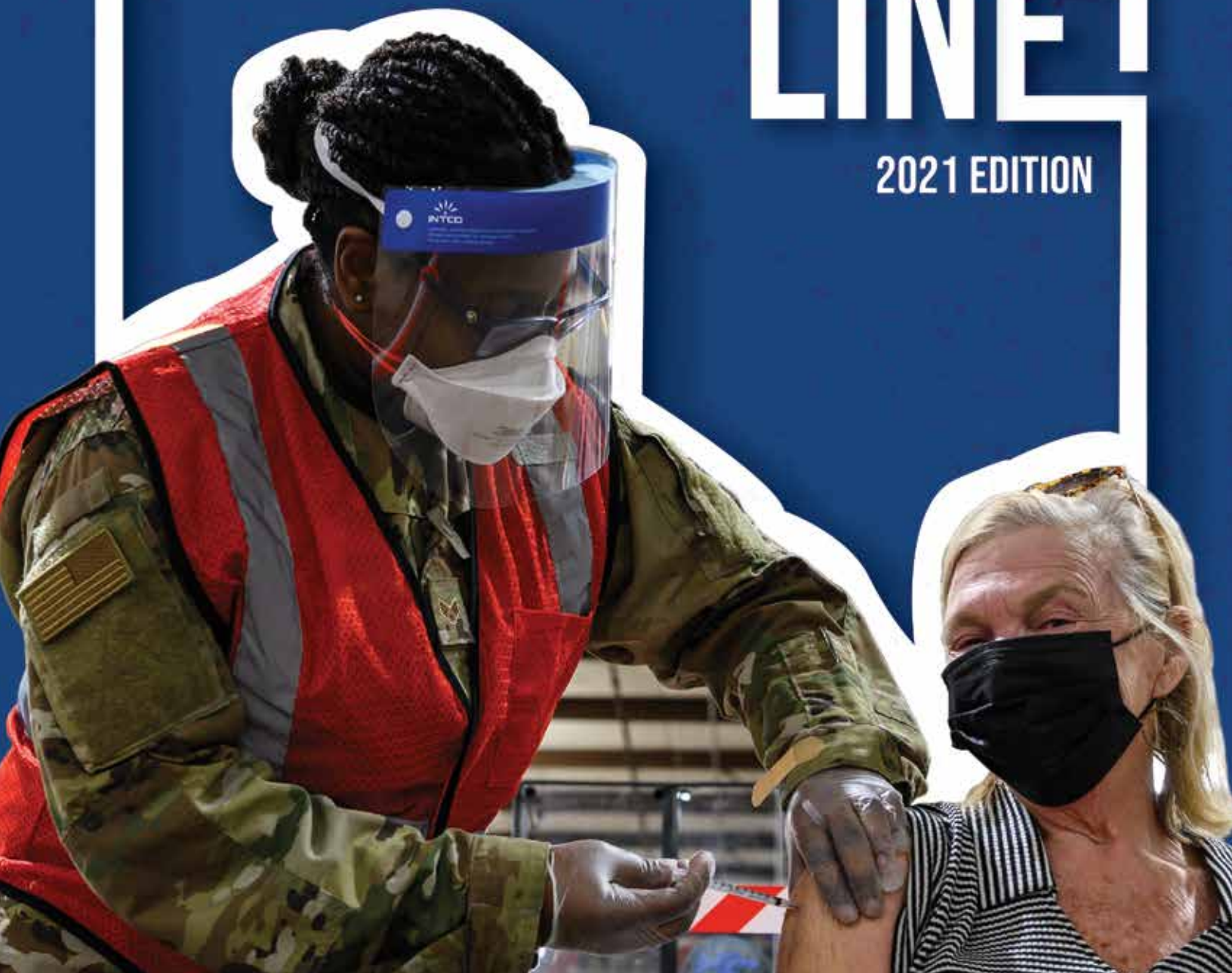
THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE MARYLAND NATIONAL GUARD

THE MARYLAND LINE

2021 EDITION



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IN THIS TOGETHER

DEPARTMENT

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AUGUST 3, 2021

BY SPC. TOM LAMB

ALWAYS READY

MDNG CONTINUES TO SUPPORT ITS COMMUNITIES

Early in January 2021, the Maryland National Guard received orders from Gov. Larry Hogan to help protect Marylanders in the fight against COVID-19 and to protect the U.S. Capitol Complex in Washington, D.C., in the wake of the Capitol riot. These missions became some of the most important domestic operations the MDNG has engaged in this millennium, and the timely, professional response coordinated between dozens of agencies has been nationally recognized.

Let's first recount the Capitol response mission. The MDNG provided 800 troops to aid in Capitol security and with the majority of these troops coming from units of the 58th Troop Comand. Joint training and operations with the U.S. Capitol Police provided the U.S. Capitol Complex with the security needed to protect the democratic process and ensure a peaceful transfer of power.

The barriers erected during that month came down in July, after the need for National Guard troops in Washington, D.C., subsided.

While our Soldiers were protecting the Capitol, MDNG Soldiers, Airmen and Maryland Defense Force members were working on a different mission: vaccinating Marylanders.

Mobile Vaccination Support Teams were groups of 10-30 service members with specialties in supply, logistics, medicine, and communications. Their primary mission was to bring vaccines to groups of people who need them. Their efforts in January were limited by the supply of vaccines and personnel, but the MVSTs have been crucial to getting vaccines to the people who need them the most.

"Once again, we're breaking new ground in the fight against COVID-19," Army Maj. Gen. Timothy E. Gowen, the adjutant general for Maryland, said. "Last year it was helping to protect the most vulnerable at nursing homes. Now, we're helping get the vaccine to the people who need it most. Neither of these are traditional military missions, and it really shows the versatility of our Citizen-Soldiers and Citizen-Airmen that they can pivot so quickly to tackle new missions."

In January, the MVSTs consisted of 375 MDNG Soldiers and Airmen and they provided over 6,000 immunizations. The Hon. John E. Whitley, the acting Secretary of the Army, visited Maryland Army National Guard Soldiers supporting operations at a drive-thru COVID-19 vaccination site located at Regency Furniture Stadium in Waldorf, Maryland.

"This is my first site visit to a vaccination facility in Maryland, and I'm very impressed with the operations and the dedication displayed by the Soldiers and Airmen," said Whitley. "This is a critically important mission for our nation and for Maryland. These service members are a great reflection of the Army's value of selfless service as they support their communities in the fight against COVID-19."

One month after the first MVSTs started operations, Maryland's first mass vaccination site opened at Six Flags America in Bowie, Maryland, on Feb. 6, 2021. At its peak, this site administered over 6,000 doses of vaccine a day without anyone leaving their cars. It was supported by approximately 115 Soldiers from Task Force 291, the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade and 58th Troop Command, with many being from 1st Battalion, 175th Infantry Regiment.

In addition to the Six Flags America mass vaccination site, the National Guard supported mass vaccination sites at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore, Regency Stadium in Bowie, Hagerstown Premium Outlets in Hagerstown, and Wicomico Civic Center in Salisbury.

"We're providing a vital service for the state by assisting Maryland and helping the community get their vaccinations," said U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Alonzo Amison, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Bowie mass vaccination site and a member of the 110th Information Operations Battalion. "We are supporting through providing traffic control, making sure civilians are getting into the correct positions, assisting with administering vaccinations, and making sure that safety is paramount while residents go through the experience of getting their vaccination."

By April 3, 2021, the MDNG had administered over 100,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, adding to the collective Maryland effort since the mission began in January 2021. By that time, over 1,000 Soldiers and Airmen were supporting different aspects of the vaccination mission.

"The Maryland National Guard has achieved this milestone – nearly five percent of all vaccinations administered across the entire state – with about 100 activated vaccinators," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Benjamin Posil, MDNG liaison for the Maryland Department of Health. "[It] is truly a testament to the competence and dedication of our personnel."

