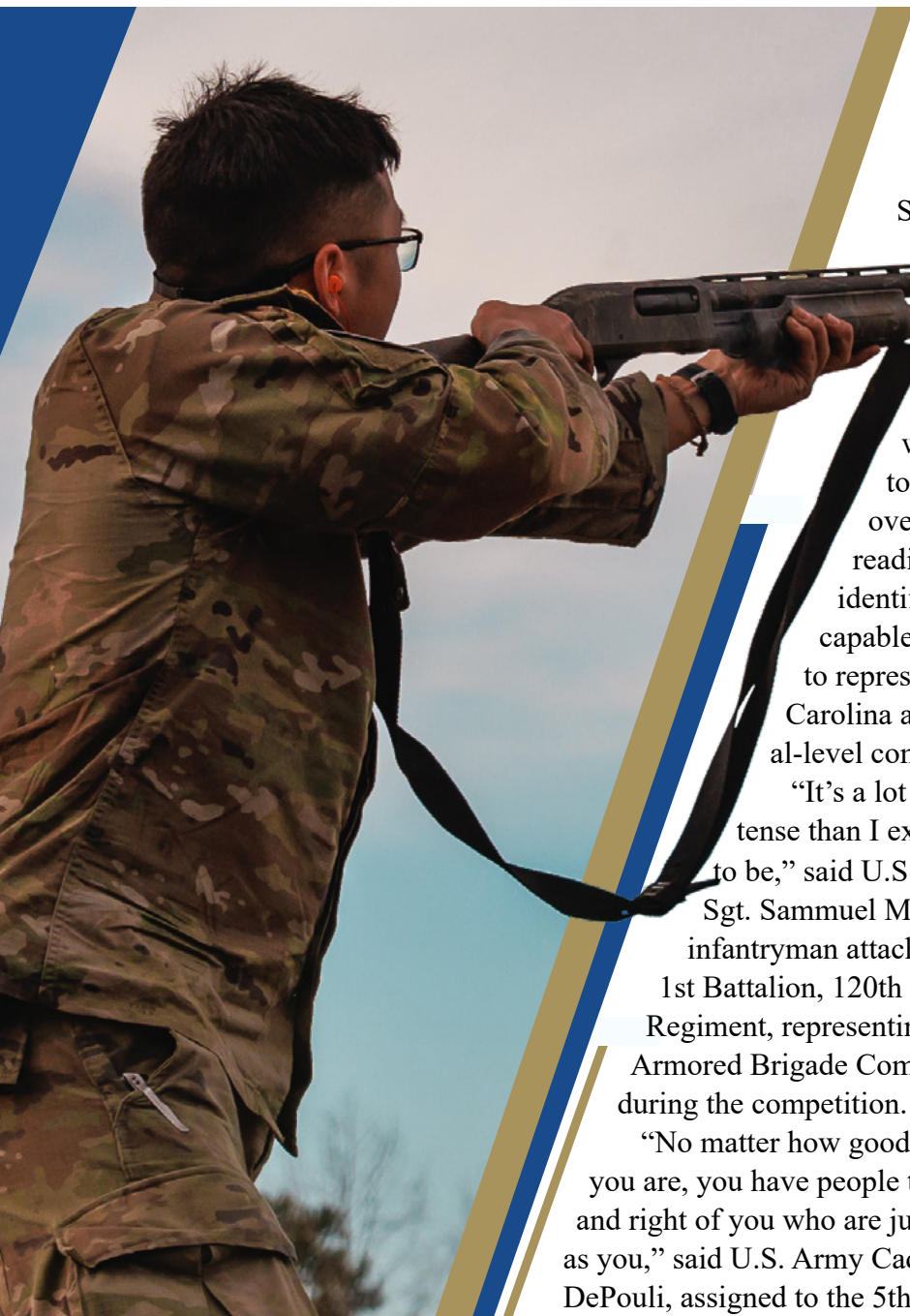
Would you like to know more?



# NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

READY. RELIABLE. RESPONSIVE. RELEVANT.

by U.S. Army Sgt. Wesley Riley

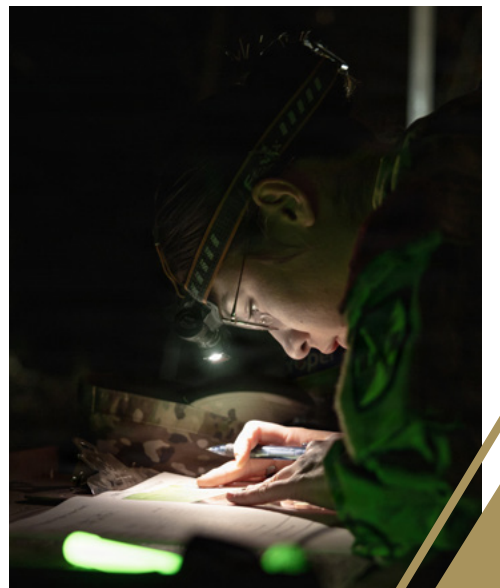


The North Carolina National Guard conducted its 2026 state-level Best Warrior Competition Jan. 11-15 at Camp Butner Training Center in Stem, North Carolina. The four-day competition challenged Soldiers across a wide range of warrior tasks, evaluating not only fundamental warfighting skills but also mental resilience and physical endurance under demanding conditions.

The event was designed to assess overall combat readiness and identify the most capable Soldiers to represent North Carolina at the regional-level competition.

“It’s a lot more intense than I expected it to be,” said U.S. Army Sgt. Sammuell Manning, an infantryman attached to the 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, representing the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team during the competition.

“No matter how good you think you are, you have people to the left and right of you who are just as good as you,” said U.S. Army Cadet Claudia DePouli, assigned to the 5th Battalion,



113th Field Artillery Regiment, representing the 60th Troop Command.

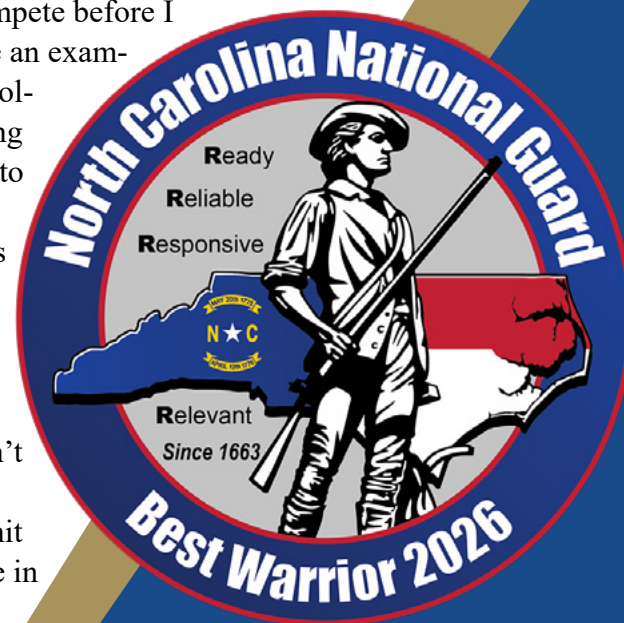
With temperatures ranging from the low 20s to the low 50s, competitors faced challenges beyond the events themselves. The physical fatigue from a 12-mile ruck march, the Army Fitness Test, and the Expert Soldier Physical Fitness Test was compounded by the mental strain of a night land navigation event, and military knowledge and professionalism boards all taking place on an unannounced timeline.

Throughout the competition, Soldiers were pushed to their limits, demonstrating not only their

technical proficiency but also determination, resilience, and commitment to excellence.

“It’s my last chance to compete before I commission, and I want to be an example to my future NCOs and Soldiers,” DePouli said. “Winning would be a way to give back to my unit. The NCOs, leadership, and even junior Soldiers have invested so much in me and my development, even knowing that one day I’ll be leaving them. I want to show them that all their effort wasn’t wasted.”

“I want to represent my unit because we take a lot of pride in being the best engineers



in the state, so it means a lot to me that my unit selected me to represent them,” said Spc. Jonathen Suh, a combat engineer attached to the 883rd Engineer Company, 105th Engineer Battalion, representing the 130th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. “It gives me a chance to prove myself: not just to myself but my unit, the state, and the Army as a whole. That’s just not an opportunity you can turn down.”

For some competitors, participation was about more than personal achievement and testing their physical limits.

“I missed active duty, and this was the closest I’ve got to feeling like active duty again. You show up and hang out with a bunch of like-minded folks, you mess around with guns and shoot targets, and do hard PT and get sweaty. There’s not much more to a better day,” Manning said.

