Throughout the United States, State Defense Forces are being called upon to protect the citizens of their state. State Defense Forces are recognized as essential to effective response in the event of state emergencies.

As challenges increase, State Defense Forces are utilizing the State Guard Association of the United States as a resource to provide superior training programs. The Military Emergency Management Specialist program provides excellent Incident Command System training. Chaplains from throughout the United States have benefited from the Chaplain’s School. At the Annual Conference, 30 October to 1 November 2015, in Hanover, Maryland, two new SGAUS training academies will be introduced: the SGAUS Engineer Qualification Program and the Staff Judge Advocate Academy. These two programs enhance State Defense Forces nationwide by providing professional, mission ready response capabilities to the states.

The Staff Judge Advocate Academy training will provide insights into numerous fields of law affecting State Defense Forces. Judge Advocates should attend, but in addition, the legal training will cover most legal topics that State Defense Forces need to know. This is truly a training that everyone should attend.

I look forward to seeing you at the Annual Conference. If you have never attended a SGAUS Annual Conference I strongly urge you to attend. You will enjoy it and come away more knowledgeable, refreshed, and ready to engage your work with your State Defense Force.

My best wishes to you all,

BG(AK) Roger E. Holl
President
State Guard Association of the United States
Alaska State Defense Force On State Active Duty for The Sockeye Wildfire

by CPL Suzannah Palmer, ASDF

On June 14, 2015 near the town of Willow, Alaska an unattended burn site quickly turned into a wildfire that engulfed an area of over twelve square miles. The main artery between Anchorage and Fairbanks, the Parks Highway, was closed down, more than fifty-five homes were lost and one thousand people were forced to evacuate. In the midst of this firestorm, Alaska Governor Bill Walker declared a state of emergency. Hundreds of firefighters were brought in to help contain the blaze and the Sockeye Wildfire Disaster Assistance Center was established.

In response to the request received by the Alaska National Guard for personnel to support the Disaster Assistance Center, eighteen Alaska State Defense Force (ASDF) soldiers were placed on State Active Duty. These troops were activated by the Alaska National Guard Joint Operation Center at the request of the State Emergency Operation Center. ASDF soldiers reported for duty from 17 June to 14 August 2015 at the National Guard Armory. These members served at the Sockeye Wildfire Disaster Assistance Center headquarters. Manning the phones around the clock, for eight hour shifts at a time, ASDF soldiers screened, coordinated and forwarded calls to the appropriate agencies in response to the needs of Alaskans who had been displaced by the fire and were requiring various types of assistance.

As of Friday August 7, 2015 a total of 743 fires burned 5,013,053 acres in Alaska. The Alaska State Defense Force was honored to serve the Sockeye Wildfire Disaster Assistance Center during the fire season.
Combined military, federal and state assets continued to adapt and mediate possible problems that emerge from natural disasters. Ardent Sentry 2015 supported a scenario earthquake event having a magnitude 7.8. The 40th ID HQ building on Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, served as a Joint Operating Center. In a response to this event, positioned staff in the JOC secured/controlled an interface, in a collaborative forum, with other responders, when simulating the management of personnel, equipment, supplies and aircraft throughout the Area of operations (AOP).

The exercise started on 11MAY15 and concluded on 15MAY15. The mission statement clarifies the reason for the Command Post Exercise (CPX): “In order to synchronize and validate the transition of Dual Status Command responsibility from JFHQ to the 40 ID and to validate the CMD capability to integrate with the USNORTHCOM DSCA Playbook to achieve unity of effort.”

Soldiers from the California State Military Reserve, Regional Support Command (S), participated in this week long exercise. Col. Donna Hinton, COS RSC(S), with Command Sgt. Maj. (CA) Marc Melissa, held a briefing with Brigadier General Nathaniel S. Reddicks, Commanding General of the 40th Infantry Division, pointing to CSMR inter-connected responsibilities. At the same time, other Soldiers from RSC (S) combined with 40ID staff positions in Public Affairs and Liaison groups.

Of course, all simulated exercises can’t easily fit in the same emergency support function (ESF) or structure. Common elements in simulated exercises, as well as real world conflicts, will exists. Maj. Jonathan M. Shiroma, Deputy Director of State Personnel in the California Military Department explained, “There will not be boots on the ground (other than role players) so there will not be a whole lot of compelling high-speed low drag Soldiers in the foxhole opportunities.”

The Joint Master Scenario Event List (JMSEL) provided exercise design, execution and support. These inputs assist in establishing plans, policies and procedures. Soldiers in the JOC continued to address the “unknowns”, situations that consistently changed. To support the CPX, implementers required message traffic, phone calls, e-mails, media queries, media reports (video and written), letters, radio traffic, and other inputs. Securing updated data supports training objectives, when meeting the Commander’s mission essential training list (METL).
The AS15 CPX included “primary agency participation from the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and USNORTHCOM, in conjunction with other state agencies and subordinate military commands.” The California Earthquake Clearinghouse, a consortium of 5 agencies, also participated in AS15. (California Geological Survey, California Office of Emergency Services, California Seismic Safety Commission, Earthquake Engineering Research Institute, and United States Geological Survey) http://www.californiaeqclearinghouse.org/

This year, the Wildland Firefighting Training Center (WFTC) in Sacramento got activated as the FEMA Joint Field Office (JFO). The WFTC, with its energetic array of support facilities and communication devices, advanced the mission of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and provided a force multiplier to Joint Forces Headquarters Command, California Military Dept. Located at the McClellan Business Park, the area set its name from the former McClellan Air Force Base.

Specific tasks in the JOC included: 1) Advance interagency, military and regional coordination through mission command and liaison activities; 2) Support NORTHCOM exercise and training objectives, 3) Reinforce the NIMS and ICS tenets of DSCA and 4) Develop standard operating procedures for integration and synchronization with Title 10, “in order to support unified action.” [Joint Publication 3-28 Defense Support of Civil Authorities 31 July 2013 CHAPTER I pg I-1]

For the PA group, their principle asset exercised the preparation of the Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) commander, Gen. Haskins, for a morning press conference. Responding to scenario injects in the JOC continued. “There will be a fake “Facebook” presence as well as role playing reporters that we will have to escort.”, said Shiroma.
Our State Guards need a Skill Qualification Test System

By: Colonel (CA) Andre N. Coulombe

Military training and education is based on developing individual and collective skills to conduct the mission. Training is based on Mission Essential Task Lists (METL). METL are those capabilities required for mission accomplishment that units train to. What is missing within State Guards is a common core of individual skills supporting METL, to be tested and quantified. Officer and enlisted Military Occupation Specialties (MOS) training, Officer (OES) and Non-Commissioned Officer (NCOES) educational systems etc. all begin with the same question. What tasks and subtasks must individuals accomplish to support unit METL. With an answer to this question; training, testing and sustainment of skills based on grade needs to be developed. SGAUS can be instrumental in this process.

In most States the backbone of our State Guards are retired and prior service personnel who are presumed to bring basic skills to the fight. In some undefined way these skills are passed along to non-prior service personnel and kept current thru unit training and exercises. Up until recent years OES and NCOES was based around correspondence courses available from the Army Correspondence Course Program and the Marine Corps Institute. Promotion and assignment was roughly based on completion of these courses. If a Federal Colonel required a Command and General Staff College so did a State Officer. The Basic Non Commissioned Officer Course (BNCOC) was equally suitable for a Federal soldier as for a State.

This approach came under challenge with greater residency requirements after 1990 and now most of these courses have migrated online. Without a Common Access Card (CAC) these courses are effectively out of range. I would argue though that we have still not asked that basic question. What do our State Guardsmen need to know at the common core level and to what degree? We do not have a baseline set of required skills and a testing system to sustain these skills. This is what our education, training and exercise programs need to be based on. In looking at the Federal programs once available much of it was inapplicable to likely State Guard missions. Do State Guardsmen need to train on “call for fire”? How many of our Guardsmen will be part of a mortar crew? Given the limitations of training time we need to train to the likely mission. These in turn provide us the basic individual common core skill sets.
The US Army facing similar questions developed a program around the Skills Qualification Test (SQT) both common core and MOS. The program is built around skill levels one thru four which roughly equate to enlisted grades E-1 to E-4. The program comes complete with tasks, subtasks, references, training linkages, manuals, job books, standards and conditions. These programs are in the public domain right off the shelf. Two thirds of the common core SQT does not apply to SDF. However among the remaining one third are many that fit like a glove. These are the skills we can build a program around. These SQT tasks are numbered and can be extracted from the original text as required for SDF training. My proposal would be to extract those tasks which are applicable to SDF roles and missions and begin a better training foundation than we have at present. This would be consistent with the limited time available for volunteers and permit Common Core Training (CTT) both for prior and non-prior service. Establishment of a basic Common Core individual training is essential to support MOS, OES and NCOES development. Space does not permit me to go into greater depth. If the Association desires I hope to expand on this basic idea and develop it into a more comprehensive proposal.

Our State Guards need a Skill Qualification Test System Cont.

By: Colonel (CA) Andre N. Coulombe

Deadlines for Items Needing Board Consideration

29 September 2015

Guidelines:

1. No more than one page.
2. Must be present.
3. Must be active/current SGAUS member.

Format: Items not submitted by the suspense (15 SEP 15) and format below will not be considered.

- Subject:
- Presenter:
- Issue:
- Points of concern: (bullets, narratives not accepted)
- Recommendation(s):
LONG BEACH, CA - On a calm, blue sky day in mid-summer, the Pacific Ocean washed gently against a stretch of bright sand, meandering for several miles, surrounding the shoreline of Long Beach, California. Soon enough, thousands of residents, visitors and tourists from foreign nations, would flow unto the sidewalks, streets and beaches, gathering in three separate venues, to witness the Special Olympics World Games (SOWG).

Soldiers in the Tactical Operation Center

Los Angeles has not had such a gigantic sports attraction since the 1984 Olympics. The 2015 SOWG marked a return, after a 16 year absence, to the United States. Roughly 6,500 athletes arrived from 165 countries to participate in the summer games.

In order to have the event operate smoothly, with visible control features and logistical support, the California Military Department ordered units from both the CA Army National Guard and the CA State Military Reserve to support the international competition.

As a result, to assist the SOWG in accomplishing its mission, CA State Military Reserve, Regional Support Command-South (CSMR RSC-S) conducted Civil Support Operations to Civilian Authorities (CSOPCA), operating from a Tactical Operating Center (TOC) inside the Long Beach Armory. The mission would extend from 15 July to 09 August 2015.