By June 2021, mass vaccination sites were beginning to close due to lack of demand. Through the State Partnership Program, the MDNG was still able to help in the fight against COVID-19 by collaborating with the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AFBiH) about best practices for establishing and operating drive-thru and mobile vaccination sites.

"[The AFBiH] didn't have a chance until now to do vaccinations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are learning how [the MDNG] manages the whole situation," said 2nd Lt. Anja Rula, an AFBiH medical professional. "I like the drive-thru vaccination idea because it is easy and it doesn't take a lot of time to do it. This gives us an idea of what we should do in our country."

The MDNG continues to support the state through the Vaccine Equity Task Force, created to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines in Maryland and led by Brig. Gen. Janeen Birckhead, assistant adjutant general for the Maryland Army National Guard.

"The mission of the Vaccine Equity Task Force is to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines across Maryland," said Birckhead. "The task force has and will continue to focus on education in different communities. Bringing materials in different languages, having trusted voices go out and have conversations with people on the street, and using different tools to communicate the importance of taking the vaccine."

ALWAYS THERE

HOLDING THE

Gov. Hogan announces steps to help vaccinate the public by utilizing Maryland National Guard mobile vaccination support teams

JAN 5

JAN 6

Gov. Hogan sends troops to D.C. to assist in securing the U.S. Capitol. Maryland National Guard Soldiers return home on January 30

JAN 18

Soldiers and Airmen support Gov. Hogan's COVID-19 vaccination initiative by providing logistical and medical support to the Maryland Department of Health

Members of the 58th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade and the 629th Military Intelligence Battalion return from an Afghanistan deployment

M&T Bank Stadium opened as a mass vaccination site where 175th Wing Airmen are supporting COVID-19 vaccination efforts

FEB 9

FEB 25

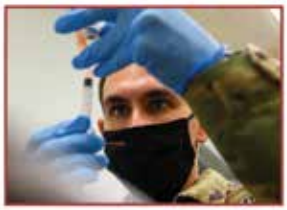
The paratroopers of B. Co., 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne), train as they await mobilization to Afghanistan to relieve other Soldiers who are currently there on duty

FEB 26

Since the start of the mission to support statewide COVID-19 vaccination efforts, the Maryland National Guard has administered more than 100,000 vaccines

The FEMA mass vaccination site at the Greenbelt Metro Station, led by U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Adam Flasch, administers 116,000 total doses over an eight-week period

APR 3



APR 6

Faith-based leaders who assisted in the battle against COVID-19 were recognized at the M&T Bank Stadium mass vaccination site

APR 7

LINE 2021

FEB 3

The 1729th Support Maintenance Company, work with the Allegany County Health Department to administer COVID-19 self-testing to local citizens, at the Allegany County Fairgrounds

FEB 5

Hon. John E. Whitley, the acting Secretary of the Army, visited Maryland National Guard Soldiers at a drive-thru COVID-19 vaccination site in Waldorf, Maryland

FEB 6

Maryland's first mass COVID-19 vaccination site at Six Flags America, Bowie, Maryland, opened, supported by the Maryland National Guard

MAR 1

The Maryland National Guard and Maryland Defense Force saved two historic murals created during World War II that were destined for the landfill

MAR 19

The Maryland National Guard repaired mobile clinics provided by the University of Maryland School of Nursing for deployment to hard-to-reach areas of Maryland

MAR 25

The Maryland National Guard supports the state's fifth mass vaccination site at the Wicomico Youth and Civic Center in Salisbury, Maryland

APR 8

The 175th Wing's A-10C Thunderbolt II aircraft perform a flyover of the Baltimore Orioles Opening Day at Camden Yards, Baltimore

APR 10

"This is what I signed up for in the National Guard, to help out as much as I can. Being so close to home, it really is personal to me to help out friends and family," said Spc. Hugo Gomez, who supported the mass vaccination site in Hagerstown, Maryland

APR 27

Deployed members of the 29th Military Police Company in Kosovo, participated in an active shooter, mass casualty training

Members of the 32nd Civil Support Team partnered with the Federal Bureau of Investigation to conduct training to detect and mitigate threats posed by simulated weapons of mass destruction

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass visited 175th Wing Airmen supporting the COVID-19 mass vaccination site at M&T Bank Stadium where she applauded their efforts to ensure Marylanders have access to the vaccine

APR 28

APR 29

MAY 4

Vice President Kamala Harris visited the M&T Bank Stadium mass vaccination site in Baltimore to applaud the hard work of the 175th Wing, Maryland National Guard, and University of Maryland Medical Center's members supporting the fight against COVID-19

Command Sgt. Maj. James Nugent, command sergeant major of the Maryland Army National Guard, served as grand marshal and keynote speaker in Sharpsburg's 154th Memorial Day parade

Members of the Maryland National Guard Joint Staff brushed up on their combat skills by qualifying on the SIG Sauer M17 handgun at H Steven Blum Military Reservation, Glen Arm, Maryland

MAY 31

JUNE 1

Members of the Maryland Medical Detachment administered COVID-19 vaccines to the local community by Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore

JUNE 7

The last of Maryland's five mass vaccination sites close down. The Maryland National Guard helped support, staff, and run each site

JULY 4

The 229th Maryland Army National Guard Band participated in Towson's 4th of July parade and the 104th Fighter Squadron, Maryland National Guard, performed a flyover

JULY 10

JULY 14

175th Wing firefighters joined units from Tennessee, California, Arkansas and Michigan in the National Guard Patriot Exercise, a training exercise designed for civilian emergency management and responders to work with military entities during disasters

ALWAYS IN

Congratulations to Sgt. James V. McGill who won the Region II Best Warrior Competition as the NCO of the year. Big thanks to McGill and Spc. Richard S. Granke for representing the Maryland National Guard in this year's competition.

MAY 8

Members of the 175th Cyberspace Operations Group participated in Southern Strike 21, a large-scale conventional and special operations exercise hosted by the Mississippi National Guard

MAY 14

MAY 15

Maryland National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Fort Belvoir-based 29th Infantry Division officially begin federal active duty with a casing of the colors ceremony May 15, 2021, in Bowling Green, Virginia, and they will uncase the colors when they arrive in the Middle East

The 175th Wing celebrated National Police Week with a law enforcement exposition held by the 175th Security Forces Squadron and Baltimore County Police Department. The day's activites included canine and taser demonstrations, civil disturbance operations and a dunk tank

JUNE 19

Four A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft from the 175th Wing participated in the Ocean City Air Show in Ocean City, Maryland

JUNE 28

JULY 1

Maryland National Guard personnel worked with the Maryland Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team to conduct helicopter rescue training used during natural disasters and other emergencies

Maryland National Guard members were given a Governor's citation from the Maryland Board of Public Works for their unwavering service to the state of Maryland throughout the COVID-19 pandemic

JULY 24

JULY 28

Sgt. James V. McGill represented the Maryland National Guard at the National Best Warrior Competition hosted by the Arizona National Guard

TO THE FUTURE

This year has been, and continues to be, challenging, but it has also demonstrated the tenacity and compassionate of Maryland citizens. It is why the Maryland National Guard proudly serves this great state and the people who make it home