At the conclusion of the competition, Manning, representing the 30th ABCT, won the noncommissioned officer category with DePouli, representing the 60th Troop Command, as runner-up.

Spc. Sean Hannier, an infantryman assigned to the 1st Battalion, 252nd Armored Regiment, representing the 30th ABCT, won the junior enlisted category with Spc. Thomas Tulbert, a cavalry scout assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne), representing the 60th Troop Command, as runner-up.

Both first-place winners will advance to the regional Best Warrior Competition to be held in North Carolina later this year.

“I learned a lot about what I’m lacking and where I can improve as a Soldier,” Suh said.



## North Carolina National Guard Best Warrior Competition



Would you like to know more?




U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Wesley Riley



# 145TH CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON EXECUTES PRIME BEEF WEEK 2026

by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Zeno Kang



U.S. Airmen from the 145th Civil Engineer Squadron participated in Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force Week at the Regional Training Site, New London, North Carolina, Feb. 23-27.

Prime BEEF Week serves as a readiness exercise, allowing Airmen to demonstrate proficiency in their primary functions through simulated wartime tasks that support airfield operations in austere environments. Rather than focusing on computer-based training requirements for this week, this exercise emphasized hands-on execution, integrated operations, and coordination across multiple career fields within civil engineering.

“The goal of this week was to execute and evaluate our wartime task standards with several subject matter experts removed from various shops as they taught and oversaw the readiness training,” said U.S. Air Force Capt. Robert Raab, a civil engineer with the 145th



U.S. Air National Guard photos by Senior Airman Zeno Kang

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Kateri T. Buser, an emergency management specialist with the 145th Civil Engineer Squadron, dips pH paper into an unknown liquid during Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force Week at the Regional Training Site in New London, N.C., Feb. 23-27. Prime BEEF Week serves as a readiness exercise, allowing Airmen to demonstrate proficiency in their primary functions through simulated wartime tasks that support airfield operations in austere environments.

CES. “It’s not just about checking a training requirement — it’s about proving that we can perform specific tasks at a proficient level.”

Wartime task standards differ from recurring administrative training in that they measure an Airman’s ability to execute

mission-essential operations under contingency conditions. For Airmen, it includes assessing airfield damage, operating an emergency operations center, establishing and supporting base operations, and conducting integrated base defense.

“This kind of training builds



U.S. Airmen assigned to the 145th Civil Engineer Squadron patrol toward a reported suspicious individual during Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force Week at the Regional Training Site, New London, N.C.

confidence,” said U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Keegan Lumley, an engineering assistant with the 145th CES. “They are familiar with the equipment, but putting it all together in a contingency mindset is different. It prepares them to operate under pressure.”

Prime BEEF Week is designed to evolve each year, targeting different readiness requirements while retaining its core mission: maintain, construct, and recover infrastructure and facilities as needed to support mission readiness.



Would you like to know more?



145th CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON - READINESS THROUGH PRECISION

- CBRN Defense
- Rapid Runway Repair
- Force Protection
- Contingency Power & Water Systems
- Expeditionary Engineering
- Field Communications



# 145TH CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON: RAPID AIRFIELD DAMAGE RECOVERY



## MISSION READY RECOVERY

Airmen of the 145th Civil Engineer Squadron participate in the Rapid Airfield Damage Recovery course at the Regional Training Institute in New London, N.C., Feb. 23-27, 2026. The course trained Airmen to quickly assess and repair damaged airfields in an austere environment. (U.S. Air National Guard photos by Senior Airman Zeno Kang)

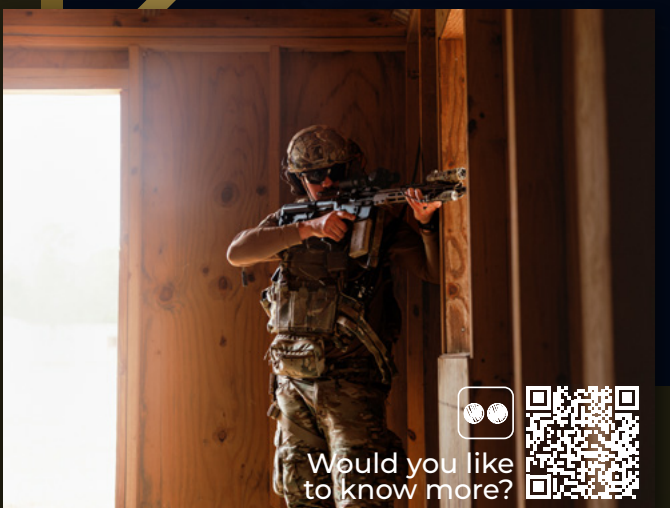
Would you like to know more? 