Preparation for this mission started in 2014, in the S-3 section, under the leadership of Col (CA) Russell Nakaishi. Relying upon the RSC(S) Administrative Support Center (ASC), the ASC collocated with the CAANG 224th Sustainment Brigade. Soldiers assigned to duty, with the ASC, managed shift schedules, alternated and replaced shift personnel, distributed orders, conducted flash training, maintained pay records and completed other administrative tasks.
Once the plan provisioned in the RSC(S), the mission intent generated the flexibility required to assign personnel, communications and operations resources. With training objectives and tasking directed onto the operational environment, Soldiers readied themselves for the extended duty. 1st Lt. (CA) Miguel Arciniega, HHC J-3 S-1 Liaison Officer (LNO), held a three day shift from 18:00 to 06:00 said, “We have new Soldiers coming in, they are in-processed here, they are briefed on the operation, and they are transported to the different venues.”

Along side Arciniega, Chief Warrant Officer 3 (CA) Mark Criswell HQ C-8/J-8, with 15 years in the CSMR, spoke to the topic of financials. “The J-8 provides support to the mission for pay and accountability of personnel. We process reports from the field on a daily basis to determine who's here and turn them into the CaSEADS system in order to process their pay.”

The in-brief also falls under the responsibility of the J-8, through its management of support activities. The overall in-brief included information that Special Olympics officials gave regarding expected conduct at venues. “We also provide information on the command intent from National Guard”, said Criswell.
Part II Interoperability: common doctrine and procedures combine CAANG and CASMR forces to support the SOWG

Story by Maj. (CA) R. Alexander

In the field, Soldiers followed the Commander's Intent: “SMR personnel will perform Resource Distribution of Department of Defense (DoD) radios and Golf Carts to SOWG 2015 staff and volunteers. Additional personnel will monitor and coordinate the Resource Distribution mission with the Joint Task Force Commander and Operations Center.”

Soldiers in the SOWG venues: Belmont Pier and Alamitos Beach

Maj. (CA) George Tunney, a Green Beret, spoke to this element of the operation order (OPORD). “It's going to be great! We have the sailing venue. Right now we are setting up for the activities that start on Sunday (26JUL15). We’re just going to be ready to rock and roll! We are working with our Special Olympics counterparts. We're not holding purely to our mission of logistics. You need help, we'll help you.”

As explained, Soldiers operated in a nonemergency, Civil Support environment, contributing to the synchronization of multiple command posts, sections and any other necessary external agencies or organizations. Civil Support Resource Distribution operations supported the intent of the commander and survived the mission.

Conducting property accountability, a variable of movement control, materials record from a specified origin to a specified destination, as the routing of golf carts and the allocation of military radios. This gave effective and efficient support to CMD clients.
On 24 JUL 15, Sgt. (CA) Jonneta Green, 3d Bn 1Bde RSC(S), deployed to control radio communications, voiced her role, while on post in the logistic security enclosure site. “I'm in charge of signing these out and the golf carts, for the different vendors and athletes.”

Persons who need to use a radio, whether at the Pier, the Marine Stadium or Alamitos Beach, had to present the required identification. Green added that her responsibility meant allocating carts “to people who are going to do the sailing ... at Belmont Pier.”

On the subject of Civil Support, Sgt. (CA) Thomas Unson, 3d Bn 1Bde RSC(S), received a request from a member of the SOWG staff. “Some objects on the end of the pier need to be moved so that the City of Long Beach can conduct pressure washing.” Having two enlisted Soldiers on the pier helped in completing the task.

The assignment to conduct pressure washing, although insignificant to someone not familiar with shoreline navigational aids, means pulling buoys, chains, shackles and weights from shallow water and pressure washing them to remove barnacles, due to their increased growth in the summer climate.

At the Long Beach Marine Advisory Commission meeting in June, the Marine Maintenance Department had scheduled the task. Unson’s explanation illustrated how CSMR Soldiers operated in a Civil Support environment, even without advanced notification.

Soldiers in the SOWG venue: Marine Stadium

Staff Sgt. Dalton Patterson, CANG 2668th Transportation Company, continued to lead in preparing the Marina venue for kayaking. At this venue, only CANG Soldiers organized the area for the athletes and public. “I think it's the only venue like that,” said Patterson.

The environment had excellent views and seascapes, which prompted Patterson to say, “This is one of the best missions I have ever been on in the California National Guard. It’s amazing!” Patterson’s team assisted in running the electric power for the tents, set-up along the shoreline.
Part II Interoperability: common doctrine and procedures combine CAANG and CASMR forces to support the SOWG

Story by Maj. (CA) R. Alexander

Throughout the games, Soldiers collected with SOWG athletes, talking, listening and promoting a social understanding of their needs regarding inclusion. Concerns that challenge the opportunities that young people, with and without intellectual disabilities, face today.

CMD Soldiers fostered the inclusive society mission by enthusiastically supporting the SOWG mission.

Sailboat racing off the Belmont Pier during the Special Olympics World Games. Pb Chaplain Capt. (CA) Brenda Threatt RSC(S), released.

CAANG Soldiers provided electrical power for the tents where SOWG staff and officials monitored the kayaking competitions at the Long Beach Marine Stadium during the Special Olympics World Games. From left to right. Staff Sgt. Dalton Patterson, Pfc. Josh Wilson, Pfc. Joseph Howell and Sgt. Mitchel Barreras, all from the 2668th Transportation Company. Pb Maj. (CA) R. Alexander RSC(S), released.

Annual Conference
Hanover, Maryland

29 September 2015  Deadline to Register for Conference!!!!
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Guest Speaker ADM Michael Rogers,
Commander U.S. Cyber Command

At the SGAUS Annual General Conference

30 OCT to 1 NOV 2015
Georgia State Defense Force participates in Defender Northwest Georgia 2015

By MSG Mark Woelzlein, GSDF, mark.woelzlein@gasdf.us

Clark Creek South Campground, Acworth, June 5-7, 2015 – The call for help goes out and the Soldiers of the 1st Brigade, Georgia State Defense Force (GSDF) respond with enthusiasm. They arrive at the designated locations, the 1st Brigade Tactical Operations Center (TOC) along with 2nd and 3rd Battalion in a camping area at Lake Allatoona, just a few miles north of the city of Acworth, Georgia and the Soldiers of the 1st and 4th Battalion at the Georgia National Guard Center in Rome, Georgia. They are here for Defender Northwest Georgia 2015, the 1st Brigade field training exercise (FTX), a scenario driven exercise where a notional tornado has damaged the area near Acworth and Rome, Georgia and the Governor of the State of Georgia has called the GSDF to assist where needed. The Soldiers arrive throughout Friday evening on June 5, 2015, after a warm and humid day to set up camp and make final preparations for the next day’s activities. Many have already worked a full day and some drove a considerable distance to get here, but no complaints are heard as all are dedicated to the mission of saving the lives of their friends and neighbors. Under the direction of Col. W. Brad Bryant, the commander of the 1st Brigade GSDF, Maj. Herb Jones, the brigade Operations Officer and the acting Incident Commander, issues instructions to the four battalions. Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kevin Ward, the brigade Assistant Operations Officer, sifts through all the reports received from the battalions to give the Incident Commander a complete picture of the affected area. The entire Brigade Staff stays busy to ensure all of the Soldiers of the 1st Brigade are able to complete their missions. The Soldiers of 1st and 4th Battalion assembling in Rome, Georgia submit progress reports through a web based reporting system as well as the Soldiers of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions located at the camp near Acworth, Georgia. By the end of the evening, all were ready to start operations.

ETOWAH PARK, Rome, June 6, 2015 – Spc. Michael Elliott, a Soldier of the combined Search and Rescue Teams of the 1st and 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, Georgia State Defense Force (GSDF) takes an azimuth reading through his lensatic compass during Defender Northwest Georgia Field Training Exercise (FTX) 2015. He is guiding his fellow team members on a search for evidence that a tornado survivor passed through the area, insuring that no ground is overlooked. The FTX tests the capabilities of the Soldiers and staff of the GSDF in their ability to respond to a disaster.
On Saturday, June 6, 2015, the Soldiers of the four battalions awaken and receive orders from their officers. They practice techniques in Search and Rescue and conduct route reconnaissance through areas affected by the tornadoes. They are also here to practice survival skills they would need if the situation called for it. With Search and Rescue, the Soldiers practice techniques used to sweep over areas to find casualties and survivors. During a disaster, reports of survivors wandering about the area in a state of shock and in need of care are common. The Soldiers of 1st and 4th Battalion, led by Staff Sgt. Corey Ranic, move across Etowah Park in Rome, Georgia, in a formation that ensures that every inch of ground is inspected for evidence that the survivor passed through the area. When an order is received to sweep an area to look for survivors that are unable to move or are trapped, the Soldiers provide what first aid that they can and, if possible, safely move the victim to a casualty collection point where a group of casualties are cared for by a small team and where an ambulance can reach them. If the casualty cannot be moved, then the location is reported so rescuers with the proper equipment are brought in. All buildings in the search area are marked with an indicator to ensure that no structure is overlooked. In a disaster, it is critical that routes throughout the affected areas be assessed for use by emergency services. With route reconnaissance, the GSDF is prepared to assist authorities in determining where roads are blocked or somehow damaged and cannot handle the movement of emergency services. Alternative routes are explored and reported to the Incident Commander. All reports of good routes, bad routes, empty buildings, downed power lines, casualties, survivors, etc. are reported to the Incident Commander through the use of standardized Spot Reports. Routine reports are submitted at pre-established times and spot reports have priority and are reported as they happen. Spot reports contain critical information that the Incident Commander uses to direct and prioritize emergency and rescue operations.

As night falls, the Soldiers of the battalions complete the tasks that they are given. The final spot reports are submitted to the 1st Brigade TOC, and the battalion commanders gather information for their After Action Reports (AAR’s) and the weary Soldiers settle down, content that they completed all that was asked of them and more. The following morning as the sun rises, the Soldiers stir wherever they laid their heads. The breakfast meal is consumed and any task remaining to be completed or done to standard is finished. Final AAR’s are completed and final briefings are given to the Soldiers with congratulations on a job well done. The Soldiers of 1st Brigade return home with a well-deserved sense of accomplishment.

CLARK CREEK SOUTH CAMPGROUND, Acworth, June 6, 2015 – Soldiers of 2nd and 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade, Georgia State Defense Force (GSDF) safely move a simulated casualty to a location where emergency services can reach him and evacuate him during Defender Northwest Georgia Field Training Exercise (FTX) 2015. The FTX tests the capabilities of the Soldiers and staff of the GSDF in their ability to respond to a disaster.
LaGrange, Georgia Armory early on a spring morning MAR 2015 -

As the large CAT diesel engines roared to life, Soldiers donned their Kevlar. Lights, Check! Commo, Check! Staging of the convoy began. Everyone was fired up and stoked. But as the miles ticked by, adrenaline turned to calm and calm turned into sleepiness. Drivers and Truck Commanders worked together as cohesive teams and fought to stay alert. On this mission concentration and focus were essential and compromise was not an option. Operation Patriot Bandoleer, a recently completed multi-billion dollar mission, was given to the GAARNG to move sensitive heavy cargo loads across long stretches of highway through sometimes mountainous terrain.