THIS TOGETHER

TOGETHER

TO DEFEAT COVID-19

MARCH 17, 2021

BY SGT. ARCADIA HAMMACK

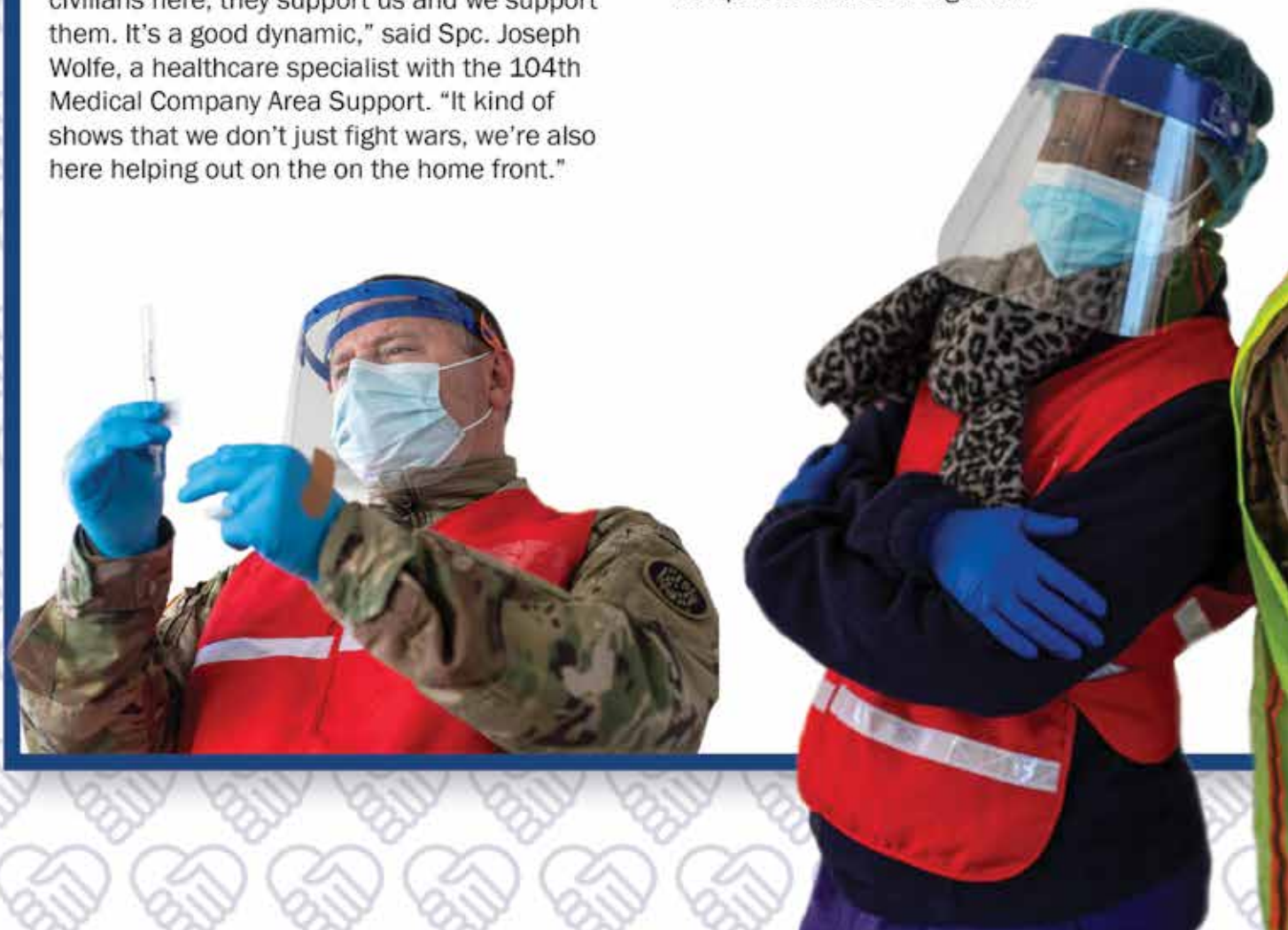
More than 115 Maryland Army National Guard Soldiers from Task Force 291, 58th Troop Command, and 29th Combat Aviation Brigade provided direct support to county health departments in Maryland to help accelerate the COVID-19 vaccination efforts at the Six Flags Mass Vaccination Site in Bowie, Maryland, beginning on Feb. 3, 2021.

In partnership with the Maryland Department of Health and Maxim Healthcare Services, the teams were able to vaccinate 4,000 Marylanders in one day for the first time on March 5, 2021, with a plan to eventually vaccinate up to 6,000 Marylanders a day.

"It's awesome working with the civilians here, they support us and we support them. It's a good dynamic," said Spc. Joseph Wolfe, a healthcare specialist with the 104th Medical Company Area Support. "It kind of shows that we don't just fight wars, we're also here helping out on the on the home front."

At the mass vaccination site, there are more than 200 MHS nurses, MDH contractors, and Guard members working each day, getting as many Marylanders vaccinated as possible.

"This crisis has been weighing heavy on a lot of people, mentally and physically, so it feels really good to be able to help with the solution," said Ariana Snyder, a nurse with MHS. "It's been fun just to see how the Guard operates, and then see how we operate and do it together."



Four white tents make up the vaccination site. Each tent has two vehicle lanes, and there are two or three stations in each lane. In each tent, there are approximately 8-14 nurse contractors and two to four Guard members, with the rest of the Service members assisting with screening patients, observing patients after receiving the vaccine, and providing traffic control.

"We are here to make sure the patients are safe while they're here waiting, as well as when they go to leave," said Spc. Damon Dallas, a traffic guide and observer at the vaccination site assigned to Task Force 291.

The combined team of MDH, Maxim Healthcare Services, and the Maryland National Guard, have been able to work together to help protect their community against the virus.

"They have been very grateful," said Sgt. Michael Conlon, a healthcare specialist with the 104th MCAS. "And we're happy to be here."

In addition to the Six Flags site, the Maryland National Guard is helping Marylanders to a receive their vaccine at the Baltimore Convention Center and M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore, along with the Mobile Vaccination Support teams at local health department vaccination.

"I want to thank the state of Maryland, Maxim Healthcare Services, and the National Guard," said Snyder. "The structure is amazing here and I want to thank everybody just coming together."

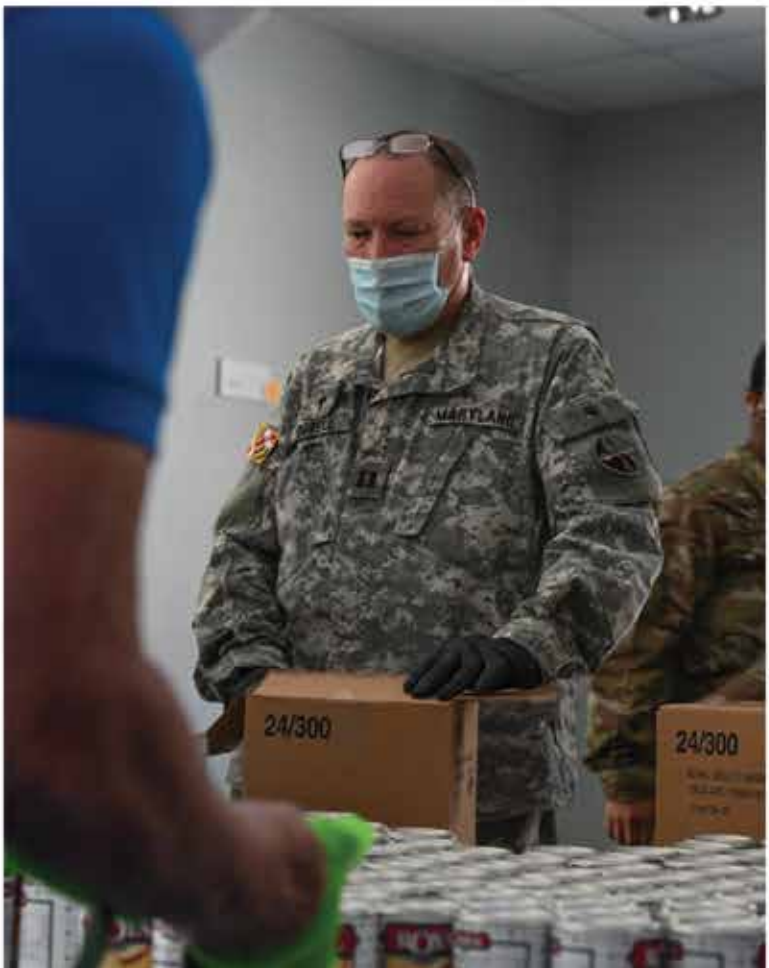
DEFENSE FORCE
PLAYS IMPORTANT ROLE

FEBRUARY 10, 2021 BY MAJ. (MD) STEPHEN RICE

As the Maryland National Guard worked diligently to serve the state and combat the impacts of COVID-19, they were supported by members of the Maryland Defense Force. The MDDF members, who are the state's uniformed volunteer militia branch providing professional and technical support to the Maryland Military Department and the state, supported the MDNG Joint Staff by augmenting the on-going mission.