# PATRIOT TRAINING: MEDICAL



U.S. Army Soldiers and Airmen with the North Carolina National Guard participate in medical training led by the Co B, 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group at the Camp Butner Training Center, Butner, N.C., Jan. 7-8. During the exercise, they rehearsed responding to contact and providing care under fire until a medevac arrived.  
(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Wesley Riley)



Would you like to know more? 



U.S. Army Capt. Jeremy Willman comforts a child after a vehicle accident in front of the armory in Wadesboro, N.C., Feb. 26, 2026. Soldiers from Alpha Company, 236th Brigade Engineer Battalion, responded to the vehicle accident while waiting for emergency services to arrive on the scene. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Austin Adkins)



U.S. Army Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, stage M2A2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles at the ready line for Bradley Gunnery Table VI near Fort Bliss, Texas, March 13, 2026. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Blair Mooney)

# Struggling with Alcohol / Drug use?

Let us help.

Confidential counseling at no cost to NC Air & Army National Guard Members



Contact us for referrals to a licensed counselor in your area

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www.alcoholdrughelp.org

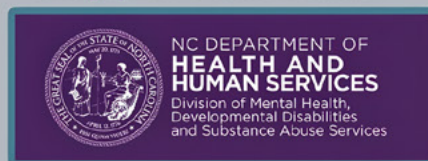


**Brenda Guarda**

Director, NCNG SBIRT Voucher Program  
Alcohol/Drug Council of NC

**SBIRT**  
Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment

Partnership for Early Intervention Support Services



The Alcohol / Drug Council of North Carolina is partially supported by the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services through a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Grant.



## REQUIREMENTS and RECOMMENDATIONS

### Motorcycle Safety Training



Every Servicemember who rides a motorcycle is required to comply with the Motorcycle Training Program.

For initial training, all motorcycle riders must complete Basic Rider Course (BRC) prior to riding a motorcycle.

Within 1 year of completing the initial training course, riders are required to complete Experienced Rider Course (ERC), Basic Rider Course II (BRCII) or advanced Rider Course (ARC) to satisfy intermediate training requirements .

Within 5 years of completing intermediate training, riders must complete an intermediate course to satisfy sustainment training requirements.

Any riders who are deployed for 180 days or more must complete Motorcycle Refresher Training (MRT) at the unit level before riding again.

### Physical Fitness Safety



To date, the NCARNG has experienced 7 mishaps this FY due to injuries encountered during the ACFT. We must do a better job to personally prepare for strenuous activity through established personal fitness, stretching, acclimatization & implementing proper control measures when administering the future AFTs.

Scan the accompanying QR code for more information regarding proper planning during physical readiness training.

### State Active Duty



Personal Preparedness is vital to ensure that your loved ones are safe so you can perform your duty as an important member of the NC National Guard.

Scan the accompanying QR code for more information to make sure YOU are prepared!

Unit Preparedness is critical to mission success during State Active Duty. During Helene Response, our Servicemembers were involved in 11 mishaps resulting from inattentiveness of the assistant driver & 7 mishaps resulting from improper ground guiding.

### Fire Safety



Fire Safety applies on & off duty. There are fire risks to our homes, workplaces & vehicles. We must ensure we are knowledgeable to protect ourselves as well as others.

Have you checked your vehicle's fire extinguisher to ensure it's ready to use? Each vehicle, generator, kitchen, ammunition storage location & building must have fire extinguishers that are properly charged & inspected.

Scan the accompanying QR code for more information on common causes, prevention, & helpful information on fire prevention & safety.

STAY CONNECTED  
STAY INFORMED

# NCNG MOBILE APP

## STAY READY



North Carolina National Guard Soldiers assigned to 211th and 514th Military Police Companies, assist State Highway Patrol to clear traffic on a bridge during Winter Cyclone Gianna in Farmville, North Carolina, Jan. 31.  
(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Brittany Burton)



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