The 1177th Transportation Company, being a unit with an excellent safety and performance track record, was the simple choice for the most difficult and longest leg of this multi-state mission. Enter the Georgia State Defense Force. The A Co. 4BN 5BDE “Road Runners” after only being stood up for 18 months are fully embedded within the 1177th TC.
With flexing personnel numbers for OPB the 1177th reached out to the GSDF for additional support. The Road Runners had just supported the 1177th TC in two missions back-to-back for 10 straight days, but one GSDF Soldier was able to continue on a third consecutive mission and went on to serve 24 total consecutive calendar days of State Active Duty. Yes, you read that right. This Soldier put in more time in a consecutive series of missions than many Soldiers of the GSDF serve in an entire year. Oh, and this was only towards the end of March 2015.

Receiving no duty pay or vacation pay from civilian employment, SSG Amber Kimble (GSDF) was in it literally for the long haul. SSG Kimble seamlessly embedded with the 1177th TC as a Truck Commander and RTO for 1,627 miles, assisting in navigation, driver’s training, safety guide, ground guide, and minor vehicle maintenance and servicing...amongst other NCO duties. She quickly became respected by her Guardsmen counterparts and even volunteered for duties and assignments that others would not take. CPT Wilson of the 110th CSSB presented her with a challenge coin in the field for her “amazing patriotism to serve on both Operation Vigilant Guard 2015 and Patriot Bandoleer.” SSG Kimble proudly represented her unit and the GSDF, and continues to demonstrate the value, experience, and overall excellence that the GSDF has to offer.

SSG Kimble and her entire unit joined SGAUS (The State Guard Association of the United States) as new members in November of 2014. Since that time all members of her unit have completed Basic MEMS (Military Emergency Management Specialist) curriculum. SSG Kimble and two other Soldiers were able to use their experiences during embedded mission support as practicum exercises to earn the basic MEMS skill badge. Remaining Soldiers of the unit are preparing for tabletop practicum exercises to be scheduled at a future date.
INDIANAPOLIS -- Two proven leaders are taking command of the Indiana Guard Reserve (IGR) and its parent organization, the Indiana National Guard this summer. While change is often difficult and uncertain, Guard Reservists are optimistic the new commanders will continue to build on the strong foundation developed over the past decades.

Maj. Gen. Bruce Bowers is the new commanding general of the IGR. Bowers has been a member of the IGR since 1987 and has served in multiple positions in second brigade and at IGR headquarters. Bowers entered military service in 1970 and was appointed commanding general of the IGR and promoted to major general by Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger, the adjutant general of Indiana, in April. His promotion was not a surprise to Guard Reservists, including Command Sgt. Maj. James Coe.

"Everyone knows his leadership and care of the soldiers will bring further greatness to the IGR," Coe said. Bowers replaces Maj. Gen. F. Barry Green, who retired after leading the IGR for ten years and serving the IGR and Indiana Army National Guard for more than a half century.

After four decades as a Guardsman, Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger also retired this spring. Maj. Gen. Courtney Carr has taken over Umbarger's duties as adjutant general. Carr was most recently the Army's deputy director of operations, readiness and mobilization. Bowers believes Carr will bring the IGR and Indiana National Guard even closer together because the new adjutant general is already familiar with the IGR and its accomplishments.

"He's been deployed several time during the last few years through the Soldier Processing Center down at Camp Atterbury, so he knows what the IGR is able to accomplish," Bowers said. "He has a great TAG in Maj. Gen. Umbarger, that he has to follow, but I know he is up to the task, and is ready to lead the Military Department of Indiana into the future."

IGR Brig. Gen. Hal Grigdesby says plans are already underway to brief the new TAG. "General Bowers and I will be meeting with Gen. Carr within the next 90 days and the IGR staff will be presenting at JFHQ for regularly occurring training briefs and mission updates," Grigdesby said. "General Carr has an appreciation for who we are and the many services we provide to the Indiana National Guard and Hoosiers. I expect that General Carr will continue all the initiatives begun under General Umbarger."
Men and women from around the northeastern portion of the state, who are in the Indiana Guard Reserve 1st Brigade, came to Warsaw in mid-July for a drill to establish a COMMEX with four other state defense forces. But the morning wasn’t just radio communications.

A handful of potential recruits were on hand to learn about the reserves and several groups gathered to prepare for the annual Air Show of Warsaw. The reserves will be providing several different services during the air show, Aug. 14-16.

These men and women will be providing security throughout the event, keeping the public from entering restricted areas and making sure safety procedures are maintained. This may include keeping people off the ramp area when aircraft engines are in operation, making sure no one is smoking near the aircraft, keeping a watchful eye that children are not endangering themselves and other safety measures.

While many of the reservist were receiving training dealing with the airshow, there were others found outside setting up a radio tower and contacting counterparts in Virginia, Tennessee, California, Texas and Indiana. This state defense force high frequency communication exercise was organized through the Virginia Defense Force. The next COMMEX is tentatively set for November 2015.

Lt. Col. Mark Hazelet and Command Sgt. Major Scott Hawks were in charge of the drill for the 1st Brigade.

Those working with the COMMEX, erected a 102-foot inverted V tower allowing the radio to pick up different bands. During the exercise, procedures were followed: ham radio call signs, who is calling, greetings, type of radio antenna being used, and signal strength.

According to 2nd Lt. Steve Sausaman, every drill set up by the reserves includes some type of training. A future drill may include a Community Emergency Response Team class, which will be open to the public. This particular unit has three CERT teams. The group also assists with a mini marathon in May, using it’s radio network for emergency response, backs up the National Guard when called upon.

Hazelet noted the specialty of the local reserves is executing search and rescue and will be leading a search and rescue course in October at Camp Atterbury, as well as a JRTC Camp.

Reservists with all different skills and ranks were on hand to participate in the exercise.

Today’s Indiana Guard Reserve focuses on serving Hoosiers by assisting the National Guard and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security in their domestic missions as well as providing instruction to emergency management teams regarding the National Incident Management System, designing and evaluating training exercises, and executing community support missions.
First of all I would like to take the opportunity to thank SGM Tredy (Dep. Commandant for MEMS Operations) for covering for me during the month of August, while I was on medical leave. I will be back in the driver’s seat after Labor Day. He has done an exemplary job. Second, I would like to thank the Navy EMA for getting their 2\textsuperscript{nd} Candidate through the Basic MEMS Certification. The Military Police unit is still working on getting their whole unit certified in the MEMS program.

There are so many factions and entities out there wanting to join the MEMS programs. For example; The Civil Air Patrol, Coast Guard Auxiliary, Fireman, Police Officers etc, JROTC Cadets, the US Army Corps of Cadets and Active Duty Members as well. This is was what having a great program does of for us as members of a State Defense Force and as members of the State Guard Association of the United States.

As these other factions come into the program we have to remind them that they have to be members of the State Guard Association of the United States before we can certify them. State Directors and Liaison Directors should be monitoring this important issue. In the past seven years, this program has grown so much, I have had to decentralize some to the management of the MEMS program. I appreciate everyone involved in that management decision.

I would encourage everyone who hasn’t visit the MEMS website to do so. The student manual is there, and there are other links to various sites for the MEMS program. There is also a contact portion that connects to me directly. I will usually answer those inquiries pretty quickly. However, I have a 7 day response policy, so what that means is that if I don’t respond to you in 7 days, send a 2\textsuperscript{nd} response inquiry, and I will respond as soon as I can.

I will be trying to get the Continuing Education Certifications back online in September when all the faculty are back at the IUPUI Campus. If you are interested, let me know. We need at least 10 Candidates to make a class roster. Remember, there is a cost for these CEU’s, if you are interested, then contact me through the website...

http://memsacademy.webs.com

If you are not a member of the MEMS website, please join, it is free. You will receive all blast emails I send, and will be kept up to date on new or updated information.

Hope to see you all at National SGAUS Conference.
EDINBURGH, Ind. – At first, it may sound like a typical summer camp with hiking, swimming and a lifetime of memories. But when you add rappelling, obstacle courses and life-saving skills training, you realize this is no normal summer camp. And these are no ordinary campers.

The week of June 22, 2015, about 220 public high school students from across Indiana, including Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Hammond, Evansville, Marion, and Terre Haute converged on Camp Atterbury for the Junior ROTC Cadet Leadership Challenge. These are students who already excel in the classroom and gave up a week of summer vacation to add military field training to their impressive resumes.

The cadets woke-up at 6 a.m. each day for a long, but fun-filled day of physical and mental training. The students learned critical leadership and teamwork skills that will help them succeed in life after high school. They built and crossed rope bridges, rappelled a 60-foot tower and participated in other team-building exercises.

JROTC is an elective high school program that teaches ethical values and principles that transform good students into good citizens.

The summer JROTC Cadet Leadership Challenge is held by the Army JROTC and the Indiana Guard Reserve, a community-based military organization that supplements the Indiana Army National Guard within the State of Indiana. For more information about the IGR, visit in.gov/igr.
As dawn broke over Baltimore City, a few miles away Maryland Defense Force personnel were loading up their gear preparing to deploy alongside their Army National Guard counterparts to stand up a field hospital at Oriole Park at what would become known as FOB Raven. During the recent state of Emergency in Baltimore, the Maryland Defense Force, Maryland’s uniformed volunteer state military force mobilized forty-three key personnel to complement and augment Maryland National Guard Forces deployed to Baltimore.

With doctors and nurses at FOB Raven to logistics support personnel pitching in at Pikesville Military Reservation to help de-mobilize the Guard as it returned from the city, the MDDF played a key role in the recent mission. MDDF personnel were also embedded into Joint Forces Headquarters at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation.

At FOB Raven, the Maryland Defense Force provided (XXX) doctors, (XXX) nurses and (XXX) other medical support personnel and treated (XXX) patients over the course of five days of sustained operation. MDDF forces have not seen a longer deployment since the deployment to Jefferson Parish, Louisiana during Hurricane Katrina relief. Meanwhile, MDDF operations officers were embedded into the planning and operations staff at Camp Fretterd providing real time updates to command and control and ensuring that personnel were deployed to maximum effectiveness.