"The MDDF personnel detailed to the MDNG Joint Staff are playing an important role for the State of Maryland," said Brig. Gen. (MD) Gregory J. Juday, commanding general of the MDDF. "Their integration has facilitated the success of numerous statewide missions and we're proud of the work that they continue to do."

> "I AM FOREVER IN AWE OF THE DEDICATION OF OUR MDDF COMPATRIOTS WHO STAND SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH US AS WE SERVE MARYLAND."
>
> -U.S. ARMY COL. CHARLES M. BLOMQUIST



One mission was supporting the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Baltimore, where MDDF members and MDNG medical personnel helped veterans get vaccinated. The overall MDDF contingent was led by Lt. Col. (MD) Fred Sanford, who is also the commander of the MDDF Troop Command.

"MDDF personnel, as part of the Joint Staff, have also supported cyber missions, served on the Unclassified Processing Analysis and Dissemination team, and worked as plans and liaison officers," said Sanford. "MDDF personnel bring a lot of skills and training to the Joint Staff at no cost to the state of Maryland."

Since the MDNG's support of the state's battle against the COVID-19 pandemic began in March of 2020, MDDF personnel have served over 2,000 hours as members of the MDNG Joint Staff.

"I am forever in awe of the dedication of our MDDF compatriots who stand shoulder to shoulder with us as we serve Maryland," said U.S. Army Col. Charles M. Blomquist, the chief of staff for the MDNG Joint Staff. "They provide a level of expertise and commitment that makes us proud to serve together whether for a domestic operation like a winter storm or the COVID-19 pandemic."

Established in 1917, the MDDF consists of nearly 200 personnel who perform legal, engineering, finance, medical, chaplain, field support, and ceremonial services for the State of Maryland.

"The MDDF Team is a critical part of our Joint Staff manning," said U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Adam R. Flasch, the director of the Joint Staff. "We simply could not execute the mission at the level or depth we have seen during COVID-19 without them. They are the very embodiment of selfless service."

GUARDSMAN

SPOTLIGHT

1ST LT. LEON CARTER

MEDICAL SERVICE OFFICER

1st Lt. Leon Carter, a medical services officer of the 104th Medical Company Area Support, served Maryland as a vaccine tester in 2020 and worked in mobile vaccination support operations in 2021. Carter joined the Guard as an enlisted Soldier to earn his degree and work in veterinary medicine. Now, as a medical services officer, he leads the platoon he originally enlisted into.

"I get to help Soldiers develop," said Carter. "Even if I'm not the smartest person in the room, with the experience that I have accumulated, I am able to use that experience to help guide and develop younger Soldiers."

STREET NAMED AFTER SOLDIERS AT VACCINATION SITE

APRIL 14, 2021 BY SPC. TOM LAMB

Two Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 175th Infantry Regiment, Maryland Army National Guard, were honored with streets named after them at the Six Flags America vaccination site for their contributions to improve the efficiency of the facility.

1st Lt. Lucas Switts, a Soldier with the 1-175th serving at the Six Flags mass vaccination site, arrived early in the process and got to see the site grow from 2,000 to 4,000 vaccinations per day quickly. There was a desire to conduct more vaccinations, informally named Project 6,000. Unfortunately, an intersection on the site was holding up the process.

The way the site was initially set up, an intersection was used near the exit. Causing traffic to back up onto the highway and slowing down the whole site. It was as much of a safety issue as it was an efficiency issue, said Switts.

"I went on leave for a few days and when I came back Lt. Switts came up to me and said 'I figured it out, we can get rid of the intersection,'" said former site director Jon Durrance. "I said 'show me,' and he brought me outside and it all clicked."

For their hard work, Durrance honored several Soldiers by naming vaccine lanes after them as he moved on to open a new site in Annapolis.

"The Soldiers I honored exemplify the Army Values," said Durrance. "The [Maryland National Guard] has been a great contribution to Maryland's vaccination efforts."

"[I just wanted to] help the state and community that I've been a part of for years and to do my part to alleviate the COVID-19 pandemic," said Staff Sgt. Chad Kuhens, a Soldier attached to the 1-175th Infantry Regiment.

MARYLAND GUARDSMAN SAVES LIVES IN FATAL CAR ACCIDENT

SOLDIER SPOTLIGHT

"IF I SEE SOMEONE IN NEED OF HELP, I'M ALWAYS WILLING. I IMAGINE IF IT WAS ONE OF MY LOVED ONES IN DANGER, I WOULD WANT SOMEBODY TO HELP THEM"

U.S. Army Sgt. Bradley Boucher, a healthcare specialist with the 224th Medical Company, 1297th Support Battalion, Maryland Army National Guard, was on vacation with his girlfriend and her family in Tennessee. While on vacation they took a trip to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Boucher then noticed movement in the trees.

"I thought it was a bear," said Boucher. As he looked closer, he noticed it was actually a bright red Chrysler PT Cruiser at the bottom of the slope, smoking and crushed on one side. While assessing the situation, Boucher saw five individuals injured by the car accident. While he usually carries an emergency kit in his personal car, there was no such gear available at the time. Instead, Boucher used his training as an Army healthcare specialist and firefighter to make do with what he had, after calling 911, two of the people were unable to exit the vehicle on their own. Boucher carried them up the nearly 60-foot-tall embankment and tore strips from their clothing to create bandages and while directing the bystanders to bodily support the two to prevent further injury. After 15 to 20 minutes, first responders arrived on the scene.

AIRMEN RECOGNIZED FOR RESCUING THEIR NEIGHBORS

AIRMEN SPOTLIGHT

"BEING A GUARDSMAN IS A PRIVILEGE. WITH THAT PRIVILEGE COMES THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT AND SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY... AT ANY TIME."

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Charles A. Peacock and Staff Sgt. David M. Burke, both of the 135th Intelligence Squadron, Maryland Air National Guard, received the Air Force Commendation Medal for their heroic acts July 5, 2020. Peacock received a call from a friend in distress describing a giant tree that fell on their garage during a child's birthday party with more than 20 people inside.

Burke was sitting in his living room at home when his neighbor's girlfriend came to his front door frantically asking for help. He immediately called 911. Burke sprang into action and went to his neighbor's home. He saw the downed tree and injured people as well. After assessing the situation, he began comforting the trapped individuals, bringing positivity, and coaching them on breathing techniques until first responders arrived.

Peacock's notification of the same emergency was very different. Peacock received a phone call and immediately rushed to help. Upon his arrival he noticed first responders and an overwhelming number of injured individuals who had open fractures, impalements, lacerations, abrasions and concussions. Peacock ran to get his medical bags and began to assist first responders render aid. Both Peacock and Burke treated about 19 people together.

During the incident, Burke said he wasn't sure if he "was dreaming due to the adrenaline rush, everything was moving so fast," but he maintained a clear and calm state of mind in order to support those who were injured. Burke and Peacock's quick actions using military acquired skills directly impacted the immediate care and treatment of the wounded.