As calm had returned to the streets of Baltimore, the next major mission would be to ensure that all Maryland Guard personnel returned home efficiently and quickly. The JRSOI (Joint Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration) Operation was stood up on Friday morning and the call came out for MDDF
Maryland Defense Force Rallies for Baltimore Cont.

MAJ Bryan Y. Fischer, MDDF

The MDDF personnel mobilized to support the JRSOI effort allowed MDNG with specialized logistics training to be used more effectively and MDDF personnel to backfill for them as force multipliers.

The MDDF supplied personnel to the MDNG operations ranged in age from 22 to 62 and ranked from PFC to Colonel. With less than 36 hours notice, the MDDF was able to provide critical professional and technical support to the emergency operations proving once again that nearly 100 years on, the Maryland Defense Force is Ready When Called.
Trail of Honor Hosts Almost 30,000 Visitors

The Trail of Honor, one of the major family events in the South, has had a long relationship with the Mississippi State Guard. This year, this relationship was expanded with over 100 members from all three Brigades volunteering for the May 17-19 event in Jackson, Mississippi.

The trail itself is a half-mile gravel path through the woods behind the Jackson, Mississippi Harley-Davidson dealership. However, since 2003 there are three days every year when it becomes something else – a chronological history of the conflicts the United States has been involved with both at home and overseas. With 26 displays, each staffed with living historians, the Trail of Honor is a family oriented activity where our nation’s history, and sacrifices, comes alive.

Chuck Holifield, VIP and Media Coordinator for the event, outlines what a family can expect to see, “At every stop on the trail there are living-historians demonstrating the uniforms, weapons, equipment, food and lives of soldiers from the French and Indian War in 1754 to present day. Sets have been constructed to bring as much realism to the event as possible. You will witness mock firefights from the American Civil War and Vietnam - Civil War cannons will be fired every 30 minutes during the weekend. You can visit the Vietnam Memorial Wall and enter a mockup of a cell at the infamous “Hanoi Hilton” prison. Inside the dealership we will have special guests – Medal of Honor recipients, Tuskegee Airmen, Navajo Code Talkers and exPOWs, as well as representatives of many Veterans organizations”.

Antique and present day military vehicles are on display both on the Trail and the front lawn of the dealership. In addition to the vehicles on the ground, there are displays in the air. The Sky Soldiers, pilots and crew of the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation, will fly overhead in historic UH-1H “Hueys” and Cobras – often releasing smoke so visitors can follow their flight paths.

A visitor to the Trail of Honor will see the Mississippi State Guard throughout the event. From the parking lots where members direct traffic and help load shuttle buses, to crews delivering water and meals to the over 400 volunteers – or the squads setting up the portable chapel and medical tents – State Guard members are there to ensure the almost 30,000 visitors to the event have the best possible experience.

Governor Phil Bryant, a long time supporter of the Trail of Honor, opened this year’s event. “The Trail of Honor is a tremendous event for families to enjoy together and see history come alive right before their eyes,” Gov. Bryant said. “I am honored to help bring awareness to the great sacrifice our men and women have undergone while serving our great nation. I would like to thank the over 100 living historians who have made this one of the major events in our State and the Mississippi State Guard who this year provided over 100 volunteers to provide support services for this event.”
Trail of Honor Hosts Almost 30,000 Visitors Cont.

Lt. Colonel James Matthews, Battalion Commander for the 120th, commented on his three days at the event, “The 120th is billeted in the State Police barracks and is on the trail from early in the morning until hours after the trail closes each day. We have many missions for this event – from operations such as traffic control to ceremony at the Wall. Supporting the volunteers at the exhibits, and the almost 30,000 in attendances, is a rewarding experience for all of our members.”

A highlight this year is the Honor Guard at the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall - a 3/5-scale replica of the Wall standing six feet tall and 300 feet long. State Guard members stand watch over the Wall 24 hours a day from the time it is set up on May 16 to when it is taken down on May 20. MSSG Chaplains, led by Colonel Nathan Barber, provide a portable sanctuary, complete with steeple, next to the Wall to attend to the spiritual and emotional needs of those visiting the Wall. The Changing of the Guard, which occurs every 30 minutes, is a major event for Veterans and their families.

Corporal Jon Shaw of the 125th Military Police Battalion, shared his experience as a Honor Guard on the Wall, “What an awesome honor to stand guard over this monument to so many who gave all. There are literally no words to describe the feelings I had. From little kids wanting to know ‘Is that man real?’ to family members taking pictures, all the way to one Veteran who posted up 15 feet in front of me and saluted me and then stepped over and said ‘Thank you for your service’. The one that really got me was this one woman who watched as I came on duty. When I saluted the wall and turned and went to parade rest she started crying. She cried the entire time I was on post. I stood there motionless, expressionless, watching her cry. Two minutes before my relief came she came up next to me, still crying and said ‘Thank You’ and walked away. It makes me feel a healthy pride to know that my service has had the impact that it has had these past three days.”

Standing Guard at the Wall is a highly sought after, and demanding, assignment, as one member posted on the First Brigade page, “Headed to get some rack time. Guard duty from 1800-2230 then back up and report in at 0600 and back on The Wall again at 0700. Such an honor to stand post at this memorial.”
The 24-hour Honor Guard is an expansion of the support MSSG has provided Trail of Honor over the years. Members have stood watch over the Wall in previous years, but this is the first time the Honor Guard has been there fulltime. Lt. Colonel Steve Kaminski, Battalion Commander of the 110th Military Police, discussed how his members viewed their duties at the Wall, “Many will not be able to go to Washington to see the Memorial Wall,” he said, “My Battalion does not see this as a replica Wall, but a continuation of the memorial. We are standing guard here just as if we were standing at the Memorial Wall in Washington”.

David McElroy, Director of the Trail of Honor, echoed this in describing how Harley-Davidson of Jackson maintains the area where the Wall stands, “It is sacred ground. We keep that site up year round. The Wall is here for four days, but even though the Wall is gone, it is just like those names on the Wall, just like those people who never came back, that site is not forgotten”.

What began as a water stop for a Veteran’s event in 2003 is now one of the most looked forward to family attractions in our region. Each year more living history groups participate – and the numbers for Run for The Wall, and families in attendance continue to climb. A brief drive though the off-site parking lots showed cars from all the surrounding states and hotels and restaurants are seeing the impact of this weekend as families come make it a three-day event.

“We have many repeat visitors”, Holifield said, “Walking along the trail you will hear families discuss new exhibits, or ask our living historians about a previous year’s displays. We are finding this has become a yearly event for many families with Jackson being the destination for extended families. We now have hotels, such as The Cabot Lodge, offering special packages for this event. This is the kind of activity where we see three generations, and sometimes four generations all engaged in the activities we offer”

As the event continues to grow, so does the involvement of the Mississippi Sate Guard. Plans are already being made on how MSSG can increase support for the Trail of Honor May 16-18, 2015.

“We are looking forward to working with the Mississippi State Guard next year, “said Holifield, “The dedication and contributions from your organization helped make our 2014 event a great success.”
New York Guard Conducts Annual Training at Camp Smith

More than three hundred members of New York's volunteer state defense force, the New York Guard, will conduct their yearly weeklong Annual Training program at Camp Smith Training Site Aug. 15 through the 22.

The New York Guard members, who volunteer their time to train without collecting a salary, will take part in communications, staff coordination, and individual skills training and instruction. The week-long training program will culminate on Friday with a supply point exercise which replicates distributing aid supplies during a state disaster response.

Training offered during the summer annual training will include individual professional development for all ranks, including Initial Entry Training for the New York Guard's newest members; a Basic Officer Course for the newest leaders of the force; and an Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course.

Unlike the New York Army or Air National Guard, members of the New York Guard are not in the federal military force and do not conduct missions outside New York. Their role is to augment and assist the New York National Guard during state emergencies and National Guard domestic support missions as part of the state's military force.

New York Guard members also assist National Guard units with administrative support and training during troop mobilizations.

Highlights of annual training will also include disaster response skills such as vehicle movement control, staging and reception operations, supply distribution operations, communications skills and select tasks such as forklift operator training and chainsaw debris removal training.

Other specially trained New York Guard members also assist in chemical, biological, radiological response missions and provide an emergency high-frequency radio network for the state. Members of this group will receive additional refresher or recertification training for donning hazardous material protective suits.

All New York Guard personnel volunteer their time to train on their skills and receive no pay for attending training sessions. They are paid by the state only when assisting in disaster relief operations when ordered by the governor.

"New York Guard members are an important part of our New York National Guard military force," said Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the adjutant general of New York.

"New York Guard volunteers bring their unique civilian skills or past military experiences and are ready to put them to work in the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs to help the people of New York during emergencies and natural disasters," Murphy said.
The New York Guard, which is one of 23 state defense forces around the country, is authorized to recruit just over 1,000 volunteers organized into units located across New York. Currently there are about 600 New York Guard members.

About half of the New York Guard volunteers are former members of the active duty military or National Guard while the other half have never served in the military.

People who have served in the military can serve in the New York Guard up until age 65. Those who have never served in the military must be between age 18 and age 55 to join.

The New York Guard’s history dates back to World War I.

Following German sabotage attempts on industries producing supplies for France and Britain in the New York City area—the Black Tom Island ammunition dump (now part of Liberty State Park) was blown up by a German spy in 1916—the New York National Guard was called upon to guard key facilities. When the United States entered World War I in April 1917 the New York National Guard was federalized and began training to go to France.

To replace those National Guard Soldiers the state of New York credited a state-only military force called the New York Guard.

During World War I these New York Guard members manned sentry posts at key facilities, including the New York City water supply. By 1919, 22,000 men served in this force and 40 died of “Spanish flu” while guarding the New York City water system.

In World War II the New York Guard was once again created when the New York National Guard was mobilized in October 1940. New York Guard units manned armories left vacant when the National Guard went to war and filled in for the National Guard, most notably in January 1945 when a snowstorm paralyzed upstate New York.

In the 1950s Congress authorized states to create full-time state defense forces and New York was one of 26 which have created forces to assist and augment their National Guards.

New York Guard members establish a communications system during annual training.
NY Guard Volunteers Role Play Reporters

Story and photos by Officer Candidate Donald Ferguson, New York Guard

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, CORTLAND MANOR, N.Y. -- Two members of the New York Guard’s Public Affairs Office played the role of reporters in support of an emergency response exercise here June 13.

Capt. Mark Getman and Officer Candidate Donald F. Ferguson portrayed local news media to exercise the Camp Smith security and response procedures for handling unexpected media arriving at the gate during emergencies.

The two helped prepare Camp Smith garrison staff leaders to better communicate with news media during a crisis.

“Informing our local residents through the press is an integral part of our emergency plan. So it makes sense to test our media plan and make changes if needed,” said Lt. Col. Joseph Cetta, Camp Smith Training Site Garrison Commander.