ALWAYS READY TO HELP WHEN NEEDED

*COURTESY PHOTOS SUBMITTED

PORT DAWGS INTEGRAL TO INAUGURATION MISSION SUCCESS

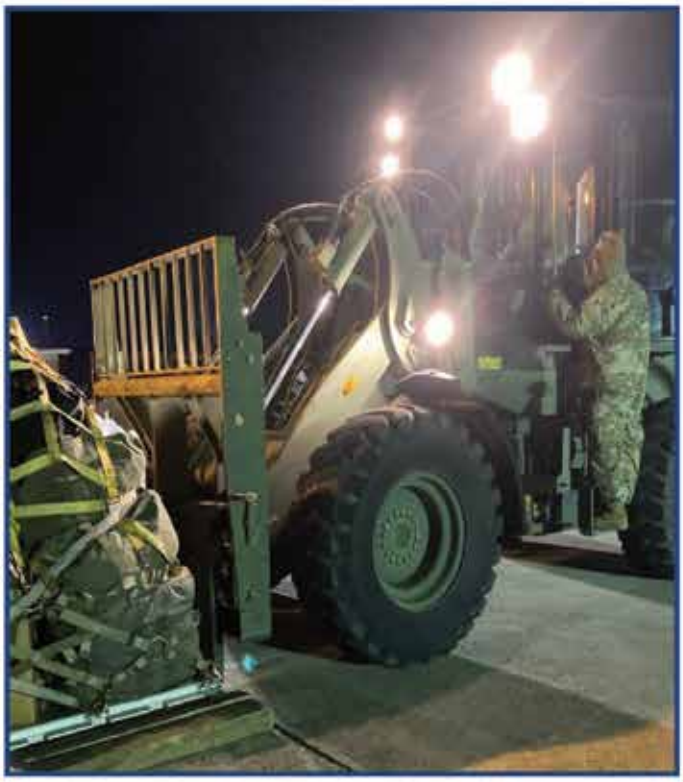
MAY 14, 2021

BY TECH. SGT. ENJOLI SAUNDERS

Airmen of the 175th Logistics Readiness Squadron, Maryland Air National Guard, affectionately known as "Port Dawgs," were part of a key logistical mission for the National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who supported the 59th Presidential Inauguration in Washington, D.C., and the security mission at the U.S. Capitol.

175th LRS members assigned worked together with fellow aerial porters from the 69th Aerial Port Squadron, assigned to the 459th Air Refueling Wing, to process thousands of personnel and handle over 260,000 pounds of equipment and cargo arriving for the Capitol mission at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland.

"The Airmen from the aerial port had a significant mission impact," said U.S. Air Force Capt. Jamie Plakosh, the small air terminal flight commander. "Their unique training allowed troops to quickly off-load both personnel and cargo, and move to in-processing."



This was the first time Airmen of the 175th Wing supported an Inauguration in this capacity. As the security mission in D.C. scaled back, troops needed to return back through Joint Base Andrews. As that mission ended, an estimated 4,900 passengers from 26 states and territories departed for their home units by aircraft, buses and other transportation modes.

"It was amazing seeing the movement of the National Guard from around our nation and territories," said U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Tevon Hawkins, a member of the 175th LRS. "I was compelled to support the Inauguration because of the events that took place at the Capitol. I felt it was my duty to ensure a peaceful transition of power in any way that I could."

The "Port Dawgs" mission ensured that the more than 26,000 National Guard men and women who supported the Inauguration returned home with their equipment over the course of more than 100 departing flights.

MDNG SOLDIERS & U.S. CAPITOL POLICE

UNITE

FOR SECURITY MISSION

FEBRUARY 3, 2021

BY SGT. ARCADIA HAMMACK

The Maryland Army National Guard's 115th Military Police Battalion provided area security and participated in joint training with the United States Capitol Police on Jan. 27-28, 2021, in Washington, D.C. This interagency collaboration in the final days of the security mission in support of the inauguration of President Joe Biden.

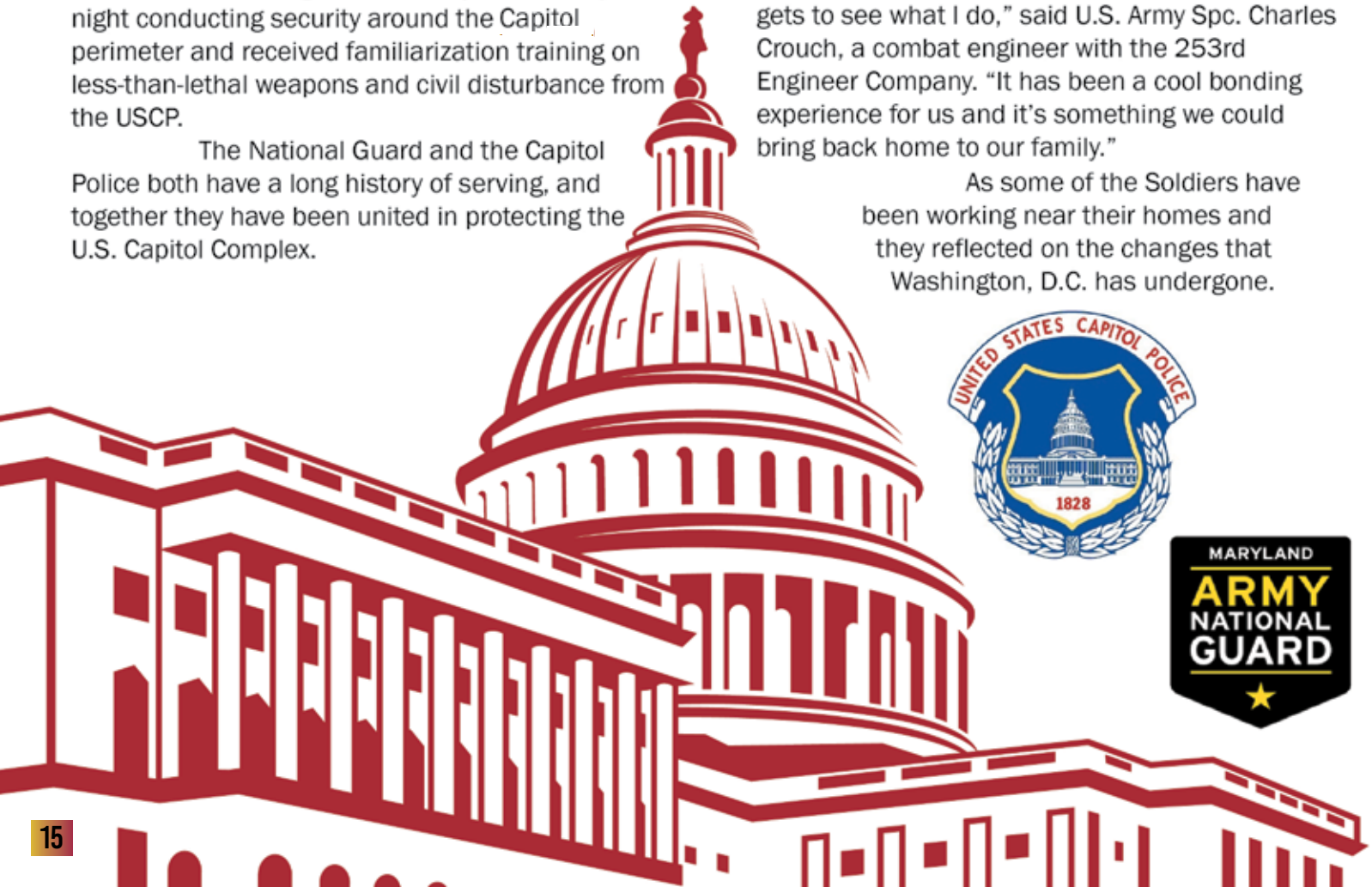
While the 115th MP Battalion was stationed in Washington, D.C., they worked day and night conducting security around the Capitol perimeter and received familiarization training on less-than-lethal weapons and civil disturbance from the USCP.

The National Guard and the Capitol Police both have a long history of serving, and together they have been united in protecting the U.S. Capitol Complex.

Some of the Soldiers have even been united with family members who serve in the USCP. One Guard member was been able to work alongside his father who, has served in USCP for over 27 years.

"I have been working with my dad who is a Capitol police officer. It's one of those things where we get to work side-by-side for once, and it's cool to see what he does for a living, while he also gets to see what I do," said U.S. Army Spc. Charles Crouch, a combat engineer with the 253rd Engineer Company. "It has been a cool bonding experience for us and it's something we could bring back home to our family."

As some of the Soldiers have been working near their homes and they reflected on the changes that Washington, D.C. has undergone.



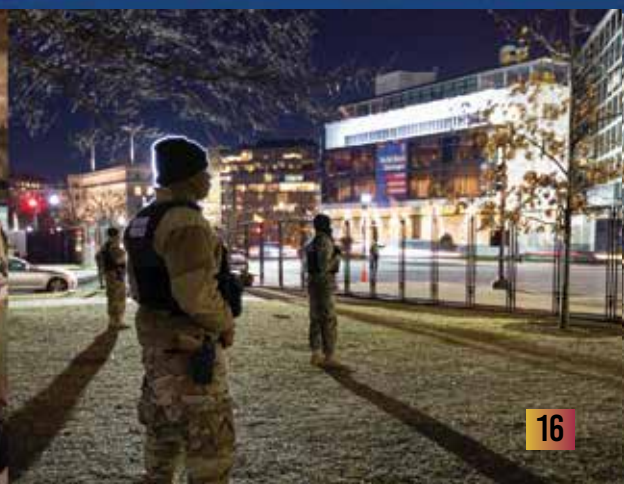
"I think it's just been interesting to see how the city transformed since we got here," said U.S. Army Cpl. Joseph Patterson, a Soldier in the 115th MP Battalion based in Salisbury, Maryland. "The first couple of days on ground we went from the small, waist-high barriers, to the eight-foot-tall fences with the razor wire on it."

Patterson said that the U.S. Capitol Police checkpoints, military checkpoints, and the vast number of Soldiers that were here was pretty extraordinary, and it seems like it will be something unprecedented in history.

Out of the 800 Maryland National Guard members who deployed to Washington, D.C., approximately 330 were from the 115th MP Battalion. Maryland was one of the first to be on the grounds following the events of Jan. 6, and they returned home Jan. 30.

"Despite what we do back home, we all came here for a mission and a purpose of a successful inauguration," said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Brittany Smith, a Soldier in the 115th MP Battalion."We're making it work and we're making it happen, and the unity is definitely strong here."

800 MARYLAND NATIONAL GUARD MEMBERS DEPLOYED TO WASHINGTON, D.C.



CYBER EXERCISE PREPARES MARYLAND GUARD FOR REAL-WORLD SITUATIONS

BY STAFF SGT. JAMES JOHNSON MAY 21, 2021

The 175th Cyberspace Operations Group conducted a realistic, adversarial cyber exercise with their Maryland Army National Guard counterparts to meet their annual training requirements back in mid May. The scenarios were based on the Colonial Pipeline cyber attack, which caused fuel supply instabilities.

"I like the concept of making the training here topical. I think it's a smart move because it brings to the forefront of people's minds the vulnerabilities and the training highlights that," said Christopher Cobb, exercise planner, U.S. Special Operations Command.

During the Cyber Blitz exercise, the 175th COG and the 169th Cyber Protection Team used this opportunity to put their combined civilian and military experience and abilities to good use.

"This exercise focuses on developing a cohesive team that accomplishes the mission and ultimately wins wars," said 1st Lt. Jennifer Santos, a cyber warfare officer with the 275th Cyberspace Operations Squadron. "A single service cannot win wars alone. Wars are won by teamwork among the services."

This is not the first time the 175th COG has conducted this type of training on a large scale, Southern Strike 2021, which took place in April, was another such training exercise.

"Well this is really a fact finding opportunity for me to determine what the overlap is between [Special Operation Forces]and cyber," said Cobb."There's a big push towards incorporating cyber training into special operations activities. More importantly to engage with the leadership here to find out what potential opportunities there are to integrate cyber into some of the special operations activities and exercises."

Maj. Charles Gruver, cyber operations mission director, mentioned that this was the first time the Air Force cyber operation squadron worked with an Army cyber protection element, working alongside their hardware, servers and laptops in a virtual integrated training environment.

During major exercises like Cyber Blitz, support from the National Guard helps key leaders in their decision-making process. Being a part of the exercise, according to Gruver, also reveals how completely integrated the National Guard is into the Air Force and Army cyber operations.

"To defeat our adversaries, there is a need for collaboration among individuals with diverse perspectives, insights and expertise. Creating this culture of synergy drives teamwork, further strengthening our ability to train and fight in joint operations," said Santos.

MARYLAND AIR NATIONAL GUARD CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

SERVING THE STATE AND NATION

BY CAPT. BENJAMIN HUGHES

JUNE 29, 2021

The Maryland Air National Guard kicked off a yearlong centennial celebration with a ceremony to commemorate the 100 years serving the state and nation. Maryland Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford served as the presiding official of the event, Tuesday, June 29th at Warfield Air National Guard Base.

The 104th Observation Squadron, MDANG's first unit and one the oldest is the U.S. Air Force, was federally recognized on June 29, 1921. The 104th Fighter Squadron, which flies the A-10C Thunderbolt II aircraft, continues their lineage as a descendent unit. "For 100 years, the Maryland Air National Guard has been a cornerstone of the defense of this nation, and the protection of this state," said Maryland Governor Larry Hogan. "When we need the Guard most, it answers the call every single time—whether it's to protect Marylanders, support humanitarian efforts, or respond to a global pandemic. We could not be prouder of the men and women of the Guard."

Over the last 100 years, the MDANG has grown to be nearly 1500 Airmen that are assigned to 17 squadrons and flights across the 175th Wing. In addition to supporting flying operations, those Airmen serve in wide range of career fields, like cyber, civil engineering, maintenance, logistics, intelligence, medical, security, administration, and more.

Maryland Airmen have deployed overseas since World War II helping bring their skills and expertise to support the federal mission. They have also supported domestic missions within the state and across the U.S. during floods, hurricanes, civil unrest and cyber-attacks.

Over the past year and half, Airmen from the 175th Wing have supported the state's Covid-19 pandemic response at the M&T Bank Stadium helping nearly 250,000 residents get vaccinated, at the Strategic National Stockpile warehouse processing and delivering over 59 million pieces of PPE and other critical medical equipment across the state, distributing thousands of meals to community, and provided 400 vulnerability assessments to state and local websites and IP addresses.

"We are incredibly proud of our rich and distinguished history answering our nation's call and serving the citizens of Maryland," said U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Paul Johnson, 175th Wing commander. "The future of Wing is bright as our Airmen lead the way by bringing air power to support allies across the globe and protecting our digitally connected world with first-class cyber capabilities."

BY SPC. CHRISTINA CHANG
MARCH 16, 2021

SPRING FORWARD TO VICTORY

MDARNG BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

Amidst the backdrop of the easing COVID-19 restrictions, the Maryland National Guard's 2021 Best Warrior Competition differed from the state's past competitions in a few respects. This year, Maryland's partners, and worthy competitors, from the Estonian Defence Forces and Armed Forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina didn't participate due to ongoing travel restrictions.

Many of the eight competitors this year – who all came from the Maryland Army National Guard – are normally part-time Guard members and supported ongoing COVID-19 response missions as well as the presidential inauguration. After winning at battalion and/or brigade-level competitions, many competitors were unsure when exactly they would compete at the state level.