“The New York Guard Public Affairs team played a key role by asking the kinds of questions real reporters would ask in an emergency.” he added.

The exercise rehearsed emergency evacuation procedures at Camp Smith and included the New York Army National Guard, US Marine Corps personnel, Life Net of NY Air 2 from Wallkil, the Continental Village Fire Department Rescue, Cortlandt Regional Paramedics, and Peekskill Community Volunteer Ambulance Corps.

The rehearsal simulated emergency treatment, stabilization and evacuation of injured occupants from a vehicle crash in a remote, woodland area.

Rehearsing the emergency procedures of Camp Smith personnel with their local first responders is crucial to the safety of everyone who trains at the installation, Cetta said. Part of that training is understanding the important role that information plays in communicating with the local community and the National Guard members, he added.

Officer Candidate Donald Ferguson, New York Guard (far right with Camera) participates in a "media" interview with Lt. Col. Joseph Cetta, Camp Smith Training Site Garrison Commander, after the "incident" training exercise for local first responders held at Camp Smith in June (photo by Captain Mark Getman, NYG)
NY Guard Volunteers Role Play Reporters Cont.

Captain Mark Getman, (R) Deputy Public Affairs Officer of the New York Guard portrays a local reporter attempting to access Camp Smith Training Site from the Force Protection soldier during an exercise for local first responders held in June at the training site.

Captain Mark Getman, (R) conducts a media interview with NY Army National Guard JFHQ PAO SGM Corine Lombardo about the "incident" that occurred at the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs, Camp Smith Training Site exercise for local first responders held in June.

Story and photos by Officer Candidate Donald Ferguson, New York Guard
Improved Members Service!

Paper Applications are a thing of the past. All Memberships (New, Renewals, Chapter and Individual) can be processed online through the SGAUS website.

All current members may also print their SGAUS membership card from the SGAUS website. Each member is assigned a login and a password when a renewal or new membership is processed online.

To print your SGAUS membership card go to the SGAUS website click on “Update Your Info”, enter your email address on file, enter your password and print your membership card. Its that Simple!!!
NY Naval Militia crews training on Lake Champlain this week

Two patrol boats manned by members of New York State’s Naval Militia are conducting training on Lake Champlain over the next few days.

The state Division of Military and Naval Affairs says the two 22-foot long Metalcraft Kingfisher boats will travel 100 miles from the lake’s southern end at Whitehall in Washington County to the Canadian border at Rouses Point in Clinton County.

The purpose of this week’s training is to familiarize the crews with operation of the patrol boats and with navigating on Lake Champlain.

The vessels will also stop at the U.S. Coast Guard station in Burlington, Vermont, as part of the training mission, which begins today and runs through

New York Naval Militia Patrol Boats 220 and 221 training on the Hudson River.

Click Sentinel Newsletter (left) to read more about the New York Guard
NYG reboots Emergency Radio System

New York Guard Times Staff

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, CORTLAND MANOR, N.Y. – More than 75 volunteers of the New York Guard completed their first full year of monthly communications exercises using the Military Emergency Radio Network (MERN) here May 2.

The communications system links military and civilian radio operators to create a sustainable emergency radio network during a disaster.

The training is part of the New York National Guard contingency plan, and tasks the New York Guard to train and operate the Army Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS). The New York Guard personnel,

While most of the communication stations involved use fixed-site radios, this year introduces “Mobile MERN” elements, allowing New York Guard communications experts to locate closer to an incident site.

New York Guard personnel begin training this August during New York Guard Annual Training with vehicle-portable high-power radio equipment that will give MERN operators unprecedented tactical interoperability with New York State’s emergency responders. Mobile MERN will also create the ability to place low-cost, high-power communications units anywhere National Guard forces are deployed in the state.

“We’re going to have over 100 boots on the ground by 2016,” said New York Guard communications officer Lt. Col. Barry Greene. Greene credited service component partners in the National Guard, as well as other supporting New York state agencies, federal military and civilian radio operators for their tremendous training and operational support.

New York Guard 1st Sgt. Mark Copeletti, 56th Brigade, from New Windsor, N.Y., performs an equipment check on a Military Emergency Radio Network receiver at the Joint Task Force Sandy operations center Nov. 6, 2012. The MERN provides back-up communication capabilities for the National Guard response to emergencies such as Superstorm Sandy. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dave Konig, 56th Brigade, New York Guard.
SLEEPY HOLLOW – A stone monument here at the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery commemorates some of New York’s fallen heroes of World War I, but they are unlike any other Soldier killed in France during the war. The names recall 32 members of the New York Guard’s First Provisional Regiment who perished during the 1918 Spanish Influenza pandemic while serving the homefront.

Members of the New York Guard and New York City Department of Environmental Police officers participated in the 97th Aqueduct Defense Memorial Service, Honoring those First Provisional Regiment volunteers here May 7.

The ceremony, supported by the 56th Brigade and New York Guard Headquarters element, honors the World War One service of those who died protecting their home.

“The main purpose of the memorial ceremony is to render honors to the memory of the dedicated men of the First Provisional Regiment, New York Guard who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the New York City Reservoir System during World War One, and second to remember our comrades in arms who have passed on in the previous year,” said Col. David Warager, the New York Guard commander of Recruiting, Retention and Public Affairs.

More than 8,000 New Yorkers served in the 1st Provisional Regiment, the lineage of today’s New York Guard.

Following the mobilization of the New York National Guard for service in France in 1917, the regiment was formed to protect the state’s aqueduct system from feared German sabotage.

Forty guardsmen perished performing this homeland defense duty.

Sleepy Hollow is the final resting place of Frank De Costa, a member of the New York Guard who died of pneumonia in December 1918. When he learned that the family had no means of a proper burial, William Rockefeller, the son of business tycoon John D. Rockefeller, donated a burial plot at Sleepy Hollow and the site became the central location for honoring the service of the entire regiment.
New York Guard 1st Provisional Regiment, Sleepy Hollow Memorial Service Cont.

Story by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard Headquarters

Photos by Capt. Dan Ozaruk, 56th Brigade and Sgt. Maj. Mark Copeletti, New York Guard Headquarters

“It is important that we remember and commemorate the dedicated efforts of our brothers in arms who answered the call to serve under difficult circumstances,” Warager said. “Like today’s New York Guard soldiers, they were citizens who cared for their country, its ideals and the freedom that they enjoyed due to the service of those who served before them.”

Memorial Stone, hewn from the aqueduct quarry in upstate NY by the members of the First Provisional Regiment and placed at a site purchased by William Rockefeller for the burial of those members of the Regiment that were homeless or did not otherwise have a place to be buried. PVT Frank DeCosta, New York Guard is buried there, who died of the Spanish Flu while on duty guarding the Aqueduct.
August, 2015 - Camp Smith Training Site, Cortlandt Manor, NY. – The New York Guard conducted its second ever specialized training for Recruiting, Retention and Public Affairs team members. This two day training session was conducted as part of the professional development component in the New York Guard’s Annual Training program. The first day of the program was led by SSG Edward Simpson, NYG Recruiting & Retention NCOIC, and covered a number of topics specific to the NYG, including the recruiting application process, goals and objectives for the recruiting team for the upcoming training year and recent changes to the NYG Directives regarding enlistments, appointments and promotion. SSG Simpson also addressed the role of the recruiting and retention officers in working with both soldiers and unit leadership in the retention process.

There was also a session by NYG Deputy Public Affairs Officer, CPT Mark Getman, on how the NYG Public Affairs office supports the recruiting and retention program and the proper use of social media in the area of recruiting and retention. The second day of the training was presented by a team from Alpha Company of the New York Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion, led by SGM Eric Hunt. SGM Hunt’s team provided sessions on 1) techniques to prospect for recruits, 2) how to develop and market recruiting events, 3) proper techniques for conducting interviews with prospects, 4) how to identify red flags in the information provided by a prospect, and 5) qualifying candidates and how to keep them interested through the application process.

Each of the NYG’s major subordinate commands had representatives take part in the training. BG Stephen A Bucaria, Commander of the NYG, visited the training session to express his thanks to the National Guard team and stressed the importance of the recruiting and retention mission to the overall mission of the New York Guard, specifically how critical it is to continue to attract and retain quality recruits in order to be able to answer the Governor’s call in the event of a state emergency.
RRPAO Workshop 2015 Cont.

Story by Colonel David J. Warager
Commander, Recruiting, Retention & Public Affairs Directorate

Photo by Captain Mark Getman - New York Guard

Brigadier General Stephen A Bucaria, Commander of the New York Guard (Center) along with Colonel David J. Warager Commander, Recruiting, Retention and Public Affairs Directorate- New York Guard (behind BG Bucaria) and his recruiters (back row) presented certificates of appreciation to New York Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion SGM Eric Hunt and his Recruiting team at the conclusion of the New York Guard Recruiting/Retention and Public Affairs workshop held during the New York Guard Annual training. Photo by Captain Mark Getman, New York Guard -PAO
The last August 16, 31 soldiers are graduated of BNOC Class 2015-01 (Basic Non Commissioned Officer Course) after four (4) weekend class and 140 hours of hard training, in Fort Allen, Puerto Rico National Guard Regional Training Institute in Juana Diaz.

**PRNG SC Rifle and Pistol Team**

PRNG SC Rifle and Pistol Team got on 3rd place on Infantry Match at National Matches in Camp Perry, Ohio, US. The event was a five day competition this last July! Hoooaahhh! Second to None!
Puerto Rico State Guard Cont.

By CPT(PR) Javish Collazo Fernandez, PRSG PAO Commander

Incident Response to Terrorism with Bombing, New Mexico

A fellows of PRNG SC HHD LTC (PR) Yelitza Diaz and CW4 (PR) Maria Adorno completed the course Incident Response to Terrorism with Bombing, New Mexico, in New Mexico Tech.

Operation Helping Our Schools

The 500th Engineering Group of the Puerto Rico National Guard State Command, commanding by the COL(PR) Manuel Alicea, start a great mission. By the leadership of Major (PR) Ricardo De Jesus and the foreman of the construction CW 2(PR) Jesus Santiago and 13 soldiers of our organization, made a great difference in the life of the children in the public school Thomas Alba Edison, community La Plata in Lajas, PR. During six days, they focused on electricity, plumbing, paint, landscaping and other technical work. 12 soldiers of the 380th Platoon, Heavy Truck Hauling Operations, of the 92nd MEB, 190th EN Battallion of the Puerto Rico National Guard, helped on the debris transport and the external cyclone fence installation.
State Guard hosts "Family Day" for members and their families

By LTC Scott Malyerck, PAO

On July 19th, more than 600 members of the South Carolina State Guard family traveled from across the state for the State Guard's "Family Day" celebration at Weston Lake on Fort Jackson. The event was in appreciation for the dedication and loyalty of all of S.C.