The competition ran from March 11-14, 2021, at the H Steven Blum Military Reservation in Glen Arm, Maryland, and on the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

In the end, Spc. Richard Granke, a healthcare specialist with the 104th Medical Company Area Support, and Sgt. James McGill, a radiology specialist with the 224th Medical Company Area Support, were deemed the best Soldier and noncommissioned officer for the 2021 MDNG BWC, respectively. Capt. Ryan Slaughter, a logistics officer with the 70th Regiment, was deemed the best officer for the 2021 MDNG BWC.

However, Maryland's BWC remains one of the crucial ways Soldiers with different stripes maintain their readiness. The competition itself embodies the Army's fundamental values and lessons. Though the competitors may have been given only a short time to prepare before the start of the competition, they all rose to the challenge.

Due to the pandemic, some of the competitors this year also lost their civilian jobs or had to put their education plans on hold. That didn't stop them from their training. The competitors came together from March 8-10 to familiarize themselves with knowledge they'd need for the competition, introducing and reintroducing them with experts in military radio operations, combat medicine, and other essential Soldier skills.

According to Sgt. Hellmann, a member of the 200th Military Police Company, the competitors were "some of the best Soldiers I've ever had the pleasure of being around. I've learned something from every single person in this competition."

The competition kicked off with a 12-mile ruck march and the Warrior Task Lane. Competitors bore 35-lb loads over the steep rolling terrain at H Steven Blum Military Reservation.

"[The ruck march] was a rough course, but I think it set the tempo for the competition," said 2nd Lt. Caleb Smith, a military intelligence officer with the 629th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Battalion. "It got us in the mindset of 'this is useful, this is challenging: we got to really dial it in.'"

After the first day, the events stepped up in difficulty and plunged the competitors into realistic combat scenarios. During the stress shoot, competitors dragged and lifted heavy loads and sprinted to push their bodies to the limit once more, before they tested their aim on the range with the M4 carbine rifle, a weapon that every Soldier learns to fire; the 9mm pistol, what many Soldiers learn to fire; and the M500 shotgun, which is used by a smaller number of troops.

The obstacle course tested the competitors' stamina and ability to move swiftly through, over and under obstacles in their way. Soldiers are trained to be able to fight anywhere on any battlefield, which includes being able to wield a variety of weapons on and off a firing range. After firing on the range, the competitors took aim in more complicated situations: as a vehicle crew and in a gunnery skills test.

"I'm always supposed to be back behind [in these situations]," said Granke, BWC Soldier winner. "So being able to do that was pretty awesome."

"Each year the [Best Warrior] competition grows a little bit," said Master Sgt. Amber Isley, 70th Regiment, one of the key organizers of this year's BWC. "Our [state competition] mirrors closely what the regional competition does ... so we decided we should incorporate it into the state competition to get back to gunnery training and weapons training across the force."

The competition's land navigation event had the competitors sleeplessly pushing their way through the dense and dark woods until the sun rose. Land navigation has been important since the early militiamen, tradesmen and farmers with intimate knowledge of the land, put down work tools and picked up muskets in defense of the colonies.

After the physical came the mental exercises, as the competitors confronted the mystery task, which was revealed to be a written essay explaining the benefits and drawbacks of the Army's new standard qualification tests in individual rifle marksmanship and the new Army Combat Fitness Test.

On the final day of the event, they donned their dress uniforms and reported before the board, answering questions on a variety of Army topics and current events.

"I didn't think I'd make it this far," Spc. Granke said. "I'm excited ... but at the same time I'm thinking 'I hope I can live up to the [Army] name.'"

McGill won the Region II competition at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, which was held from May 11-14, 2021, and then competed in the National Best Warrior Competition at Camp Navajo, near Flagstaff, Arizona, from July 19-23, 2021.

STATE PARTNERSHIPS

REEMERGE WITH VACCINATION VISIT

JUNE 16, 2021 BY SPC. CHRISTINA CHANG

Members of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AFBiH) met with their medical counterparts in the Maryland National Guard to learn best practices to vaccinate their citizens during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, June 7-11, 2021. During the visit, they learned about the operation of different types of vaccination sites and mobile vaccination capabilities.

Entities including the military; federal, state, and municipal governments; as well as volunteer and religious organizations, have collaborated to get more people vaccinated in order to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and restore a sense of normalcy. U.S. Army Maj. Harrison Bittenbender is Maryland's State Partnership Program director and helped coordinate the collaborative AFBiH visit.

"The sooner we get [the AFBiH] the information about vaccination sites, the more likely they would be able to set up their own vaccination sites quickly and efficiently," said Bittenbender.

According to Bittenbender, the general lack of vaccine doses in the Balkan region influenced the decision to align Maryland's SPP training with Bosnia and Herzegovina this year on helping them to develop their COVID-19 response capabilities. Maj. Gen. Timothy Gowen, the adjutant general of Maryland, will visit the AFBiH in Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of his travels to Europe to discuss military-government partnerships focused on enhancing the COVID-19 response capabilities of European allies.

Several visiting members of the AFBiH also had the opportunity to personally experience the vaccination process when they received their first COVID-19 vaccine doses at the Maryland Medical Detachment at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation in Reisterstown, Maryland. The personnel toured the facility, learned about the different vaccines available in Maryland, as well as how to handle administrative paperwork.

"[The AFBiH] didn't have a chance until now to do vaccinations in our country. We are learning how [the MDNG] manages the whole situation," said 2nd Lt. Anja Rula, an AFBiH medical professional. "I like the drive thru vaccination idea, because it is easy and it doesn't take a lot of time to do it. This gives us an idea of what we should do in our country."

Zoran Batarilo, AFBih defense attache and the rest of the AFBiH members visited the Baltimore Convention Center Field Hospital in Baltimore, the Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium in Annapolis, and the Six Flags America site in Prince George's County.

The Baltimore Convention Center Field Hospital, like other sites, primarily serves the local communities in providing COVID-19 testing, vaccinations, and treatments for patients who test positive for COVID-19. The site showed the AFBiH how Maryland provided comprehensive COVID-19 services to more people free of charge, and the staff with the medical expertise necessary to provide these services.

"We all speak the same language in terms of wanting to really attack COVID-19," said Cheryl Stiles, the director of nursing at the Baltimore Convention Center Field Hospital.

"I thought it was great to be able to partner and really share our experiences so that we can, as a group, unite and really defeat and control this disease."

"[The MDNG and the Armed Forces of BiH] have a positive relationship," said Batarilo. "Our mutual cooperation comes from sharing different areas of cooperation like exercises, courses, exchanges, and other experiences in our state partnership with the National Guard of Maryland."

Batarilo also mentioned that in addition to other Western countries, like the United States, Bosnia also works with its neighboring countries and organizations, and has received most of their vaccine supply from their donations. Since 2003, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a part of the National Guard State Partnership Program and paired with the MDNG.

"It's good when you learn from all experiences, even if they were bad or good ones," Batarilo said. "I believe that we can together learn something from all these unexpected circumstances and challenges in order to prepare and plan for the future."

PARTNERSHIP ENDURES

MDNG TOP GENERAL CONDUCTS INITIAL VISIT TO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

After 16 months of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Maryland National Guard is able to turn to reinvigorating its nearly 18-year, enduring partnership with the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Timothy E. Gowen, adjutant general for Maryland, traveled for the first time to BiH on June 22, 2021, with the mission of making up for lost time with a valued ally.

Gowen traveled to Sarajevo, BiH to meet with key leaders, Sifet Podžić, BiH minister of defense; AFBiH Lt. Gen. Senad Mašović, chief of defense; and Eric Nelson, U.S. ambassador to BiH. Together, they observed Coordination 2021, a civil-military emergency preparedness exercise that reassured the importance of the partnership. Additionally, Gowen discussed his priorities in securing future training opportunities together.