State Guard members and their families who support the Guard's critical mission for the State of South Carolina. Without the support of spouses and families, it would be difficult for State Guard members to volunteer so much of their time and effort in serving the citizens of South Carolina. S.C. State Guard Commander, Brigadier General Thomas Mullikin, said, "The level of commitment and professionalism of our State Guard is unparalleled. This event is a way to show our sincere appreciation to everyone for their service and support."

Governor Haley calls upon the State Guard to aid in protection of military recruiting offices

On August 17th, Governor Haley issued an Executive Order that addressed recent tragic events occurring at military recruiting offices across the country. In The Order the Governor does call upon the National Guard and the South Carolina State Guard to undergo training to assure the safety of both military members and civilians. An excerpt from The Order reads:

"NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the power conferred upon me by the Constitution and Statutes of the State of South Carolina, I hereby order the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina as follows:

1. To install security enhancements at all store-front recruitment centers and other facilities of the South Carolina National Guard as he deems necessary.
2. To identify and designate appropriate and qualified members of the National Guard, State Guard, or any civilian employees thereof to undergo specific force protection training coordinated through the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division."
State Guard hosts "Family Day" for members and their families

By LTC Scott Mal yerck, PAO

"This type of specific recognition and designation by South Carolina's Commander-In-Chief is due to the good work and commitment of our all South Carolina State Guard members," said S.C. State Guard Commander, Brigadier General Thomas Mullikin.

State Guard host annual "Hurricane Hike" to train and prepare for disasters

The Hurricane Hike, held this year on September 19th, is an exercise that help trains State Guard members to improve upon methods to deal with the immediate aftermath of a hurricane or other natural disaster. The hike is a component of the State Guard's readiness training to rapidly deploy during a hurricane or other natural or man-made disasters.

"The State Guard continually trains in order to be 'boots on the ground ready' when a disaster hits our state. As we are in hurricane season, this event will help our troops in the areas of providing relief materials to citizens, search, rescue and recovery, damage assessment and route reconnaissance," said Brigadier General Thomas Mullikin, Commander of the S.C. State Guard.

Participants will hike for 6.2 miles carrying a 45lb pack filled with supplies that would be brought into an area that may be impassable by vehicles in the aftermath of a natural disaster. Members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Special Forces, National Guard and other first responders will also take part in this event along with military spouses, family members and the general public.

The S.C. Adjutant General, Major General Robert E. Livingston, Jr. addresses hike participants prior to the start of last year's hike.
THE TENNESSEE STATE GUARD (TNSG) MAKES HISTORY AGAIN WITH A GRAND SLAM TRAINING WEEKEND!!

During the weekend of 17-19 July, 2015, and undeterred by the tragic and cowardly terror attack on our Service men and heroes 90 miles South in Chattanooga, the TNSG made history once again at the National Guard Volunteer Training Center in Smyrna, TN. For the first time in its history, the TNSG conducted three Professional Military Education in-residence academies for its recruits and advancing soldiers under strict security procedures. The 33-strong cadre of instructors and supporting staff conducted Initial Entry Training (IET) for thirteen (13) recruits; the Advanced Leaders’ Course (ALC) for eleven (11) NCO’s preparing for senior NCO leadership opportunities; and the combined Warrant Officers and Officers Basic Course (WOBC/OBC) for seven (7) WO’s and seventeen (17) officers. The WOBC/OBC was offered in-residence for the first time. Additionally, the TNSG Commanding General, BG Kenneth Takasaki, ordered the soldiers of the TNSG Headquarters Company to drill at the Smyrna Volunteer Training Center, where they also obtained formal training from the instructors already assigned to the in-residence Academies. This co-location maximized the tremendous training opportunity while achieving great economies of scale.

The ambitious weekend training event was an undisputable success, culminating in the graduation of 45 soldiers! The TNSG Commander, BG Takasaki and Tennessee National Guard’s BG Tommy H. Baker, Assistant Tennessee Adjutant General (ARMY), presided over the commencement ceremony on Sunday the 19th of July. Tennessee State Representative 2LT Terri Lynn Weaver, a student herself in the IET course, beautifully sang our National Anthem leaving not a dry eye in the audience.

The following soldiers achieved above and beyond expectations earning the coveted Distinguished Graduate Award; 2LT Terri Lynn Weaver for IET, CPL Alisha Johnson for ALC and finally CPT Alan Bagley for the WOBC/OBC. Congratulations to these outstanding soldiers for their superior performance. Well done!
However, it didn’t end there. Not content with the PME academies and the HHC drill, the TNSG also successfully participated in its first multi-state State Defense Forces Communications Exercise (COMMEX) with the Virginia, Texas, California, and Indiana SDF’s. The TNSG deployed its communications gear and operators, led by MAJ Ricky Froggatt, to the NG Smyrna Volunteer Training Center for the COMMEX. But wait, there’s more… The TNSG’s 4th Regiment was also participating in another communications event, the Athens, TN, HAMFEST event.

What a weekend! A total of 122 TNSG soldiers (students, cadre, HHC, and Signals soldiers) racked up 5,864 soldier-hours of training. The TNSG volunteers drove a total of 26,887 miles consuming 1,075 gallons of gasoline costing the soldiers approximately $3,800. The weather was dry, but quite challenging under temperatures reaching 100F with heat index at above 110F. Thanks to our medical staff and cadre’s attention to sound risk management practices, no soldier became a heat casualty. Not even during the 2-mile march on Saturday the 18th.

All in all, this was an unforgettable weekend for our TNSG.
The Tennessee State Guard participated in the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency Spring Auxcom, an event hosted by Tennessee Emergency Management Agency and Williamson County. This event was held in Bell Buckle, TN from 30 April to 2 May 2015. The exercise is for the various auxiliary communications volunteers in the State of TN. This mainly includes TN MARS organizations, and the ARRL ARES. In addition to TEMA, and Williamson County, other such counties throughout the state, Bridgestone Emergency Response Team, the Tennessee Department of Health, the Tennessee Department of Transportation, the Tennessee National Guard, Arnold AF Base, Tennessee State Guard and other such government and non-government agencies, have come together with TN communications volunteers to provide emergency interoperable contingency communications for potential earthquake of the New Madrid Fault.
A student texted her mother about making an A+ on a chemistry test. Her mother replied: “WTF! Now you can relax and enjoy the weekend”. The daughter asked, “Mom, do you know what WTF means?” Mother’s response: Well That’s Fantastic! While we often assume others know what we mean when we use text-speak, jargon or other specialized terminology, sometimes they don’t, or worst yet, it means something entirely different to them. That’s why it is so important to use plain language in emergency situations.

In an actual emergency or large scale exercise, the State Guard may need to interact with the National Guard, Tennessee Emergency Management Agency, the Red Cross, Hospitals, Police, Fire Departments, and many non-government organizations. Over the years, most of these organizations have developed short cuts, like saying MEMS instead of Military Emergency Management Specialist. Within the past year or so we started using NIMS instead of MEMS so that the National Guard will know what we mean. Last week I received an email about CMEs. At first, I had no idea what that meant so I entered those letters into my Web Browser and found over two hundred possible meanings. (In this case, CME stood for coronal mass ejections or a solar storm that may disrupt communication networks). Incidentally, our local EC (Emergency Coordinator) told me about a new SWAT team (Severe Weather Alert Team). See how confusing this could be if you have a law enforcement background.

We assume others know what we mean when we use jargon, and in most cases they probably do, especially if we are members of the same group or organization. However, it’s critical that you consider your audience or the recipients of your communication and use plain language or define the term the first time you use it. Remember, in an emergency, a misunderstood term, could have disastrous consequences.
Texas State Guard conducts annual drill

Van Zandt County has been inundated with the Texas State Guard conducting rescue operations, but it was only a drill. Officials say they are simulating search and rescue missions to prepare for hurricane season.

They use Boy Scouts to play victims of a natural disaster. Somewhere in the woods of Van Zandt County, Boy Scouts playing tornado victims await aid.

Back in Canton, the Texas State Guard has taken over the Van Zandt County Sheriff's Department briefing room. Lt. Colonel Wendell Sadler says all that military is under the county emergency operations coordinator's control in the event of a real emergency.

“If this were an authentic event, we would come in and we would receive guidance from him. We would be here to support him,” Sadler said.

The guard make their way through the woods, looking and calling out for victims who have been instructed to stay put and only respond when they actually see their rescuers.

“They know the basic gist of what's going to happen, but they weren't given any information regarding precisely where,” Sadler revealed.

If the victims were unconscious, they obviously wouldn't be calling out. Command in the control room does their best to coordinate the rescue. They bring their own equipment for several reasons, such as being familiar with their own gear, and just in case local equipment has been knocked out of service.

“We stand ready at a moment's notice and we can operate for 72 hours without outside assistance,” Sadler stated. Some of the troops are conducting real emergency operations in San Marcos, responding to flooding, which shows how important training is.

“We know the events are going to happen. It's not a matter of if, but when,” Sadler added. As they find the first few mock tornado victims, it becomes obvious the Texas State Guard are doing their best to step in when situations become overwhelming. The 19th Regiment with the first, second and third battalions will continue training through the weekend, ending with a thank you ceremony for local officials.

Please see video at this link:
At the request of Gov. Greg Abbott, through the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), approximately 100 citizen-soldiers and airmen with the Texas Military Forces are in support of the severe weather and flooding across Texas. Initial response crews mobilized to North Texas on May 8.

Currently, UH-60 Blackhawks, CH-47 Chinooks and C-130 air crews remain pre-positioned on standby in Austin, Grand Prairie, Houston and College Station to assist with any emergency search and rescue, swift water rescues and emergency evacuations. In addition, members of the 176th Engineer Brigade have been activated to support local, state, and federal agencies with any request for high water ground transportation and evacuation needs.

Members of the Texas State Guard are mobilized to assist with various aspects of logistical support.

“This is what we train for,” said Brig. Gen. Patrick M. Hamilton, commander of domestic operations task force, in a released statement. “This type of operation is not new for Texans, and we’re proud to stand beside our civilian partners, firefighters, first responders and volunteers.”

Texas Military Forces continues to work with TDEM to project additional personnel and equipment requirements as needed should the flooding and storms continue into next week.

“This is Texans helping Texans – neighbors helping neighbors,” Hamilton said. “While we don’t want to have to put our training to the test during a tragedy, our citizen-soldiers remain prepared to help save lives and property, when called.”