During the CMEP exercise's distinguished visitor day, facilitated by Selmo Cikotić, BiH minister of security, Gowen witnessed the value of interagency coordination and support to civil authorities during an earthquake scenario.

Nelson stressed that Coordination 2021 emphasizes the importance of cooperation between military and civilian structures and the non-governmental sector during crisis situations.

The MDNG's experience in crisis response, specifically with the COVID-19 pandemic and other natural disasters, can be used to help develop BiH's civilian structure capabilities and the AFBiH's role in crisis situations, said Nelson.

Responding to natural disasters, such as floods or forest fires, is a key mission for the AFBiH and supporting civil authorities. Much like with the MDNG, their timely and efficient action is crucial for a successful emergency response.

"Here we are... watching a civil-military exercise," Gowen said. "It's training like this that allows us to thrive in this partnership together."

During this initial visit to BiH, Gowen was accompanied by Command Sgt. Maj. Perlisa D. Wilson, senior enlisted leader of the MDNG, and U.S. Army Lt. Col. Rob Wille, Maryland Army National Guard G3 Training Division chief. Wilson and Wille visited the AFBiH Training and Doctrine facility in Travnik, BiH, to engage with the AFBiH training and doctrine commander and staff. Together they discussed and planned future training opportunities the MDNG could facilitate for AFBiH noncommissioned and commissioned officers.

According to Willie, one of the major projects he'd like to take on is creating a way for AFBiH members to attend courses at Maryland's 70th Regiment (Regional Training Institute).

"It's something the MDARNG could likely facilitate, but it requires the right sources of funding to make it possible" said Willie.

Wille, who previously served as the deputy commander for the 70th RTI, sees the potential for progressive State Partnership Program opportunities for the MDNG and AFBiH.

THROUGH COVID-19 PANDEMIC

BY MAJ. KURT RAUSCHENBERG & STAFF SGT. SARAH McCLANAHAN

JUNE 26, 2021

Normally, the MDNG and AFBiH would complete about 50 training events in a typical fiscal year. However, the COVID-19 pandemic placed a hold on many in-person SPP activities for more than a year. Some SPP events were still conducted virtually, such as a long-lasting public affairs initiative between MDNG and AFBiH to enhance strategic communications, resources, and media operations. This initiative was last directly observed during exercise Silver Arrow 2019.

Today, many AFBiH public affairs professionals still use camera equipment provided by the MDNG years ago and have the opportunity to attend the public affairs course for international students at the Defense Information School in Fort Meade, Maryland.

For the first time last month, BiH hosted a Defender series exercise known as Immediate Response 21. Initially, the MDNG had planned to send public affairs and infantry members to participate. Due to complications posed by the pandemic, this too was thrown into a spiral. Regardless, this successful exercise served as an important milestone for the AFBiH, as it was the most amount of U.S. military personnel in BiH since 2005.

Prior to traveling to BiH, Gowen visited U.S. Army Europe and Africa, headquartered in Wiesbaden, Germany, to discuss future training opportunities for MDNG and SPP counterparts. During his discussions with the USAREUR-AF deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Jarrard, and with training and exercise key leaders, Gowen emphasized his intent to stand side-by-side with AFBiH counterparts in future USAREUR-AF exercises, such as the Defender exercise series.

"Participation in the Defender exercise series with our AFBiH counterparts just makes good sense," Gowen said. "[Not only will it] enhance the relationship under the state partnership program, but it'll also enable us to spend our 20th year together in 2023 to reach common goals and objectives and to achieve a shared vision like never before. We can help one another reach maximum multinational interoperability, taking security cooperation to the next level."

Achieving multinational interoperability is one of the most significant training objectives in the European operational environment. BiH is a member of the U.S.–Adriatic Charter, or A5, which is an association among the U.S. and Western Balkan states. A5 promotes regional cooperation and assists with achieving NATO membership. Historically, the MDNG has facilitated various training opportunities with BiH participation, assisting in their progress towards becoming a NATO member.

The MDNG's enduring partnership with AFBiH will continue to contribute to this progress. Gowen's initial visit to BiH and his discussions with key leaders like Mašović will help to pave the way for future training opportunities such as the Defender series.

Mašović talked about the need to focus more on civil-military activities and reflected on the many accomplishments of the SPP, specifically mentioning a shared deployment to Afghanistan between the AFBiH and MDNG's 115th Military Police Battalion in 2013. Without skipping a beat, Gowen and Mašović shook hands as they parted ways, exemplifying the MDNG and AFBiH's long-lasting partnership.

SOLDIERS RETURN HOME FROM DEPLOYMENT

BY SGT. ARCADIA HAMMACK
FEBRUARY 10, 2021

More than 130 Citizen-Soldiers from the Maryland Army National Guard's 58th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade and 629th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Battalion, have returned home from a nine-month deployment to Afghanistan, in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

This deployment marked the first time that a National Guard EMIB had ever been deployed in combat. The unit is only one of two EMIBs activated in the entire Army National Guard. The 58th EMIB provided intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support during their deployment.

"The Soldiers have done an incredible job these past nine months," said U.S. Army Col. Julie Minde, the commander of the 58th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade. "Actually, it has been longer than nine months, if you count the 'shelter in place' order that locked us down last spring as we had just mobilized. The unit played a big part in intelligence support in Afghanistan during a very difficult, uncertain, and highly unusual period – a sizable and rapid drawdown conducted in a pandemic environment during Afghan Peace Negotiations."

Soldiers from the 58th EMIB, who were not forward deployed, supported operations in the state, responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in Maryland since March 2020. They helped with testing, food distribution, interagency coordination, and more. They were deployed to armories across the state and supported missions at the capital and Maryland Department of Health.

"As the commander in the rear, I was honored to represent the 58th EMIB while they were deployed this past year," said U.S. Army Col. Kristine Henry, commander of Task Force 291. "We are so happy to have them home, and I look forward to integrating them back into our day-to-day operations in Maryland."

Task Force 291 was an internal Maryland element established as one of the Maryland Army National Guard's major subordinate commands, to provide command and control for several units while the 58th EMIB was deployed overseas.

"I have great leaders in this brigade and it shows because we overcame every obstacle and succeeded at every task, often times setting new standards and helping find the best way ahead." said Minde. "I couldn't be more proud of the 58th EMIB's – a.k.a., Task Force Chesapeake's – performance. Through their actions, the brigade has achieved a legacy unlike any other, as the first National Guard EMIB to deploy in support of combat operations."

UNITS THAT DEPLOYED/RETURNED IN 2021

175TH WING - UNITED ARAB EMIRMATES & NIGER

110TH INFORMATION OPERATIONS BATTALION - HORN OF AFRICA

29TH INFANTRY DIVISION DETACHMENTS - KUWAIT

58TH EXPEDITIONARY MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BRIGADE - AFGHANISTAN

729TH QUARTERMASTER COMPOSITE SUPPLY COMPANY - POLAND

29TH MILITARY POLICE COMPANY - KOSOVO

MARYLAND NATIONAL GUARD
COVID-19 VACCINATION MISSION

*AS OF AUGUST 10, 2021

1,089 SERVICE MEMBERS SERVED OVER **258** DAYS

847,879 VACCINATIONS ADMINISTERED AT **792** SITES IN **23** COUNTIES

MDNG PROVIDED COVID-19 TESTING FOR

175,427 PEOPLE AT PERSONAL SCREENING SITES

THE VACCINE EQUITY TASK FORCE COMPLETED OVER **1,000** MISSIONS

150,347 DOSES DISTRIBUTED AND OVER

150,000 DOSES PROVIDED TO COUNTY EQUITY PLANS

800 PERSONNEL DEPLOYED TO D.C. FOR THE SECURITY MISSION

TOTALING OVER

403,200 MAN HOURS

MARYLAND NATIONAL GUARD
OLD LINE