The mission of Texas Military Forces is to provide the governor and the president with ready and trained forces in support of the citizens of Texas and state and federal civil/military authorities at home and abroad.

Find more information on Texas Military Forces at txmf.us.
As the field team from UIndy’s Archeology & Forensics Laboratory prepares for its third trip to Texas to help identify the remains of missing migrants, its work is featured in this month’s issue of *Scientific American* magazine.

A package headlined “The Mystery of Case 0425” explores the story of Maria Albetrina Iraheta Guardado of Honduras, a 37-year-old mother of six who is the first person to be identified after being exhumed from a pauper grave in Falfurrias, Texas. Her remains were among hundreds that the UIndy team has exhumed during its past two summer trips to rural Brooks County, where a consortium of universities is assisting local authorities in identifying and repatriating people from many nations who die in the arid ranchlands after crossing the U.S. border.

Quoted extensively in the piece is team leader Dr. Krista Latham, associate professor of Biology and Anthropology, director of osteology for the Archeology & Forensics Lab and director of the Molecular Anthropology Laboratory. The magazine is available for purchase at newsstands and at this link. Latham reflects on Case 0425 in a new entry on the forensics team’s blog.

By now, most of the unidentified remains in Sacred Heart Burial Park have been exhumed and are awaiting further analysis at the participating universities. On this upcoming trip from June 8 to 20, the UIndy team is returning at the request of the Brooks County Sheriff’s Office to teach members of the Texas State Guard how properly to recover bodies, an ongoing challenge.
Operation Lone Star brings free health services to Valley

As a mother of three children Maria Martinez said she finds it difficult to make time for herself. However, she knew she had to make it a priority to receive a free health screenings during the annual Operation Lone Star event at Edward Manzano Middle School in Brownsville Monday morning.

Operation Lone Star brings a variety of medical care to local residents at no charge during the annual week-long event hosted by several local agencies including the Cameron and Hidalgo County Health and Human Services Departments, The Texas Military Forces and the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Operation Lone Star serves as an emergency preparedness exercise in the event of a major disaster. It is taking place this week at several Rio Grande Valley locations and in Laredo.

Emergency physician and Texas State Guard Col. Marco Coppola said 250 members of the Texas Military Forces had volunteered for the mission. According to Coppola, the volunteers used their own medical training to provide comprehensive physical exams and dental, hearing, and vision services to those in need.

“I am an emergency physician but for this week, I am a primary care physician. We each bring our own special expertise to Operation Lone Star,” Coppola said.
Service in the Texas State Guard

The Texas Army National Guard and the Texas State Guard are two of the three branches of service that make up the Texas Military Forces, all of which answer to Abbott, but that’s about where their similarities end. The National Defense Act Amendments of 1933 separated the National Guard from the 23 state militias, known as State Defense Forces, that are currently active. The NDAA of 1933 also made it possible for National Guard units to be called upon for federal service in a time of need.

The Texas State Guard, rooted in Stephen F. Austin’s militia, got its official name in 1941, when the Texas legislature authorized the governor to call a militia “at any time that the National Guard is in active Federal service.” It banded and disbanded as needed, but was formally reorganized in its current form in 1993.

State Defense Forces like the Texas State Guard may be loosely related to the National Guard Bureau, but do not have to follow the same rigid guidelines as those who sign up for National Guard. According to the Public Affairs Office of the Texas Military Forces, the qualifications for joining the TSG include being a healthy resident of Texas for at least 180 days; being between the ages of 18 and 70; having a valid Texas driver's license; and being able to pass a criminal background check. If those standards appear rather light, it’s because they are.

The Texas Army National Guard, or TANG, on the other hand, faces the same strict level of recruitment, physical fitness, aptitude test scores and citizenship requirements as do all members of the regular Army. The upside is that members of the TANG still get a majority of the same benefits for just giving their state one weekend a month and two weeks a year. The risk is the possibility of deployment into a warzone, just like that of the regular and reserve Army.

Members of the State Guard are not paid unless they are activated by the governor for an emergency operation, but they do get some sweet side perks. A free Texas concealed handgun license, a super combo hunting and fishing license, specially marked license plate eligibility, a waiver of toll road fees and paid military leave for state employees are among the benefits of being part of Abbott's personal army. When they do get called up, State Guard members are paid a daily stipend of $121, regardless of rank. The pay they would receive for a monthlong activation would almost equal the pay for all but the most senior enlisted in the TANG.

The last state budget had set the cost of the Texas State Guard at $495,000. Click the link to see the State General Appropriations Act.
Virginia Defense Force's Mobile Communications Platform

On Wednesday, 17 June, the Virginia Defense Force’s (VDF) Mobile Communications Platform (MCP) of the 3rd Regiment stationed at the Cherry-Beasley Readiness Center, Winchester, Virginia successfully made its inaugural contact with the SHAred RESources (SHARES) High Frequency (HF) Radio Network. The SHARES HF Radio Network, administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, provides an additional means for Federal, State, tribal, local, and non-governmental organizations with an emergency management mission to transmit critical messages to coordinate operations even when traditional means of communicating via landlines and cellphones are degraded or destroyed.

The 3rd REGT MCP was manned by 2LT Easton, SPCs Barr and Williams and PV2 Barr. LTC Murdock, VDF G-6, was also present to observe the operations of the MCP in making this first ever voice contact with the FEMA Region III SHARES radio net control station. The VDF, under the Virginia Department of the Military Affairs (DMA), is the first state defense force to join this network of more than 1,400 HF radio stations representing over 100 Federal, State, and non-governmental organizations located in all states, the District of Columbia, and overseas.

The VDF, via its fixed and mobile HF stations, now adds this voice capability as a complement to its data mode, i.e., ability to pass email messages via the HF radio-to-INTERNET gateways provided as part of the Department of Defense’s Military Auxiliary Radio Systems (MARS) infrastructure. Both of these organic VDF capabilities provide the DMA with additional modes of operation in responding to a variety of emergency response scenarios.

With this inaugural contact, the VDF will now participate in monthly SHARES net calls and exercises. The VDF will also continue to expand its operational range on SHARES by adding new digital methods of communication.
VDF Participation in the 2015 ARRL Field Day

Running north to south along the length of the Shenandoah Valley from Thursday to Sunday of this past weekend, members of the Virginia Defense Force (VDF) participated in the 2015 American Radio Relay League (ARRL) Field Day. Members of the VDF’s 3rd Regiment headquartered in Winchester and the 4th Regiment headquartered in Lynchburg deployed their Mobile Communication Platforms (MCPs) to various field sites. The ARRL, a non-profit national association representing the amateur radio community, sponsors in late June its annual “field day” for licensed operators across the U.S. and Canada. This venue provided the amateur radio community an opportunity to exercise emergency communication response skills and capabilities under less than optimal conditions from remote and austere sites.

This was the first year that VDF communication elements officially participated in the ARRL Field Day. VDF MCPs moved out early from their home stations to designated sites and deployed in various operational configurations using a variety of antennas to support short distance, i.e., a few 100s of miles, and long-haul communication paths, i.e., thousands of miles. The VDF stations initiated contact on predetermined High Frequency (HF) radio channels with each other to validate operational status. With many of the VDF personnel being FCC-licensed amateur radio operators, they then tuned to authorized amateur HF frequencies to establish voice and data contact with other radio stations in the Commonwealth and across the Nation, to include reaching Hawaii. This allowed VDF communications personnel to test their proficiency in exercising long-haul radio links, particularly under variable weather and radio propagation conditions. Under the supervision of these licensed VDF personnel, non-licensed VDF personnel were also able to learn new techniques in maximizing the capabilities of VDF radio assets.

Joining the VDF at these various field sites were other radio enthusiasts, local emergency management officials, first responders, and even Boy Scouts learning radio fundamentals. VDF members proudly displayed their radio equipment and antenna arrays. In the process, their passion for community service and radio communications was shared with the other Field Day participants. Whether VDF personnel or licensed amateurs operators, both train to provide life-saving communications when primary paths are either severely degraded or no longer available.

The VDF will participate in the next major AARL training event in October 2015 when it supports the national-level Simulated Emergency Test (SET) to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in emergency preparedness and communications with local communities.
First Ever State Defense Force Multi-State COMMEX:

The Virginia Defense Force’s Winchester-based 3rd Regiment and Lynchburg-based 4th Regiment used high frequency (HF) radios in their Mobile Command Posts (MCP) to participate in the Virginia Defense Force sponsored multi-state communications exercise on July 18, 2015. State defense forces that participated in the exercise were: Virginia, Tennessee, Indiana, Texas and California. The VDF’s 3rd Regiment successfully communicated from Madison County via strong signal connections with the Indiana Guard Reserve and Tennessee State Guard. Members of the 3rd Regiment also assisted the Madison County Sheriff and Parks and Recreation Department with access control at the Madison County Fair. The VDF’s 4th Regiment set up two different types of field deployable antenna systems (NVIS and Long Wire) from the Lynchburg armory, and successfully communicated via strong signal connections with the Tennessee State Guard and established weak signal connections with California State Military Reserve. The exercise was designed to test the VDF’s ability to communicate if there was an incident that degraded systems like mobile phone networks. Providing interoperable communications is one of the many different missions sets the VDF provides as the all-volunteer auxiliary to the Virginia National Guard. There are already plans to conduct a similar exercise in November 2015 with additional states participating. Learn more about the Virginia Defense Force at http://www.vdf.virginia.gov/
Evergreen Tremor 2015

The Washington State Guard recently assisted the Washington National Guard with HF communications setup and UHF data/voice communications via amateur band repeater operations. This comm support was during Evergreen Tremor 2015, an earthquake response exercise hosted by the Washington Military Department. The WSG also provided a GIIEP team and LNOs during the exercise. The Adjutant General and his staff were very grateful and impressed by the expertise and professionalism demonstrated by participating WSG members. This exercise was preparation for the 2016 National Level Exercise Cascadia Rising.
2015 Awards Recipients

Award Recipients:

Soldier of the Year: Maryland
NCO of the Year: Maryland
Soldier of the Year: Tennessee

Stipend Recipients:

Alaska
Massachusetts
South Carolina

Helga Polsey (SFC)
Eric Sigillo (1LT)
Donald Hayes (MAJ)
2015 Awards Recipients:

Scholarship Recipients:

Alaska: Nancy Means
California: Alec Velazquez, Hannah Rabitoy, Tyler Townsend
South Carolina: Emily Katherine Dalton
Tennessee: Alyssa Lee Anne Frennier, Christin Mahone, Rhonda Shinn, Byron Parmely, Adam Poncher
Texas: Adam Poncher
Burial Benefits for U.S. Armed Forces
Retirees & Veterans

Although most Retirees don’t think about what happens upon their death, preparing in advance provides peace of mind knowing that arrangements have been made. Normally the question is asked after the passing of a retired Soldier, when there is a tremendous amount of pressure on the survivor. Planning in advance can simplify things and take some of the pressure and decision making requirements from the survivor, allowing them to grieve in their own way, without as many distractions.

Burial benefits available include a gravesite in any of the 131 national cemeteries with available space, which are operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs’ National Cemetery Administration, www.cem.va.gov/burial_benefits/index.asp.

Additional benefits include opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a government headstone or marker, a burial flag, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate, all at no cost to the Family. Some Veterans may also be eligible for burial allowances. Cremated remains are buried or inurned in national cemeteries in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains. Please note, there is not a VA National Cemetery in every state, so check the VA website for specific information at www.cem.va.gov/cem/cems/listcem.asp. Many states have established state veterans cemeteries. Eligibility is similar to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemeteries, but may include residency requirements and these are run solely by the states. You can also find links to state run cemeteries on the website listed above.

Burial benefits that are available for Spouses and dependents buried in a national cemetery include burial with the Veteran, perpetual care, and the Spouse or dependents’ name and date of birth and death will be inscribed on the Veteran's headstone, at no cost to the Family. Eligible Spouses and dependents may be buried here, even if they predecease the Veteran.

Generally speaking, any Veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable may be buried in a VA National Cemetery. With certain exceptions, service beginning after September 7, 1980, as an enlisted person, and service after October 16, 1981, as an officer, must be for a minimum of 24 continuous months or the full period for which the person was called to active duty (as in the case of a Reservist called to active duty for a limited duration). Undesirable, bad conduct, and any other type of discharge other than honorable may or may not qualify the individual for Veterans’ benefits, depending upon a determination made by a VA Regional Office. Cases presenting multiple discharges of varying character are also referred for adjudication to a VA Regional Office. A copy of DD Form 214, Copy 2 or Copy 4 are required to prove service. If you do not have a copy, use this link to the National Archives to request a copy www.archives.gov, or contact them at (866) 272-6272.
Annual Conference
Hanover, Maryland

29 September 2015  Deadline to Register for Conference!!!!
Click here to Register

Guest Speaker ADM Michael Rogers,
Commander,  U.S. Cyber Command

At the SGAUS Annual General Conference

30 OCT to 1 NOV 2015
Unless you keep close track of obscure holidays and observances, you probably didn’t know that August is “What Will Be Your Legacy? Month.” Still, you might want to use this particular month as a useful reminder to take action on what could be one of your most important financial goals: leaving meaningful legacy.

A legacy isn’t simply a document or a bunch of numbers — it’s what you will be remembered for, and what you have left behind that will be remembered. It’s essentially your chance to contribute positively to the future, whether that means providing financial resources for the next generation, helping those charitable organizations whose work you support, or a combination of both. To create your legacy, you’ll need to do some planning. And you can start by asking yourself a couple of key questions:

**What are your goals?**

When you think about leaving a legacy, what comes to mind? First and foremost, you may well want to leave enough money to help your own grown children meet their financial goals. After that, you probably have other things you’d like to accomplish. Perhaps you want to provide resources for your grandchildren to attend college? Or setup a scholarship at your own alma mater? Give financial support to a cultural, social, religious or scientific group? By thinking about your goals and putting them on paper, even in an informal sense, you’ll be taking the important first step in leaving the legacy you desire.

**How can you turn your goals into reality?**

If you don’t take some concrete steps, your legacy just won’t materialize. And the most important step you need to take is to create a comprehensive estate plan. Your estate plan can be quite involved, because it may involve several legal documents, such as a will, living trust, health care power of attorney, and so on. In creating these materials, you will need to work with your legal and tax advisors because estate planning is definitely not a “do-it-yourself” endeavor. You probably shouldn’t wait until you are deep into retirement to take action on your estate plan because developing the necessary documents and arrangements can take a fair amount of time — and you’ll want to make these preparations when you’re in good mental and physical health. Also, the longer you wait to set up your estate plan, the less likely it will be that you’ve communicated your wishes clearly to your family members, who may end up unsure about what you want and what their roles are in carrying out your plans — and that’s an outcome you certainly don’t want to see. In fact, clear communications are essential to developing a successful estate plan. You should not only tell your family members — and anyone else affected by your estate plan — what you are thinking of doing but also inform them about the professionals with whom you are working and the locations in which you are storing any vital documents, such as your will. By identifying your goals, working with the appropriate professionals to create an effective estate plan, and communicating regularly with your family members and other “key players” in your life, you can go a long way toward leaving the legacy you desire. So, do what it takes to launch that legacy.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.*

Edward Jones, its employees and financial advisors are not estate planners and cannot provide tax or legal advice. You should consult your estate-planning attorney or qualified tax advisor regarding your situation.
Avoid Problems by Updating Beneficiary Designations

Submitted by MAJ Starr

Like many people, you might not particularly enjoy thinking about your estate plans, but such planning is necessary to make sure your assets go where you want them to go. And it’s just as important to regularly review your plans with your tax, legal and financial professionals in case any changes are needed. For instance, some of your wishes expressed in your will may be overridden by beneficiary designations you filled out years ago. If these designations become outdated, your assets could be passed to those you didn’t intend.

You might be surprised at how many of your financial assets and legal documents have beneficiary designations tied to them. If you have an IRA, a 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan, a life insurance policy, an annuity, a transfer-on-death (TOD) arrangement, or any of a variety of other assets or accounts, you almost certainly named a beneficiary. And this beneficiary designation offers a simple, direct and efficient way to get assets in the hands of your loved ones who survive you.

However, as time goes by, you may experience many changes in your life — and when your life changes, your beneficiary designations may need to follow. But if you are like many people, you might forget to update these designations after a marriage, divorce or other change in your family situation. And because the beneficiary designation is a legally binding document, the asset will go to the person you once named as a beneficiary, regardless of your current relationship status.

It really doesn’t take much effort to look over your accounts and legal arrangements to ensure that your beneficiary designations are current — and if they aren’t, it’s pretty easy to change them. In fact, for some financial accounts, you may be able to update the beneficiary designations online. In any case, plan on reviewing your beneficiary designations regularly, but especially when you experience a change in your life.

Here’s one more thing to keep in mind: Make sure your current beneficiaries are informed that they will eventually be receiving your 401(k), IRA, life insurance proceeds or other assets that require a beneficiary designation. This advance knowledge may help your loved ones as they plan and maintain their own financial and investment strategies.

Although it’s clearly important for you to update your beneficiary designations and to communicate your actions, you will still need to attend to other areas of your estate planning, such as providing care for minor children or dependents, deciding who you want to receive specific items that do not carry a beneficiary designation, naming someone to manage your affairs should you become incapacitated, and specifying the control you wish your beneficiaries to have over their inheritance. These are just a few examples of estate-planning considerations.

Because everyone’s situation is different, you will need to consult with your legal advisor to determine the level of estate planning you require. As we’ve seen, updating your beneficiary is one piece of the puzzle — but to leave the legacy you desire, you’ve got to complete the picture.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.
Although we are in the later stages of the summer season, fall is right around the corner and it is best to keep in mind that fall driving can be unpredictable because of weather changes and the end of daylight saving time. To be safe and aware on the roads this fall, follow these guidelines:

**Watch out for leaves:** Children love to play in piles of leaves. Use extra caution where leaves are piled at curbside. Always drive carefully making sure to be aware of poor visibility during certain weather conditions and times of the day. Keep a safe distance from the car in front of you. Wet roads make it more difficult to stop. Use your dimmed headlights in bad weather with decreased visibility. Once leaves become wet, they can present slippery and dangerous driving conditions. Be sure to watch for patches of wet leaves on the road or on road lines. Dry leaves can also present a problem to your vehicle. Avoid parking your vehicle near leaf piles to prevent fires that could start from your vehicle's catalytic converter.

**Stay alert on the road:** The end of daylight saving time means reduced visibility on the roads, which can create unfamiliar driving conditions. Even on familiar roads, it's important that motorists use additional caution and adjust their driving habits to watch for pedestrians, cyclists and other roadway users who will be less visible, especially during the first week of the change.

**Check your tire pressure:** With frequent weather and temperature changes, tires can expand and contract, causing them to lose air pressure. Make sure tires are properly inflated and have plenty of tread.

**Avoid sun glare:** With the change in time you may need to adjust to the different morning or late afternoon glare from the sun. The glare can cause reflections off car windows and hoods and decrease your visibility. Have a good pair of sunglasses readily available to counter daytime glare, and consider lenses with anti-reflective coating to reduce glare when night driving can't be avoided.

**Plan ahead for wet conditions:** Fall often brings rainfall, which can decrease visibility and cause hydroplaning. Make sure your windshield wipers are in good working condition. If driving on a road with excess water, slow down and avoid sudden movements with the steering wheel or brake pedal. If you feel like you're floating, steer straight and gently release the gas pedal until you feel the tires make contact with the road surface. In an especially heavy downpour you may want to pull off the road until it's safe to continue.
Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors: Change the batteries in your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors when you turn back your clocks for Daylight Saving Time. Make sure to check the alarms with the new batteries installed. Check and replace any home fire extinguishers that have expired.

**General Safety:** Use extra caution when climbing ladders for fall jobs such as cleaning gutters or hanging holiday decorations. Shoes or boots may be wet causing you to slip as you climb the ladder. Keep your driveway and walkway clear of falling leaves. They get very slippery when they are wet. Always wear work gloves when doing outside yard work.

**General Fire Safety:**

- **Service Your Furnace** - Before the cold autumn and winter weather sets in, be sure to call your heating and cooling company to service your furnace. A specialist should inspect the furnace to make sure everything is in working order and that there are no leaks.

- **Use Fireplaces Safely** - Keep that fire in its proper place by using a fireplace screen to keep sparks from flying out of the fireplace. Never leave a burning fire unattended, and make sure a fire in a fireplace is completely out before going to bed.

- **Use Caution with Space Heaters** - A space heater can be an effective way to warm up a chilly room, but it's essential that you read the instructions on the unit before you use it. If your space heater requires venting, make sure you have vented it to the outdoors. Never use your stove or oven to heat your home; only use space heaters that are approved for this purpose. Always allow at least three feet of empty area around space heaters.

- **Reconsider Leaf Burning** - There are medical reports that state burning leaves can produce dangerous and cancer-causing chemicals and urges homeowners to avoid disposing of leaves this way. If you decide to burn leaves, wear a protective mask. Burning leaves should only be attempted far away from a house or other structures on a homeowner's property. Always check the weather forecast before starting to burn leaves. This activity should not be attempted in windy conditions.